

MY 85th BIRTHDAY PARTY

William Allen Zulker
1926-2011



On Saturday, November 26, 2011, I was totally surprised with an 85th Birthday Party that Isabel and the family had for me.

It was a celebration with family and friends arriving one after the other until the house was filled with so many that there was standing room only.

But let me go back to the beginning.

On Thanksgiving morning, Barbara and Bill drove down from Brewster, MA arriving at about 2:30 pm. Late that afternoon, we all went to Beth and Jim's house for Thanksgiving dinner joined by Jim, Ellie, Chris, Debbie, Lisa and Jim's mother, Terry.

On Friday afternoon, Barb and Bill drove Isabel and me to the Green Dragon Famer's Market in Ephrata where we were joined by Beth and Jim. During the afternoon, I got a phone call from Captain John Sibole, my flying instructor, asking if I would be able to fly at 3:30 on Saturday afternoon. I did not know at the time that he was a part of the planning for the party. Deferring a decision for the moment. I thought about Barbara and Bill being there for such a short visit, and after considering other things, I called John back and told him that it would not work out on Saturday. He simply said it was ok and that there would be another time.

On Saturday, by the time I got to breakfast, Barbara and Bill had left on an errand. They, too, were in on the planning and had gone to Wayne to pick up hoagies and meat for the party.

Not knowing that anything special was planned for the day, I had suggested to Barbara and Bill that we go to the Thanksgiving Holiday Parade in Myerstown on Saturday afternoon. I had enjoyed it on a previous year and thought they might like it. I also suggested it to Jimmy and Ellie. Again, they were in on the secret surprise party celebration. When I had declined the suggestion of John Sibole to fly, Jimmy, Bill Marshall and I then planned to attend the parade which I indicated was to start at 3:30 pm. But Ellie wanted to get me out of the house before guests arrived for the party which they scheduled for 3:00 pm. Ellie then said that she thought the parade was to start at three and that we ought to leave by 2:30. So Jimmy called about then and said he would pick me up at that time because he wanted to stop at Ace Hardware on the way and we had better leave. I actually went to the computer, looked up the parade information and found that it was at 3:30. But he came anyway and I jumped in with him and Bill.

We went to Ace and then Jim took his time getting a parking place about two and half blocks from the parade route. Just when we got the space we wanted and were

waiting for the parade to start, my cell-phone rang. It was Isabel telling me that some important visitors were at our house and that I wouldn't want to miss seeing them. I suggested that they wait, but she said they couldn't. I suggested that as they left that they come by the parade route and I would meet them. I also told her that I didn't want Jimmy and Bill to miss the parade, but she persisted. I then handed the phone to Jimmy who spoke with Isabel and he suggested we go home. I agreed stating that maybe we could get back to the parade before it ended. Well, both Jimmy and Bill knew what was going on, but played it straight.

When Jimmy pulled up to our house, I saw balloons flying from our mailbox but did not get the connection. For some reason, I decided that we should enter by the front door and when we did I was greeted with "Happy Birthday!" WHAT A SURPRISE!

Waiting for us (Jimmy, Bill and me) to enter were Don and Arlene Hastings along with Verna Mae Walton from Union Presbyterian Church in Kirkwood, PA where I had preached many times; Captain John Sibole, my flying instructor and former commercial airline pilot from USAir; Richard and Mary Mang, from Paoli, along with daughters Katy and Natalie for whom Isabel had been a care-taker from their infancy until they started kindergarten; Barbara, Ellie, and Beth who had been helping Isabel get the party together; Debbie; Chris; Jim and his mother Terry Mellon.

Then, I turned around and saw Marvin Stoltzfus, his wife Lorraine, and his sister, my little six year-old friend, Marilyn Stoltzfus, who had just then arrived having been picked up by Jimmy..

Someone then said that I had a singing telegram coming into the kitchen where we were all gathered. It was Nick and Lucy Della Valle (Zacchaeus) who had driven in from Kansas for the party. They began to sing birthday greetings that they had written for the occasion, words found at the end of this report.

Bev and John showed up with Katie and Sarah.

A few minutes later Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Stoltzfus arrived with daughters Barbie Ann and Katheryn, sons Michael, Stephen and Leon along with son Elam, his wife Annie Jean and their son Jaden who had been transported by Beth, Jim and Jimmy.

