

Janet's Birthday Week 2015

Monday – Her First Birthday

I remember Janet's first birthday. Do I remember it because of the pictures or because of the chicks? Well, in any case, here is on her first birthday with big sister holding chicks.

That year her birthday must have been quite close to Easter. Dad and I went to the Katz drugstore in Westport one Saturday (Janet would have been too young to be running errands with us.) I distinctly remember my excitement and delight when we walked through the door and encountered the strategically placed, child-eye-level tabletop display of brightly-dyed baby chickens. Of course I begged! Farm boy that he had been, he must have known they would grow up. Anyway we picked out four to take home.

One of them died pretty quickly. Alas! Then another of them died when I went dashing out the back garage door and stepped on the one sitting on the top steps.



head?" Well, no.

In any case, here is Janet on her first birthday: chicks, cake, candle, big sister and all!

And don't miss noticing the wallpaper!

Dhyan



I cried
bitterly! But at
least two were still alive on Janet's birthday.

So there we are on her first birthday. I'm holding the magenta or blue chicks for us. Notice that Janet has her famous little hair "knob" on the top of her head. Neither of us knows why my mother thought that was so cute. Janet says, to this day, "Thanks, Mom!" and then asks me, "Have you EVER seen another child with a little knob on the top of her

Janet's Birthday Week 2015 Tuesday – The Beauty Queen



Here She Is..... Miss Amerrrrrica!

One summer the Ladies Club at Church held a Beauty Pageant. I can't remember which State Mom was. They thought it would be funny to have a "little girl" for Rhode Island and guess who was delighted to take on the role!

Janet LOVED those high heels. She wore them until they either didn't fit anymore or broke. The costume was my old ballet outfit and it was a stunning daffodil yellow satin with netting for the bottom and the sleeves. Mom did herself proud over Janet's hair!

I believe Janet has a crown on because she won!!!! 😊

Happy Tuesday of Birthday Week, Janet!

Dhyan

PS – There are the birthday Hummel Figures on the mantel!

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Wednesday – Happy Birthday, Birthday Girl!

Let's go back to April 1, 1961. Janet is 6 years old today and she is having a birthday party. Below are the pictures from that historic day. Just because the pictures are all so cute, I can't bear to make this a single-pager!



CAKE AND ICE CREAM: Please notice very special Munchkin-like, paper plate, birthday hats Mom hand-made for this party. (!) That is **Miss Janet** in the front, looking at the camera over her left shoulder. To her right is our cousin Lisa. (Aunt Merle, Uncle Helmut and Lisa must have come from Illinois for Easter.) To the left of Janet is Nancy Rice from Janet's Sunday School class. We went camping with the Rice family and Nancy was Janet's age. To the left of Nancy is Cindy Hyde who lived across the street from us and was Janet's best friend and playmate. At the back, facing the camera (between the candles) is "The Older Sister." That would be me.

Please note that the kitchen wall paper has changed since Janet was 1. Also, my Dad has replaced the windows with French doors out to the screened in porch which he built. To the right is the chest of drawers that Dad refinished which is in his yellow sun room these days and see Mom's spoon collection on the wall which is currently in Dad's so-called dining room.

NEXT UP: BIRTHDAY PRESENT OPENING! Mom had a system: Presents on the piano bench. Birthday girl stands behind the bench and opens presents. Mom quietly writes down 'who gave what' so the Birthday Girl can later send appropriate thank you notes.

Is Janet not wearing the quintessential Princess-like birthday dress? I forget what color it was, maybe mint green. I like that expression on the right! ☺ Yes, that is the piano in Dad's house. Right down to the lamp!



GUESTS in pretty party dresses sit on the sofa politely to watch (this is, after all, 1961!) I don't remember the name of the little girl on the far left but (left to right otherwise) is Nancy Rice, Peggy (?) and cute little JoVan Dennis who Janet was shocked to find out this past year has died. In my mind she still looks like below! How could she have died already? It is shocking to me to think that all these little girls are now in their 60's! Yikes! Where did the time go?





Here is everyone except Lisa and me. Janet, of course is on the left. Cindy Hyde is beside her.

NEXT! PIN THE TAIL ON THE EASTER BUNNY!



Don't I look like the Jolly Green Giant in this standing picture?

