



# Toni Wintroub



**The family at Christmas**

Funny how it seems hard to put the story of your life on paper, especially when you know the people who will read it. I've read all the bios submitted so far and must say that one of the first things that struck me was how good our English teachers were! We Mustangs larned that thar grammer and punktuashun purty good. It's been a lot of fun to read everyone's bios—what a great idea that was!

Burges....last year....too much of my memory has disappeared. I was so glad to get away from Alice White before my dad would throttle her, and I was so relieved when the graduation ceremony was o-v-e-r. In less than two months, I was on a train travelling across Texas on my way to Antioch (in Yellow Springs, Ohio) via St. Louis where my aunt could outfit me for Ohio winters. That trip was awesome b/c I got to see parts of Texas I had no idea even existed. Green? In Texas? Gorgeous! Antioch is a small, [very] liberal arts co-op college that required students to accrue academic credits and work credits in order to graduate. The first quarter-mester was on campus, and then we went out to our jobs. My first job was being a nurse's aide on a psychiatric floor in a Boston hospital. I lived on Beacon Hill but never saw Paul Revere's ghost OR the Boston Strangler. I loved the friendliness of the people I met, and being there in the fall-winter, I got to see real snow. I will never forget how it sparkled like diamonds! I also learned how not to make lasagna. The Italian grocer who coached me said my lasagna was the best one he ever drank.

Then it was back on campus for another quarter-mester and then back out to another job. I worked in a veteran's psychiatric hospital. If you ever saw or read One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, you'll have a perfect idea of that hospital. I had one more job working for a major publishing company in Cleveland. The 60s, as we all know, were a time of tremendous turmoil, and I was in the thick of it. I was a member of SNCC, youth arm in the Civil Rights movement, and worked in parts of Ohio and the South where Blacks and whites had better not be seen together. Went to jail. Yup. And there's more, but that would make this too long. Anyway, I lost my scholarship to Antioch b/c I spent more time marching in picket lines and registering voters in poverty neighborhoods than attending class.

Back to El Paso which had TWC. Attended there and continued the political dissent which included everything from Viet Nam issues to the farm labor issues. A couple of years later, my to-be hubby and I transferred to UT-Austin. I flipped a coin to determine whether to major in Education of the Deaf or Library Science. Education won. I DID go to classes even though there was plenty



**Letting everyone know that I voted!**



**This is three of my kids and the 3 grand-kids. We had just finished cracking confetti-filled eggshells on each other and are full of confetti. Great fun!**

the tiles in her mouth.

Having kids in school and being a former teacher led to an interesting big change in my life. Long story made short, I got involved in protesting some curricular and political (civil rights) changes the school district was threatening to do, one thing led to another, and I got drafted to run for the school board. OMG! The only thing I'd EVER won in my whole life was an album on the 4:30 Sock Hop (~Music for Crazy Mixed Up People...go figure). After a hard-run campaign in which even some former Mustangs participated, we won the election. When you use the word "win" in the same sentence as the word "election," you are in for a big surprise about what "win" means. Still, it really was an interesting, eye-opening experience in EP and Texas politics....some major wins, some big losses, and some heartbreak. I was on that school board for 6-7 very long years, worked very hard for students' needs and rights, employees' rights, and ethical and legal business practices. Apparently I did what my dad taught me b/c I "got the right people [so] mad at me" that in one election, they even ran a guy with the same name as mine against me! (I won.) For those of you who don't already know it, Texas politics are pretty vile, and I had to get out of there; my family was sacrificing just too much in too many ways.

Hubby and I parted ways and I had to get a real job. Taught at El Paso Community College for a few years. Joined up with a psychologist who'd been the leader of incorrigible soldiers in Viet Nam and with two crazy but brilliant Viet vets. Under an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the state of Texas, we developed awesome programs for working with adjudicated kids and their families and foster teens whose parents' rights had been terminated. Those programs were lauded, but TX ran out of the money for it and we had to close after a few years.

