

The Life Story of Marvin Phillip Knoll

## Ancestry:

The oldest ancestors on record for the Knoll family are Henry Knoll and Anna Wetsch, parents of twelve children. One of the children was Phillip Knoll, who was born September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1909. Henry Knoll was Born October 29, 1880 and died in 1945. Anna Wetsch was born May 12, 1885 and died in 1957. Phillip Knoll would marry Stephina Lauinger on September 29 in 1936.

The oldest recorded ancestors for the Lauinger side are Stephina Burgad and Bernard Lauinger. They were the parents of Anton Lauinger, who was born in 1877 in Karlsruhe, Russia. In



*Henry Knoll and Anna Wetsch 1903*



*Odessa, Russia in the Ukraine*

1894, at the age of 17, Anton Lauinger came to the United States from Odessa, Russia, in the Ukraine. He came because of the promise of land and fortune. He was not the only one to come at the time. This was popular in families of Germans from Russia to send their boys to the Americas in hopes that they would be able to farm or work on the railroads to get enough money to later bring the entire family out of Russia and to the Americas. Anton came to the Dakota Territory, started his farm with the help of the Homestead Act, and eventually married Marion Bender in 1898. She and Anton had five children, Theresa, Frances, Margaret, Clara, and John, before she passed away in 1911. Anton then married Clementine Marshall, who was an orphan who had come to the United States at the age of 18 with her brother, Val Marshall. Her country of origin is unknown. She and Anton had three children together: Regina, Stephina, and Jack.

Both Phillip and Stephina came from farming families. They lived on neighboring farms and met at local social gatherings such as church, dances, and holiday celebrations. When Stephina was 14, Phillip, who was nine years her senior, told her that he would marry her someday. When he asked Stephina's father, Anton, he told Phillip that he had to wait until she was 18 to marry her. Phillip waited patiently until her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, which was on September 25<sup>th</sup>, and then promptly married her four days later on September 29<sup>th</sup> in 1936. Anton was given a cow for his daughter's hand in marriage.



*Phillip Knoll and Stephina Lauinger  
1936*

Phil and Stephina Knoll then lived on a small farm for a few years until they lost their farm in the Great Depression and then moved to Butte, Montana. In Butte, Montana, Phil washed buses and Stephina did laundry to make a living. They eventually moved to Mandan, North Dakota, where Phil and Stephina started their family.

### **Life Story:**

Marvin Phillip Knoll was born March 29<sup>th</sup> in 1938 in Mandan, North Dakota. His mother was taken into the home of a midwife who would take care of women who were soon to have a child. He was the firstborn of Phillip and Stephina's five children. Marvin was definitely a troublemaker when he was younger. When he was a baby, his crib was one of those old metal cribs with wheels, and



*Marvin Phillip Knoll*

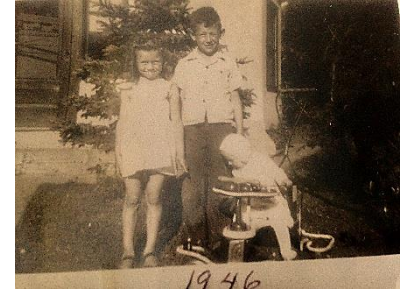


*Marvin Phillip Knoll*

he would scoot the crib around. He also loved throwing his glass baby bottles at the large pot-belly stove that was in the middle of their house and watching the bottles shatter. The second oldest child was Janice, who was born June 20, 1940. After Janice, there was Sylvia Jane, who was born on June 16, 1944, but died in infancy from Blue Baby

Syndrome in August 1944. Sylvia was born a year later, on November 28<sup>th</sup>. Marvin's only brother, Paul, was born October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1951. After Paul, a set of twin boys were miscarried in 1954. The youngest child of Phil and Stephina's was Stephanie, born February 15, 1960.

Marvin grew up in Mandan, North Dakota, where his father, Phil, first got a job at a creamery, where he worked for a while until he got a job for the railroad. Phil began as a carman, which means that when a train would come to Mandan, North Dakota, we would service the train, whether that was providing it with water, coal, loading cargo, or cleaning it. He later became a part of the "wrecking crew", which would clean up the railroad tracks after there was a train crash. Train crashes happened often in the railroad's early years, and it was important to keep the tracks clear to prevent even more wrecks. Phil eventually worked his way into getting the best job on the wrecking crew - the cook. This meant that he didn't have to do as much heavy-lifting, he could be inside, out of the elements, and he just made food for the rail men. He



*Janice, Marvin, and Sylvia*



*Sylvia, Janice, Marvin*



*Sylvia, Janice, Marvin*

was also able to bring home any leftover food to his family. The railroad fed its workers very well to keep them happy, and as Marvin Knoll described, “they ate like kings.”

