

Chapter XIX

How Time Flies

January 1, 1962 – December 31, 1963

1962 began as had the all of the other recent years. It was always an exciting time when the new calves were born. Incorporating the Black Baldy heifers into the breeding stock proved to be a good move. They produced some excellent calves and the cows proved to be good mothers.

The wrestling team got off to good start by picking up two wins and only one loss during January. They seemed to be getting better as the season progressed.

Sheffield wanted to watch the launch of Friendship 7 and John Glenn on the first American earth orbit mission. The launch was originally scheduled for January 16th which was a school day so he wouldn't have been able to watch it anyway. It ended up being postponed because of weather to Saturday the 20th and he was all set to watch it. Again it was put off because of the weather and pushed back to the next Saturday.

Sheffield watched that morning as the countdown proceeded, but at T minus twenty nine minutes it was again canceled because of weather. The launch was postponed until February 1st and then again to the 14th. Finally on the 20th the mission took place. Only he had to miss it because it was on a school day. That evening on the news he watched the highlights of the mission from launch, through three orbits of the earth, re-entry, and splashdown. The mission was a triumph and John Glenn became a national hero.

The round up took place in March and went as usual. The Magicians had a strong finish to their regular season and took second in the district tournament, loosing to Patrick Henry. The second place finish was enough to take them to state but they didn't make it into the final round.

During the spring, Sheffield finally broke down and traded in the old Farmall H for a 1958 Farmall 340. Although it had more horsepower than the H, it was still considered a small tractor. At the same time he traded the old hay baler for a newer model. He figured they would last him for as long as he would need them.

School let out on Good Friday for spring break. Over the Easter weekend and Sheffield and Ramona made a special trip out to Utah. Wesley's adoption had been finalized in March and now they were free to have him sealed to them in the temple. It was a quick trip. They flew over on Friday, on Saturday morning they went to the Logan Temple for Wesley to be sealed to Janet and Jerry, and flew home on Sunday.

The rest of the spring settled into a routine. Just like every other year, the school year came to an



end, this time on the 23rd of May. The next day Sheffield spent a good share of the day watching live television coverage of the flight of Aura 7 piloted by Scott Carpenter, another navy man. Sheffield had an out of town conference that weekend . That was followed by the Memorial Day reunion on Wednesday and Ramona's birthday four days after that. In contrast to a routine spring, summertime was getting off to a busy start.

On Thursday the 7th of June, Sheffield and Ramona drove up to Arlington for the Reprisal's twentieth year anniversary reunion and stayed with Mason and Pat Owen. At the fifteen year reunion, Mace was put in charge of organizing this event. With help from his committee, they were ready. It was held in the Arlington Convention Center, just down the street from the Pentagon and was about as well attended as the last one. Some like Morris Gover were regular attenders and participants. There were others like Murry Austin, formerly known as Murry Puchesky, who didn't care to remember that time in their lives. The core of the active participants had served aboard the Reprisal during the Second World War, but there was also a good percentage who had served aboard afterwards as well. At the business meeting, the twenty five year anniversary reunion was set for June 9th and 10th, 1967 in Denver. Following the reunion, they drove home on Sunday.

But they didn't stay home for long. The following Wednesday they flew down to Denison to spend a few days with Harvey and Marcella. They took Anna and Paul, who where now fifteen and thirteen, with them to spend the summer with Joseph and Rhonda. The reverse arrangement had actually been working out well for them. They were much happier and content to live with their grandparents than with their stepmother. By the end of the summer, they were always ready to come back. It worked out well for Sheffield to take them down since he was already taking Ramona to see Harvey. That afternoon they landed at Harvey's ranch and had a good visit with them over the next few days and flew home on Friday, since Sheffield had a conference to attend that weekend.

