

we moved to California, he also studied clarinet and guitar.) But from the earliest age, David's favorite instrument was piano. My mother (David's grandmother) was an excellent pianist. Every time she caught David sitting on the piano stool, she would sit down beside him and give him a lesson. And David *often* sat on the piano stool!

Another highlight of David's childhood was his activities in the Cub Scouts. He was a Cub Scout from the age of six to nine, and later (in California) he became a Boy Scout. I think one of the main attractions that being a Cub Scout had for David was that he loved the uniform *and* loved the "goodies" that were served at the weekly meetings!

When David was around six years old, he decided to run away from home. I actually don't remember exactly what happened. I think he wanted something and he didn't get it — and he got angry. Basically, David was a very fair person, so whatever it was he wanted was something he genuinely felt entitled to — and I'm quite sure he felt that his decision to run away from home was justified! When I realized that he was taking the whole thing rather seriously, I thought about it for a moment and decided not to treat this episode lightly.

I said, "David, I want you to stay. We like having you here. We don't want you to run away. Will you stay?"

David pursed his lips, looked adamantly down at the floor and said, "Nope!"

I paused for a moment and then thoughtfully added, "Would you *please* think it over?"

He said, "Nope!"

After another pause, I continued, "You mean you are really going to leave us?"

"Yep!"

"Well," I said, "if you change your mind, you know that the door will always be open for you here."

"I won't change my mind," David said. Whereupon he gathered all of his worldly possessions in a small suitcase, took his life savings — all 14 cents of it — and walked out the front door.

After David was gone, I sat sort of "frozen" in a chair in the living room. All kinds of thoughts went through my head. *You should have stopped him. No, that would have been too "bossy". Maybe he'll go and stay at one of his aunts' houses — and they'll call me up and tell me he's O.K. You should have begged him to stay.*

These thoughts all just added to my agony. Every few minutes, I would get up and go look at the clock. It seemed that the hands were standing still. A minute was like an hour. I walked the floor and thought, *What can I do? What should I do?* The torture seemed to go on forever. At one point, I looked at the clock and — though only 15 minutes had gone by — I felt as though I had been walking around the living room worrying about David for *15 hours!*

Suddenly, there was a noise out front. I heard someone walk across the porch and I heard the door opening. I cannot tell you what my reaction was, except to say that I felt I had suddenly had an electric shock — for there stood David! It was all I could do to "keep my cool" (as you say nowadays). I was torn between wanting to reach over and hug and kiss him — and to break out crying like a kid. Instead, I just stood there, staring at David. He slowly and calmly walked through the living room and plopped his gear down on the couch.

He looked at me somewhat coldly and said, "I have not changed my mind. I'm still going to run away. But I decided I'll have to wait until another time, because I don't have enough money."

"All right, David," I said in a quiet little voice. "Whatever you say."

By the way, it was very odd, but in that moment David seemed quite a grown-up man. He picked his stuff up off the couch and started off in the direction of his room. "However, I *will* be leaving on some other day," he said as he vanished down the hall.

P.S. He never did run away again — and, boy, was I relieved!

BIRTHDAYS, EASTER & MUMPS!

From the ages of six to ten (when he was ten we moved to California), David's New Jersey childhood was really almost ideal. His granddad—whom he called "Pop Pop"—and his Uncle Stan, both of whom he dearly loved, became like second "dads" to him, teaching him all the things daddies teach little boys—like how to go fishing, how to shoot archery, how to make a fire with two rocks, how to go camping and even how to ride a motor bike! Uncle Stan's daughter Barbara — who was two years older than David — was his best friend in those days, and to this day they're very, very close. Barbara is now a math teacher in New



What's this — the Adonis Of The Month? No, it's David at four and one half taking a bath at the family home in West Orange, New Jersey.



At five and one half, David gave his Christmas list to the Santa Claus at Muir's Department Store.



Ganddad, grandmom, David's mother and David pose for their annual "Easter portrait" (David was six years old).