

Virginia Lee Heckle Mikkelsen

A biography



Edited by Tim Mikkelsen

Copyright © 1999
All rights reserved

<i>Introduction</i>	5
<i>Birth</i>	7
<i>Childhood</i>	9
<i>Grade School</i>	13
<i>Junior High School</i>	17
<i>High School</i>	21
<i>Iowa State University</i>	31
<i>Back to Des Moines</i>	37
<i>Marriage</i>	45
<i>Married Student Life</i>	51
<i>Oregon</i>	55
<i>Back to Ames</i>	59
<i>Fort Collins</i>	61
<i>Amanda</i>	71
<i>Ben</i>	93
<i>Married with Children</i>	101
<i>A Non-traditional Student</i>	123
<i>Transition</i>	133
<i>Memories</i>	147
<i>Favorite Recipes</i>	159
<i>Thoughts about Virginia</i>	171
<i>Memorial</i>	185

Introduction

This is a biography and memorial for Virginia Lee Heckle Mikkelsen. I've drawn this from things that Virginia wrote. I've also gotten help and support from family and friends.

This can't capture the full person that Virginia was, but I hope that it gives a sense of her. My hope is that this helps family and friends remember her. It is also my hope that this will tell her descendents and others, who did not know her, something about the person she was and her life.

Although I did not have the quantity of time with Virginia that I wanted, I know that quality of our life together was exceptional. She was a very special person who touched and affected many lives. I loved Virginia very much and always will...

Tim Mikkelsen
July 15, 1999

Birth

Birth certificate with footprints – May 3 1953

952 21828 K



MISSOURI BAPTIST HOSPITAL
919 NORTH TAYLOR AVENUE
ST. LOUIS 8, MISSOURI

This is to Certify that Virginia Lee Heckler
was born in this Hospital at 4:08 A m., on the 3rd day of May 1953
and is hereby declared to be a member of the

Babies' Alumni Association
of
Missouri Baptist Hospital

In Witness Whereof the said Hospital has caused this Certificate to be issued and the under-
signed have affixed their signatures:

LENGTH 22 inches
WEIGHT 8 Pounds 9 ounces

O. E. Capeland
Nurse-in-Chief of the Hospital

Blanche Rose Ringer
Superintendent of Obstetric Department

Midwife



Official Birth certificate – May 3 1953

THE DIVISION OF HEALTH OF MISSOURI		12453-1132154	
MAY 16 1953		STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF LIVE BIRTH	
Registration Number 818		Primary Registration Number 1008	
1. PLACE OF BIRTH a. COUNTY		1. USUAL RESIDENCE OF MOTHER (Other than mother's birth) a. STATE Missouri b. COUNTY 2149	
2. CITY (If outside counties limits, write NEAREST city or town) Missouri, St. Louis		3. CITY OR TOWN St. Louis 4. IN DISTRICT (Give District No.) 2149	
3. FULL NAME OF HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION Missouri Baptist Hospital		4. STREET ADDRESS 5219a Delor St.	
5. CHILD'S NAME a. (First) Virginia b. (Middle) Lee c. (Last) Heckle 2149		6. DATE OF BIRTH (Month) (Day) (Year) 5 3 53	
7. SEX Female / Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / Twin <input type="checkbox"/> / Triplet <input type="checkbox"/> / 1st <input type="checkbox"/> / 2nd <input type="checkbox"/> / 3rd <input type="checkbox"/>			
FATHER OF CHILD			
7. FULL NAME a. (First) Arthur b. (Middle) Anthony c. (Last) Heckle Jr. d. COLOR OR RACE W.		8. AGE (As of date of this birth) 23 YEARS	
9. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) Normandy Mo.		10. USUAL OCCUPATION Maintenance Man	
11. KIND OF BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY Groves Lab.			
MOTHER OF CHILD			
12. FULL MAIDEN NAME a. (First) Thelma b. (Middle) Lee c. (Last) Berkley d. COLOR OR RACE W.		13. AGE (As of date of this birth) 17 YEARS	
14. BIRTHPLACE (State or foreign country) St. Louis, Mo.		15. CHILDREN PREVIOUSLY BORN TO THIS MOTHER (Do NOT include this child) a. How many OTHER children are now living? 0 b. How many OTHER children were born alive but are now dead? 0 c. How many children were stillborn (born dead after 28 weeks pregnancy)? 0	
17. INFORMANTS'S SIGNATURE Mrs. Arthur Heckle Jr.			
18. SIGNATURE OF ATTENDANT F. H. Hecker		19. ATTENDANT AT BIRTH OTHER M.D. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D.O. <input type="checkbox"/> (SPECIFY)	
19. ADDRESS 3121 Grand		20. DATE SIGNED 5-6-53	
21. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE Earl Smith M.D.		22. DATE MAY 9 1953	
23. REGISTRAR'S MAILING ADDRESS FOR REGISTRATION NOTICE 6219 a Delor St. St. Louis, Missouri			

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SECTION (CONFIDENTIAL) (This section MUST be filled out for each birth)

Childhood

Tim: Art talking about coming home from Korea and seeing Virginia

Virginia's father, Art, was in Korea when Virginia was born. He came back late in 1953. His first stop was at the army base in Colorado Springs. From there, he took a train to St. Louis. Lee had gotten a small apartment on the south side (on Giles Street). He didn't know where the apartment was. He arrived in St. Louis on the day before Thanksgiving. From the train station, he took a taxi. He said it was just amazing coming home and seeing Virginia. He said it was like coming into an existing life – and totally different from the previous three years.



Virginia with Art

Photograph: Virginia – 1953



Virginia

Tim: Lee talking about Virginia

Lee said that Virginia was a very good baby and child. She said that Virginia started walking early at around 9 ½ months. She was sure that Virginia's first word was 'mama'. Another early word was 'funnyphunt' for elephant.

Tim: Lee describing how Tootsie got her name from Virginia

Lee's mother's real name was Iris (actually it was Thelma Iris Stark Berkley). I didn't know her real name until I wrote this (in 1999). Everybody called her Tootsie. Virginia was the one to get people to call her this.

When Virginia was very little, Art, Lee, and Virginia used to live in an apartment downstairs from Iris. Often, Lee and Virginia would come in and Iris would be standing on the top of the stairs. She would call down and say "Is that my little tootsie?". Virginia started calling her Tootsie. Soon, the neighbors started to call her Tootsie. It got to the point that the neighbor kids used to call Tootsie's husband Mr. Tootsie.

Photograph: Virginia's 2nd birthday – May 3 1955



Virginia's second birthday

Lee: Painting the house - 1956

This happened when we lived on Lee Lane in St. Anns, Missouri. Virginia was probably 2 or 3. She and Vickie were playing in the fenced backyard. When I went to check on

them I found that she had pooped in her panties. It must have fallen out and she decided to play with it and smeared it on the house by the back door! What a mess!



Virginia at the house on Lee Lane

Photograph: Virginia on a horse – 1950's



Virginia riding a horse

Grade School

Tim: Virginia and Vickie playing with Cindy in St. Louis

Virginia related to me that when she and Vickie were very young and living in St. Louis, they had open ditches (I think they were the storm sewers). Virginia and Vickie were playing with Cindy who was still a pretty young baby. They had Cindy in a stroller and were rolling her around the yard. At some point, the stroller got away from them and proceeded down the yard into the ditch. Apparently it was really icky and Cindy was covered in mud and goo.

Cindy: Virginia, Vickie and Cindy not going to bed

When we lived in St. Ann (10905 Lee Lane – don't ask me how I remember that), Missouri, we three all slept in the same room. Bedtime could be challenging because we could get (and keep) each other riled up when we were supposed to be sleeping. This first story I don't remember but I've been told Mom had warned us several times to be quiet and go to sleep. We had ignored her and she blew into the room very angry. She went to Virginia and smacked her behind, then went to Vickie and smacked her behind, and then turned to me in my crib. I, of course, by now was playing like I was sound asleep. Mom asked me if I was asleep and I quickly nodded yes! I think I got a smack anyway.

The second story starts much like the first. We had been fooling around long after we had been warned to go to sleep. It was nice enough outside that our bedroom window was open and of course the room was dark. We must have pushed Mom too far that night, because she went outside to our window, and in a very low voice said, "Be quiet and go to sleep." I don't think we moved, breathed, or made a sound for the rest of the night. Forget about wondering if Santa Claus and the Easter bunny were real, we wanted to know the truth about the boogey man!

Virginia: summer early 1960's

Tuesday, August 13

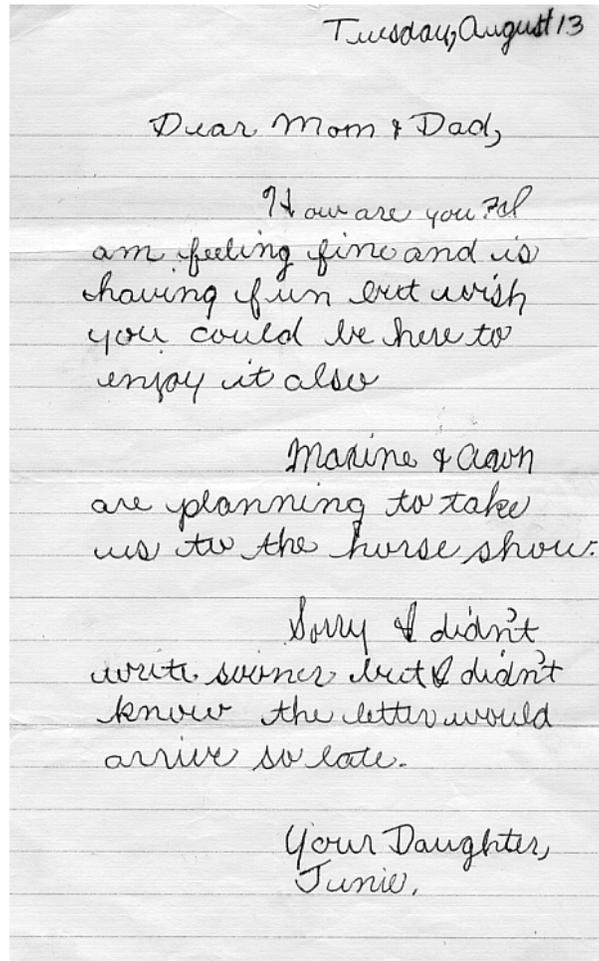
Dear Mom & Dad,

How are you? I am feeling fine and is having fun but wish you could be here to enjoy it also

Maxine and Aaron are planning to take us to the horse show.

Sorry I didn't write sooner but I didn't know the letter would arrive so late.

*Your Daughter,
Junie.*



Cindy: Vickie's splinter

After we moved to Des Moines, we made many trips back to St. Louis to see all the relatives that still lived there. We would stay with Tootsie (our Mom's mom) and everyone would stop by. Sometimes we would spend time at Papa Berkley's house (our Mom's dad). I can even remember spending the night there once or twice. During these trips, we would spend several hours at Papa Doc's house (our dad's dad). Papa Doc lived on the other side of St. Louis, in an old, well-kept, brick house across the street from a park. This was back in the day when parents could let their children go to the park without supervision. The three of us girls would head off to the park. It had all kinds of rides and swings and it was great fun.

One day the park was pretty empty. We were on a big, eight-sided merry-go-round. You sat on wood and pumped with your arms and legs on steel rails, which made you go round and round. Since we were the only ones on the ride, we were spread out with Virginia directing us to scoot out even further. With so little power (us), we couldn't get the ride to start. While Vickie was scooting over (because Virginia was telling her to), she got a splinter in her rear.

I should add here that I'm not relating this story to embarrass Vickie, but rather to show how Virginia and I paid for laughing at her (yes, we did laugh). One of us stayed with Vickie and the other went and got Mom and Dad. They took her to the emergency room and after a flurry of activity, Virginia and I realized we were stranded at Papa Doc's house. I don't ever remember being there, before or since, without our parents.

But now they were gone, Vickie was gone, and the car was gone. It was just the two of us and we had no idea when they were coming back. The longer they were gone, and it seemed like they were gone a long time, the more worried we got. What was taking so long, where were they, how long could it take to remove a splinter, what if something else was wrong? Needless to say, we were racked with worry and guilt by the time they returned. And to add further insult, they had stopped somewhere and got Vickie a brand new doll because she had been so brave and good. Vickie came back smiling and we had long since stopped laughing.

Lee: Virginia's bicycle wreck - 1963

This happened when we lived at 7706 S.W. 10th Street. Virginia was about 9 or 10 years old, I think. She was riding in the street, going down hill when the fork (the part that holds the front wheel on) broke, throwing her face first onto the street. She skidded on her chest and belly causing many scraps that didn't really bleed a lot, they oozed a clear/slightly bloody fluid. It was such a large area I hardly knew where to start. I took her clothes off and filled the tub with lukewarm water and had her soak for awhile to calm her down. I think I wrapped gauze around her and a loose T-shirt is all she wore for some time.

Junior High School

Virginia: My Vacation 1965

My Vacation "65"

Saturday June 19 we were raring to go to South Dakota. This would be our first time to South Dakota.

We were going to camp for 1 week in a rented trailer.

We started at 7:00 and were off. We stopped at Manning Iowa to eat breakfast at a nice little park. For this meal we had donuts and milk. We were forced to stay in Manning because of a car adjustment. Cindy had fallen so we went over to a gas station to wash off her sore. When we cam back someone was looking at our trailer! It turned out to be a mailman who just wanted to look at it.

After dad came back home we were well on our to Elk Point. At Elk Point, South Dakota we had lunch.

We had quite a time trying to find a camp. We first tried Fish lake, but my dad was afraid to try it because the road wasn't so good. So we tried Trout Areana which supposed to be very good, but after we saw it we didn't want to try it. So we tried the old rode, after we arrived we saw it wasn't worth it, it was a nice place but didn't appeal to me or my family. Then my dad recalled a sign he had read on the highway. We found the sign and it said,

*Al's OASIS AND Familyland
3 Miles West Chamberlain*

Before stopping in Chamberlain we went to Michelle to see the Corn Palace. Then we stopped at an ice cream shop and had something to drink. Then we went to Al's Oasis and set up camp. Around 3:00 it poured rain and dad had to go outside and put all our stuff away. Around 5:30 we wake up and ate breakfast at Rainbow Café and then went to 7:00 Mass at St. James Church. Then we came back to camp to take it down. We hit the open road about 9:00. Soon we found ourselves in the badlands. This place can never be described. It is unusual yet beautiful. We took pictures, and climb the hills. We also ate lunch. After leaving the Bad Lands we went to the Black Hills. We stayed at the Covered Wagon.

Cindy, Vicki and I went swimming in the pool. Later on that night we went to a show of places to go. Then we went to bed. The next morning we had pancakes. Then we went to a lake. We went to Hill City to see the 1880 Train. Then a Free Zoo. From there to

Custer State Park, the Buffalo and Burro Range. Before going to Custer Park we stopped at the Rafters J bar ranch to see about camping. We arrived at Rushmore in the rain. And ate at the foot of Mount Rushmore. Then we stopped at an old town. And went back to camp and went swimming. We went to a movie to find the points of interest.

In the morning we had scrambled eggs, hot chocolate, Tang, toast. Then Dad went to talk to the man to give us some directions. After breakfast we hopped into the car and went to the 4T Guest Ranch to ride. My horse's name was Dixie. Dixie was a horse who could only understand Indian. After the trail ride we went to old abandoned ghost towns.

After that we came home and went swimming. Then we ate and saw some Indians dance. Then we went to sleep. The next morning was cold and damp so we just had cereal and went to Deadwood, where we saw where Wild Bill Hickok died, and we saw his grave and Calamity Jane. Then we went to the Adams Museum. From there we went to ??? where we toured the Homestake Gold Mine. After that we went to a drive Inn for lunch. After we got to camp we went swimming, ate supper. And we went to a sing-song. Bill sang and played the guitar and the audience sang along. Then we went to bed. In the morning we ate and started packing to leave. Then we left, as we left dad saw Mr. Monerkamp and said good-bye. We drove, and we went through 2 Indian reservations. Then we stopped for lunch. And had an ice cream cone. Then we drove through more Indian Reservation. Then we went to Burke. We couldn't find a place to stay so we traveled around Burke. We finally found the place, but it wasn't too neat. Then we went on to Ft. Randall, and had a problem there. Finally we found it. We had a late supper and went to bed. It rained all night and in the morning we ate, walked along the beach and took off. We stopped off at a gas station and had some ice cream.

Lee: Paul Revere and the Raiders - 1966

This was a group that was very popular when Virginia was in the 7th-8th grade. She had a BIG crush in the lead singer, Mark Lindsay. He was all she could think and talk about. She thought she really loved him and if she could only be with him her life would be complete. She was in tears about him at one point when I was trying to explain to her that there was no way she could meet and or be with him. I told her she wouldn't even remember him when she got older, but you know what, she did.

Cindy: Virginia's bike accident - 1967

When Virginia was about 14 she had a bad bike accident. I wasn't there when it happened, but I heard she had gone head first over the handle bars. Luckily, she was very close to the house. I remember a lot of commotion in the bathroom. When I looked inside, Virginia was naked in the tub, soaking. She was black and blue and scraped and cut. A neighbor who was a nurse came in to check her out. She checked for broken bones and head injury. I don't think Virginia went to the hospital, she was stiff and sore

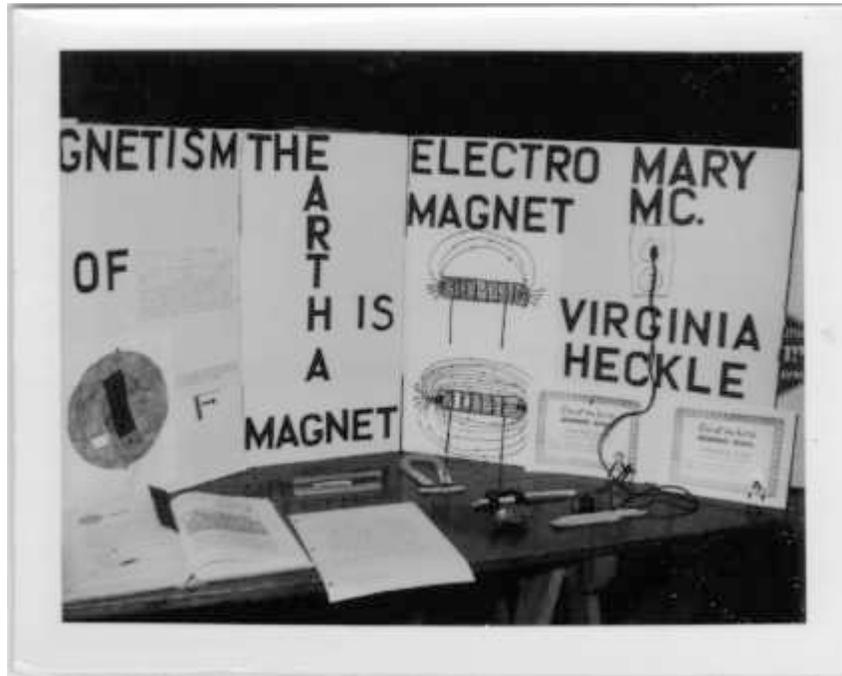
for awhile. My main memory is being embarrassed for her, everyone was staring at her, trying to determine the extent of her injuries and there seemed to be nothing she could do.

Cindy: Rollerskating

Roller skating was a big activity when we were in school. Christ the King (our Catholic grade school) had skating parties once a month and skating on Saturdays was the thing to do. Parents would drop kids off, we would meet up with our friends and giggle over which boy would ask us to skate during the moonlight skate (low lights, disco ball, soft music and holding hands). I remember one time being at the skating rink, sitting with my friends in the snack bar, when the management was trying to make an announcement. They had asked several times for everyone to stop skating, stand still wherever you were and be quiet. It took several warnings and several minutes to get all those kids to comply. The final announcement was that a small group of girls in the snack bar must think that this request didn't apply to them and we were all going to have to wait until they decided to be quiet. Everyone was looking around to stare at the trouble-makers. One of my friends said, "Cindy isn't that your sister." Sure enough, Virginia and her friends were the trouble-makers. What a rebel.

Speaking of Christ the King... Virginia and Vickie had been going there for a couple of years. I was going to a public grade school. When Virginia was in 8th grade and Vickie in 6th, I transferred to Christ the King for 4th grade. In our day, we graduated after 8th grade into high school. Mom wanted me to switch schools because this would be the only year all three of us would be in the same school at the same time. We all graduated from Christ the King and then attended four years at a Catholic high school. In fact, Virginia spent all four years at an all girl Catholic high school!

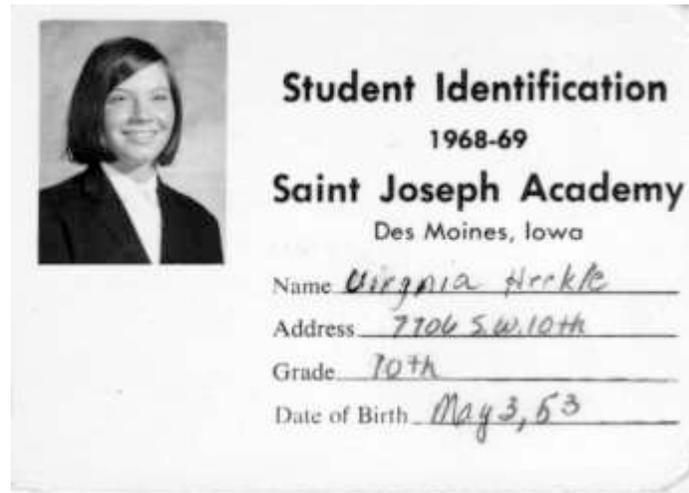
Photograph: science fair project – 1960s



Virginia's science fair project

High School

Virginia's Saint Joseph Academy student ID card - 1968



Virginia's student ID card

Lee: working at Bishops - 1968

Bishops was a cafeteria near our home and Virginia's first job. She didn't have her driver's license yet so we had to take her and pick her up. She was not thrilled with the job and I don't think she worked there very long. I don't remember anything of any importance happening during this time. Dad remembers one night when she was very late coming home from work. Dad drove to Bishops and of course it was closed and no sign of her car, she was driving by this time. She eventually came home and said the girls decided to go out after work and she didn't think to call us.

Lee: Greenie - 1969

Her first car was a '61 Corvair. She drove to school - Saint Joseph's Academy on Grand Avenue. She took Vickie, Karen DeFino, and Nannette Baumhover. She was a pretty good driver, most of the time. She was in a serious accident one Sunday. She had backed into something and put a dent in the rear of her car and Dad was working on it to fix the dent. She took my car-'64 Corvair Convertible that I dearly loved- and was on her way to pick up Karen. At S.W. 9th & Watrous, she was making a left turn onto Watrous and she was hit pretty hard in the passenger side and pushed into a telephone pole on the driver's side. Thank God she wasn't hurt and that she hadn't picked up Karen yet. It was a terrible call to get. Neither driver was ticketed. We believe the other kid pulled around another car waiting to turn left (from the north, Virginia was coming from the south).

Cindy: Virginia's car wreck

When Virginia started driving the car Mom and Dad passed on to her was a cute 1964 Corvair Spyder convertible. One spring weekend Virginia was going to pick up her best friend, Karen Defino (Vickie's husband's sister). She was making a left-hand turn when another driver ran into her from the right. Virginia was okay, but the car was totaled. We were all glad Virginia was all right, but we sure were sad about the car. In fact, I still have one of the door handles from the Spyder as a keepsake.

Cindy: Paul Revere and the Raiders

When we were in grade school we would come home from school and watch "Where The Action Is" because Paul Revere and the Raiders were regulars on the show. The lead singer of the Raiders was Mark Lindsay and Virginia was madly in love with him. During 1968 and 1969, Paul Revere and Mark Lindsay hosted a musical variety ½ hour show Saturday mornings. It was called "It's Happening" and we watched faithfully every week.

Back in the 1960's, when the Raiders were popular, music was purchased in the form of vinyl long-playing (LP's) records. My memory is that a new release cost five or six dollars and that meant saving your allowance for several weeks in order to buy one. In addition, every month the popular teenage magazines like "16" and "Tiger Beat" would come out, full of pictures and articles of the groups, singers and actors that all the girls were swooning over. We used to hang the pictures of Mark all over our rooms. Mom kept trying to tell us that if we pooled our allowance, we could buy more records and magazines, instead of each of us saving to buy our own. We thought she was crazy, if we only had one copy of a magazine and the pictures in it, then how could we each have those pictures displayed in our room? If we only had one album that we shared, how could we say, no- you can't play MY record!? What could Mom possibly be thinking? So we each continued to buy our own stuff, sharing with each other only when the mood struck us or we were bargaining with each other for something else.

What made this even more ridiculous was that for a long time, there was only one record player in the house. Sometimes our albums would be left by the record player, other times we would keep them in our rooms. After all, a sibling may actually play one of your records without asking permission, or worse.

When Chris was little, just walking, he came across the surface where some records were laying. Someone had not put all of the records back in their covers. Chris managed to get a record in his mouth and take a little bite out of it. I recall it was one of the Raider records Virginia owned. In fact, as I write this, that album is probably in the stack of records Tim has. If found, you would still be able to see Chris' little teeth marks.

Virginia was not pleased and I think Chris was lucky he was young and cute, and Mom and Dad were so attached to him.

The Raiders appeared twice in concert at Vets Auditorium in Des Moines during the late 60's and early 70's. I remember going but with Vickie and friends. Virginia at this time was too "cool" to attend a concert with her younger sisters! It must have been while the Raiders were in town for the second concert that Virginia was working at Bishops. Bishops was a cafeteria style restaurant that was particularly popular with the older set. You pushed your tray and made your meal selections and at the end of the counter was a cashier who totaled your selections and gave you a receipt. At this point a waitress would take your tray and escort you to the table you had selected. Then they would place your items on the table for you, remove the tray, and check back with you to refill drinks or retrieve an item from the line that you had forgotten. They would also help the elderly push their trays through the line. Virginia was a waitress, and I think maybe not a particularly good, helpful, cheerful one. As I recall she hated it, the dorky uniforms, the waiting on people, having to be nice and cheerful, the slow-moving and slow-minded elderly people (remember she was a teenager and this was definitely not a cool job). But between her pay and her tips it allowed her to put gas in her car and that meant freedom and that was cool. Anyway, somehow the rumor started at Bishops that while the Raiders were in town for their concert, they were going to eat there. (I know, we all said "ya, right the Raiders are really gonna go to Bishops, out of all the restaurants in Des Moines. They will probably eat at whatever hotel they're staying at.") But Virginia was convinced it was true. I think the rumor was they would either have a private dining area or Bishops would stay open and serve just them. She was so excited, she was finally gonna meet Mark Lindsay! What a crushing blow when it never happened. Virginia eventually grew out of her Mark Lindsay phase, as we all did.

Lee: Randy Summy - 1969

I don't remember much about him, I don't think we even met him. It was a short lived boy friend. The only thing I do remember is they broke up just before Christmas which made for a miserable holiday.

Tim: Virginia beating up Vickie

Virginia and Vickie lived together at home in the same room. During junior high and high school, Virginia was apparently a restless sleeper. Sometimes she would sleep walk. She would be having a bad dream and would start hitting Vickie. The next morning Vickie would ask why Virginia hit her and Virginia would have no idea what she was talking about. Vickie said that later on she felt very badly about having done this.

Tim: Virginia and her school uniform

When Virginia was in high school and junior high, she had to wear school uniforms (since it was a private Catholic school). She told me that she would often leave the house and then put on make up and adjust her clothes (like roll up the hem line) so that she would look nicer.

Tim: Virginia and Catholic school math

Virginia, as long as I knew her, never liked mathematics. She could do it well, but was always stressed out by it. I think a lot of this came from the mathematics classes from junior high and high school. She described the teacher (a nun) who taught her geometry. The nun was cross-eyed. It was bad enough that when the nun would call on students to answer questions, she would look and two different students would stand up. So, when this cross-eyed nun drew parallel lines, they would intersect!

Tim: Virginia and Catholic schools

Virginia went to parochial (private Catholic) school. She got a good education, but she also felt that she was a recovering Catholic – trying to get over some of the other aspects of that style of education. She had lots of great stories about her experiences.

Early on, the nuns tried to teach the girls proper etiquette and demeanor. They also tried to make sure the girls didn't do anything bad without really explaining what the bad things were. The nuns told the girls never to sit on a boy's lap directly. This was bad, they said, because of the 'vibrations' that would be there. So, if you had to sit on a boy's lap, you should put a phone book on his lap before you sat down!

In high-school, the school did do some sex education. In one of the physical education classes, they showed educational films. One of the ones they showed was a U.S. Navy training film on childbirth. Virginia said that about 7 girls passed out during the film (and as I remember, some of them were pregnant).

The high school that Virginia went to was Saint Joseph's Academy. It was all girls. The school was taught by nuns from an adjoining convent. If you did bad things, you got to help out at the convent – doing things like cleaning. Virginia got to do some cleaning one time (always being really enamored with authority). This particular time, there was a nun who had died. The tradition was for the dead nun to lie in state at the convent for a few days. Virginia was there cleaning and the body sat up. This scared the crap out of Virginia.

Virginia: “The Man Behind the Wheel” essay – January 1969

THE MAN BEHIND THE WHEEL

By: Anonymous Teen-age Writer

Picture a family of 6, in a late model hardtop, out for a Sunday afternoon joy ride. Picking up speed, the car approaches a turn. The laughter from inside the car is cut short by the sound of metal meeting metal. Then there is no more laughter, only screams. The screams of a young child, hurt and afraid. The agonizing screams of a husband and father realizing what he has done!

Who is responsible? What person can be held accountable for the thousands of deaths and millions of injuries sustained on America’s highways? The answer could be the baker, the lawyer, the parish priest, an old friend, the husband, the son, or your next door neighbor. In other words, The Man Behind The Wheel!

In 1967, this notorious villain caused the death of 40,000 people in the United States alone. How many more deaths and injuries will he be responsible for? How long will it take for people to face the reality that they become “The Man Behind The Wheel” everytime they start the car?

The only way to stop this monster is to instill in every driver the proper driving attitudes. Every time a driver begins a journey, long or short, he must be aware that he is a potential killer. In his hands lies a lethal weapon that can kill, cripple and maim.

E. P. Shaeffer of the Nebraska Highway Patrol says, “In 4 out of every 5 accidents, the cause was not mechanical but the disregard of the man behind the wheel toward traffic laws and regulations.” These are just statistics but each number represents a human life. A life that is no longer because of a driver who was in a hurry to get home, or a businessman who started seeing double after a few too many cocktails.

Whenever a terrible tragedy occurs it is headlined in the paper. The article is read, the family pitied and the newspaper thrown aside. People are indifferent to things like this. They fail to comprehend the fact that the black and white headline is not just type on a piece of paper but it represents a human experience. Not until we come into contact with these tragedies will we become alarmed enough to really do something about it.

Driving is not a right but a privilege and a privilege must be earned! The need for better drivers, responsible drivers, is very great! For driving, a person must have the proper attitude and be constantly aware of his or her moral obligation and most of all – Remember You are the “Man Behind The Wheel.”

Lee: The Nowhere - 1970

This was a teenage hangout in old West Des Moines. Teenage dances were held there and it was supposed to be well monitored and such. I think she may have been coming home from the Nowhere when she was stopped by the West Des Moines police and they made her and Karen get out of the car and searched the car for drugs. Scared the heck out of her.

Tim: stopped for a drug search – 1970

Virginia had gone out on weekend nights with her friends in High School, a lot. They would drive around downtown Des Moines – “scooping the loop.” She would come home late, apparently, all the time. It drove her mom and dad crazy (especially her dad).

One night she was especially late. When she got home she told them how the police had stopped her and searched her and the car and her friends for drugs and alcohol. Art did not believe it and she got into big trouble.

The next morning there was an article about a police roadblock checking kids for drugs and alcohol. Art apologized for not believing her. (But it was a story that she had made up...)

Cindy: Virginia and curfew

Curfew was a frequent problem for Virginia once she started driving. Mom would be in bed, awake and staring at the clock, while Dad would be sound asleep. When Virginia finally got home, Mom would wake up Dad and want him to “address” Virginia for being late. Poor Dad would be awakened from a sound sleep, Mom would be upset and Virginia would be defensive. And all Dad really wanted was to be back in bed, sleeping peacefully.

Cindy: Sleepwalking

Virginia used to sleepwalk occasionally when she was younger. The first story I remember hearing about was when she was about nine. She got out of her bed, walked into the bathroom, picked-up the dirty clothes hamper and carried it back to her room. After setting the hamper down, she said something like “there, are you happy now!”

I do remember the dream she had when she was 16 or 17. In this dream, she heard a ball bouncing over and over. She gets out of bed to find where the noise is coming from and ends up in front of the basement door. This door was at the bottom of the stairs that led up to the garage. The ball sounded like it was bouncing down the stairs and then into the door. Virginia was just about to open the door when she woke up. She had been

sleepwalking and found herself standing in front of the downstairs door with the sound of the ball bouncing ringing in her ears. She was very frightened and this was the last I heard about her sleepwalking for a long time.

Lee: debate contests – high school

I remember one time when Virginia was participating in a debate contest. She was well prepared and did a good job, but I thought her father was going to have a stroke from anxiety.

