

THE STREHLKE SAGA II

By

George Louis Strehlke Jr.

Gilroy, California

December, 1997

This book is dedicated to adorable Gloria, who has been the center of my life for over forty years.

We shall always have San Francisco



Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Alhambra, Palm Springs, New York, Washington, Los Gatos, Saratoga, Carmel, Mendicino, Reno, Toronto, Cuernevaca, Mexico City, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, Sunnyvale, Napa, Gilroy, Bakersfield, Death Valley, Monterey, Redding, Medford, Newport Beach, Florence, Rogue River, Coral Gables, The Star Princess, And Sacramento.

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FOREWORD

On Valentine's Day weekend, 1998, my brother George honored me with the invitation to write the foreword to his memoirs, as I had been involved in the production of the other two sets of Strehlke memoirs--*Remember When* and *The Strehlke Saga*. My connection with *Remember When* is discussed in the "Typist's Notes" section of that document. However, I would like to clarify my connection with *The Strehlke Saga*. When my father was terminally ill with colon cancer, I wanted to make sure that all the stories he had told while I was growing up were saved. So he and I feverishly worked as a team to create a Christmas gift for my brother and his family who would be visiting for the holidays. Suffering from a twisted nerve in the neck, Dad held himself up with one hand and wrote in longhand with the other, and I then typed the pages at my office at night.

Interestingly, all the authors of these Strehlke memoir documents suffered pain while writing. Nellie Andrews Strehlke, the author of *Remember When*, suffered a lifetime of pain from severe arthritis, and my brother George wrote his *Strehlke Saga II* late at night while courageously fighting pain and insomnia from the advanced stages of chondrosarcoma cancer.

From the 1890s through the 1990s, these three documents cover a whole century of the life of one family set against the political and economic changes of the United States of America. Famous persons are met, events from history books are lived, and through it all, the growth of technology is featured--from stagecoach through jet aircraft and sophisticated computers. A sense of responsibility, the love of family, and the thrill of achievement are, I believe, common threads of this family's story.

Each document reflects the personality and priorities of the author. *The Strehlke Saga II* is by far the biggest undertaking, but George has been careful to explain to everyone that it is intended to be only his perceptions, not necessarily a comprehensive chronology. Consequently, some of the subsections might seem short to the reader, such as his children's weddings and his mother's death. However, regardless of any revisions he might like to make, the writing of his story is finished, whether because of severe pain and fatigue from the disease or whether from psychic closure. Now the reader's enjoyment of the story can begin.

Sally Faith Strehlke
February 1998

1. BABYHOOD

My earliest clear memory I place at two and a half years old.

I come out of sleep, cold, in a grey darkness with noise and vibration, to call for Mother. She hovers over me to tuck a light blanket around me in my chair, and to say something soothing. We are in an airplane moving smoothly through the night. I look out the small window. What I see so delights me that it is frequently replayed in my mind:

The bright moon, in the black night, reveals a fluffy cloud deck below us. Standing tall from this cloud deck, sprinkled with lights, is a magical island in the sky. Though I rub my sleepy eyes as we slowly glide by, the island is truly there.

Of course, it was not too many years before I realized that what I had seen was a mountain peeking up through the clouds. Yet, I still feel the wonder and warm security of the moment.

Later in my childhood, I imagined that this had been my golden age. As no one could expect much in the way of performance from a baby, I imagined that all I had had to do was smile occasionally and gurgle, and everything must have been milk and cuddles. I do have vague feelings of my mother reading to me at bedtime. My favorite was "The Owl and the Pussycat". It was my favorite, not because of the story, which made no sense to me, but rather because Mother's soft voice made such loving music to carry me off to Dreamland:

"... And danced by the light of the moon, the moon,
and danced by the light of the moon."

I was born on November 20, 1929, in Seattle, Washington.

This was not a time of "warm security" for my parents. They had been married less than a year. Mother came from a large extended family in Bay City, Michigan, and Father's family was in California. Father lost all of his money in the great stock market crash that began the month before my birth. Some time within the next two years, Father left his position with Pacific Air Transport for a brief job with the Carnation Company, then returned to Pacific Air Transport. So they were adjusting to a new marriage; they were alone in a strange town; they had no savings; they had real concerns about Father's unsettled employment; and they had their first big inescapable responsibility. Me.

Seattle: November 21, 1929 and, Below, Two Months Later



2. HOME LIFE: PRESCHOOL

The Benton Way Duplex

Around my third year, we came to live in a duplex on Benton Way in Los Angeles. This was a very pretty two story white house with horizontal wood siding. The two front doors were side by side. Inside, the house was separated into two two story units. Our Living Room, Dining room, and Kitchen were downstairs. Upstairs were three bedrooms and the bathroom. My bedroom had a sloping ceiling, with a dormer window jutting out of the roof toward the street.

I can remember on Sunday mornings watching from my window for the Sunday newspaper. When it arrived, I would tiptoe downstairs in my pajamas to retrieve it. The comics were my goal; I would look at the pictures and make up stories that would go with the pictures. After breakfast, I would get Mother or Father to read them to me. Paying close attention to the words, I would come back to the comics again and again to "read" them to myself.

Ganna and Gannadaddy

We lived just up the street from the apartment house that Father had promoted and had built in 1926. He was the lead partner in this enterprise. Here lived my grandparents Strehlke. I called them Ganna and Gannadaddy.

Ganna was completely crippled with Rheumatism; she could not move without help, and went everywhere by wheelchair. Always cheerful, I felt that she was very brave to stand her pain so well. However, I do not remember having more than very short conversations with her.

Gannadaddy was always pleasant with me, but I do not remember spending much time with him. He had a little Boston Terrier with which he spent a lot of time, and which gave their living space a distinctive odor.

Their tiny apartment had a fold down Murphy bed, with Ganna often in it, a small bathroom, and a tiny kitchen. On the walls were a few photographs and a Maxfield Parrish print of a Grecian garbed youth standing over a lovely Grecian garbed damsel sprawled on the floor of a pillared temple open to a lake and trees.

They also had a radio. If we visited on Sunday, they would entertain us by tuning in Ganna's favorite program, "One Man's Family". I learned patience, sitting quietly as the radio droned on in "Harrumphs" and chatter. Their apartment always seemed to be hot and stuffy, and the visits long.

My First Broken Arm

As an excitable, uncoordinated, weak kid, my body received more than its share of injuries. I hurt myself so many times, with my mother always admonishing me to be a "brave soldier" and not cry, that eventually I was able to look at each new injury as just a bad experience of pain that would soon pass. I no longer experienced the terror of unknown consequences.

At four years of age, I first broke my arm. Exploring, I climbed through the basement window of my father's Alsace Apartments. Just inside, below the window, a set of bed springs was leaning against the wall. I used the springs as a ladder to go down. Just as my foot slipped off, I managed to thrust one arm up past the wrist into the springs. My wrist snapped. Until I regained a foothold, I hung momentarily by the broken wrist. This was very painful, and my loud screams soon brought help. I was taken to a doctor who set and cast the arm. For the weeks that it took to heal, I wore a sling around my neck to support the arm. The doctor described my injury as a "green stick break". This meant that the bone was not completely broken; rather, just like a green branch from a tree, one side of the bone broke as the rest of the bone's thickness bent.

Father's Model A Ford

The first car that I remember was a Model A Ford roadster. This car had two doors, a canvas top that could be raised or lowered, with side curtains including windows that could be mounted to keep out the weather.

The exciting feature of this car was the rumble seat: there was a handle on top of the rounded back, which could be pulled to open up the back to reveal a seat out in the rushing wind, entirely separate from the front seat of the car. I always wanted to sit there.

Although Father worked the then standard five and a half day week, we did take occasional Sunday outings. One outing took us high up into some mountains. We splashed through little streams that crossed the bumpy road, as clouds came.

Then started a cold mountain rain. The three of us were in the front seat. The car was stopped. Father and mother raised the top and mounted the side curtains. We resumed our journey, as the rain came down harder and began to stream through the canvas top. Mother and I tried holding up towels but it did little good; we were drenched. Luckily the sun came out to dry us off, and we had a nice picnic by a mountain stream at our destination.

Father's 1934 Dodge Sedan

Sometime after this outing, Father turned in the Model A Ford for a 1934 Dodge four door sedan. This was a solid dependable weatherproof vehicle. I have felt no greater security since in any car.

More than once, I would wake up in the back seat, then sit up to see where we were.

We might be parked up in the hills, with Mother and Father sitting in the dark looking down on the lights of Los Angeles.

We might be parked at a drive-in restaurant, where attendants would hang trays on the doors to hold the food.

We might be parked in a drive-in theater, among many other cars, facing a giant movie screen, with loud sound coming from the direction of the screen. (Only in later years would drive-in theaters have parking stalls for each car, each stall complete with a small speaker with volume control to hang inside the door of the automobile).

That Dodge almost became a second home to me.

My Ruined Toys

Surely, sometimes during the few years on Benton Way it must have been cold, and it must have rained, and it must have thundered, but I remember only warm sun there during the days. I mostly remember wearing short pants and short sleeved shirts. That it must have rained, I do have indirect evidence:

Mother was always after me to pick up my things - in the house as well as in the back yard - and I always resisted. Finally tiring of this, she told me that she would no longer pick up my toys left in the back yard and that they would be ruined.

One day I went out in the back yard to find windup metal toys rusted, wooden toys split and fallen apart, and cardboard objects dissolved to a mushy mess. Although I continued to leave things all over indoors, I always remembered the consequences of leaving things outside.

Christmas

Christmas was a very emotional time for me, all through my childhood, but especially when I was younger.

My parents would take me to downtown Los Angeles to see the window displays at the big department stores. It appeared that each store window was more marvelous than the one just seen. Brightly lit animated scenes of Santa Claus and his workers making toys; Christmas trees with animated figures scurrying through the branches; giant layouts of model railroads speeding through intricate networks of tracks.

All you could hear on the radio was Christmas music: the traditional hymns, as well as the new popular songs -

"You better not whine. You better not pout. You better not cry. I'm telling you why. Santa Claus is coming to town."

Mother and Father would take me to the big Hollywood Christmas parade. There would be a float with Santa Claus. There would be a lot of cartoon figures marching. And, one year, a parade car carrying Shirley Temple, herself.

Each year, my anticipation was unbearable. I felt that Christmas, the great day of presents, would never come. When it finally did arrive, my excitement was uncontrollable.

