

**CHAPTER 8**

**SECTION D**

**LORRAINE JUDITH FREDENBURG BESEMER**

**MY BEAUTIFUL WIFE**



**JANUARY 1, 1940 TO ?**

**MALAGAR, SPAIN FALL OF 1978**

CHAPTER 8

SECTION D

LORRAINE JUDITH FREDENBURG BESEMER

I first met Lorrie while she was working in the Bendix Employee Relations Dept and at the time, her boss was the Director of Personnel. I had gone into Lorrie's office to change the beneficiaries on my bonds, insurance, etc. over to my children after Betty's death. She was very helpful and equally very attractive. I suppose that it can be said that I was enamored on first sight. Several weeks later, when I had gotten up the courage, I gave her a note asking her if she would consider going out with an older man. She said she would and we agreed to go out for dinner at Wynn Schuler's in Benton Harbor. I picked her up at her mother's house in Michigan City, where Lorrie spent most of her week ends, and as we were driving up to the restaurant she casually mentioned that she was one of 10 children and I immediately went into shock, thinking here we go again, another catholic girl. Then when we discussed specific churches, I was surprised to discover that Lorrie attended a sister church to our Zion church. I was later to spend quite a number of my Sundays attending their church, having lunch with her and her mom and going for leisurely drives in the afternoon. I liked her mom and her family all treated me very kindly even though surprisingly there was always some undercurrents of individual inter family friction.



AT FERNWOOD GARDENS



FAMILY OUTING AT ROD  
& MARY FREDENBURGS

We had a bit of a rough go of it because I was dating too soon after my first wife Betty's death and wasn't really emotionally stabilized. We had our spats. I never did date a lot

of women and obviously wasn't very worldly as I had really known only the one woman that I had married and she was my high school sweetheart.

I was in charge of the Bendix travel club and had scheduled a number of trips to Hawaii having been there myself 13 times. These trips were usually scheduled over the Bendix Christmas/New Year two week shutdowns. That way people did not have to use any of their vacation days. In October of 1978, I got a call from a travel agency that I had dealt with in the past, informing me that I could have a free one week trip for two people visiting Malaga, Spain as long as I could be ready to go within a week. They were under booked and had seats left over. I asked Lorrie if she would like to go and she replied yes even though her mom didn't really approve of it. The flight departed from Detroit so we drove up there and left the car in the long term parking lot. I had a moment of concern when the very heavily loaded chartered DC-8 just barely got off the ground as we passed the end runway lights. I have traveled considerably both on business and pleasure and I normally am quite well organized but on our arrival in Malaga, Spain I proceeded to screw up almost immediately.

I left my coat with the Bendix credit union traveler's checks in the overhead rack on the plane and then left her sister's shawl in the overhead rack on the bus to our hotel. I felt like an idiot but I did bring my check book and since the tour director cashed my regular checks spending money was not a problem. (The traveler's checks were later cashed in Las Vegas, obviously forged, but my money was still refunded by the Bendix credit union on our return.) Two days later the bus people returned the shawl and we both mellowed out. It didn't help that our rooms weren't ready when we got there and the other people on the trip got downright testy. Lorrie was ready to go back on the next available plane.



FIRST DAY CASTLE RUINS TOUR

I was grateful that our room in the hotel Alay had a lovely view of the swimming pool directly below with the beautiful Mediterranean beyond and thankfully was separate from

the rest of the travel group. We took bus trips to see a number of different towns with their magnificent churches and of course, a bull ring. The people were either very wealthy or poor: there was no discernable middle class. The Catholic churches were numerous and spectacular in all the towns we visited. One church we later visited in a small town had the entire altar area constructed of teakwood and was really beautiful. The day after our arrival we first toured the castle ruins which were within walking distance of our hotel. After touring the castle ruins we continued on and toured the main cathedral in Malaga which was a huge structure and contained eleven small altars along its periphery that surrounded one huge altar in the center. The cathedral was truly a magnificent structure and very old as testified by the deeply worn entry steps.

We were directed to a restaurant called Pepe's that was proven to be within walking distance from our hotel and had a number of delicious meals there. We thought that Pepe understood English but found out that his comprehension was limited. One night we commented on his delicious salads and he brought us one of each! On another occasion I asked for a doggy bag and he took away my plate and fed it to the dog. In spite of our language difficulties, it was very pleasant and romantic to eat under a palm thatched roof by the shores of the Mediterranean with the full moon for background.