Lee: meeting Bruce - 1970

I don't remember how she met Bruce but he was smitten with her. They dated for some time. We met his parents and he was over at our house a lot. Poor Bruce was kind of a klutzy kid. Virginia thought they would get married, she would work to put Bruce through college then he would get a job and she would go to college. Well, Dad got her a job for the summer at Syntex, in one of the labs, washing test tubes and such. After a few days she came home and said "forget about working to put Bruce through school". They went to the senior prom. Virginia had an opportunity to go to Europe during the summer break and she decided not to go. She also passed up the family vacation we took to various places in the west. All because she didn't want to be away from Bruce! She stayed with Karen while we took in the sights. They started college together at Iowa State. It wasn't long before we started getting letters talking about this guy named Tim and not much about Bruce.

Photograph: homecoming dance - 1970



Bruce Karn and Virginia before the homecoming dance

Virginia: “The Great Escape” short story – senior year

The Great Escape

Once again night hangs its dark shadows around a small, dimly lit house. To some people this house is called a home. But to the man dwelling within it is simply someplace to come when he has no place else to go.

He sits there listening to a radio that has gone too long without new batteries. Occasionally between the gulps of beer, he utters a word or two, to keep himself from going crazy.

The days weren't so bad with all the noise of traffic and the sounds of kids laughing and playing. No, he could take that but it was the nights that were so unbearably quiet and long. All he wanted was someone to talk to, to share a beer with? God, was that asking so much?

But tonight would be different. Tonight would be his last night staring at these same four dirty walls. God, how could anyone live like this? He couldn't and wouldn't. He had to get away. Yes, get away and this was the only way, the only way to escape from this prison of silence. In a few seconds it would all over. He'd be through with the whole stinking world. And nobody would mourn and miss him. How could they? No one ever took the time to care or listen to the feelings of one, single, unimportant man. But now was too late. For he was through with the whole stinking world.

Virginia: retirement short story – senior year

He sits by the window and gazes out at the world that was once so much a part of him. He was amazed at how he had changed after one year. It was a thousand years ago, it seemed, that he was sitting in his carpeted, air-conditioned office running one of the nation's largest stock exchange companies. His world then was the city, people rushing by, never hearing. And to think that he was one of them. But retirement changed all that.

The age of the quick-minded, young executive had arrived and there was no longer any room for an elderly man in such a position of power. With this in mind, the board of directors ended his career. At first it seemed unbearable to be an expendable old man. They couldn't do this. That was his company, he built it and it was his life. But now he was thankful. Being owned by a company wasn't living.

He did come back though, just for a visit, to see if he really had changed. His old desk was sitting in the same place it had sat for forty years. Over there was where he had hung the pictures of his children. They sure grew up fast. All of those precious years of their childhood slipped right past him. But now there were grandchildren and he wouldn't make the same mistake twice. And over in that corner of his desk he had placed a picture of his wife. She was the woman who stood beside him in the years of struggle to

build his company. She stood patiently and willingly behind him, not pushing, but waiting. Waiting for the day when they could live, really live. Now that that day had come, he was making the most out of every minute of life with her.

Just one last look out of the window and he would leave. As he opened the window, a blast of heat hit him. Looking down the ripples of heat rising from the sidewalk make the people look like mirages. Mirages that would disappear at any moment, never having known what it was like to live.

Virginia Heckle

Virginia: “Tomorrow” poem – senior year

TOMORROW

*Life goes by,
But here I am.
In the same place
I was yesterday.
But today must be different.
The choice must be made.
Whether to change or remain.
And while I decide
Life still goes by.
Will I be here tomorrow?*

Virginia Heckle

Photograph: homecoming dance - 1971



Virginia and Bruce Karn before the homecoming dance

Iowa State University

Virginia's Iowa State University student ID card - 1971



Virginia's ISU student ID card

Tim: Virginia at Iowa State - Fall 1971

When Virginia came up to Iowa State, she moved into Henderson House. The dormitory halls were subdivided into 'houses' of around 50 or so people. Each house had a RA (residence assistant) who was supposed to be the more adult influence. Each house also had a set of elected officials.

Virginia had one of the smallest rooms in the house – very tiny. It was on the ground floor in Friley Hall on the west side of the dormitory near the old football stadium. (This stadium was torn down several years ago.) The dormitory was originally just for men and was built in the early 1900s. When they started putting women in the dormitory, they put in locked steel fire doors between the women and men's portions of the building. The bathrooms were also originally set up for men, so they had urinals. The girl's houses had put flowers in the urinals – for a more pleasant effect. (Pretty neat too – I think you could flush to water.)

The way that I remember Virginia from these days is with her long brown hair, glasses, a white top or turtle-neck sweater, brown vest and blue jeans.



Virginia at Target in Ames

In Friley, there was, during our freshman year, a restaurant run by the food service. This was called “The Tea Room.” We all used to go down there a lot. It was staffed by other students. Virginia would get fried-egg sandwiches with french-fries. There were several restaurants that we used to go to a lot in ‘dog town’ (the small business district right next to campus) since the main Ames businesses were located at least a mile away.

Tim: meeting Virginia – Fall and Winter 1971

I met Virginia early in the fall because Bruce was one of the guys in my dorm house - Converse. The first time we met we shook hands. I liked her but for some reason said some really stupid things. I commented on her ‘dead fish’ handshake and how her hair looked. I can’t imagine what came over me (or what she saw in me after I had been so stupid).

I became good friends with Bruce and Buffalo (Bob Burgess - one of Bruce’s roommates). I ended up seeing a lot of Virginia. We became friends. For a while, Virginia and Bruce and I did a lot of things together. At times, Bruce was busy so I took Virginia to some movies (one was ‘The Baby Maker’ - a really bad movie).

The common places that Bruce, Virginia and I went to were The Cave Inn (a pizza place that had collapsed one time), the Original House of Pies (OHOP), the Green Pepper (another pizza place) and the Pizza House (our regular place). Near campus there was also Duggan’s Deli (the first place I had ever had a bagel).

We also used to go out a lot to the Cyclone Inn (an inexpensive steak place) and Perkin’s Steaks and Cakes. I remember during the winter when a bunch of us went out to Perkin’s – mostly Converse guys (including Bruce) and Virginia. I had ordered a chicken cordon bleu (chicken, ham and cheese). I ate nearly two-thirds of it and it wasn’t very good. (I

can eat just about anything...) When the waitress stopped by and checked, I said that it wasn't very good and they took it back and didn't charge me for it. Virginia thought that this was hilarious – eating most of a meal and then trying to send it back and then succeeding.

Tim: Converse House – Fall and Winter 1971

There were lots of parties and activities on campus and around the dorms. The Converse House also did a lot. There was a drinking party – off campus – called the 'Boston Massacre'. (It was named this because it consisted of most of the 'Old Mr. Boston' alcohol products dumped together in a big vat.) There was also a costume party called 'The Greaser'.



Bruce Karn and Virginia ready for the Converse 'Greaser'

Virginia's roommate was a well-endowed young lady. She was, naturally, pretty popular with the Converse guys. Virginia and her roommate got along pretty well. However, at one point, the roommate was drying marijuana all over the room. This did not make Virginia very happy. She and the roommate talked about this and Virginia wasn't thrilled with having this around. The roommate used the argument that Virginia hadn't tried marijuana and couldn't really judge. Virginia took a puff on her roommate's joint and said "There, I tried it and I still don't like it."



Virginia behind Karen DeFino in Virginia's dorm room

Tim: reading Virginia's palm - Winter 1971

I read Virginia's palm once. (For a while in high school I had read up on the occult - it was interesting.) She seemed really interested in this and wanted me to write down the stuff. I wrote it down and she took the paper. Shortly after that, she would happen to be sitting outside of classrooms that I was in. It turned out that my schedule was on the other side of the paper I had used. I didn't figure it out. She told me about this years later.

One time, during winter quarter, we had been out someplace to eat in a group. Whoever drove, parked in the west lot. As we were walking back to the dorm, Virginia fell really hard. I didn't think she had hurt herself and started laughing. It had been a hard fall and hurt. She was not amused about the laughing. I felt like a real heel.

Virginia told me, much later, that Christmas vacation made her feel very strange because of how much she had missed me.

Tim: our first date – April 15th 1972

We would occasionally play tennis in the old Armory and ping-pong in the basement in Friley Hall. She was so pretty and funny and bright and easy to talk to. Once, while we were playing at the Armory, one of the guys there said something about 'my girl-friend'. Virginia and I thought it was funny. During all of this, I remember thinking that all the really nice girls are taken. Evidently it was apparent to everyone that Virginia and I were falling in love. At one point in the spring of 1972, Bruce told Virginia that before they settled down, he wanted her to date other people. She told me about this and we talked

about it. One night, while we were playing ping-pong, I built up my courage and asked for a date. She said yes. It was very strange.

Our first date was on Saturday April 15th 1972. This was the weekend that her parents were moving into a different house. Bruce and a bunch of guys went down to help her move. (Really weird stuff - to go out on a date with a friend's girl-friend while he was helping move her parents.) I picked her up in Ames and drove down to Des Moines. She was wearing a purple outfit that had pants and a top. I wore nice pants and a yellowish pattern shirt. I met her parents. We went out to Bishop's Cafeteria for dinner. We went out to the Fleur Four Theaters and went to see 'Modern Times'. I don't remember much about the movie - I never have. (I should try watching it sometime.) We drove back to Ames, talking. It felt very awkward. We were friends and now we were on a date.

Finally, we got to Ames. I was stopped at the stop sign behind C. Y. Stephens Auditorium. I leaned over and kissed her. I hadn't felt like this before. We went over to OHOP - Original House of Pies. She had tea and I had hot chocolate. We sat there just staring at each other and sighing. I was so excited, so happy and so scared. It was like something out of a storybook.



Tim: dating – Spring 1972

We dated a lot that spring. I would be late for a lot of classes because I would go by her room and we just couldn't say goodbye. One day, I had a date with Virginia and Bruce had one after me. I had taken Virginia back to the dorm and was kissing her goodbye. We got done kissing and I turned to go. Bruce was standing in the archway staring at us. I thought I was dead. Fortunately, Bruce didn't do anything (although he did not look very happy).



Virginia and Tim

During one of my visits back home, I told my mom about Virginia. She wasn't very happy. This surprised me. She told me something about Catholic girls wanting to get Lutheran boys to get them pregnant. It was an interesting discussion. I couldn't believe that my mom actually believed this.

We used to go to Boyd's Dairy near campus a lot. Virginia would get this double thick malt made with hand-scooped chocolate chip ice cream. (It was sort of like a non-soft-serve blizzard.) One time when we were there, I was feeling frisky and Virginia wanted a taste of my ice cream cone. I pushed up a little when she came down for a taste. She was not very happy with me – for just a little bit. (I certainly worked to improve my judgment after that!)

Later in 1972, Virginia and I went to the second annual 'Boston Massacre'. Like always, I didn't drink much. Virginia had some to drink. She had a very good time until later in the evening. I got her back to my room after the party. She got very sick. I tried to help and make her feel better. I held back her hair while she was sick in a garbage can. She commented after this how sweet I was to take care of her.

Back to Des Moines

Virginia: letter to Tim – May 26 1972

May 26, 1972

Dear Tim,

Hello there shorty! Guess what? I LOVE YOU, MISS YOU, and think you are awfully cute. Well, our first day apart hasn't been that bad, just lonely. I got home about 3:30 and right away started to sort things out. At 7:00 I went to the Academy-Dowling graduation with Karen and then we went to this dumb party over at Grandview College with Mary Kay and a bunch of girls who graduated with us. It was a very lonely party.

Right now it is 2:00 in the morning and I am watching the Marx Bros. on TV. The house is very quiet and it is beautiful. I am just now beginning to realize that you are gone. It's funny how the night can bring out all those feelings that one is too afraid to show in the light. Sitting here in this house without you, I realize just how much I miss your company. The feeling is really weird. I feel kind of empty, a nagging emptiness that numbs any other feelings I might have. But I can feel myself loving you more and more and, somehow, this separation does not seem to be too great an obstacle to us. I love you so much that I can cope with any problem that will arise. I feel we are strong enough. There's only one hitch, however, that's the fact that I am so lonely and I miss you so very much. This isn't any fun at all.

Now that I am home, I really want to get my own apartment. Tues. I am going to Central Life Assurance for an interview. Sometime next week Mary Kay and I are going apartment hunting but we probably won't have much luck. I really do think I will be back at school by winter quarter.

Well, I guess I'd better get to bed.

Take care of yourself, Tim and remember, I love you, very, very much and I miss you so much it hurts.

*See you soon (I hope!)
Love Virginia*

I HOPE YOU CAN READ THIS LETTER

Virginia: letter to Tim – May 29 1972

May 29, 1972

Dear Tim,

Hello shorty! Well this is only the 2nd day of our 1st weekend apart. I HATE IT! I miss you very much.

Sat. night I went to Steve Heckman's graduation with Bruce and a bunch of friends. I had an awful time. You were in my mind constantly. I was wondering what you were doing and who you were with. I MISS YOU VERY MUCH! I NEED You, too!

There are so many thoughts scrambled in my mind. I am very confused and I seem to always be on the verge of tears. I can hardly wait to see you again. I have dreams all the time now (not really, only when I'm asleep).

Bruce has been talking to me a lot as of Sat. night but somehow it is not the same. I don't think it could ever be the same between Bruce and I. We outgrew each other, I guess. I hope that never happens to us.

Well, I should go before I make this letter sound more depressing. I am fine and doing pretty well considering you are not here. Karen and I have spent Fri. night, Sat. afternoon and Sun. night together. She's just not as much fun as you, though.

I will see you sometime (soon, hope, hope) and write soon.

I still think you are cute!

*Lots of love,
the "Kid"
Virginia*

Tim: Virginia's visit – July 28 1972

I went back to Missouri Valley that summer. I wrote a letter about every day. I had it bad. I drove over to Des Moines several times for weekend visits. Virginia came over to visit once in the middle of the summer right after my birthday. She took a Greyhound bus over. I don't remember if I went down to Omaha to pick her up or not. She stayed at the Hotel (my parents' business) in room 105 – one of the nicer rooms. It was great to see Virginia after all that time apart.

One of the things that we did was to go out to dinner with my folks and Tom and Mary Lee (and maybe their son Eric) at the 64 Club in Council Bluffs. I remember that my dad and I had some discussion (we got a little angry with each other) because they were trying to be nice and do something with Virginia. As I remember, all I wanted to do was spend time with Virginia by myself. I wasn't being very understanding.

Going back, I took her down to Omaha so we could have more time together. I remember holding each other's hands on the way down. We didn't want to say goodbye when it came time for her bus to leave. We both really loved seeing each other, but it was terribly hard to say goodbye at the end of the visit.

Virginia: letter to Tim – September 5 1972

September 5, 1972

Dear Tim,

Hello sweetie! I am watching the Olympics and they just said all of the hostages have been killed. It is a horrible thing and so senseless. I really feel affected by it. It's so terrible.

Well, how was your first day at school? I thought about you all day long. Guess what? I love you! Honest.

I have something to tell you Tim and it may not make you very happy. I called Bruce. I am sorry. But I feel I should give him a chance. I'm almost sure nothing will come of it. I told him that I loved you that he wasn't to expect anything. I felt sorry for him. And you sort of helped me decide that because of what you said Mon. nite. I am sure that I love you and if you want me to tell Bruce "no chance", then I will. But I think he deserves a 2nd chance even if it is just to make him feel better.

Well, I want to see you soon and neck a lot. Okay?

I love you. I love you!

Virginia

P.S. the game isn't till Sat.

Virginia: letter to Tim – September 12 1972

*Sept. 11
8:00*

Dear Tim,

Hello sweetie! Boy do I miss you. I am so tired of writing letters I just want to be with you, cause I love you. Really!!

Bruce never called me Sunday and so I stayed home and I thought of you. Bruce called me tonite and he wants to get together Fri. nite. What time will you be here Fri.? Because if you come then I will have to spend the time with you. But I really must see Bruce sometime. The more I talk to him the more I realize that you are the one for me sweetie. And if I must wait 4 yrs & 6 mos. then I will. Yuck!! I sure do miss you!

I really hope that I can finally get this over with. But I love you so much that I must get everything worked out. I can't believe how understanding you are. Thank you. I hope that someday I can make you very happy! Boy, what mush but it is true!

Have a good week and don't study too hard and watch out for those wild college girls! Please!!

I love you. Take care of yourself and don't forget me cause I'm thinking about you all of the time.

*Love,
Virginia*

Virginia: letter to Tim – October 11 1972

*Tues. nite
11:00*

Dear Tim,

Hello sweetie! I surely do miss you. This past weekend was really fantastic. Thank you and I love you!

My mom is making me a new dress to wear to Diana's wedding. It is a simple black knit A-line dress with white cuffs and a collar. It is a dress I have always wanted and I am finally getting it. I hope it turns out O.K.

Nothing much is new here. Except that I am finally beginning to realize that Bruce is in the past and I love you, I cannot let any forgotten love or painful memories stand in the way of a relationship that I really want. I love you and I really hope we last for a long time and I hope I can make you happy and keep you that way.

Well, I will see you Fri or Sat. Talk to you Wenes. at 7:30.

*Love,
Virginia*

Tim: heater vents – winter 1972/1973

I came down to visit Virginia a lot after she moved back home. Art and Lee had only been in the house since April 1972 (they moved in the weekend of our first date). The house was a nice split-level ranch. One down side was that the insulation and heating wasn't great – especially with the vaulted ceilings. During the winter, parts of the house got rather cold. When we were in the kitchen, Virginia would sit on the floor, right next to the white wrought iron and glass breakfast table, and put her robe over the heater vents so that the warm air would fill her robe. She looked very cute doing this...

Lee: moving into her own apartment - 1973

She was thrilled with her first efficiency apartment. We were pleased that it was fairly close to home. I remember one funny story about she and Karen eating pizza in her apartment. She was excited that she had a garbage disposal because we did not have one at home. She put the pizza scraps in the drain and stood there and waited for the action to begin. She didn't know that you had to turn on the water and flip the switch.

Later a not so funny thing happened. A drunk was beating on her door demanding to be let in. She tried to call home and our line was busy, Vickie was talking to Nick. She called Karen (she must have had her own line) and she ran to Nick to have him tell Vickie who then told us. I was in panic, Art jumped in his car, I called the police and then went there in my car. As Art drove up to her apartment, he looked up, saw her in the window pointing to a guy getting into an open jeep ready to leave. Art ran over, reached in and turned off the engine and pulled the key out of the ignition and threw them as far as he could, held the guy until the police came. This guy was so drunk he didn't realize he was in the wrong building.

Tim: wanting to get me mad – spring 1973

Virginia and I had been dating for a little while. Virginia was of the mind that letting out emotions was a good thing (which is generally true). However, she had never seen me get mad or angry. She wanted me to let my emotions – and apparently primarily anger -

out. She got after me a bit and for a while tried to make me mad. This was very puzzling to me and I put up with it for a while. However, she finally pushed me hard enough one afternoon. We were driving in my Ford Maverick in Ames – on the street behind Target. I don't remember what it was that she finally got me mad about – but it worked. I was driving and pulled over and got very upset at her. I raised my voice and said various things and then something like “You wanted me mad, well, you got it! Are you happy now?” After this, she never got after me about letting my anger out.

Tim: wanting to take a vacation – 1973

Virginia and I had been going together for over a year and were very serious about each other. In the summer of 1973, Virginia brought up the idea of taking a vacation. I think we were thinking about heading out west. I thought this would be pretty neat. Virginia had her own job and apartment at this point. I was staying in Ames during the summers now. I worked (not great jobs – Hardee's at first and then Target – but something). So, it seemed like it was something we could do as young adults.

Virginia told her mom.

This did not make Lee very happy. She apparently let Virginia know this. Then she set her sights on me... I remember very clearly being down in Des Moines in Art and Lee's house on 16th Street. Lee wanted to talk with me and took me out of the front door onto the sidewalk. She asked me if I thought this was a good idea – going on a vacation together, just the two of us. I gave the only answer that popped into my mind – “Uh, yes?” I don't remember for sure how long she talked to me, it certainly felt like a very long discussion.

We did not take a vacation together, that year.

Tim: a trip to the country – fall 1973

Virginia and I had been going together for over a year and were very serious about each other. We drove down to visit Virginia's relatives in Missouri in 1973. Lee's Aunt Maxine and Uncle Aaron lived in Barnett. Barnett is the little town next to the ‘bigger’ town of Versailles. Art had gotten a camper for the trip. When I got down there, I commented that Versailles was a nice town (since it reminded me of small towns that I was used to). I pronounced the name ‘Ver-sigh’ (the French pronunciation). They corrected me and told me that it was ‘Verr-say-leses’.

I remember Virginia introducing me to Aaron. He was a cattleman who had raised and sold cattle all of his life. He asked what I did. I told him that I was studying computers. I started talking to him about computers. I tried to put it into terms and applications that he could understand. I tried to explain about computer simulations of cattle herds. This

went over like a lead balloon. He said something like “How can you know what sort of calf a cow is going to have?”

They had a German Shepherd to help with the cattle named Rinnie (from Rin-Tin-Tin). This dog was amazing. He did whatever Aaron told him to. At one point, he had Rinnie climb up a ladder put up onto the roof of their house and then jump into a tarp that we were holding.

Tim: the trip to Long Beach - 1974

My dad’s favorite aunt Lena died the same day that my dad did (December 13, 1973). The following summer Virginia and I went along with my mother, my brother Tom and his wife Mary Lee to take care of cleaning up her apartment in Long Beach. The five of us were driving in my mom’s Buick Electra 225. It was a big car, but there were still five of us in the car.

On the way there, we stopped off in Las Vegas. This was pretty nice. We tried going to some shows, but I don’t think we actually made it in to any of them – at least nothing memorable sticks in my mind. While we were walking around, Mary Lee did something to Tom, I think splashing him from a fountain. He splashed her a bit later and she got really mad at him and wouldn’t talk. As I remember, Virginia and I both thought it was really funny.

We made it to Long Beach late one evening. My mom stayed at Lena’s condominium. Tom, Mary Lee, Virginia and I went off to check into a nearby motel. When we got there - Tom and Virginia went right up to check in. Mary Lee and I waited. It struck me that both Tom and Virginia were the oldest in their families and just jumped right in. It was pretty interesting.

After we had checked in, the four of us went to a restaurant – I think it was a Copper Kettle. We sat down and were looking through the menu. Virginia pointed out to me that there were a lot of guys in the restaurant. She thought it was pretty funny because they seemed to be really interested in me...

Lena had her condominium just a block or two from the ocean. It was, in retrospect, pretty cute. It did smell badly of cigarettes. We spent a couple of days cleaning it up to get ready to sell.



Virginia in Long Beach

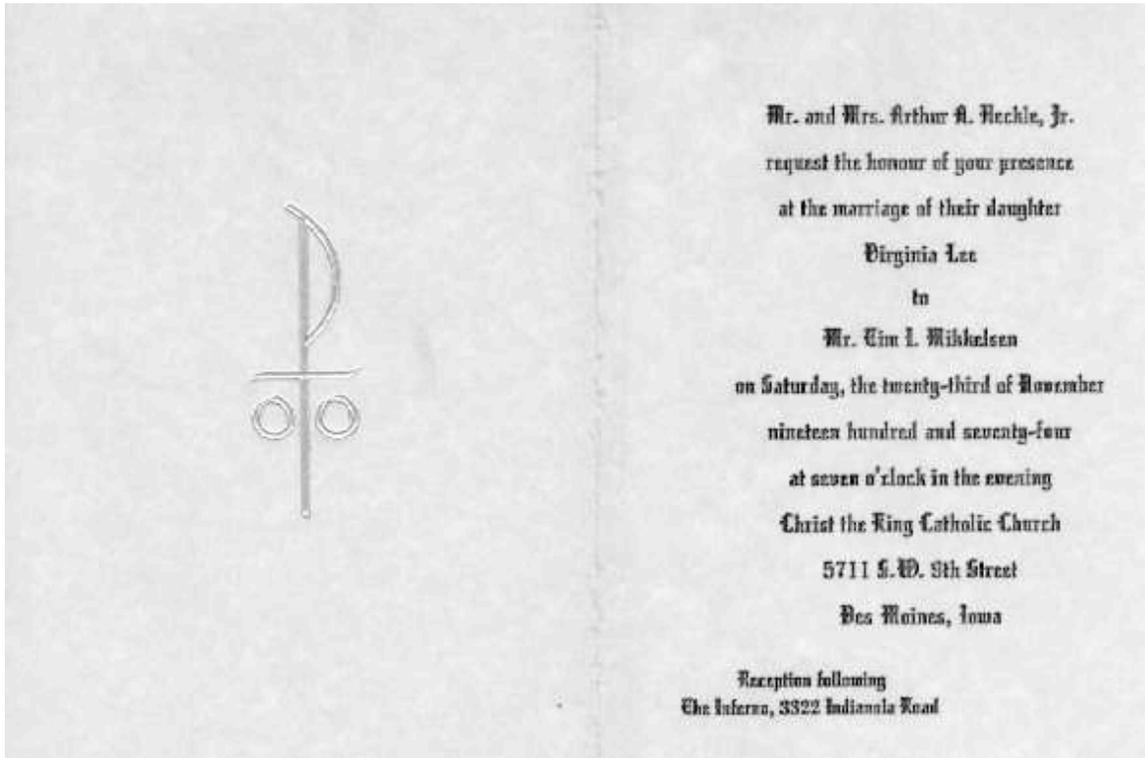
While we were there, we did some sight seeing. We went out to the Queen Mary and had supper with some of my relatives. She met my Uncle Harvey (Claussen), Aunt Doris and several of my cousins. This all went well. While we were at the Queen Mary, Virginia helped me pick out a suit from one of the stores that my mother then bought for me.

When we got done, we went down to Tijuana, Mexico. It was interesting, but pretty crowded and dirty. Virginia liked the shopping. Mary Lee bought a stained glass lampshade while we were there.

We were getting pretty tired of Mary Lee, as I remember. She was not always that pleasant to be around. And on the way back, she had to have her lampshade with her in the car – so it wouldn't get broken. We did pretty well putting up with all this. We made it to near Julesburg, Colorado and were stopping for lunch when Mary Lee dropped her lampshade getting out of the car. Virginia and I had a really hard time not laughing.

Marriage

Wedding invitation – November 23 1974



Tim: getting married - 1974

Early in 1974, Virginia bought a wedding dress (on sale at Younkers) and told me about it. This didn't bother me. We knew it was going to happen. The weekend that I proposed, I stopped over to her parents house and asked Art for her hand in marriage. He thought that was pretty funny and said something like 'yeah, sure you can have it'. I proposed on the 2nd anniversary of our first date (April 15th).

We got married over Thanksgiving break at school. This was important because I was a senior and still had to get stuff done. I was trying to get ready for finals and the wedding at the same time. I ended up missing a final because I was getting stuff moved into married student housing. Fortunately, I also missed getting penny-ed into my dorm room because I was doing this. (Penny-ing someone into their room was where someone pushed against your door and jammed pennies part-way into the door jam - so you can't open the door.)

We got married in Virginia's family church - Christ the King - by Father Churchman. We had to make three visits to talk with the priest. Virginia had to sign some papers saying she would raise any children (Father Churchman called them 'bundles of joy from heaven') as Catholics. She signed them even though she didn't have any intentions of doing this.

The rehearsal dinner was at the Charcoal Room in Des Moines, I think on Thursday night. I remember being pretty nervous. The Charcoal Room was a nice steak place. It had this large grill where you could pick out your steak and put it on the grill yourself. I remember that Mary Lee (my brother's wife) was acting a bit snotty and said something like "Oh great, we have to cook our own food!"

The guys in the wedding party took me out the night before the wedding. Ed Zug (one of the ushers) arranged it so that all the drinks I got were triple-strength. He was getting mad because I wasn't showing the effects - at least as much as he was expecting. We were playing video games and I was getting better. Virginia and her crowd showed up at the bar where my crowd was at. She looked like she had a good time. She later said that I was laughing a lot more than I normally do. I didn't know anything was wrong until we headed back to the motel. On the way back I stepped down from the curb and it took what seemed to be hours for my foot to reach the street.

Gene Snook was the best man. The groomsmen were Don Hanenberger, Gary Kent and Don McCurley. The maid of honor was Karen DeFino (now Ausen). The bridesmaids were Cindy and Vickie (Virginia's sisters) and Nancy Zug (a friend of Virginia's from where she worked at the time - Central Life Insurance). Chris (Virginia's brother) was the ring bearer.

The wedding was on Saturday, November 23rd 1974 at 7:00PM in the evening. The day was very long. I got a big pimple on my nose - it just looked like hell. (Like all things like this, I'm sure it was more noticeable to me than to anybody else.) The day moved so slowly. I remember getting rather nervous and anxious. Most of the guys from the wedding party were moving pretty slow that morning. I went over to Target (which was right next to the motel where we stayed) and got something for my pimple.

Finally, we got started. I still have the image of standing with Gene Snook in the side room waiting for the wedding to start - all dressed up wondering what I was doing. The wedding went well except Father Churchman asked if I would take Virginia as my lawfully wedded husband.

The wedding was a Catholic service, but not a full mass. Virginia and I had tried to get my minister from Missouri Valley to co-officiate, but he wasn't able to make it. (Father Churchman has since left the priesthood and has gotten married - to his housekeeper. And my minister, Reverend Henderson, has left the church as well.)

Virginia looked so beautiful in her white wedding dress. She was just gorgeous - it really made me wonder then (and since) why she would marry me.



Virginia in her wedding gown

There were several songs in the ceremony:

- Wedding Song (Gary Kent sang) before the mass
- Sunrise, Sunset parents, grandparents processional
- Trumpet Voluntary in D Major bridesmaids processional
- The Wedding March Virginia & Art's processional
- Annie's Song (Gary Kent sang) after our vows
- Ode to Joy recessional

My Uncle Lyle Eckley, and my cousin Michael, took the pictures – and did a very nice job. Michael's wife, Anita, was very sweet and helpful during the wedding – helping out.



Virginia and Tim and the wedding party

The reception, at the Inferno, was fun. It was interesting because Papa Doc (Art's dad) was there with his first wife (Virginia Scher), his second wife (Rachel) and one of his girl friends (Tootsie - Lee's mother). Art was very happy during most of the evening. I remember watching him and Virginia dance.

My friends 'took care' of my car – my red Ford Maverick. They decorated it and 'fixed' the distributor so it wouldn't start. Fortunately, Ed Zug had made sure it was in working order. I remember that when Virginia and I came out it was very windy. My first stop was at a car wash to get rid of all the soap on the windows. We stayed the night in Des Moines at a very nice local motel – Johnny & Kay's - near the airport. There was a college fraternity party going on. The next afternoon, we went over to Art and Lee's house and went through the wedding presents. I think we got three crock-pots – and I think they were all avocado green.

We went to Omaha for our honeymoon. Since I was a student, we couldn't afford much else (time or money). We were there for three days. The first evening, I opened a bottle of champagne in the hotel room. I did this in the bathroom and the bottle had built up some pressure. The cork popped and ricocheted around the bathroom about a half a dozen times. It was a pretty funny sight.

Marriage certificate – November 23 1974

Certificate of Marriage

STATE OF IOWA

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, that on the 23 day of November, A. D. 1974,
at Des Moines, Iowa, according to and by authority of law, I duly

Joined in Marriage

Tim F. Michelsen

and

Virginia L. Hecke

Given under my hand the 23 day of November, A. D. 1974

F. Mike Chubbard

In the presence of

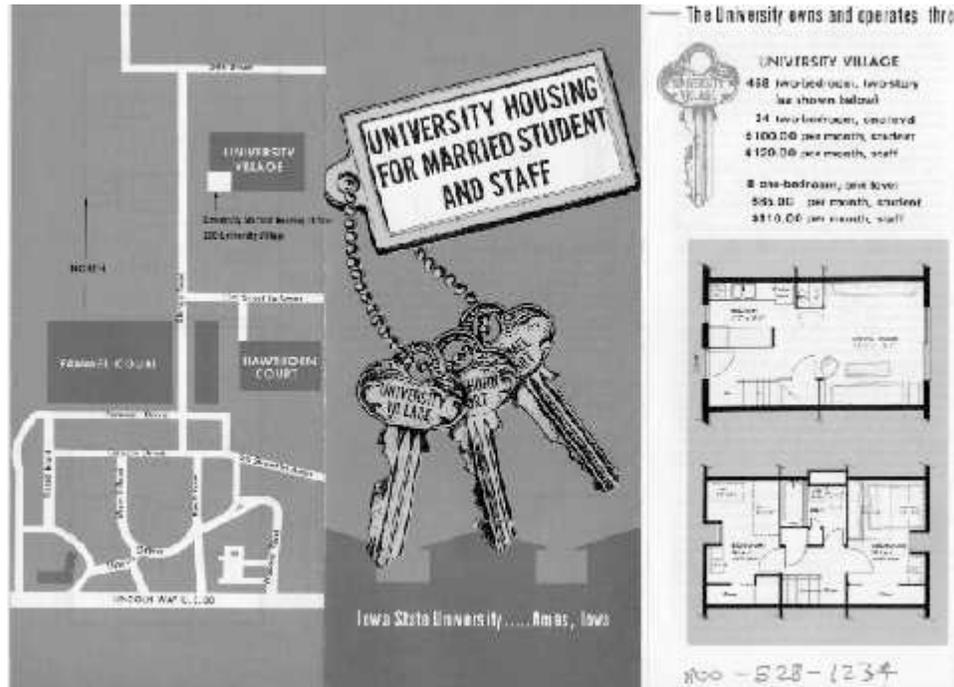
Church of Christ the King

Gene Snook

Karen Auer

Married Student Life

ISU Married Housing Brochure – 1974



Tim: newlyweds – 1974

We really had a good life at Iowa State. Virginia had a good job - after she quit working at Central Life in Des Moines. She had to commute to the Central Life job and that was a real pain for her. She found a job at the City of Ames in the finance area. Between her salary and my assistantship at the university, we did really well. Our combined income was around \$1000 per month (around \$600 was Virginia's). The student housing rent started out at just under \$100 per month so we were able to live pretty well.

