

## My Son, the Music Man

Jeanne Lee

During my first pregnancy, we were stationed at Ft. Sill and then Ft. Hood. We were attending a church that had a big pipe organ. One Sunday, the organist seemed to “pull out all the stops!” and was playing a rousing hymn before the service. My child decided during that hymn to swing and sway to the vibrations of the organ. That was indeed an unexpected feeling as I tried to sit still in the pew. He (although I didn’t know it was a “he” yet) seemed to enjoy music whenever it was played and did some gyrating, which definitely got my attention.

Michael and I moved back to my hometown when his daddy was sent to Viet Nam. Mother and the two of us would sit in the back pew of the little church so that if needed – and the Cheerio treats ran out – we could make a quiet escape to the cry room. He would stand in the pew between Mother and me and wave his hands like the pastor was doing as he directed the congregation in singing. Well, one Sunday, the pastor started smiling as he directed the music and then thanked Michael for assisting him in the directing!

In grade school, Michael decided he wanted to play trombone and we rented the instrument and began lessons. After some agonizing first weeks, he began to improve and continued to play in the school band. In middle school he and his brother both played trombone in the band and jazz band. At one point, the two of them made up half of the trombone section in the jazz band.

In high school, he became part of the marching band, the jazz band, orchestra and the pit orchestra for the school musicals. The pit orchestra needed additional brass players, but there was no room for addition musicians in the pit area. Michael decided to rent a coronet, learn the music and play both the trombone and coronet (obviously not simultaneously!) when needed in specific musical numbers.

During his high school years, many hours were spent at marching band competitions. The Conn sterling silver plated horn with F valve attachment (Circa 1984) was “paid forward” to his second cousin on his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday for use in his jazz band.

In junior high Michael also decided he wanted to play the piano, but we didn’t have a piano. Arrangements were made for him to practice using one of the pianos at the church where I was secretary. After the first three lessons, his teacher told me, “You need to buy that boy his own piano!” Today that piano sits in his living room although he doesn’t play anymore. When I visited him about 10 years ago, he agreed to play the two recital pieces that I have loved since back in the day. I have a picture of the two of us sitting on the piano bench. Though I had always wanted to play piano, I learned after a few lessons as an adult, it wasn’t to be one of my talents. However, my Music Man has provided me with lots of good musical memories.