LORRIE, PEPE, AND HER SISTERS SHAWL

One day we took a bus trip to Alhambra, the Moorish castle, which was quite splendid. They took pictures of us no matter where we went and tried to sell them back to us. One evening we went to a dinner at a farm out in the country where we were served chicken roasted on a spit and wine from a goat skinned bag squirted directly into our mouths while they, of course, took your picture. Lorrie went to the rest room and I swear that at least 5 guys followed her. When she returned we went outside where they had an outdoor platform for dancing with a combo playing. The place was loaded with Gigolos ready to dance with any unescorted single woman. I went to get a pitcher of Sangria from the bar and while I was walking back a guy headed for Lorrie but when he saw me shake my head he changed course away from her. They were all shorter than me.

We also took a bus trip to a beautiful cave along the coast and the bus broke down so we had to wait several hours before they finally took us back to our hotel. We came upon a group of bus drivers gathered together back at our hotel and I found out that they understood German so I made a date with one of the good looking guys who agreed to meet us the following evening and bring his girlfriend. However, that date never materialized so he obviously must just have been pulling my leg. I thought that Lorrie might never want to go on a trip with me again but she eventually forgave me and with the then available airline couple discounts accompanied me on a number of my business trips thereafter.

A couple years later I sent a group of Bendix people over to Malaga on the same trip and gave a fellow in the group the previous picture to take along and give to Pepe. They arrived at Pepe's on an evening that he was having a birthday party for his son and when they gave him the picture of Lorrie with Pepe, he invited them all in to help celebrate his son's birthday and the drinks were on the house.. They said that the wine flowed like water and even Pepe got a little bit loaded. The people that went to Pepe's said that it was the highlight of their trip to Spain and they went back to Pepe's place several more times after that. They were all delighted with their trip and raved about it for weeks afterward.

Back home Lorrie was having trouble with her immediate boss at Bendix and because of this friction chose to leave her job. I tried to intervene and spoke to our plant director, and only got myself in trouble. Bob Statzell, a close friend, said that during a staff meeting, the PD had indicated he wanted to place a reprimand letter in my personnel file, but Statz spoke up for me and convinced him that I was just too emotional after the recent death of my wife. If truth were known, I had vigorously defended Jack Longnecker previously with the director when there was a possibility that Jack [an excellent technician] was going to be laid off, and thought that I could do the same for Lorrie. Unfortunately, the PD had since moved up on the corporate ladder and was no longer quite the confident that I thought he was. His official complaint was that I had not gone thru the normal chain of command to seek an audience with him but just walked into his office unannounced. Actually that was a good example of how I usually operated around the plant. Subtlety was never my strong suit.

Lorrie was out of work for a while and we continued to date and then she landed a job with a stock brokerage office downtown. I think that she really enjoyed the job but soon realized that her boss was playing around with another employee even though both were married. Not a great working atmosphere. She did, however, receive a trip to New York City for job training purposes out of it. In the meanwhile her house was sold to another owner who moved in upstairs and his apartment was pretty noisy at times. It was no secret that he wouldn't feel bad if Lorrie moved out and it was with some reluctance she realized that she would indeed have to eventually move out of the apartment she had happily lived in for over twelve years.

I was still running trips to Hawaii and we were scheduled to make a trip over the Bendix Christmas-New Year shutdown. Lorrie couldn't get off work and not wanting to go alone I gave my ticket to George Walters, whose wife was going, while he was going to stay at

home. When he called her from work with the news she started to cry because he usually let her make trips alone [with a couple of friends] while he saved vacation for hunting and trapping. She was afflicted with the same disease that Betty had fought so it became a very meaningful trip for both of them. On their return they were so grateful that they took us out to dinner and gave Lorrie several gifts from Hawaii. His wife was a lovely lady and it shocked me a little in that to me she looked so much like Betty had in the same stage of her disease. Sadly, she passed away less than 6 months later.

