

The Strength of the Human Spirit

By Beverly R. Titus

I had known Nancy since high school; even back then she was fiercely independent. Married and divorced twice, she raised six kids on her own.

At some point she gave up her car and relied on her bicycle and her own two feet to get around. Nancy also didn't like to be indoors; she found it too confining and was happiest out in nature. She would bike or walk from before sun up to almost sundown every day. She kept two journals: one strictly mundane about each day's ride with notations of where she had gone that day and/or the people she met. She would make drawings of interesting plants and animals encountered along the way. The other was her spiritual journal filled with poems and spiritual insights relative to the natural world.

Her friends were concerned about her because we knew she was thumbing rides in bad weather. We would caution her about taking rides with strangers. And she would reply, "They're not strangers. Everybody knows me." Yes, she was right, everyone did know her, but she did not know every one of them. All we could do was love her and pray for her safety. Her children knew better than to try to change her. Nancy lived her life with determination and a child-like innocence.

As the years went along it was evident to her friends that Nancy was more and more forgetful and becoming eccentric in her behavior. But you could not hold her down. Every day she rode her bike, or walked wherever she needed to go in her hometown and surrounding towns. She loved talking to people and always had a big smile.

I went riding with her one day and I told her that when she died her Guardian Angel was going for a well-earned R & R. She turned to me in all seriousness and said, "You know, sometimes when I'm riding, I feel like someone gets on my bike behind me, puts their arms around me and holds onto the handlebars."

Over the last two or three years, Nancy has been walking more than riding. People would stop and offer her a ride. Often she would accept even though she didn't always recognize the car (or the driver) right away. Many people were happy to drive out of their way to get her to where she wanted to go.

On April 20, 2016, a person new to town, posted on the town's Facebook page asking about this elderly woman they saw walking all over town and surrounding towns. She was genuinely concerned. That Facebook page lit up with hundreds of responses. Everyone had a Nancy story. There was so much love and caring poured out that day...I couldn't keep up with it. There was also a lot of concern expressed by people who had recently seen Nancy

walking late at night on dark back roads. Nancy's dementia had reached the point where she wouldn't stay in her apartment at night. She was clearly becoming a danger to herself and others.

That night, April 20, 2016, Nancy went for a walk down to the center of the village and, this woman who was never sick a day in her life, suffered a fatal heart attack.

There are no coincidences. Nancy, at some higher level, must have sensed the energy coming from all those Facebook postings. At that same higher level she must have realized she was very close to being confined for her own safety and the safety of others. If someone had hit her with their car it would not have been their fault, but they would have to live with that for the rest of their life.

I had been planning to go for a bike ride on Thursday the 21st, and it seemed fitting that I carry out my plan. While I was riding I became aware of Angels accompanying me. They told me they wanted everyone to know they had guided Nancy "Home" where she was safe and happy. They also wanted everyone to know that they were Honored, Privileged, and Blessed to have been assigned to her. Before they left they indicated they were now going for some well earned Rest and Recalibration. (I found that rather funny. Who knew Angels needed to be recalibrated! That is the word I heard quite clearly.)

Nancy lived her life her way and she died her way. You have to admire the strength of the human spirit. Ride on, Nancy. Ride on.

Beverly Titus retired from the production staff of The Door Opener in 2005. Since then she has written numerous poems and self-published three chap books of poetry. She has also written many stories for her family, mostly about her life and her adventures. She is the mother of four, grandmother of seven and the great grandmother of 3 great granddaughters and a great grandson to be born in June of 2016. Beverly may be reached at geminibev@cox.net.

