

MY SON-DAVID by EVELYN WARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

Jersey and she and David regularly keep in touch with each other.

Every birthday, I tried to give David a party — and I remember that his fourth birthday was a particularly happy occasion for him. I had streamers flowing down from the ceiling, a beautiful cake with David's name on it, and party favors for all his little friends. David's idea of heaven in those days was to have a Mickey Mouse watch — and, indeed, he got it!

Every Christmas, we would go to Muir's Department Store in East Orange, where David would have his annual visit with Santa Claus. He not only believed in Santa Claus, he insisted on telling Santa a list of all the things he wanted — plus having his picture taken sitting on Santa's knee.

When Easter time came around, Mom, Dad and I would all dress up — and we'd dress David up — and we'd all go off to church together. After church, we'd come back to the house and pose "prettily" in front, while each of the relatives had turns taking pictures of all of us together.

During the summer that David was six, he had a glum few weeks during which he had the mumps. Since he was in quarantine, so that he wouldn't give the mumps to any of the neighborhood kids, he mostly sat around the backyard looking morose and bored. During that time, in an effort to cheer him up, I whipped out my trusty camera and a *sombrero* I had gotten in one of my summer stock trips. I put the hat on David's head and snapped away, telling him to smile. Well, if you look around on these pages, you'll find one of the pictures I took — and you'll see that I *didn't* succeed in getting David to smile!

Aside from the aforementioned Cub Scouts, David's youthful "social" life centered around school, church, sports and home.

At Eagle Rock school, David was an imp (as in *impatient*). I remember that he was particularly naughty in the third grade. He and another boy would always finish their lessons first — and, while the other kids in class would be finishing *their* studies, David and this boy would start to carry on. Miss Sutterline (who, by the way, had been *my* third-grade teacher when I went to the same school as a little girl) once sent David home with a note for me. In the note, she asked me to please come to the school to discuss David's "behavior". Miss Sutterline told me that David's grades were really quite good and that he was excellent in

math. But she said, "You've got to tell David to stay away from this other little boy. I have separated them the best I can by seating them at the opposite ends of the classroom, but you're going to have to do something to help me." Her voice was almost pleading as she continued. "They giggle, they laugh, they tease the girls and they disrupt the class."

That night I sat David down and had a long talk with him — or rather *to* him. It came out that David was actually bored with class because things weren't moving along as fast as he would like for them to. In other words, he would learn a lesson and then wait for the rest of the kids — and *that's* when he would get into mischief. Well, Miss Sutterline tried everything she could to cure David of his "naughtiness". She even kept him after school — and did he *hate* that! Then, by chance, Miss Sutterline found *just* the thing to make David Bruce Cassidy behave himself. She would threaten him, saying, "If you don't behave in school, I am not going to let you come to bible class." And David would suddenly start to behave!

Believe it or not, David *loved* bible class. Every Friday afternoon he would go to Miss Sutterline's house, where the children would read from the bible, have text explained to them and, of course, enjoy such goodies as lemonade and cookies. David was also very interested in church activities. He attended Sunday School at Holy Trinity Church in West Orange (where he was baptised) and he was a member of the junior choir there. The junior choir was led by Mrs. Linnell (who is in her 80's now and who tells me she loves looking at *The Partridge Family* on TV!) and David's Aunt Marion. Aunt Marion was not only in charge of the junior choir, she also supervised all the Sunday School classes *and* their various activities. Aunt Marion and David's grandmother — whom he called "Nana" and who was a concert singer — were both very instrumental in developing David's youthful interest in drama and singing.

Many was the Sunday when I'd sit in the congregation and listen to David's voice lifted in song — not dreaming then that that same voice would one day be singing for millions upon millions of TV-viewers and record-buyers.

But more about that next month! I'll meet you right back here next month in the May issue. The May issue of 16 goes on sale March 25. Reserve your copy now and I'll see you then!



David in "quarantine" with the mumps, looking very glum. Even the sombrero couldn't cheer him up.



David (third from left) with the Holy Trinity junior choir — Miss Linnell and Aunt Marion are in the background.



David — when he was the third-grade "terror" at Eagle Rock School.