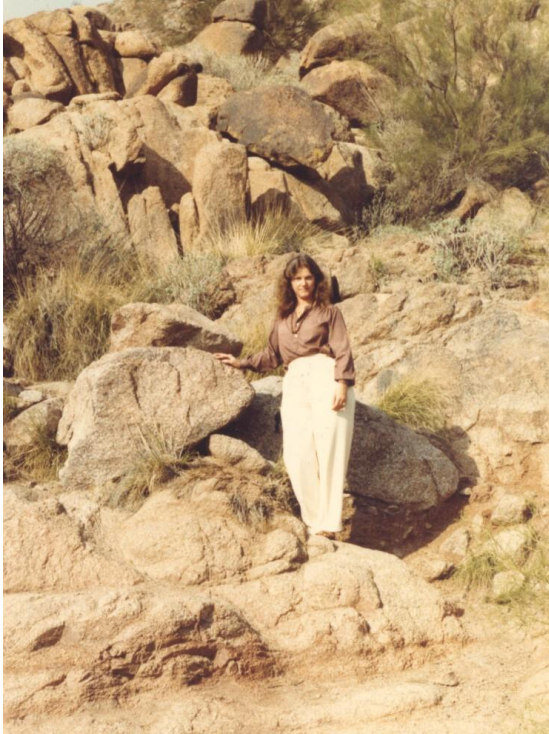
Lorrie realized that she would have to move out since her new owner continued making things difficult for her. She was prepared to move back home to live with her mother when I offered to have her move in with me for I was totally in love with her. She somewhat reluctantly accepted. Contrary to my mother's accusation that we were living in sin, we slept in separate rooms. Later, when my mother fell down the front steps of their home and shattered her knee, Dad, who had great difficulty in walking, had to move in with us while mom was in the hospital. Lorrie was very patient with him and took great care of Dad. She got him to sing songs, in German of course, and a trifle colored since they were mostly songs they sang in the army. I still was working and traveling an awful lot so Lorrie really had her hands full when my mother got out of the hospital and also came to live with us. Mom went into her we're living in sin routine and my Dad very forcibly told her to drop it since he really liked Lorrie and appreciated all that she was doing for them. While I wasn't a witness to all the things that Lorrie had to put up with, we were both thrilled to the core when the folks moved back home. My Dad was forever grateful for Lorrie's efforts and always spoke very kindly of her. He had been very happy during his stay with us, thanks to Lorrie, and I know was more than a little reluctant to go back home.



LORRIE, MOM, & DAD BEFORE MOM'S FALL

We continued to live together usually spending Friday evenings with my best friend, Bob Riggs, having cook outs, where we would cook a steak and celebrate the end of a work week [TGIF] together while also having a little alcoholic beverage or two. Bob had lost his wife to a brain aneurism a number of months before Betty had passed away.

I still continued to make a great number of business trips and when the airlines offered a discounted trip for your wife, if she accompanied you, Lorrie readily went along. She would use our rental car, taking me to work, and then explore the area, sometimes picking me up after work or meeting me somewhere when I had other transportation. She was able to explore a lot of New England, Arizona, Oregon, California & Michigan.



PHOENIX, ARIZONA



TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

Lorrie and I were invited out to Los Angeles to Occidental College for my daughter Linda's tenure ceremony and she was told by the Dean on the morning of the day we arrived that she would not receive tenure, Linda was crushed and in tears and we all were very disappointed, for this is usually fatal to your career and you must leave the college within the next year. Her fellow professors told us not to worry for there had to be some kind of terrible mistake. When the student body found out about this they created a huge ground swell of protest led by her art students with a number of parents threatening to remove their students from the college if Linda was not given tenure. Two weeks later the same Dean informed Linda that he didn't really mean that she would not receive tenure status. He had responded to the pettiness of a very jealous fellow art professor, who was his personal friend, and had been forced to reverse himself and present Linda with tenure status. I mention this only because it is such a rare and unusual occurrence. The Dean eventually retired while the jealous professor was completely reduced in status by all of her peers and fellow college staff people.

Lorrie and I visited the Hawaiian Islands at least 6 times together but one trip in October of 1988 was memorable in that the beautiful Wailua Bay View Resort, a three story wooden condo building in which we were staying on the island of Kauai, caught fire

when an inebriated smoker dumped his ashtray into a waste basket directly under the curtains.



WAILUA BAY VIEW RESORT BEFORE THE FIRE

The building went up like a torch. We were sitting in our ground floor #109 condo when Lorrie heard a crackling sound and when we looked we realized that the building was burning and we were able to remove our belongings in extremely short order throwing everything into our rental car and driving away. People who had placed their luggage in their room's came back to find their rooms no longer existed.



