

## What Took Me So Long!

*By Molly Hegman*

The year was 1985. The occasion was Parents' Weekend at the Naval Academy. The mode of transportation was a four seater airplane flown by my husband, Ben. I sat in the co-pilot's seat enjoying the view. Our two daughters, Kate and Laura, were sitting in the back seat engrossed in their books. The trip there was uneventful. We were there because our oldest daughter, Adrienne, was there as a first year student.

The weekend was super busy, filled with special events. My favorite was the parade. Ben was happy to attend a football game between Navy and Air Force. The girls were happy with everything but what they enjoyed the most was the dance on the last night.

The day after the dance we were scheduled to leave in the afternoon. We woke on the departure day to cloudy skies. It grew stormier as the day progressed. Ben was in frequent contact with the airport. When the events of the day ended we quickly said our goodbyes to Adrienne and took off for the airport.

When Ben checked in he was told that we would have to delay our departure. We checked into a motel and tried to sleep. It was a little after midnight when we climbed into the plane. Kate and Laura returned to the back seat. Due to the late hours they had spent at the dance, they went to sleep. I was uncomfortable as the weather was still stormy. This feeling appeared to be justified as we spent the first twenty minutes bouncing around in the sky. Ben kept assuring me that all would be fine shortly. Just in case ... I gripped my seat with both hands ... to hold the plane up in the sky.

After about twenty minutes of Ben concentrating on flying, the girls sleeping off a late night while I kept the plane in the air, we were bounced out of the clouds into a cosmic wonderland. We were awestruck! The bouncing stopped abruptly and it seemed as if we were motionless in the sky. The sky in front of us and the earth below us were spectacular. Ben and I sat quietly, taking in the beauty of the deep black sky filled with twinkling stars, Van Gogh's stars. It looked as if we should be able to pick one out of the velvety sky. The ground was contourly striped with dark rolling hills and bands of glittering lights. As we flew in silence the real show began. We were treated to a spectacular Van Gogh display. It was meteor shower time! I spotted one, then Ben had his turn. Soon there were too many to count. We sat in awe, caught up in the beauty of the moment as the meteors streaked across the sky. After about fifteen years of flying with him, I finally understood Ben's love of flying! What took me so long? The two girls in the back? They slept through the whole event!