

My dad got sober on December 27, 1957. In January of 1958 the Starkweather story hit and as a free lance photo journalist, he kept really busy. After life calmed down, he and my mother threw themselves into the program and spared nothing to help people suffering from alcoholism. It was common for them to put people up in our home.

I was 12 and my brother was 6 and when we were asked to help clean up for company, we would ask, "man or woman, drunk or sober?" We had different standards of house cleaning for different guests.

In 1962, they opened the first treatment center outside of a state hospital in the little house next door to ours. They christened it House of Hope. I would have preferred to just live a normal life of a high school junior and my brother just wanted to go fishing and camping.

Not having made contact with our higher power clearly enough we decided to write a letter to Ann Landers asking her what to do. She wrote us back that our parents were doing a good thing and we should help them. She was the closest thing we knew to God, so we did.

Somehow in the mysterious grace of divine providence, a wonderful, funny, brave, person came to the house named Ron and we were given back our childhoods.

It was at least 3 years later before we went on a date - I was 19- and after a proper courtship we were married during my senior year of college.

To make a long story short, this has been the shortest 40 years in history. It seems like we just got married 40 minutes ago and we just got Elizabeth 34 minutes ago and Lettie 23 minutes ago and we only had to wait for Ashley to arrive in 19 minutes, not 19 years.

Where did these grandchildren come from and son-in-laws?

We started out with nothing but a dream 40 years ago and it was kind of a Moses thing - to deliver our own people - out of the slavery of addiction and mental illness.

I knew when I married Ron that I was marrying a treatment center. It's a good thing too. Looking at our picture, we look like James Dean and Sandra Dee. There is no way we could have survived trying to be "normal".

- Paige Namuth

Paige and Ron are celebrating 40 years of wedded bliss on 17 December 2006 at 2:00 PM. You are invited to join them at the Antlers Center in Lincoln, Nebraska!

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