

## Home Sweet Home

It was December 1969, and I was home. A lot had changed in almost 4 years. All my old girlfriends and buddies had married, moved, gone to school, or in the military. My brother Ron joined the Marines and was serving in Vietnam on his second tour of duty. Cliff had joined the Navy. Randy, Diane, Linda, and Brenda were still living at home with Mom and Dad, who were now in their 40s. Things seemed a lot quieter. I was FREE and out of service.

It felt good, but my life had no direction or desire to get serious about anything. I knew that would change, so I started to look for work to help pay for my GTO. My dad got me a job at his Westinghouse Plant, which I did not like. I worked a total of 4 hours before I decided I had had enough of factory line work. I left at lunch, never to return. Then I went to interview for a job at several Temporary Service locations, but had no luck until I finally accepted a starting position at Elston Richards Storage Company as a billings clerk for \$2.70 cents per hour.

It was January 1970; after clocking out, I walked out to the parking lot at my new job when I realized my GTO was missing. I figured a hot car like my goat was stolen, so I went back inside to call the police officers. They made a report and suggested that I call my finance company. My finance company told me they had my car because I was 2 months past due. It was repossessed!!! I called my mom, and she told me she would help me get back to my car and she would come and pick me up. Thanks Mom. You know, moms are great. I liked my job and the people I worked with, and I made it a point to work hard and learn as much as possible. My bosses liked me, and again, I was promoted whenever possible.

In the meantime, back at home, because I was not making enough money, I was living at home for free. One day, while rummaging through the refrigerator, Dad had had enough of “freeloader” Jim. He told me it was time to leave the nest again!!! Ron had just gotten out of the Marines, and he and his girlfriend had just bought a house from Dad, and I could move in with them temporarily. Moving was easy because they lived only 2 houses down the street. I did not have a lot to move, like only my clothes, and I did not have a whole lot of those.

One day, Mom asked Cliff (brother) and me if we would go pick up our brother Ron at the Marine Base located in North Carolina. Of course, we would! We took off in my GTO. It was a comfortable ride in my goat, and we made it down there, I am sure, in record time. Somewhere in North Carolina, while driving down a two-lane road at dusk, I found myself again behind a semi-truck trailer going too slow for me, and you guessed it, I decided to pass. I floored the GTO, and off we went flying around the Semi. Suddenly, over a small hill, another car pops up heading right at us. Knowing what the GTO would do, I made a split decision to put the pedal to the metal, which I am sure put us to 90 miles an hour all the while Cliff was screaming “WE’RE GOING TO DIE”. The other car drove safely into the ditch, and we left the semi in the dust.

1970 brought us the music of The Carpenters, Jackson 5, Anne Murray, Chicago, James Taylor, Ike and Tina Turner, Joe Cocker, Stills Nash and Young. At the big screen we saw Five Easy Pieces, Little Big Man, Patton, Love Story, Mash and Airport. On the little screen, we were entertained with The Flip Wilson Show, The Six Million Dollar Man, The Incredible Hulk, Bonanza, Rowan and Martin's Laugh In, Hee Haw and My Three Sons.

The major events of that year were the National Guard opening fire, killing 4 students at Kent State University. I remember this vividly; it made me very mad, and I asked why. Sad, so, so senseless. The Beatles broke up and Janis Joplin died during this year.