

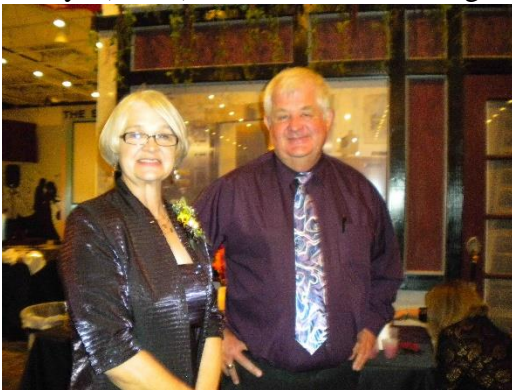
My Favorite Niece

In my stories, I admit that I have my favorite people and it probably shows in the writing. For



instance, I have a favorite niece. My older brother Bob and Mary Ann's daughter has been and still is my favorite niece. I've known Shelley since she was about three years old when Bob and Mary Ann asked me to stay with them in Devils Lake, ND after graduating from high school. They found me a job working in the construction field which paid well so I could buy a car, a 1957 Dodge and save some money for college. Shelley was a fun and intelligent young girl and we got along very well and deserves to be my favorite niece. After reading this, Shelley reminded me of the time I brought her a three-foot stuff bear. I hauled on the back of my motorcycle, driving from Moorhead to Thief Rivers Falls, about 100 miles. I'm sure it was quite a sight going along the highway.

Marlys (Marti) Mattson was the daughter of my older sister Avis. She was just a kid when I



went into the Air Force. When I got out, she was a young adult having just graduated from high school. I found myself sitting in a bar with Marti and her roommate Diane having a drink. Marti was and still is a very outgoing fun person to be with and became my favorite niece. We made a promise that the first of us to marry would be given a bottle of champagne as a wedding gift. She won. Marti deserves to be my favorite niece.

When I met my second wife, I met her family. Yes, I've been married more than one. My new sister-in-law, Ida and her husband Jeff had a daughter, Alyssa. I quickly became her favorite uncle and she my favorite niece. She was an intelligent wonderful young woman who is now a nurse. She deserves to be my favorite niece.

My second wife, Rose came with two boys; Ryan and Chris both of whom turned out to be wonderful adults with families of their own. When Ryan graduated from high school, we, of course had a graduation party and invited family and friends. It just so happened that Shelley, Marti and Alyssa were all there and one of them rounded up the other two, confronted me and asked "OK, which one of us is your favorite niece?" I was caught! I told them that I loved them all and stopped. Shelley and Marti have continued to be my favorites, however since the divorce, I lost track of Alyssa.

After my heart attack, Shelley was always there providing me with support over the phone and with email. Her support also helped my Sweetie, Bev cope with my recovery. What a wonderful person Bev is! Marti's daughter, Annette has become my favorite great niece and is a Special Education teacher, helping students with special needs. I am very proud of her.

There is one common fact about the three women. Each of them married and each has two children; Shelley has two daughters, Marti has a daughter and son while Alyssa has two sons.