Shy cousin Lisa, who managed to stay out of the present-opening pictures is in front of me. Janet is on the right between Cindy and JoVan. If you look closely you can see that all the "tails" are on the Easter Rabbit.



*So Happy Birthday,
Birthday Girl!*

You're still a Princess!

Love, Dhyan



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Thursday – Jan and the Stuffed Animals

These pictures come from the very short time in which Janet called herself “Jan.” She would have been in about 5th or 6th grade and the Atkinsons had moved to 4411 West 54th Terrace – the house Megan and Chris will remember as Grandpa and Grandma’s Kansas City House. ❁ Didn’t she have beautiful “chestnut” hair? Just like Megan!

These pictures were taken in series by me and have lived in my photo album all these years so maybe even Janet hasn’t seen them in 50 years!



Left: Jan and the Stuffed Animals.

Actually these are not “random” stuffed animals! The big and little elephants are the famous Ellie and Funt. The panda bear was a teddy given to my Mom by her best Humphrey next door neighbor, male friend, so I named it after him: “Gerald the Bachelor.” The poodle was mine but the SNAKE!!! (which was a big deal in those days – like Barbies or Legos now) and the baseball (which was autographed by all her friends) – those were Janet’s.



**But THESE are the
BEST pictures!**

Left: Jan on the Elephant.

Right: The Elephant on Jan

**I have loved these
two pictures for years!**



Happy Birthday Week, Sister Mine! *Dhyan*

Janet's Birthday Week 2015

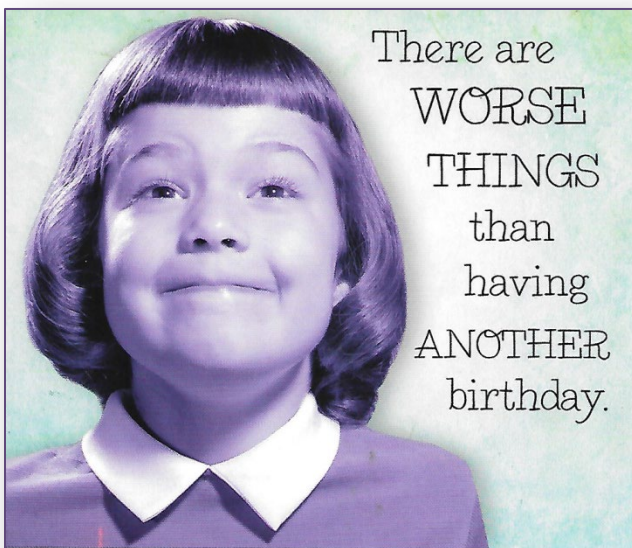
Friday – The War of the Bangs

Janet came out of the womb caring about what she wore and how she looked. She was just like Mom in this regard. (Me? I never cared what I was wearing – just like Dad - and thought the constant battle to curl my stick-straight hair was a total waste of time.)

Mom and Janet felt the opposite. Unfortunately, they had ONE MAJOR difference of opinion that set them at odds from the time Janet could recognize herself in the mirror.

Mom wanted Janet to have short bangs.
Janet wanted to have long ones.

This birthday card I found says it all:



Your mom could still be
cutting your bangs.

(Are you laughing, Janet! ☺)

It wasn't like they could compromise so Janet could have long bangs on school days and short bangs when at home. And once the bangs were cut, they were cut! You simply had to wait for ages for them to grow out and whose hair was it, anyway? Janet would cry for hours if Mom cut her bangs too short, she'd be so mad, and it mattered to her so much. Millimeters counted!!!!

So at one point I volunteered to be the bangs cutter. *It could have been an episode on any reality show.* Janet would stand on the bottom stair in the garage with a big round mirror held squarely in front of her face and I would reach around the mirror, leaning to one side or the other to see, and delicately and ever-so-carefully snip. Smidgeons would come off.

Slivers. Snippets.
Micro-lengths.

“That’s enough! That’s enough! That’s enough!!!!” Janet would yell. “Now just a touch on this side. Be careful! Not THERE!!!! Over here!”

I think a person should do at least 5 really good things in life before he or she dies.
Five really good ones. I think intervening in the Bang War was one for me!
This is one place was I was definitely a “good big sister!”