At the end of the month on the 30th, they picked up Janet and Jerry at the airport. Wesley was now a year old and had grown since Sheffield and Ramona had last seen him in April. Rather than attend the Austin/Brason 4th of July celebration that year, they celebrated by themselves for once. They all attended the parade in Salem and that afternoon had a barbeque and in the evening they went to Victory Stadium to watch the fireworks. The traditional Austin/Brason 4th of July celebration had gotten to be too big of an affair over the years, and after having their own celebration, as a family they decided to start their own tradition on an every other year basis from then on. On the off years, Craig and Norma could celebrate with their in laws, and for Craig that was the Austins. Shenan and Emily's family had already dropped out a couple of years earlier. Only Walt and Sarah and their family still participated, after all Sarah was an Austin.

The following Monday Jerry flew home by himself while Janet and Wesley stayed for the entire

month of July. During that time, Janet and her friends, Olivia and Beverly, had their own little reunion of the sisterhood. Only Takara was missing. At the end of the month, Sheffield and Ramona took Janet and Wesley home in the Staggerwing and and stayed with them for a few days.

After a busy June and July, August was much more relaxed. Sheffield only had one conference to attend, and it was right there in Roanoke. Another summer ended with the Brason Labor Day picnic. It was a much much more manageable crowd to accommodate and not everyone was able to attend each time. The pasture seemed to be the best venue for the twice a year family gathering with plenty of room and plenty to do and four horses to ride.

The entire year seemed to have passed quickly. Here it was the first day of school again and it all started over again. The wrestling team had the potential of doing better than they had the previous year.

During September, Sheffield and Ramona attended the ground breaking for a new mission home on the corner of Deyerle Road and Highway 11, only three quarters of a mile from the Two Star Ranch. The Mission had outgrown the current mission home and a new one had been in the works for a while. At the ground breaking, the three members of the mission presidency, including Sheffield, and some of the nearby district presidents, including Walt, simultaneously turned the first symbolic shovel full of dirt that signaled the beginning of construction.

Sheffield continued to follow closely the developments of the space program. After school on the 3rd of October, he watched the highlights of Wally Schirra's six orbit flight in Sigma 7 on the news.

What had started off to be a routine semester proved to be anything but that. After dinner on Monday evening October 22nd, Sheffield was on the telephone with the President of the Charlottesville District about a matter. When he hung up, Ramona called to him from the other room, "Sheffield, you've got to hear this."

"What is it?" He asked as he entered the room where she was fixated on the television.

"It's the President. The Soviets are setting up missiles in Cuba." she replied as she slid over to make room for him on the couch.

That got Sheffield's attention. He had missed President Kennedy's opening remarks, but he now he was listening intently as the President went on to say, "Neither the United States of America nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril. Nuclear weapons are so destructive and ballistic missiles are so swift, that any substantially increased possibility of their use or any sudden change in their deployment may well be regarded as a definite threat to peace. ...

"In that sense, missiles in Cuba add to an already clear and present danger -- although it should be noted the nations of Latin America have never previously been subjected to a potential nuclear threat. But

this secret, swift, extraordinary buildup of Communist missiles -- in an area well known to have a special and historical relationship to the United States and the nations of the Western Hemisphere, in violation of Soviet assurances, and in defiance of American and hemispheric policy -- this sudden, clandestine decision to station strategic weapons for the first time outside of Soviet soil -- is a deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country, if our courage and our commitments are ever to be trusted again by either friend or foe.

"The nineteen thirties taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. This nation is opposed to war. We are also true to our word. Our unswerving objective, therefore, must be to prevent the use of these missiles against this or any other country, and to secure their withdrawal or elimination from the Western Hemisphere.

"Our policy has been one of patience and restraint, as befits a peaceful and powerful nation which leads a worldwide alliance. We have been determined not to be diverted from our central concerns by mere irritants and fanatics. But now further action is required, and it is under way; and these actions may only be the beginning. We will not prematurely or unnecessarily risk the costs of worldwide nuclear war in which even the fruits of victory would be ashes in our mouth; but neither will we shrink from that risk at any time it must be faced.

"Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and of the entire Western Hemisphere, and under the authority entrusted to me by the Constitution as endorsed by the Resolution of the Congress, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

"First: To halt this offensive buildup a strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba is being initiated. All ships of any kind bound for Cuba from whatever nation or port will, if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons, be turned back....

"Second: I have directed the continued and increased close surveillance of Cuba and its military buildup.... I have directed the Armed Forces to prepare for any eventualities;...

"Third: It shall be the policy of this nation to regard any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States, requiring a full retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

"Fourth: As a necessary military precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo,... and ordered additional military units to be on a standby alert basis.

"Fifth: We are calling tonight for an immediate meeting of the... Organization of American States, to consider this threat to hemispheric security and to invoke articles six and eight of the Rio Treaty in support of all necessary action....

"Sixth: Under the Charter of the United Nations, we are asking tonight that an emergency meeting of

the Security Council be convoked without delay to take action against this latest Soviet threat to world peace. Our resolution will call for the prompt dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons in Cuba, under the supervision of U.N. observers, before the quarantine can be lifted.

“Seventh and finally: I call upon Chairman Khrushchev to halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace and to stable relations between our two nations.... He has an opportunity now to move the world back from the abyss of destruction by... withdrawing these weapons from Cuba by refraining from any action which will widen or deepen the present crisis, and then by participating in a search for peaceful and permanent solutions....

“My fellow citizens, let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out. No one can foresee precisely what course it will take or what costs or casualties will be incurred. Many months of sacrifice and self-discipline lie ahead -- months in which both our patience and our will will be tested, months in which many threats and denunciations will keep us aware of our dangers. But the greatest danger of all would be to do nothing.

“The path we have chosen for the present is full of hazards, as all paths are; but it is the one most consistent with our character and courage as a nation and our commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high, but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission.

“Our goal is not the victory of might, but the vindication of right; not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this hemisphere, and, we hope, around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved.

“Thank you and good night.”

Ramona had been holding Sheffield's hand tightly as they listened to the speech. When it was over she turned to him and asked, “What does all of this mean? Are we really on the brink of an atomic war?”

“I really don't know. It sounds ominous alright. What did I miss at the beginning?”

“He said that one of our spy planes discovered the missiles several days ago and that they have been working on diplomatic solutions only to have the Russians lie to us.”

“I never have trusted the Russians, their frame of mind is world domination.”

“So you do think that this could lead to war.”

“I didn't say that. I need more information before I can answer that question. I have a hunch that they are doing this to blackmail or intimidate us somehow to isolate us so they can make a move somewhere else, like Europe.”

“I don't now.” Ramona said. “He said that these missiles are capable of carrying a nuclear warhead as far as Washington and that all of the southeastern United States is within range. That includes us.”

“Yeah but think of it this way, we have the capability of hitting them back just as hard. Both countries would come out on the losing end and they know that. I don't think Khrushchev is that stupid that he actually thinks he can get away with it.”

“Let's hope not.” Ramona concluded.

“There will be more information in the next few days. We'll just have to see what develops and pray that it doesn't come to that.”

The next morning the news reported that the President had ordered a naval blockade of Cuba that was to begin the following day. At school, an atmosphere of tension prevailed. As he discussed it with his second period class, the impressionable minds of his students were imagining the worst. They looked to the Admiral to reassure them and he did his best to do so.

“I'll tell you what.” he said. “Here's what I want you to do over the next few days. As you watch the news and read the newspapers, I want you to look for how the various branches of government come into play here and how they function in their respective roles. Beyond that, we will have a test next Monday covering chapter five. I expect you to study and prepare for it.”

“But Admiral,” one student asked, “What if we get blown to kingdom come by then?”

“Then I guess you'll get out of the test then won't you.” Then he added, “Watch and observe over the next several days and we'll talk about it and see what we can learn from it. One day, your own children and grandchildren will come across a paragraph about this in a history book and they will ask you what you remember about it.”