THE BUILDING AFTER THE FIRE



OUR #109 CONDO - BOTTOM RIGHT

We drove to another resort that I had used and secured a room. It started to rain after we were all settled and just as we were finally relaxing there was a loud crash. Apparently the swimming pool was under repair and the large tent like tarp placed over it filled with rain water and collapsed. We then received a phone call from the rental agency telling us that they had made reservations for us at the Lai Nani another nearby resort. I assured the lady that we would stay where we were and move to the new place in the morning. The Lai Nani was beautiful but as we were carrying in our luggage the smoke alarm went off. [Everything happens in three's?] Lorrie came instantly out of the bedroom with luggage in hand. They fixed the alarm by disconnecting it and we finally calmed down enough to enjoy this lovely condo that was located close to the pool and the shore. As we ate our breakfast sitting outside on the lanai numerous doves would share with us and eat out of



our hands. We stayed in this same particular ground floor condo several times on future trips to Kauai. The next day we drove back to the burned out building that we originally rented only to find our condo was completely intact but the other ones on either side were destroyed. We were allowed inside our room and found Jim's bathing suit hanging in the shower and on the driveway we found the water soaked Hawaiian tour book that Rick and Rose had previously given us which we obviously had dropped in our haste to leave the night before. When we returned a number of years later the building had finally been rebuilt and upgraded with a sprinkling system but was of the same wooden construction.



BY LIGHTHOUSE POINT

When I decided to retire at the age of 64, after 42 years of service, I was given a choice of several retirement plans. I wanted to take a plan that would provide for Lorrie if anything happened to me, but first I had to ask her to be my wife which I did very awkwardly. Unfortunately for her, she accepted and we then had to consider where we wanted to get married. We chose to go to Gatlinburg, TN. and made reservations for a small church and a three bedroom rental cabin called the Executive Berghaus for the wedding party.

#### THE EXECUTIVE BERGHAUS



RANCH STYLE FRONT



FOUR LEVELS IN BACK

We were married in a little church across the street from Ed Hensons' parking lot on Airport Road. My son David could not get away so I asked Ken Dillingham, a friend of mine from nearby Asheville, North Carolina, to be my best man and Lorrie asked Carolyn Coddins to be her maid of honor.



THE VERY HAPPY COUPLE



Lorrie made a very lovely bride and we were married on June 12, 1992. Then the six of us attendees [Donna, Carolyn, Ken, Anna, Lorrie, and I] had dinner afterward at the Burning Bush Restaurant in Gatlinburg before we all returned to The Berghoff. It is significant to note that both the church where we married and the Burning Bush no longer exist today.



BURNING BUSH RESTURANT

We had a more formal luncheon type reception, held July 11, 1992 in South Bend at Tippecanoe Place [the Studebaker Home], for 100 friends and relatives after our return, with our Pastor Hohl and his wife Kathy in attendance and my son David making a nice congratulatory speech.



TIPPECANOE PLACE ENTRANCE

Tom O'Reilly, my boss and a good friend, proposed a toast and made a nice little speech about Lorrie and me while wishing us much happiness in our marriage. Unfortunately both Tom & his wife Betty Jo have now passed away. Pictures were taken by a hired Bendix photographer and we circulated about the room visiting with all our guests and relatives.



TOM AND HIS TOAST TO US



OUR CAKE AND US



HEAD TABLE IN CORNER

VARIOUS RECEPTION ATTENDEES



JIM'S RELATIVES



OUR FRIENDS



MORE OF OUR FRIENDS



LORRIES SIBLINGS AND FAMILY





HARPIST



BEFORE RECEPTION

We continued to reside in the home at 19300 Dresden Drive even though Lorrie would have liked to move out to a place in the country. I felt that we should stay there if for no other reason than it was paid for and ours or move into a condo and eliminate all of the maintenance problems. We stayed and Lorrie planted flowers that really made our yard look beautiful. Like all married couples we had our disagreements and some rough times but I felt blessed in that God had given me a second very lovely woman to love and cherish.