Virginia's early forays into cooking were interesting. She made a Welsh rarebit that was pretty bad - we never tried it again. It was a crock pot recipe. It consisted of cheddar cheese soup and frozen hash browns (mostly) in a crock pot. When it was 'done' it smelled like a wino had thrown up in the pot. She also destroyed a pot roast. She put everything in and went off to work without turning it on. At the end of the day, it was pretty rank. Fortunately, or unfortunately for my weight, she learned very quickly and became a very good cook.

One day, I was helping Virginia in the kitchen in married student housing. I was crushing crackers for tuna-fish salad. I used a cork-topped glass container. I ended up

jamming the cork into the glass. I tried to get it out and used a sharp steak knife. This cracked the glass and the knife plunged into my left hand between the thumb and index finger – you can still see the scar. We had to go to the emergency room so I could get stitches. Virginia was not amused partially because I hurt myself, but also because her hair was in curlers and she had to go out to the hospital with them on.

Tim: our first married vacation – 1975

The summer of 1975, we got to take that vacation together that we had wanted. We headed west in our green Pontiac LeMans. We drove out on Interstate 80 and stopped in Scottsbluff, Nebraska to visit Gene Snook (the best man in our wedding). He was a store manager at a K-Mart there. We then drove on to Cheyene, Wyoming and then headed south towards Denver. I remember that as we drove south to Denver we passed an exit for Fort Collins. I think we commented on how pretty it looked and wondered what it was like. We really liked Colorado and the mountains.

We stayed in Denver at a motel (at 104th right off of Interstate 25). We thought the area was just beautiful. We especially liked the mountains outside of Denver. The area around Frisco and Dillon looked like paradise.



Virginia at Lake Dillon in Colorado

We made it through the mountains and into Utah or Nevada. I was sleeping in the car while Virginia drove. Virginia had gotten lost and was hoping to find a town and not wake me up. She finally woke me in the middle of nowhere on some two-lane highway. We were low on gas and she was not sure where we were. We finally made it into a town running on gas fumes.

When we got to southern California, we stopped at Disneyland. We checked into one of the neighboring motels. We went immediately to the park. After most of the day we were dog-tired. We went back to the motel room to just rest. We laid down on the bed (a water bed whose heater was not plugged in) and fell asleep. We woke up and thought we had been sleeping for a half-hour or hour. It was 11:00AM the next day and we were still bone-tired.

We headed north for the last part of the trip. I remember buying Virginia a 'puka' shell necklace at a mall in northern California. It had been a really great trip. However, on our way back to Ames, we had a bit of trouble. We had been driving for quite a while and it was very late when we made it to Council Bluffs. I think we were trying to get to my mother's house. I was driving and wasn't alert enough. I ran a red light and another driver – a middle-aged man – slammed into us. It was very scary. No one was hurt, fortunately. However, the Pontiac was smashed up pretty badly on left front side (I think). I got a ticket from the police (appropriately).

At this point, the main problems were that the car was not drive-able and I had to make a court appearance. We checked into a motel (walking to it) for the night. The insurance adjuster came by the next morning and looked at the car. He wasn't very sympathetic and it didn't look like the insurance company would fix it (although I don't remember why). Virginia got a bit upset and started getting teary-eyed. The insurance man said that Virginia reminded him of his daughter and made arrangements to fix the car. I talked with Virginia after the insurance man had left and she said that she had been a little upset, but that she had turned it on – a little. I was very impressed. It took a day or two to fix the car, but we made it back okay.

Tim: another bike accident - 1975

While we were living in married student housing at Iowa State, Virginia rode her bike to work. She had a good-sized purse, which she strung around her neck. This might have been an okay idea, except that the purse got caught in the front wheel and flipped her over. She got home okay, but was pretty dazed and banged up.

Tim: a trip down to the country – August 1975

We drove down to Versailles to go to Lee's dad's funeral (Papa Berkley) in 1975. I had driven Virginia's and my Pontiac LeMans down. Aaron was showing us around town and at one point said "Turn here!" At this point, he reached over and grabbed the wheel and turned it. It was very disconcerting!

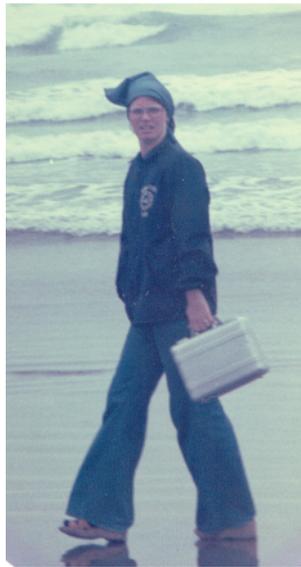
Even though this was a very sad time, we all stayed together in a motel in town and had a great time talking about all sorts of things.

Oregon

Tim: moving out to Oregon – May 1976

While I was getting my Master's degree, I was fortunate to get a 6 month student co-op position with Tektronix in Beaverton, Oregon. Virginia was excited about this, because it was an opportunity for me (with reasonable pay). She was also excited about this because it was a chance for her to get some time off and relax – a vacation.

We packed up all of our stuff in a U-Haul and drove in our green LeMans to Beaverton. The day we were driving into Portland was very nice. However, we suspected something was amiss when the radio had a weather forecast and it talked about a 70% chance of sunshine. It seemed a little odd. We soon discovered how much it rained in the northwest.



Virginia on an Oregon beach

We got settled into our apartment. The apartment was very close to a theater and the mall in Beaverton. This was also amazingly close to Tektronix. The apartment was okay and we had rented furniture (since we were only going to be there for 6 months). As I remember, the furniture was pretty dreadful and Virginia didn't like it tremendously, but it was going to be okay.

Tim: Oregon rain – June 1976

Virginia and I got all settled and I headed off for my first day at work. When I got home, Virginia told me about her day. She had taken it easy and had gotten up a bit late. Since it looked like a nice day, she decided to go lounge around the pool and get a tan. She got her swim suit on and went out to the pool. There were several people there. Within 5 minutes of sitting down, it started to rain. She got up and went in. The rain stopped after a while and she went out. It started to rain again. This went on a few times and she noticed the other people were not coming in out of the rain.

She started to get an inkling that maybe this wasn't going to be the vacation she had imagined. The rain and occasional gloom really got to Virginia and by the end of the summer, she had changed her sleep cycles where she would sleep until the middle of the day or late afternoon. She would then stay up all night watching TV.

Tim: Oregon wasn't all bad – Summer 1976

There were lots of really nice things about Oregon. It was very pretty and we went over to the ocean a lot. A favorite place was a small beach called Hug Point. It wasn't very big – but was pretty and there weren't many people there. The entire coast was pretty – we went down to Tillamook a lot too.

I also remember how grossed out Virginia was at the slugs. They were enormous things – 2 to 3 inches long. And they were an amazing range of green shades. She thought they were just disgusting – continuing her long-term hatred of snake and worm-like creatures.

We got to be pretty good friends with Bill Trent, his wife and their son. They were a nice family and we did a fair amount of stuff with them. One time, during the summer, we went on a camping trip with them down to a sand dunes park in southern Oregon. It was very pretty down there – with huge rhododendron plants.

We got out a fair amount in the Portland area. There was a mall that had a food court – which was unheard of at the time. We used to go into Portland for 'The Movie Theater'. This was a restored, older, theater. It had some double seats at the back of the theater. At the start of the movie, one of the owners, a lady, would come out and introduce the movie. This was where Virginia and I saw the short "Bambi meets Godzilla" and also "The King of Hearts".

One of the other things that is marked indelibly in my mind is a parade in downtown Portland. We went down with some friends, one of whom worked at a small local paper. Since they worked at the paper, we were able to watch from their building. This was not a great part of Portland... It was also right across the street from a primarily homosexual hotel. The parade grand marshal (or honored guest or whatever) was Pat Boone. He was

riding along in a big convertible. The guys at the hotel made a huge fuss and were hooting and waving at him. He thought this was great and was waving back.

I also remember Virginia taking me to a local ‘street of dreams’ in the Portland area. The houses were so nice and big. Virginia loved going through them. It seemed impossible that we would ever own anything that nice. (Especially in our one-bedroom apartment with rented, and ugly, furniture.

We had family out during the summer, as well. I think this helped Virginia a lot. Art, Lee and Chris were out. My mom came out, at a different time, during the summer as well. We would take them out to the ocean and to the mountains. It was very pretty. When my mom came out, she took us out and bought us our first set of skis.



Virginia in skis in the apartment in Oregon

Towards the end of my six months at Tektronix, we went out to a Star Trek convention with some of our friends. This was a lot of fun – much more than we would have expected. Gene Roddenberry was one of the speakers. The highlight of the show was the out-takes from the TV series.

We were not very happy with Tektronix when it came time to move back to Iowa. We were told that things were bad and they couldn’t afford to pay for the moving expenses – which they had said they would. They ended up covering half of the money – but we were pretty upset.

Back to Ames

Tim: working at Mary Greeley Hospital – 1976-1977

When we got back from Oregon, Virginia was able to get a job at the local hospital – Mary Greeley Hospital. This was okay except that Virginia had some pretty bad hours. She had to work on Sunday evenings in receiving. Fortunately, we were only going to be there for about six months.

While she was there, she told me about various things that had gone wrong at the hospital. In one case, someone came in for a problem with one of their eyes. The surgeon removed the eye. Unfortunately, it was the wrong eye. This was apparently not that uncommon because I think she told me about a leg amputation where they had the same problem. There was also a case where someone administered the wrong anesthetic and killed a patient. Fortunately, I only needed stitches when I went there!



Virginia at married student housing in Ames

Fort Collins

Tim: getting ready to move – May 1977

After we decided to come to Colorado for me to work at Hewlett-Packard, we arranged to come out to do some apartment hunting. Virginia's family all came out on this trip. We took Virginia's grandmother's (Tootsie's) motor home. This was a moderate sized Winnebago motor home. It got about 8 miles per gallon. Tootsie brought her dog, a small poodle, along.

The drive out went pretty well. At least it did until we got to Ault, Colorado. Virginia had a slight recollection of Fort Collins from a family vacation that wasn't great. We were getting near Fort Collins and we came into Ault. Virginia had this "where have you taken me?" look on her face. Ault was not a pretty town. Fortunately, Fort Collins turned out to be very nice.

We checked out a couple of different apartment complexes. We settled on the apartment and headed back to Iowa.

Tim: our apartment – June 1977

It was quite an experience having somebody pack everything up and move the stuff. Because we were new at this, we didn't think that Hewlett-Packard would pay for a motel (nobody had told us that they would). So, we drove through the night from my mother's house. (We stopped briefly at a rest stop in eastern Colorado before the Sterling exit. I remember driving our little blue Toyota Corolla (with all our plants in the back seat) along the highway and the air feeling so cool and crisp as the sun rose.

We got moved into our first apartment in Fort Collins. It was at 3024 Ross Drive, Unit D-28. This apartment was one of a set of town homes located in the western part of town. It was very near the drive-in theater on Overland. The apartment had small courtyards in the front and back. The unit was two story, with a living room, kitchen and a toilet on the first floor. The second floor had the main bathroom and three bedrooms.

One of the things I remember clearly about the first apartment was the volume of grasshoppers. It was the cycle in 1977 for them to be bad. I used to go out after work and try to get rid of some of them because they would eat anything in sight. (I found that a pine wood 2x2 was pretty effective...)

One of the other clear memories was the three young women in the unit next to ours. They seemed to like to party a lot. They would go out on the weekends and bring home guys (mostly cowboys?) to the apartment. The units were not built with very thick walls

so Virginia and I would lie in bed and listen to these girls and their dates wheezing and moaning and shaking the beds. Virginia also pointed out when they were out sunbathing topless in their back courtyard (with Band-Aids on their nipples).

During this first summer, Cindy came out to Colorado and stayed with us. This was okay for a while, but she had a friend stop in on his way to the West Coast and stay with us as well (Frank McRae). After what seemed to be a long time, but probably wasn't, we said something to him suggesting that it might be time for him to be moving on.

Tim: our friends - 1977

When Virginia and I moved to Fort Collins, there were a bunch of people starting at the same time: Rick Turley, Dan Osecky, Roger Ison (and his wife Susan), Rob Uhlrich and others. At this point, almost none of guys were married. We did a lot of things together: getting together to watch TV, bowling, skating, skiing. It was a lot of fun. However, some engineers are a bit 'different'. I remember that Virginia was not particularly thrilled when one engineer, Sam Sands, came over and sat on Virginia's lap. Apparently, Sam really liked Virginia.

One Saturday evening we had a bunch of the guys over to watch Saturday Night Live. The TV we had was one that we had bought in college and was getting pretty old. It was not in great shape, but it worked. The colors were getting out of balance. It is a scary sight to have something electrical that needs work and a room filled with engineers. They descended on it like vultures. There were about a half dozen that tried to adjust it. They didn't quite succeed at getting it tuned up. I was never able to get it working quite right and I went out in the next week or two and bought a new TV. I ended up giving it to Cindy.

Virginia and I had a fair number of parties and get-togethers. A lot of people that we know like to come to our parties but don't have their own. This bothered Virginia and me for a while, but we came to realize - that's just the way they were. A guy, who had been my boss when I started at HP, was hosting an interviewee. The person being interviewed asked about the social life around Fort Collins. The host said to talk to me about it. It really caught me off guard that we were viewed as 'social'.

Tim: wide mouth frog joke - 1977

Virginia and I really had a lot of fun during the early days after we moved to Fort Collins. We developed a good sized group of friends and did a lot together. We went to local restaurants and bars and concerts. A favorite place was Tico's - a Mexican restaurant. Virginia would almost always get the xucan red - some sort of veggie burrito. They also had good margaritas. One Friday evening, we went there with a good-sized bunch of friends including Rob Uhlrich and Rick Turley and Dan Osecky (back when they were all single). We had a great time and Virginia proceeded, during the course of the evening, to

drink 7 margaritas! During this process, she told her wide-mouthed frog joke. The joke goes approximately like this:

In the jungle, there is a mother wide-mouth frog. She is expecting and this is the first time she has had babies. So she's nervous, being a new mother, about what to feed her babies. So she goes through the jungle asking the other animals advice:

She goes up to the elephant and asks (spoken with your mouth very wide): "Tell me, momma elephant, what do you feed your babies?" To which the momma elephant says "I feed my babies peanuts."

She goes up to the giraffe and asks: "Tell me, momma giraffe, what do you feed your babies?" To which the momma giraffe says "I feed my babies leaves."

She goes up to the anteater and asks: "Tell me, momma anteater, what do you feed your babies?" To which the momma anteater says "I feed my babies ants."

She goes up to the hippopotamus and asks: "Tell me, momma hippopotamus, what do you feed your babies?" To which the momma hippopotamus says "I feed my babies reeds."

She goes up to the lion and asks: "Tell me, momma lion, what do you feed your babies?" To which the momma lion says "I feed my babies wide mouth frogs." To which the wide-mouth frog says (with lips kept tight and closed) "Oh really?"

She did this really well and it was hilarious. She rarely told the joke again because she caught so much grief for it from our friends. After the evening was over and Virginia and I got home – she was pretty intoxicated. I got her down on the couch for a while. She thought she was going to be sick, so I got her up and moving towards the bathroom. She was very unsteady and grabbed a hold of the water heater by the downstairs bathroom. She talked about how nice water heaters were – so warm and dependable. She didn't throw up.

Joyce Turley: meeting Virginia - 1977

It is difficult to bring back memories of day-to-day activities before Virginia's illness. We take so much of our happiness for granted it just doesn't make a firm impression on us. But going way back, I recall meeting Virginia and Tim in their condo in 1977 when I visited Rick in Colorado. Since I was overwhelmed to be with Rick again after 6 months apart, I can't recall anything about that meeting.

Cindy: the day Elvis died – 1977

On August 16, 1977 Virginia and I were in the car listening to the radio. An Elvis Presley song came on (I think it was Hunk-A-Hunk of Burning Love). I started singing along in a funny voice and Virginia made fun of me. Was I mocking the King? Later, watching TV we heard that Elvis had died. Virginia always accused me of killing Elvis by making fun of his singing. (Looking back now I find it somewhat ironic that both Elvis and Virginia died at the age of 42.)

Tim: playing tennis – January 1978

Our first winter in Colorado was really neat. During January, it was incredibly warm – in the 60's and 70's at times. During January, I played tennis at the apartment complex with Virginia and also with Cindy – at the same time. I was doing pretty well – for a while. Unfortunately, part way through the game, I was making a macho attempt at getting a shot and hurt my foot. I think I ended up with a hair-line fracture.

Tim: Virginia's birthday – May 3 1978

If our first winter was really neat, then the first spring made up for it. On Virginia's birthday, it snowed 3 feet. Everybody was snowed in. It was this really heavy, wet snow. It was really strange to have that much snow and to be warm. It took a couple of days to melt off – even with the sun and the heat.

Virginia: Virginia's resume - 1978

*Virginia Mikkelsen
3024 Ross Dr. Unit D-28
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521
221-4984*

Age: 25 yrs.

Birthdate: 5/3/53

Married to Tim I Mikkelsen

Husband employed by Hewlett-Packard since June 1977 as a Developmental Engineer.

We have resided in Fort Collins since June 1977 and are currently renting an apartment. We are in the process of building a house at 1742 Fremont Ct. and should be living there by July 15, 1978.

EDUCATION

Grade Schools: *St. Ann's Public School* 9/58 – 5/59
St. Ann, Missouri Kindergarten

St. Kevin Parochial School 9/59 – 5/61
St. Ann, Missouri 1st & 2nd Grade

Jefferson Public School 9/61 – 5/62
Des Moines, Iowa 3rd Grade

Christ the King Parochial School 9/62 – 5/67
Des Moines, Iowa 4th thru 8th Grades

High School: *St. Joseph Academy (now Dowling High School)* 9/67 – 5/71
Des Moines, Iowa 9th thru 12th Grade
 Graduated 5/71
Studies: Math, History, Typing, English & Civics

Colleges: *Iowa State University* 9/71 – 5/72
Ames, Iowa Completed Freshman year
 Major: History

Colorado State University 9/77 – 12/77
Fort Collins, Colorado Attended part-time
 Major: Undecided Course: Forensic Anthropology

PAST EMPLOYMENT

7/72-12/74 *Central Life Assurance* Supervisor: William Walton
 5th & High Streets
 Des Moines, Iowa 50315 Phone: 283-2371 Area Code: 515

Duties: Underwriting Clerk
 Set up new applications for underwriters review – typed credit check requests on new applicants – typed orders for medical exams and paid for exams – responsible for updating and follow-up of pending new business applications.

Reasons for Leaving: Accepted job that offered better pay and chance for advancement.

1/75-5/76 *City of Ames, Iowa* Supervisor: Leonard Lapehn
 Finance Department
 Ames, Iowa 50010 Phone: 232-6210 Area Code: 515

Duties: Cashier 1/75-6/75
 Responsible for bookkeeping of overdue metered parking ticket revenue – handled complaints and problems with the meters – follow up letters to overdue violators – sending

warrants for arrest to the Clerk of Court – counting money from parking meters – taking payments for utility bills.

Accounts Payable Clerk 6/75-5/76

Responsible for paperwork needed to pay the city's bills – involved working closely with the Purchasing Department and the Director of Finance - duties involved checking invoices with goods received and much phone work – kept track of coal shipments to City's utility plant.

Reasons for Leaving: Husband accepted a 6 month co-op job through the university in Portland, Oregon.

12/76-5/77

*Mary Greeley Hospital Supervisor: Anna Christenson
Business Office
Ames, Iowa 50010 Phone: 239-2011 Area Code: 515*

Duties: Dismissal Clerk

Handled paperwork involved when dismissing patient or when patient has expired – included filling out forms and checking on patient's insurance.

Relief Switchboard Operator

Worked information desk handling questions dealing with patient status, room number and insurance, paged Doctors and handled switchboard.

Admitting Clerk

Assigned rooms to all patients admitted to hospital on Sundays – explained hospital procedure to incoming patients – typed nurse's & doctor's report sheets, admittance forms & insurance forms.

Reasons for Leaving: Husband graduated from ISU & accepted job with Hewlett-Packard.

Since living in Ft. Collins I have worked at Teledyne Water Pik in the Accts Payable Dept from Dec/77 – Jan/78 to help with the end of year rush.

Jan 16/78 – May 12/78 Larimer Co. Treasurer's Office. Processing property tax payments rec'd in the mail. This was only a 4 mo. job.

Office machines Used: Typewriter, 10 key adding machine, CRT, coin counter, dictaphone, switchboard.

Personal References: Jane Stalheim

*103 E. 9th
Ames, Iowa 50010 Phone: 515-232-8646*

*Rhonda Roewe
520A Pammel Court
Ames, Iowa 50010 Phone: 515-292-7883*

*Nancy Jo Zugg
630 Marlou Pkwy
Des Moines, Iowa 50315 Phone: 515-285-1971*

Tim: our first house - 1742 Fremont Court – 1978

This was Virginia’s and my first house. Virginia was always looking at new and different houses. She saw the style in one development and we ended up buying it in another development.

This house was a one-story ranch house with an unfinished basement and a two-car garage. It was located on a cul-de-sac. The upstairs had about 740 square feet of living space (pretty small). There were 2 small bedrooms. The ‘master’ bedroom was located right next to the neighbor’s drive way (because of an error in the positioning of the house). This meant we would be awakened during the winter by the neighbor starting his pickup truck.



Our first house – 1742 Fremont Court

Virginia really enjoyed picking out the various finishing touches – lights, colors, et cetera. She did a really great job. I finished the basement myself. I put in a study, a bedroom, a utility room and a family room.

We bought the house in 1978 for \$49,900 and sold it 11 months later for \$59,000. To buy the house, we had to borrow \$1,000 from my Mom. She and my brother Tom came out and Tom ‘helped’ by writing up a ‘contract’ for the loan. Because of the loan, Virginia and I didn’t feel we could ask Mom not to smoke in the house. This bothered

us, but since she had helped us get into the house we didn't feel we could say anything. It was a nice starter house.

Tim: going to see the Rocky Horror Picture Show – 1978

While we were in our first house, we continued to do a bunch of parties. One of the things we did was to organize a crowd to go see The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Virginia and I had gone to see it previously and enjoyed it. There were about 20 people that showed up at our house for our outing. We gave everyone a small paper bag with all the props they needed: toast, newspaper, matches, rice and toilet paper. We went in a big crowd and sat together. It was a lot of fun.

Lee: dining at Tico's - 1978

This was an evening of wonderful Mexican food and margaritas, a fun family get together. We spent a long time lingering over food and drinks so when we left it was already dark. As we stepped out the door into the night Virginia said, "It is the darkest it has been all day". Really broke us up, we laughed so much about it and it became a catch phrase for the family.

Tim: seeing her boss's wife with another man – late 1970s

Virginia worked for Anesthesia Associates for several years. Early on, Virginia and I met each other for a picnic lunch during the week in the city park. It was very pretty and we had a blanket out and were talking. We were having a really nice time – it was a beautiful day. Virginia looked up a bit and said "Oh look, there's Mrs. Pearson." Then she said "Oh! That isn't Dr. Pearson!" The wife was out with her boyfriend – apparently a professor from Australia. Virginia and I were really surprised – and didn't say anything. Over the next couple of years, Virginia said that Dr. Pearson would occasionally bring in letters to be copied. (Virginia thought they were letters from the boyfriend to his wife.) The Pearsons eventually got divorced.

Tim: our second house – 3284 Silverthorne Drive – 1979

This house was a 4-bedroom tri-level with an unfinished basement and a two-car garage. It had about 1,980 square feet finished. I finished off the basement (which brought it up to about 2,500 square feet). I also added a fence and a multi-level deck in the back yard. The house was located on a corner.



Our second house – 3284 Silverthorne Drive

It cost us \$69,900 in 1979. We sold it in 1987 for \$108,000. We did really well by that house. Virginia had done a lot of nice decorating and it was a very nice, comfortable house. The neighborhood was nice. There were quite a few kids for Ben and Mandy to play with. We did have a problem with one neighbor. He thought we had called the police on him for some noise. We hadn't - another neighbor had called in and given our name. So he called the building inspectors about the deck I had built. I was able to get approval with very little trouble.

Amanda

Tim: pregnant with Mandy – 1979

Virginia was pregnant in 1979 with Amanda. Virginia found out at a doctor's visit in the middle of the day, but she waited to tell me until I got home from work. During that year we had moved into the house at 3284 Silverthorne Drive. Virginia worked very hard to get the room set up. We didn't know whether Amanda was going to be a boy or a girl. Typical of many fathers, I was hoping for a boy. I would talk to Virginia's tummy calling Amanda by boy's names.

Virginia got all sorts of weird food urges. I remember her getting an urge when she was about 6-7 months along. She had to have some "Zingers" – a raspberry snack cake dessert. So, I got into the car (I think it was around 11:30PM) and drove out to a 7-11 convenience store. Of course, on the way, I was pulled over for speeding. She also got really hooked on bean burritos. For a couple of years afterwards, she couldn't eat them.

We took the Lamaz classes. These were actually pretty helpful. However, as the sessions went on, it felt like everybody was having their baby. It seemed like we would be the last ones to deliver.

Joyce Turley: pregnant with Mandy - 1979

The next time I really saw Virginia, she was noticeably pregnant with Mandy and moving in to her new house in Woodwest. I was somewhat in awe of this 'mature' woman who seemed to have it all together! She seemed years ahead of me in life, and I wasn't sure I'd ever have her confidence and vitality. As the years went on I continued to be impressed by her abilities and interests and awareness of events around her. She spoke so confidently of her opinions on current events – it was years before I ever knew she regretted not finishing college.

Tim: Amanda's Birth – December 27 1979

The time came and went for the delivery. Virginia was getting really uncomfortable. Virginia developed a rash all over her body (except face and hands). She was miserable. The rash was 'Pups Syndrome' (I'm not sure of the spelling). It was a reaction to the high hormone levels (and is indicative of a baby girl). It got to be three weeks past the due date.

Virginia's family came out for Christmas. We had expected to have the baby by then. Her family brought out a cold or flu and everybody got sick. It hit Virginia the 25th. She

got over it and went into a cleaning frenzy on the 26th. I got the flu on the 26th. Virginia went into labor early in the morning on the 27th of December. We went in to Doctor Merkle's office using Art's station wagon - because there had been a pretty good snowstorm. She had started labor, but we found out later that it was because of the sack in the birth canal. We went to the hospital and they took X-rays. We found out Mandy's head was too big to fit through Virginia's pelvis. We needed to have a cesarean section delivery.

Doctor Merkle acted sort of panicked by this (it didn't help our nerves). We had to sign the release forms (this also didn't help our nerves). Virginia got prepped. I was given a surgical gown and went in. I got to stand by Virginia's head and hold her left arm. The anesthesiologist gave her a spinal block. The surgeon started to make the incision. Virginia called out that she could feel the incision. The spinal block was too low. They rushed and gave Virginia a general anesthetic - knocking her out. I was getting very worried but kept telling Virginia that everything was okay. She went under. About that time, I started to get sick. I suspect it was a combination of the operating room, the flu and the stress. I was taken out and had mostly dry heaves in a scrub room.

Amanda was taken out at around 6:30PM. She weighed 9 pounds 5.5 ounces. I watched Dr. Merkle clean her up. She went to the bathroom out of both ends - Dr. Merkle said that all the plumbing was working just fine. They got all done cleaning her up. Virginia was fine.

Dr. Merkle brought Amanda out to me. She had a good set of lungs. I took her in my arms. She seemed so small. I took her up to the nursery. All the way she just laid in my arms and stared at me. It was one of the neatest feelings I have ever had.



Virginia and Amanda in the hospital

I don't remember much else about that day. Vickie got the flu that day and threw up when she saw Amanda for the first time (through the nursery window).

Virginia took a little longer to wake up because of the general anesthetic. She had told me that she didn't like not having been conscious and aware and "with it" for the first day of Mandy's life. She tried to breast feed, but it wasn't working too well.

Tim: post-partum blues – January 1980

When Mandy was about 3 weeks old, I remember coming home after a normal day at work. I walked into the house (through the garage). There, sitting on the floor in a pitiful huddle were Virginia and Amanda. Both of them were crying their eyes out. Apparently it had been a very long day for Virginia and she just couldn't take any more of it.

I asked what was wrong and told her that everything would be okay. I took Mandy and she stopped crying. This didn't help Virginia immediately – given that Mandy had stopped crying.

I think that this was Virginia going through post-partum blues. She was fine really quickly.

Tim: Virginia, Lee and Amanda at Tico's – 1980

Shortly after Mandy was born, everybody came out for a visit. One evening, we all went to Tico's (a favorite Mexican restaurant of ours). While we were there, Lee was holding Mandy and the waitress came up. The waitress asked Lee about her baby. We all thought this was great. Virginia said something like "Hey! I did the work here."

Virginia: Europe trip diary – October 2 1980

1980 Oct. 2 Thurs.

overslept and had to rush to H-P for travelers checks and then to Denver. A nice porter took care of checking in our bags and the H-P boxes. Got a bulk head seat on the plane - all 3 seats for us. Amanda slept on take-off and for about an hour after. She was a good girl. One of the stewards took her on a tour of the plane for about ½ hr. All the passengers told us later how cute she was and how well mannered. Had lunch on the plane and landed in N. Y. around 5:30. Had to circle several times before we could land. Flew over the Statue of Liberty, the World Trade Center and the U. N. bldg. NY is very pretty from the air.

The TWA terminal was hot & muggy – the people very brusque and unfriendly compared to Denver. Ate at one of the cafeterias & fed Amanda. She was tired and her diaper and coveralls were wet. Changed her diapers and her outfit and waited for our flight. It was delayed for ½ hr so we were pretty restless by the time we boarded at 8:35. Had to check the stroller as late baggage and that was the last time we saw it. Loaded us on a bus that drove us to the plane.

We got seats by the door and a whole aisle in front of us for Amanda. The stewardesses were very friendly & nice to Amanda. Got her set up in a little cradle that we put on the floor in front of us. Once again we got all 3 seats in the row. Had a very good supper. Chicken stuffed with cheese and Tim had beef shish-ka-bob. The only time Amanda was really fussy was after she woke up. (She slept during take-off again and woke about an hour later.) Tim and I were trying to see the movie "ffolkes" with Roger Moore and she cried & cried. About ½ thru the movie she fell asleep and slept until we woke her – an hour before we touched down in Frankfurt. It was a bumpy flight and we had to stay seatbelted most of the time. It was dark over the ocean – so I missed most of it. Towards morning though I opened the window shade and could see England – the White Cliffs of Dover. It was very pretty from 39,170 feet with the morning fog still clinging to the rivers and streams.

Soon we were over western Europe and the landscape was totally different from any I had ever seen. Little clumps of red roofed houses with the obligatory church steeple and

then farm fields, then huge thick forests and then a large gray city. All the while a ribbon of super highway – the autobahn – connecting everything.

Oct 3 Friday

We had to circle Frankfurt a few times but finally landed at 9:30 in the morn – Frankfurt time – 2:30 in the morn our time. Poor Amanda was in a daze and didn't make a sound. Tim & I were so excited to be here that we temporarily forgot how tired we were. The next five hours I would like to totally forget. Frankfurt is a big city with a big airport and a lot of unfriendly people. Their unwillingness to help us made us believe we had made a terrible mistake. Tim was stopped at customs because of the HP equipment which was impounded. Only 1 customs agent spoke English and he took great delight in playing the part of the all powerful custom's official.

We stayed at customs an hour and still could not get anything resolved. Tim then told TWA our stroller was lost & he filled out a claim form. There are no porters at the Frankfurt airport and the carts you use for transporting luggage are cumbersome, clumsy and only handle 3 suitcases! We were each pushing a cart loaded to the gills with 1 baby, four pcs of luggage, 3 overnight bags, 2 coats and 1 big HP box filled with books. Tim left Amanda and I sitting outside of customs while he tried to contact HP in Boblingen about getting the impounded equipment.

We waited for 1 hr. and he finally came back trying to look calm but looking very tired, worried and frazzled. No one would help him use the phone and he had instead gotten the rental taken care of. So Amanda, Tim, me and the 2 carts of luggage went to find our rental car. We had to take the carts down an escalator – a scary and totally unpleasant adventure. Tim left us safely deposited in the rental and went off to once again try to use the phone. Manda and I fell asleep in the back of the car and I totally lost track of time.

I started to get very worried about him and was just about ready to crack when I heard him walking to the car. The tears came and would not stop. After the hysteria was over – Tim told me he had gotten hold of Jon Faraday in Boblingen and that 2 fellows from HP Frankfurt would be here to take care of the mess. Well it took quite a while for them to get there but within 5 minutes the mess was cleared up and we were struggling to get the boxes into the little rental car.

After almost 5 hrs. at Frankfurt we were on our way. Somehow Tim found his way out of the city and heading toward Stuttgart and Boblingen and a nice warm bed. Amanda and I slept most of the way and I think Tim did to. It seemed to be an interminably long drive and once in Boblingen we had to find Novotel. Well, luckily you could see the sign from the Autobahn and after a few trys we pulled up in the lot – signed in and unpacked our load.