Mom cut them



I cut them

Happy Birthday Week,
Sister Mine! *Dhyan*

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Sat/Sun – Last One! - Easter Memories

I awaken to the sensation of something round and cool touching my feet under the covers. What could it be, I wonder drowsily. Then I jolt awake! It's Easter! It must be an Easter egg! I dive under the covers and retrieve what I expected, a cool round, hard-boiled, hand-dyed Easter Egg.



"Janet," I hiss in a whisper. "Wake up!" Janet jolts awake. "Look what I found under the covers!" I show her the egg. She dives under her covers without ever saying a word. She comes back up, eyes shining, and shows me her egg. We laugh together happily.



We leap out of bed and tiptoe to the living room. Our parents are still asleep. There are two big Easter Baskets in front of the fireplace, green crinkly cellophane grass tipping over the edge. A huge (by child standards) chocolate bunny stands in each basket hip deep in grass. We can see the ears of a stuffed bunny beside it. Are there jelly beans? Malted eggs? We are not allowed to touch the baskets until Daddy and Mommy are up.



Will they ever get up? We dance with impatience in our room. Then Janet, ever the bolder of the two of us, says "I'm going to wake them up." "Don't" I whisper urgently. "It is



not even light out." I snatch for Janet's arm but she is off and away. "**HAPPY EASTER!!!!**" I hear her announce at their door and then she launches herself at the bed. I hear an almost simultaneous "plump" and "Oooof" - she must have landed on Dad. I go launch myself at the bed too. We are all in bed. Mom mumbles, "Too early" and buries her head under her pillow. But it is too late for that.

"Here comes Peter Cotton Tail," we sing, bouncing up and down on the bed, *"Hopping down the Bunny Trail. Hippity Hoppety Easter's on its way!"*



Unlike Christmas there is no holding off Easter. The moment we are all in the living room Janet and I cannot be restrained. Squeeling with delight we pounce on the Easter Baskets. Hooray there is a sugar egg with frosted decoration and a window to look inside hidden under the grass. Mine has chicks. Janet's has bunnies. There are also several Russel Stover fruit and nut chocolate eggs... my favorite! And a fair presentation of those wretched candy and cream filled eggs. I ate so many in

my childhood to this day I get slightly nauseated thinking about them. Ugh! There they are →



Finally, one of us spots a hidden egg and the hunt is on. Dad and Mom have carefully counted the hard-boiled colored eggs so that no one steps on one months from now. That didn't spare them from Janet or I hiding one downstairs in the play house one year and finding it months later. Of course you crack things like that! The whole house had to be opened and aired.



Then we are off to church for Easter. Mom has decorated us to the nines. Here we are one Easter. I know it is Easter because of the hat on Janet and the

crown of flowers on me. Please note that these were dresses mother hand-made including the band of embroidery at Janet's waist and along the hem of my dress.



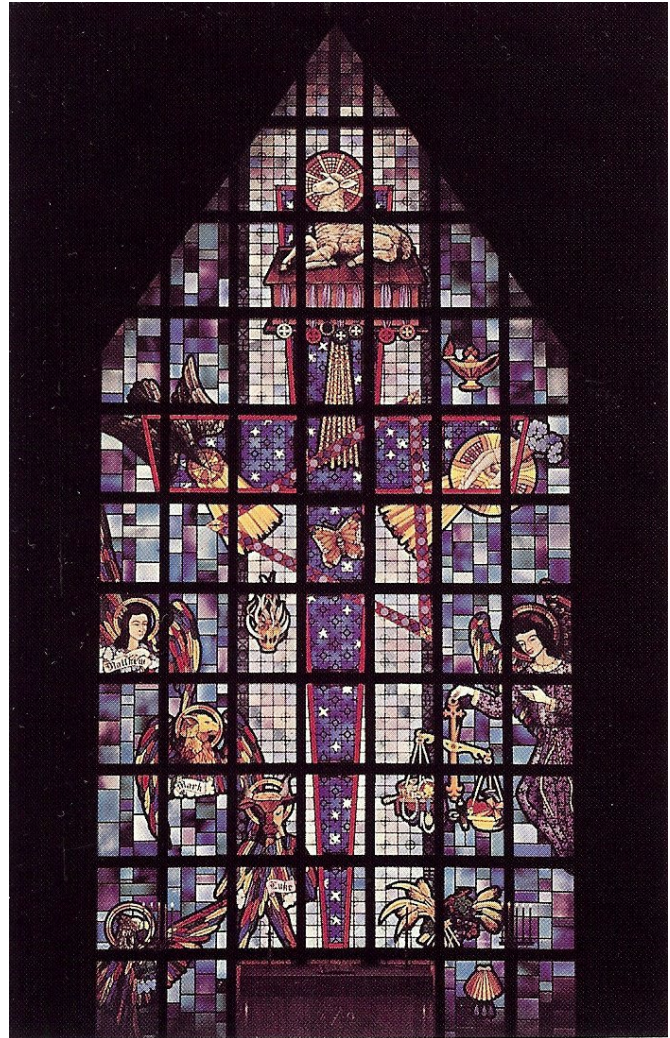
Off to church where every little girl of our acquaintance looked like a Princess. I do not remember a single word of any Easter Sermon but the stained glass window, 4 stories tall, was always a good distraction. Pity the colors are off in this picture.

