

Dale Dawursk

By Ken South

On January 20th, 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated for his 3rd term as President, while gay man, Alan Turing, at the British Code School at Bletchley Park, England, took part in the top-secret work to break the German Enigma Code.

Orson Welles, produced "*Citizen Kane*," and Congress voted the fourth Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day. The Japanese navy launched a surprise attack on December 7th on the US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, causing the US to enter World War II. And, on January 22nd, Mr. February was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the middle child of a family of five siblings, two brothers and two sisters.

Each year, Mr. F's family attended a community fireman's picnic. Even at the age of six, he would be intrigued with the men's bathroom. It was customary to have a trough for guys to pee, not urinals. He would use the trough, giving him full view of the older guys as they used it. And he even had a major crush on his best friend in high school, but, of course could never, ever, say anything to him or anyone else about it.

He left home at 13 and worked as a paper boy and many other jobs, until he graduated from Messmer RC High School. On November 22, 1963, the day JFK was shot, Mr. F was on a bus returning from a draft board physical. The riots in Milwaukee destroyed the draft board office and he was never called to enlist.

In 1964 he worked at the Milwaukee Boston Store as a Christmas temp and was then kept on, later promoted to men's wear.

As his shop was part of the Federated Department stores, Mr. F traveled to Europe over the course of six years. During that time, he met a girl who became his best friend, in 1966 they married. He hoped "the gay stuff would go away" but, it did not. In 1969 they had a daughter and in 1970 they moved to Connecticut where he worked at a department store. In 1972 he went into business for himself in Westport, Connecticut and by 1986, he had opened seven men's clothing stores.

In 1982 he met Bill, they dated, and moved in together in Connecticut, where they lived for 12 years.

When Mr. F retired from retail, he volunteered for the next ten years in response to the new disease, AIDS. but it took a toll on him. During the 80s,

Mr. F struggled with the acceptance of his sexual orientation. It was so overwhelming for him that he even considered ending his life, which changed with the encouragement of a radio show. He came to terms with his sexuality, told his wife, and as sad as that was, they divorced. He came out to himself and others, but was disappointed that the "gay life" as he saw it, was characterized by "gay bars, drugs and booze", not his style.

By 1999 Mr. F had moved to Palm Springs, California without his partner Bill, an extremely painful part of his life. He also sold the NYC co-op they had shared for so many years as their second home. He purchased The Desert Paradise Hotel, which he managed until its sale in February, 2020.

By January, 2021 Mr. F had moved into his new home at the Parliament House condos on Pompano Beach. He enjoys visits by his ex-wife, children, grandchildren, and surviving siblings. And looks forward to the end of this epidemic when he can participate in the Prime Gentlemen social activities.