The room is very nice – double bed with a studio couch and a crib – TV, refrig stocked with all sorts of liquor, mineral water and pop and fruit juice. All I can really remember

about Friday nite is we had cheese, ham and bread sent up to the room and then we all 3 slept like logs until about 10:00 on Saturday.

10-4

Jon Faraday is an Englishman who speaks fluent German and has been with HP Boblingen for 9 years. He met us at 11:00 and showed us around Boblingen. Took us to the shopping district and to a coffee shop for tea and rolls. Tim had what he said is the best cup of hot chocolate ever. It looked to be mostly whipped cream and did look good. Amanda had a cup of milk and was not too thrilled with the taste. The rolls were very good and loaded with butter. The Germans love butter and there is never any shortage of it in restaurants. We went to a drugstore and bought baby food (brand name HIPP) and baby juice also diapers called Baby Slips here. A box of 36 diapers cost about \$10.00 American.

Then we went to a store called "Hertie." The place is 6 floors high and is a JCP, Monkey Wards, Sears and Steeles all in one. The bottom floor is the grocery store with all grocery items including Coca-Cola & Fanta Orange op. There is wine and a fantastic bakery and deli. All sorts of sausages and smoked fish. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. The cans of Coke are not that expensive however the small bottle of Coke in the room are around \$1.60 each. If you use the parking garage for your car you must show the man any receipts you have from the store and if you have spent over a certain amt. you pay less than someone who did not buy anything.

After shopping we went back to the hotel and had a Pils beer then I went upstairs and put Amanda to bed for a nap and soon I was taking a nap too. Tim came up about 1½ later and we cleaned up and roamed around town looking for somewhere to eat. Lo and behold we saw a pair of golden arches in the distance and the smell of french fries guided us to the only McDonald's in miles. The boy at the counter spoke English and we almost forgot where we were. We ordered 2 Big Macs, 2 large fries, 2 cokes and a hot fudge sundae (it tasted just the same) and ended our day in Germany with an all-American meal. The McDonald's is quite a hang out for the German teen-agers. I convinced Tim that we should go for a drive and I thought we would never see our hotel again. We still don't know for sure where we went but it took us 2 hours to get back to the hotel. It was a scary, exciting and fun drive to God knows where.

10-5

We were up and ready to go by 11:30 today. Bob Moore and his wife Kathy have invited us to dinner at their house. They have been here since February and are renting a house in a little village outside of Boblingen. They have 2 children – Kelly, 4 and Shannon – 18 months. The Moore's seem to really enjoy living here. They are both learning German and Kelly is the only American in a German pre-school.

They are renting a large house – 2 story with partially finished basement. The house is large, simple and very attractive. All German houses have lots of big windows with no

screens. (Very few bugs). The house has a very simple and clean line and is totally functional. Most of the newer houses are white stucco with one car garage and red roofs.

Kathy had fixed BBQ hamburgers, potato chips, salad, fruit salad with yogurt and some very good German bread. We had the equivalent of German pop – orange drink with carbonated mineral water – it was pretty good. For dessert we had a German kuchen.

Tim: Europe trip – October 1980

As Virginia said in her diary – the trip to Germany was pretty eventful. We got off late and I had to leave the rental car in front of the Stapleton airport departure area. We just barely made it. (An indication of things to come.) The flight was okay, but long - especially with 10 month old Amanda. I had arranged in Ft. Collins about the paper work for all the stuff I was bringing (4 computers and documentation). It turned out that not everything was in order. We had landed around 8 in the morning. I couldn't get the gear through customs - it was impounded. I got Virginia, Amanda and our luggage into the rental car. I then tried to find a phone and call the Boeblingen plant. It took several hours to find someone to help me with the phones - they worked differently than they did at home. Nobody from the Bunde-post (post office - phone company) or the guards or anyone else would help. A person from the US military aid station told me how to work it.

On one of the many trips to and from the car, I was alone in a corridor in the parking garage. A pair of Germans were walking towards each other. As they got close, they gave each other a Nazi salute. This did not exactly make me feel right at home. Finally, a person from the local sales office came and posted a bond and we got out.

The drive down from Frankfurt to Boblingen was very interesting given how tired I was from the trip. We made it down to Boblingen and got settled with some help from Jon Faraday. We went out on a Saturday and had a good time. We didn't buy some of the stuff we needed, because we figured we could get it on Sunday. We found out very quickly that the stores were not open on Sunday. And what was worse is that the stores were only open on Saturday late one weekend per month.

There was an Oktoberfest going on while we were there. We went to this and had a good time. One of the things that really caught Virginia's attention (I think she was in love...) was a big machine that looked a little like an ice cream machine – but it dispensed whipped cream.

Most of the time, we were immersed in the local culture. This was fun and a great experience. However, we would go to McDonalds on Saturdays to get 'American' food and go back to the hotel and watch Armed Forces TV. It was amazing - the McDonalds tasted just the same. I tried to order in German at McDonalds (having spent a little time trying to learn the language). I asked for "tswai big macs mit pomme frites, und ..." (two

big Macs with french fries and...). The high school age boy asked me (in English) if I wanted anything else.

After we had been in Germany a short while, we headed off to Paris for part of the training that I was there to do. The trip to Paris was interesting. The roads in French towns were not always well marked. We made it to Strausborg in our little rented Opel Kadet. As we were driving through Strausborg, we did not see a single sign for Paris. It seemed to take forever, but we finally pulled on a road and saw the arrow towards Paris.

In France, part of the way to Paris, we stopped at a gas station plaza. Mandy needed some milk. So I was trying to use my broken, tourist German with a French lady who spoke a little German. I kept asking for 'lea fua' which meant cold milk. I was having a terrible time getting them to understand. Finally we got some room temperature milk. Afterwards, we figured out that they thought we were crazy because they always used warm milk for infants – never cold.

We made it to Paris. It was very busy and interesting and crowded. We were running low on our clothes (since we had not been able to find a laundromat). I went out and bought a new shirt so I looked presentable and then Virginia and I sent all of our stuff down to the hotel laundry. Virginia was trapped in the room wearing dirty clothes and a 10 month-old baby. Virginia called down to the hotel laundry to find out how soon we would get them back. The person on the other end asked if Virginia spoke French. After Virginia said no, the other person proceeded to say "Oh - too bad" and then spoke on in French. Virginia and I were not impressed with Parisian manners.



Virginia and Amanda in Paris

We did get help from Guy (pronounced Gee) Cohen – a guy from HP Boeblingen who was born and raised in Paris. When we were on our own – people were often rude and unfriendly. When we were with Guy, everyone was nice. We had a wonderful meal there with Guy. It was pretty neat because Mandy had a French baby-sitter that night in the hotel – I think her name was Michelle. One evening when we were out driving, Guy was trying to get us somewhere quickly. At one point during this drive, Guy drove up on the sidewalk (with people on it!). At another point, Guy was in the far right lane of a six-lane street at the stop light. He wanted to turn left. The light turned green and Guy proceeded to drive very quickly in front of all six lanes of traffic. It was amazing (and terrifying). The other amazing thing was that, as I remember, no one honked at us!

At one point we did understand some of the reactions American's got in Paris. We were in the hotel restaurant having a meal. It was very good. A few tables away, there was an American couple (actually from Texas). The man was complaining very loudly, in his southern accent, about how his hamburger had been prepared. I remember him saying something like "Boy, back where I come from, we cook our meat before we eat it." Both

Virginia and I were trying to look like anything but Americans while simultaneously trying to disappear into our seats.

We got done with my work in Paris and headed back to Germany. We made it to Strausburg again. But we couldn't find the entrance to Germany. We were a bit tired, but not that bad. We kept looking for Duetscheland (German for Germany). We did this for over a half hour and finally Virginia recognized that one of the road signs said 'Allemain' (which is what the French call Germany!).

We got back to Boeblingen and within a few days I got very sick – non-specific urethritis - an inflammation of the urethra. I had fevers and chills. I sweated so much I was lying in pools of sweat. This is the worst I have ever felt. Virginia was very worried about me and tried to find out about getting me to a hospital. I made it through until morning and we got into a doctor. It had all the symptoms of venereal disease. The German doctor that I went to asked, with Virginia standing there, if I had been with a 'bad girl'. If I hadn't been in so much pain, it would have been funny. I told him "No." I got some antibiotics and started feeling much better. I think I got it from the water in Paris.

While we were in Boeblingen, Mandy started walking.

We went to Baden Baden – a spa town. We also went to an old university town - Tubingen. This was a very pretty area. Virginia went out with a wife of one of my acquaintances in Germany. Virginia had good conversations with her about the US military and Russia. (They liked having US troops there.) Virginia thought it was pretty strange driving along and seeing tanks driving through villages. The roads had three posted speeds – one for cars, one for trucks and one for tanks!

One day, Virginia was looking at the building next to the hotel. It turned out to be a vehicle inspection center for the German government. While Virginia was watching, a woman came through with her car. After a while, the inspector and the lady were talking – in a rather animated fashion. They were both pointing to a spot on the car. And then the inspector pulled out a small pointer-like tool and punched it into the side of the woman's car and made a gash where there had evidently been some rust. Apparently the Germans are very strict on their inspections! (Seriously, all the German cars looked very nice and in good shape. When we had crossed over to France, they all had dings and nicks and looked in bad shape.)

Given our trouble catching the flight to Germany, we got a very early start on the way back to America. We got up and packed and got out with hours to spare. Of course, we made it about halfway and there was a huge line of stopped traffic. It took a long time but we finally made it to an accident site. Two cars were at least 300 feet away from the road – mangled terribly. (The downside to no speed limit on the German Autobahns is that when people have accidents, they usually don't survive.) We finally made it through the congestion. I drove as fast as I could because we were going to be very late. We got to the airport and I headed Virginia and Mandy to the plane and I dropped off the car keys. On my way to the plane, I saw a man that looked just like my brother Tom. (It

made me wonder what dad had done during the war.) I got to the plane and they closed the door right behind us.

Virginia: Amanda – October 1981

Amanda

10/12

She has gone crazy over books. Calls them bookees and reads and plays with them constantly. Likes to look at them at nite when we put her to bed. She will sit up there with her little lite on and pretty soon it is very quiet and she has fallen asleep with her books spread all over the place.

10/16/81

She was sick with a cold & didn't feel very good. It was about 3 in the morn. and she woke up crying for a bottle. I went into her room and she was barely awake and her voice was crackly & hoarse. I couldn't find her bottle in the bed and when I did find it I said "Here it is, I found your bottle" and she put her arms in the air and went "Ta-da."

10/20

Loves monkeys – calls them mongeys. Watches a cartoon show on Channel 2 because a man is dressed up in an ape suit.

10/26/81

Amanda likes her bath filled up really full and she lays down in it on her tummy and tries to swim. She will stand up & position herself in front of her big sponge and counts 2-3-2 and jumps on 1 knee and lands on the sponge.

10/27/81

She has a baby now. The teddy bear my dad gave her (the one with the cute vest) She wraps it up in her bath towel and holds it just like a baby. Calls it baby and gives it kisses. When it comes unwrapped she runs over to me to fix it. Took him to bed last nite and woke up the next morn. hugging him.

Oct. 28

For the past 2 months she has really liked to help me clean. She will get a wet paper towel and scrub the kitchen floor with me. When I dust, she has to dust and she gets her little vacuum out when I vacuum.

She loves to dance and really does a very good job. Claps her hands and swings those little hips. Likes jazzy music like the theme from "The Jefferson's" and Christopher Cross "Ride Like the Wind."

Has started to walk down the first 2 steps on the porch without holding on to anything.

We have been reading nursery rhymes to her and on "Patty Cake" she will clap her hands and call them "This Little Piggy" she will grab her toes.

I went into her room one afternoon because she was crying and she was supposed to be taking a nap and she had gotten her sweatshirt partially off. She had her neck and head out and the neck of the sweatshirt was bunched up behind her head and her arms were still in so they were pinned back – she was really mad.

Another day I went in & she had stripped the whole bed down to the mattress pad and thrown everything on the floor. She had been a bad girl all day and I asked her if she wanted a spanking & she shook her head yes.

10/28/81

Vocabulary:

apple – apa

bath

book – bookee

bottle – boppa

bug

Chad

home – ome

juice

milk

pop

monkey – mongee

mommy

daddy

bye bye

hi

owee

nose

knee

more – ma

please – pease

thank you – ankyou

duck – guck, guck, guck

moo

drink – dink

to eat

poopy

potty

light

toys

bear

doll

night-night

water – wawa

candy – cany

bologna – bogony

spaghetti & noodles – skit & noonoo

bread

butter – bupper

dawn

up

car

shoes

socks

off

no

huh

huh-uh

doggy

plane

baby

TV – TB
mall
shopping - sopping
bird
Cindy – Dee
tree
ice
good girl
pretty
outside
snow
blue
eye
Eeyore
mouse
toast
cereal
bubble
HP
cheese

blanket – banket
gunky
Big Bird
cookie
cookie monster – cookie mon
meow
go
stop
hat
pool
Mandy – Manny
me
mine
bike
ketchup
pies
pizza
balloon – bayoon
ball

When you show her a flower (even just a picture) she sniffs and goes “aah.”

When we read “A Horse of Course” she hits the picture of the bug, whinnies for the horse, makes fish sounds for the fish & turtle and puts her hand on her nose and makes a noise for the elephant.

She is very loving and likes to hug & kiss. When she is in a bad mood sometimes she hits but then she comes right over and hugs you. When she has an owee we kiss it so now if we have an owee she will kiss it. If I get teary-eyed over a book or TV show she comes running over and looks very worried and pats me and keeps saying ‘huh, what?’ and she won’t quit until I smile and say everything is OK.

We take showers together and she gets a wash cloth and washes my legs. She stays in the corner so that she won’t get the full spray.

She is really starting to watch cartoons and laughs & jabbers all the way thru them.

Loves to go shopping – when we drive by the mall – she claps and yells “mall.” She does the same thing at Target. Looks thru the JCP Christmas catalog and points to all of the toys.

We were at the grocery store and checking out. The girl doesn’t use a cash register. It is a little terminal with keys and Amanda has a keyboard similar to it and she just reached over & started bagging on it. Wiped out half of the groceries and the girl had to start from scratch.

She loves to tease Tim. If he asks for a kiss – she will giggle and run away. They play a game where she is in the kitchen & Tim runs into the living room & Amanda tries to figure out if he is coming thru the dining room or the hallway.

She is becoming a real ham & will pose for a camera no matter what. Loves to look at pictures especially ones where she is in the swimming pool.

When Cindy is over – Amanda knows who the soft touch is. If we say no, she will cry and run over to Cindy and really force the tears.

She has been to the drive-in twice and has stayed awake the whole time. Not much fun – she keeps climbing from the back of the wagon to the front seat.

She likes to play ball. When it was warmer out we would play ball in the front yard and wait for Tim to come home. She & Tim would play in the back yard on the patio. Now that it is winter we roll the ball back & forth on the kitchen floor.

She likes riding bikes. I have a carrier on my bike and she sits back there watching everything. Every once in awhile she will put her arms around me and give me a great big hug.

When we are out at a restaurant she plays with the ice in the water and recently has started drinking with a straw. But when the food comes – she lets out a scream and starts pushing things out of the way so there is room for the food. She loves ketchup on her french fries, chicken, hamburger and hot dogs.

She likes to eat at Wendy's, Perkins, Fish & Chips and especially Delfannies, Godfather's & Pizza Hut. Likes french fries, hamburgers, hot dogs, fried chicken, turkey, ham, bologna, mashed pot. & butter & gravy, pot. chips, cheese, cottage cheese, noodles, spaghetti, applesauce, rice, mac. & cheese, ice cream, ice pops, m&m, vitamins, pizza, meatballs, tacos, cheese burritos, any kind of cookies, pop, Wendy's frosties, lasagna, toast, cherrios, scalloped pot.

She doesn't like vegetables, donuts, pancakes, Fruit Loops.

She takes any medicine really well. She claps afterwards and says good girl. She loves her chewable vitamins and sometimes will take the chewable St. Joseph's aspirin.

She loves going to Karen's house. I think she really enjoys the kids. Chad & Mark are 1½ & 2. Jennifer & Debbie are 4. Jeff and his sister, Jennifer (also) come 3 days a week and they are 2½ & 4. Debbie & Amanda are always hugging and Amanda & Mark give each other kisses. Chad & Mandy love to play together. Karen says she is little mother – whenever anybody cries – she runs over & hugs them. The older girls play house & Dr. with Mandy. One afternoon at home – Mandy stuck a pencil in my mouth and grabbed my wrist. Then she took the pencil out and started to fuss over me.

She likes to watch Sesame Street. Knows Big Bird, Oscar, Grover, Cookie Monster, Ernie & Bert. Doesn't like the Count.

She is starting to play mommy with her stuffed animals – put one on her potty chair and talked to him just like I do to her.

She is starting to get the hang of potty training. I haven't really worked hard with her. She has gone several times on the potty and seems to think it is quite the thing to do. If she is in the tub and has to go potty – she will tell me.

All in all, she is an exceptional child.

She likes to pretend she is washing your hair. Stands behind you & starts to run her hands thru your hair.

Likes to sit on Tim's shoulders and ride thru the mall. Sometimes she wants down and just starts to run.

She seems to be very co-ordinated. Does very complicated jumps and spins around but hardly ever falls.

If she hears another baby cry at a restaurant or store she gets very upset and wants me to hold her.

She likes to stand on the bathroom vanity and put her arms around me and put our faces together and pose in the mirror. What a lover.

Virginia: Amanda – December 1981

12-17-81

Amanda is starting to be very helpful. If I am carrying something she comes up to me with a very serious look on her face and says "help you" and she takes whatever I am carrying and puts it in the kitchen. If it is heavy she says "heaby, heaby."

She is fascinated by Christmas & Santa Claus. Says Santa Claus and waves. Loves the Christmas trees and plays very gently with the ornaments. She is a real shopper. Always wants to go to the mall.

She sings nursery rhymes now. Jack & Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of "watu", Jack fell "down" (Mandy will say) and broke his "crown" and Jill came tumbling "after". If she wants you to hear Jack & Jill she will sing "fell down". Patty Cake "Patty Cake". This Little Piggy "ish piggy". Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star "winkle". What are little girls made of "good girl".

12/17

no way
Santa Claus – Canty Caus
heavy – heaby
help
cartoons – toons
animal – animu
lights – kites
coat – cake
hat
up
diaper
wet
Mark
milk
spoon
after
dawn

Virginia: Amanda – January 1982

1/4/82 starting sentences

hug you
help you
hold you
bad girl
movie - nubie
Cinderella – rella
hide, mom
Ryan
snow
love you
HP
work
clean
shopping
purse
money
paper
color
bib – bib off
apron – apan

cook
spill
mess
sorry
ice cream
Vickie – Bickie
Nick
Grandma – mamaw
Grandpa – gapaw
come on
know what
Oh Daddy
vacuum
go away, bug
wind
soap
cards
birthday
soup
chocolate
socks
open

1-9-82

Took Amanda to the 7:15 showing of Mr. Toad & Cinderella. When we first walked into the theatre she kept saying “no way” and she was kind of nervous. Once the movie started she was fine and would laugh and make comments. During the last 20 minutes she got tired and laid down on the coats with her body longwise over me and kept saying nite-nite.

She now takes the plates from the kitchen table and carries them over to me at the dishwasher and she grabs a wash cloth and wipes off the table. Loves to clean.

Started really potty training on 1-4-82. She has her good and bad days. The weekend of the 8th, 9th & 10th she did really well.

1/15/82

Now when we go bye-bye when the car stops she starts saying “out”. She sits in the front seat now without a car seat and does pretty good. She likes to lay down with her head in your lap and say nite-nite.

1/15/82

She is starting to put together simple sentences. help, mom – love you, hide mom, hold you, help cook, mom wet. When she is happy she will go around the house saying “happy, happy, happy”.

Loves to play the video games – asks Tim for money and puts quarter in all by herself.

She helps me shovel snow – loves to play in the stuff. Bundled up so tight she can hardly move.

She understands the word paper. She uses it for toilet paper, newspaper and sheets of paper she colors on.

1/26

She keeps taking her diapers off when she naps. I went up last week and found her with her diapers off and she was screaming poopie. She had evidently had a bowel movement and one had gotten stuck on her foot. She was standing in the middle of her bed bare-bottomed with her foot in the air screaming “mom, poopie”.

Amanda is starting to go potty by herself. She will pull her pants down by herself and even dumps the potty in the big stool and flushes.

Virginia: Amanda – February 1982

2/17

music – mukey

Happy Birthday to you

Norma

Vickie & Nick – Beekie & Nick

up or down

positive

Virginia: Amanda – April 1982

4-5-82

During the ski trip (3-21 to 3-27) she started to talk in sentences.

“Mandy eat cookies”

“Grandma go by-by, shopping”

“Mommy, feet owie, walking”

She also has started to ask for a cookie and when you give her one she holds two fingers up and says "2 cookies please".

Tried her on skis last month – she wasn't real crazy about it. She was OK as long as she could use her poles. Liked to stand still and look around. When I took her skis off – she would plant her poles in the ground and jump around as though she were skiing. Grandma would hold her and ski down a short hill with her and she really liked that.

She fell in love with Greg Thompson on the trip. She would call – Boy – oh – Boy.

On the way home we got a flat tire and Tim changed it on the interstate. The whole time she would watch Tim and say "Oh God". Then on the way home she was in the back and was saying – tire broke, daddy fixed it.

She is so good-natured and such a hugger and kisser. I love her companionship. She is a sweetie.

Have to watch our language with her. She says God Damn and Crap!

Have been having car trouble and sometimes it will die on us. She says "Oh God" or "Oh Dear" and "car break, mommy fix it". When it won't quite start she says "Almost".

She knows Joyce Turley and always gives her hugs and says "Hi Joyce".

Answer the telephone "Hello".

When you are eating – she comes up to you and says "eating – good – like it".

Bought her some new sun dresses. Fell in love with one and did not want to take it off. Dressed her in a new nite gown – sleeveless with a little slit up the side and she went to Tim in the basement and said "Daddy, Mandy pretty, like it?" Then she came up to me and told me that "Daddy liked it". She would stick her leg out of the slit and stand there in a sexy pose.

4/27

Pretended she was grandma and said to me "Hi Mandy, go swimming". Then she wanted me to be grandma.

She was pretending to be a baby at the dinner table and kept repeating gaga goo goo. I asked her if she would be a quiet baby and she said OK and sat in her chair mouthing gaga goo goo with no sound coming out.

Woke up at 4:00 this morning saying "Mommy, leg come off". She was crying and scared. I showed her leg to her and said everything was OK. I think it fell asleep and was tingling. She wanted me to rub her feet and toes.

Virginia: Amanda – August 1982

8-17

She is talking in full sentences. Is excited about the new baby. She says she has a baby in her tummy too. She has finally adjusted to pre-school Monday she was fine. Tuesday, Wed & Thurs she cried & cried “Ladies scare me” “Mandy bad girl”. But Friday she was fine. Monday & Tues she acted like she had always been there. Gives her teacher, Ann, a hug & a kiss when she leaves. (Children’s World – while Karen was on vacation)

Loves her tricycle and can finally touch the pedals on her big wheels. Doesn’t want to talk on the phone anymore. Opens fridge & gets her own drinks out.

You can threaten her with bed & she will do anything you want. Her new sayings “No way, never” “School good fun” “Tummy hurts, Mandy eat too much”.

When she is daydreaming she sings “Fashion Show” or “Tomorrow, tomorrow swimming tomorrow”.

Loves to take showers in our bathroom. Will sing & play for almost an hour.

Does not like to sweat. She will come running up to me crying “Sweating – fix it”.

Virginia: Amanda – October 1982

10-12-82

Well she is really talking like an adult – in complete sentences -

“I really like this.”

“No way eat this cookie – something icky in it” (Raisin cookie)

Can recite her ABC song perfectly. Also London Bridge, Ring around the Rosey, Baa-Baa Black Sheep and Hey Diddle Diddle.

I think she is part monkey. Climbs on everything and jumps off the love seat and couch. Does somersaults & “nastics” (gymnastics) & “exercise”.

Loves to watch her video tape of the “Great Muppet Caper” & “Willy Wonka”. She calls him “Winky Wonka”. She knows the whole movie by heart. Sings & dances to the Oompa Loompas.

She is really grown-up acting. It is like having a little friend with me. She wrote Grandma Lee a letter a few days ago. Can hold the pen right & everything. Such a genius.

Every toy commercial on TV “Mommy can I have that, please.”

Picks out things in the stores that she really likes and really knows how to use “please.”

Tim: miscarriage – 1982

After Mandy had gotten to be a little older, we were ready to start trying to have another baby. We really wanted to have more than one. Well, things appeared to go very well and Virginia got pregnant.

We went around telling people. We were very happy. I felt very proud. Things seemed to go pretty well. Then there were some problems. We went in for an ultrasound. There was no movement on the ultrasound. Things did not look good.

Shortly after the ultrasound, Virginia started to miscarry. This was very hard. Virginia was bleeding a lot. I was with her at home when this happened. (Cindy came over and helped.) I remember cleaning up the blood and tissue so that Virginia did not see all the blood. It seemed to last forever. I took Virginia in for a D&C (cleaning out the uterus). There was some thought by our physician (Dr. Merkel) that the problem had been caused by an Rh factor problem – possibly from Mandy’s birth.

It was hard on both Virginia and me. We both felt like we had done something wrong. I know that Virginia felt that some of the chemicals used for the yard had been a part of the problem. Virginia didn’t want to touch gardening supplies or some of the clothes she had used for gardening for a long time. But, one of the tough things was telling people that Virginia had the miscarriage – I hated doing that.

Tim: Ben's Birth – March 28 1984

Virginia got morning sickness really bad with Ben. Because of this, she didn't gain much weight during the pregnancy. We sort of expected that we would need another cesarean section. We were ready for a VBACS (vaginal birth after cesarean section) - but it didn't happen that way. Virginia went to full term. She went beyond full term. We finally talked the doctor into a C-section.

This was in March. I know it was silly to want it this way, but I had been born on July 27th, Mandy on December 27th. I asked the doctor about March 27th. He wouldn't do it (I think because the operating room schedule was booked). We did the operation on March 28th. We went in early.

Again, I got to be in the operating room. The anesthesiologist was Dr. Pierson (Virginia's boss). This time it was somebody we knew. Virginia got a spinal block. It worked this time. It was strange because she started to feel claustrophobic and unable to catch her breath. She started flailing her arms around a bit. Dr. Pierson gave her something to counteract the effect. Ben was born at 8:00AM. He weighed 9 pounds 3.5 ounces. The doctor brought him up so Virginia could hold him for a minute.



Virginia and Ben in the hospital

It was very strange, standing there, looking into Virginia's open abdomen. After the delivery, they started cleaning things up. This involved putting the uterus outside of the opening and 'vacuuming' blood off of it. This was very weird. As I remember, Virginia was a little annoyed at me because I found it sort of fascinating. Virginia bounced back a lot faster this time. Doing a spinal (as opposed to a general) made a big difference. Mandy was really excited to hold her little brother.

Tim: jury duty – July 1984

Virginia was called in for jury duty in 1984. She was very excited about the chance to do this. She was selected to be an alternate on a local murder trial. Since murders don't happen very often around Fort Collins, this was a pretty big deal. The case was one of a man coming into a convenience store and shooting another man who had been having an affair with his wife.

She really enjoyed the experience. She found it fascinating to watch the actual process of a trial. She thought that the prosecutor (the local district attorney) did a good job. She thought that the defense attorney was pretty bad. He apparently came across like a shyster lawyer even though he was supposed to be a relatively well know attorney from Denver. The case was pretty straight forward and the accused had done it and had been drunk at the time.

Virginia did not get on the final panel. She talked with the judge when she was released. He asked her what she thought about the case and the trial. As I remember, he was amused with (and agreed with) Virginia's assessment of the defense lawyer. The jury did find him guilty.

Virginia: Amanda – October 1984

10-1-84

It has been 2 years now – Mandy is almost 5 and Ben is 7 months. I love having 2 kids – they are so good together. Mandy is a little mommy. She enjoys pre-school. Has been practicing her big and little B. She is a good girl. Can verbalize very abstract feelings. She truly has grown into a social person. She is picky about her hair and clothes. She brushes her own teeth and picks out her own clothes. One day last week she wanted me to come into her bathroom to help her with something and I had just gotten out of the shower. I told her I couldn't come and help her because I was naked and wet. She yelled back "That's OK – I won't laugh." What a clown. She is becoming aware of her body. She knows where her vagina is and calls it her "Chinas." I will have to read up on how to handle this new sexual awareness.

Virginia: Ben – October 1984

10-1-84

Now about my Baby Boy. He is a sweetie. Always has a smile for everyone. He is good-natured and loves to play. In the past 3 weeks he has developed quite a temper. When he is mad he huffs for a while and then screams. Scares you to death. He has a really high pitched scream that pierces your eardrums. He is eating all of the baby foods – meat, fruit & veggies. Loves apple juice and doesn't seem to notice the bottles of regular milk we have been slipping him. By 8-31 he was rolling from stomach to back and for the past 3 weeks he rolls back to stomach and doesn't even think about it. He gets on his hands and knees and rocks back & forth but always ends up going backwards. When he wants to move forward he flops to the floor and scoots on his tummy or he rolls. He likes to roll under the coffee table and he gets wedged in there and can't move. He lets out one of his piercing screams and Mandy & mommy come running. He eats teething biscuits and zwieback and loves to eat some of Mandy's ice cream & Jello pudding pops. He has had only one bout with colic and that was for about 4 hours in the first of August. He lays in bed and enjoys his music boxes. Just smiles and smiles and he can even pull the string on one of them. He is hard to dress because he rolls around so much. Has very busy feet – he is always grabbing things with his feet. Sits up really well and holds his own bottle. Loves to play. Just squirms all over when he is on the floor and sees you coming. Likes to sit on Daddy's lap and play his keyboard.

Mandy is into building tents with sheets, towels, blankets – whatever is handy. Went into Ben's room Sat. morn. and Mandy had been in there and made a tent w/3 blankets over Ben's crib. You could hardly see him. He was just laying there looking out of a little hole.

Ben loves his bath. He sits up in a baby ring and splashes and tries to grab toys – he doesn't even mind when you wash his hair. He cries and whines when you take him out though.

The only accident we have had so far with Ben was when he was on his dressing table and the top drawer was opened. He pee'd and it ran right into the open drawer – I had to wash most of the clothes. The little stinker. Last weekend Tim was playing with Ben and a set of keys – Tim hid them behind his back and Ben tried to look in his pocket – brilliant child.

Mandy really enjoys our days off – Tues & Thurs. She just lays around in her pajamas and plays with Ben.

Virginia: Ben – November 1984

11-6-84

Ben is crawling today. Doesn't scoot but actually is crawling on hands & knees. He has been scooting around for several weeks. He jabbars all of the time. Cries when he gets mad – if you take something away from him. Has developed quite a temper. He sits up in bed and plays with his toys. Can pull the string on his musical bell and likes to listen to the music. If he is in bed and sees you in the room and doesn't want you to leave he will scream if you leave and won't stop until you come back in.

Tim: 10th wedding anniversary - Jamaica trip – 1984

Virginia and I went to Jamaica for our 10th wedding anniversary. My mom came out to watch the kids. We flew into Jamaica and got off the plane. It was hot and muggy and there were all sorts of local people trying to get our luggage (and hustle us).

We had arranged for a rental car and went to the counter for it. It was a local company and this guy drove us out to where the cars were supposed to be. We drove a fairly long time and through side streets and out to a residential area up on the side of a hill. I began to wonder if we were being hijacked. We finally ended up at the rental car company owner's house. Along the left side were a bunch of cars. One of them was ours. Our car turned out to be a Russian-built Fiat – a Lada. Fiats aren't great to begin with and this one had the great Russian industrial touch on top of that. It was right-hand drive (since Jamaica is a drive on the left, British-style, place. All of the gauges had Cyrillic (Russian) words and symbols. It was very funny, even at the time.

The drive was very pretty. The island was green and lush. There were a fair number of small villages with young children getting out. They were all dressed in uniforms. We also noticed that the area seemed pretty poor.

We drove on from here a short way (a bit over a half-hour, I think) to Ocho Rios. We were not staying at an all-inclusive sort of place, but at a hotel compound. The hotel, a Sheraton, had a private beach and high chain-link fences. This caught our attention.

The hotel room, which wasn't on the ocean side, was okay. The hotel had a very nice beach, where we spent most of our time. The hotel also had very good food. It was all you could eat, buffet-style. They had all you could eat lobster and steak. Virginia thought this was pretty cool. They also had entertainment out on the beach at night. It was really pretty good for hotel entertainment.

The island had a fair amount of poverty. People offering to sell us drugs (mostly ganga – marijuana) constantly bargued us. Virginia was also constantly asked if she wanted her

hair corn-rowed. I constantly heard “mister, you buy ... for the pretty lady” for whatever they were selling.

We did get out a little to the local markets, which were nice. We both really liked the ‘jerk’ chicken – sort of a smoked barbecue. We also made it to the waterfalls near Ochos Rios.



Virginia in Jamaica

It was all very nice, but the poverty and constant hassle wore us both down, a bit. But it was really nice to get away, just the two of us.