One Christmas, I had asked for a fire engine that I could pedal. I guess that money was short, so Father painted my little metal wagon red, and rigged a wooden framework on which he hung two homemade ladders. Tying this to my tricycle, he presented me with a play fireman's hat to complete the outfit. I accepted it in good grace, but it was not at all what I had in mind.

I also received a little toy cannon with a spring arrangement that allowed you to shoot little projectiles at some wooden soldiers. This gift did excite me, and I eagerly grabbed it from Father just as he was demonstrating it to me. He exploded, and that was the end of my happy day.

I think that it was the next Christmas that I was given the all metal pedal driven airplane with stubby wings, together with a leather pilot's helmet. Boy, did this fuel my imagination. I was right up there with the US Army Air Corp shooting down the enemy. That airplane got solid use just about every day.

Childhood Terrors

While still quite young, I began to have really bad nightmares. Also I became genuinely terrified whenever Mother and Father went out for the evening and left me in the hands of a baby-sitter. I would throw sobbing fits, but these seemed to have no effect on the light mood of Mother and Father as they left.

I started my decline to become a skinny, sickly child, with frequent illnesses. I remember Mother giving me cod liver oil which was supposed to buck me up with vitamins.

Mother's Fall

In the midst of her pregnancy with Susan, Mother fell downstairs into the front hall. I was so concerned that I ran to the kitchen and brought her a tablespoon of cod liver oil. When she saw me standing there with the spoon of cod liver oil, she laughed uproariously. I was relieved that she no longer seemed to be hurt; however, I felt unloved that she would make fun of my trying to help. It hurt each time she laughed, as she retold the story to my Father and to others.

Susan

I was excited when Mother went to a hospital to have a baby. When they brought Susan home from the hospital, I was told that there was something wrong with her. I was not allowed to go into the nursery bedroom to see her. After a short few months, she died. Father told me that her back had not formed properly, and that the doctor had said that, had she lived, she would have been badly crippled.

My First Acute Illness

Sometime after Susan left us, I had my tonsils removed. This operation did not stop my general decline, and I slipped into acute illness.

I remember Mother setting up a steam tent for me in the Living Room. On a chair, using books, she braced a pressing iron with the heating plate up. On this she placed a teakettle. She sat me on a small chair facing the teakettle spout. She then placed tall backed dinning chairs around all this and covered it all up with bedsheets. This was to clear my lungs and help me to breath. It also gave me steam bath.

At the time I am writing this, Brian's family still has one of my childhood books with a scorched spine where it held up

the iron for the steam tent.

My illness got worse. Years later, Father told me that the doctor said that I had lost any will to live and would surely die if my mood wasn't lightened.

The doctor suggested that they buy a bunch of toys, wrap them individually, then put them into a big sack. Each morning, after eating my food and taking my medicines, I was to be allowed to pull one package from the sack and enjoy it for the rest of the day.

It worked! I looked forward to each day as a miniature Christmas, without the onerous overhead of having to behave just right.

One gift was a large book of simple magic tricks that included cardboard punchouts of coins, a top hat, a wand, and other items that Mother helped me make and learn how to use. I was very happy, thank you very much, just being sick in bed, with the promise of the grab bag every morning.

My Beginning Woodworking

Father taught me how to hit a nail with a hammer and how to cut wood with a saw.

Once he took me to a lumber yard. There he bought me a box of nails and a bundle of lath. Lath was a stick four feet long, one inch wide, and one quarter inch thick, with a very rough splintery surface.

In those days, carpenters used lath in building houses. They would nail these sticks fairly close together on the house's framework, then other workers would slop plaster onto the lath. They would then smooth the plaster to make the finished surface of the walls.

Anyway, father bought me a bundle of lath and set me free in the backyard to build anything I wanted. After building an Indian tepee, I couldn't think of anything else to make with lath. I had banged my thumb with the hammer, which hurt a lot, and I did get a small cut from the saw, which didn't hurt much, and my hands did get splinters, which Mother carefully removed. I soon abandoned the lath.

Vacation at Surfside

One summer we vacationed at Surfside. We shared with another family a big light and airy frame house right on the beach.

One morning at the beach house, I saw in the kitchen large pans filled with small silvery fish. Mother told me this fantastic story of how they had been awakened in the middle of the night by shouts of "Grunion! Grunion! The grunion are running!"

She said that they put on swim suits to run outside with pans. As the waves swept up on the sand they were shimmering silver in the moonlight with thousands of fish come to bury their eggs in the sand. Mother and Father frolicked through the water scooping up the fish into the pans in a loud laughing party mood. But no one thought to wake me up. I was hurt to be left out of this great adventure.

The rest of the vacation was wonderful. I splashed in the smaller waves. Made crude castles in the sand. Fished from a pier. Found starfish, shells, and pretty rocks polished by the surf. I could even track sand through the house without adult comment. And, everywhere, my loving companion was my first dog: a short haired energetic little fellow who was an unlimited source of affection and play.

My Beloved Dog Died

On the way home, my dog became sick. Father stopped the car often to let him out to throw up. He was taken to a place that treated dogs, and there he died. I was in the same room with Father when he got the news by telephone. Something in the conversation caused him to laugh. In my little boy grief, his laughter was far beyond my understanding.

Friendly Neighbors

In the house to the right of us lived an English bachelor who was very nice to me. He would take time to talk with me and to join in some of my play fantasies. One Christmas he gave me a Meccano Set (like an Erector Set). I could tell that I was too young for it, but I did save most of the pieces to play with when much older.

On the other side of our duplex lived two other bachelors. While both friendly, only one of them spent any time with me. I remember one long afternoon that he spent talking about airplanes. He drew me a biplane with lines coming back from the wings, making it look as though it was going very fast.

The Mysterious Death

One of the two bachelors died, and the other one immediately left. Father told me that that the death happened in their bathroom, just while father was on the other side of the wall in our bathroom. He did not know what was happening, but at the time that he later learned that it happened, he saw a mysterious shadow stain appear on the shared wall, spreading then fading away.

Uncle WhoaBill

There was a children's radio program, Uncle WhoaBill, that I listened to every day with Mother. One feature was "The Birthday Search". Uncle WhoaBill would name off a birthday child and give a running commentary of clues to find a hidden present. I loved the program. When it was my birthday, I was entranced with the magic of his knowing my name and his being able to direct me to a special present. One day the program was gone. I was sorry to lose my radio friend.

Mother's Good Deed

All of this happened in the early 1930's, during the Great Depression. Many people were out of work and were very unhappy. One morning, a strange man in a business suit came to our back door. He looked very embarrassed as he explained that he was going downtown to look for work, but had had no breakfast that morning.

Mother asked him in just as though she knew him well and fixed him a large breakfast with all of the trimmings. After he left, I asked her a lot of questions that she happily answered. She went about her housework singing all day. I still feel good about the boost Mother gave him. I hoped that he found a job and was happy.

The Park

Down past the foot of our street was a park. Here was lots of green grass, small trees, hard gravel paths, benches, and a lake. Mother would bring me here to play in the grass, and to feed the few pigeons and ducks.

I was fascinated with the few snails that I discovered by the paths. I had mother explain over and over, what they were, and how they lived. I noticed their fragile shells, I noticed their eyes out on long stalks. I noticed how slowly they moved. I noticed how they pulled in their eyes and body if disturbed. I noticed how slimy they were.

By the park lake was a kind of open house with boats in it. We would occasionally rent one of these noiseless electric boats and glide over the surface of the lake. I noticed that no one made any sound while in these boats. People just sat quietly and glided along.

Bringing Home the Groceries

To the left, around the foot of our street, was Rampart. Across Rampart, on the corner, was a market. I think that it was called "The Big Six". It was like a very very small version of the large supermarkets that we have as I write this. Mother and I would walk there to buy groceries.

Sometimes she would buy so many items that I would have to help carry them home in the brown paper bags. I would get very tired climbing up the hilly part of our street. I would complain loudly, and mother would urge me on, and sometimes get angry with my complaints. My legs would start to hurt, and I would go slower and slower. "Just a little further, and the climb will be over," Mother would say. I believed that the climb would never end, but it always did.

Everyday Activities

Our everyday activities were not much different from what they are as I write this. We did not have television, or air conditioning, or computers, or shopping centers, or big supermarkets, or freeways, but we had just about everything else, plus a few things entrancing to a small boy that have now disappeared.

We had trolley cars on rails that went everywhere that you would want to go.

Mother bought her vegetables and fruit from a man who everyday drove down our street in his overloaded truck with sides built out to hold the displays. Swinging on the back was a scale to weigh the purchases .

Our milk was delivered in bottles each morning before I was even awake.

Occasionally a man would come by pushing a cart with a big rotating stone on which he would sharpen your knives and scissors.

Another man would come by on a horse drawn wagon ringing a bell and calling "Rags, Bottles! Any Rags, Bottles!."

Toward evening, jingling bells as it moved slowly down the

street, came the Good Humor truck. You could run out to hail him, and he would stop to take your order, make change for your money, then open the refrigerator door on the back of his spiffy white truck to get your chocolate coated ice cream bar on a stick.

Perhaps most fun of all was the ice man. He carried big blocks of ice to deliver to those who did not yet have refrigerators, and who kept their food cool in an ice box. While the ice man was off carrying with tongs a block of ice on his back to someone's back door, the older boys would watch him go. As soon as he was out of sight, they would jump up into the back of his open truck to grab slivers of ice to eat, to throw down to the younger children, and to put down each other's backs in play.

"Get off of there!" he would cry good-naturedly, as all of us would scurry away, laughing and happy with our escapade.

Preschool



3. GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Overall, I did not do well in grammar school. By that I mean that my teachers gave me poor grades. By the time that I left the sixth grade, I did read well, I could do arithmetic well, but I had not learned grammar, so I did not write well.

1934: Kindergarten

Kindergarten went fairly well. I remember my first day. Mother brought me to this separate bungalow structure across the playground from the main building. The rest of the class was outside at recess. The teacher was fairly young, tall, pretty, and very kind. She took me around the classroom introducing me to the rabbit in its cage, and to the various educational toys that I would be using. When Mother left, I gave no trouble.

As the curriculum only involved learning the alphabet, the numbers one through ten, the "do, re, mi..." scale, and playing various games involving colors, I had no problems with studies. However, not quite five, my age was less than the others, also I am convinced that I was immature for my age. For example: if I saw the smallest infraction of the teacher's instructions, I might report it to the teacher. Enough of this, and the other students chanted "Tattle Tale" every time I went to the teacher. Though I desperately wanted friends, I made none; I did learn not to tattle.