Marvin Knoll grew up in what he would describe as the “American Dream” neighborhood. He grew up playing games with the neighborhood kids. They would play on the lawn in front of the post office, or go to the park at his school, St. Joes, or hitchhike their way to the local pool. Marvin eventually learned that the best way to get a ride to the pool was to bring his little sister, Janice, along. Janice, Marvin’s sister, remembers a time when she and Marvin decided to go “camping” in their front yard. They didn’t have a tent or sleeping



*Marvin and Janice*



M. Knoll, J. Knoll

bags, so they improvised by throwing a sheet over the clothesline. Their neighbors, the Kruger’s, found out about their camping trip and brought some food over for them to enjoy in their tent. After that, the camping trip was canceled because of the swarms of ants and mosquitoes that decided to join in on their little party.

Marvin attended school at St. Joseph’s, a Catholic school, from elementary all the way to high school. All of the teachers were nuns at St. Joes, and Marvin had the honor of being the



*St. Joseph's Church, Mandan, N. D.*

altar boy. He would have to get up at six in the morning every day to help with daily mass before school. It was not a particularly exciting job, but Marvin was very good at it, so he did it from a very young age and all the way through high school.

It also was at a young age that Marvin realized his love for basketball. When one of his neighbors got a basketball hoop, Marvin and the neighborhood boys would go over and spend hours just shooting baskets. These sixth-grade boys would play before school, during the noon hour, after school, and whenever they had the chance. They could even play late into the night because the lights from the post office would provide enough



*Marvin (Age 14)*

light for them to keep playing. It even got to the point that in the wintertime, when they couldn't find a ball, they would throw

chunks of ice through the hoop. Marvin eventually was able to join the school's basketball team in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, where he played the position of a guard.



*Marvin*

Marvin was not able to just spend his days playing. He worked really hard. When he was younger, he would help his mother maintain their small farm. He also clearly remembered having dish duty, and how he and his siblings would rotate through who had to do them for the week. When he was about ten years old, he began doing a paper route. He and his sister, Janice, would use their little red wagon to haul the newspapers in the summer and a sled in the wintertime. On Sundays, they would deliver the Minneapolis Tribune. Marvin did his paper route until he was seventeen.



*Janice, Marvin, and Sylvia*

When he was 14 years old, he also had what he remembered as the worst job ever. He worked at



Marvin (Age 16)

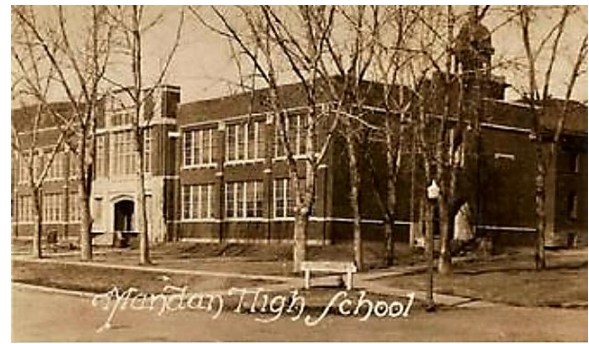
a poultry cleaning place that would pay him 25 cents for each bird that he cleaned. He worked there for two years. When he was fifteen, his family also bought a motel, where he would help with the laundry, cleaning the cabins, and lawn and cabin maintenance. He



Mangler Machine

clearly remembers mangling the sheets and how hard of work that was. He helped run the motel with his family until he graduated from high school.

