

THE STORY CONTINUES.....

During the middle of May 1992, Bernita and Bob took off for an extended trip in their motor home to Alaska. On their return trip south, they stopped in to visit with us in Maple Ridge (a suburb of Vancouver, BC). During that first stay, they attended the wedding of Karren's son, (Bernita's eldest grandson) David. He was to marry Sandi in a church just down the road from where we lived. Bernita also got to meet Karren's other two children, Christine and Andrea, as well as all of her extended family.



David's wedding day
Karren David Sandi Bernita

We decided, later that same year, to return to Amboy to celebrate the American Thanksgiving with them for the first time.

As soon as we walked through the front door, Karren said, "I know that smell".

Moments later she continued, "It's corned beef and cabbage! My dad (meaning Mon) used to cook that all the time for us. I loved it. What a surprise".

Our first Christmas together, was also in the same year and again we were in Amboy to celebrate. Allen and Lisa along with their three children were there to help in the festivities and to exchange gifts.

What a first year that turned out to be!

The months went by and the mother/daughter relationship blossomed. Letters were exchanged regularly, as were the telephone calls.

In May, the following year, on Mother's Day, Karren got to meet the rest of the family. Aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, in-laws and out-laws. They were all there. It was the Taber's annual family picnic, held every year on Mother's Day in the City Park in Redding, California.

Tension.....

Apprehension.....

And then finally, all the hugs and kisses were again prevalent, as she was introduced, and most importantly, accepted into the family.



The Taber Family 1993

John Sue
Fredell, Bernita, Laura, Fred, Wilma.
Alice Frances

Karren's mind was a blur, with all the names, dates, births, marriages and deaths. Her new family was huge.

It is now 2005 and more than thirteen years have past since that monumental day back in March 1992. The four of us, that is Bernita, Bob, Karren and myself, have shared many marvelous times together. Not only have we visited each other's homes at least twice a year during that time, but so many other functions, holidays and especially

those Taber Family picnics. Sadly however, we have lost Uncle Fred and Uncle Fredell as well as Aunt Wilma and Aunt Frances. But nonetheless, Bernita's family has continued to grow. When we first met her, she had only one great-grandchild, Ashley, Christine's daughter. Now, that number has grown, as her grand children and step-grand children have given her twelve more.

On one of our holidays we all traveled to Sacramento, California and then over to Reno and Virginia City in Nevada. That trip included an incredible stay at Bernita and Bob's cabin, high up in the Sierra Mountains, at Soda Springs. Close by the cabin, is the site (now a museum) of the Donner Party's camp. The Donner Party was part of a wagon train that got snowbound after more than forty feet of snow fell during the winter of 1846-47. They were forced to spend the winter there and had to resort to cannibalism in order to survive.

In another trip, Karren and I flew down to San Francisco to meet up with them at the Danish Convention, which both Bob and his Mother were heavily involved in, being of Danish heritage. At the dance on the convention's last night, Karren surprised everyone, by taking the MC's microphone. She introduced herself to the crowd and then asked Bob for a father/daughter dance, that she had never had in her life before. A very emotional evening!

Before making yet another visit down the I-5 to Amboy, we made a call and arranged a meeting with Kenneth Frazer. He is the eldest son of John Frazer, Karren's biological father. We met in a restaurant just south of Portland. It was a short, but nice meeting. It has been the only meeting between the two. It seems as though he doesn't want to further the relationship. (John Frazer also had two other younger sons, Kevin and Kyle, but they were both killed in a traffic accident when they were in their teens).

Several years after we had found Bernita, we decided to go through all the papers we had acquired during our search period. It was a major surprise when it was discovered that we had missed a very important piece of information. It was in one of the newspaper clippings of Bess Gilroy's trial, in which she was being prosecuted over just one child, but the story revealed many other cases in which she was involved. One of these newspaper articles printed some of the testimony during her time on the stand. Here is the part we missed:

The Court: How many cases in 1948 have you had where you did not place the baby for adoption, or it was not turned over to you for adoption, that is where the girl kept her own baby, how many cases in 1949?

Bess Gilroy: In 1949?

The Court: Yes.

Bess Gilroy: There was one in 1949.

The Court: How many in 1948?

Bess Gilroy: There were three, that is including this one. In the two others the baby died.

Why had we not seen this before?

..... "In the two others THE BABY DIED".

We couldn't believe our eyes.

Two babies died in 1948 - how many we wondered, were there in 1947 and could Karren have been one of these 'dead children' in that year?

Questions, questions!

We now know that there will never be any answers, at least to this part of the story.

In June of 1995, I took an early retirement from my job with the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Four months later, in October, we left the Greater Vancouver area and our home in Maple Ridge and moved to Grand Forks, where we had built our retirement home. Bernita and Bob, along with Bob's mother, Thelma, have visited us here many times during the years, most times with their motor home.

During one of these visits in 1997, Bob decided to take a separate vacation with one of his buddies and they went fishing off the coast of Vancouver Island. This left Bernita and Karren several weeks of bonding time to look forward to. Unfortunately, this only lasted for a few days, as Karren had a major horse accident and cracked her hip in three places. She ended up in traction for six weeks at a hospital in Trail, BC. Trail is about a one-hour and a quarter drive, east of Grand Forks. So instead of Bernita bonding with Karren, she had to settle on bonding with me!!!