Mom looking her best for church!

THEN!!!! AFTER CHURCH!!!!

A trip to the Plaza to see the Easter decorations. Here are a few I found on the internet.

Keep in mind these rabbits were as tall as my Dad!



Ahhhhh, the Bunny Women were the best!



Derek, I bet you remember Easter on the Plaza too!

In our day the bunnies had light bulbs for eyes and they glowed bright pink.

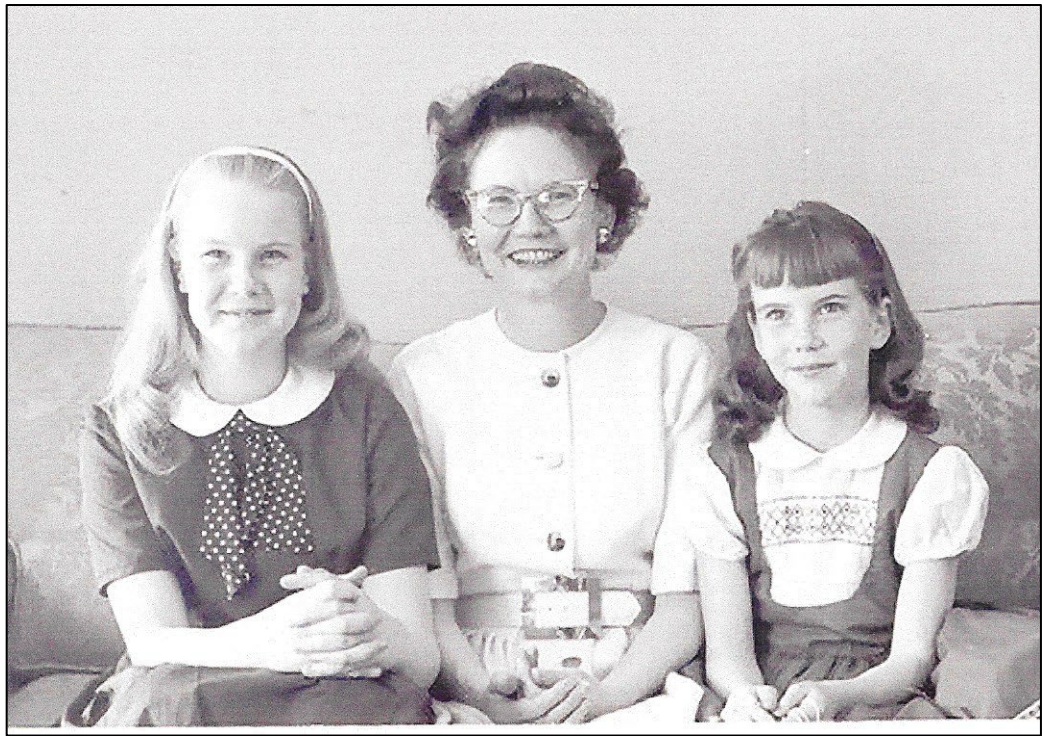
The pelican was one of my favorites. In our day, the pouch was clear plastic and they had gold fish swimming around. Ah the days of innocence!



A tiny
pix of
me at either 1 or
2 years old on
the porch, Easter
morning, with a
brand new Bun
Rab!



Finally, I don't think the pictures below were taken at Easter but it shows the whole family the way we once were. (What did Dad say to make us smile like that?) Those were mostly "good 'ole days." Nice to remember them for a week!



Happy Birthday Week, one more time, Janet! Best wishes to all of you!

Dhyan

