

## Rhoda and Roy Benedict Family

Rhoda Jacobs married Roy Benedict on 3 June 1961, one year after graduation from high school. My goal in life at that time was to get married and have a family. That was a typical view of many girls of the 50's.

Our first child was born on 15 May 1962. After being in labor most of the afternoon and not realizing it, I drove myself to the Dr. Wainscott's office for a scheduled appointment and he told me I'd better get to the hospital. I called Courtney & Plummers to have Roy meet me there. I arrived at the hospital about 4 o'clock and Allen was born by 5:30. Roy just made it to the hospital on time. In those days mothers had to go through the labor and delivery alone. The husbands and fathers were not allowed beyond the doors to the labor rooms. We were so happy to have a son who could carry on the family name. Roy was such a proud father. We reversed Roy's name and called our son Allen Roy because Roy was a junior and didn't care for the nickname he had for years.(Boogie) Allen was born with club feet and had to wear casts on his feet already when he came home from the hospital. It corrected his problem with the help of wearing corrective shoes and night braces until he was about one.

One year later our first daughter was born on the first day of summer, 21 June 1963. She was a beautiful baby and we were so happy to have a daughter too. She had a little round face and beautiful blue eyes. Susan was born with club feet also and had to wear casts home from the hospital. The correction wasn't total so when she was a year old the Orthopedic surgeon put the casts on again. It didn't slow her down a bit. She crawled around dragging the casts on her feet. She would stand up by the furniture and throw one leg up and pull herself on to the furniture. She had a spirit of toughness and perseverance as a baby that has carried through into her adulthood. She always worked very hard in school. She was a sweet child who always tried to make her parents very proud of her. As Sue grew up she had a tendency to look after her older brother and younger sisters. If she thought they would have trouble fighting their battles she would fight for them. Susan played the alto Saxophone in band just as I did in school. She was in Girl Scouts until her senior year of high school. She earned most of the scouting awards. Sue went to the mountains in New York state, hot air ballooning, for a Wider Opportunity when she was in senior scouts. Her adventure was written up in the National Geographic Kids World Magazine pictures and all. She was a good hurdler on the track team in high school and was only a few seconds away from going to state. Susan got a job at Kim Tech, a division of Kimberly-Clark when she was a senior in high school. After graduating she got a permanent job in the credit department of Kimberly-Clark. She has worked at many different jobs in the Corporation and improved her computer skills along the way. She will now be working in the Quality Assurance lab as a technician because of the flexibility of work time in that area. She will

be able to work around her children's schedules better than when she worked as a secretary.

Sue met her husband David Trefethren when she was a junior in high school. She was attending a play at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis with her scout troop and stayed at the same hotel as a group of boys from Duluth were staying at while attending their state basketball tournament. They started to correspond and when he graduated from high school he moved down to Neenah and got a job as a busboy at Butte Des Morts country club. After a short time he took a job at Becher Plastics in Menasha and when they were married he got a job at Kimberly-Clark, first at the Developmental Facility North, then at Lakeview and now at Badger Globe. Sue and Dave have two wonderful children. Their first son is Willian born 14 December 1984. Andrew is their second son born 12 November 1987. They have built a beautiful home in the town of Greenville on five and a half acres of land they own.

Our third child was born one and a half years later on 3 January 1965. Dawn was expected on 23 December so after Christmas, Dr. Wainscott induced labor but she was stubborn enough to wait until Jan 3 to be born. We always kidded her about cheating us out of our tax deduction in the beginning and the end. She was born right after the first of the year and got married the same year she graduated from College so she cheated us out of that deduction too. Dawn always strived to be the best at everything she did in her studies and in sports. She was in Girl Scouts until she was a senior in high school. She also earned most of the religious and merit awards. She went out to Wyoming with her Senior troop. Dawn was on the Track team and also the Volleyball team. She was a good hurdler but hated long distance races. She also played the flute in band.