Our next door neighbor Rhonda Swan and her son Evan came, as well as other neighbors Brian Wahlberg and his wife Jean.

Still later came neighbors Raymond Zimmerman and Esther Mae, and children Cheryl, Crystal, Lyndell and Andrew, plus neighbors Isaac Lapp and wife Sarah Ann.

WHAT A WONDERFUL HOUSE-FULL OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

We all moved around talking and laughing and having a very enjoyable time. Isabel, Ellie, Beth, Barb and Bev put out a food-spread of everything imaginable including the hoagies Bev had sent up with Barb and Bill on their early morning secret journey. Isabel had ordered a large birthday sheet-cake with a helicopter design, a special feature, which I cut with the help of both Isabel and Marilyn.

I wandered from person to person wishing all the while that we had more time to spend with each one. As one by one they began to leave, I could hardly believe that it had happened.

At the end of the day, Barbara and Bill were still there to spend another night, and Nick and Lucy were staying until Monday before heading back to Kansas.

By eight-thirty on Sunday morning, Barb and Bill left, and Nick and Lucy joined us for church with Jimmy and Ellie. The four of us then went to the Railroad Diner for

lunch. Having been invited by Alvin and Miriam to visit with them later in the day, I drove my 1926 Chevy to their home with Nick alongside in the front seat and Isabel and Lucy in the back. We spent almost two hours in the Stoltzfus's home living room with several of their children including daughter Martha, her husband Sam and children Matthew and Sarah Jean who also arrived.

Just before we left for home, all the Stoltzfus family sang one of the hymns that the Amish sing at their church services. We all then stood in a big circle holding hands as Nick led us in prayer. What a glorious and unforgettable moment!

But the day was not over. As we were leaving Alvin hitched up his horse to the Amish buggy and took Nick, Lucy and Isabel for a ride while I took Marvin and Lorraine for a ride in my Chevy. When we all got back to the driveway between the barns, there was Leon with his pony cart and Matthew and Marilyn in the front seat. Nick and Lucy got onto the back seat for another short ride.

On Monday morning Nick and Lucy had breakfast with us and then left for Kansas. The 85th Birthday Party had come to an end, and we spent the rest of the day marveling at all that had happened in the last forty-eight hours!

How thankful I am for such a wonderful wife and loving family, and so many wonderful and thoughtful friends.

My actual birthday was on the 20th of December. On the day before, I had another exciting "85th Birthday Celebration-Flight" in the helicopter (Schweitzer 330) as I sat at the controls with John Sibole, my instructor at my side. I now have a total of 55 ours in the helicopter with another 95 hours in a fixed-wing airplane for a total of 150 hours - all since starting lessons at the age of seventy-nine.

THE BIRTHDAY SONG
Written and sung by Nick and Lucy

Don't forget, this song is to be sung.... melodiously....to the tune of
"Clementine"

Pastor Zulker Birthday Song

Happy birthday, happy birthday,
We have traveled from afar
Came from Kansas on the highway
in a little rented car.

Just to tell you that we love you
And we really think you're great
We have missed you good to see you
Now that you've turned 98

Only kidding, only kidding
Here is why we made the drive
Wishing you a happy birthday
As you're turning 85.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Lucy - Bill - Nick

HERE ARE PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOME OF THE PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE



Bev-Beth-Dad-Mom-Barb



Nick - Bill Isabel - Lucy



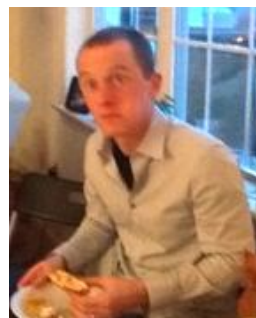
Debbie - Lisa



Bill - Barb



Ellie



Jimmy



Lisa - Kate



Bev - Terry



Natalie Katy Don



Jean - Brian - Nick - Bill - Lucy



Verna Mae - Bill - Arlene - Don



Natalie Richard Mary



Bill - Sarah



Bill - Kate



Bill - Lisa



Natalie - Isabel - Kate



Evan



Bill Isabel



Bill/Isabel



Nick and Lucy



Nick

HOMEWARD BOUND

THE END