

Forty-Seven Years and Counting

THE GIRLFRIENDS:

1. Mary, mother of eight
2. Seven wonderful and delightful friends of four decades, also stay-at-home moms, whom Mary met when she married a farmer from LeRoy, Wisconsin.

THE MISSION:

To offer support and friendship on a weekly basis.

THE DESTINATION:

A different friend's house each Thursday.

THE GETAWAY (as told by Mary):

"I originally met these ladies through one of our church organizations, way back in 1955. It met on a monthly basis and after the business meeting, a lunch was served and then we were free to socialize. Some just sat and visited, others opted to play cards, a game called Sheepshead. We all had such a good time playing together that we decided to form a group to play each week. Since we were all young, stay-at-home moms, we played on Thursday night, usually around eight.

"We alternated among each other's homes, and we never served a lunch, but offered a beverage. Through the years, some members of our group have left, others have joined, but there are five of us who are original. Three of them are sisters, and they always say I'm their adopted sister. You have no idea how good that makes an only child feel. Since all of us are now retired and our children are all grown, we now play in the afternoon, always on a Thursday.

"There aren't too many weeks in the year that we don't play. Win or lose, we always have a good time, just girl talk and never any gossip. Our menfolk had a hard time believing that. They just knew that there was a lot of laughing going on. From time to time we go out for lunch, usually to celebrate a birthday. These ladies have become very dear to me and I view them as my extended family. I know that I can count on them for support and prayers whenever needed. ...

"The youngest member of our group is sixty-six, the oldest eighty-two. One of our ladies has never been married, and I am the only widow, but we all have something in common—that little deck of cards that brings us together each week and gives us so much pleasure.

"All of our look forward to Thursdays, no matter what the weather. Outside may be cold or wet, and the news on TV may be devastating, but there is love, friendship, and laughter at our weekly get-togethers."

THE VERDICT:

From Anne, Mary's daughter: "I can only speak of the group as a daughter, but I tell you the lessons I learned were priceless. I learned that Mom was entitled to a weekly time-out with her friends, and that that time was a priority and important; life went on without Mom for

a couple of hours a week. I learned it was allowed and healthy to have friends of your own, and interests of your own, and opinions of your own.

“We also learned early on that if we wanted Mom to be at something, don’t schedule it on Thursday night. She had a prior commitment, and she stuck to it. So did the rest of her friends—which in a small town, pretty much took care of our friends’ moms, too. When the group met at our house, it was always around the kitchen table, and I know there was always laughter—over the cards and coins mostly. I learned that this weekly gathering of women was a very good thing for my mom and she looked forward to it. I know that when Dad died four years ago, all of them were there, and I know they provided a unique kind of support system that no others could.”

-Thanks to Mary Wondra for providing this True-Life Tale.

From *The Girlfriend Getaway Guide: You go Girl! And I’ll go, Too*
By Pam Grout

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