

## LIVING LOVING HELPING AND SHARING

By: William Hoffman

Because of a job related injury and many months of hospital, therapy, and then rehab followed by readjusting to a new occupation, my wife Peggy, then about age 50 nursed me back to health and at the same time went back to work as a realtor. Her attitude was always positive and reassuring to me, never letting me give up or get down hearted. Peggy was about 68 years old when she developed cancer of the cervix, and after surgery and chemotherapy we thought all was well. About 8 years later she suffered a triple heart by pass operation after which she needed constant oxygen and was wheel chair bound for most of the time. Two years later, Peggy was diagnosed with alt Alzheimer disease. At first she knew she had bad problems but never complained and tried to continue serving as church librarian and teacher and house keeping as long as she could, always with a smile and no complaint. As her illness progressed, Peggy didn't know who I was and I was forced to tears daily as I watched her being confused and scared. Her beautiful happy smiling face is now just a memory for me. Many times every day I would tell her that I was her husband and I loved her so much. There were times also that I needed to use physical force to restrain her, leaving me again in tears. Hospice workers helping me to care for Peggy the first few years advised me that Peggy should be in a nursing home where they are trained to care for patients with this illness, but I knew I could never leave her as long as I was physically able to care for her. I felt that Peggy needed my love and care more than she would benefit with professional care. At the age of 81, Heavenly Father granted her peace and took her home.

For fifty years of our marriage, I competed with Peggy to try to be more loving and helpful to her than she was to me. She always outdid me. I learned from her examples that my service to others is more rewarding than service by them to me. Throughout the years of service to my church and also to senior citizens centers as volunteer gives me the satisfaction that life is worth while. Now, being alone, I find life is different. I have no one to care for except my neighbor's cat that comes to my door daily, hops up on my lap and demands love and attention, then hops down and runs to her saucer that should "always" be filled with milk. I enjoy visiting with my daughters and grand children. I enjoy mowing my own lawn and helping a senior friend by mowing her yard. Painting the house and house repairs also keeps me busy. Bicycle riding to church on Sunday and during the week shopping and bringing groceries home in the basket on bicycle gives me some exercise and relaxation.

I feel so blessed in my 83'rd year for having the health and strength that has been given to me. It was so wonderful having my sweetheart to help me all these years and to love life. Every day is a new adventure to meet new and old friends and share what happiness is left in this lifetime.