1935: First Grade

I was a disaster in First Grade. Part of the problem was that we were learning to read the infamous "Dick and Jane" books. I guess that the idea was to slowly introduce new words, and to drum in these new words with repetition. The result of this method was mindless prose, such as, "Dick runs. See Dick run. Dick runs to Jane. Dick and Jane run, run, run."

Father had often read to me. Evening after evening we would work our way through Robinson Crusoe. That book greatly impressed me. It left me with images of self-reliance and organization that I still carry with me. I also enjoyed Tom Sawyer and Treasure Island. I knew what interesting prose sounded like. Dick and Jane did not lead interesting lives.

One of my favorite scheduled events in Kindergarten had been milk and Graham crackers, followed by a nap. First grade was too grown up for these, and I missed them. When bored, I would put my head down on my desk and try to sneak in a nap - preferably when another member of the class was reciting from

"Dick and Jane".

Another part of the problem was that the one teacher was expected to cause all thirty children to do the same thing at the same time. Often, I would rather try to maintain a conversation with my neighbor. Also, should the teacher leave the room, I would delightedly join in eraser throwing, or any other hi jinks. On her return, I was always one of those caught in the act. I spent time with the Principal.

The teacher began giving me notes to take home to Mother. Every time she opened one of these notes, Mother would cry. I stopped giving her the notes. The teacher, receiving no replies, began having the notes delivered by another student. Mother had a bad time. Father had harsh words for me. I became in my own eyes, worthless. In the morning, I had a hard time getting dressed. I would stay in the bathroom until long past time for starting to school. I would get "sick". Sometimes, I really was sick; I developed an uncomfortable "warm stomach". Once, Mother, convinced that I was faking, took me to the doctor. I will never forget that the understanding doctor, in my presence, told her, "You know, he really does not feel well."

I Could Not Make Friends

Though desperate for playmates, I would not act appropriately in order to build friendships. I thought that sarcasm and teasing were funny and were appreciated by my targets. I thought that playful shoving was fun for the person shoved. Finally, in order to interact with my fellows in some way, I became over-fond of fighting. Even when bruised, I enjoyed a "good fight."

Biting the Plate

Sometime while we still lived on Benton Way an incident occurred that cured my of my bad habit of tipping my chair. We were eating dinner in the dining room, and I was balanced forward on the front two legs of my chair. Suddenly, the legs slipped on the hardwood floor. My mouth was open to take a bite. In falling forward, my front teeth chopped a neat piece out of my plate. Luckily, my teeth were not damaged.

Moving to Blackburn Avenue

Part way through the school year, the owners of our duplex decided to live there, so Father rented a house on Blackburn Avenue, still in Los Angeles.

This house was an attractive single story stucco house. The entry was in a little turret. The roof was flat. There were three bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room, an dining area, and a kitchen. There was a basement for the furnace to keep the house warm in Winter.

There was a grass lawn in front. There was also a grass lawn in the back yard, with a concrete walk and stucco wall leading back to the flat-roofed garage, which opened to the alley that ran along the left side of our house.

On the other side of the alley was a large vacant lot extending to La Cienega Boulevard.

The house move also meant a change in schools for the remainder of my First Grade. Of course, the first school sent my records on to the new school, so they were ready for me. The school change brought me no success. My report card marks were all "Needs Much Improvement."

The Rock Fight

As my parents visited with my grandparents at the Alsace apartments, I joined a rock fight in progress in a neighborhood vacant lot. Two rows of wooden crate fortifications faced each other about twenty feet apart. With joyous excitement, I joined one group behind their battlement. I crawled to one end of the boxes, and threw my missile. Then, very cleverly I thought, I rapidly crawled to the other end, and threw again. Crawling again to the other end, I stuck my head out to receive a hail of rocks from the waiting enemy. One rock struck the outside of my right eye socket. There was not much pain, but there was bleeding. My parents were summoned. They took me to a doctor who stitched me up. The scar was quite noticeable until it disappeared among the wrinkles of age.

Sally is Born

On April 28, 1936, Sally was born. She was a healthy and happy baby. The mood around the house lightened. The difference in our ages was so great that we did not figure much in each others lives until much later.

Father and I Talk

The day that Mother and Sally came home from the hospital, Mother suggested that Father and I have a talk. We went into his den and sat down. He asked me what we should talk about. I didn't have the slightest idea. So we went our separate ways. Father and I never were to have discussions of any depth.

Mother's Live-In College Girl

When Sally was born, a live-in college girl was hired to help Mother. She was very pretty, and I liked her a lot. She played games with me and was always kind. Then came the day that I witnessed a scene that broke my heart. She was brought home from college by a friend who explained that she had suffered an epileptic fit. I remember mother sitting in a chair, with this girl kneeling on the floor at her feet, crying as she begged to be allowed to stay. Mother calmly told her that she could not stay. Then she was gone.

Oddie

Mother immediately hired Oddie, an older woman. She was very nice. She also told me interesting stories. Oddie was her real name. She had a daughter of which she was very proud. This daughter was an exotic dancer. Oddie said that she was a rival of Sally Rand's, who Oddie told me danced with fans. Oddie's daughter danced with big balloons. I gathered that they did not wear much clothes when they performed.

My Fights

The Blackburn Avenue neighborhood was full of boys around my age. We got into a lot of one-on-one fights, generally not out of animosity, but rather out of the sheer joy of combat. When I arrived home, dirty and banged up, Mother would go into a fury. She would march me back to the location of the altercation and chew out everyone present. This was very embarrassing to me. I was soon branded as a "Momma's Boy". Finally, one day I returned home from a typical battle to find Mother visiting with a friend. She told me loftily that she would no longer concern herself with my scrapes. I was thenceforth to be "on your own." In my joy, I could almost hear trumpets sound. I was no longer to be a "Momma's Boy".

Trying to be helpful, Father, who had done some boxing in college, dug out his old practice gloves to teach me some fundamentals, so that I could better defend myself. The gloves were large pillow affairs. They were so heavy that my

major difficulty was in keeping them up in position. I still remember some of what he taught me. Of course none of it was useful in my actual fights: everyone grappled and wrestled on the ground - no one stood up and boxed.

Mother's Picking

Mother continued to pick away at all of my defects, real and imagined. She even took me to a doctor about my supposed flat feet. The doctor thought that they were fine, but, to please Mother, told her of some exercises that would do me no harm. For some time, I had to do things like walk around the house barefoot holding marbles in my toes.

As I lost my baby teeth, I would put them under my pillow for the Tooth Fairy to leave a dime. Don't laugh. A dime would buy ten long licorice sticks, two standard candy bars, or two rolls of caps for my pistol.

Mother became concerned that my permanent teeth were not coming in fast enough. She took me to a dentist who slit my gums, inserting wadding to keep the slits open to let my teeth come through. Was this necessary? There were no bad effects.

1936: Second Grade

I never forgot the first day of the second grade. We all came in and chose a seat. From a list, the new teacher called our names. When she reached my name, she indicated that my seat was back there, all by itself next to the cloak room. My reputation had preceded me. It was during second grade that I lost track of what was going on. I saw no continuity in what I was doing in class. How I learned, what I learned, I do not know. My classroom misery deepened.

Family Home Evenings

Aside from reading, as a family we had a few radio programs that we listened to. Sunday evenings, we devoted to Fibber Magee and Molly, as well as Jack Benny.

Sometimes Mother, Father, and I would play games. We started with simple spin-the-pointer board games, then progressed through checkers, Parchesii, and ever more challenging card games. As she became old enough, Sally joined in. This game playing continued, when I was at home, all through my college years. Our last craze was Canasta.

1937: Vacation in Bay City

The summer that I was seven, Mother took baby Sally and I to visit her family in Bay City, Michigan. There I experienced many novelties: my first comic books, a wooden whistle that an uncle made before my eyes with a pocket knife and a willow branch, the magic removal by my grandfather of his teeth, and the easy display of the wealth of the Defoes, with their large private yacht and the big summer house on the Great Lake beach. I was expected to become buddies with my cousin, George Whitehouse. It didn't happen. He was a little older than I, much calmer, and was much put out at having to waste time with me. His attitude was validated by two incidents:

1. George Whitehouse had not yet learned to swim without water wings. One day, I convinced him to swim with me to a raft that seemed to be just a short distance off shore. There were a few adolescents on the raft having fun diving into the lake and horsing around. As we swam, we talked. Suddenly, I ran out of all strength. To keep myself afloat, I reached out to just hold onto one of his wings. Panicking, he pushed me down under the water. As I doggedly held on, he kept pushing me down under. Luckily the commotion attracted the attention of those on the raft. Several swam over and got us to shore. Of course, the whole incident was my fault. It was pure justice that I was the one full of water and completely exhausted for the rest of the afternoon. Cousin George was physically fine, just angry and disdainful.

2. One day, at my grandparents home, excitably playing around the front porch with the neighborhood children, I fell off the stone porch wall and, yes, broke my arm. After a doctor set it, I spent the rest of the Bay City visit with my arm in a sling. Cousin George faded away.

1937: Burning My Right Leg

Later that year, continuing my fascination with experiments, I used a pair of Father's pliers to clumsily hold a jar cap containing solid tar over one of our stove's gas flame burners. I was surprised when the melted tar caught fire. With a jerk, I stepped back from the stove and dropped the jar lid, spilling the burning tar over my bare right leg's shin. This hurt for a long time: tar does not soon cool down. The doctor warned us not to remove the tar. It was there for some weeks, and it left a lasting scar.

1937: Third Grade

For third grade, I was changed to Hancock Park School. I remember little of that school.

That Christmas Eve, as we were opening presents, Father became furious at my over-eager grabbing at gifts to open. His yelling, sent me crying to my room, where it soon became apparent that I was once again seriously ill. A long siege of sickness kept me home the rest of the school year.

Mother obtained all of my school books, exercises and assignments. Even when I was confined to bed, schoolwork came first; it had to be completed before any other activity. I credit Mother with preparing me for success in the fourth grade at Oneonta School the following year when we moved to South Pasadena.

During my sickness, I read a lot of comic books, magazines, adventure stories, Father's copy of "The World in the Air" (which was an illustrated history of man's efforts to fly from antiquity to 1930), and our "Colliers Encyclopedia". Reading comprehension became one of my strengths.

