

Stork and Parents in Dead Heat

by Frederick Wickert

I was serving in Tokyo, Japan in 1956 when I received a letter from home. Enclosed was a newspaper clipping of an Ithaca, NY newspaper. The front page was also included, which had the picture of the entrance of the Ithaca hospital set back away from the curb and an awning over the walkway leading to the entrance.

The letter and the newspaper clipping provided some interesting information. My kid sister was expecting her first child. She had carried well for she was a large framed and healthy girl. She and her husband had been at a picnic that afternoon.

In the evening my sister and her husband enjoyed dinner and after the dishes were washed and put away, they sat in the living room watching TV. Suddenly, my sister's water broke. She informed her husband they had better head for the hospital right away. They had a bag prepared for such an event so it took no time at all to go outside and get in the car. They lived in a small town near Ithaca at the time, called Mecklenburgh, NY.

My sister's husband, Chuck, drove to the hospital. He pulled up to the curb and parked the car. It was 11:00 P.M. and the nurses and other hospital staff were coming and going from the entrance as it was shift change time.

The young couple proceeded to walk towards the door which was approximately fifty feet from the curb. A little less than half way my sister stopped. She spread her feet apart and told Chuck, "It's coming right now."

She reached under her dress with her hands and caught the baby as it exited from her body. She then looked around her, and called out to passersby, "Somebody please help me!" And somebody did.

Hospital personnel came to her aid. She was quickly taken into the hospital where proper care was rendered. Her first born son, Charles, was doing well, and so was my sister. Her husband survived shakily as well.

The next morning when the Ithaca Newspaper came out, the headlines roared, PARENTS AND STORK IN DEAD HEAT AT HOSPITAL GATES. My kid sister of course, was somewhat embarrassed but proud of her newborn son. All the rest of her friends and family enjoyed the incident with many good laughs.

The son Charles grew up to have a career in the United States navy. My sister was to give birth to three more sons before tragically being killed on her way home from work when a driver ran a stop sign at 55 mph and hit her.