Sheffield had a similar discussion with his third period class as well. At noon all of the teachers were summoned to a special meeting with Mr. Lovelock, the principal. He had instructions for them from the local civil defense authorities regarding an air raid drill that had been hastily put together and was to take place during the fourth period. They were handed a sheet of paper informing them what they were to tell their students before hand, which followed the basic format of air raid drills that had been conducted off and on over the last several years.

Sheffield challenged the instructions. “I take it you have never been under attack, have you?”

“No, Coach. I can't say that I have.”

“Has any one here?”

One hand went up. It was band teacher. “Tell them about it Marv.” Sheffield encouraged.

Marv cleared his throat and said with some emotion, “My company came under an artillery barrage on Pork Chop Hill in Korea one night. I can tell you, there was no place to hide. We were decimated and were overrun by infantry the next day. Admiral Brason is right, having the kids drop to the floor and cover their heads with their hands or hiding under a desk won't do a thing to protect them.”

Then Byron Westmore, a science teacher, spoke up. "I've never been in combat like Sheffield and Marv. But I can tell you this, if they were to hit Roanoke with an atomic missile, it wouldn't matter what they did."

"You're probably right." Mr. Lovelock agreed. "We don't want to scare the hell out of the kids. We just want to them to feel that they have some control over the situation. These are my instructions and I need you carry them out, whether we agree with it or not. So let's just play along."

Vera VanMeter, the typing teacher, who had been listening on the verge of tears, spoke up. "How can you talk about this so matter of factually? Aren't you scared? I'm terrified by all of this."

Others agreed with her.

Mr. Lovelock said, "I think we're all scarred by it. But we have to lead by example here. I'm sure the kids are confused and frightened out of their wits. I need you to all set your own concerns aside because while at school they look to us as a stabilizing influence in their lives. Can you all do that?"

At the beginning of his fourth period class, Sheffield had the same discussion with the class that he had with the first two periods. Then he explained that there would be a drill during the class period and read the instructions that he had been given.

One young man in the class asked, "What good would that do?"

"That was exactly the point I tried to make."

"What would you do, Admiral?"

"Pray."

"Well, I'm not afraid." one boy boasted. "My Dad put in a bomb shelter and we have enough supplies, guns and ammo to last us for a year."

The siren sounded at the appointed time and the students got out of their desks and laid down on the floor, covering their heads with their hands. One girl was so frightened that all during the drill that she hyperventilated. By the time the all clear sounded three minutes later she passed out when she went to get up. Sheffield rushed to her side and sent someone after the school nurse. Once she came to, the nurse took her to the office and Sheffield resumed his class.

That evening Craig and Edith and Wade and Norma and their families came over. Gean, Geoffrey, and Teresa had also had a drill at school. They ended up talking about it as a family and expressed their fears and concerns. "I really don't think this will actually come to a nuclear war." Sheffield assured them. "But things could get ugly. Having been in two wars, I pray that it won't come to that."

Throughout the week, the news was grim as diplomatic and military options were considered. Each day the news sounded more and more grim. An American spy plane was shot down, the pilot was killed. A Soviet submarine had been forced to surface. President Kennedy showed no sign of backing down as the

military was mobilized and reserve units were called up. Plans were being drawn up for air strikes on the missile sites as well as an invasion of Cuba.

Then on Sunday morning the 28th the crisis came to a head when Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles if the United States did not attack Cuba. Kennedy stood his ground and went right to the brink of war, but Khrushchev blinked. A collective sigh of relief was breathed by the entire nation, and the world.

“So what do you think of Kennedy now?” Ramona asked.

“I think he handled it just right. Didn't I tell you that it wouldn't come to war?” He answered but qualified his comment with, “But I still don't agree with his politics.”

On Monday, Sheffield's classes took a test on chapter five as planned. The Students were happy to take the test as opposed to the alternative of being blown to kingdom come. The naval blockade remained in a affect for three more weeks until November 20th when it had been verified that the missiles and warheads had been removed. The next day, school let out after a half a day for Thanksgiving.

