

June Barbone

I remember the night that Joanne Burleigh died, and the car accident. I was there, it was so traumatic, for all of us who hung out together.

I remember the phone call waking us in the middle of the night, it was my cousin Cheryl, she came across a car accident on Route 45, she lived in Center City Mantua, and she knew my friends and recognized Jimmy Akins car. She was told that the girl who was killed had red hair, she thought it was me.

We had been in Jimmy's Car that night, earlier he took us from Westville to Wenonah. I thought Pam Canning may have gotten into his car but Sue Austin, who was living with us at the time, got up and said that Joanne got into Jimmy's Car.

I remember that horrible phone call to Kathy Domino, me shaking, because they were best friends for many, many years. I could not make myself tell Kathy that Joanne was dead. I just couldn't say those words. She went directly to the hospital. She called me later after have been to the hospital and found out.

None of us slept much that week, it's was just a sad blur of disbelief and shock.

Jimmy remained in a coma for the next six months until his death.

I remember us all going to see the crumbled car, and trying to imagine how anyone could fit into the crushed spaces, and realizing it could have been any of us.

I remember the funeral, so many people came, it seemed that the entire school was there.

I remember seeing her father by the coffin, Joanne's face and body, unrecognizable, her father a Marine, crying, I never saw a man cry before, that really stayed with me, still breaks my heart when I picture it today.