The Summer of 1938 in Balboa

A friend of Father's, Shields Maxwell, was leaving the airline business to start a restaurant. Needing capital, he sold Father his house in South Pasadena. Sending Oddie there to live and clean it up, our family rented much of that Summer on Balboa Island.

At that time, Balboa was a place of small bungalows on normal lots. There was one tiny general store. We swam in the bay. I fished off the rocks at one end of the island. There were children to play with. It was a very relaxed quiet place.

I had learned to swim when four years old at the Bimini Baths in Los Angeles. This Summer, though weak, I could get around a little in the water.

The Move to South Pasadena

When we came to our new home, there being no room for her, Oddie said goodbye.

This pretty hillside home had a bedroom for Sally, a bedroom for me, a curtained off den for Mother and Father, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, one bathroom, and a screened in back porch that had a wonderful view north to the mountains. Beneath the house was a one car garage that was

reached by a steep driveway; it was a challenge to move the car in and out. To the rear of the garage was a room that we used for playing ping-pong and for building projects.

1938: Fourth Grade

Fourth grade at Oneonta School was much better. I liked my teacher, and I did well with my studies. Also, Mother joined together with the mothers of some of my classmates for informal get togethers. This, in turn, set up closer relationships with my classmates. I remember fondly games and rubber band wars at classmates homes.

I remember after school group climbs of the giant live oak tree that was then on Huntington Drive. The lower horizontal limbs of this tree were so large that we could stand up and walk on them. Years of children playing had worn the bark off of the top of these limbs. Long thin branches hung down from above. We used them like vines to swing from one to the next, all the while calling out like Tarzan of the movies.

Then there were the few days I spent at classmate Paul Warnshuis' summer home in Newport Beach: waking in the night to the wail of the coastal steam locomotives to watch their headlights paint across the walls; kayaking among all of the moored sailboats; swimming in the lagoon; laughing at the dinner table.

1939: Fifth Grade

Fifth grade was even better. Miss Robe, my teacher, included some lessons on electricity, with experiments in constructing crude telegraph equipment, and in wiring up crystal radios. I caught on fire. I raided the public library for everything on radio. Soon, I was building one tube receivers. I even built a one tube oscillating transmitter that I could tune so as to block out Georgie Love's radio reception (pretty mean, I agree). Most important, my special knowledge earned me some respect from my fellows.

As a classtime project, each of us made a Christmas present: a three candle holder with hammered tin reflector. I proudly presented mine to Mother. We display it each year.

The Great Fire

It may have been this year that I had the idea for a big neighborhood party.

My neighbor, Georgie Love, and I collected all of the

discarded Christmas trees from our street. Across the street was a vacant lot scooped out of the hill for an abandoned project to build a house. We dug a shallow pit about ten feet in diameter in this lot, stacked up the trees, and set them on fire. We expected to have a nice spectacular blaze that would then burn down to a big layer of coals, just right for the neighbors to enjoy roasting wieners and marshmallows.

The blaze certainly was spectacular! The flames towered high above our houses!

From far off we could hear the fire trucks coming - from several directions. Being very frightened boys, Georgie ran to his bedroom, and I to mine, leaving our fathers to deal with the firemen. Luckily, those firemen were very understanding. We were warned but not punished.

The Fossil

In that same scoop out of the hillside, there was an outcropping of harder shale. This outcropping must have been the bed of an ancient stream, lifted ages ago when the hill was formed by earthquakes. One day, digging a shallow cave beneath this outcropping, I found a piece of shale that contained the fossil of a small fish. It was amazing to me that this form of life had been preserved so well. As I write this, I still have this memento of my childhood.

Movies

Movies were very important to my childhood. They allowed me to escape to adventure. They also gave me examples of how to behave (not all of these examples were good). About this time, I first saw "Only Angels Have Wings." This story of airplane pilots in South America struggling against weather and primitive equipment thrilled me. It was not just the exciting moments, it was the people and how they behaved. I decided that one day I would have enough money to have my own movie projector. The first film I would buy would be "Only Angels Have Wings."

1940: My Tree House

At ten, I began work on my tree house. Right next to our house on Oneonta Drive in South Pasadena was a large pepper tree. At about eight feet, its first crotch formed a bowl with four main branches. Using two 2x4's and long nails, I nailed horizontal supports that were generally parallel. For flooring, I nailed boards across these 2x4's. For walls, I nailed boards horizontally across the side branches - the

walls tilted at crazy angles. In order to get up, I nailed short boards across the trunk. Enjoying my special place, I would come out in the evenings, light an oil lantern, and sit in the dark, imagining great adventures.

One day, wishing to extend the floor out beyond the main crotch, I cut a piece of wood to fit, but had not yet determined how to permanently fasten it. As Mother was calling me to dinner, I temporarily tack-nailed it on the underside of the 2x4's. Some days later, with Georgie Love right behind me, I climbed the rungs to where I could grab that latest board, forgetting that it was not securely attached. As I pulled myself up, the board gave way. My feet hit Georgie and I turned in mid-air to land on my outstretched right arm, breaking it for the third time.

1940: Sixth Grade

Sixth grade I backslid. I received thirteen "N's" (Needs Much Improvement). I did not get along with the teacher. Once, I really angered her by disagreeing with her statement that the U.S. is a democracy; I said that the U.S. is a representative republic. She turned as red as she might have had I espoused Fascism. I found her to be terminally boring. She lectured much of the day. I found that I could daydream through much of it, as she repeated each major thought at least three times. I remember answering Father as to what I did all day, with "I look out the window and try to count the leaves on the tree."

In the Christmas play of the Nativity, I portrayed a shepherd. I played him silent, stationary, and held my crook with dignity.

At the Sixth Grade Graduation Exercises, I was the Master of Ceremonies. I had a script to follow in introducing each of the students who had prepared thanks to speak to a favorite teacher or other school personage. Without waiting for her introduction, one girl rushed forward to speak her piece. Unfortunately, it was not yet her turn. The result was that one girl was skipped over who was to give her appreciation to the janitor (today the title is "custodian"). I just continued with the script. After the ceremony, back in our classroom, my teacher commented, in front of the whole class, that I should have said something like, "I believe that we have forgotten someone," then introduced the janitor thanker. Though I remember the incident, I wasn't particularly embarrassed at the time. I remember thinking that perhaps she should have selected someone as Master of Ceremonies that she hadn't given thirteen "N's".

Grammar School Athletics

All through grammar school, I desperately wanted to be good in athletic games. However, I was quite weak and uncoordinated - I never was able to throw either a baseball or a football very far. I was always the last one chosen for teams. I did suffer. I remember seeing a cartoon with a doctor, a mother, and a little boy. The doctor says, "Johnny does not have an inferiority complex - he is inferior." Looking back, I can remember no one calling me a sissy. It wasn't that I was not all boy; it was just that I was not successful in team athletic endeavors. My final attempt was in a football game. All of us boys in the sixth grade were automatically members of the touch football team that played other grammar schools. At this particular game, our school had run up such a big score against the other school, that, in order to stop the drubbing, our coach had agreed to put in his weakest players. I went in as a line backer. On the next play, I was sent out for a pass. I ran across the goal line, I turned, I stood absolutely still, I was thrown the ball, and I caught it in my gut for a touchdown. Everyone on my team betrayed a look of absolute amazement.

Once out of grammar school, I had no more interest in team sports, neither to participate in them, nor to view them in a stadium, nor to listen to them on the radio, nor to view them on television, nor to read about them, nor to discuss them with others.

Sawyer Camp in Summer 1941

Mr. and Mrs. Sawyer lived apart: he practiced medicine in Fort Bragg, Northern California, and she lived with their two children in Pasadena, Southern California. Every Summer, she would bring her children to the hilly country near Willits, California, to camp out by the Eel River. Whenever he could, he would join them. They would pay for this vacation by including somewhat less than a dozen children. Mother and Father learned of this camp through friends. I was lucky to be included. I have not forgotten the warm acceptance I received. I am buoyed up by the memories of simple pleasures and tame adventures.

I was awakened before dawn. In front of our house was parked the giant Pierce Arrow touring car. The front and back seat were two separate cockpits, each with its own windshield. The seating looked as though it belonged in an airplane. The engine rumbled. The heavy car rolled down the road as solidly as a locomotive. What a great way to begin an exotic adventure. We traveled all day. As night fell, paved highways gave way to dirt road, with the big headlights boring a tunnel through the brush and trees overhanging our

way.

Finally, we stopped by a river. We were called out to help carry supplies across the footbridge to a clearing. Lamps disclosed a cooking shack and several rough sheds that were to shelter our clothing and supplies. Everything else was out in the open: the big table for meals and our individual metal cots. I drifted off to sleep to the sound of whispers and rustling, the lapping of the river, and the movement of air through the giant redwoods overhead.

What did we do there? We fished and swam in the river. We took long hikes through the forest. We each had a designated horse at a neighboring ranch. I had had riding lessons, so I was able to control the horse away from the poison oak that he liked to eat. We rode all over the countryside. We had one automobile outing to Fort Bragg. There we saw a Judy Canova movie, stared at the loggers in their beards, and watched the big logs sent down a flume to drop over 100 feet into the sheltered bay.

Every night we had a campfire. We would sit in a circle around the flames to sing songs and to tell ghost stories, as the sparks flew upward and shadows moved around and above.

During later down periods, I would remember the Sawyers Camp as an example of how wonderful life could be, and I would be lifted up.

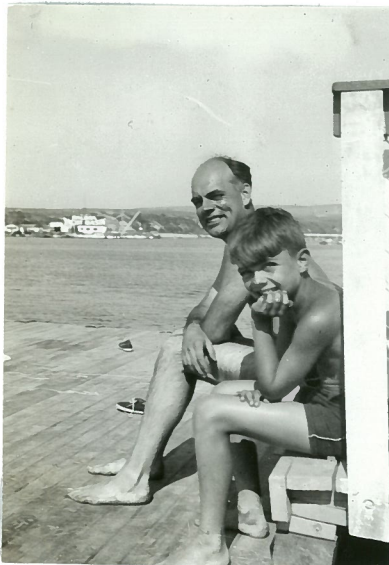
Grammar School



At Six With 1934 Dodge



1937 Bay City W George W.



Summer 1938 on Balboa Island



Oddie With Sally

Grammar School



1940 First Bike



New 1940 Dodge



Oneonta School Entry in 1941 Alhambra Hi Neighbor Parade



Sawyer Camp in 1941



4. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The year before I entered the South Pasadena San Marino Junior High School it was involved in a dramatic event that made headlines all over the United States. The principal, having been told that he was going to be fired because of mental instability, arrived unannounced at a meeting of the school board. He proceeded to shoot dead the secretary barring the door. He then entered the meeting room, shooting every member of the board, killing several. This incident definitely added to the allure of the place.