Life settled back into routine once the threat was over. The Brasons celebrated Thanksgiving, Sheffield's sixty fourth birthday, Christmas, and welcomed in 1963. Janet, Jerry, and Wesley home for a week during the holidays. January brought a new crop of calves. The wresting team resumed their schedule and maintained a respectable record throughout the remainder of the season and made a good showing at both the district and state championships. Come spring the round up was held and the garden was planted.

As the school year wound down, Sheffield followed the flight of Faith 7 piloted by Astronaut Gordon Cooper in the news during the middle of May. It was the last of the six manned Mercury missions. It would be nearly two years before the first manned Gemini flight. Sheffield was pleased to see that one of the men in the second group of astronauts selected for space program to participate in Project Gemini was someone that he knew. At the time Neil Armstrong had been an Ensign flying from the Essex while while Sheffield flew his flag aboard her off Korea. Ensign Armstrong had been shot down and was rescued and returned the ship. Sheffield met him upon his return to the ship and took him under his wing but lost track of him when he transferred his flag to the Reprisal.

Because of the continued growth in the area, the Rowans were were being pressed upon from all sides. That spring they decided to sell their herd and sell off the land to developers, for a hefty price. Wade graduated from Roanoke College with his veterinarian degree and passed the state test. He went into business for himself, setting up shop in on of the out buildings on the ranch that he had remodeled into a clinic. A few days after his graduation was the annual Brason Memorial Day picnic.

There were two, or maybe make it three, big milestones that year. One was Ramona's sixtieth birthday. The gift of youth continued to grace her as she looked like a woman in her mid forties and she was

still as petite as ever. More and more, people who didn't know them mistook her for Sheffield's daughter. It used to bother him when that happened, but now he just took it as a compliment to Ramona. The other major event came a little over a month later when both Geoff and Teresa were baptized by their fathers on the 6th of July and confirmed the next day in Fast and Testimony Meeting.

All the time, Sheffield and Ramona continued traveling to conferences and meetings across Virginia. In July, President Aposhian was released as the Mission President and was succeeded by President Delmont H. White. He retained Sheffield and Merrill Duke as his counselors.

During the summer, they made a trip to Utah to see Janet. They got together with Craig and Norma and their families every chance they got which included a few days at the cabin. The Staggerwing took to the air on several pleasure flights and they got on the horses several times. The kids themselves were getting older. Norma turned thirty that year. The grandkids were getting bigger; Gean was ten, Geoffrey and Teresa turned eight in June, Todd and Samantha were five, and Tina, Marty, and Wesley were two. At the time, there weren't any more grandchildren forthcoming.

In the fall when Sheffield and Ramona returned school, it was for the last time. They had their sights set on retiring in the spring and talked of their month long vacation to Hawaii. Sheffield's last wrestling team came together and looked like it would be a very promising team and got off to a winning season.

On Friday November 22nd Sheffield was in his fourth period class, just after lunch, discussing the process for amending the constitution. The discussion was interrupted by Mr. Lovelock with an announcement over the intercom. "May I have your attention please.... May I have your attention."

Sheffield stopped where he was and he turned his eyes toward the speaker mounted above the door. All of the students followed suit.

"We have just received word that President Kennedy has been shot. The shooting occurred about an hour ago in Dallas. I repeat, the President has been shot. There is no word on his condition other than he has been rushed to the hospital. I will keep you posted of any further developments."

Even before Mr. Lovelock had finished his announcement, two or three girls broke into tears. The entire class, including Sheffield responded with stunned silence.

"What exactly does this mean?" one of the students finally asked.

"It all depends on the outcome. If he was merely wounded, then I suppose things will continue on as they are."

"But what if he dies?"

"We've covered that. Remember? Who can tell us?"

"Then the vice president becomes the president." someone answered.

