Aubriana

Sometimes love creates love in a strange way.

I have a very cluttered family tree with branches that have gone wild. Most of the tree's growth came from my husband Bob's side of the tree. Saying that Bob's branches have been prolific is an understatement. In the 45 years of being with Bob (and the 3+ since he passed) Bob went from having 3 children to 4 children, 14 grandchildren and 24 great grands. #25 great grand is due in July. Add to that a hefty number of spouses and significant others—currently there are 14 of those. I think that's the current count but sometimes I'm not even sure who to count as ours! I find I still claim a few ex-spouses like they are still ours. And then I count their children as ours and then the whole tree blooms and blossoms with more and more growth.

But today I'm focused on Aubri. Aubriana Kristeen Ray. A great granddaughter on my stepson Steve's branch of the tree. Daughter to my oldest granddaughter Candice. Aubri has been on my heart so much lately and thoughts of Aubri always lead me back to thoughts of Bob—her great grandpa.

I can't remember a time in Aubri's life when she and her great grandpa Bob didn't "click". They truly had an affinity for each other. It was obvious to others that they had a special connection though it was on a very subtle level. Their time together seemed to make them both happy. Not just as a baby. This connection was evident when Aubri was a toddler and carried into her years as a young girl. When Bob passed Aubri was only 10 and she bravely and tenderly spoke before a hall full of family and friends at Bob's Celebration of Life. The only great grandchild to speak. I can't remember what she

said but my heart still is so very happy when I remember that moment. Aubri loved her great grandpa. I love Aubri. Love creates more love.

I think my most special memories of them together are always our trips to SeaWorld. I would tell Aubri that we were old and that we needed her to keep an eye on us so we wouldn't get lost. She would grab hold of our hands and cling to us like we were truly going to slip away into the crowds if she didn't hold tight to us. For a few years we were all member of the "scaredy cat club"—those people that don't like the fast rides, wet rides, bouncy rides, and roller coasters. Just big scaredy cats. But once Aubri grew a bit and her fears subsided, she wanted to bail out of the scaredy cat club. I didn't. But her great grandpa Bob stepped up. I just don't think he could disappoint her, so he joined her in those bouncy, wet, scary rides while I cheered from the sidelines. I can still picture their wet clothes and HUGE smiles when they came off of Shipwreck Rapids! I can't picture many other times that Bob had such a big smile on his face.

They seemed to need to touch each other a bit. Handholding. A light touch. A little hug. I know she loved me as well, but I noticed she was more drawn to Bob, and they seemed to have a silent language between them. It was sweet and now a precious treasured memory.

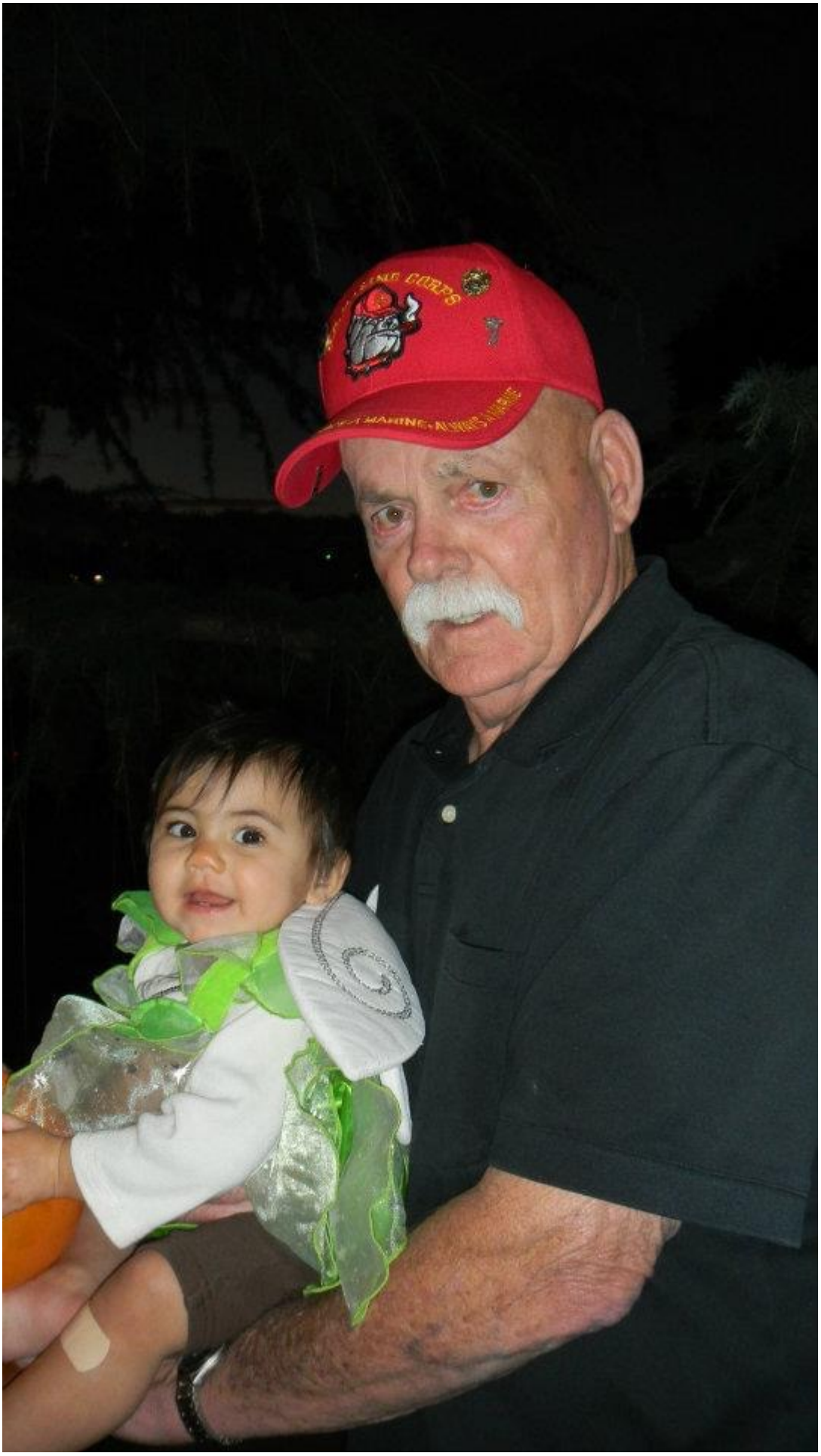
Aubri is a teen now. Finishing up 8th grade soon and heading off to a new chapter. High School. Oh my! Yes, being 14 isn't easy in today's world. My prayers are always for her to know how much she is loved by our Lord and Savior. And I always add a tag line to my prayer that she can always feel the crazy love her great-grandpa Bob had for her. Unconditional love by God and by a great grandpa. What could be better?!