Covering the grades seven through nine, this school had behind it the wealth of San Marino, then the Southern California place to live for the conservative elite. It could afford the best teachers, as well as the finest equipment. Here was a wood shop, equipped with all of the major power tools, as well as cabinetmaker's devices. Here was a metal shop, equipped with all of the major metal working tools, including a metal lathe and an annealing furnace. Here was a print shop, complete with a working press, a tray of type for each student in each Printing Class, as well as an inexhaustible supply of ink and paper stock. You get the idea.

In my previous experience, all of the members of a classroom stayed together for the entire school day. Here, students had choices for all subject types, so after the first period, we were responsible for threading our way through an individual schedule, with ten minutes between each class, and one hour for lunch. For everyone, the first period was Homeroom; here was the teacher most interested in our total progress; in addition to Homeroom matters, here was taught Social Studies.

The French Records

Mr. Huaret (sp?), was my Seventh Grade Homeroom teacher. He was a Frenchman, driven to the U.S. by the German invasion of his country. He was a well dressed, pleasant person, with always a smile for everyone. In addition to our Homeroom, he taught French. Learning that I owned a wind-up portable (?) phonograph, he asked me to bring it in, so he could play some French singing records for his French class and also for our Homeroom class. My phonograph was heavy and bulky, so I put it on the floor. Kneeling on one knee, I started winding it up. Without my seeing him, Mr. Huaret put several of his treasured records to be played on the floor next to me, right under my other knee. Putting my other knee down, I broke the records. Mr. Huaret was disconsolate. While he did not blame me, I somehow was led to believe that it would be nice

if I were to give him my phonograph. After my apology, I said nothing. I took my phonograph home.

Some days later, I was accosted at an after school event by a girl from his French class. She was carrying some of his other phonograph records under her arm. After upbraiding me for having broken the records in my Homeroom, we both turned away. As we turned, the elbow of her arm carrying the records struck my elbow, and, you guessed it, the records were broken. She cried and yelled a lot. It was an accident, so I just walked away.

Telescope

At our junior high school, every day's schedule included a Club Period. Each student was required to join one club, and to attend every day. There were clubs for wood working, metal working, printing, stamp collecting, radio, painting, photography, ceramics, even telescope construction, and more. Each club was led by a teacher, who either did the subject as a secondary profession, or did the subject as a absorbing hobby. I was enthralled. Which club should I choose?

Interested in astronomy since visiting a planetarium, I had a favorite book, "The Stars Above Us," that filled me with wonder. Wow! here was a club where you could actually build your very own telescope! There was one problem: on the grounds that younger students would not finish their projects, Mr. Davis would accept only ninth graders. After much pleading, he did make an exception for me; I had to promise to see the project through. For a very few dollars, I was given a thick glass disk four inches in diameter to become the objective mirror, a thick four inch marble disk to grind the glass disk against, a supply of grinding powders, and various items to use in completing the telescope.

The big job was grinding the mirror surface to the proper concave shape. I was assigned a large barrel to use as my work surface. The marble disk was fastened to the flat top of the barrel standing on end. The proper grinding powder was mixed with water and poured onto the marble disk. The glass disk was then placed on top. Holding it with the finger tips of each hand, the glass disk was pushed over the marble - back and forth, with each stroke a rotating twist given to the glass - as I slowly moved around the barrel. As the glass took on its concave shape, the grinding powder used was finer and finer, until, finally it would be polished with jeweler's rouge. This grinding was a long process; at one class period a day, it would take many months. Once ground, the glass disk would be given a series of optical tests of its accuracy and of its focal length, which would set the length of the telescope's barrel.

Photography Club

I was several months into the grinding process when a friend told me about the things he was doing in the Photography Club. He was not only learning how to take better pictures, he was using the club's fully equipped darkroom. There he was learning how to develop his negatives, expose prints, develop his prints, even make enlargements. This was Great! This was knowledge I had to have - right now!

I went to Mr. Davis, and asked his permission to suspend work on my telescope for one month, just long enough to learn the neat techniques used in the Photography Club's darkroom. With a very disappointed face, he told me that he had known that I would not finish my telescope. I assured him that I would be back. He assured me that I would not.

After one month in the Photography Club, I had completed my own darkroom in a cubby hole just off of our basement garage. I was now able to develop my films, print them on a printing box I constructed, and develop the prints. Great fun!

Return to the Telescope Club

I then returned to the Telescope Club. Mr. Davis was pleased and surprised to see me back at my barrel, grinding away on my objective mirror. By the end of the seventh grade, I had completed my four inch telescope. In its construction, I used as the barrel a store donated cardboard tube core of a large rug, I used a wooden tripod and barrel yoke constructed in the Wood Shop, I used a water pipe support constructed in the Metal Shop, and I used, as the eyepiece, a philatelist's magnifier. Mr. Davis sent my completed objective mirror out for professional silvering.

Boy, was I proud of that telescope. It was designed to be used in searching the heavens, but it was also great for looking at earthly things from our hillside back yard. It was so powerful that I could read the license plate of an automobile many blocks away. On several occasions, friends would stay over in our back yard in sleeping bags, just so they could get up during the night and look through the marvelous telescope that I had built.

The End of My Telescope

The summer that I graduated from junior high, we moved clear across the country to Florida. Mother explained how very expensive it was to move our possessions. I had a lot of "good stuff": a large collection of radio parts, homebuilt photography darkroom equipment, and, of course, my large,

bulky and somewhat worn telescope. I agreed to leave it all behind, taking with me from the telescope only the objective mirror, on which I had lavished so much careful effort.

Three years later, when I was leaving Florida for college in Massachusetts, I gave the objective mirror to the genius brother of my friend Leston Ney. Beyond that gifting, I have no idea what happened to this last part of my telescope.

WWII Begins

Monday, December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, we were called to a special assembly of the entire school. We all sat quietly listening to the special broadcast of President Roosevelt addressing Congress. I especially remember, "...A day that will live in infamy...."

With all of the ranting on the radio and in the newspapers about the Japanese being a subhuman race of monsters, I felt a good bit of confusion. It felt good to have a legitimate focus for my personal share of hatred; however, I knew two friendly first generation Japanese-Americans in my homeroom. The Student Body President, Hedeki (?) Yamanaka, I admired as a very mature person. Also, he had just set a new school record in one of the sprint distances. My confusion deepened when these three people that I liked were sent off, with their families, to concentration camps.

In that year's Christmas play, I played a German toy maker, hammering at his workbench. Looking up as two children came on stage, he was a man of few words, "Ah ha! Little Gustoff und Linda!" At that stage in the war, the ordinary Germans were yet to be demonized, only the Nazi Germans were bad.

Nothing else in our school was touched by the war. I do remember another special assembly, when the sister of General Patton, whose family had long resided in San Marino, read to us one of his letters home. As, she told us, General Patton was "our general", she promised to come again to read any especially interesting letters. I was thrilled. Unfortunately, before she came again, General Patton slapped a "coward" soldier in a field hospital. His reputation did not revive until after I had left for Florida.

1942: Rifle Training

Our next door neighbor was a rifle enthusiast. He had a target range in his basement. To ensure a precision charge, he even loaded his own shells. He taught an evening class at the Pasadena City College on target shooting. I was invited to take the class. Wow! I was inspired with the phantasy

that I would be up in our hills with a trusty rifle, defending our city against invaders.

Under our neighbor's guidance, I developed a very good sight picture. I became very accurate in every position except standing; I just did not have the strength to hold that heavy rifle steady.

Our neighbor also checked out Father's twenty-two rifle. He told us that unfortunately someone had failed to clean it after firing; the barrel was so pitted on the inside that it had no accuracy. He also said that the steel used was not strong enough to use with any but a short round.

1942: My Fourth Broken Arm

At Twelve, Georgie Love and I were wrestling on a friend's lawn. When Georgie made a running jump to land on me, I was on my back, with my arms outstretched to catch him. Yes, I managed to break my right arm, yet again. I had no lasting effects from any of my broken arms.

Shop Classes

One of my classes in Seventh Grade was Wood Shop. I made a wagon wheel lamp for Mother that we still have. In that class, I mastered techniques that I have used in all of my home projects.

In Eighth Grade Metal Shop, I made Mother a small copper bowl that Sally still has. I learned how to properly use a micrometer; knowledge that I later used in training IBMers. I also mastered other techniques that I put to use later on the shop floor at Blackstone Manufacturing.

I learned how to type in the Ninth Grade Typing Class, which was equipped with the top of the line L.C. Smith machines.

1944: Tearing my Right Arm

My most traumatic injury happened in my fourteenth year. Mother had been bugging me to do something with Sally, who was then eight years old. It was settled that we would go sidewalk roller skating. Very sensibly, Sally was carrying her skates to use on the more level terrain at the bottom of our hill. I, on the other hand, started skating from our front door. I went slowly, so that Sally could keep up without having to run. For most of our block, I had no problem with control. However, as we passed the Paynes' house the sidewalk was becoming too steep. Then, I saw what

I had forgotten: just beyond the next house the sidewalk ended abruptly, with a thorny bush just beyond.

That next house was owned by a middle-aged German couple. They were very friendly with all of the children. Built into the hill down from the street, their house and the Paynes' were just steps from the sidewalk. In order to protect their pretty front yard pond with working water wheel, they had a white picket fence installed just by the sidewalk.

As I passed the Paynes, my speed was becoming uncontrollable. I starting rattling my left hand on the next door picket fence. Not enough. Before reaching the sidewalk end, with my left hand I grabbed a fence slat. Instantly, my body spun, my right arm, outspread for balance, went over the top of the fence, my skates went out from under me going backwards, the inside of my right elbow contacted the point of a slat, which pulled loose the skin of my inside forearm, then slit the middle of this large flap. As I went down, with my right hand I grabbed the top of the offending slat, hung for a second, then let myself drop to the sidewalk. (My bloody fingerprints remained over the top of the slat. The German couple told my father that they had been unable to scrub them off - they had had to repaint the fence.)

My laid-open forearm looked just like the rabbits that my father had skinned. As all of the involved nerves had been severed, there was less pain than you would expect; However, there was A LOT of blood.

