

My Life

by Val Lawson

I'm a 1949 baby, a Libra born in Reno. I grew up in Sparks, where we lived next door to my grandparents. As it turned out, this was a good thing, because whenever I ran away from home, I had somewhere to go!

I was aware of being attracted to my best friend from a very early age (perhaps three years old). We were together all the way through high school, inseparable. Janice's mother took us everywhere together, although what I remember most is the movies. In Sparks/Reno, there was very little else for kids to do in those days. Gambling and drinking were everywhere.

My dad taught me to mix his drinks at around eight years old. Before then Mom would pour me 7-Up and wave the bottle over it! But once I had my hands on the booze, I began drinking like a pro. In fact, Dad would tell me "I'd rather have you drinking at home than going out and drinking!"

As a child, I swam all summer long at a nearby park pool. I rode my bike and played with the boys whenever I could. I was the typical "tomboy," and even went hunting and fishing with my father and grandfather. At 13 I joined Rainbow, mainly because Janice was in it. Her mother and my grandmother were in Eastern Star and my grandfather was a Mason. Sometimes I would ask my good friend Dennis to go to Rainbow functions with me. Dennis always felt safe to be with, and it didn't really surprise me when later I learned that Dennis had also "come out!"

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