

Dave Labbe

By Ken South

Lots was going on in 1950 including; apartheid enactment in South Africa, the creation of NATO, China invading Tibet, Senator McCarthy leading his “Un-American Activities Committee”, and the US leading the world in the Korean War following North Korea’s invasion of South Korea.

But most importantly, on November 15, 1950, in Portland, Maine, Mr. March was born! He and his parents lived on his father’s poultry farm in Biddeford, Maine for many years. The small town was the home to many other French-Canadian families, many of whom had immigrated there in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Four years later, Mr. M welcomed his brother into the family.

Elementary school was spent at St. Andre Roman Catholic School. Growing up on a farm and re-enforced by a Catholic education, instilled in him a strong work ethic, which did him well later in life.

In due course, he attended Biddeford High School where he participated in the Air Force Junior ROTC program, played the trombone in the school band and performed in the senior class school play. He graduated with his class in 1968. While in grammar and high schools, Mr. M worked a variety of part-time jobs, including mowing lawns, working at the neighborhood grocery store for a local vegetable farmer and in the kitchen of the local hospital. It was during this last job that he became interested in cooking, which became his life-long avocation.

To further his education, Mr. M enrolled in the South Maine Vocational Technical Institute where, two years later, he earned an associate’s degree in Electronics Technology. Upon graduation, he was hired as an associate engineer by the New England Telephone company at their regional engineering headquarters in Manchester, New Hampshire. While there, he also joined the New Hampshire Army National Guard in 1970 and served for four years, rising to the rank of Staff Sergeant.

After 4 years of working for the phone company, Mr. M had saved enough money to be able to resign from his job, go back to college and pursue a Bachelor’s degree. In 1974, he enrolled in the University of New Hampshire, and received his BS in Electrical Engineering in 1978. During that time, he also served the remaining two years of his military obligation in the New Hampshire Air National Guard. While in college, Mr. M supported himself and paid for his own schooling with his savings, supplemented by a combination of his National Guard pay and a part time job with the phone company as a directory assistance operator, working three night-shifts per week, as well as summer work-study jobs and college grants.

Following graduation, he was immediately hired, full-time, by the phone company as an engineer and moved to Framingham, Massachusetts where he worked as a microwave radio engineer until the breakup of “Ma Bell”. In 1984 he transferred to Western Electric (which would later become Lucent Technologies, where he was a senior engineer working on microwave radio and fiber optic telecommunication systems. In this capacity, he was sent all over the world in support of the company’s efforts. Mr. M reports that, between work and vacation travel, he has had the pleasure of stepping foot on every continent in the world, including Antarctica! His favorite vacation destination is Hawaii, which he has visited 19 times (so far).

In 2001, he took advantage of the company’s early retirement incentive plan, and at 50 years old, began his retirement, which he still enjoys to this day. His hobbies include movies (he has a very large DVD collection), food (he is well-known for his cooking and baking), traveling and spending time with friends and family.

Like so many of his generation, Mr. M knew from a very early age that he “was different”. For many years, he didn’t even have the words to describe his feelings. And given his early childhood upbringing, he felt he could not act on his feelings with other men. Mr. M laughingly remembers that, as early as four years old, he enjoyed drawing penises which he would then burn in the family’s wood stove. He remembers with fondness a crush he had on an older male cousin (who also grew up to be gay). In the 70’s, while on a business trip to Boston, he discovered the “Combat Zone” with its bars, theaters and its gay bathhouses and his life was changed forever.

In 1984, after meeting in a Tampa, FL bathhouse, he started a two-year, long-distance relationship with Tom. They saw each other at least one weekend a month, though Mr. M. was in Boston and Tom was living in Tampa. It was an exciting partnership for them both while it lasted.

In the early 1990s, Mr. M. joined a gay nudist club in Boston called BANG (Boston Area Naturist Group). He became very active in this organization, ultimately serving on the steering committee, as the events coordinator, and as the editor of the club’s newsletter!

At a (non-nude) 4th of July party hosted by a fellow BANG member in 2010, Mr. M. met his current partner and began a whirlwind romance that culminated in their cohabitation by the end of September of that year. It was this partner who revealed to Mr. M. that there existed a community of men who are attracted to older gay guys (a welcome revelation indeed!) and who introduced Mr. M. to Prime Timers of Ft. Lauderdale.

His partner has been a “snow bird” for over 15 years with homes in Ft. Lauderdale and Boston. The couple now calls Palm Aire home for 7 months of the year with the remaining 5 months divided between Boston and Provincetown.