Years ago we rented a chalet in Gatlinburg called Moonlight and Roses which was going to be taken off the rental market. When we heard this we wrote a letter to the owners thru the rental agency, who would not reveal the owners address, stating that we would love to rent it directly from them and that we would take care of it like it was our own. About a week later we received a phone call from the current owner who said that we could go down there anytime, free of charge, provided we would keep it in good condition. It was a beautiful chalet constructed on a very steep slope [2 stories in front and 4 stories in back] with a lovely view of the mountains. The side lawn was so steep that I would let the power mower run freely down the slope and haul it back up with a rope tied to the back of it. It was laborious and time consuming but quite effective. Lorrie would weed the plants adjacent to the driveway and feed the stray cats that would occasionally appear. The view of the mountains was outstanding and we could watch the cable car in the distance as it ascended and descended from the Ober Gatlinburg ski run and ice rink.

GATLINBURG, TENNESSEE



MOONLIGHT AND ROSES



LIVING ROOM

This relationship lasted for 6 years with us staying there at least 4 times a year repairing numerous items as required. We never met the owners in person, communicating with them exclusively by phone. We loved this chalet and resolved to buy it if it ever went up for sale. Surprisingly, in the fall of 2011 it became available when it was vacated and put into foreclosure by the owners. Unfortunately, in the 15 years since we were last there, it was not at all maintained and the owners had allowed it to deteriorate to the point that the repairs would cost as much as the purchase price. Trees had grown up untrimmed and there no longer was a clear view of the mountains. One heat pump had failed and the outside badly needed a coat of paint. We were quite saddened and very disappointed in its condition and did not even put in a bid for at our age we could no longer undertake the extensive work load or cost required to restore it back to its original splendor. [We also learned a contractor already had an inside track and purchased it.] Considering all the various repairs we had to make, it was obvious that without our care, the resulting deterioration was inevitable.

Based on the loss of my first wife, when Lorrie had a hysterectomy, I thought that the threat of cancer would never be a problem. We were shocked when in the fall of 2009 the doctors discovered in a very early stage, that Lorrie had contracted Multiple Myeloma, an incurable and cancerous disease of the blood that causes deterioration and porosity of the bone structure. The source and cause of this disease is unknown but we thank God that it is now treatable with medication. Several people, in Lorrie's support group, while losing as much as 7 inches in stature, have lived for more than 17 years with the disease due to the new medications that have been developed. Unfortunately, Lorrie tires very easily and no longer can plant all the flowers as she had in the past, but longevity is still possible.

We used to have friends and relatives in for meals on various occasions but Lorrie can no longer handle the stress of cooking for a group of people or having multiple overnight house guests with the loss of energy mainly due to the low blood count inherent with her disease. She tires very easily and requires a lot of rest. We sometimes plan an activity and have to cancel in the last minute when Lorrie does not feel good enough to

participate. Group gatherings as below are no longer possible because of the resulting stress that Lorrie must avoid.



THE LAST GATHERING OF CLANS AT OUR HOME IN LATE SUMMER OF 2009

We still continue to take vacations to Gatlinburg, TN. each year and in recent years also to Fort Myers, FL. where we have a number of friends and relatives. We were going to discontinue the costly Florida trips, where we stayed in a lovely #105 condo within the beautiful Lexington Country Club, but after spending the winter at home in 2013 have decided to again return to the same condo in 2014.

Future travel for us has yet to be determined but our yearly visits to Gatlinburg, Tennessee will still continue to be a strong vacation possibility. We love the clean well furnished secluded cabins, the peaceful atmosphere, and even the occasional visits by black bears with their cubs. Another nearby attraction is the Smoky National Park with the Cades Cove 11 mile one-way drive where deer, wild turkey, black bear, and on rare occasions a red wolf can be sighted.

KEIN MERE!



### A FEW CONCLUDING REMARKS

This concludes my efforts on this 10 year historical endeavor. As stated in the beginning this entire effort was directed toward providing our children with a historical account of our family. When the other members of the family indicated an interest in this endeavor we proceeded to make it available on the Internet. We mean no offense to anyone and have found out in our research that there are numerous branches of the Besemer family with no direct relationship to our particular branch. There are at least 3 different branches located in the nearby state of Michigan alone. The Besemer name apparently is quite common throughout Germany with several different ways in which it is spelled ranging from Besemer thru Bezemer including Bessemer.

As I conclude this endeavor I have but a single regret and that is that my coauthor Rick Hofferbert is no longer here to share in this final wrap-up.

There is a remote possibility that my sister Rose will provide additional insight at a later date or one of our children might want to add a chapter but for now my efforts are henceforth concluded....

Respectfully submitted by W. James Besemer



JIM AND LORRIE BESEMER  
JUNE OF 2013