Dawn attended the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee to get a degree in Occupational Therapy. The year she graduated from college she married a high school sweetheart, Joe Syring. They lived out in Montrose, Colorado the first two years of their marriage. She worked at the hospital with children who had drug and alcohol problems and he was the manager of a Burger King in Montrose. While they lived out there, we had an adventuresome trip elk hunting in the Rocky mountains. They loved the mountains but got homesick living so far away. They returned to this area and bought a home in Green Bay because Dawn had a job at Bellin Hospital there. Shortly after that, Joe left Dawn for another woman. She was devastated for quite some time.

Dawn has since gotten a job with the Neenah school system working with physically and mentally handicapped children. She has met a wonderful person named Chris Pieper. He works as an engineer for Kimberly-Clark. He has spent the last two years getting his masters degree at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. They plan to get married down in Arkansas after the festival on April 20, 1992.

Our last child was born two years later on 2 February 1967. I had my longest labor with her. I started in labor early in the morning and had her at supper time. Most of the staff was out to

lunch and didn't call the Dr. on time, because they didn't think I was ready to have her yet. The nurse delivered her just as the Dr. got there. She was born healthy and strong. Karen was a real good baby and a happy go lucky child without a care in the world. She had her older brother and sisters to spoil her so she usually had her way. To this day I hear how we spoiled her, although we always tried to treat our children the same and fairly. I think after four children parents mellow out a little and aren't quite so strict with the rules. Karen was more like Allen. She was a day dreamer and liked to enjoy life. She always got respectable grades in school but she didn't want to cut into her play time too much. She played the clarinet in the band and later joined the choirs in high school. She has a very good singing voice. She also joined the Guitar group in the Church Choir. Karen was a Girl Scout for about 8 years, and also earned many merit and religious awards. She was a long distance hurdler on the high school track team. I would go to their track meets and sometimes get all choked up with emotion watching them working so hard. Karen wasn't like her sisters, she excelled in the long distance hurdles.

Karen was a co-op student in her senior year of high school, working in the credit department of Kimberly-Clark. She didn't care for that type of work very much and left there. She took a job as office manager at Krueger Hardware in Neenah. That is where she met her daughters father Gregg Geurts. He is the son of a girl that grew up next door to our family, Marianne Kuepper. Their daughter Amanda was born 3 November 1989. They chose not to marry but have a very good relationship for their daughters sake. Gregg's family helps care for Amanda much of the time while Karen is working. Gregg is getting a degree in engineering at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

Karen rents the house we bought from Roy's folks when they retired and moved up to Port Wing, Wisconsin. She has a very good friend named Steve Nollenburg whom she is planning on marrying. Amanda is now two years old and is a very smart, darling little girl. Karen now works at another corporation in the area named Outlook Graphics. They print and mail literature all over the country.

When I was a senior in high school, my mother and father built a cottage west of Tomahawk on Pier Lake. I was going with Roy at that time and he came up some weekends to help us build it. The whole family enjoyed many happy hours at that cottage. At times there was so many of us up there we almost had to stack up to sleep. On holiday weekends we all went up there. We all loved to hike, fish, and swim. Many times while we were hiking down the old logging roads we would see deer, or sometimes hear a bear. Most weekends there was work to do before the fun started, but we'd willingly do that so we could enjoy the rest of the weekend. We cleared the weeds from around the dock so we could enjoy the nice sandy beach. We would catch many tiny fish off the dock and mom and dad cleaned them all and cooked them before we went home. Once in a while we would go down to the rapids

near the cottage and catch many sun fish, crappies, and perch. The grandchildren would often put their life preservers on and go out to row the boat for grandpa Jacobs while he fished. Sometimes mom even fried fish for breakfast.

Deer hunting and Thanksgiving at the cottage got to be a real family tradition. It was always the first time we could go ice skating in the fall. The turkey dinner with all the trimmings was a challenge because of space, but we managed, and loved it. Mom would roll out the pie crust for about 4 pumpkin pies, stuff the turkey with delicious dressing and make candied sweet potatoes. Karen and Walter's youngest daughter Janice thought we betrayed them by telling mom and dad they could sell the cottage because we just didn't use it very much after they retired down in Arkansas. They said Thanksgiving would never be the same. They were right. The Thanksgiving holiday just isn't the same away from the cottage. Those warm memories will always live in our memories though.

