

OHHH My Orinda By Jim Benney

An unpolished story **6-22-25**

Mom's Job

In our world mothers were expected to take care of the kids and the home front and not bother the Dads at work.

And they did, not always happily.

Although my mother was crippled by polio she was one tough cookie, and was there for us kids 100%.

Once we were all out of her hair she became a docent at the DeYoung Museum in the city and we got backstage passes to the occasional major event.

She would have preferred to not have had polio but I never heard her complain about it. Her parents fought for her to be treated like a normal kid.

My Dad was a football playing, boxing, future lawyer at Cal and had his pick of women. He loved her inner strength and active mind. That was what mattered.

My ADD, OCD, ?

I wonder if they had a diagnosis for this kind of thing in the fifties. It would be interesting to read the teachers private comments from my early days. I wasn't a bad person, but maybe challenging.

I liked having fun running around with my friends or just exploring, and being couped up in a classroom I only did because I had to.

I could pay close attention when something interested me, and when I cleaned my own room at home maybe there was an obsessive compulsive aspect.

Mrs. Thom

My second grade teacher, old Mrs. Thom, became a legend in Orinda to those in the know. For her every subject became a lesson in phonics and phonetics, and understanding correct spelling.

Her students scored way higher in English testing than the other kids all the way through high school. It was an important advantage to have.

Don Jesse

Mr. Jesse was my seventh grade teacher at Pine Grove.

He made everything interesting, as he had a theatrical background. I will never forget him casting my friend Robby Wallace, who had a serious stuttering problem, in the lead role of the annual school play. It cured his stuttering for good. Magic of the highest order.