Sally took off running up the street screaming "Mommy!" With my history of accidents, I had paid attention during a just completed school course on first aid. I got my left thumb on the nearest pressure point, just inside the armpit, and stopped the bleeding. I lay still on my back.

The Paynes' kitchen was at the front of their house. As I had passed, I had heard through the open window Mr. and Mrs. Payne doing the dishes. So, I now started shouting, "Help! Mr. Payne! Help!" Hearing their window shut, I looked over my shoulder to see the venetian blinds close. Mr. Payne was a mousey little man, and though I really needed his help, I wasn't surprised at his reaction. Some months later, he approached me to say that he thought I had merely been playing a loud game. I said nothing, and, as we soon moved to Florida, I never saw him again. I know now, that, unless a person decides in advance how he will handle emergencies, his shock may lead him to betray his best nature. I harbor no animosity toward Mr. Payne.

Mother arrived, as did some other neighbors. An ambulance was called. I was sped to Pasadena Memorial Hospital. There my right arm was soaked in a saline solution, then I went

into surgery. The surgeons were not dealing here with a clean incision, but rather with ragged tears. They did the best that they could. For awhile, every day they would pull out dead bits of flesh. With my lack of nerve sensation, I didn't help matters by throwing paper balls around the children's ward, thus tearing out some of the stitches. Five months later, when we moved to Miami Beach, Florida, the spot where the picket had entered was still boiling up raw tissue, so doctors did what they no longer do: they burned the tissue back with massive doses of x-ray.

My first aid treatment of my stupid injury became known around South Pasadena. The local paper published the account of the ambulance driver. The school first aid instructors used me as an example. Many years later, when my sister Sally interviewed for a position at the junior high, the principal asked her if she was related to the Louis Strehlke who had used his first aid instruction to save his arm.

All through high school and college, I was embarrassed about the giant "M" on my forearm. My most informal dress included a long sleeved white dress shirt, open at the collar. Once out of college, I no longer was especially conscious of the scar; I could easily field conversational questions.

Overall Assessment of Junior High

I remember fondly the South Pasadena San Marino Junior High School. I did well academically, and I looked forward to each school day. Also, I have documentary proof that I was no problem for the principal. His office staff did not even know who I was: my diploma is inscribed "Louise Strehlke".

Junior High School



June, 1942: With Just Completed Telescope

5. HIGH SCHOOL

The Move to Florida

In late 1943, Father was the Pan American Airways Branch Manager for Los Angeles. Pete Peterson, who had been the manager before leaving for military service, now returned from serving his country and reclaimed his old position. Father was made Assistant to the Manager of the Latin American Division. He immediately moved to Miami. Until the end of the school year, in June of 1944, Mother, Sally, and I stayed behind in South Pasadena. For the Summer, we moved to an apartment in Miami Beach that was right on the ocean. Once I got used to the water being much warmer than the Pacific and with no waves, I had an idyllic vacation.

We became good friends with another family in the apartment house. With the mother, I would hike up the strand to a place called Baker's Haulover. At one time this had been a piece of land separating the ocean from the bay; some fellow named Baker would haul boats across. By the time that we had arrived, a channel had been cut there and the tides raced through that channel. We went there to catch fish for dinner. One time that sticks in my mind, three spear fisherman surfaced from their frolic and presented the mother with a lobster. She thanked them, then she proceeded to cut it up for bait. I wonder yet just what she expected to catch that would be more delicious than that lobster.

I was continuing my study of magic. In one of the suppliers catalogs I saw advertised a book on practical hypnotism. Now that would be a handy talent, I thought. I sent away for it; I studied it; I tried it on our friendly family's hired girl. I thought it was working, until she laughed. I abandoned hypnotism as requiring a more dominating personality.

In the back of the apartment house was an outdoor shower to rinse the sea water off after swimming. One afternoon, as I was running out to swim, Mother told me when to come in for supper. When I forgot, she ran out yelling at me; she slipped on the wet pavement beneath the shower and hit her head. An ambulance was called and she was strapped down on a gurney for the trip to the hospital. As she lay there she continued to scream at me that it was all my fault. I was worried about her injury, but I knew that I had not caused it. Years before, guilt would have smashed me, but now just her screaming that I was the cause, no longer made it so.

South Miami

By the end of Summer, we moved to a rented house in South Miami. Florida was very strange to me. Here were giant banyan trees that sent down roots from their branches. Here were six inch land crabs that skittered around after dark in packs, sounding as I imagined skeletons would sound. Here some houses were landscaped with tropical plants that would overgrow to smother the house in wild green lushness.

And, here the air was moist. As there was no air conditioning, except in the downtown department stores and movie theaters, hot days were very tough on this desert native. During the cooler part of the year, however, this moistness was pleasant, especially in the balmy evenings.

And, here were mosquitoes. I had encountered mosquitoes before, but always as solitary hunters, and only rarely. Here, in season, they were the dominant form of life. They traveled as clouds. They could make waiting for a bus, which was how I got around, a trial by torture.

The back yard was scattered with rocks. Father assigned me to pick up and stack the rocks, so that we might plant a garden. Well, there was no end to the rocks. Finally a native set me straight: beneath the surface, South Florida is solid soft coral stone. There would be no end to my efforts. I gave up. Finally, just for fun, in the back yard I did plant some watermelon seeds.

The Hurricane

At some point, while we lived there, came the hurricane. And, what a hurricane it was! The house was one story concrete block, with a slab terrazzo floor (marble chips in concrete), and flat tiles on the slightly pitched roof. The steel crank out windows could be closed tight and locked. Our car was parked in the back of the house, away from the expected wind direction. Mother, Father, Sally, and I were snug in our fortress.

The wind howl built up stronger and stronger. At its height, the rain sailed horizontally through our side screened porch, barely wetting the floor. Then water began spurting through the slight crank openings in the windows; we quickly rolled up the rugs, putting them on furniture, and began a continuous mopping of the floor. We began to hear the flat roof tiles breaking loose, then tumbling across to fall with thumps on the top of our car. My one immature watermelon rolled around the backyard, this way and that, tethered by the vine. The radio had warned us to beware the calm eye as it passed over; when it passed, the hurricane would resume in

the opposite direction. And, so it did!

The next day, we took stock. We had suffered little damage: just a number of lost roof tiles, some dents in the roof of the car, and my lost watermelon.

We took an automobile tour of the area. We saw utter ruin. There were many frame houses with their roofs flown away and all four walls laid out flat like petals of a flower around a clean swept floor. Many streets were completely blocked with debris from buildings and trees.

We drove some miles to what had been the world's largest airplane hanger. Ripley's "Believe It Or Not," a then popular newspaper feature, once featured this hanger, saying that, when the moist air conditions were just right, a cloud would form and it would rain inside. In preparation for this hurricane, this hanger had been used as a refuge for the area's private aircraft. Some of these planes must have leaked gasoline. Somehow a fire started. During the height of the hurricane, firemen tried to battle the blaze -without success. All that was left of the hanger were the concrete floor and the two giant concrete ends, standing as monuments.

Beginning at Ponce de Leon

In the Fall of 1944, I began high school. Ponce de Leon High School served the communities of Coral Gables and South Miami, Florida. It was not wealthy in facilities - my junior high school had a better physical plant and better equipment. What it did have was a fine faculty, and intelligent and motivated students.

My first event at high school was an assembly held in the gymnasium. There was a stage built into the side. By setting folding chairs in place, the gymnasium also served as the school auditorium.

This assembly was just for the new students. Nearly all of the attendees were coming into the ninth grade. I was coming into the tenth grade. I was very impressed by the principal and by what he had to say. Mr. Rath looked like a successful business executive, and he spoke to us of important matters as though we were fellow associates.

He mentioned that eighty percent of Ponce graduates had gone on to college, so, though there was a fine education here for those who did not go on, the major emphasis of the faculty would be on college preparation. This preparation would be not only in course material, but also in extra-curricular activities designed to help us develop well-rounded skills in athletics, communication, and adult

behavior. We should start off running, making every activity of every day count, using him, the fine faculty, and the excellent fellow students to progress towards our goals. The door to his office was generally open. When it was open, he would be delighted to counsel with any student, on any topic.

Here at last was a school principal oriented toward the success of each student, rather than merely the administration of staff and facilities. I later learned that, when Mr. Rath had first been appointed, he had been the youngest high school principal in the United States. He proved to be the driving force of this institution, roaming the halls, and dropping in on every activity. His advice and encouragement were very important in my success at Ponce.

My only other memory of this assembly was a fellow named Don Brown, who entertained us with a show of sleight of hand. He was very good. He charmed the audience. After the assembly, I went up to Don and introduced myself. He was a year ahead of me. We shared no classes or school activities; he did welcome me as a friendly sharer of our mutual interest in magic. Although our continuous contact ended with Ponce, in recent years we have accrued an eight inch file of correspondence.

How I became George

As I had just moved from California, I knew no one; however, I soon found my classmates to be the warmest contemporaries I had yet encountered. It is true that Southerners are the friendliest Americans. I was very fortunate in the steady increase in my involvement with the best and the brightest.

At the first homeroom meeting, when the teacher called the roll, she called me by my legal first name, "George." This was the first time that anyone had called me that. As I did not tell her that everyone called me "Louis," I was now George, to her, to my classmates, and to everyone else at the high school. So, here I was in a new exotic place, with all new people, and I was this new person, George. It felt liberating to leave behind the old person, Louis.

When my father heard my new friends call me "George." He was disturbed. He pointed out that I had always been called "Louis" and that, as "George," I might be confused with him. I replied that "George" was my real first name, and that he was the one who had named me. I didn't mind the family calling me "Louis;" to everyone else I was now to be George.

Academics and Extra-Curricular Activities

During the Tenth grade, I felt that I was running behind. As this was my first experience with high school, I really felt like a Freshman. Always measuring my actions against gaining admission to a good college, I not only worked hard on my studies, I also started joining school clubs. We were told that admission officers wanted to see a lot of social activity and leadership; they did not want the "greasy grinds". As a Sophomore, I joined the Morse Code Club and the Panamerican Club. My Junior year I joined the Chess Club, made the National Honor Society, made the National Forensic League, and was elected Homeroom President. My Senior year I joined Grin and Grimace (drama), Top Hatters (drama), and was invited into the Wheel Club (Junior Rotary).

Throughout my schooling, I did well in mathematics. I enjoyed the challenges of solving the puzzles, and the precise logic appealed to me. However, I never thought of myself doing anything with mathematics in adult life, so I took the college prep required Algebra's I and II, and Plane Geometry, receiving "A's".