We lived in a small upstairs apartment on the corner of Lake Street and Winchester Road in Neenah when we were first married. We paid \$50 a month rent there. We had a sweet land lady by the name of Mrs. Race. She was very hard of hearing because she was in her mid 80's. She would share her garden vegetables and fruit from her trees with us. We were living in that apartment when Allen was born. Shortly after that we moved into a little three bedroom house on 252 Gruenwald Avenue in Neenah. That house cost us \$55 to rent. It was just down the street from Roy's folks, their address was 225 Gruenwald. It was very convenient because Roy's mother often took care of Allen and Susan while we worked at the house we were building west of Neenah at 703 Woodfield Road. We had a contractor build most of the house but we did the dry walling and all of the varnishing and painting before we moved in. The house and lot cost us \$15,000 total and we had a house payment of \$78 a month. Roy worked at a stone and gravel supplier named Courtney and Plummer at that time. He knew how to drive all the big equipment, so we did our own back filling and yard work. My father had a good eye for leveling the ground so with his help we have a very nice lawn to this day. Dad planted many seedling evergreens when I was a senior in high school. Many of them are planted in our lawn now and they have grown to be very tall trees. We decorated the Blue Spruce in front of our house with Christmas lights for many years until it grew too tall to even reach the top with a pole. We moved in the house on Allen's second birthday 15 May 1964.

It was a wonderful neighborhood for the children to grow up in. There were young families, so the children had many childhood companions. I did not work outside of the home when the children were young. Sometimes we'd go swimming and to the park. We bought a Crosly boat and would go boating and water skiing on the weekends we weren't camping. The children got involved in the organized park programs at O'Hauser Park on weekday mornings. The made all sorts of crafts and played games with the supervision of young adults.

When Allen was old enough he joined the little league. Allen was working on a fund raiser for the Little League shortly after he turned ten years old. They were selling Degreaser and he thought a man who owned a garage across Hwy. 150 would be a good customer. The children were never allowed to cross the highway by themselves, but he exerted a little independence and thought he was old enough to do that. Susan was along with him and tried to talk him out of crossing that road. He stepped out on to the road and was struck by a fast moving car, probably a drunk driver, and was killed instantly. I was at the kitchen table sewing when one of the neighbors came to get me. I thought my world had ended for a while. Our beautiful son died without a chance for saving him. We found out at that time how wonderful family and friends can be. With a great deal of support we survived that ordeal and went on to live for the rest of the children.

That whole year was devastating for our family. In spring Roy's favorite aunt, Marie Courtney, took her life because she couldn't live with her alcohol problem. In summer Roy's brother and sister-in-law, Ed and Fern Benedict, lost two children, Bobby and Cindi, through drowning. In March Roy's father took his life because of depression and despair. In June our son was killed in a car accident. After that year we decided it is important for everyone to enjoy life while they can because we realized how short life really is on this earth.

The reason we encouraged mom and dad to sell the cottage after they retired in Arkansas was because we had gotten into camping. We just didn't enjoy the 180 mile drive on a weekend to get up there. Walter's family and ours started camping by investing in a two bed homemade tent camper. We would go to campgrounds in the area such as High Cliff or Devils Lake. We never missed the Knights of Columbus camp out each July. The adults would sleep in the camper and the children would sleep in the back of the station wagon. When the children started out growing the car we got an eight sleeper Starcraft camper. That worked for a while but Roy and I liked to go more places so we got a Scamper, tent trailer of our own. Walter and Kathy bought the Starcraft. The children enjoyed going with us even when they were in high school. Many families complained that their teenagers wouldn't go with them, but we didn't have that problem. In 1989, after the children had moved out of the house, Roy and I invested in a Coachman motor home. We started thinking of retirement and wanted it paid for by that time. We've taken some wonderful vacations in the motor home. Roy and I and a friend, Bill Surfus, drove out to Montrose, Colorado elk hunting while Dawn and Joe lived out there. We got caught up in the mountains in a 12 inch snow storm that started after we went to bed at midnight. With the help of a friend who had a two ton four wheel drive truck, the purchase of some chains for the tires, and the good grace of God, we managed that twenty mile trek down the mountain. We've gone to Arkansas with the family for the spring festival. This summer we went to Alaska for a month. It was a

trip we'll never forget. One of those once in a lifetime adventures.