And of course, may Aubri know that I love her deeply as well. Love creates more love.



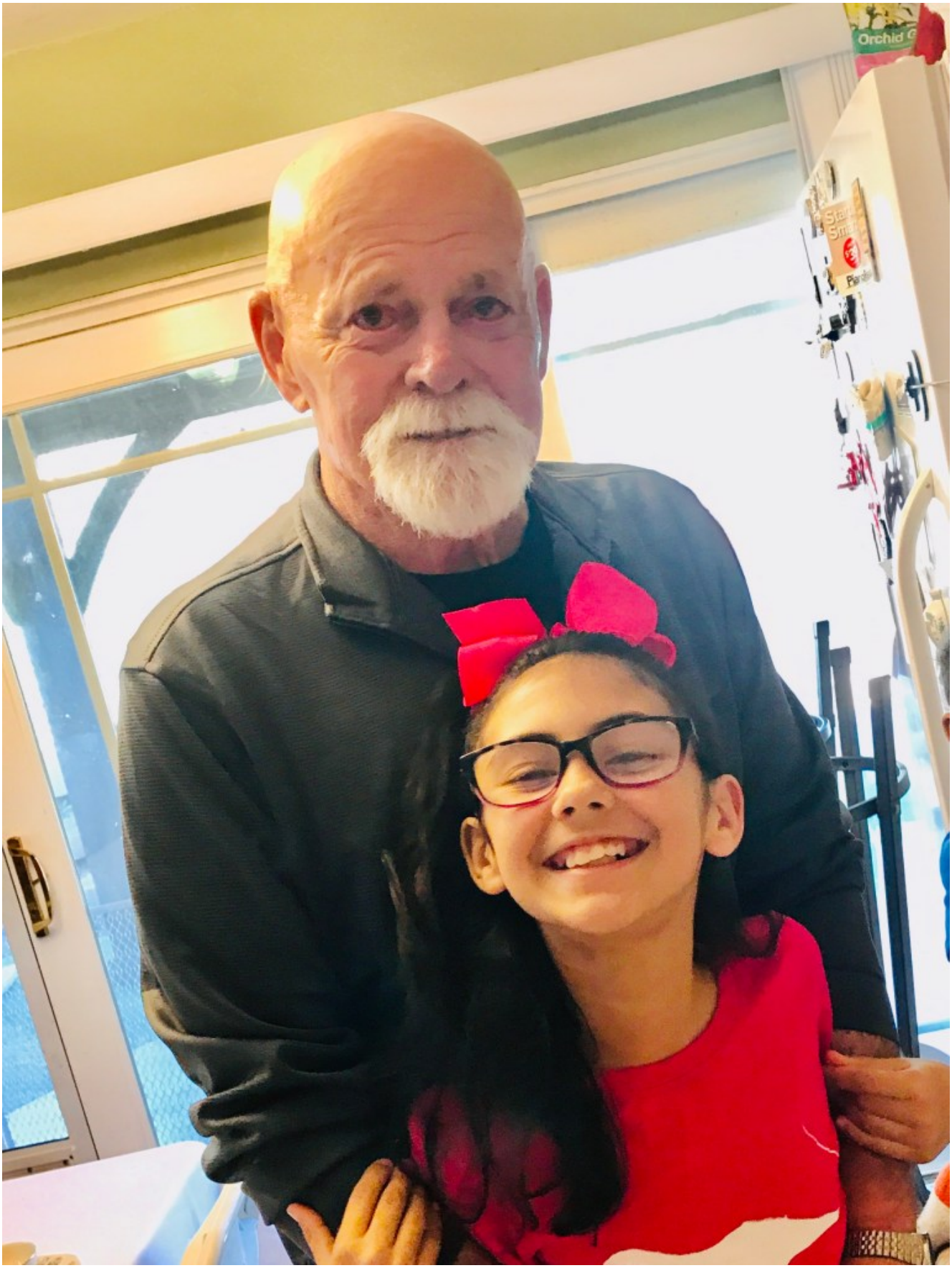









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