Virginia: Ben and Mandy – February 1985

2-8-85

Haven't written in awhile and so much has happened. Mandy has vocabulary equal to many adults. She loves science & animal shows and is fascinated by the human body esp. bones. She loves Ben to pieces. She was so angry at me last month because I wanted to hold Ben and she wanted him. She turned to me and said “He's my son.” She meant to say brother and she got so embarrassed. She loves to draw and cut out pictures. I think she is quite an artist. Ben stands now and will walk when you hold his hands. Just started yesterday to say uh-oh and oh. Has a real temper when you say no & take something away. Loves to stand in his crib and peek out the door and jump.

2-12-85

Ben has a new face – wrinkles up his nose and laughs – loves to make that face. 1st tooth is poking thru bottom middle on left side.

2-21

Can see tooth now.

2-27

Ben is taking little steps now but prefers crawling.

Virginia: Ben and Mandy – August 1985

8-9-85

Ben now has 4 upper teeth and 2 lower teeth. He says mom constantly. He loves to tickle people. He walks up to you saying tickle-tickle and wriggling his fingers. Loves to go outside and wants to play w/Mandy & her friends. His vocabulary grows constantly – thunder, dad, mom, Mandy, bye, hi, please, thank you, what's that, thunder, hat, baby, pretty, outside, no, yes, ouch. He now fights back w/Mandy when she tries to boss him around. They do - however - play really well together. Ben loves to play w/Tim's guitar & electric piano. He can really pout when he thinks it will keep him out of trouble. And his temper tantrums are classics – he throws his upper body against anything close and screams his high-pitched screech. Mandy wanted Ben out of the play room last nite and he wouldn't leave. So Mandy turned real sweet & said to Ben – “You want to go bye-bye?” And Ben headed upstairs for the door & Mandy closed the basement door behind him. Tricky.

Virginia: Ben and Mandy – October 1985

10-23-85

The kids are growing. Mandy enjoys school – has a boyfriend – David. She seems so grown-up. This morning she woke up – got Ben out of bed – closed my bedroom door so they wouldn't wake me and made Ben a bottle. They were both watching cartoons when I got up at 7:50. She is a big help. I love watching her grow up.

Ben still has no new teeth. I am starting to worry. He is becoming a real ham. Loves to entertain us with faces at the supper table. Has a large vocabulary and is mimicking words we say. Loves to watch birds fly. Enjoys going to Judy's house. He says bye to me every morning. I think he is going to be an engineer. He loves anything with dials & knobs.

& also loves to go “bye-bye.” & is always dragging my purse to me and saying “bye-bye.” When we do go somewhere – he is upset when we get there because he has to get out of the car. Likes to sit in the van or the Triumph and pretend he is driving. Makes all the right noises.

Married with Children

Tim: hurting her back –1985

I was out in Palo Alto on a business trip. While I was out there, Virginia was exercising off of a Jane Fonda exercise tape. Part way through the work-out, she was in excruciating pain, unable to move. She got a hold of me in California. (I think I called her, but I don't remember clearly.) I called some of our neighbors (Bev Stewart) and had her come down and get some help for Virginia. I came back early the next day, but it was very nerve racking being so far away. Virginia went to our physician – Merkel. He ran a ton of tests and couldn't find anything wrong. What we think happened was that Virginia pinched a nerve from the exercise tape.

Tim: Challenger disaster – January 28 1986

One morning Virginia told me about a bad dream she had the night before. She dreamt that the space shuttle had blown up. I told her that I was sure it was just a bad dream. I was in at work and Virginia called me. She told me that the space shuttle Challenger had blown up after takeoff from the Kennedy Space Center. (This may seem improbable, but Virginia had told me early in the day and the shuttle had not exploded until about 9:38 AM Colorado time.)

Tim: trip to Europe – March 1986

I went on a business trip to Europe (Bristol, England and Hannover, Germany). Virginia came with me on the first part of the trip to London. I don't remember who watched the kids – but I think it was my mom. We had a good flight over and landed at Heathrow Airport.

Since I hadn't been to London since I was a kid (1966), we took a taxi in from the airport to the hotel. The city streets were like a labyrinth. We stayed in a very nice hotel in the Covent Garden area - the Mountbatten. To get there, the driver backed down a bunch of streets from the Covent Garden market area. He told us it was faster that way than going down to where he could go down the streets properly.

The hotel was very nice. Our room was very plush, but tiny. The bath was all marble and good sized. The bed was big – in this tiny room. There were phones and remote controls for the television on each side of the bed. This was pretty ludicrous given that there was approximately one foot space between the bed and the walls and dresser. I could literally reach from the bed to the television. Virginia really loved the continental breakfasts.

We went to all the standard tourist attractions – the Tower of London, the crown jewels exhibit (which was at a different location than it is now – in the Tower). We went to Buckingham Palace and Piccadilly Circus. We also made it to the British Museum and Madam Tussaud’s wax-works. Virginia just loved the place. We saw the classic punks at several of the places – people with wildly colored hair done up in spikes with various body piercings.



Virginia at the Tower of London

We went to Harrod’s (the big department store in London). Virginia also really liked the Covent Garden market area with all the funky stuff – jewelry, art, clothes, crafts, et cetera. While we were at the market, Virginia had a baked potato. In Britain, they called them ‘jacket potatoes’ and they put a variety of toppings on them. Some of the toppings were normal – like cheese. But they also had corn and baked beans as toppings. Virginia tried the baked beans topping and really liked it – even if it was a ‘starch festival’.

We also went to see the musical CATS. This was a lot of fun. Virginia commented that she must have lived in England and London in some previous life because she just felt so at home there.

Tim: our third house – 4316 Picadilly Drive – summer 1986

Virginia was always looking at houses. Part of this was for decorating ideas, but part of it was looking for a new place as well. We were happy with our house on Silverthorne, but Virginia had found a neighborhood that she liked – Taft Canyon. She had seen a house with potential and looked at it. She took me over and we talked with the builders – but we decided not to buy because it was a lot of money - in the range of \$180,000. After a while, they called us back and encouraged us to come and look again. We went back and looked at the house again. It was a nice house, but with some things that weren't quite perfect. (And I wasn't particularly thrilled about the idea of a bigger mortgage.) We talked it over and decided to give it a shot. We came in and gave them a low-ball offer of \$150,000. It shocked us when they said yes. This scared us a little so we added on some things as part of the deal – air conditioning and finishing the upstairs for approximately \$12,000. They still said yes! The builders (Brothers Carpentry) were in some financial difficulties, and were getting ready to get their third construction loan on the house. (They also had a bunch of other houses that they had not yet sold.)

So, we put our house up for sale through a realtor early in 1986. We were asking \$108,000 for it. It ended up not selling right away. We finally did get an offer of \$104,000, which we took. We found out later that our realtor was not exactly on our side. He had told the buyers that we would take \$104,000 when we were really after more. The buyers had been by to look early on and we were lucky enough that they came back later on.

It was a real pain keeping the house clean for the open houses. I remember that one Sunday, Ben spilled grape juice on the steps and I had to run out to get a steam carpet cleaner and get it cleaned up before people started looking at the house.

We also found out that the builder was still trying to sell the house, even though we had it under contract. The day before we were closing, we moved in some boxes into the basement. Virginia was there when a prospective buyer came through. Virginia asked what was going on and the buyer said that the builders said the house was available. We were not very happy, but fortunately, we were able to close without too much more hassle.



Our third house – 4316 Picadilly Drive

We did have a little difficulty with some of the follow-up items on our ‘punch-list’ (the defect list). There ended up being a moderately large problem with heating the upstairs that required some furnace work. There was also a problem with the upstairs dry wall that needed to be repaired. But Virginia had done a great job picking and then decorating the house.

Lee: trip to Mesa Verde – August 1986

We had a great trip that year, I don’t remember the date but Ben was a baby barely walking. We explored southern Colorado, saw many beautiful areas, the sand dunes were unbelievable. Mesa Verde was stunning, Virginia and I had a huge interest in such places and really enjoyed seeing and touching such antiquity, just being there was very moving. At one point Art had to save Ben from falling into a kiva.



Art, Lee, Amanda, Virginia and Ben at Mesa Verde

Tim: trip to Europe – August 1987

I was back in Europe in the summer of 1987 (twice, actually). For the August trip I was going with Gary Fritz, and Virginia came along. We flew over to London. We landed early in the morning – a normal thing. We made our way to the YMCA – our hotel. When Virginia had looked into lodging, she found the YMCA as a choice. It was the only lodging in central London with a swimming pool. The rooms were really tiny (and I had thought that the Mountbatten from 1986 was little!). I could barely fit in the bathroom. After we checked in, I tried to keep Virginia and Gary moving. I almost literally drug them to the British Museum. We also looked at an art museum (but this might have been the British Museum as well – we were all pretty tired).



Virginia in London

We hung around London for a few days and did the various tourist things. One place that we went to was the science museum. This was really cool because we got to see Charles Babbage's original 'difference engine'. This was technology stuff that was the real foundation for digital computers today. Although Virginia wasn't overly excited, she put

up with this very well. We also got to the London Zoo and several parks. At one of the parks, we noticed several nude sunbathers. Mostly, this was okay, but one of them turned out to be an elderly woman. This is not something that any of us really wanted to see...

We got to go see the musical 'Chess' in London. This was just fantastic. The acting, singing, music and production were phenomenal. We loved it.

One afternoon, we were walking around shopping in the High Kensington district (this is the really 'upper-class' place to shop). Virginia, Gary and I were walking along and noticed a cluster of people around a store. We walked up to see what was going on (hoping for royalty, I think). The store was pretty much empty except for a small number of people. There were some big burley bodyguard types, and a couple of women. One was short and dressed very outlandishly, the other conservatively. We watched for a little bit and then I started to move on. Virginia stayed put. After a short while the people came out of the store and walked right by Virginia. The conservatively dressed woman was Madonna. (The outlandishly dressed woman was apparently a decoy.) Virginia thought that this was pretty neat. Virginia said that she was so close to Madonna that she could see the pimples on her nose.



Virginia and Gary Fritz in London

One evening, we all went out to a local pub. Virginia and Gary both got some of the local ale. After London, we stopped off at Oxford. It was really fascinating seeing all the separate colleges (all more than 500 years old). Walking around and seeing this was really neat. We stopped for a while and listened to a choir practicing.

After Oxford we went up to visit and stay with a friend – Peter Fenton. He was kind enough to let us stay with him for a few days. He lived near Warwick. This was really neat since Warwick was where my dad had made friends during World War II. My folks took my brother and me there in 1966. So, I was able to show Virginia around the area. It is a classic castle. While we were up in the area, we went over to Stratford on Avon (Shakespeare's town) and saw "The Twelfth Night". Again, this was fantastic. After this we did some sightseeing in Wales and took a narrow-gauge train ride. Virginia had a great time, but then had to head home while Gary and I went off on our business.

Virginia: Ben at the pool (from audio) – 1987

[This is from an audio recording for a class Virginia was taking at CSU. Recorded January 1993.]

I am Virginia Mikkelsen, 480-72-4116.

My first story is about my son who is seven now, who was three at the time. We were potty training him. And we were at Epic at the indoor pool. And I had him with me in the women's locker room. And we were very progressive parents. So we taught him the correct name for everything. We were very proud of that. So, we were in the dressing room. And he's naked and I'm drying him off trying to get his clothes on. And there is a 21, 22 year old gal next to us in the locker room. And she's naked. She's just trying to get her clothes on. And my little son, who is gorgeous by the way – big blue eyes – really cute, walks up to her and taps her on a naked thigh. And says "I see you have a vagina." And this poor girl wanted to die. And then he turns to me and looks at me like "see, mom I got the right name." And he turned to her and goes "I have this cute little penis." I have never talked so fast in my whole life. "I'm so sorry. We're potty training, he's only two and a half. And we didn't know he would do this. We taught him all of the names. We didn't mean anything personal." She got dressed so fast. And she went "oh, that's all right, that's all right." But she was just out of that locker. You know I didn't even notice, I was so embarrassed, so absorbed in what was happening, I don't know who was there. But Ben was quite proud. And I didn't take him back until he was six and his daddy could take him in the boy's dressing room. I was done with it.

But then, a couple of weeks later, I told the story to a bunch of our single friends at HP. And the guys are desperate for women. "Why doesn't anybody love me..." And I told this story. And one of the guys leans over and goes "that is one hell of a pickup line." So he was going to use it. He is now married. So I don't know if it worked or not. "I see you have a vagina." So he was going to go up to somebody in a bar and say that.

Tim: vacation with Turley's to Disney World – Spring 1988

This was a classic sort of family vacation. We went down during spring break and did about 4-5 days around Orlando. We went to Disney World for 3 days and one day at NASA. Disney World was really nice. The kids were excited and had a lot of fun. We were all just exhausted at the end of the days at the park.

When we first got there, the kids saw the big geodesic dome near the entrance. They called to Virginia and me and said “Look, it’s the great ball of Disney”. Mandy was scared by some of the rides (the haunted house and the Michael Jackson 3D movie). Ben wasn’t scared at all and really liked the rides. Outside of the 3D movie, there were some ‘dancing water’ spouts. These were large pots (like giant planters). Mandy thought they were really neat. It appeared like the water was running from pot to pot. Mandy positioned herself in front of one of the spots where the water would come from and after a few minutes she got splatted in the head. She thought this was really neat - it was funny.

The kids didn’t seem excited about NASA which made me sort of sad - but it wasn’t as exciting (or as nice) as Disney World for them. We met Rick and Joyce and their kids in Orlando. We all drove together down to the Keys. Virginia and I had made reservations at a nice hotel on the west side of the state. We canceled these and went with Rick and Joyce to Plantation Key and a motel they had found. It was a ‘quaint’ cottage motel - old and funky. Virginia was not thrilled - but Rick and Joyce loved it.

The place was a bit run down (it was a little reminiscent of the Hotel where I grew up). But we did have a good time there. However, Ben was out in the sun a lot and sensitive to sun burns. Virginia had lathered him up, but he still got a terrible burn. You could see the outline on his back of Virginia’s hand. She felt very badly. Ben felt very sick for about a day, but snapped out of it pretty quickly.

While we were there, one of Virginia’s gold necklaces came up missing. We talked to the front desk and reported it missing. A policeman came out to check it out. The next day, the necklace showed up on the dresser, but it was bent as if it had been stuffed in a pocket.

Virginia: Ben at the ocean (from audio) – Spring 1988

[This is also from the audio recording from January 1993.]

Two to four is a dangerous age. Because they have vocabulary. But they don’t have self control or restraint. After about four or five, they start to learn. Two to four is terrible.

I think little boys all have a fascination with the female form. My son has always been like that. When he was two and a half or three we would go to the beach. Florida, we’re

in the Keys. Ocean. It's gorgeous. We're all seated, looking out to the ocean. Ben, my three year old, is turned around looking at the girls – who are lined up behind us. And I say "turn around, go play in the water." He says "I was just looking at the girls. I wasn't going to touch them or anything." And of course my husband is going "Yes!!!" He's very proud. I'm trying not to raise a little male chauvinist.

Tim: hurting her knee at Steamboat Springs – March 1988

There was an HP retreat for SEDD up at Steamboat Springs in early 1988. Virginia drove up towards the end of the retreat. We had a nice time and there were various events going on. I had hired a guy – Brian Fromme previously. We found out later that they had almost bought a house from our neighbors (the Keegans). Virginia met Brian and his wife Cathy at this retreat.

We had a good time and stayed an extra day to ski. We were up on the mountain on a run called "High Noon". Right before noon, Virginia took a big spill and hurt her left knee very badly. She was in great pain and we were clear up on the mountain. She had to get down and basically skied down. I would help her on the left turns as best I could. We had her looked at there and then drove back to Fort Collins. She had torn her ligaments, as I remember, and had to have arthroscopic surgery on her knee. This really slowed down her skiing, but she did have bad knees that she said it often felt like there was ground glass in her knees. She had often thought of going in for surgery on her other knee.

Tim: don't talk to strangers – late 1980s

We were working on the kids and making sure they were safe – not talking to strangers. One time, Virginia had just gone through a discussion with Mandy about talking with strangers. In this discussion, Virginia had told her to scream if a stranger started talking with her. So, Virginia, Mandy and I were at a restaurant in the mall, shortly after this discussion. An older couple sat down next to us. They saw Mandy and smiled and asked her "What's your name?" She looked at us and her eyes got real wide and she opened her mouth to scream. Virginia stopped her just in time. She told the people we had just been trying to teach her about strangers.

Another time, after Ben was born and at the age to warn about strangers, we went to a movie. I had gone out to get snacks. While they were there, Virginia spotted a really weird looking man. She leaned over to the kids and said "Remember how I am always warning you about strangers? Well that man is what I'm talking about." At this point, I walk in with the snacks and hand them to the kids. I then walk over to the strange man and say "Hi Colin." It was Colin Cantwell – a fellow that we hired as a consultant for several things. He did look strange and is rather strange, but I don't think it helped with the kids education...

Tim: business trip to Washington - Uniforum – January 1989

I went to a computer conference in January of 1989 in Washington DC. I was presenting a paper along with a colleague from Sweden - Jan-Erik Gustavsson. I got in during the middle of the week and was scheduled at the last session on the last day. On top of this, Washington was hit with back to back blizzards - the worst in over 50 years. The mass transit ground to a halt. Virginia came out during the conference to spend the weekend in Washington - between the snowstorms. We had never been there and wanted to see the sights. Because of the snow, almost everything was closed or impossible to get to or see. It is sort of scary to see how badly shut down the nation's capitol is in what I would consider a moderate snowstorm. The place was really shut down.



Virginia in Washington, D.C.

We did get to several places. We went on the White House tour - this was nice. We got to the Air and Space museum - which was really nice. They had a lot of well done exhibits. We also got through the Smithsonian, but this was mostly like a collection of state-fair exhibits. We went to an art museum (I've forgotten which - but it was near the

Smithsonian). This had some really nice artwork - sculptures, paintings, et cetera. It also had a painting of a nude woman that had - well - texture. This was pretty bizarre - and obviously left an impression.

We also walked around the 'mall'. It was neat seeing Abraham Lincoln's statue. The most impressive memorial was the Vietnam memorial. The ground was covered in a lot of snow (I think about a foot). As you came up to it, it was this large black thing in the ground. It looked sort of big. As Virginia and I walked down towards the middle, the size of it started to hit home. As we walked more, it really struck us: the names that covered every piece of stone. This huge monument was covered with the names of young people who had died. When we reached the middle and looked out to both sides, it was quite an experience. Both Virginia and I started to cry a bit.

Tim: California trip – July 1989

I had some business out in California towards the end of July 1989. Virginia and the kids came out for this. They were hanging out in the Bay area while I did my work. During this, Mike Bacco, a friend from work, died of liver cancer. I flew back to Colorado on one of the corporate jets (with some other folks from my division) for the funeral. Virginia stayed with the kids in California. They went to the Great America amusement park in San Jose. This was going okay until Ben and Virginia got separated on a ride. She was just frantic trying to find him. I came back that night on a commercial flight and got in pretty late. Virginia was waiting for me with the kids in the rental car at the San Francisco airport. This was very nerve racking for her because she kept seeing these big cars and limousines with shady-looking people doing 'business' (apparently drug dealers). I got in late and she was very worried and tired.

I got done with my work. We did some things around the piers in San Francisco – they had some neat shops. We drove down to Monterey and stayed down in that area. We visited the Monterey Bay Aquarium – which was really well done. We spent some time on the beach – even though it was very cool.



Amanda, Tim, Ben and Virginia at the Monterey Aquarium

Tim: 15th wedding anniversary - Hawaii trip – November 1989

Virginia and I went to Kauai (in the Hawaiian Islands) for our 15th wedding anniversary early in November (but before our anniversary). At work, I was just finishing up the SoftBench project. I had been working pretty hard. We got the tickets for the trip free because of the traveling I had done the previous couple of years.

My Mom came out to watch the kids along with a friend - Mary Briggs. Mary was my kindergarten teacher and her son and I had been classmates in Missouri Valley. When we called back the second day, Mandy got on the phone and said “Grandma is lazy and eats all the time”. Mandy and Ben found out how easy we had been on them. My Mom made them do a bunch of chores.

We caught our flight, which connected through Honolulu. We flew onto Lihue, the largest town on the island of Kauai. The airport in Lihue was small, but very nice. Kauai was very pretty. We got a rental car and drove to the hotel. It was located on the southern part of the island. The hotel room was very inexpensive and very nice. It was really cool because there were geckos all over – including in the room. (They eat bugs. One would be up on the wall behind the bed – just sitting there.)

There were cats everywhere. There were several around our hotel. We also saw them out around the island – many of them had crossed eyes or big paws because of so much inbreeding on the island.

We went over to totally relax. We had no plans at all. I brought a pile of books, swim trunks and our tennis rackets. Virginia needed to get away from the kids and planning and

schedules. So essentially, we didn't do anything. We swam, read, sun bathed, played tennis, drove around the island, did some shopping and ate. I got tired of relaxing after about two days. Virginia really enjoyed it – she needed this down time.

The island was just gorgeous. Each part of the island was very different. The western edge had really neat beaches. The northern edge was rather cool. We drove around to the caves on the northern edge of the island. The roads got very narrow. On the northeastern corner, there was a really neat lighthouse. Near the lighthouse was a small town with a really good Italian restaurant.

In the southern central area was a mountain. This was, apparently, the wettest spot on earth (430 inches or so of rain per year). The canyons leading up to this area had really neat rainbows – all the time.



Virginia in Kauai

In Lihue, we ate at the Plantation House one night. This was a real plantation home – really big and very pretty. Also in Lihue was a really nice Hilton. We went through this one afternoon. It had a bunch of swimming pools and was huge and very nice. Virginia wanted to come back and stay there.

We did the normal tourist sorts of things like a 'blow hole' on one of the beaches. We also went to the local mall several times (since it was near the southern area where we were staying). There was a small fast food place there that served 'tuna dogs'. These were grilled slabs of tuna steak on a hot dog bun. Virginia and I just loved these things – they were great.

Virginia: Ben – March 1990

March 19, 1990

Ben is almost 6 yrs. old – I can't believe it! His 2 bottom front teeth have been loose for almost 2 weeks now. He is excited about losing them. I think at this point he is tired of them being loose. It hurts to brush his teeth (not his favorite activity even on the best of days) and every once in awhile he will bite down on them and the pain really surprises him. He told me today that he knows I am the tooth fairy and he thinks \$15.00 a tooth would be fair. I am noticing so many changes in him as he approaches year #6. Tim & I can easily hurt his feelings w/o meaning to. A certain tone or a look will send him reeling into self-pity – "you don't look like you love me" or "I guess I'm just too stupid."

He loves to be the clown & he is a wonderful mimic – TV ads & shows. He & Mandy spend a lot of time together & 80% goes really well. But they use a tone with each other that drives me up the wall. I am sure it is the same tone I have used on them.

Ben does not handle the time we spend w/Mandy well. She needs help with her homework & projects and poor Ben feels a bit left out. He still whines too much but he is rarely afraid to stand up for himself and can be quite vocal when he sees an injustice done either to himself or anyone else.

Tim: cruise to the Bahamas – November 1990

We took a cruise in November 1990 with Virginia's family – Art, Lee, Vickie, Nick, Angela and Cindy. Chris and Julie were the only ones who did not come along. We all flew into Miami and spent the night at a hotel. The weather was very nice. We sailed out of Miami to the Bahamas and did a couple of stops at different islands.



Everybody boarding the cruise ship

We mostly ate and relaxed on the trip. One of the real high points was an aquarium that had a huge area of fish and exhibits. They had large ocean going turtles in one of the tanks. Virginia asked Ben if they looked anything like “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” – one of his favorite cartoons. The kids had a great time with the tide at one of the beaches and the pool on the boat.

Virginia had Joyce make up a design (Hurricane Heckle) that she put on sweatshirts.

Virginia: Ben getting hit by a rock (from audio) – 1992

[This is also from the audio recording from January 1993.]

This is my final Ben story. This just happened last year. I was at school all day – CSU. And I came home right before the kids' bus. And the answering machine was beeping. I answer it and there is Ben's voice going "Hi Mom. This is Ben. A rock fell on my head. Guess I'll be okay. Talk to you later." So that was it. As I'm listening to this, the bus is driving down the street. So I know that they are on their way home. So Mandy walks in the door. "Well where's Ben."

"Well, I don't know. He wasn't on the bus."

So, I try to call Tim at work. He's not at his desk. He's got that voice mail thing. "Hi, this is Tim Mikkelsen, I'm not here right now..." He's at the hospital with Ben in the emergency room with Ben, he's dying...

So, I'm calling school to see what happened with the rock. They're tracking down the teacher. She says "Well, yeah he got hit in the head with a rock. And he seems okay. We didn't know he called you. Any calls like that are supposed to be from the nurse not from the child. We didn't know he called you." So there at some point in the day he was left alone and made a phone call to me. Which is not good. So, also his teacher is going to check on that. She said she released him with the school bus kids. And over his objections. He said "No, my mom was going to come and get me cause she knows I'm hurt." So, evidently, he knew I was going to be there to pick him up and watched the bus drive off and he's still standing there. And one of the neighbors saw him.

So he walks in the door, like ten minutes after he is supposed to be home.

"Where have you been! Don't you ever do that again..."

And I'm crying and he's crying. And he goes "Well, what's the problem, here?"

"I thought you were dead."

"Well, that rock did hurt."

So then I go up to school the next day to eat lunch with him and help out in the classroom. And everybody in the school goes "Did you hear what happened to Ben?"

"Well, yes, I'm his mother. Yes, I do know what happened..."

So, we're sitting there eating and two or three of the little kids come up and says "you know Darren Peterson, who threw the rock, is sitting over there."

“Well, why don’t you send Darren over here.”

So I’m sitting at the lunch table. And they’re talking to him. And Darren kind of goes... So finally he comes over. And they drag him over.

“So, Darren, I’m Virginia. I’m Ben’s mom. I hear that you hit him with a rock.”

“Well, yeah.”

“Well, you know it’s really not a good idea and can I ask you why you did it?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, thank you. I appreciate that. And I just want you to know that now that I know your name and your last name I do know your parents’ phone number. And I will call them next time...”

“Well, well, okay...I’m sorry...”

I guess they were in this jungle gym. Ben was at the bottom. This Darren kid was at the top. And Darren goes “Ben, watch out, there’s a rock!” And so Ben looked up and as he looked up, bang.

Six year old boys – dangerous creatures.

Tim: trip to Tucson for an MOT residency – January 1992

During 1991 through 1993, I was going for a distance-learning Master’s degree. At the end of each term, there were residencies where all the students got together. Virginia did not come to the first one, but did come down to Tucson after the second one in early 1992. I picked Virginia up at the airport as all my classmates were leaving.

We basically did all the tourist sorts of things – sight-see, shop and eat. Tucson is a nice city nestled right up to some foothills. Tucson had some nice shopping – especially art and decorating sorts of things.



Mayan Glyph

There were some military bases and museums (most of which I had done earlier) but Virginia did put up with going to see a decommissioned Titan missile site. This was actually pretty neat – even for Virginia. But one of the things that Virginia really liked on this trip was an old Spanish mission church out away from town. The church was really interesting. Virginia enjoyed the souvenir shop at the church. It had all sorts of strange, to me, religious paraphernalia that Virginia remembered from her childhood.



Virginia and Tim near Tucson

We also went to the Saguaro National Park outside of Tucson. The cacti were really impressive and otherworldly. In the park, there was also a zoo. We both were really impressed with the zoo because it was designed to blend into the surroundings and to look like natural habitats. We also drove to see the Bio-Sphere II. Although this place has had some troubles, it was an interesting place to see – rather impressive.

Tim: trip to Lehigh for the last MOT residency – August 1993

Virginia came out to Lehigh University (in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania) at the end of the last residency. It was a really good time. I was all done with school work and was pretty relaxed. We went to a bunch of activities including a picnic. One evening we went out partying and drinking with my classmates. Virginia always fit in very naturally with groups of people. We had a great time. There was some dancing and I got up with Virginia and we danced to “500 miles” by The Proclaimers. My classmates hadn’t seen me relaxing like this – or dancing.

After the residency was over we hung out at a music festival that was going on at the same time. This was pretty nice. We also drove around the area. We made it down to Amish country and looked at crafts and quilts.



Virginia near Valley Forge

We made it down to Valley Forge. There was a really neat park there that we walked around. We also drove down to Philadelphia and saw where the Declaration of Independence was signed. We also saw the Liberty Bell. This was all really interesting and Virginia really liked this. We talked about needing to get the kids out to see these things.

Tim: Caribbean cruise – November 1993

We took another cruise over Thanksgiving in 1993. We flew into San Juan, Puerto Rico and met up with the rest of the family (except for Chris and Julie) there. We cruised out and around to a bunch of different islands: St. John, Aruba, Grenada, Martinique and Venezuela. Our favorites were St. John and Aruba.



Virginia, Ben, Tim and Amanda on the cruise

On St. John we went around to a beach that was a U.S. National Park. This was really nice. There were wild donkeys. The cool part of this was an under-water trail marked out in the water. Although Virginia had a little trouble with her mask, we snorkeled on the trail. It was really well done and fun.

Aruba was very nice. We went over to a private island and beach and spent an afternoon there – relaxing, eating and drinking. The beach was in a protected cove and we snorkeled there for a while. The fish were just gorgeous. Virginia didn't want to go out

too far so she didn't get out to some rocks (which had even more fish) and beyond (where there was an aircraft fuselage on the bottom).

When we got back, we wandered around San Juan for a while. The kids were just dying because of the heat and the weight of their backpacks. It was very bizarre to see shipments of Christmas trees coming in for the holiday season.



Amanda, Ben and Virginia in San Juan

A Non-traditional Student

Virginia: CSU homework – spring 1994

#1 Saturday, February 5, 1994

We had to be at McGraw at 9:00 this morning for Ben's basketball game. He stayed up late last night and really didn't want to get up. He was moving slow and kept snapping at both of us. I asked what was bothering him. He said he was very nervous because he would be playing with the 5th graders. He is insecure about his playing and he didn't want to mess up in front of everyone. We told him that no one could guarantee how he or anyone else would play and he should just go and have fun. As it turned out he is bigger than most of the 5th graders and he did a really good job. There were a few snide remarks exchanged but he was not the lone target and that seemed to make him feel better. I guess misery really does love company.

Mandy's best friend spent the night Friday so they slept in and missed the game. I usually encourage Mandy to come to Ben's games but didn't push it today. The girls were up late doing teenage girl things (lots of giggling, gossiping and bonding). Mandy has been stressed lately and she needed a night to unwind and a morning to sleep in.

Ben and Mandy did their chores this afternoon without too much complaining but they sure took their time. Ben knew that as soon as his chores were done he would get his allowance. This is especially important today because he gets to go to Target and buy the bridge to the Starship Enterprise. He was thrilled to have saved enough money to finally be able to buy it. As a reward for a good report card he had a friend spend the night and we all went out to dinner and a movie (without Mandy-she was babysitting).

Saturdays have always been a struggle in our house. There always seem to be games to attend and the chores never get done. It is now a rule that the chores are to be done by 2:00 unless there are special circumstances. Since we made this decision, chores are a given. As a part of our management plan we have detailed who is to do what and how the tasks are to be performed. I took them step by step through the process and spelled out what was expected. Their weekdays are structured and we found that although they need down time on the weekends, they also need some kind of structure. Saturday chores accomplish this and give them an opportunity to be active participants in the running of the house.

#2 Thursday, February 1, 1994

I don't have classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In order to reduce time conflicts I set aside Tuesday as my day to study and Thursday as my day to catch up on my domestic

duties. Every other Thursday the cleaning lady comes. Thursday is also my day to do volunteer work in Ben's classroom. Today, however, I am not needed at school and I have the house to myself all day. I did laundry all morning while I watered the plants and paid the bills. This afternoon I did the grocery shopping and went to Target to pick up a few things.

When I got home I started the roast for supper. I picked Mandy up at 3:30 and picked Ben up at 5:00 from basketball practice. In between the two I put my feet up and watched Oprah while I folded the laundry.

After dinner Ben and I spent 7:00 to 8:00 with the TV off. He ran through his multiplication facts and studied for his DOL test the next day. He is really coming along on those math facts.

Ben went to bed at 9:00 and Mandy and I sat in her room until almost 10:00 just talking about her day. It was nice to be able to spend some time with her and just listen to her tell me the days gossip.

Tim and I watched the news and got ready for bed and David Letterman at 10:30. Tim had had a long day and ended up falling asleep halfway through the show. Poor guy.

Since I have arranged my week to accommodate my necessary tasks, I have found that it has decreased the conflicts and stress that I was subjecting myself to. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are spent on campus and the kids know that if they have a problem they must deal with daddy, not me. I do not accept any invitations or obligations on Tuesdays as that day is set aside to fulfill my student obligations. Thursdays are filled with my domestic obligations. This arrangement has worked well for me for the past two semesters. By organizing my week in this way I have structured my activities in such a way that allows me to accomplish quite a bit more and weed out those activities that were just draining my time and energy. I do, without guilt or remorse, say no to many things that used to fill up my days off.

THE FAMILY SYSTEM

<i>VIRGINIA MIKKELSEN</i>	<i>40, wife, mother, CSU student</i>
<i>TIM MIKKELSEN</i>	<i>40, husband, father, HP employee</i>
<i>AMANDA MIKKELSEN</i>	<i>14, daughter, sister, 8th grader</i>
<i>BEN MIKKELSEN</i>	<i>9, son, brother, 4th grader</i>
<i>MAX</i>	<i>7, cat, loyal family pet</i>
<i>SPOT</i>	<i>9 months, cat, rambunctious newcomer</i>

#3 Monday, February 7, 1994

Up early today to drive the girls to school. It was below zero with the wind chill so I decided to drive them instead of making them suffer at the bus stop. Since I was already

up, I showered and got dressed for the day. Ben had a big math test and he was very nervous about it. As a special treat, I made Ben a big breakfast and served it at the table with a candle and fancy silverware. He thought it was pretty neat. I decided to take him to school to spare him from the elements. He was in a really good mood when I dropped him off and I think it helped decrease his nervousness.

