

Down By The Berry Patch

"The Yellow Boots"

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I had not thought about the yellow boots for some time. But just this week I received two memory joggers. Good friend, Norma Dinsmore, wrote and asked if we would send her a picture because she had so many memories of Alex in his yellow boots. Then I was reading a copy of a letter I had written to my good friend, Mary Mae Campbell, in 1994 and there was a mention of the yellow boots again.

I smiled as I thought about it. I went through some old picture albums to see if I could find some pictures. Sure enough, there were numerous pictures of Alex--with the yellow boots. I recalled that every day for over a year, Alex would come trudging over to our place in his yellow boots--spring, summer, fall, and winter. I now wonder if he had two pair because I doubt that his foot remained the same size to accommodate the space. But, he surely did love his yellow boots. He wore them to walk through water puddles, to go across the dew in the grass in the early morning, and to keep warm. He wore them fishing, walking in the woods, shooting archery, to church, shopping, catching frogs, eating meals, and often to bed. But, in addition to wearing them for needy purposes, I was always convinced he wore them because they were easy to put on. They required no lacing or tying of shoe laces. It was a quick entry of the foot and a fast get-a-way when Mom wanted him to do something.

Then I also wondered if it was in the genes. I recalled when his dad and our youngest son, Mike, would wear a green shirt and green denim jeans for over two years running. He wanted to wear the same thing to school every single day when he was in the second and third grade. I remember explaining to the teachers that he was not wearing the same clothes--dirty--every day. He had three or four outfits exactly the same. That was his choice. If I purchased other clothes, they just hung in the closet or sat in the drawers until he outgrew them. Then they were delegated to St. Vincent DePaul--brand new. They often had the tags on them yet. Now, thirty plus years later, Mike wears the same blue shirt, navy vest, and brown hat day after day. His hat has become a trademark along with his greeting of "Good Morning" any time of the day or night.

Then, I was thinking that my husband, Lorain, always wears the same blue work shirt day after day, month after month, year after year. Actually, it is not the same shirt, but they are identical. It is a type of



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Photo Caption: Alex in his yellow boots. 1 August 1994. Cary, North Carolina

shirt that he likes and one day he came home with about 15 of them because he got a good buy on them at the Mill End Store, a favorite store of his in Bay City. He gave some to Mike and some to me. But he kept the majority and they hang next to each other in his closet. It is a number of years since the purchase and they are getting very faded, very shear, and very frayed around the neck. But they all look the same--well worn.

I wondered how this could be happening. Why was it happening? Why would three generations of guys be doing this? And then I remembered that a couple of weeks ago Mike and Janice, my son and daughter-in-law were commenting on the fact that I was always wearing the same pink sweat shirt--day after day, season after season. I explained that I had 3 identical shirts, so it was not the same shirt I was wearing. I explained that pink makes me feel good. The chemotherapy I am receiving for cancer often make me feel not so good--but the pink of the shirts is a picker upper. Pink made my mother look good. When she was ill, I put her in pink sheets, pink pillow cases and pink nightgowns--week after week. And I smiled as I remembered this.

Maybe it is in the genes. Maybe it is a learned trait. Whatever it is, whether it is a pink sweatshirt, blue work shirts, green jeans and green shirt, or yellow boots, it seems to run in the Berg family.

And those yellow boots are pretty neat on a cute little guy--my grandson. When I look at the pictures of this darling little blond boy in the yellow boots, it is difficult to imagine that it is the same handsome, six foot three, brunette seventeen year old who is still the sunshine of my life. Go Alex!

P. S. (October 2007)

Alex is now 19 and his parents just purchased a new pair of yellow boots for him!

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