

Arnie Joseph

by Doug Kent

Life is a wonderful journey filled with trials and tribulations, up and downs, highs and lows. We have all experienced these to various degrees as our individual journeys progress. None of us is exempt from these extremes. However, this month's Prime Timer will show us that not all of us share life's extremes to the same extent.

Our July/August Prime Timer (Mr. Summer) was born on a cold March evening in 1938 in the bustling city of Detroit. With two younger sisters to care for him along with his loving parents, Mr. Summer sailed through his early childhood and elementary education without major problems. He attended Mumford High School enjoying literature but not liking math. He was a shy kind of kid, but again did what he had to do to successfully complete all his academic requirements and graduate in June of 1956. His parents tried in vain to get him to attend college, but Mr. Summer had other ideas.

After kicking around the country for three years, Mr. Summer found out that the Detroit Police Department in 1959 was hiring. So he signed on for a 30 year tour with the department as a civilian. Mr. Summer loved his work with the department, and within the first year met his lifelong partner of 36 years, who also worked for the department. They moved in together and from that point led their lives as a gay couple.

One would suspect that in this era of the late 1950's and early 1960's that two professional gay men, living openly, would experience difficulty from some co-workers or from society in general, or some family members. This however was not the case. The only problem experienced by this couple was Mr. Summer's mother, who did not speak to her son for exactly one month, after he decided to move in with his partner. After that, the fences were mended and Mr. Summer's mother communicated more with his partner than with her son.

Their life was quiet and unobtrusive, enjoying weekends on Stag Island. They also enjoyed entertaining close friends, both gay and straight, with dinner parties at home. They also had many opportunities to travel, primarily to every major city in Mexico, with other enjoyable trips to Spain

and the Canary Islands. Life was good for these men. Mr. Summer retired in 1989, three years after his partner. Together they moved to Melbourne Florida to a custom built home. They lived there until 1995, when Mr. Summer's partner passed away. In 1997 Mr. Summer decided to move to South Florida to be near his two sisters.

Both sisters had married and had families of their own. As fate would have it both sisters decided they had enough of the straight life, and now live happily with their gay partners.

Mr. Summer has been a Prime Timer for more than 7 years, enjoys his family, his condo, and still lives that quiet life style. A collector of sorts, he supports a nice collection of older clocks and masks, and still enjoys cruising thrift stores and flea markets. He is a regular at the senior exercise class at the Pride Center and hangs out with the Prime Timer bowling contingent. Our Prime Timer is one heck of a nice guy, quiet, friendly and fun to be with.