I went back to graduate school again and majored in Clinical Social Work. That degree led to my being a PSYCHOtherapist in a United Way

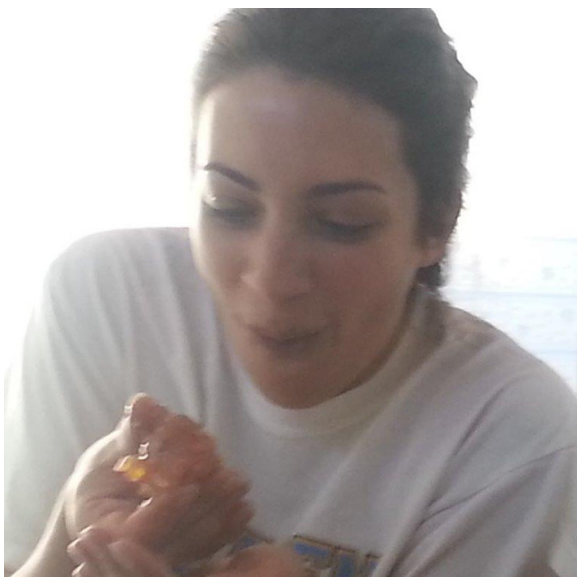
of political and social upheaval to be involved in. After six long years in college, I finally graduated and worked as a teacher of little deaf kids in a residential school. The State of Texas and I had some disagreements on how deaf kids torn away from their homes ought to be treated: the kids were expected to learn how to speak and read lips, but some of us teachers thought they ought to be able to communicate with signs, too. After a few years of trying fecklessly to get eight pairs of eyes to look at me at the same time, I went back to UT to get a Master's Degree in the Emotionally Disturbed department....and it was. The two professors eventually left their respective spouses and ran away together. My husband finished pharmacy school while I was in graduate school, and we moved back to El Paso "for just one year." Y'all know how that goes.

By the time we returned to EP, I had one little boy, 7, and soon male Kid #2 was on the way. I did the dutiful housewife thing for many years and made some GREAT jams and preserves with fruit from all our fruit trees. Four years later, a girl was born, and then four years after that, another boy. Try playing family games with that stretch between kids: Scrabble—Kid #1 playing words, Kid #2 driving the tiles, and Kid #3 sticking



**We're in a Chinese restaurant which we ALL love**





**This is Shaina, my daughter. Her expression comes from holding a piece of dripping honeycomb from a hive that a friend of mine removed from between the walls of my living room when the kids were moving me to Denver. My friend is a beekeeper and he rescued over 50,000 bees from that hive and removed over 50 pounds of honeycomb. My kids were fascinated by the whole process, which took two days.**

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Agency in EP. For 16+ years, I worked with individuals, couples, families with all kinds of problems. Eye-opening. Heartbreaking. Humbling. Challenging. Incredibly interesting. And fun! (Of course, you don't tell your clients that their problems are fun for you to work with.) Truly, I loved it and learned a lot from each and every client.

Accomplishments in life? Raised four kids I'm proud of. Had the only weed-free yard on the block until I got into politics. Contributed to cleaning up some abuses at the State School for the Deaf. Contributed to saving some programs in the schools and tried to clean up corruption. Helped many families/couples learn how to communicate effectively and problem-solve. Developed policies and programs to help HIV/AIDS patients and their families/partners and trained therapists to work with GLBT teens and clients. Probably, I hope, others, too, but these might be more notable???

For yukky health reasons, I had to leave EP at the end of 2012 and now live in Denver where my three oldest kids live. Brrrr. Gorgeous. Somehow there's something really soothing about listening to birds singing or squabbling, squirrels fussing, crickets chirping, and thunder rolling. I love watching those squirrels.....and we have tuxedo-clad magpies up here! Love it. I've always been passionate about things political, but now my major focus is protecting all animals, especially those in the wild or who should be in the wild, from exploitation, abuse, loss of habitat, etc.

Unlike so many of you, I have no creative ability; my mother said she was NOT going to teach anybody who held the knitting needles parallel how to knit. I also love to read...always have. Shantaram is one of my favorites...especially the audiobook. Hopefully, I'll get to return to camping soon. Kaye Jones' family took me with them every summer and I miss her....and camping. Last, I'm an avid collector of miniature liquor bottles and have over 1000 different bottles (unopened) from all over the world.

I probably won't get to see y'all at Reunion 50.....no job yet, no money. Hopefully, those great planners will set up another one later and I will get to go.... Yah-hooo and y'all have fun...hug each other for me!!