I was on campus by 9:00 and went to the library for research on a paper. After my 10:00 class I went back to the library for more research. I want to finish the research this week and write the paper this weekend. I have got to get organized with all of these projects.

This is the difficult part of school. The class time really is not a time burden. It is the research and writing the papers and reading and studying for tests that are activities that cut into family time. I have a system that works really well on average weeks but there are so few average weeks. For the next week this paper will take top priority. I worked on the paper this evening after Ben went to bed but had to stop to help Mandy study for an English test that had her very stressed out. When she went to bed at 10:00, Tim and I spent an hour on the Internet trying to get some information I needed for the paper. It was really kind of pleasant to be working together with no outside distractions.

Tonight was one of those nights where our family system was interacting with and in conflict with outside systems. Mandy and her school responsibilities came into direct conflict with my school responsibilities. But my responsibility as her mother took priority. I see one of my main obligations as being available to both of the kids for any kind of help and assistance they require for school work. Many times this has meant that my school work has been done at 10:00, 11:00 and even 12:00 at night. Tim helps as much as he can but his job requires travel and a lot of time in the evening and besides, I really see it as part of my mom duties that I am not ready to give up.

#4 Friday, February 11, 1994

Today is my sister's birthday. We made arrangements last night to go to her office after I picked up the kids and then we would all go out to eat. We had to eat early because Mandy was spending the night at Sara's and going to the school's Valentine's Day dance.

This morning started out hectic and the day stayed that way. Mandy woke up complaining of the classic strep symptoms, sore throat, fever and aching all over. I called the Dr. and took her in at 8:30 for a strep test. The quick test showed negative and he looked at her and said her throat looked a little red but did not look like strep. He gave her some lozenges and amoxicillin samples and sent us on our way. Mandy did not want to miss school so I took her home to get ready and dropped her off at 9:50. Of course, the school office couldn't make it easy and we had to fill all sorts of forms and swear on our ancestors grave that she was not playing hooky. What a pain! I can understand that they have to be careful and cautious about these absences but she was with her mother for God's sakes and she was trying to get back into school not get out.

By now I was late for my class but decided to go ahead and sneak in. I was very glad that Tim was in town and could make sure that Ben was taken care of.

The weather this morning was beautiful, blue sky and sunshine and it helped to restore my mood. It is mornings like these that blow apart my carefully designed schedule. I had planned to do the readings for my 12:00 class this morning between 8:30 and 9:30 so I was not well prepared for the class discussion. By 2:00 the weather was downright nasty and by 3:00 I had my doubts that I was going to make it to my sister's office. I picked Mandy up and it took me 15 minutes to drive the 1 mile to Ben's school to get him. We finally had to give up and head home, a slippery, scary drive that took 30 minutes. My sister called as soon as I walked in the door and I told her it was so nasty that she should leave for home now and we would have to rearrange her birthday plans. I called Tim and told him the change of plans and 1 hour later he finally made it home with the news that the school dance had just been canceled. Mandy took it so well that we actually risked life and limb to take her to her friend's house to spend the night. Actually, since most of the traffic had cleared and we stayed on the main streets the drive wasn't that bad. By 7:00 we were home enjoying a cozy night by the fire with scrambled eggs and hot chocolate. Mandy was commiserating with Sara at her house and it was a pleasant evening after all. This is a classic example of how the forces of nature can impact your system and force you to reevaluate your goals. We changed our goals from enjoying a busy, social evening to being happy to be safe at home.

#5 Tuesday, February 15, 1994

I have been looking forward to this day for a week. Tuesday's are a wonderful break from the rest of the week. I stayed in my grubby clothes until 2:00. It was great. Today everything went as scheduled. The kids caught the bus on time and Tim didn't have any meetings here at the house. I actually had the place to myself all day. I didn't have to pick the kids up until 5:00 and Tim even ended up doing that. What a day!!

Tuesday is the one day of the week that I seem to most often have control over. It is my day to stay home and study and the house is quiet. It is the one day of the week that I devote fully to reaching my goal of graduating. It has always been a part of our plan that I would finish school as soon as the kids were old enough. Well, now I am a senior and that goal is well on its way to being accomplished. There are several reasons why I want to get a college degree. I was not a very dedicated student at 18 and college was really wasted on me. Now the learning process is very important to me and I have attacked my studies with a dedication and zeal that I did not think was possible. I want to be able to have a career not just a job when I do decide to go to work. I felt that this would be more likely to happen if I had a college degree. Personal satisfaction is one of the primary reasons, however. I am proud of what I have accomplished in college and this pride has given me more self-confidence. My husband and I have discussed what will happen after graduation in December. I have decided not to work full-time for awhile, until Ben is in junior high. We discussed the options and we decided that my salary would not be vital to our finances. That along with the stress of working full-time we felt

would negatively affect our home life. My husband is already in a stressful job and neither one of us feel that it is fair to any of us to increase it. Besides, I am not ready to give up being a domestic goddess. I like the fact that I can volunteer at the kid's schools and drive carpool and have lunch with my friends. The decision to delay working full-time was in conflict with what Tim had expected. But after discussing it and showing him the salary ranges, he agreed with me. I do intend to get a part-time job thru one of the places where I have interned. I think this is a workable compromise for all of us.

#6 Sunday, March 27, 1994

Slept late-read the paper-enjoyed a quiet morning. We got bored around lunch time and we all piled in the car and went out for lunch. While at lunch we tried to figure out what to do with the rest of the day. Only one with an idea was Ben. So we headed for Denver and the Natural History Museum and the Star Trek exhibit. Mandy didn't want to go but she had no other ideas and didn't want to stay home--so we forced her to go.

We had a great time at the museum. Ben did all of the hands on activities. We don't fuss with Mandy-let her sulk on her own. But after awhile she started getting into it. She had a ball people watching. We went thru the other exhibits, had a snack and headed home at 5:00. Had a quiet ride home-both kids fell asleep.

We had spent the day together. It was fun but by the time we got home we all needed some time to ourselves. The signals from the kids were easy to read. They were at each other as soon as we stepped in the door. We adults had had enough and it was best to let the kids fix their own suppers and head for their separate rooms. Although we usually value our family dinners together tonight we just needed some down time away from each other. Although the day had been fun, we were all feeling the stress from having been in crowds all day and we were physically tired.

We got Ben in bed at 8:00 and Mandy squirrelled away in her room with the phone. Tim and I ordered Chinese food at 9:00 for the 2 of us and had a very nice, quiet dinner.

We had a wonderful family outing but we have learned from experience that a long day together requires down time at night. Tim and I have learned to pick up on the messages that the kids are sending. They become cranky and nasty with each other and we become the same to them. Through years of practice we have found the best solution is to let them go their separate ways. Their rooms are their sanctuaries and the time spent in them is much needed for all of us.

#7 Tuesday, April 5, 1994

Another Dr. appointment today. I wish they could find out what is wrong and fix it. These recent health problems have not been cut & dried. Difficult to diagnose and very frustrating. If I could just get some energy-I would feel more in control.

These health problems have made me think about something else I value-health. Mine and my family's. Because my health has been off-it has affected the whole family. I haven't had the energy to keep up my activities around the house. Tim has had to pick up the slack. It has also put a burden on Tim's freedom to switch careers. If these next tests show something it could make us very dependent on his current health insurance. This would seriously decrease our options. Tim's dream is to start his own business in the next 4 years. We will have to rethink this and make the necessary adjustments if needed.

#8 Sunday, April 10, 1994

Spent the day studying. I have fallen behind in most of my schoolwork. Poor management skills or just plain old fashioned senioritis?!!

My 1st step was to write down and prioritize my tasks for the rest of the semester. I put in order according to due dates the projects needed to be completed and then listed them as to the amount of work needed to complete them. What resources would I need in order to complete my assignments and when and if those resources would be available. Right now my own mental and physical resources are severely depleted. Time resources are strained as well because it is the end of the semester and there is so much to be done. In order to make the most of my resources I have done a few things to reduce the stress on my resources. I use the other resources available to me. My family, my friends and my neighbors have been invaluable to me. They have been more than willing to help out when I have run out of time and steam. I avoid situations that would cause me any undo stress. I have said no to many school obligations and activities and have cut back on volunteer work. I have reduced my stress level by uncluttering life in general for right now. I have also readjusted, temporarily, my standards of cleanliness, home cooked dinner and free time. I wrestle with the kids and joke around with the family. Laughter and physical contact have been great stress relievers.

I worked on the most urgent of the projects and also the one I was least prepared for. I also gave myself my own deadlines as to how much time I could and would spend on each. This also involves a readjustment of standards. I used to spend way too much time on every project and I simply can not do that this time.

This is always a hectic time in the semester. I talked to my family and told them that I would not be available to them for the next 4 weeks. We reorganized the house duties and set up a reward system(bribes) to help motivate them.

Reducing the stress has helped my energy levels immensely. I will concentrate on getting a handle on stress from now on.

#9 Friday April 15, 1994

Today is the 22nd anniversary of our first date!! Oh and tax day. The taxes were paid last week and now it is time to celebrate. We went to dinner at the Wine Cellar. Had a late, long, expensive dinner and it was very nice. Hawaii would have been better but that's the way it goes.

The last 22 years seem to have flown by. We were both amazed at how far we have come and how much more we want to accomplish. We spent part of the evening re-evaluating our goals. #1 is to find out what is wrong with my health. #2 is to get me through this semester and the next and graduated!! #3 is to get me a job and #4 is to get Mandy's college fund built up. The financial resources have not been a problem. In fact, it has been a real impediment to our ability to think about making any career changes for Tim. We have gotten spoiled by the money he makes and we are unwilling to make any change that might risk our standard of living. We see this risk averse behavior as increasingly restraining us from what should be a logical next step. We also are very tied to this area, our friends, neighbors, and the community. This is an area where we don't seem to be flexible and where our family system is suffering from an imbalance and is hampering the growth and development of the members within the system.

#10 Thursday, April 21

More tests at the lab and then maybe some answers. At least, these early morning appointments get me out of bed and started in the morning. It is nice to get up early and get so much accomplished with all of the extra time. I was done at the lab by 10:00. I brought some of the reading that I needed to do for school and that helped pass the time and keep me from worrying about how much time it was taking.

When I was done I ran a few errands, had lunch with Tim and went home and made some phone calls about two highly possible jobs.

With these health problems that I find myself facing I have had to do some serious thinking and coping. Coping strategies are very important. There is a section in the Family Management Book that deal with coping with crisis and I have been using them in my own situation. The first step is to confront the crisis, talk about it, realize the seriousness. I have done this by talking with Tim and my friends and my sister. I haven't told by parents because they would unduly worry and until I have some answers for them I don't see the point and I don't want to deal with the guilt I would feel for causing them such worry. #2 is to avoid giving false assurances and I think also not to blow the whole thing out of proportion. #3 Find the facts. I have been doing a lot of reading and research on my own and that has helped immensely. #4 Don't blame others. Tim and I are dealing with the possibilities head on but again we don't know yet what or if anything serious is wrong. Keep it all in proportion. #5 was surprisingly hard at first but what a help. Learn to accept help. This has been good for all of us involved. Everybody feels closer, good friends have become better friends. Just help with the small everyday things has helped me feel like I am still somewhat in control.

Learning to cope with and evaluate stress has helped us gain some control over the throughput in our system. And this increased control has actually reduced the amount of stress we are feeling.

*Virginia Mikkelsen
HC 330- S'94*

Journal Entry Paper

I have decided to write about values in relation to the journal entries previously written. I am using the term value in a broad sense to denote what I see as desirable in my life. I see my values as the foundation for the decisions and the actions I perform in my life. It is my values that guide my actions and provide me with the sense of satisfaction and happiness that make life worthwhile and meaningful. I value my health and my family's health, both emotional and physical. I value a happy family life, those relationships are valued and cherished above all others. I value giving my children a good life, with good memories and a solid foundation for them to use to build their own lives. I value my friendships and my husband above all friends. In myself, I value, intelligence, loyalty, honesty, kindness, assertiveness, fairness, trust, reliability. It is important to me that I am someone who is perceived as such. I value my financial status and my domestic status. I value the fact that I have stayed in school this time and have almost accomplished my goal of graduation.

After reading my journal entries, it is obvious that I value my family and the position we have in our society. We are really a throwback to the Ozzie and Harriet family system. We are a traditional family of the olden days. Not so traditional today. I value the fact that my husband is well educated and well employed. My journal discussed my family system, my husband, and two children and myself.

The changes discussed are my nearing graduation and the change I will be making from student to employee. The other changes are the maturing of our children and the parenting changes necessary. The unexpected change in my health situation is also having an effect on my family system. Most of these changes reinforce and are guided by the values I hold most dear and are intrinsic to me. I wanted a college education and the opportunities that it would open for me. I also wanted a college education just for the experience. To be able to prove to myself that I could do it. I also enjoy the fact that it has improved the way I think. I have become more open minded and aware of the complexities of issues and I value this ability.

We live in a neighborhood that is fairly traditional and our social system is also. The larger environment however is one in flux and chaos and this effects our system. Our

society is in the midst of changes or adaptations that are changing our notion of normal and traditional. My children will have to be prepared for a world where the family they grew up with is not normal. How do you instill what you consider good, basic values in your children that might not be enough to help them in the future? We concentrate on the terminal values, common to our society that are relevant regardless of the current social climate. The values of respect for ourselves and others, for forming, working toward and meeting goals, and tolerance. Tolerance will be increasingly important in the future because of the diversity and interconnectedness of modern society.

Values impact others in our environment. I feel that a person's values can dictate how that person will be treated by others. I value honesty, intelligence and so forth and expect to be treated as such and will assert myself when my treatment is at odds with my values. I avoid, as much as possible, situations and people who have put me in the uncomfortable position of causing conflict with my value system.

The relationship of resources and values is an interesting concept to consider. I have noticed that the idea of resources isn't always obvious to me. I think that is in part due to the fact that I have a lot of resources, human, environmental and economic. That coupled with the fact that most of our goals, needs and values have not severely taxed these resources. This is something that could change as we face a future that is uncertain on many levels. I am now able to achieve and attain my goal of a college degree. My next goal was to work full-time in a career. Now that has changed as the reality of that goal has become clear. I do not want to work full time until the children are a little older. I have that choice because of my husband and the financial and human resource he provides. But with today's uncertain economy I am not totally assured of the stability of that resource. I think that as time progresses and our lives continue to change at a more increased rate it will become more important to carefully manage my resources and not take them for granted. Our friends, neighbors and other family members are also resources to be cultivated and maintained for the future.

My family system is entering a time of change within itself as well as the broader environment we exist in. The flexibility and adaptability of my system will be vital to the health of the system. By defining our goals, values and identifying our resources the system can better adapt to changes, good or bad because we know what we have to work with and what is important to us.

Transition

Tim: warning signs – March through May 1994

Virginia said that early on she had some vision changes. She said that there was a sense of 'no sharp edges'. This wasn't so much a fuzziness or lack of focus. The way she describes it, it sounds more as a perception change than vision. She also said that one night, things 'snapped back'. This was the only way that she really knew that something was going on. She also mentioned that she had noticed a metallic taste in her mouth.

Virginia had been having severe headaches. She had gone in to our family doctor since late April or early May. Our doctor prescribed regular antibiotics because the obvious problem was a severe sinus infection. On her birthday and Mother's day, she wasn't able to go out and do anything. She just rested at home.

She was in enough pain during the first part of May that I needed to drive Virginia to the last of her final exams. She went in again and Dr. Merkel prescribed stronger antibiotics. By the 11th or 12th, things were still not better, and Virginia made an appointment to get into an allergist.

On Friday the 13th, I drove Virginia to the allergist appointment. The allergist found yeast in her sinuses. This was a normal reaction to the high antibiotic levels. I got her prescription filled and got her home around the middle of the day.

Joyce Turley: Virginia not feeling well – Spring 1994

It had been weeks since I had been in touch with Virginia, so I gave her a call as I cleaned up the kitchen. I knew she was very busy with her schoolwork, but was surprised to learn she had been 'sick with the flu' for a couple of weeks. She described how she would nap on the couch and waking from a very deep sleep, vomit, then pass out. She insisted she was feeling better now and I had no reason to question her. I did mention that the vomiting could be explained by her antibiotics, but not the fainting. But in her usual manner, she reassured me and we moved on to general visiting on the phone.

Several days later, we invited Tim and Virginia to join us for an early Sunday supper at Round the Corner. Virginia still seemed tired and overwhelmed with schoolwork, but we made plans for lunch that week. I felt she needed cheering up, and planned to spend sometime outdoors at our house in the foothills. I bought some spring flowers and thought she could help me plant my window boxes while we talked outside. She helped me plant, with little enthusiasm, but we enjoyed catching up with each other. Before Virginia left, I was anxious to get her opinion on our new bedroom furniture. She knew I was excited over the purchase, as I had admired the contemporary rosewood furniture for

some time. She seemed to like it, but offered the opinion that I had to get rid of two older pieces of furniture across the room that took away from the effect. I recall being surprised at her bluntness, having expected some advice on how to blend the older, sentimental pieces with the new. Later, as I related this to Rick, I told him “it just wasn’t the same Virginia”. Of course, by then, the tumor had been affecting her personality, though none of us knew it.

Tim: the collapse – May 13 1994

So, on Friday the 13th, I got home and she was looking better. We ordered pizza. She ate some (her appetite had not been great over the last week). She was resting on the couch after supper. I went upstairs to work on the computer for a few minutes. Ben called up that she was in pain.

She was sitting up, shouting about the pain in her head. I got her a pill and started to get her upstairs. I got her as far as the foot of the stairs. She was unable to help. I got her down on the floor. I called Dr. Merkel’s service and got a call back from one of the other doctors. I described the symptoms and he said to get her to the emergency room. I couldn't get her there myself, so I called 911 for an ambulance.

The ambulance came. They said for me to follow them in the car. I had the kids go down to Larissa Schendel’s house. I started following the ambulance, but they turned on the lights and siren. I kept following them - because they said to. After we turned left on Lemay, a policewoman pulled me over to get me to stop following them. They had changed their mind about how fast they wanted to get to the hospital and had no way to tell me.

I got to the hospital and called Cindy about this and told her to take care of the kids. After what seemed to be a long time, the emergency room doctor came in and told me that they had found a brain tumor on the CT scan. Virginia told me later that she had been in the CT machine and heard them say that it was a brain tumor. She said that she called out from inside of the CT machine “it’s only a sinus infection.”

Dr. Donn Turner, the neurosurgeon, came in after the scan. He lived in our neighborhood, and Virginia knew his wife. He said he thought that the tumor was a very serious one - a grade 3 or 4 astrocytoma. The tumor had hemorrhaged – which had caused the pain and collapse. If he did not operate, she would not have any chance of recovery, and would die within 24 hours. The tumor was lemon-sized and in the right parietal lobe. He said that the tumor would mostly likely recur and the prognosis was that Virginia would survive between 3 months and 2 years - but that it would be back. He also was unsure of how much mental or physical damage there would be - although it occurred on the non-dominant side - which was somewhat hopeful. But, I had to decide to let her die or take the chances of reduced mental and physical capacity. At this point, the outcome did not look good. I had decided not to operate because of Virginia and my shared understanding of each other and the high risk of mental damage.

Virginia was not conscious at this point. After I told Turner about my decision, he went over and looked at her pupils. The right pupil had been dilated (a bad sign). When he looked again, the pupil contracted, this indicated that the brain had responded to the mannitol (an alcohol sugar-substitute) and the damage was not yet too severe. He also called out and Virginia responded. I asked her if she wanted to live, to have another year or two. She called out: "Yes, I want another year or two". I told Turner to go ahead and operate.

Joyce Turley: getting the news – May 14, 1994

On the morning of May 14, the Turley family had dragged itself out of bed ~6 A.M. to take part in an early morning bicycle tour in Loveland. While we were enjoying the morning of exercise, the Mikkelsen family had been facing several agonizing hours of uncertainty over Virginia's welfare. Tim had called us early that morning and faced leaving a message about Virginia on our answering machine. As I casually pressed the button for messages upon our return home, I was horrified over the message: "...Virginia has a brain tumor". I ran to get Rick, we listened again. I found myself unable to catch my breath, unknowingly hyperventilating. I had to go lie down in my dark bedroom as I attempted to absorb what had happened. Rick and I longed to make contact with the family and see Virginia, but knew we could not get in to the ICU. Nevertheless, we went and bought a bag of snack food and left it at the hospital so they could have some nourishment as they spent long hours at Virginia's bedside.

That night I had a very selfish thought as I lay in bed. If Virginia is gone, then who will I have left to talk to? My mother is dead; I have no sisters; she was my best friend, my surrogate sister and my mother substitute...

By Sunday morning, Virginia had been moved to a regular room, and Rick was very anxious to see her. We stopped by the hospital late in the morning, but I was very hesitant to go in. I felt we would be intruding, whereas Rick knew, thankfully, that we could offer some support and comfort.

Virginia was lying very still with her head wrapped in a turban of white gauze. I couldn't believe this was my vibrant, loving friend. Rick offered to take Tim home briefly while I stayed at Virginia's bedside, so he could change clothes, etc. I recall feeling anxious about being alone with her, but also privileged to have the opportunity to help in some small way. I think that was the point I first realized I thought of Virginia as something more than a friend, more like family.

Tim: recovery – late May 1994

The next several days were a blur. I kept hoping that it wasn't real – but I didn't wake up. Dr. Turner said it could be 1 to 4 days before Virginia regained consciousness.

Before I got back early Saturday morning, Virginia had regained consciousness. This was very fast and a good sign. She was obviously aware and still herself. This was a tremendous relief. In spite of the risks and problems, Virginia had come through the surgery very well. It was amazing. Dr. Turner warned me that the recovery would be slow. Art and Lee came in Saturday afternoon.

It was really amazing how well she came through the surgery. They had removed as much of the tumor as they could. They also had to give her a partial lobotomy – removing 80% of her right frontal lobe. If they hadn't done this, swelling would have killed her. In spite of all of this, she was still the same person. Her memories, personality, verbal skills were intact. She had been affected in some motor planning skills, but overall it was tremendously more than what I had been told to expect.

The oncologist came in early the following week and sat down with us to talk about what was going on. It was not good. Virginia had a high grade brain tumor – an astrocytoma grade 4 which is also called a Glioblastoma Multiform (GBM). The prognosis was not good. The expectation was that it would recur within a half year to two years. He said that it would ultimately lead to Virginia's death. He was very open and direct, but did not hold out hope for any cure. After he left, Virginia and I just held each other and cried for a while. We both wanted to do what we could to try and make this work out. We talked about how unfair it all was. We talked about wanting to make whatever time we had left the best we could.

In the middle of the following week, I was at home with the kids. Lee, Art and Joyce were over at the hospital. Virginia needed to go to the bathroom and the nurse asked everyone to step out - which they did. For some reason, the nurse felt she had to step out for just a minute. Unfortunately, she did not ask anyone to step in to help. While the nurse was out, Virginia fell off the toilet and hit her head! Fortunately, she hit on her forehead and not on the surgical area. I came over shortly after this happened and was very upset about it all.

She recovered very quickly and was moved to a recovery ward. This was a pretty dismal place, but Virginia did very well. She had lost control of much of her left leg and most of her left arm, but in general was doing very well. We did have a lot of trouble with anti-seizure medication and went through many different drugs before they found one that worked.

While we were in the hospital, the last episodes of "Star Trek, the next generation" were aired. Virginia tried to watch these and commented that it was very hard to follow the show. (It was a multiple time-line story that wasn't necessarily easy to follow to begin with.) Virginia was released from the hospital on May 27th. We had our room upstairs, but because of all this, we moved into a bedroom on the main floor.

Joyce Turley: getting a wig – June 1994

When Virginia's hair was thinning, I encouraged her to see Del, her stylist, so she could be set up with a wig. (I always understood it was important for a cancer patient to continue to feel good about her appearance). Although I cannot remember her exact words, Virginia made it clear to me that she really didn't care about her hair when her life was at stake. I kept my mouth shut about her appearance after that. This was the first time she showed her vulnerability. Previously she had expressed a lot of anger and frustration over her partial paralysis and treatments for cancer. I recall she didn't want anyone to install wheelchair ramps at the house because she intended to be walking again, and she did.

Tim: doing well – Summer and Fall 1994

Through all of this, we got a lot of help. Virginia's family came out a lot to help. The people where I worked were great – professional and personally. During the summer I took Virginia to physical therapy. She was able to walk pretty well. We worked on her arm and it improved some, but it was very limited. This was all from the pressure of the hemorrhage, which put pressure on the brain stem that controls motion. This bothered Virginia a lot. The left side of her face was a little droopy as well and this bothered her a lot, too.

We started radiation early in June. Virginia tolerated this very well, but I could sense that this slowed her down a bit. The surgery and radiation made her lose her hair. She got some wigs at a place in Loveland. This helped her spirits a lot – getting back to normal. There were 30 radiation treatments during the summer. Virginia liked to listen to "Ghostbusters" music on a tape I had made. She visualized that the radiation treatments were zapping the tumor cells. It was often tough, but we made it through this.

Mandy went to Washington D.C. for a school trip in June. All of this was hard on the kids and Mandy really needed a break.

Late in July, during an Oprah talk show on TV, we (Art, Lee, Virginia and I) were talking a bit. Art wondered if Virginia had thought about writing her experiences and thoughts down. She and Lee had already talked about it. She already had a title in mind - "Betty and a cake". During the night when she had the surgery, she didn't have a 'go to the light' experience, but she saw everybody around her bed. This included her folks, Tootsie (her grandmother - who had passed away), Aaron (her great-uncle - who had also passed away) and a whole bunch of other people. At the end of the line were Betty and Armond DeFino (Vickie's in-laws and parents of Virginia's best high-school friend Karen). Betty always bakes a cake for every event - good and bad. Virginia thought that this would be a good title.

By the end of July Virginia was doing well enough for us to move back upstairs. This was really great.

Virginia started to drive a little in August and was able to drive on her own pretty quickly. She was able to be independent – in spite of everything. She would take a fair amount of time to get ready, but she could get up and get showered and dressed and drive. We even got down with the kids to the HP day at the Denver amusement park – Elitches Gardens.



Virginia at Elitches

We talked a little bit about chemotherapy, but Virginia was feeling good and didn't want to have to go through that.

Tim: our 20th wedding anniversary – November 1994

We went up to Rick and Joyce's for the anniversary party that was thrown for us. Art and Lee were the official hosts. They had arranged for snacks from Bisetti's and a cake and a bunch of other snacks. It was a nice party. All of Virginia's family was there. Our old crowd of friends from our early days at HP: Rick and Joyce, Roger and Susan Ison, Dan and Marty Osecky, Tim and Kate Tillson. There were also some of our newer friends: Anna Walicki (Wenzel), Robert and Marilyn Heckendorn. Kay Godowski from the neighborhood was also there. It was a nice crowd. Mandy looked very pretty and grown up. Lee had put together a picture board. Virginia even had a little sip of champagne at the party.



Everybody at Tim and Virginia's 20th wedding anniversary party

One of the gifts that we got was a romantic weekend for Virginia and me. In the middle of December, Virginia and I went down to Denver. Rick and Joyce took Ben. Mandy stayed with friends. We stayed at the Scanticon in southern Denver. We ordered room service and had pizza, a buffalo burger and cheese cake while we watched TV. We slept late, got some breakfast and went out. Virginia got pretty tired, but had gotten a lot of walking in. We watched a movie in the hotel room Saturday night (The Shadow). I should say that I watched the movie, because Virginia slept. We got up late on Sunday and went to the Denver Natural History Museum. We had lunch and saw an IMAX movie on Africa and walked around. We had a very nice time.

Joyce Turley: dinner at Youngs – January 1995

I remember a dinner at Young's with the four of us. As we waited at the bar, I noticed how wonderful Virginia was doing - she was cheerful, cracking jokes, so much more 'herself'. Unknown to any of us, Virginia had been cutting back on her anti-seizure medication, and later that week suffered a seizure at Steele's Market. But for a short while, we could pretend we were enjoying a carefree dinner out with our good friends.

Tim: the relapse – February 1995

The winter was pretty good and things were going pretty well. We drove back to Iowa over Christmas. We had a great time there. But Virginia was still very tired and had headaches. She didn't want to go in for an MRI or to start chemotherapy. In the middle of January, Virginia had a seizure while she was at the grocery store. This was very scary. So, we got in for another MRI and it showed that the tumor had grown. We were looking around for what to do and checked into, with a lot of help from Joyce, various trials and new treatments. We ultimately started a round of fairly traditional chemotherapy. This was very hard, physically and emotionally, on Virginia. We went through several cycles of chemotherapy.

Joyce Turley: getting out with Virginia – Spring and Summer 1995

Another day, I brought Virginia to the house for lunch and to visit for the afternoon. Because of all of our stairs, this was a challenge, but she was clearly pleased with herself for making it. It was a gorgeous spring day, and we spent a lot of time out on the deck. She commented that after a day like this, she almost felt it was worth living and continuing to fight the cancer. I don't think I was aware of how hopeless she had been feeling. Although we had always been close, I think Virginia continued to keep her struggles to herself.

During the summer of '95, Virginia had been staying in because she was feeling quite weak. She did show interest in going to T.J. Maxx so we took off for a little shopping therapy. I planned to drop her off, then park, but as she got out of the car, she was suddenly very dizzy. So we canceled that and drove over to the Iris garden at CSU instead. She was content to look at the flowers through the window as I took a quick tour through the garden. I always felt that she had pushed herself to go out that day just to prove that she, and not the cancer, was still in control of her life. Unfortunately, she must have realized she was losing the control.

Tim: Kelly Warden's wedding – July 1995

We all went down to Kelly Warden's wedding in south Denver. Kelly's folks, Tom and Kathy, are friends from the neighborhood. Kelly has done a lot of baby-sitting for the kids over the years. It is very bizarre to see her grown up and at her wedding. I got everybody moving pretty well and we got down there in plenty of time. The wedding

was small, but very nice. We went over to the reception after the ceremony. Virginia got fairly tired during the proceedings, but did okay. The wedding was nice, but strange. Listening to them say their vows made me think about Virginia's and my vows. Virginia leaned over and whispered a comment that I had really lived up to the vows.



Tim and Virginia at Kelly Warden's wedding

Tim: decline – July through September 1995

During the course of the summer, Virginia was doing less and less well. She was sleeping more. She was eating less. It was very hard. I tried to do the best that I could. We talked with the doctors in Denver about alternative treatments and started an experimental chemotherapy treatment. In July, I took a leave from work. Lee came out to stay with us in the middle of August. Towards the end of August, the local hospice organization came in and started helping with the various care aspects. Art and Vickie and Julie came out as well. Even though Virginia was talking less and less to me, she was still aware.

Virginia was very alert Sunday morning – September 10th. I went in after getting dressed and said “Hey beautiful!” She responded quickly with “Who? Me?” She also made a joke about Lee being “ready to get away” or something like that.

Cindy talked to Virginia one day and asked if she was dreaming. Virginia said she was. She said that she was dreaming about being on a cruise with all of us.

This same day, Butch and Cindy called saying they wanted to talk with me about something - but they didn't say what. They came over around 8:30PM. Butch had been

working on getting Virginia's degree granted. He succeeded! It took him two weeks to work through the system. They both knew how much it had meant to Virginia. She was short 9.5 credits and the liberal arts college agreed to waive these last credits - based on the situation and her grade point average. Art, Lee and I were all very moved by this. Butch also told us that Joyce had called up CSU this week to start the same process. The secretary was pretty confused - since it was happening - and asked Joyce if she knew a John Hoxmeier (Butch's real name).

They wanted me to tell Virginia. Lee was, after a while, able to get Virginia to wake up. I came in and told her that CSU had waived the last 9.5 credits and that she was now a CSU graduate. She looked at me and said "No way." Cindy asked her what we should call her - "Mrs. Mikkelsen." Virginia responded with "Doctor". She smiled at the news.

Joyce Turley: near the end – September 1995

I think it's important to mention some events which took place just prior to her death. For weeks, all of us had struggled with the conflict of appearing positive and upbeat, but knowing she had lost so much ground she would never recover. Fortunately, the Hospice nurse guided us to let Virginia know it was okay to let go and die when she was ready - we would be okay. This was so difficult to do, but a week before she died I told her these things. She was quite weak at the time and kept her eyes closed as I spoke to her. Until that time, I had never cried in front of her or let her know my despair over her illness. As I hugged her, all I could tell her was that I missed her so much. I had already told her I understood how tired she must be, and that it was okay to stop fighting. But I needed her to know how much I missed her already. I will never forget how she carefully pulled her hand out from under the cover to comfort me as she was dying. What a strong, caring gesture, even at the end of her struggle.

The night before Virginia died, I woke up suddenly at 4 A.M. to the hooting of an owl outside my open door. It went on and on for maybe 10 minutes as I laid awake. I had only seen one great-horned owl in all the years at our home, and had never (or ever since) heard one. I remember thinking that it could be a sign that Virginia had died. As the hooting stopped, I dropped back to sleep, but woke up thinking of Virginia. I was actually disappointed not to hear from Tim that morning because it had felt like such a strong omen. But about 11 A.M., Tim did call with the news that Virginia had died that morning. To this day I feel the appearance of the owl was a very spiritual event, and I was more convinced as I heard of Cindy Hoxmeier's experience at 4 A.M., as well.