Both of Marvin's parents believed strongly in working hard, so they didn't quite understand Marvin's obsession with basketball. Marvin was

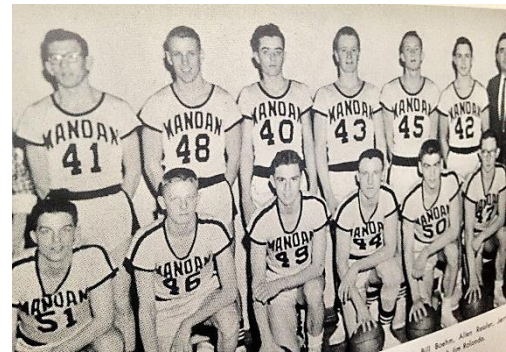


Marvin (Second from left)

what he called a "trailblazer",

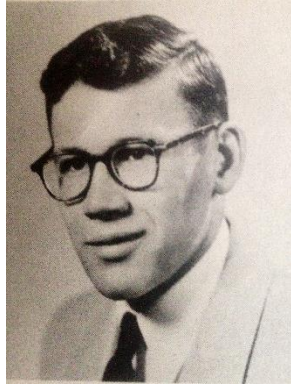
because it took a while to convince his father especially to let him keep playing. It wasn't until his father started spotting

Marvin's name in the newspaper that he



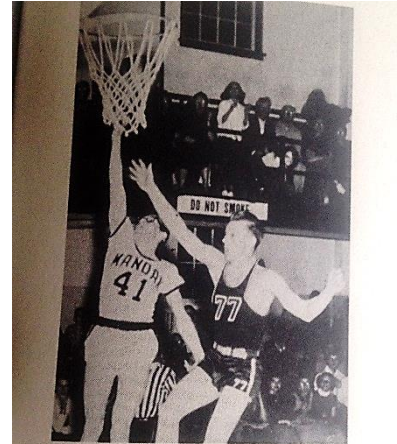
Mandan Braves Boys Basketball Team  
Marvin (#41)

began to appreciate his son's athletic talents. In high school, Marvin became a star player, scoring 39 points in one game by himself, and also making 21 free-throws in one game in his senior year, making a record for the most



Marvin (Age 18, Graduation)

free-throws in a game that was only broken recently. His basketball success earned him the nickname “Mandan’s sparkplug”. All of this boosted his popularity in high school, putting him, in his own words, “pretty much at the top.”



Mandan’s sparkplug, Marv Knoll, makes two of the many points he tallied during the season. These particular two points helped the Braves defeat New Salem.

It was because of his basketball success that he went to Dickinson State College with a “scholarship”. It wasn’t really a



scholarship though – this was before the time that college sport scholarships were offered – he actually got a custodial job on campus. They didn’t work him too

Marvin (#41)

hard though. Marvin describes this job experience as getting paid \$400.50 a month to basically shoot baskets. This covered his tuition,

### BASKETBALL TEAMS



ROW ONE, Left to Right: J.V. Cosch, Ed Hollinger, Assistant Manager, Sam Brödsall, Larry Bares, Bud Perry, Lauren Larson, Roger Meyers, Wayne Sanders, Herb Hkrauf, Coach H. J. Weinbergen. ROW TWO: Ernie Trujillo, Jim Dwell, Willy Lockart, Bob Laaster, Tim Gooderson, Marv Knoll, Ted Easton, Leary Getz. ROW THREE: Bob Tobias, Jack Simmslog, Bruce Campbell, Louis Getz.

living expenses, and gave him some spending money. Because Phil, his father, worked on the railroad, Marvin was able to get a free railroad pass so that he could



Marv'



come home on the weekends to see his family. The job and train pass allowed Marvin to attend college for four years, get a double major in History and Physical Education, and an English minor, and to become the





VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM, Row one: Roy Perovich, Phil Koller, Harley Wash, Bob Latham, Paul Rogers, Rudy Clifton, Terry Brinkley, Coach. Row two: Freddie Fort, Ned Christensen, Guy Steady, Don Pomeroy, Bill Leake, Chetle Papp, Marc East.

first college graduate in his family. His father had only been schooled up to the third grade, and his mother finished sixth grade in a one room school house called St. Anthony's.



Marvin made his parents very proud. He also continued

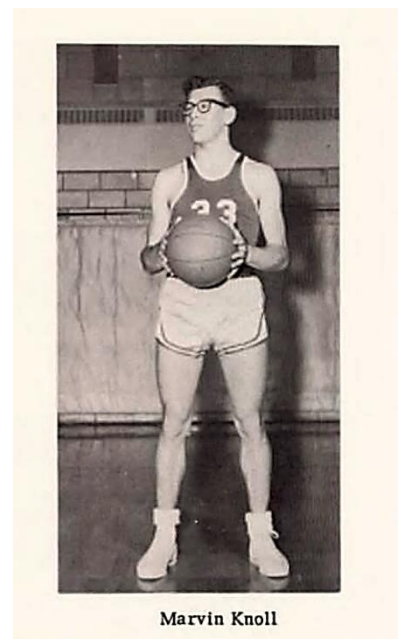
### MEN'S UNION OFFICERS



Mr. L. G. Pulver, advisor; Marvin Knoll, secretary-treasurer; Dale Nagstad, president; Harlan Wash, vice president. Not pictured: Lloyd Hendrickson, Student Council representative.

to impress them with his basketball skills all the way through college. He started every game, from his freshman to senior year. His father loved hearing his son's name on the radio. Marvin earned the nickname "Marvelous Marvin" in college, and eventually was inducted into the Dickinson State Hall of Fame.

