

"Writing the truth
as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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A thank-you to mom for all she did

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The Sunday is Mother's Day. I would like to remember my mom, the woman dad often referred to as 'Mother,' rather than by her name, Alice. He used the term 'Mother' when he was referring to her with admiration and respect.

Recalling my childhood, I can now appreciate how difficult those years were for us, but especially for mom and dad. Dad was a school teacher and in later years a principal and superintendent of schools. But the income was meager. I read one of his teaching contracts from the 1940s; he was paid \$600 a year. They were raised during and lived through the Depression. And like many others of their generation, they had known hunger and difficult times. They watched pennies like they were \$100 bills. Everything mattered. Everything counted. Nothing was wasted.

I remember when the ketchup bottle was nearly empty; the next evening's meal would be yum yums (sloppy joes). The reason: She could shake the ketchup bottle with water, making a sauce for the hamburger meat, so no ketchup was wasted. The same with potato chips. When the bag was down to crumbs, the next evening's meal would be a tuna and pea casserole with a crust of crumbled potato chips. One of my favorite salads was half a banana cut open and filled with peanut butter. It laid on a piece of lettuce, covered with mayonnaise mixed with sugar and water. On the stove always sat a mayonnaise jar with bacon grease. She did have some Crisco on hand but mainly used the "free" bacon grease.

When I was growing up, I do not remember ever having more than two shirts and two pair of pants at a time. I thought that was normal. My wife jokes that is why I buy too many clothes, especially underwear and socks.

How do you thank a woman, a wife, a mother for all this? How do her husband and sons thank her? With my dad she raised four sons; a bank president and three physicians. The end of my first year of college my father died and I moved home with mom so I could attend the University of Northern Colorado, 14 miles away. When I finally left home for medical school, mom had been raising boys continuously for over 40 years and for 36 of those years she had two or more sons at home. She joked her life was mud and guns and pheasants and quail and ducks and geese and whatever else we could hunt that allowed us to track mud through the house.

She was a mother. She was a wife. She loved her "job." She and dad were farm kids from eastern Nebraska. Her father was a second generation American, his father emigrating from Prussia. Their lives as children were even harder than as adults. Her little brother, Glen, died on their kitchen table while the family doctor performed surgery for appendicitis. She wrote about him and thought of him almost daily until her death.

I doubt any of the four of us will ever know all she did without, all she needed and did not have, all she probably wanted and dismissed - all for her sons. She gave us her everything every day, always there

for us. Her only concern, her only focus, her husband and her sons.

One of her last ventures was to help the baby of the family, me, shortly after I moved to Pocatello. I was a single father with custody of my three-year-old son, recently divorced, and I needed help. She got on a plane and came to Pocatello to help her son care for her grandson. She was 75 years old. Mom died when I was 43, and I was still not old enough to understand all she was, all she did, all she modeled for us. She was everything I wish I had understood years earlier. A mother is everywhere. A mother is everything. A mother is forever.

If you want to know the character of God, look no further than the face of a mother. Mom was a Christian woman with a wonderful heart and a clear understanding of her faith. I can still see her sitting on her living room sofa in Eaton, Colorado, reading her Bible, making notes in the margins. That Bible, it now sits in my den.

Mom, it took a long time for me to grow up. I hope I am becoming the kind of man you hoped I would be. I hope you are pleased. You raised four sons who love their wives and families, love their country, and love their parents.

You and dad had nothing and did everything. Mom, it's a bit late; but "thank you." This Mother's Day let's spend some time with our moms, living or not.