



THEN (1963)



NOW (2011)

MARTHA ALLEN NEWMAN: How I got this way

I am now a 67 year old wife, mother, grandmother, sister, 5th-generation Texan, quilter, technophile, and part-time nurse at Presbyterian Healthcare (a large HMO in NM)--I am working Adult Medical-Surgical unit. I am also smart, funny, and frequently irreverent (which periodically gets me in trouble). Here is a little of how I got here:

I only went to Burges from October 1961 'til graduation in May 1963, and I was always something of an outsider. I had few friends and made even fewer waves. Many decades later, after viewing a PowerPoint slide that consisted of advertising images from the 50s and 60s, I realized that the embarrassment that I felt about my family, mostly because images like the ones in this PowerPoint Show bombarded us on a daily basis, led me to believe that those pictures were the norm for everybody. Since nothing in those images even came close to illustrating my family, I came to believe that I must be a social pariah.

In truth, I came from an intact, nurturing home. They gave me all that I needed, and most of what I wanted. They drank--a fair amount--but socially. They never drove drunk, and alcohol never impacted our lives. For most of my life we lived in a 3 room apartment on the edge of downtown. I went to El Paso High School which had a large group of lower class students, and a large group of upper class students. Needless to say, I didn't fit in. I wasn't allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities unless I could get there on my own and be home before dark. My mother didn't drive, and asking my dad for a ride was unthinkable! We didn't even have a telephone until I was 17. In my junior year, we moved to the East side of El Paso and lived in a tiny house that was rented, but scrupulously clean. Since I had few friends, TV was my only window to the world, and I believed that "Leave It to Beaver" and "Ozzie and Harriet" were the way *real* families lived. The icon of dysfunctional families, "Archie Bunker", didn't debut until 1971!

I actually took all this self-isolation and made it into strength of character. I learned to be self-sufficient, not really needing outside approval to validate anything I thought or did. It's my very best quality, I think, and makes me a fairly unique individual. Additionally, the

father I was so embarrassed by taught me from Day One never to take myself too seriously, to find enjoyment in the world around me, and not too judge people until you've walked in their shoes (I'm not so good at this one!). I never figured out until I was well into my forties that all teenagers feel this way, but by that time I was a fully formed person, and I can now look back with amusement at that other me, and I can discourse with classmates with confidence.

I've had an interesting life so far. I decided to become a nurse when I was nine and read my first Cherry Ames book, so I started nursing school at Hotel Dieu, but quit and got married in 1964 to John Zimmermann. Five years and three kids later I went back and graduated from Seton School of Nursing in Colorado Springs in 1971. John died of a massive heart attack (he was 35) in 1973 when I was 28—my kids were 7, 5, and 4, and I remarried only to find that my new husband didn't tolerate children well (did I mention I had three?).

The death knell to that marriage came when my oldest son, John Zimmermann, Jr., sustained a spinal cord injury in 1982, and subsequently died in 1984 of sepsis. My daughter, Sarah Zimmermann, and I moved to Albuquerque and it was there that I met Herb Newman. He and I married in January of 1985 and we lived in San Diego, CA for most of the next twenty-five years.

I retired from Kaiser-Permanente in Southern California after 32 years as a Pediatric nurse in Sept 2008, and now work as an RN, PRN for Presbyterian Healthcare in Rio Rancho, NM.—I found out that nursing wasn't just something I *did*, but something I *was*.

Though I've had some adversity, I've had lots of good things, too. I've lived in 7 different states and worked as a nurse in five of them. I now have a solid 27 yr. marriage to a really great guy, and I consider my daughter my best friend and the most admirable person I know.

My husband I moved into our dream house in Rio Rancho, NM (near Albuquerque) in Sept 2008 and we are enjoying the 3 kids and 2 grandsons who live here. My son, Jesse Zimmermann had some very challenging years, but he prevailed and I am so grateful that we moved to NM and that we have had the chance to build a wonderful relationship! We very much enjoy having family dinners with the whole group once a week. I am a truly blessed woman!

I like quilting, golfing, photography, and technology; in fact I even built my own website <<http://www.quiltedmemoriesbymartha.com>>



Front row: Herb, Nathan Newman

Back row: Martha Newman, Vince Newman, Kerry Newman, Evan Newman, Jesse Zimmermann.



From left: Matthew Eishen, Jeff Eishen, Sarah Zimmermann Eishen



We call this "Martha's Menagerie"