

# THOSE BABY BLUE EYES!

*a Conversations with an Angel “web extra”*

by **Randy Schuneman**

The first thing anyone would have noticed about Jennie when she was a baby was the color and shape of her eyes. Even before that beautiful, curly brownish-blond hair grew in, Jennie’s baby-blue eyes were one of her most beautiful features. She got the color from me, but I think the shape of her eyes came from her mom. Along with stopping us while we were shopping to ask if Jennie’s hair was naturally curly, people would also comment on how beautiful her eyes were.

In September 2008, Bonnie, Jennie and I made a trip to visit Robb in South Korea. When we met with Robb’s ESL class, the women could not quit commenting on how beautiful both my girls are and how they loved



Jennie's eyes. I found out that in South Korea, the Korean women have eye surgery to attain "American Eyes." Every time Jennie would answer a question from the class, someone would say, "You are beau-ti-ful. I want eyes like yours!" The way Jennie smiled, I would have considered moving to South Korea so she could understand how beautiful she truly was. However, I would have starved to death trying to eat squid, octopus, kimchee and Bulgogi Burgers at McDonald's.

As Jennie grew into a little girl, her eyes began to stand out even more. One of my favorite pictures of Jen is when she is two. Her hair is combed perfectly ... and there are those baby blues. My favorite picture of Jennie as an adult was taken after she gave a speech on her cancer at a Christian School in Ponca City, Oklahoma. Jennie had lost some weight and felt good about herself. You can see the confidence in her smile ... and in her beautiful eyes.

Jennie's *baby blues* could melt her Daddy's heart pretty quickly. If there were tears in her eyes, I would do anything to make the tears stop. I never wanted her to hurt. Although she did not take advantage of my weakness (very often), Jennie received many gifts to make her eyes clear up. She did know how to use her eyes as weaponry if she really wanted something. She could look at me and say, "Please?" It was hers. Her unwillingness to give up asking for something until she got it also helped.

Jennie's whole life story could be seen through her eyes. When she was happy, you could see it in her eyes. When the pain was unbearable, her eyes seemed to serve as a *release valve* for what she was experiencing. When she was near death in the hospital at 4, her eyes were definitely telling us of how fragile her life was at the time. When her heart was broken because she was not married, her eyes expressed her emotions very clearly.

For most of her early life, Jennie's eyes were hidden behind a pair of glasses. Yes, she did go through that *awkward stage* of big glasses and braces. When she was old enough to get contact lenses, she threw her glasses away and exhibited her baby blues without barriers. When she was old enough to pay for it herself, Jennie had Lasik surgery so she would not have to bother with contacts any more.

While we were in Houston, Dr. Patel did not want to put Jennie through any chemotherapy. The chances were so small of having any positive effects plus the side-effects could be so severe. Against his better judgment, Dr. Patel finally approved one round of chemotherapy. Jennie's eyes lit up over the possibility. I remember the night the chemotherapy was administered. Jennie's eyes were bright and filled with hope.

Unfortunately, Jennie could not tolerate the chemotherapy. I remember Dr. Patel explaining Jennie's condition to us. After giving us the

facts, he began to chastise himself. Dr. Patel said, “I never should have done the chemo. I know better than that. I have probably shortened her life by two weeks. But she looked at me with those baby blue eyes and my heart melted.” Dr. Patel, do not be hard on yourself. It has happened to me hundreds of times!