Marvin's siblings all vividly remember being their big brother's biggest fans. Paul, Marvin's younger brother, remembers one time that he attended one of Marvin's games at Dickinson State, that he got the privilege of carrying the American flag for singing the national anthem before the game. Sylvia, one of Marvin's younger sisters, also remembers the family tradition of the Dampfnudels – the family would eat a large German meal before all of Marvin's games, and Marvin had made a deal with his mother that for every Dampfnudel he ate, that would be how many baskets he would make during the game.



Marvin Knoll



Once Marvin finished college, he got a job in Cando, North Dakota as a high school history and physical education teacher. He was also the basketball, football, and track coach. It was a small school with only 125 students. He taught there for three years with an annual salary of \$5,000. One student that Marvin recalls coaching was Dave Osborn, who went on to play 11 seasons for the Minnesota Vikings, and one season for the Green

Bay Packers. During this time, he also would attend summer sessions. During the summers, the school would send him to a summer school, and he would stay in the dorms on a college campus. It was during one of these summers, at Jamestown, North Dakota, that he met Kathleen Kilzer.

He was dating her roommate at the time, Marge Bophink. Near the end of that summer, he went



*Kathleen Kilzer*

back to Dickinson State for a homecoming celebration as a date with Marge and met Kathy. He ended up leaving the party with Kathy. He and Marge had agreed to end their relationship because, at the time, a “mixed marriage” – a Catholic (Marvin) and a Lutheran (Marge) – wouldn’t have worked out. Marge introduced Marvin to Kathy at this party, and then they started dating. At the time, dating was not easy because Marvin lived in

Cando (on the eastern side of North Dakota) and Kathy lived in Williston (on the western side of North Dakota). They would try and meet on the weekends, although it was difficult with Marvin’s coaching job. They also would try and meet whenever possible in the middle of the state so that one of them wouldn’t have to drive all the way across. After the first semester of that school year, Kathy quit her English teaching job in Williston and moved to Cando. She and

Marvin then got married in December 1961, in Richardton, North Dakota. Marvin then finished the school year while Kathy worked at the local drug store, and then they moved to Watford City, North Dakota.



*Marvin and Kathleen*

Marvin began teaching in Watford City as an English and History teacher and as the head basketball coach and assistant football coach. He received \$8,000 for his annual salary. It was a high school with only 250 students. He taught there for five years. During this time, he and Kathy



*Marvin holding Dave and Joan*

started their family. Joan, David, and Ronald were born in Watford City. After they started having kids, Marvin began to feel he was missing too much time at home because of his job, so they decided to move to Dickinson, North Dakota. They moved when Kathy was pregnant with Sean. When they moved to Dickinson, Marvin got a job as a history teacher at the

Dickinson High School. After only a few years, he became assistant principle. This was at the time that his kids were attending the same middle school that he was



*Marvin (Age 26)*



*Marvin and Kathy*

working at. He went back to being a teacher after a few years, so he could teach history to his kids when they were in high school. After a few more years of teaching, he became the school's business manager and personnel director for three years. Marvin enjoyed this job because it allowed



*Marvin and Kathleen*

him to be creative, coming up with new ways of making education

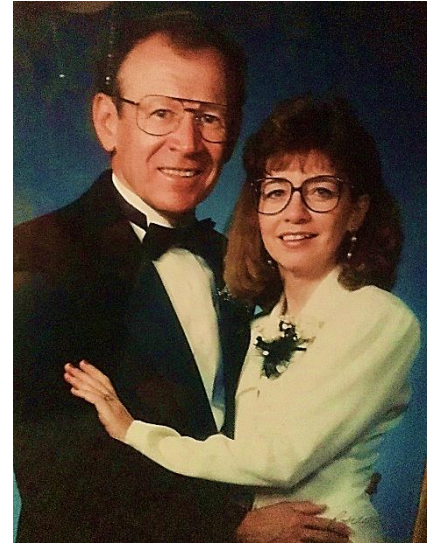
exciting. Dickinson High School was a new and innovative school. They actually were the first school in the nation to do block scheduling, and Marvin had a part in making that happen. Administration from schools all over the country would come visit the school to see how this method of teaching worked.