When the children were in high school we had exchange students live with us two different years. First we had a Japanese student named Myumi Nakahara, and then two years later we had a boy from Venice, Italy named Andrea (Andy) Tozzato. We enjoyed the stay of both students and learned a great deal more about the world from different perspectives. Andy had a special place in our hearts, because he was like the son we lost. He and Roy got along just great. The girls enjoyed having a brother for that one year too. By that time Dawn was in college, Sue was married and Karen was a senior in high school. We missed him so much after he went back home, we went to Italy to visit him. The year Dawn graduated from college Roy and I and Dawn flew over to Rome and took a train up to Venice to stay with his family and visit. It was a wonderful trip and we were treated just like royalty. They really appreciated how much their son enjoyed his stay with us. We still correspond with both students.

Now Roy is driving a semi trailer truck over the road for Kimberly-Clark. He got that job in 1978 and doubled his wages in the first year. He was earning about \$15,000 at Courtney and Plummer and started earning about \$30,000 with double the vacation time. He usually drives about 100,000 miles a year. In spite of all his company driving he still loves to get in the motor home or car and go on a long vacation. We went on an Alaskan vacation in June and July 1991. By driving about 350 miles a day, we were able to complete the vacation in about 4 weeks. We took the trip with dad, and Annette and Ron Treichel. We started planning for this trip already last year. Mom helped plan the trip, but passed away in spring before we left. We felt her spirit with us the entire trip.

Roy and I went on a cruise to the western Caribbean for our twentieth wedding anniversary. We had a wonderful time in Jamaica, Cosomel, Mexico, and the Camen Islands. We sailed on a French ship called the Rhapsody. Everything about the trip was first class. For our twenty fifth anniversary and Albert and Mildred's fiftieth anniversary we sailed on another cruise on the Commodore to the Eastern Caribbean. We went to the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The islands were breathtaking and the vacation wonderful. We were married on mom and dad's twenty fifth wedding anniversary so we always enjoyed celebrating together when we could. Besides doing that, we had a huge party for all the relatives and most of them came and had a wonderful time. All of their wedding attendants were able to come for the celebration. Our wedding attendants were also able to be with us also along with most family members.

While our children were growing up, I enjoyed staying home with them and being a housewife and mother. I was able to witness all of their first adventures, like first steps and words. I liked watching how they learned to socialize with other children in the neighborhood. I was able to watch the sports

matches they were involved in. Roy was an umpire for the little league Allen was in. I became a scout leader when Allen began scouting and remained a leader for ten years. I wanted all our children to have the advantage that scouting gives them. At that time we lived in a neighborhood where most of the mothers stayed home with their children. We had many get togethers with our neighbors to compare notes on child rearing. Things have changed drastically in the neighborhood now in 1991 because almost all the mothers are working.

My own upbringing showed me how important it is to let your children interact with all ages and sorts of individuals. We encouraged them to get involved in after school activities such as scouts. As long as my girls were involved in Junior Scouts I stayed in with them. It was so much fun to take them camping and teach them fire building skills and whittling with a knife. Parents just don't let them do those things. By teaching them to respect nature they learned to respect others and the world they lived in.

The girls were also involved in band and chorus, so they would have an appreciation of all sorts of music. The children were involved in sports so they could keep their bodies as well as their minds healthy. They have grown up to be good citizens and christians who care about the earth and their fellow man.