"Very good." Sheffield said, trying to make a teaching moment out of the situation. "Then who

becomes the vice president?"

"The secretary of state?" one student ventured a guess.

"No, you goofus." another student challenged. "Its the Speaker of the House."

"You're both wrong." Sheffield corrected. "The constitution doesn't make allowances for replacing the vice president. But you're close. Let's say, heaven forbid, that the President dies. Then Vice President Johnson would be sworn in almost immediately and he would assume the presidency and the office of Vice President remains vacant. You're too young to remember, but when Roosevelt died in office and Truman became president, he finished the term without a vice president. Now lets say hypothetically speaking that something would happen to the president when there is no vice president, the Speaker of the House of Representatives would become the President. Can anyone tells me who that is?"

"John McCormack." Someone answered.

"Very Good. Thats right. As long as he meets the constitutional requirements to be president. From there it would go to the President pro tempore of the Senate. Both of course are elected officials. From there it would go to the Secretary of State and down through cabinet members. Again they would have to meet the constitutional requirements."

The discussion took their minds off the situation unfolding in Dallas.

"Now who can tell me when the vice president had succeeded the president?"

"When Truman followed Roosevelt." one student responded.

"Abraham Lincoln." another offered.

"But who was the vice president?"

"Andrew Johnson." another said.

"Who else?"

No one had an answer. Before he could answer, Mr. Lovelock interrupted again. "May I have your attention again." Again all eyes turned to the speaker. "The White House has confirmed that President Kennedy has died from the gunshot wound received during the assigation attempt. The superintendent of the school district has directed that we dismiss school early today and cancel all extracurricular activities scheduled for today and tomorrow. You are now dismissed."

This time the students were stunned beyond belief. How can this be happening? It was unthinkable. Many were in tears as they filed quietly out of the classroom leaving Sheffield alone. He hadn't particularly liked JFK, but he was the President. You don't just kill the President of the United States. The thought produced a knot in his stomach.

Since wrestling practice and the match scheduled for that evening had been canceled, Sheffield went home, thinking that there would surely be more information on the television. Before going in, he went over

the flagpole and lowered the flag to half staff. When he went in the house, he found Ramona sitting in front of the television, holding a handkerchief to her eyes. It was obvious that she was crying.

She stood up and rushed to the comfort of his arms. "Oh Babe, I'm so glad that you're home. I take it you heard what happened?"

"Yeah, I heard. It's unthinkable. What's going on now?"

She released him from her arms and led him by the hand over the couch. "They've just arrested a suspect." she said as they sat down together on the couch in front of the television. For the rest of the afternoon and evening, they listened to Walter Cronkite as he presented the details as they were made known. For Sheffield's benefit, he rehearsed what had happened earlier, including the hasty inauguration of President Lyndon Johnson.

A cloud of gloom settled over the entire nation with Thanksgiving only days away. All through the weekend, it was on the minds of people and in the forefront of the news on the television, the radio, and in the newspapers.

Sheffield didn't have any out of town meetings that weekend so he took a break from watching all of the news coverage to put up the outdoor Christmas lights. Craig came over to help and together they got both of their houses decorated.

To complicate matters, on Sunday morning Lee Harvey Oswald, the alleged assassin was shot and killed in the basement of Dallas Police headquarters on live television by a Dallas nightclub owner by the name of Jack Ruby.

Immediately, conspiracy theories arose that the assassination was part of some larger plot. The killing of Oswald compounded those suspicions. Sheffield stuck with the published facts.

The state funeral was scheduled for Monday the 25th. The school district canceled school that day as well. Since there was only a day and a half before letting out for Thanksgiving, school would reconvene the following Monday. Since Hollins canceled classes as well, Sheffield and Ramona watched the live coverage of the funeral on television.