Tim: Virginia passing away – September 14 1995

Susan Ison stopped by and read some of "Skinny Legs and All" to Virginia. Cheryl, the Hospice nurse, stopped by. She took Virginia's vital signs. She said that Virginia was very close - probably in the afternoon but certainly no more than a day or so. I read some more of the book to Virginia for a while. I called Vickie around 11:00AM and told her

that things were very close. We didn't want to shock Vickie and wanted to give her some warning. While I was on the phone, Virginia's gaps between breathing became much longer. I came in to let Vickie talk to Lee. At that point, Cindy and Lee were standing over Virginia and checking her. She hadn't taken a breath and they were checking. I handed the phone to Lee and checked. She was gone.

Virginia's obituary – September 15 1995

Virginia Lee Mikkelsen

Virginia Lee Mikkelsen, 42, of Fort Collins died at home on Thursday, Sept. 14, 1995.

A memorial gathering will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday at the CSU Alumni Center, 645 S. Shields St. Cremation has taken place. Warren-Bohlender Funeral Chapel is handling arrangements.

Virginia Heckle was born May 3, 1953, in St. Louis, Mo., to Art Heckle and Lee Berkley Heckle. She graduated from St. Joseph's Academy in Des Moines, Iowa, and recently received a bachelor's degree in social sciences. She lived in Des Moines from 1961 to 1977.

She married Tim I. Mikkelsen on Nov. 23, 1974, in Des Moines. They moved to Fort Collins in 1977. She worked as an office manager for an anesthesiologist's office.

Survivors include her husband, Tim I. Mikkelsen, a son, Benjamin Mikkelsen, a daughter, Amanda Mikkelsen, all of Fort Collins; her parents, Art and Lee Heckle of Des Moines; a brother, Chris Heckle of Des Moines; and two sisters, Vickie DeFino of Des Moines and Cindy Heckle of Fort Collins.

Memorial gifts may be made to the American Brain Tumor Association or Hospice of Larimer County in care of Warren-Bohlender Funeral Chapel.

Tim: memorial gathering – September 17 1995

The memorial gathering was held on Sunday at the CSU Alumni Center on Shields and Laurel. It was a very nice setting.

The memorial was nice and went very well. I think Virginia would have been satisfied with the choices. It had rained a little before the memorial, but the weather cleared and it was a little overcast to partly sunny during the entire gathering. There was a good-sized crowd there. We all did pretty well during the memorial. Chris had set up boom boxes, one inside and one outside, and was playing Dan Fogelberg and Enya. There was a broad cross section of people: there were a lot of friends and colleagues from work, there was a good sized neighborhood contingent, all of the kids' friends, the kids' current and previous teachers, and some old friends. Doctor Merkel showed up briefly. Doctor Pierson (Virginia's old boss) also came as did Marilyn Radford (the lady Virginia worked with).

It seemed that Virginia was there, just like at our normal parties at home. At these parties, for part of the time, I would work one end of the house and she would work the other. But we would always end up together holding each other's hands or touching somehow. But, she wasn't. The time went by very quickly. Lots of people commented about how nice the memorial was - consistent with Virginia.

We went back home for a minute and then the close circle of friends and relatives headed back out for supper at the Rio Grande restaurant. This included: Rick and Joyce; Cindy and Butch; Susan Ison and Elizabeth Ross; Tom and Mel Huibregtse; Art and Lee; Vickie and Nick; Chris and Julie; Cindy Heckle; and Tom and Mary Lee. I made a toast to Virginia. Everyone, except Julie who was pregnant, had margaritas - including myself. I would like to have said a lot of things, but all I could say was "To Virginia". It was very nice, and we talked a lot about Virginia. Butch had a hard time talking with Vickie because she reminded him personality-wise of Virginia so much. Tom Huibregtse came down at one point and talked to me about all the things that Virginia and I had done. All of these close friends and family felt that the Rio was the perfect celebration of Virginia.

Bachelor of Arts Degree – December 1995

Colorado State University

Upon recommendation of the Faculty of Colorado State University,
The State Board of Agriculture, governing board of the University
has conferred upon

Virginia Lee Mikkelsen

the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts

Awarded Posthumously

Major in Liberal Arts

Cum Laude

Given under the seal of Colorado State University at Fort Collins, Colorado
this sixteenth day of December, nineteen hundred and ninety-five.

Robert C. Yates
President of the University

Loren W. Seabree
Dean of the College of Liberal Arts



James R. Logar
President of the Board

Memories

Lee: summer trips to the country

We took several trips to the country to see my grandparents and Uncle Aaron and Maxine. Most of the memories concern Uncle Aaron and Maxine. They didn't have children and so they really enjoyed having kids around and would do anything to entertain them. Uncle Aaron would bring in horses for them to ride. Once he hauled in a water trough and filled it with water for them to swim. All of us were stunned, it was green with slime and goop! But they were troopers and gave it a try, didn't stay in very long - it was pretty cold water and they used that as an excuse.

Uncle Aaron and Maxine's dog Rinnie was a great dog. He was a shepherd mix, looked like a German Shepherd and he was very smart. Uncle Aaron made a harness for Rinnie so he could pull a cart and give the kids a ride in the cart. Rinnie would climb a ladder to the roof of the house and then jump off into a tarp or blanket being held by as many people that were around. He did it over and over again. Rinnie also was very protective of Maxine as her eyesight faded. He stayed by her side most of the time.

Lee: pets

Beauty, a beagle, was a gentle dog. Someone in St. Louis gave us Beauty. The girls would be all over her and she never got mean with them. We have pictures of Cindy actually using Beauty for a pillow. When we moved to Des Moines, we left Beauty with my mother. However, she brought Beauty to us on one of her trips to see us. I don't remember what eventually happened to her, I guess she ran away. Maxine and Uncle Aaron brought a kitten for the girls, it was a tabby cat and very sweet. We had her for some time and then she got to acting sick. Art talked to the vets at work about her symptoms and they recommended some pills. We all gathered around to hold the cat and help give her the pill. The cat struggled mightily and then collapsed and died right in front of our eyes. The girls were devastated. They huddled, arms around each other, crying and I think it was Virginia who said "It's OK, Daddy was trying to help her, he didn't mean to kill her". Art took the cat to work and the vets looked her over and said it had a congenital heart problem and the struggle was too much for her. Then we had a black cat that was the meanest cat I ever saw, it was part Siamese. We finally had to take the cat for a ride.

Lee: toy horses

Virginia loved horses, wish we could have afforded to give her riding lessons, but we couldn't. She collected horse stuff and we still have several of them, a gray called Nancy's Ghost and a Palomino and a couple of small porcelain ponies.

Lee: Barbie dolls

The girls were in at the very beginning of the Barbie craze. They each had a doll and got Barbie items at every event, Birthdays, Christmas, etc. They had wardrobe cases, clothes, cars, houses, everything. We still have some of the clothes and at least one doll that was Virginia's. I made some of the Barbie clothes. They really played with them a lot. Many years after Virginia and Tim moved to Colorado, she became convinced that her Barbie was one of the original dolls. She was very disappointed when she checked her Barbie on her next visit and it didn't qualify as one of the original Barbies.

Lee: ball bouncing down the stairs

This was a funny episode. Vickie and Virginia's bedroom was in the basement along with a playroom, family room, laundry and bathroom. Originally the only stairway to the basement was in the garage. When we put the bedroom down there, we put a stairway in the living room. One night they came screaming up stairs saying that they heard someone bouncing a ball down the steps that were in the garage. Don't know what it was but it sure scared them.

Lee: Virginia's sense of time

She always had a problem being home on time. I don't know why but she just didn't get it. She called one night, five minutes before she was supposed to be home, and said they had just ordered pizza, she would be late! She didn't understand that when you have five minutes to get home, you don't order pizza! Also we had to make it clear that if she was supposed to be home at midnight, it meant in the house, not in the driveway.

Lee: skiing

Virginia was a fearless skier. We all learned together and had a lot of fun. I remember after she and Tim moved to Colorado and made their first ski trip to the mountains, she called and was so excited about it, she said "You have got to come out here and see this."

We had many memorable family ski trips, what fun. I vividly remember Virginia flying straight down a run with her arms spread high and wide and the biggest grin on her face, yelling with joy.

Lee: mother – daughter angst

We had the usual mother-daughter angst, but as we both aged, what a wonderful bond we had. We made the trip to Colorado as often as we could and they came back here when they could. We have so many happy memories of family trips and visits. We took several cruise vacations, the whole gang, except for Chris and Julie, they had problems getting away from jobs. Many, many happy times, that we are so grateful for, the memories are precious.

Lee: Lassie

Virginia loved to watch the old TV show “Lassie” and she would cry after every show was over even though we assured her Lassie would be back on again next week.

Lee: Virginia playing with her toys

One day when Virginia was very young, maybe three or so, I found her leaning head first into the toy box, throwing toys out over her shoulders with both hands, saying “Where the Hell is it”!

Cindy: playing drive-in bank

Right before I was old enough to start school I remember being sick for several days. After about day three of being in bed, Mom made Virginia and Vickie play with me when they came home from school. Since I had to stay in bed, we played drive-in bank with Monopoly money. They would pretend to pull up to my “window” and make deposits and withdrawals. I soon caught on that when they wanted change they kept asking for the orange colored bills. They had told me they were like pennies. I didn’t understand that they were \$500 or \$1000 (I don’t remember which), I just knew they wanted them too much. “Why don’t you just give me some of the orange bills, you don’t want them. They’re not worth much.” I didn’t give out too many of them (did they think I was born yesterday). I may have been the baby of the family, but I wasn’t stupid.

Cindy: family routines

Certain routines defined our childhood. We went to mass every Sunday morning and often before school during the week. We always had family dinners together around 5PM (until jobs and busy teenage social schedules interfered). We had donuts for breakfast every Saturday. After mass on Sundays, Dad would make eggs (we did the rest, toast, juice, etc.). Because we were Catholics (and I stress was) Friday's dinner was meatless, usually macaroni and cheese, salmon patties, tuna casserole. Sack lunches during the week were bologna, on Fridays tuna salad, sometimes cheese. On your birthday, you got to choose what we had for dinner.

When we got older (teens) and Mom got tired of planning every meal (and started working outside the home) we took turns helping with meal planning. I think we were each to pick one meal a week or maybe we took turns and one of us picked one meal a week, I don't remember and I don't think it lasted too long. We did rotate dishwashing duties. Virginia did them one week, Vickie the next, me after that, and then back to Virginia. Sometimes we traded weeks or just a night, if we had something going on right after dinner. That was okay as long as the dishes got done and there was no fighting (it's your turn to do the dishes, no I did them for you last time, it's your turn now, no it isn't I already paid you back for that time, no you didn't). Sometimes Mom would just have to call a truce and arbitrarily re-start the schedule.

You had to clean your own room every Saturday morning before any TV watching, outings, or any other fun stuff. I think Monday mornings (at least once a week) you stripped the sheets off your bed and then re-made it that afternoon with the clean sheets Mom had washed while we were at school. You also had to put away the clean clothes that appeared on your bed.

When you came home from school, you took your stuff (books, purse, coats, shoes) directly to your room, no leaving them off in the kitchen, living room, by the door, wherever.

Every Friday night we would watch scary movies. Keep in mind, this was back before color TV's, remote controls, cable, special effects. So we girls would get ready for bed, make popcorn, go downstairs, cuddle up with our pillows and blankets, turn off the lights and watch bad, scary movies on a small black and white set. The movies started at 11PM or midnight and didn't end until 1AM or so. Since Virginia and Vickie's bedroom was in the next room in the basement, they would just run into their beds when the movie was over. I had to go upstairs across to the other side of the house to my room in relative darkness. But every Friday, for years, we watched those movies.

Cindy: dropping Art off at work

When we moved to Des Moines, we only had one car. If Mom needed the car, we had to drop Dad off at work. We would get up early, have toast that we dunked in hot chocolate, climb into the backseat of the car in our pj's and get comfortable with our pillows and blankets. It seemed like it took hours to make the trip from home to Diamond Labs (where Dad worked) and back home again. Diamond was clear across town, we would settle in the back seat and sleep.

Cindy: Virginia's nickname – Junie

I was 20 years old before I called Virginia by that name. Her childhood nickname was Junie. She was named after our paternal grandmother, whose nickname was Ginny. Mom didn't like that name because it reminded her of a Jenny she went to school with and didn't like. Our dad is a Junior and that used to be his childhood nickname, so somewhere along the way, Virginia became Junie. And she was Junie until college and Tim. I don't think Tim ever called her anything but Virginia. People in Colorado don't know who Junie is, but for family it's hard to break old habits.

Cindy: Virginia getting Cindy's VW Bus started

I owned a 1970 VW Bus during the early 80's. I remember Virginia and I were going out to dinner and a movie one night (I think Tim was out of town). She drove to meet me at work and then we were going to follow each other to the restaurant. Virginia and I were not very mechanically inclined, and this night I couldn't get the bus to start. Virginia asked if I had a hammer or a flashlight. Why, I asked as I handed her a flashlight. She went to the rear of the bus, opened the engine panel and pounded on the battery terminals with the flashlight. "Try it now" she said. I'm thinking she's lost her mind but I tried and son-of-a-gun if the bus didn't start. I was speechless. I looked at her with disbelief, "how did you... what did you?" She calmly replied that sometimes the terminals get corroded and if you bang on them it loosens the "gunk." "How do you know that" I asked. "Dad told me" she said.

She was funny when she rode in the passenger seat in the bus. When I would pull into a parking space with something in front of me (another car, a building, a sidewalk) she would be pumping an invisible brake pedal on the floor, repeating the "No Nose, No Nose" (the bus didn't have a front because the engine was in the rear). Later when she and Tim bought a 93 Silhouette Van (which didn't have much of a nose) it was my turn to chant "No Nose." She would freak me out because if we were parking in front of a store, she would gauge when to stop by looking at the Van's reflection in the store's window. I'm thinking no nose and watching her and she doesn't appear to be watching the nose of the van. "What are you looking at?" I asked. I thought her reflection technique was very clever.

Joyce Turley: friendship and hand-me-downs

I think we became very close during the years of Ben's (and Jeff's) babyhood. This common experience brought us to the same level, and I truly shared in our friendship. (In prior years, I used to wonder what she saw in me as a friend, but I think we must have shared some basic values and interests). Virginia arranged a nice baby shower and luncheon after Jeff's birth, and she passed along advice and many bags of clothing that Ben had outgrown. I can still see Ben at the front door in his red sweatshirt and worn Oshkosh overalls. Virginia had a talent for putting together practical but adorable outfits for her kids. My three children eventually all wore those same clothes – a tremendous benefit for a first-time mom.

As our children grew, we each got involved in activities on our own. Virginia worked off and on, and we saw less of each other. But she was always there when I needed a sympathetic ear. I knew my confidences remained with her, and it was always reassuring to learn that Virginia had had similar experiences, or at least understood my feelings.

When I learned I was pregnant with our 3rd child, Nate, I had very mixed feelings. Rick and I had decided we were almost ready for a new baby, but planned 6 months to conceive, as was needed for the first two pregnancies. However, our very first attempt was successful, and I was suddenly overwhelmed with the thought of losing the tiny bit of free-time I had while Jeff and Kin were in pre-school. I recall sitting at Virginia's kitchen table on a Saturday morning confiding my guilt over feeling this way. She understood immediately and helped me see how quickly the years would pass. Of course she was right, and I soon was eagerly anticipating the birth. I would never have shared those feelings with any other friend – only Virginia could listen, and help me, and not judge me. Just like a sister, or a mother...

Joyce Turley: Virginia's decorating skills

Of course, I always admired Virginia's talents in decorating her home. Again, I knew I'd never be on the same level as she was. So I was secretly pleased years later when she chose to carpet her new Taft Canyon home with the same carpet I had installed in our remodeled playroom.

I would often ask her advice on decorating, and there are things in my home which can be attributed to her influence. An early suggestion for the color scheme in our new addition was to paint an accent wall in 'eggplant'. I remember thinking that would never work, but looking around today, I note I have in fact painted several of the walls in 'eggplant'.

When we held a party in honor of Tim and Virginia's 20th anniversary, I rearranged the living room furniture so Virginia could keep off her feet but still feel a part of the

celebration. Although I planned to put it back after the party, I immediately saw this was a better arrangement.

Finally, during Virginia's last visit to the house, I told her how I planned to arrange the playroom furniture. I was surprised as she described an arrangement 180 degrees opposite mine. Again, it didn't make sense at the time, but the week after she died, I found myself placing the furniture the way she had suggested. It may have been simple to her at the time, but it has worked for years.

Tim: decorating

Virginia was very good at style and decorating. Not only was she always looking at houses, she was always looking at decorating ideas and styles. The houses and apartments we lived in were never static – something was always changing. The normal turn-over rate was about 2-3 rooms per year were redecorated.

For a while in school (at CSU) she was taking some interior design classes. She did very well at them. She didn't think a lot of the instructor's 'tastes' in decorating. His background was in industrial and public design (prisons and mental institutions!). During this period she worked at a store selling shades and blinds. She also did some freelance work for friends and neighbors. She didn't like this very much because as someone selling or helping with someone else's design, she needed to do what they wanted – even if it was really hideous.

Tim: hair cuts

When I met Virginia, she had really pretty long brown hair. Like her decorating, her hair rarely stayed the same for long. (Although I really liked the long brown hair...). She tried all sorts of things – but nothing too radical.

I remember the first time my mother gave her a permanent wave – while we were still dating, I think. Virginia came in to me after my mom was done and was in tears. She was wondering if my mom didn't like her. (Her permanent wave was a bit tight – curl-wise.) I reassured her that everything was fine. Over the years, Virginia would regularly get at least a little upset about her hair right after she had it done.

Tim: not eating hamburgers

Virginia would almost never eat a hamburger. She would often order a Big Mac at McDonald's and remove the beef patties and eat the sandwich. The first time I saw her do this, it seemed really strange, but she said that she liked the taste, but not the beef.

Tim: singing and music and noises

Virginia had a lovely voice. She would sing around the house and in the car. Some of my fondest memories are of Virginia singing the kids to sleep when they were little. I tried to encourage Virginia to get into singing. I guess, she didn't think she was good enough – even though I think she was. Two of the songs I remember Virginia singing to the kids were “The Rose” (by Bette Midler) and “Longer” (by Dan Fogelberg).

Virginia liked lots of different types of music. As a young girl, she was a big fan of Paul Revere and the Raiders and (most especially of) Mark Lindsey. In the mid-seventies she really liked Barry Manilow (although I did not quite share her enthusiasm). Dan Fogelberg was always a favorite. During the late 80s and early 90s she started to really like some alternative world music (African) and Rhythm and Blues and piano instrumental.

Virginia also had pretty impressive voice and breath control. She could burp on command. Obviously, this is not something to do out in polite society, but the kids thought it was really cool. (Ben, apparently, has inherited this trait or ‘skill’.) Virginia also could make ‘monkey’ noises that were very impressive.

Tim: jewelry and art

Virginia liked jewelry. Not a huge surprise I suppose. She liked a variety of things, but she liked interesting and ‘funky’ things. When I would go on trips, I would try to find something interesting. A local artist, Bill Amundsen, did two of her favorite pieces. They were ‘funky’ style bolo ties that represented male and female fertility.

She also liked southwestern jewelry and art.

Tim: habits

Whenever Virginia wanted to open something, she would never get a knife or scissors. She would always open it with her teeth. This just drove me crazy. Most of the time it would work, but sometimes she would be gnawing on a package trying to get it open.

The other thing she used to do all the time was, when she was concentrating, she would be sticking her tongue out of the side of her mouth. I thought this was really cute.

Virginia had a scar on her lower lip – on the left side. This bothered her a bit and she would go over the spot with her tongue a lot. She had told me that she had lost some feeling there when she had gotten the scar.

Tim: hangovers

Virginia enjoyed social drinking through much of life together. She wasn't a fan of most beer, but liked wine and really liked margaritas. She liked the idea that she could always depend on me to get us home safely. During our first years of marriage, we had more opportunity to go out – especially on the weekends.

One very bizarre aspect of Virginia's physiology was that she had a one-day delay for hangovers. If we went out Friday night, she would get her hangover on Sunday. If it was Saturday night, she felt badly on Monday. And, on a few rare occasions we went out Friday and Saturday night. On those unfortunate times, Virginia had 2 days of feeling badly – Sunday and Monday.

Tim: television

When Virginia was little, she told me that she loved to watch Lassie and would always cry when the show was over. She normally didn't watch soap operas. She did watch talk shows – “Oprah” and “Regis and Kathy Lee.” Although after she got sick, she didn't like the “Regis and Kathy Lee” show very much.

We liked watching television together. Early in our married life, Virginia liked the Mary Tyler Moore show (and affected some of the decorating touches). During the 1980s, Virginia really liked Moonlighting (with Bruce Willis and Cybil Shepard) and Remington Steele (with Pierce Brosnan and Stephanie Zimbalist). We also liked WKRP and “Soap”. In the 90s we watched “Mad About You”.

Tim: diets

Virginia was usually worried about her weight. So, she would often go on diets. She did bounce around on her weight, but most of the time she was just fine – for my tastes. She got very skinny before we got married. She did look very good, but her monthly cycle coupled with the weight loss made her very emotional. I tried to convince her that it wasn't healthy for her to be that skinny. (I think she agreed.)

Tim: 2001 - A Space Odyssey

Virginia liked a lot of different things – movie wise. However, while she was dating Bruce, he had wanted to go out to see 2001. It was one of his favorite movies. I think he took her to it a couple of times. She developed a real dislike of it. (Which is a shame since I like it a lot too!)

Tim: Virginia's tail-bone

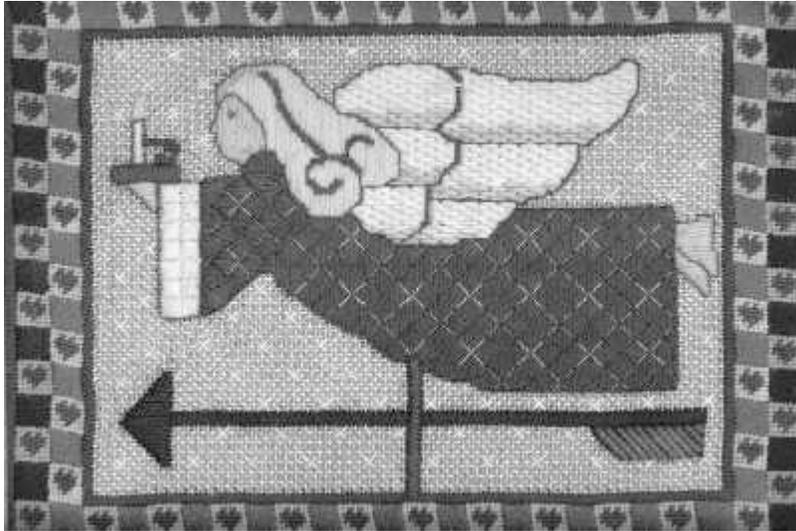
Virginia started to have some discomfort over the years in her rear-end. Joyce Turley said that she thought it was Virginia's pregnancy with Ben that triggered the pain. She went in to see Dr. Merkel about it. She had broken or hurt her tail-bone (the coccyx) at some point. (I think it was back at Iowa State in 1971 when she had fallen so hard on the ice.) He said he could "whack it off." She always said "He seems too anxious to do the surgery." Even though it bothered her, she never got it fixed. She could tell when a movie was really great because her rear-end didn't bother her during the movie.

Tim: bad dreams

Virginia had told me about some bad dreams that she used to have. In the dream, there would be a man watching her. I think she described him as being dressed in black, with piercing red eyes. These would terrify her. In the dreams, the man never moved or said anything. I don't remember her ever having these dreams after we got married.

Tim: crafts (cross-stitching and ceramics)

Virginia liked crafts. She especially enjoyed ceramics and cross-stitch. She did various pieces around the house. She also did some for friends. Virginia had stitched a piece for Jeff Turley's birth – which ended up in Kimberly's room.



Virginia had taken a ceramics class in town and liked it a lot. She did this for years. She made lots of Christmas ornaments, primarily. She found it a relaxing and social thing to do and liked the lady who ran it. However, the teacher's husband was somewhat of a jerk (according to Virginia). He was a heavyset guy who thought he was pretty hot stuff. He would come into the work area and stand in the doorway without a shirt on and put his arms up on the door jamb. Virginia thought he was ridiculous.

Tim: love and hate

Virginia was a really good person. In general, she got along with everyone. Rarely, she would develop a dislike for someone. The way she dealt with things like this was that she felt that love and hate were very closely related emotions – very strong emotions. So, her approach was that hate was not the opposite of love – indifference was the opposite of love. So if somebody did something bad enough – she stopped caring about them or thinking about them. I was always impressed by this and found that this was a very mature and strong way to deal with people who you disliked.

Tim: walking in the rain

When Virginia and I first started dating, it was spring time at Iowa State. It rained a lot. She wore a red raincoat that her mother had made for her. We walked close and slowly under her red umbrella. Because of all the rain, there were always earthworms on the sidewalks on campus. Virginia hated stepping on them so we would step or jump over them.

Actually, she hated just about everything about worms or anything that looked vaguely snake-like. When we lived in married student housing, her brother Chris came up to stay with us for a weekend. While he was there, a worm somehow made its way into the

apartment and got caught on the carpet. Chris and I were leaning over looking at the poor thing wriggling in a strand of carpet fiber. I called Virginia over to see it. She freaked out and ran so fast outside. She would not come back into the apartment until I had taken it out.

Tim: egg whites

Virginia, when she was making scrambled eggs, would fish out the cloudy material that clung to the egg yolk. I don't know where she picked that up from, but she always did it.

Tim: Hubble

Virginia really loved the movie "The Way We Were" with Robert Redford and Barbara Streisand. It really got to her. Shortly after this, I got her a funny-looking shaggy stuffed green mouse toy. She named it Hubble.

Tim: Virginia and snakes

Virginia has hated snakes for as long as I knew her. She was so scared of snakes that she would turn her head when one even came on television. At one point in school, someone put the class snake in her desk. She got to her desk and put her hand in to get something and found the snake. This really freaked her out.

In high school, she went on a field trip to St. Louis. While they were there, they went to the zoo and Virginia was one of the girls called on to be photographed with a giant boa constrictor. She wasn't very happy...

Favorite Recipes

Beef Bourguignon (Beef Burgundy)

This is from Virginia's mom - Lee.

6	strips bacon – ½” pieces	<i>leave out to reduce fat</i>
3	pounds lean beef, cut into 1 ½ inch cubes	
1	large carrot – sliced	
1	medium onion – sliced	
3	tablespoons flour	
2	cans beef broth	
2	cups Burgundy	
1	tablespoon tomato paste	
2	cloves minced garlic	
½	teaspoon thyme	
1	bay leaf	
1	pound mushrooms	
1	pound small white onions	

Cook bacon till crisp, remove. Brown meat in fat, remove. Brown carrots and onion. Spoon off fat and return beef and bacon to pan. Season with 1 teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Stir in flour. Add broth – save ½ cup. Add wine, tomato paste and herbs. Cover, simmer 3 hours. Slice mushrooms – sauté in 3 tablespoons butter and 2 tablespoons salad oil for 5 minutes. Remove. Brown onions. Add reserve broth and mushrooms and simmer covered for 10 minutes. Add to stew. Thicken stew with ¼ cup flour and 2 tablespoons butter creamed together. Roll to pea size and add to stew.

Serves 8-10

Virginia would serve this on egg noodles. She also used a crock-pot.

Sesame Pork Chops

This is also from Virginia's mom - Lee.

6	pork chops, ¾ inch thick	
¼	cup soy sauce	
1	tablespoon ketchup	
½	cup water	
3	tablespoons honey	
1	small onion, chopped fine	

¼	teaspoon ground ginger
1/8	teaspoon pepper
1	tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

Brown chops in small amount of fat. Place in 13 x 9 x 2 pan. (Don't salt the pork chops.) Combine remaining ingredients except sesame seeds. Pour over chops. Sprinkle on sesame seeds. Cover pan and bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 1 hour or until tender.

Serves 6.

Beef Stroganoff

	round steak
	fresh mushrooms
1	can cream of mushroom soup
1	can golden cream of mushroom soup
	sour cream (optional)

Cut steak into thin strips and fry. Add fresh mushrooms and soup. Add sour cream if desired. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour over noodles or rice.

Pot Roast

2 ½ - 3	pound pot roast
1	envelope of Lipton onion soup mix
4	small potatoes – quartered
2	carrots – cut into 1½ inch long pieces
1	can sliced mushrooms – drained
	salt
	pepper
	garlic salt

Place a baking bag in a baking pan. Put roast in bag. Sprinkle with soup mix. Arrange potatoes, carrots and mushrooms around roast. Close bag. Bake for 2 hours or until done.

Beef Brisket

Virginia made this a fair amount. She did this especially during the winter months.

1	fresh brisket of beef – lean
	garlic salt
	onion salt

	celery salt
2 ½	ounces of liquid smoke
2 ½	ounces of Worcestershire sauce
	barbecue sauce

Put the brisket into a tight fitting glass pan. Season with salt to taste. Pour the liquid smoke and Worcestershire sauce over the meat. Seal with aluminum foil. Put in refrigerator for at least 12 hours to marinate. Wrap meat in heavy aluminum foil leaving the juices with meat. Make sure foil is sealed tight. Put in a baking dish. Cook at 325 degrees Fahrenheit. After cooking for 5 hours, open foil and spread ¼ inch thick layer of barbecue sauce on meat. Reseal and cook for another 1 hour.

Lasagna

½	pound lasagna noodles
2	tablespoon cooking oil
2	cloves garlic
1	medium onion chopped
1	pound ground beef
2 ½	teaspoon salt
¼	teaspoon pepper
½	teaspoon rosemary or basil
1	tablespoon minced parsley
2	6 ounce cans of tomato paste
1 ½	cups hot water
½	pound mozzarella cheese
¼	cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cook noodles in salted water for 15 minutes. Drain noodles. Heat cooking oil in skillet. Cook garlic and onion in oil until soft. Add beef and seasonings and cook until crumbly. Add tomato paste and hot water. Simmer 5 minutes. Set aside in baking dish 9x13x2 inch baking dish. Put down thin layer of meat sauce, ½ noodles and ½ cheese. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Let cool for 10 minutes.

Iowa breakfast casserole

2	cups diced ham
½	pound grated sharp cheddar cheese
½	cup velveta cheese
12	slices of bread (white) – with the crust trimmed off
1	teaspoon dried onion
¼	pound butter

½	teaspoon salt
1	teaspoon dry mustard
4	cups milk
6	eggs

Use a 9x13 inch greased pan. Layer cheese and ham and bread and onion in 2 layers. Melt butter and pour over everything. Beat eggs, seasoning and milk together. Pour over ingredients in the pan. Take a fork and press the mixture to the bottom of the pan very gently. Cover with foil. Put in refrigerator overnight. Bake covered at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for an hour.

Serves 8-10 people.

Pepperoni skillet dinner

I think Virginia got this out of a magazine, but it turned into one of our favorite meals.

	olive oil
4-5	medium to large potatoes
	pepperoni
	shredded cheese (mozzarella and colby-jack or whatever)
	spaghetti sauce (usually Ragu regular)

Peel and slice the potatoes. Season with a little salt and pepper. Fry them in the olive oil in a large skillet until brown. Reduce the heat on the potatoes. You can pre-cook the pepperoni or not depending on how you like the pepperoni (crispy or not). Put the pepperoni on the potatoes. Cover with spaghetti sauce and then cheese. Put a lid on the skillet and let the cheese melt a bit.

Karen's Potatoes

Virginia made this a lot for special holiday meals (like Easter Sunday).

2	pound package of frozen hash brown potatoes (thawed)
10	ounces of shredded cheddar cheese
1	can cream of mushroom soup
8	ounces sour cream
½	cup melted butter
½	cup chopped onions
1	teaspoon salt
¼	teaspoon pepper
2	cups plain corn flakes

Mix all the ingredients (except for corn flakes) together. Place in a 9x13 inch pan. Top with crushed corn flakes. Pour an additional ¼ cup of melted butter over the corn flakes. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 45 minutes.

Mandarin Salad

This is also from the Colorado Cache Cookbook.

4-6 servings

½	cup sliced almonds
3	tablespoons sugar
½	head iceberg lettuce
½	head romaine lettuce
1	cup hopped celery
2	whole green onions, chopped
1	11-ounce can mandarin oranges, drained

Dressing:

½	teaspoon salt
	dash of pepper
¼	cup vegetable oil
1	tablespoon chopped parsley
2	tablespoons sugar
2	tablespoons vinegar
	dash of Tabasco sauce

In a small pan over medium heat, cook almonds and sugar, stirring constantly until almonds are coated and sugar dissolved. Watch carefully as they will burn easily. Cool

and store in air-tight container. Mix all dressing ingredients and chill. Mix lettuces, celery and onions. Just before serving add almonds and oranges. Toss with the dressing.

Tortilla roll-ups

Virginia made this for our parties all the time.

3	burrito sized white flour tortilla shells
½	small can of chopped mild green chilies
1	small can of chopped black olives
1	package of light Philadelphia cream cheese

Mix the chilies, olives and cream cheese. Spread this mixture in a tortilla shell and roll up. They turn out best when put in the refrigerator before cutting. Right before serving, take the rolls and slice into ½ inch slices. Serve with salsa.