After the children were all in high school, I decided to go to work. Roy was driving truck by this time and I was home alone a great deal of the time. I was a professional volunteer by this time. Any committee that needed something done knew they could call on me because I didn't know how to say no. I decided since I was working so many hours for others I might as well get paid for the work. I started working for Zaug's vending service as a head cook at Badger Globe. Many of my patrons talked me into applying at Kimberly Clark for a food service position in their office cafeterias. I worked at that for ten years. After about eight years of that I started feeling like I might be wasting my talents and capabilities. As I would serve the laboratory technicians, I dreamed of doing that type of work some day. I started going to college at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh on weekends to get a Liberal Studies Degree. I applied for a job as a technician in Consumer Tissue at Kimberly Clark. I got the job, I'm sure in part because of my education. I love the work I am doing now, it is both challenging and rewarding. I am half way through college and received my Associate Degree this June. I have greatly enjoyed all the things I've learned. It was like opening up whole new vistas for me. I've read more in the last three years than I've read all my life. Each class is a new adventure. I'm writing this family history for class credit, but it's forcing me to finish something I have wanted to do for years. Because our lives have contained a great many sorrows, we've learned the importance of bringing some sunshine and joy into it wherever we can. I hope that everyone who reads this family history will enjoy and learn as much from it as I have.

## CONCLUSION

I have done a great deal of work on my family history and yet there is still a great deal to write about. I would like to finish writing about all my aunts and uncles and their children, my first cousins. I know all these people personally and find their lives very interesting. My goal for this year is to finish the history enough to share with all the family members who helped me compile the information. Many have expressed an interest and are anxious to read it. Perhaps this will encourage them to write something down to share with their children and grandchildren. Our history is too rich and full to let it slip away into oblivion. We can all learn how our pasts helped carve out our futures. Why we have certain features and characteristics.

We can see how God played a very important role in all our lives. Without Him we may have not been able to face all the adversity and struggles we and our ancestors had to face. The spirit of our ancestors will always live on in each and every one of us, so we must keep persevering and being good Christians and Citizens of whatever country we may have come from.



*Obituary Info  
Oshkosh Daily Northwestern  
Friday, June 16, 1972, Pg 1 & 13*

***COLLECTING FOR BALL PARK, BOY KILLED***

*Allen R. Benedict, a Little Leaguer, was attempting to collect money for a new ball diamond at O'Hauser Park.*

*While making his rounds of rural Neenah homes Thursday morning, however, he darted onto Highway 150 near Irish Road west of Neenah and was struck and killed.*

*His death raised Winnebago County's toll to 14 as compared with 13 on this date a year ago, officials said.*

*According to Winnebago County Coroner Duane I. Moore, the boy died en route to Theda Clark Memorial Hospital from multiple fractures and internal injuries he received when he was struck by a car operated by Ivor L. Lewis, 43, of 702 N. Rankin St., Appleton.*

*Sheriff's deputies said the boy was walking with his eight-year old sister, Susan, 703 Woodfield St., on Highway 150 near the intersection of County Trunk QQ in the Town of Menasha, when he darted into the path of the west-bound Lewis car.*

*Lewis said he had no chance to stop his car to avoid striking the boy. Moore said no charges had been filed against Lewis, who, he said, appeared to be victim of circumstances in the fatal accident. Moore said he would make a final decision next Tuesday following the completion of an investigation.*

*The boy was reportedly collecting money for an extra diamond and dugout at O'Hauser Park in the Town of Menasha by selling home car products to township residents.*

*The boy was a member of the Neenah Suburban Little League baseball*

*team, reports said.*

*Moore said the boy's sister attempted to warn him of the oncoming car, but her attempts failed. Reports said the boy apparently did not see the car approach.*

*He was taken to Theda Clark Memorial Hospital by Neenah fire department ambulance following the 11 a.m. mishap.*

*Born in Neenah May 15, 1962, he had lived in the city all of his life and had completed fourth grade at St. Gabriel Catholic School. He was a member of St. Gabriel Catholic Church.*

*Survivors are the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roy A. Benedict; three sisters, Susan, Dawn, and Karen, all at home; his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Roy E. Benedict, Winneconne, and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Jacobs, Menasha, and great-grandfather, Edward Bradley, Omro.*

*Funeral services will be held at the Kessler Funeral Home, Neenah, at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, and at 11 p.m. at St. Gabriel Catholic Church. The Rev. Ronald Hopfensperger will officiate. Burial will be in Greenlawn Memorial Park.*

*Friends may call at the funeral home from 7 to 9 p.m. this evening. A prayer service will be held at 8 p.m. A memorial has been established.*

*Contributed by [Janet Eiler](#)*