As all good colleges required a second language, I chose to study Spanish, as potentially the most useful in my adult life. I took it all three years. It was a struggle. Later at Harvard, I failed a mastery examination, so I had to take two more years of it there. Some thirty years later, at a top restaurant in Mexico City, I asked the waiter, in Spanish, to bring another bottle of the excellent wine. He proudly brought me the bottle's label.

English, particularly English Literature, was well taught and captured my interest. Miss Mary Cecile Ions taught Senior English with a lot of enthusiasm. I did well. She even went so far as to use some of my work as examples for the others. I was so surprised to receive a "B" in my last term that I asked her why? "Well, George, you are going to Harvard, and I do not think that you will do well there." Not only a good teacher, she was an excellent seer.

1945: Working for Spending Money

As Father would not tolerate my laying about the house, every Summer I would work. During the school year, I was expected to work on Saturdays.

My first job during the school year was at the South Miami General Store. I was soon fired for talking back to the cashier.

I then began showing up early on Saturday morning to be

picked as a grocery bagger at a supermarket in Coral Gables. The attraction there was that grocery carts were yet to come into use; women would tip me to carry their groceries out to their cars. I would average \$10.00 for a ten hour day.

Expanding on my magic performing, I began performing in the free shows from the stage in the back of the downtown Miami shop of Jahn The Magic Man. The night Franklin Roosevelt died, masses of people were roaming the streets of downtown Miami. I guess that Jahn hoped to lure some of them into his shop to buy, or perhaps he just hoped to cheer them up. Anyway, he started a show. I remember being on that little stage doing my magic and telling my jokes to a solidly packed sea of faces wiped of all expression: I was not again to see people that looked that drained until I saw the movie, "Night of the Living Dead." Roosevelt's death had been shattering.

That Summer, I went to work for Jahn The Magic Man. My primary motivation was to learn all of the tricks. I was paid \$15.00 for a six day week, working an eleven and a half hour day. After a while, I was fired for talking back.

The Centers of My Success at Ponce

Two of my activities made Ponce such a wonderful time: my performances of magic at the annual student variety shows, and my stellar success on the Debating Team. From these stemmed my notoriety and what social popularity I enjoyed.

Every year, Ponce had an evening variety show, showcasing student talent. My performances not only made me well known, but at graduation time led to my classmates selecting me as the boy "Most Talented".

Mrs. Herberta Leonardi was our leader in the Debating class. The first woman lawyer licensed to practice before the Florida Supreme Court, she was extraordinary! More a drama coach than a teacher, she raised all of "My Chickens" to their top potential. She made me a very confident platform speaker. Starting in Tenth grade on the "B" team, as a Junior, I made the "A" team and enough win points to become a member of the National Forensic League.

Building Our New Home in South Miami

At the beginning of 1946, Father was given notice of a choice of buying the house we were renting, or leaving. Looking forward to success in the ranks of executives, he immediately bought two and one half acres, and designed a guest house for us to live in while planning eventually on building a grand place. His plan was of a single story rectangular board and

batten cottage, with a composition roof and metal insert fireplace. The floor plan was marked out by building a square core, which included the kitchen and bathroom, that North and South marked off the front and back hallways, and East and West marked off the living room and the two small bedrooms. Off the South side of the living room was the screened in back porch. The floor was concrete slab. Water was supplied by a centrifugal pump drawing from a twelve foot well. Sewage went to the cesspool with drain lines on the South side. The idea was that the underground water flow was from the North, so our water was safe from our sewage. However, I always wondered what was coming at us from far to the North. I also wondered at how the Hjorts were fairing to our South. Father hired Ponce's manual arts teacher to do the construction. He had it done in a very short time. We moved in by summer.

1946: Summer Work

The Summer of 1946 I worked as an apprentice house painter at \$.50 an hour. Then later on my own I painted the outside of a stucco house for \$.75 an hour.

1946: Family Separation

My achievements at school and my work independence raised my confidence. At the beginning of my senior year, I badly needed this confidence. Father had left his job with Pan American Airways to accept a position with the just being formed TACA Airline. TACA did not come to fruition, so Father was out of a job. He was able to return to PAA, but only as a salesman in the Chicago branch. Father had to sell our new house and move to the Chicago area. I saw my world crashing down. I believed that my transferring for my Senior year to a Chicago area high school would destroy my academic and extra-curricular record, and thus might well ruin my chances for acceptance at a good college. I voiced these concerns to Father. To my surprise, he agreed to back me with \$75.00 a month if I could find a someone to house and feed me for that amount. I learned of the Frosts having a room for rent, so Mother and I went over and made the arrangements. Robert Frost, the poet, had two small houses. When he came down from Boston, he stayed in one of the houses. The other was permanently occupied by his daughter-in-law and her son Prescott. As he was in Boston, I slept in Robert's bed. I had a lot of freedom. I took advantage of this freedom to buy a motor scooter, and to enjoy the company of friends and the closest thing I ever had to a steady girl friend, other than Gloria, Helen Johanson. I let the good times roll.

Senior Debating Triumphs

At the beginning of my Senior year, Mrs. Leonardi teamed me with our top speech student, Darryl McCall. The day that my family left for Chicago, Darryl and I sprawled on the living room floor of our vacant home to plan the basic strategy that we would use in our debates. We worked together frequently and diligently throughout the school year, generally at his house with stirring music playing in the background. The Warsaw Concerto was our favorite.

That year, we won every single debate, including not just the inter-school rivalries, but also the Miami B'nai B'rith Championship, the Dade County Championship, and the Florida State Championship. I am convinced that our strategy was the key to winning:

1. We chose one side of that year's topic (the negative) and thoroughly researched every aspect.
2. From a laundry list of points for our side, we picked the two very strongest.
3. As a Southern elocutionist of the old school, and our best man, Darryl would handle these points and NOTHING ELSE.
4. From the laundry list of points, we selected the next ten for me to handle. I WOULD NOT MENTION HIS POINTS.

In the course of a debate, each side was given time to make its points, time to rebut the points made by the other side, and time to sum up the superiority of that side's arguments.

At every single debate, the other side would note down Darryl's two points along with my ten points, and would give equal weight to each point in rebuttal, thus thinning out their arguments to weak gruel. In rebuttal, I would concentrate in knocking off their central arguments, ignoring the rest. In his final summation, Darryl WOULD ONLY HAMMER HOME HIS TWO POINTS, ignoring everything else said in the entire debate.

The Miami B'nai B'rith championship carried with it an all expense trip to Washington D.C. There, contacts of Mrs Leonardi, the senior McCall, and B'nai B'rith, arranged some memorable meetings. We had lunch with Congressman (later Senator) Smathers, who was to become a close ally of John Kennedy. We had coffee with Senator Pepper, who later successfully sponsored much legislation protecting the elderly. We shook hands in his office with Attorney General Tom Clark. We sat in the balcony to watch congress debate

the "Greece and Turkey Aid Bill", which was the first post WWII response to Soviet aggression. (Many people thought that it might plunge us into war, what it did was lay down the gauntlet for the beginning of "The Cold War".) And, of course, we toured all of the monuments, had fine meals, and stayed in a first class hotel.

Senior Year Working for Spending Money

During my senior year, money was short. My father's \$75.00 a month went directly to those who housed and fed me. For other funds, I did some house painting, and I put on magic shows, primarily for children's birthday parties. Magic became a job and lost its charm for me. I had been a member of a USO troop that performed at veteran's hospitals, but I dropped out. Of course I was not paid for this, and I had wished to conserve what energy I had for paying endeavors. I was embarrassed when the leader offered to fire their paid pianist in order to pay me; I refused to accept this.

Hervey Allen

I was varnishing the floor for the tenant of a guest house on the estate of Hervey Allen. As I worked, I carried on a spirited political debate with the tenant: she was a liberal and I fancied myself a conservative. I guess that she was impressed enough with me to take me over to the mansion and introduce me to Mr. Allen. I soon learned, from Mr. Allen himself, that he was the author of historical novels. His first, "Anthony Adverse," was made into a movie that had received the Academy Award for 1934. Obviously, there was a lot more money in writing best selling novels than Robert Frost was receiving for his critically acclaimed poetry. Mr. Allen presented me with paper back copies of his most recent novels that had been published during the war in Switzerland.

After several of my social visits, he broached what he had in mind. He apparently spent little time with his son, who was very withdrawn and neurasthenic. Having heard of my having constructed a telescope, Mr. Allen proposed that he hire me to tutor his son in astronomy. This employment did not attract me. I did not have the emotional strength or time to take on fathering his son. Retreating behind the truth that I actually had very little knowledge of astronomy, I held out the hope that I could find someone who would better fill the position. One of my closest friends was the half-Hawaiian Leston Ney (who became the valedictorian of our class). His brother had a stratospheric IQ; he also had an interest in astronomy. I brought this brother out to meet Mr. Allen. It was the last time I saw Mr. Allen. I hope it all worked out.

Leaving the Frosts: Joining the Browns

Just at the turn of 1947, disaster struck: Robert Frost decided to come out for a few months, and Prescott was getting married. I was to be thrown out. My good friend Don Brown, home for the holidays from MIT, prevailed on his mother to take me in. She certainly had no need for the money, but she took on the imposition for this friend of her son. In my immaturity, I am afraid that I was not the ideal guest and she came to regret her generosity. However, I was able to stay until my June graduation, which allowed me my triumphs at Ponce. I remain indebted to Don, whose influence saved me from losing all that I had built up.

Senior Year Success

With these pressures, my senior year was not relaxing, but it was very successful. Although my high school grade average was only "B+", I did quite well on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. This, together with a good interview with a Harvard official, and my extra-curricular achievements, gained me a full-tuition scholarship to Harvard. Top of the world!

Good Memories

Of all of the schools I attended, Ponce is the one that fills me with nostalgia. Of course every place exists in time as well as geography. So I refer to the Ponce of the middle 1940's. The campus grounds were open and ample. There were arcades, clumps of trees with benches for conversation, paths with well groomed girls strolling in dresses or pretty skirts and blouses. Most of the upper class boys wore dress slacks. Any boys carrying pocket knives used the knife for sharpening pencils. No guns. No drugs. I knew of no alcohol problems.