Vidalia Onion Dip

Virginia and I had this at a friend's party (Don and Carolyn Porter) and it was really good.

2	cups mayonnaise
2	cups white cheese
2	cups chopped Vidalia onions

Mix together and bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 20 minutes. Serve with club crackers.

Denver chocolate sheet cake

This is from the Colorado Cache Cookbook.

Cake directions (12-16 servings)

2 1/3	cups flour
2	cups sugar
1	teaspoon baking soda
1	cup butter (can use some olive oil)
1 1/4	cups water
4	tablespoons cocoa
1/2	cup buttermilk
2	eggs, beaten
1	teaspoon vanilla extract

Mix flour, sugar and soda in bowl. Bring butter, water and cocoa to a boil in saucepan. Pour over dry ingredients. Mix thoroughly. Add buttermilk, eggs and vanilla. Beat well. Pour into a greased 9 x 13 inch pan and bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 30 minutes or until it tests done.

Frosting directions

1/2	cup butter (can use some olive oil)
4	tablespoons cocoa
6	tablespoons buttermilk
1	teaspoon vanilla extract
1	pound powdered sugar <i>better w/2 lbs. (4cups)</i>
1/2	cup chopped walnuts or pecans (didn't normally use)

To make frosting: heat butter, cocoa and buttermilk to boiling. Remove from heat and mix in vanilla, sugar and nuts. Note: A delicious, moist, chocolate cake. The frosting will be runny but it hardens as it cools. Cake freezes well. Good with peppermint ice cream. It is also good with a 7-minute frosting.

Red Devil's Food Cake

2	squares (2 ounce) baking chocolate
1/4	cup water
2	cups sifted flour
1	teaspoon baking soda
1/4	teaspoon salt
1/2	cup butter
1 1/2	cup sugar

3	eggs
1	cup buttermilk or sour cream
1	teaspoon vanilla

Melt chocolate with water and stir until thick. Sift flour, soda and salt together. Cream butter and sugar at medium speed until blended. Add dry ingredients to butter mixture. Add eggs, buttermilk and vanilla. Beat for 2 minutes. Add melted chocolate and blend at medium low speed. Pour into 2 greased and floured 8-9 inch round cake pans and bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 35-40 minutes

Harvey Wallbanger Cake

Virginia used to make this a lot when we were first married.

1	package yellow cake mix
1	package vanilla instant pudding
1	cup cooking oil
4	eggs
¼	cup vodka
¼	cup Galleono
¾	cup orange juice

Mix all of the ingredients and beat for 4 minutes. Pour into well-greased and floured Bundt pan. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 45-50 minutes. Frost with orange glaze.

Mom's Apple Crisp

6-8	cups sliced apples
1	teaspoon cinnamon
½	teaspoon salt
¼	cup apple cider or water
2	tablespoons of lemon juice
1	cup of caramels or caramel sauce

Add the lemon juice to the cider (or water). Soak the apples in the mixture. Drain the apples. Arrange the apples in the bottom of a 9x13 inch pan. Add cinnamon and salt. Toss the apples well. Put caramel on top of apples.

1 ½	cups flour
1 ¾	cup sugar
2/3	cup butter

Mix the ingredients together until they form a course mixture. Spread the mixture over the apples. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 40 minutes.

Chocolate Drop Cookies

Virginia made this for our parties all the time.

1 ¾	cup sifted flour
1	cup brown sugar
¼	teaspoon baking soda
1	teaspoon baking powder
½	cup butter (soft)
½	cup chopped nuts (optional)
1	egg
2	squares (2oz each) melted Baker's chocolate
½	cup milk
½	teaspoon vanilla (add to milk)

Sift flour, soda, baking powder and salt together. Place butter, sugar, and egg in large bowl and beat (on medium) until creamed. Add chocolate. Beat at the same speed until well blended. Add sifted dry ingredients alternately with milk and vanilla at low speed. This should form soft dough. Add nuts. Drop from teaspoon onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 10-12 minutes. Makes 4 dozen.

Chocolate Fondue

Virginia made this for our parties sometimes to use with strawberries and marshmallows.

6	squares (2 ounce) unsweetened chocolate
1	cup light cream
½	cup butter
1 ½	cup sugar
1/8	teaspoon salt
2	teaspoon vanilla

Put all the ingredients together except the vanilla in a pot. Heat the ingredients, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes until thick. Add vanilla and mix well.

Dippity-doodles

Virginia made this a lot – especially with the kids in the afternoons. It would often be mostly gone when I got home. Mandy remembers that Virginia would make these late at night. She would come out and ask for some and Virginia would say “now, just go back to bed, honey.” As she got older Virginia got softer and would let her stay up and have some.

½	cup butter
1 ½	cup graham cracker crumbs
1	can (14 ounce) sweetened condensed milk
1	package (6 ounce) semi-sweet and/or milk chocolate chips
1	package (6 ounce) butterscotch chips
	flaked coconut (optional)

Melt the butter and put it into a 9x13 inch pan. Sprinkle crumbs over the butter. Pour the condensed milk over the crumbs. Top with a mixture of the chocolate and butterscotch chips along with coconut (and nuts if you want). Press down gently. Bake at 325-350 degrees Fahrenheit for 25-30 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool before cutting.

French Silk Pie

Virginia loved this chocolate pie. They served it at Bishop’s cafeteria (where she worked) and at Poppin’ Fresh Pies (later called Baker’s Square). Whenever we were back in Des Moines, we would always go and eat there at least once (for the French Silk).

1	pie crust shell
1	cup butter – softened
1 ½	cup sugar
2	teaspoons vanilla
1 ½	squares (2 ounces each) melted unsweetened chocolate
4	eggs

Cream butter and sugar together. Add vanilla, chocolate and eggs, one at a time. Beat for 5 minutes after each egg. Fill crust and chill for several hours. Best when topped with whipped cream. (Often the crust is prepared with coconut or nuts and sugar and butter and cooked and chilled before the filling is put in.)

Margaritas – Pookie’s recipe

Virginia loved margaritas and really like the way her dad (Art a.k.a. Pookie) made them.

1	6 ounce can of frozen lemonade
1	6 ounce can of frozen limeade
1 ½	cans of tequila (using the lemonade/limeade cans)
2/3	can of triple sec
½	cup powdered sugar
1	egg white
	club soda

Blend all together.

Place 2 cups of mix and 14 ice cubes (for 4 drinks). Blend to slush. Add club soda to top of blender and mix together.

Thoughts about Virginia

Lee: Virginia

We are proud of the woman she grew to be. She was a good person, wife and mother. She faced her illness with determination and dignity. We are comforted knowing she had a good life, a devoted husband and wonderful children.

Amanda: The Heart

When it comes to memories of my mother there are so many. She will always be my best friend in the whole world. The only thing keeping from breaking down is all of the memories of her. My earliest memory of my mother that I can remember is when we lived in the house on Silverthorne and I was down stairs drawing and coloring a heart for my mom. I worked so hard on that heart. Then mom came down stairs and I gave it to her and in that moment of love both of us hugged each other and cried, it was a great moment, it was a good cry. I miss her so much, but she is what I am today. And she married a wonderful man (my Papa) who has done an excellent job. I am so proud of him. I love you Mama, you will always be in my HEART.

Your daughter

Vickie: For Junie, with love

For Junie,
with
Love

Junie was the oldest, the first to do everything. The first to go to school, to date, to drive, to go to a dance, to marry and move away, and the first of us to be a parent. Being eighteen months younger than her, she made many milestones in my life easier by her example. She was never afraid of going to school. If she wasn't afraid why should I? She always seemed eager to tackle the next adventure in life. She taught me more than she ever knew.

Growing up, I am sure she found it a drag to have younger siblings that she would have to be responsible for. Having to do things with us she would rather not. (Trust me she would let us know). There was one time (I find it hard to believe it was only once) she was driving some friends and me to school. Suddenly, she drove off leaving me standing in the driveway. I don't remember why. But I do remember thinking she had to come back for me because she would have to explain it to Mom and Dad. Being mad at your younger sister was not worth losing the keys to the car! But most of the time she didn't seem to mind and would have a great time with us. We were room mates for many years, and the music of Paul Revere and the Raiders filled our room. She had an awful bad crush on Mark Lindsay, the lead singer. His pictures covered her half of our room. We even attended some of their concerts together with our friends. After one concert, I remember driving to the hotel we were told they were staying. She was so disappointed that we never found them. Sharing a bedroom was not always a positive experience, there were many times there was a line down the middle of the room, sometimes real, sometimes the no entry zones were just indicated. So in tuned to our individual space, we could often discern a breach of our zone without having witnessed it.

We almost worked together one summer at the A & W Drive-Inn. We had applied together, and had both been hired. I had applied for several jobs at the time, and before our starting date at A & W I had been offered a better job. So I called A & W to inform them that I would not be available for the job. Junie still showed up on the starting date and ended up working the whole place by herself. She quit that night. I have often wondered what it would have been like if we had worked there together. For some reason, I picture a food fight in the kitchen.

When she left home to attend Iowa State University, we wrote each other a couple of times and I went to visit her for Veishea. That was the first time I met Tim. He was standing outside the window of her dorm room in the pouring rain, waiting for her to let him in the building. My first thought was that he must have it pretty bad for her. Waiting in the rain, and he wasn't even mad. Tim was a welcome relief after Bruce, her previous boyfriend. The first time I met him he was dancing like a wild man in the middle of a dance floor. My first thought about him was; you've got to be kidding me.

After her freshman year at ISU Junie moved back home for a short time. During this time Mom, Dad, Cindy and Chris had gone out of town for a Drill Team Show in which Cindy was to participate. They had barely been gone 2 hours when Junie and I (after a trip to the grocery store to buy the required junk food) locked ourselves out of the house. Our bedroom window was at ground level and Junie discovered that it wasn't latched. I walked around the corner of the house just in time to see her legs slide in the window after having gone in head first. A horrendous crashing sound was followed by expletives as she dove over a desk and chair right below the window. We were back in!

Being away at school Junie had gotten used to a lot of independence and very quickly found an apartment nearby. I would go visit her and swim in the pool at the complex. By the time Junie and Tim got married on November 23, 1974 we were becoming closer. Our sisterhood was becoming a friendship. She was living back at ISU in married student housing.

Nick and I got married September 13, 1975. Junie and I loved being in each others weddings. Tim and Junie came to Des Moines almost every weekend so we saw each other quite often. About this time the whole family began taking skiing trips. Mostly to Minnesota at first, then after Junie and Tim moved to Colorado we skied the mountains. Junie skied with much abandon. Straight down the hill, her opened jacket flapping in the wind. The guys would usually ski the black runs and us girls pretty much stayed on the blue runs. We would meet up with them and they would tell us about a black run that was so nice, we would just have to try it. They would take us to this black run and we would end up skiing down a cliff. After that, whenever they would tell us about this really nice black run we wouldn't believe them. One afternoon we were all skiing together and Tim had brought the video camera. Tim taped everyone skiing down Basher, one of my favorite runs at Steamboat. Tim turned the camera over to Junie and me to tape him and whoever went back up the run with him. Neither one of us had much experience with the camera and had difficulty determining when it was recording and when it wasn't. It is important that I mention Junie and I often skied with Hershey Kisses in our pockets. For us it was as necessary ski equipment as the skis themselves. On the tape you can hear us discussing if it is recording, you see snow and in perfect focus Hershey Kiss wrappers around our feet. We usually ended the ski day in the Chalet enjoying a hot chocolate drink called the Wobbly Moose. We took family ski trips for many years. Great trips, wonderful memories.

In December, 1979 marked the arrival of Amanda. I'm an aunt! She was such a pretty baby, and so much fun. Junie loved being a Mom, and she was great at it. Our daughter Angela was born November 23, 1982, Junie and Tim's Anniversary. I told her that since I had a baby on their anniversary, she could have one on ours. Ben must have wanted his own day, arriving four months later in March, 1983. We are Moms together!

We would get together as often as we could. All of us taking trips back and forth across Nebraska. We would call each other all of the time, and we would have so much fun when we were together. Drinking margaritas, shopping, dining out, going to movies.

Did I mention drinking margaritas? Almost every visit I made to Fort Collins included dinners at Rio, a favorite Mexican restaurant of ours that makes the best Margaritas. Hanging above the bar is a sign in bright neon letters, 3 DRINK LIMIT. We viewed this as more of a challenge than an actual limit. Certainly they couldn't be serious. Only 3 margaritas! What amateurs.

In between family trips to Fort Collins, Angela and I would go there for visits. We would pile the kids in her van and take them horseback riding, swimming at the beach at Horsetooth Reservoir and of course shopping. One time, we had taken them shopping at Pick-and-Save. They made their purchases and we sent them out to the van so we could pay for our items. Less than 5 minutes later, Junie and I return to the van to find Mandy in handcuffs, Ben looking guilty and Angela in the back seat looking like a deer in headlights. Our first thought was where in the world did they get handcuffs? Ben had purchased a detective set which included handcuffs. Poor Mandy was getting upset and wanted freed now. Junie asked Ben for the key. Ben's response, "Key? What key?" By now Junie and I could not even look at each other we were fighting the urge to laugh so hard. We did not want to laugh and upset Mandy any further. We decided we would have to break the cuffs to get them off. That is when Ben got upset. He wanted his cuffs back in one piece. Mandy is getting madder by the minute. Finally, Junie was able to free her without breaking the cuffs. We could barely suppress our laughter any longer. It was hysterical.

Junie would also visit Des Moines with the kids. Sometimes when the kids were younger we would drop them off with a play group so we could shop. After dropping them off and before heading to the mall, we would stop at Baker's Square to get a slice of French Silk pie and, of course, a Diet Coke. (No sense in wasting valuable calories on a soft drink when they could be more wisely invested in the pie) Now, we were ready to shop.

Over the years ski vacations gave way to warmer climate destinations. In November, 1990, we took a four day family cruise out of Miami to two stops in the Bahamas. We had a great time soaking in the sun, snorkeling, shopping and going to the ship's casino. Junie wasn't one for the slot machines or any of the gambling, but she did enjoy watching Cindy and me feeding the one arm bandit. We would drink Yellow Birds, I'm not sure what was in them, orange juice mixed with something. They were great. The kids had a wonderful time, all three of them were beach bums. We celebrated Junie and Tim's anniversary and Angela's birthday on this trip. We liked the warm weather vacations so much we took a 7 day cruise in November, 1993. At the time it seemed to be a very special family vacation, a once in a lifetime kind of trip. In retrospect, little did I know how really special it was. I remember meeting up with Junie, Tim and the kids on the main stairway of the ship the day we all arrived. We were all excited and goofy, she greeted me with a hug and a leg wrapped around my legs Groucho Marx style. Junie had brought a denim hat with a large sunflower on the front, it was the hat of the trip showing up in many of the cruise ship daily videos. Another anniversary and birthday were celebrated. The night of the spectacular midnight buffet, Junie, Mandy, Cindy, Nick, Angela and I waited in line for at least a half hour. When we got through the line we all looked at each others plates, Junie and I had grabbed everything chocolate, Mandy had

only an apple. One night in our cabin we started talking about scuba diving and the development of equipment that made it possible. Nick is a scuba diver and mentioned that they had used goats in pressure testing for a condition known as the bends. Which in this group started jokes about exploding goats. Trying to imagine the shocked look and dumbfounded statements of scientists when the goat, “She go boom”. Laughing ‘til we cried, it was so funny. We had so many beautiful ports-of-call, San Juan, St. Thomas, St. John, Guadeloupe, Grenada, Caracas and Aruba. This cruise was wonderful in and of itself, cherished now because it was the last time Junie would vacation with us.

Junie told me many times how lucky she knew she was. A husband and children she adored, a wonderful family, beautiful home and great friends. She was living a fulfilling life and I don’t think there was much she would have changed. She did wish she could have lived closer to the rest of the family. Because of that family gatherings were even more special, always creating something memorable.

During her illness her friends and neighbors would bring dinners to the house. Visiting often and chauffeuring Mandy and Ben when needed. She asked me how she could ever thank them for everything they were doing. I don’t think I could get her to understand that they were thanking her. All of her generosity was returning to her in kind. She was a wonderful friend and valued her friends as extended family.

Smart, caring, giving, interesting, outgoing, headstrong and funny. She was uniquely herself and she was my best friend. Not a day goes by that I don’t think about her and appreciate what a tremendous gift her sisterhood is to me. Still teaching me, always teaching me. Forever with me.

Vickie

Susan Ison: Virginia

Virginia:

A roller skating rink was where we first met. I'll always remember that Roger, Wendi and I had just moved to Colorado a few weeks before. We were invited to a party by some other "newcomers." I hadn't been roller skating since I fell on my tailbone at age 12 and spent two days recuperating on the sofa, and even before that it had never been one of my favorite activities. However, I was in no position to be picky, since I knew no one in Colorado. I don't remember a single thing from that party except meeting Virginia. It only took a short time for us to discover what we had in common: we loved to shop; we tended to be constant "critics" (of everything and everybody); the clever repartee gave us extreme pleasure; we were decisive; we loved to read; we loved our families (immediate and extended) and loved to dislike the exceptions; we were undereducated, but full of ourselves nevertheless, and planned to return to school; we liked to decorate our houses (though I was a distant second in that regard); and, we were happy and enjoyed a good time. In the current vernacular: we bonded. I don't remember any specifics immediately after that time. We started spending time together and it just flowed. Unlike some friendships, it didn't take a while to "connect;" it was just there from that time forward.

The things that we wanted to do for ourselves, like family and school, took larger and larger chunks of our time as the years passed. But I always knew she was there for me and felt a strong need to touch base with her from time to time. The adage: "Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold," is right on. I had one of my "need to connect" urges right before a business trip May, 1994. Since Virginia had gone back to school, spare time was at a premium. She had gotten very organized about studying, family time and friend time; it was hard to make things work sometimes. I will forever be grateful that we managed to make a lunch date work before my trip. Virginia, Elizabeth and I met at Alfalfa's. During lunch she updated us on her health problems, which she said had recently been diagnosed as a severe sinus infection. She was cheerful, but looked tired. I didn't think much about it with her schedule; she had a right to be tired.

I was staying at my mother's house while I attended a conference in Virginia. Aside from shock, fear, and disbelief after Tim's call, I wanted, more than anything, to get back to Colorado and see her. I told her that when I saw her in the hospital for the first time, and she looked at me like I was loony. The implication was: why would anyone want to get near this. I don't think she ever understood how much of a gift it was, sick or well, to be with her.

Humor was such an ever present force in Virginia's life and it served her, and her friends, well through her illness. One day we went shopping at the Outlet Mall. She was walking some and using a wheelchair some, so Tim loaded it into the van for us. This was new territory for all of us. I got it out and we took turns pushing it, Virginia riding occasionally, while we shopped. When we got back to the van I couldn't figure out how

to fold it up again. I banged, pushed and prodded; then Virginia banged, pushed and prodded. We were getting nowhere. In frustration we looked at each other and she said, "Well, I only have half a brain." I cracked up and said, "Well, I should have at least a half, too; between the two of us we should be able to figure this out." We did get it folded eventually, but it was very embarrassing as passersby watched us struggle.

I wish I'd been a little faster on the uptake in reading Skippy Legs and All to her, too. As Virginia slept more and talked less my visits seemed to me like endless babbling (mine). I wanted to talk, I needed to talk, and had a hard time just sitting there in silence. Besides, shooting the breeze about mundane, everyday matters seemed really stupid under the circumstances. I remember Elizabeth telling me she asked Virginia one day if the wood blinds in her house got dusty easily and if it bothered her. Virginia said, "Not anymore."

So one day I suddenly thought, if I'm going to babble why not make it interesting and read a book. Skippy Legs and All is one of my favorites. I thought the ribald, weird sense of humor would be appealing. As I recall it doesn't take much more than a page or two to enter the realm of risqué. Virginia appeared to be sleeping when I came in. I told her what I was going to do, but got no acknowledgement. I read a couple of paragraphs. She opened her eyes and turned to look at me, but didn't say anything. I couldn't tell what the look meant so I asked her if she wanted me to keep reading; she nodded yes and closed her eyes. It was our last eye to eye contact. I read to her several times more, the last time a few hours before she died.

Our last outing was in July, 1995. We had been planning for weeks to drive out to Pawnee Buttes. The original plan was to see the spring flowers, but it rained and rained and rained. Neither of us had been there before and we sure didn't want to get stuck in the mud somewhere in the middle of nowhere. So we had to keep postponing it. Virginia was getting worse fast then and I was beginning to fear we wouldn't get to make the trip. We found a day that would work, but Virginia had to be back for a doctor's appointment in the afternoon. I'm so glad we made it. It was a very peaceful relaxing drive. Virginia fell asleep a couple of times and apologized. I told her it was just like riding with Roger (which is true). When we got there I asked if she wanted me to take her on the trail in the wheelchair a ways. She said she was concerned about rattlesnakes. I guess after what she'd been through she wasn't taking any chances and who can blame her. When we got back to the house she put her head on Tim's shoulder and you could see her anguish. She couldn't face going to the doctor and Tim told her they wouldn't go. We all were afraid there wouldn't be too many more trips.

The night before Virginia died I woke up suddenly at 4 a.m. I awoke suddenly and had the impression that I'd just heard a loud noise that had startled me awake. However, Roger, who can hear a mosquito two rooms away, was still sound asleep. I walked around and looked for things, found nothing, and eventually went back to sleep. Only after Virginia died did I discover that Joyce and Cindy had awakened at the same time, Joyce from an owl and Cindy from a falling picture. I remember telling Tim about it and it upset him quite a bit. He said, "Why didn't I hear anything." Only then did I realize

that I, too, would have been upset if I hadn't heard anything. In our hearts Joyce, Cindy and I know it meant something precious to us--but Virginia loved Tim best of all.

Joyce Turley: Virginia

Virginia has once again given me confidence in facing the unknown future: in this case, the experience of death. She did not leave us, kicking and screaming and begging not to die. She showed me it can be a peaceful and acceptable experience. Her death helped me slow down and take note of what's important in my life. Her generous acceptance of my help during her illness showed me she knew how deeply I cared for her. And she allowed me to believe I was helping her cope and I could finally feel I was giving something back to this friend/sister I admired so much.

Cindy Hoxmeier: Virginia

I have very warm feelings of gratitude for the friendship I had with Virginia. All too infrequently we make friends that last a lifetime. Our lifetime was only eight short years. But in that time we did manage to have a lot of fun, great conversations, and most importantly were able to share in each others normal everyday life.

Virginia and I met in my “Mother” years. When I was physically and emotionally exhausted by spending life pregnant, nursing and caring for three kids. Actually I had just had Alex, my second son, and Charlie was 2 ½ years old. Ben and Charlie are just 9 months apart and soon the street between our houses was blazed with a trail only kids can make between their playmates homes. These two boys would spend days together much to their mothers’ delight, and then of course would need to spend days apart—a terrific friendship they enjoy to this day. My kids have been instrumental in bringing some of the best people into our lives. Being neighbors and having little kids wasn’t the only things Virginia and I had in common we were soon to discover. We both hailed from the Midwest—Iowa and Nebraska -and traveled there to visit family. A lot of our past experiences were similar and we enjoyed a lot of the same things, i.e., shopping and chocolate! We were oldest daughters, stay at home Moms, and needed to have an adult conversation in the middle of the day! We had also both worked in the medical field and so knew many of the same people. The best part of our times together was the laughter. Her sense of humor was addicting and she was just plain fun to be with. We could talk about anything - usually husbands, kids, other neighbors, decorating, cooking—nothing earth shattering just good, fun, comforting conversation. Something I cherished and consider very lucky to have had. It was a friendship I had hoped would last a long time. If being Virginia’s friend taught me anything it’s that a lifetime can be very short. She was a great organizer and instigator of her theme parties, trips to Santa Fe with the girls, and Moms Night Out were always fun and well attended. For stay at home Moms the potential for insanity is very high so those rare friendships that share a common bond are essential. Virginia was just that friend. We had many of the same likes and dislikes but our family was the most important thing in our lives—that’s why we were home. We were able to share in each others normal everyday life as well as the hard to handle parts of it. Even when my friend was sick she was able to laugh, mostly at me trying to help her, but also at herself. It seems odd to some people but I’m thankful I could share some of the pain in Virginia's last year and a half because we had shared so much that was good. It is part of the friendship cycle - the happy with the sad - I feel I was able to complete the circle with her.

Her death was literally a shattering blow. In the early morning hours as Butch and I were sound asleep the very large picture above our bed came crashing down shattering glass all over both of us. Neither of us were hurt, just stunned and surprised. It wasn’t until later that morning that Tim called to say Virginia had died. I’ll always believe the timing of her death and the picture crashing on us are related in some way. Her wacky sense of humor just makes me think she had something to do with it.

After her death I dealt with the sadness and despair of losing a good friend but over the years I have replaced those feelings with thankfulness for our time together. I have a gladness for the times we shared. I see her in many things including her beautiful children, paint techniques on my walls that she taught me, and the picture above my bed (the glass has not been replaced.) It all makes me smile and feel a little special.

Tim: Virginia

Virginia was an incredible person.

She had a fantastic smile – it would just light me up to see it.

She had a very strong presence – you really knew somebody was there.

She was funny and nice.

She was smart and witty.

She had blue eyes and little toes.

She had brown hair and a little scar on her lip.

She was very genuine and real.

She had a sense of culture and style, but was very natural and unassuming.

She could rhyme amazingly when she was tired.

She was a great mother with, usually, enormous reserves of patience.

She was willing to try just about anything.

She was a warm and caring friend.

She was not religious. She stuck out her tongue when she concentrated. She worried about her weight. She argued and disagreed with authority figures. She occasionally got nervous. She was math-phobic. She almost never shouted or cursed.

She was beautiful and fit
just perfectly under my chin.

She loved chocolate and margaritas.

She loved decorating and travel.

She loved archeology and anthropology.

She loved to argue and discuss.

She loved movies and theater.

She loved parties and skiing.

And she loved me.

Memorial

Virginia Lee Heckle Mikkelsen

I have been thinking that many of you who have helped us did not know Virginia or only knew one part of who she was. Although impossible, I want to at least try to communicate a sense of Virginia.

Virginia was born May 3rd, 1953 to Art and Lee Heckle in St. Louis. Her father, Art, was away in the army in Korea at the time. He was worried about not being able to get back and see his new baby. After the war, Art and Lee had two more girls - Vickie and Cindy. After a few years, when Virginia was 6, they moved from St. Louis to Des Moines, Iowa. 6 years later, Chris, Virginia's brother was born.

Virginia went to Catholic primary school and an all girls Catholic high school (St. Joseph's Academy). In junior high school, she was class president. At this time she got in an interesting struggle because she followed her conscience about an issue - and was at odds with the rest of her class. (Virginia was not easily swayed by external pressures - she followed her internal compass.) She always said that she got a good education from Catholic school. She also said that she was a recovering Catholic because of it, too. As a teenager, she was a big Paul Revere and the Raiders fan (especially Mark Lindsay).



After she graduated, she went up to Ames where I met her. I commented that all the good ones were taken. She was dating someone in my dormitory house - I was in the room next to his. Virginia, her boy friend and I started to see a lot of each other as friends. Years later, Art and Lee both commented that letters from Virginia started to mention some guy named Tim. After we were married she admitted to me that she had gotten my schedule and started showing up after my classes because she felt something special, too.

Our first date was on April 15th, 1972. We went to see an old movie in Des Moines. We came back up to Ames, and I kissed her - I can still remember the exact place - a stop sign behind C.Y. Stephens auditorium. After this we went to a restaurant and just looked into each others eyes. Virginia moved back to Des Moines after her freshman year

because she didn't know what she wanted to do quite yet. She went to work for an insurance company. We dated for a year or two. I put a lot of miles on the car and time on the phone. We had started out as best friends and quickly fell in love - true love. I can't imagine anything better.

Early in 1974, she told me that she had bought a wedding dress (I hadn't asked yet, though we both knew it was going to happen.) I asked her that spring on the anniversary of our first date. We got married on November 23rd, 1974 - right after my finals. We went to Omaha for a few days for our honeymoon. We could not afford a fancy honeymoon, but it was nice.



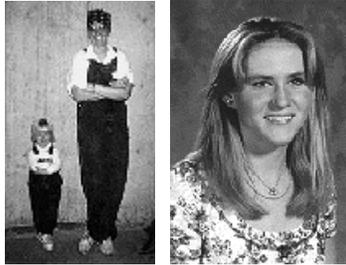
We moved into married student housing and I finished my last two quarters and got my degree in computer science. Virginia worked in Ames for the city and at the hospital in various jobs until I was out of school.

In 1976, we went out to Oregon for 6 months as part of a work study program during my masters. Virginia had gone out with the idea that she would be able to relax and have sort of a vacation. She got a clue the first day when she went out to sun-bathe. It started to rain. She came in. It cleared up. She went out. It started to rain. This went on for a while and then she noticed that all the other people just stayed out in the rain. We found that Virginia needed the sun.

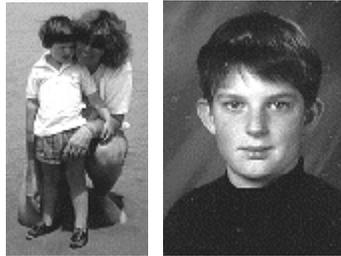
Fortunately, after graduation in 1977, I got a great job offer from HP in Fort Collins (which is sunny). We made a lot of great friends and enjoyed our new employed life-style (going out with our friends, skiing, hiking, dancing, skating). We loved to go to movies. Virginia really liked "The Way We Were" and we both liked old movies (like "Philadelphia Story" and "The Thin Man"). She read voraciously - ranging from classics to contemporary. She enjoyed Thomas Hardy through to Tom Robbins, John Grisham, Tony Hillerman, Anne Tyler, Anne Rice and Orson Scott Card.

Virginia started going to school a little and got back into working. She ended up working as the office manager for a group of anesthesiologists. We moved out of our apartment and into our first house in 1978. Virginia did a great job at getting us into great houses. She also had a flair for interior design - which she got from her mom. She always seemed to be ahead of the next fashion or design trend. In the last 10 years, almost every year, she would go down to Santa Fe with her girl friends on a major shopping expedition - and come back laden with southwestern pots and art and accessories. This was another aspect of Virginia - she loved to shop and was very good at it. She was an aggressive, careful shopper and always got great value - she took a lot of pride in this.

Virginia was pregnant early in 1979. We moved into a bigger house in July - getting ready for the big event. And on December 27th 1979, Amanda was born. Mandy's head wouldn't fit and had to be delivered by C-section. But, Mandy was fine - and gorgeous. We were both incredibly proud and happy.



Ben was born on March 28th, 1984. Virginia was sick with morning sickness a good part of pregnancy. Just like Mandy, his head was too big to fit. But, since we were ready for it, the C-section went very smoothly. Ben was another great looking baby.



Our life changed drastically with children and the responsibility that they brought, but we still had a lot of fun with the two of us, with the four of us and with our friends. We went on various vacations (including Disney-world), trips (like Europe) and cruises (to the Caribbean).



We had always had lots of parties. Sometimes there was a theme (bad movie, event, holiday), sometimes not. Virginia would always get a little nervous right before the party, but things would always go great. We had a great life. Virginia would comment at times that things were too good - she almost seemed to be expecting something. Virginia had gone back to school to get her degree in 1990. With the kids school and my going back as well, the entire family was in school.

In early 1994, Virginia was almost done with her sociology degree. But, she was starting to feel tired and having headaches. On May 13th, after her finals, she collapsed with a hemorrhage from a lemon-sized high-grade brain tumor. The doctor did not paint a positive outlook - only a year or two with probable mental dysfunction and left side

paralysis. She briefly regained consciousness and I asked if she wanted the time. Virginia said "Yes, I want the one to two years." As bad as all this was, Virginia did come out of the operation quickly and regained use of all but her left arm. She had all of her memories and mental skills. We went in to this knowing the range of outcomes and kept a hopeful and positive approach. Virginia underwent radiation which seemed to help. By the end of the year, she was doing well. The remaining tumor had shrunk and she was driving and fully functional. We had our 20th wedding anniversary at Rick and Joyce Turley's (our friends) house.

At the start of 1995, things took a turn for the worse and the tumor grew again. We were able to slow the growth, but over the course of the year, things got worse. Through all of this, she was the same person. She kept doing things with the kids. She kept in close contact with her friends. Even in July, she went out with Susan Ison (another friend) to see the wild-flowers at Pawnee Buttes.

Around August, Virginia was sleeping most of the time. (However, even when you thought she was sleeping, she would often chime in with a usually humorous comment.) Early in September, our friends, Cindy and John Hoxmeier, had arranged for Virginia's few remaining graduation requirements to be waived. We told her that she had gotten her degree and she responded, in her normal humor, with "no way". Virginia died on September 14th. She had not been in pain and retained her sense of humor and sense of self until the end.

In early 1994, she wrote the following about her values: *"I value my health and my family's health, both emotional and physical. I value a happy family life, those relationships are valued and cherished above all others. I value giving my children a good life, with good memories and a solid foundation for them to use to build their own lives. I value my friendships and my husband above all friends. In myself, I value, intelligence, loyalty, honesty, kindness, assertiveness, fairness, trust, reliability."* She followed these values all through her life.



She was my love, a great mother, a great friend and a caring, intelligent, wonderful and funny person. Virginia should have had more time, but she still had a great life - if only in 42 years. She will leave an immense emptiness in our lives but not in our hearts.

Tim Mikkelsen
October 15th, 1995