*Top: Joan and Dave Bottom: Sean, Kathy, Marv, Ron, and Pepper*

Marvin had just become the athletic director at Dickinson High School when he met Gloria Pearson. He and Kathy had gotten divorced a few years earlier in 1988. Gloria had wanted to leave her teaching job in Bismarck, North Dakota, so she had applied for a job at the Dickinson High School. She had gotten letters of recommendation from the administration at her school in Bismarck, and she had also gotten an unsolicited recommendation. She didn't know who it was until she met Marvin five months later and he had explained it to her. Marvin's very close friend, who had been the principle at Gloria's old school in Bismarck, had written the

unsolicited letter of recommendation and told Marvin that “you better hire her – she’s a good one!” Marvin had then talked to the school’s personnel director. She got the job three days later. Marvin and Gloria met at a staff party at an Elk’s Lodge, where they talked and learned they had a lot in common. The next day, there was a St. Patrick’s Day party, and at this party, Marvin asked Gloria for a dance. After that, they dated for a year and got married on June 15, 1991. Marvin and Gloria both had four children from previous marriages, totaling eight children altogether!



*Marvin and Gloria*



*Kris, Eric, Gloria, James, and Erin*

Marvin has lived through many historical milestones. He lived through the Great Depression, World War II, and the Vietnam War. During the Great Depression, his parents lost their farm, which is why they moved to Butte, Montana. He remembers the rationing, although he says that his family did not suffer too badly during the Great Depression. He didn’t remember ever missing a meal. He remembers the “military presence” during World War II when he was really young. He remembers how at the movie theatres, they would pass around baskets asking for donations to support the war effort. He also remembered the war reels they would play before the movies to inspire patriotism. Marvin was “too young to be in the Korean War, and too old to be in the Vietnam War.” He also was a teacher, so he got an exemption from the Vietnam draft. He didn’t want to go to war. He did have friends go fight in the Vietnam War, but they never came back

the same. They came back with bad drug habits, bad health, and PTSD. They also were not welcomed back because of the negative outlook on the war. Marvin describes the return from the Vietnam War for the soldiers like “sneaking in the back door to get back into society” whereas after the World Wars, the soldiers returned home “marching back as heroes.” He remembers



*Neil Armstrong 1969*

voting for the first time, and proudly reports that he voted for Eisenhower. His family wasn't too political. They voted for whoever helped farmers the most and whoever they felt would help with the economy and taxes. He also remembers watching the TV and how exciting it was to watch the moon landing. He talked



*John F. Kennedy*

about how people stayed home from work and school to watch. He also remembers Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963. He had been supervising the cafeteria in Watford City when it happened.

Marvin also has seen huge evolution in technology. He says, “it is just amazing to see how much it has changed.” He remembers the “ditto machine”, which was basically a copy machine, but remembers how people thought it was “really something” that people could just “crank out the copies so quickly.” Now that he looks back, the things when he was younger that seemed so technologically advanced seem so simple, basic, and uncomplicated. He thinks of how technology in education has changed. When he was in school, they had chalk and blackboards. They didn't have overhead projectors and computers. As for how technology has changed what entertainment has looked like in his lifetime, he has experienced many of the exciting changes.

He remembers growing up listening to the radio, listening to the Lone Ranger, Green Hornet, and his other shows he liked. He also remembers how when he was younger, he would frequently go to the movie theatre. He remembers how movies used to cost 12 cents. He would bring one quarter, and it would cover the movie and his popcorn (one nickel) and his pop (another nickel). He also vividly recalls the first day his family got a television. They were one of the first families, where he lived, to get one. He came home from a basketball trip to Williston in his sophomore year (1954) and found the television set sitting in his living room. He remembers turning it on and seeing the test screen and how amazing it was. He remembers watching cheesy wrestling shows and organ performances, what he called “bad TV”, but because it was on, everyone watched it. He remembers the picture on the TV being very hazy, but everyone just thought it was so cool to have a television set.