Bernita and Bob also moved home before the turn of the millennium, as they bought a second house in Roseburg, Oregon. We spent many happy hours visiting them there; either just for a vacation or at other times, I did some renovation work for them, both at Roseburg and at Amboy. Bob would always find interesting places for us to see during these visits, including one memorable one to the drive-through Wildlife Park in Winston, just south of Roseburg. Christine's daughter, Ashley was vacationing with us on this trip. At the final gate in the park, we were met by a rather rambunctious ostrich. He was guarding the gate and attacked Bob's car with his beak and made quite a few scratches on it. As we finally made it out of the park, Ashley changed the words to that crazy Christmas song - 'Grandma just got run over by a reindeer' and started singing, 'Grandpa just got run over by an ostrich.....' instead. Great laughter rocked the car as we made our way home.

After writing the first edition of this book on a typewriting, Bob presented me with my very first computer. I was the complete novice, but slowly - very slowly, he coached me into making it work for me. That old DOS programmed machine has long gone to the great computer graveyard, but I still rely on him for his computer expertise to this day.

A wonderful celebration took place in Portland, Oregon in March of 2002. It was Bernita and Bob's 50th wedding anniversary. The whole family went out and celebrated with a champagne brunch.



**Bernita & Bob
celebrate their 50th Anniversary.**

But the celebrations were short lived, as soon afterwards, Bob was diagnosed with skin cancer. Karren went down to Amboy to stay with them and also to drive him to and from the cancer clinic, for his chemo treatments. She stayed five weeks before heading home, when he was able to administer the doses for himself at home. This plan went well for a couple of months but after

the turn of the year, things took a sudden turn for the worse. I had tried to get hold of Bob by email for several days, because I had another one of my many computer problems. We began getting quite concerned when he didn't reply. He always answers our emails promptly. On the fourth day of no replies from him, we decided to place a phone call to the house. Bernita answered the phone, which was most unusual. She never liked to answer it. She seemed confused to Karren and appeared to have lost track of time. When Karren asked where Bob was, she replied that she hadn't seen him for days, but she could hear him banging downstairs in the basement. He was making her a wheel chair ramp, so she could get in and out of the house much easier. She also mentioned that she hadn't seen him for any meals during that time. Alarm bells went off in our heads and we decided that something seemed awfully wrong down there.

But what to do? How can we help them? Obviously, the police was one way, but we didn't want to go that route, at least not yet. Allen was not a choice as he was in San Diego, training for his new job in the marines. Finally, we decided that we should call Lisa. But that also posed problems, as Lisa had only recently divorced Allen and in turn, married Clayton Sayles. Clayton is the son of Bernita's youngest sister, Sue - and therefore, Bernita's nephew. Lisa told Clayton the problem and he drove out to the house. But it was a house of horrors, when he arrived. The house was locked up tight, but he could see Bernita inside the house but couldn't get her attention. There was no sign of Bob, so Clayton decided to break in. Upstairs, Bernita seemed OK to Clayton, but oblivious to the noise he had created while trying to break in. He turned his attention to finding Bob. He went downstairs and found him crumpled up in the shower stall. He was close to being unconscious and had been there for several days, unable to help himself because of his weakness due to the chemo. Clayton immediately called 911 for help.

Lisa returned our phone call later that day and told us of Clayton's find. The next day, Karren was on her way south to be with them. She found Bob in the hospital and extremely weak, while Bernita had been admitted to a nursing home. Soon after Karren had arrived, Allen came in from San Diego. After assessing the situation, Allen rented a house in the Vancouver, Washington area that was close to both the hospital and the nursing home. Karren and Allen, along with Allen's girl friend, Teresa and together with Lisa and Clayton, got the house ready for Bernita, who was to be released within a few days. Karren moved into the house and looked after Bernita for six weeks. Bob recovered enough to be released himself from hospital and he joined Bernita and Karren in the rented house for the last two weeks. Looking after both of them, however, was too big a job for Karren, as they both really needed professional help. She hunted around, with the help of several social workers, for an adult home, which could care for both of them. At last she found one and arranged for them to move in.

By now, Karren was totally exhausted and had to return home. Bob's health improved steadily and later that year, came and stayed with us for a month, while he recuperated some more. Bernita's health however, slowly deteriorated. Her condition was such that the adult care home Karren found was no longer capable of tending to her needs and she was moved into a nursing home.

During the next few months, we traveled down to Vancouver, Washington to visit with her many times, but she wasn't making much improvement to her health. In October 2005 we made another quick trip to visit with her, even though we had been down only six weeks before. This time though, she wasn't at all well. We, along with Bob, were very concerned for her health and spoke extensively with the hospital administrators. We left; hoping for the best, but very worried for her. Bob kept us informed

almost on a daily basis, as to Bernita's health. Two weeks after we returned, Karren decided that she wanted to go down again. I drove her to Spokane, so she could catch the Greyhound bus to the coast. We had arranged with Bob, that he would pick her up at the depot in Vancouver, but when we bought the ticket, we learned that there would be a long layover in Portland. So we called Bob to say, that we had changed our plans and would he pick her up instead in Portland.

Bob answered the phone. "Thank God that you called, I've been trying to get a hold of you", he paused. "but..... I'm sorry honey, but your mom passed away about 4 o'clock this morning".

Five days later, on Thursday, November 17th, 2005, her family all gathered at her graveside, in Vancouver, Washington. It was a bright, sunny day with a real chill to the air. Her white coffin was decorated with the most beautifully arranged wreath of red and white carnations.

Goodbye, dear Bernita.



We have come full circle -

**Karren's pledge, when still a child -
To find her mother -**

**If it was the last thing she ever did -
Has been fulfilled.**

They were together for just thirteen years -

**And now -
All that remain are the memories -**

The dream is over.