

StoryWorth.

Where did you go on vacations as a child?

by Jane Caragher

All I ever dreamed of was going to Disney Land for a vacation. I watched the Mickey Mouse Club after School everyday and the Wonderful World of Disney on Sunday nights. From time to time they would show Disney Land and all I wanted to do was meet Mickey and ride Dumbo the Flying Elephant. Whenever I suggested this my parents looked at me like I had three heads. We didn't even call my Grandma in New York unless it was a special occasion because long distance telephoning was so expensive. For my hard working parents a vacation was not something a family took every year and If we took one it was usually close by.

Here are 3 I remember.

When we were really little, I want to say I was 6 which made Gale 4, my parents went to a little motel called the Sunaqua which was 2 miles away from home on A!A, across the street from Hallandale Beach. I remember the rooms being nice and cool. The motel had air conditioning which was a luxury the Barnett's didn't have at home and best of all a pool!

Daddy went to work every day but Mommy stayed home with us which was such a treat! Dad fed us breakfast before he left for the store (he did this every morning) so Mommy could sleep in a little. We were always aware that Mom's Heart condition made it necessary for her to get a little extra sleep in the morning and being compliant kids we quietly kept ourselves busy until she woke up.

One morning of our stay I got the bright idea that Gale and I should quietly leave the room so Mommy could sleep and we could go out and put our feet on the top step of the pool. We did and as I remember were jumping around on the stairs

hopping between step one and two when Gale lost her balance and went off the second step to a place where she couldn't reach bottom.

I tried to reach for her and couldn't. I needed to think quickly and was lucky to notice the "wading rope", (that's the rope that has the floats attached that hotels used to string from side to side in the pool so the ladies could hold on to and not get their hair wet), was curled up on the side of the pool. I quickly grabbed it and pulled it over to the stairs. Gale at this point was really underwater. I threw it to her and motioned for her to grab on. I then pulled her out of the pool.

She was sputtering and coughing but alright. I don't remember what happened after that, Did Mom hear a ruckus and come out or did I go and get her? Did I bring my soaked, halved drowned sister to the room?? Don't know. All I know is I was touted by my parents as saving my sister's life and I don't remember getting yelled at for taking her to the pool without supervision so I guess all's well that ends well!

When I was 7 or 8 we went on a "Florida" vacation. It was fun. We went to the middle of the state and stayed in a cabin at Rainbow Springs for a week. This was where my father and brother Billy taught me how to dive. We would swim in icy cold spring water a few feet out into the lake climb up onto a little floating dock. There my Dad and brother patiently taught me to bend at the waist and kind of fall in to the water over and over till I showed some proficiency for the skill. It was that or drowned so... I learned!! Actually it was fun!

On the same trip we visited Silver Springs and took a ride on a glass bottom boat. But the side trip I liked the most was the Mermaid Show at WeekiWachee Springs.

You toured some gardens. (unmemorable). But then you got to go into this room that held maybe 30 people and the Mermaid Show came on.

Holy Cow! That was amazing. Two BEAUTIFUL Mermaids with long hair and shiny tails dove down into the tank and swam around in front of us. They did backwards

and forward flips and held hands and smiled as their lovely long Mermaid Hair floated around them. Every once and a while they would take "sips" from a tube and then blow bubbles. When we got home Gale and I cut the yellow and green straps of our parents lawn chairs and "unbraided" them so we could bobby pin them in our hair to make Mermaid Hair.. We would sit up in the Mango Tree and comb our beautiful long hair and pretend that we were under the sea in our Mermaid Kingdom

The one time I remember going far away for a vacation was when we went to North Carolina to a rustic resort in Hendersonville called Fontana Village.

The beginning of the trip was good until we got to the winding mountains and I got car sick. Daddy stopped for me and was so sweet to say any time you need to stop.. just let me know. Wise guy that I was I waited for the car to roll a few feet before I yelled STOP! My Dad,(that's where I got my sense of Humor) slammed on the brakes and we all had a good laugh!!

I now know that my Mom would have liked a fancy vacation but, this was Daddy's thing so any time we went somewhere it usually involved woods or mountains.! It was so much fun. We lived in a cabin and they had entertainment and and games for all age groups and times being different Gale and I were allowed to have free run of the place. I don't think we ever saw Mom and dad except for meal times. There was square dancing, horse shoe throwing, potato sack races we even went horseback riding!

Gale reminded me that om took a Ceramic's Painting Class and made a lamp that the family loved for many years to come. She had the head of a beautiful African/Indian Girl that was wearing a turban with a feather in it. Mom painted her face a midnight black and the turban was in those mustardy yellow, orange and moss green that were so popular in 50"s Kitsch! We adored her and she was named Margie!

I remember one night they showed a scary movie that Gale and I attended on our own. Seems to me it was "The Fly". I remember Gale and I running as fast as we could all the way back to the cabin so that nothing "spooky" happened to us!



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1. The Margie was much prettier than these lamps but you get the idea!
2. The day I saved Gale's Life!!
3. Mermaid Hair is in this Chair!!