*The Lone Ranger*



*Green Hornet*

In the Knoll family, the biggest priority has always been family. When asked about traditions that Marvin remembers, he just said that the biggest tradition was just “spending time with the family.” For holidays, the family would all get together at each other’s houses and enjoy his mother’s wonderful German cooking. Because of the large age gap between siblings, Marvin and Kathy would have Paul and Steph come and stay with them. Paul and Steph both remember taking the train to go visit their big brother. Paul remembers staying with Marvin and playing basketball games at the gym, and Steph remembers watching him play his “Old Pro Basketball” with his buddies, and she was so proud watching him make all those baskets. All of the siblings remember Christmases with Marvin. Sylvia remembers how one time, Marvin played Santa, but

he forgot to take off his class ring, so that was a “dead giveaway.” Steph recollects Christmases with her nieces and nephews who were only a couple years younger than her, and making gingerbread cookies with them and Kathy. Janice and Bob, Janice’s husband, would usually host Christmas Eve,



and Stephina and Phil would host Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve, the adults would have Tom and Jerry’s and then they would have a big meal, and afterwards, they would open presents. Family has continued to be one of the most important things in the Knoll family. The holidays have always been a special time where everyone is together. This is a tradition that will be passed on throughout the generations.



*Stephina, Phil, Janice, Marvin, Steph, Paul, and Sylvia*





Marvin Knoll has had many different titles throughout his lifetime – sparkplug, Marvelous Marvin, teacher, coach, husband, Dad – but one of his all-time favorites is “Papa.”



## Some of Grandma Great's Favorite Recipes

Dum Pfa Noodle

4 c warm water      1 tsp salt  
1 pk yeast          1/4 c oil  
2 TBsp sugar        6 c flour

Electric pan  
with cover  
works best

*punch  
dough*

Mix and raise in a warm place for 1 1/2 hrs. Then  
form into small buns, let raise again for 1 hr.  
When raised (about doubled) Place 1/2" water in pan  
add 2 TBsp butter or oil and salt. Heat water and  
place dough balls into water, turn down and cook  
for about 1/2 hr or until water is gone and balls are  
browning - listen to hear sizzling. Do Not lift  
lid until you hear them fry, taste so yummy.  
With a nice brown crust - Some with sauce.

Grandma      Prune / Raisin  
Knoll        Quick noodle use frozen bread dough

Prune / Raisin  
Sauce

about 2 qts water  
add - handful pitted dried prunes  
add - handful dried raisins  
Bring to a boil - add - about  
1/2 - 3/4 c sugar - Simmer -  
Serve over dumpanoodle  
can add other dried fruit if desired  
Mom did sometimes

## Mom Knoll

### Kuchen

To make the dough, soak 2 cakes of yeast in 1/2 cup of lukewarm water. Scald 3 cups of milk, cool it and add to it the yeast, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 tablespoon salt, 1/2 cup melted lard, enough flour to make a soft dough, and 2 unbeaten eggs; mix together. Roll the dough into pie size. Let it rise slightly before adding the filling. Bake in a hot oven. *about an hour*

**FILLING:** Use any fruit filling or cottage cheese. Cover with heavy sour cream and sprinkle with plenty of sugar. ~~Crumble lard and flour over the cream and cover with more sour cream.~~ Sprinkle cinnamon on the top.

*Beat 2 eggs - 1 TB flour, 1 c cream about 1/2 c sugar  
after dough is raised - poke hole with fork then  
pour mixture over top, sprinkle w cinnamon or  
favorite fruit -*

## Cheese Casserole

Easy  
cheese  
buttons

1 pk ribbon noodles  
1 carton dry cottage cheese  
mix cheese with 2 eggs  
and 1/2 cup sugar - alternate  
cottage cheese mixture and  
noodles in layers - bake  
1 1/2 hr at 400 - brown bread  
crumbs in 1 stick butter  
Cover while baking  
Grandma Knoll

# Grandma Knolls 1982

from the kitchen of: \_\_\_\_\_

Over night  
Buns

4 cups water

2 cups sugar

1 cup margarine

Boil together for 1 minute

Cool -

4 cups eggs pinch salt

serves: \_\_\_\_\_

1/4 cup warm water soak

1 yeast -

Mix together top ingredients with flour enough to make soft dough.

make dough about 4 p.m. punch dough 3 times make into buns 10 o'clock p.m. let raise over night bake in morning makes about

60

1 buns

m - m - Good



Joan - June '65