

# Bill Sandrik

By Ken South

It was 1942 in Chicago, during the darkest days of WWII. On December 22nd, Mr. October's mom and dad welcomed their first child into the world. A brother and a sister followed a few years later. Mr. October's dad served in the US Navy.

After 10 years of living in Chicago, the new family moved fifty miles north of Chicago, to Lake County, where they lived through Mr. October's grade and high school years. He especially had a talent for art in those days. After graduating, Mr. October enlisted in the US Navy.

After basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Base, he attended Yeoman school in Bainbridge, Maryland. Upon graduation, he was stationed in Washington, DC working in the Office of Naval Intelligence. His rank was that of Yeoman 3rd Class, an administrative position. As part of his duties, he reluctantly processed paperwork relating to fellow gay sailors being ejected from the Navy dishonorably. This irony was enhanced by the fact that three out of his four cubicle mates were gay. Mr. October, like many of his buddies, frequently attended DC's gay bars. Sadly, a good friend of his was discharged as the result of a raid on a private gay party. Mr. October managed to escape the gay purge and was honorably discharged from the Navy.

Another, ex-Navy friend of his, then employed by the US Post Office, helped him get a job there. He really didn't like that job, but stayed for a year and a half. That Postal Service friend was the head of the drag scene in DC for many years, and performed as Mame Dennis! His career took a creative turn in 1967 when Mr. October decided to go to Beauty School and become a hair dresser. He first worked in that capacity in a salon at Ft. McNair in DC, and then for several years at the *Ms. Ritz Salon* in Woodward & Lothrop Department Store in downtown DC, commonly known as "Woodys". He was working there during the 1968 riots after Martin Luther King's assassination. The next five years were spent at *The House of Vincent* in Georgetown. Increased sensitivity to the toxic chemicals involved in the trade encouraged him to find other work.

Over the course of the next couple of decades he found himself on the administrative staff of a few federal agencies, including the Price Commission and Cost of Living Council, under President Nixon, where he worked as an analyst. After leaving those temporary agencies, he found employment at the US Customs Service, where he supervised and managed a Word Processing Center in the Data Processing Division. He then became interested in computer programming and worked in that capacity in the Office of Internal Affairs at the Customs Service and the Treasury Department IG's office until his retirement in 1995. Mr. October's first gay sexual experience was while he was in 6th grade living in Island Lake, IL. A high school neighbor boy suggested they explore each other. Mr. October thoroughly enjoyed the experience, which they repeated several more times!

All during the time Mr. October lived in Washington, DC, he took full advantage of its very active gay scene. On most weekends he could be found at *The Chicken Hut*, *Johnny's Tracks*, *The Lost & Found*, *Mr. "P's"*, *Friends*, *The Georgetown Grill*, or any one of the numerous places around town, not to mention "P Street Beach" on a sunny afternoon. In the early 70's

Mr. October met his first partner, Hank, with whom he shared an 18-month relationship. Then later, he met Gary, with whom he shared four years in Bethesda, MD. But in 1983 he met his current partner, Henry, at the famous *Mr. "P s"* tavern . They subsequently married in 2014. They are devoted feline lovers and their third pair of cats, Albert & Victoria reside with them in Wilton Manors.

What started as a life-long hobby became a business for Mr. October in his retirement. He became a professional philatelist (stamp dealer) and bought/sold stamps and postal history at various stamp shows around the country. He still collects and exhibits competitively at US & International exhibitions.

He and his husband enjoyed visiting Ft. Lauderdale for several years, and then decided in 2014 to move to South Florida, to escape the cold snowy winters. Through the introduction of several friends, they joined Prime Timers soon after moving to Wilton Manors and enjoyed its various activities and meeting many new friends. He especially likes bowling at Manor Lanes on Wednesdays.