The extra time was a nice extension of the Thanksgiving holiday which went on as usual, including the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade broadcast from New York City. The kids and grandkids came over to watch the parade with them. Dinner was at noon, which included the full time missionaries assigned to the Salem Branch. Dinner was early so Craig and Norma could go to her family later in the day. The day after, they traveled in a caravan up to the cabin for their annual Christmas tree hunt. Sheffield and Ramona drove up in the old pickup so they could bring the trees back down off the mountain.

On Monday when school resumed, emotions were in check after a the national tragedy. Sheffield altered his lesson that day to discuss the the governmental functions that had been in play during the crisis.

It was basically an expansion of the discussion that he had with his fourth period class on the day of the assassination. At the end of the week, the Magicians came a way with an impressive victory over their cross town rivals at Patrick Henry.

The following Saturday was a day that held mixed emotions for Sheffield. It was his sixty fifth birthday. On one hand it meant that he was old, while on the other it meant that he could retire for good. Officially, he had been retired from the navy for ten years after twenty seven years; serving from 1921 to 1946 and 1951 to 1953. Since then, he had been the wrestling coach and government teacher at Jefferson high school for a total of sixteen years; from 1946 to 1951 and since 1953.

He had worked hard all of his life and now he was looking forward to retirement with excitement. He still wanted to find something to do with his time. He could think of a lot of things that he wanted to do. For one, he wanted to spend more time in the Staggerwing; perhaps they'd take it on a cross country trip out to Utah and back. He also wanted to spend more time riding Admiral.

Ramona was also planning on quitting her part time teaching position at Hollins. She still wanted to dabble in her investments but not as seriously as she had been. She liked Sheffield's idea of a cross country trip. She was already making plans for their month long vacation in Hawaii. Both of them wanted to spend more time with the grandkids, which also meant spending more time in Utah with Janet.

When Sheffield got up, he got dressed and went out to take care of the chores, leaving Ramona in bed. He came back in to find that Ramona, still in her robe, had breakfast waiting for him. They sat down together for some pancakes and eggs.

Later, she lead him by the hand out to the bathhouse where they had a relaxing soak. Sitting under the mural of Diamond Head and Waikiki Beach, they talked of their vacation to Hawaii and what they wanted to do.

Later in the afternoon the kids and their families came over to celebrate his birthday with him. Janet had timed it just right so that the card that she sent him with a sweet note arrived in the mail that very day. After dinner, birthday cake and ice cream and opening gifts, Sheffield and Ramona went out to a movie. Since it was his birthday, he got to pick. The latest John Wayne movie had just come out three weeks earlier and was still playing.

"McClintock" was a western comedy starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hare. This was the fourth film that they had made together, there was always good on-screen chemistry between them. This film was a western adaptation of Shakespeare's comedy "The Taming of the Shrew". In this case, the shrew is not a rodent, but rather a cantankerous woman with a temper.

At the end of the day, when they climbed into bed, Sheffield said, "Thanks for a wonderful day. It couldn't have been any better."

“Good. I’m glad that you enjoyed it, Babe.”

The following weekend, the Magicians won their match on Friday. Then Sheffield and Ramona went to a district conference in Bluefield on Saturday and Sunday. Before long, it was Christmas again. When school let out the Magicians had improved their record with two more wins. During the holidays, the family got together, all except for Janet, who was planning on coming in January. Then yet another year had come to an end. How time flies.

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Stirling W. Sill being at the Virginia Stake Conference in Richmond to speculative.
The Arlington Convention Center is fictional.

According to a January 18, 1964 Deseret News article about the dedication of the new mission home, the groundbreaking took place in September 1962. The circumstances of that occasion as presented in the story are fictional.

The text of President Kennedy’s speech has been abbreviated.

The Cuban Missile Crisis lasted from October 16th to the 28th, 1962 in which the world was at the brink of an all out nuclear war.

Neil Armstrong was one of nine additional astronauts selected in 1962. The reference to him flying from the Essex in Korea is accurate.

The 25th Amendment to the Constitution which provided for filling vacancy of the office of Vice President was not ratified until 1967.

How long school was out is speculative.