There was no obvious display of sexual activity. The operative word was "Romance". Beach parties in the balmy evening were romantic. Motor scootering to a dance with Helen Johanson on the seat ahead of me was romantic. Going to the Senior Prom with Helen and presenting her with an orchid corsage was romantic. Both of us driving around the rest of the Prom night with Leston Ney and his date was romantic. A big musical hit at the time was "Moon Over Miami". Did I think of sex? All the time. Did I do anything about it? No. During the whole time that I was at Ponce, I only heard of one pregnancy, and that couple married just before the baby came.

It was all so pleasant and straight up, that I often think of my experiences there as part of a movie starring the young Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland. Another world. In 1994, I

struggled with my decision to attend a big reunion of everyone who had graduated from Ponce before it was converted in 1950 to a junior high school. Out of this struggle I composed the poem "Why Come to the Reunion?" I read it before the attendees. It must have struck a chord, as the applause when I finished carried me across the stage, down the steps, and back to my seat. Another attendee composed a piece titled "Inside We're Just the Same." I certainly found the same warmth that I had left behind at graduation.

Why I Chose California Over Florida

You might be wondering, with all of my love for the people and Ponce, why, after my Air Force service, I returned to live in California, rather than Florida. The climate. At the 1994 Reunion, I found that over seventy five percent of my classmates still lived in the area. Evidently, if you were raised there in that hot house atmosphere, you wished to live no where else. Evidently, if you were raised in a dry atmosphere, you wished to not live in Florida.



B'nai B'rith Officials, Leonardi, Me, Smathers, McCall, Pepper

Most Talented

Nettie Hjort and George Strehlke



(I am not pouring milk in Nettie's pocket; I will magically vanish the milk in the cone of paper.)

6. HARVARD

For me, Harvard was a tremendous disappointment. For Harvard, I would have been a tremendous disappointment, if anyone had cared.

Harvard Indifference

My first experience with Harvard's indifference was the letter of acceptance. There was none. Although the Miami Harvard Club phoned me that I had won their Full Tuition Scholarship, by July I still had not heard anything from Harvard: no letter, no course catalog, no housing guidance, nothing. I wondered if my application had been lost. I finally phoned Mr. David McCord, the Harvard official who had interviewed me in Miami. He told me that of course I was accepted, "You are the very sort of person that we want at Harvard." He arranged to send me all of the materials that I needed, except a letter of acceptance.

1947: Summer Canoe Portage Trip With Father

One evening, shortly after my arrival in Oak Park, father sounded me out about joining him in a camping trip in Northern Minnesota. When a boy of twelve, he had read in "Boys Life" an account of a camping trip out of Ely, Minnesota. It involved canoeing across lakes, carrying the canoe and supplies from lake to lake, fishing, tenting - all of this in a wilderness with no permanent habitation, but lots of wild animals. The article had so impressed him that the approximate route was engraved in his mind. It was something that he had always wanted to do. Now in his fifties, this Summer might be his last chance.

Well fine. I agreed to go; I did look forward to it.

Well, Father made all of the arrangements. There was an outfitter in Ely, Minnesota, who completed our gear. We rented a big aluminum canoe made by Grumman. It was beautifully constructed. Watertight and very strong.

The trip was fine. We had no arguments. We coped well with the occasional rainstorm. On the entire trip, we saw only four people. The lakes were pristine and the forests were thick and green. Sitting in the bow with the waterproof map and compass, I was able to demonstrate prowess with my navigation. I was able to hold my own with the rowing. The portaging of all the stuff he brought was onerous, but the exercise was good for me. What was missing was joy in each other's company. We just were not buddies. Father and I never reminisced about this outing.

1947: Summer Work

That Summer in the Chicago area, I needed to make money for college. I had \$150.00 from the sale of my motor scooter. I wanted \$350.00 more for the college year. I looked in the telephone Yellow Pages for firms to phone for interviews.

Furniture Moving

My first job was with a furniture mover. I worked one fourteen hour day that included helping with three local moves. One move included being the bottom man on a baby grand piano down a spiral staircase. Another move included having a strap passing under a small refrigerator wrapped around each wrist, then my lurching down a staircase with the gait of the Frankenstein Monster. The next morning, my muscles hurt so much that I could not get out of bed; also, I genuinely feared permanent injury. When I did get up, I resigned by phone. I don't recall my pay.

Tree Surgery

My second job that Summer was with a tree surgeon. Hired as a "Ground Man", my job was to clear away the debris sent down by the people working above, and to go for things that they needed. My pay was \$1.00 per hour. Toward the end of the second week, I was given some instruction and sent aloft to trim, from the top down, the dead wood out of a tree. There was a lot of green growth that obscured my view: this was good in that I had a fear of heights and couldn't see down - this was bad in that I lost track of my supporting rope. Leaning back, with my feet planted against the trunk, I was sawing away when I felt a sudden give. Leaning forward to look around the trunk, I discovered that I had nearly severed the rope. Cutting it the rest of the way, I knotted the rope together, let myself down, and quit.

Selling Furnace Cleaning

My third job that Summer was with the Holland Furnace Company, soliciting door to door for furnace cleaning. For every \$10.00 furnace cleaning job sold, I was paid \$5.00. I was to sell this service only to those who had the ancient hot air furnaces that were built up by stacking large cast iron rings, with asbestos sealing paste between each ring. The sales message was that the cleaning truck was going to be doing other homes in the neighborhood, so we could give a special rate to vacuum out all of the ducts, as well as disassemble the furnace to clean it and to give it a safety

inspection.

Sales were slow. Some people reacted negatively to the company name. Then, on the fifth day, an elderly lady told me, "You seem like a nice boy; do you know that you are working for crooks?" Her story was that, during WWII, she had had the company clean her furnace. With the furnace rings spread around her basement, a company "inspector" told her that her furnace was so old that it would soon start cracking and would flood her home with deadly carbon monoxide gas. The company would not expose itself to liability, so her furnace would not be reassembled. She would be given a "special deal" on a new Holland furnace. She refused, so they left her furnace all apart. It was well into winter before she found someone to put her furnace back together.

When I returned to the office, I confronted the manager with the lady's story. As he fumbled for words, one of the old hands lounging against the partition said, "Why don't you tell him the truth? He's going to need to know eventually." I quit on the spot. Years later, the top executives of this company were sent to federal prison. This was the first successful prosecution of fraud in interstate commerce.

Factory Worker

My fourth job that Summer of 1947 was at the Blackstone Manufacturing Company of Cicero, Illinois. My pay was \$1.00 per hour for a forty hour week. Starting by stacking received steel in racks, I eventually worked at all of the positions in their shop making custom designed steel link conveyor belts for industry. I worked at the steel saws, the punch presses, the steel bending brakes, the steel shear, the spot welder, assembly, and crating for shipment.

Freshman Blues

As a Freshman, I shared Holworthy Hall, Room 10, with three classmates. There was a back hall to the room next door. On this hallway was the bathroom for the eight of us. Of the eight of us, five were from New England prep schools, they melted right into the Harvard scene, and their prep schools had specifically prepared them for the Harvard curriculum. Of the three of us from public high schools, one flunked out by the end of the first year, another became a clown in order to hang on to the fringes of society, and I built up a hard loner shell. Father had told me that he had had a hard time with the cold snobbery at Harvard, and had warned me not to go there. Fresh from my successes at high school, I figured that I could handle it. Well I couldn't. Thoughts of suicide became so frequent that I listed reasons to stay

alive on a card that I carried with me in my wallet, just in case I hit a particularly dark mood.

Working During the Freshman Year

The 1947 Summer ended without my reaching the monetary goal, so I looked for evening and weekend work.

Theater Usher

I was hired as an usher at the Paramount Theater in downtown Boston. The ushers were outfitted in elaborate uniforms, and operated with military marching drill. Shift relief looked like the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. The ushers were stationed two to each door into the auditorium; one inside and one outside. The inside usher was to maintain his night vision by not looking at the movie in progress. The outside usher would open the door for patrons, then, with a flashlight, the inside usher would take them to available seats. As movies ran continually, with no requirement for patrons to leave, occasionally the outside usher would pass along to the inside usher a request for a count of empty seats. The inside usher would then rapidly walk down the aisle counting in half way on one side; walk back up the aisle counting in half way on the other side; then report the count. I lasted one night. The whole parade was just too ridiculous for me. The pants of the uniform I used that one night came down only to my shins, and I could hardly breath in the tight coat. At least I saved them the cost of getting me a uniform that fit.

Shirt Salesman

My next job was at Filene's, the major department store in Boston. I was made a salesman in the men's shirt department. With my boredom, I quit within the week.

As my college studies were not going at all well, I then abandoned all idea of working during the college year.

Poker

As a new Freshman, in order to have some social interchange, every night I played nickel-dime poker. I was not very good. I lost about \$5.00 a night. At that rate my money would not last long. My Summer earnings were earmarked for the year's clothes, train fare to home and back, text books, laundry and cleaning, entertainment, meals out, and all of my other miscellaneous expenses. It became obvious to me that I was

becoming a pathological gambler, and, that if I was to continue, I had to become a winning pathological gambler. So, I embarked on the only productive educational project of my college years. The Lamont library was the repository of rare books, and I learned that they had a large collection of books on the strategy of poker. Every day for a month I went there. I would select a volume in their card catalog; someone at the desk would retrieve it; then I would study the book there, taking notes. Soon, I became a consistent winner. Poker was a supplementary source of funds right up to graduation.

Scholarship Lost

At the end of my Freshman Year, I was asked to meet with the assistant dean of students. It was a short meeting. He told me that my grades were so poor that I would be put on academic probation. Also, my scholarship was cancelled, so "I assume that you will be leaving us." I told him that my father had agreed to pay my tuition, and that I would be staying. He silently made a note of this, and I left. This was my only interface ever with any official of the college.

Sticking It Out With Father's Funding

At the end of my Freshman year, Father agreed to fund me for one more year. His feeling was that, with two years at Harvard, I would have little trouble transferring to a state university. By the end of my Sophomore year, I had learned to play the school's game well enough to get off probation. Father said nothing about quitting, so I decided to stick it out one more year. At the end of my Junior year, I decided to go for graduation. Having invested so much time already, I might as well get my Harvard Diploma. It had value in the business world.

1948 Summer Work at Blackstone Manufacturing

Next Summer, I returned to the Blackstone Manufacturing Company. I worked there the entire vacation. After one month, I received a raise to \$1.25 an hour. As there was no air conditioning, the heat, together with the hard labor, would result in my sweat rolling down into my one pair of work shoes. I developed a world class case of Athletes Feet, which made it painful to walk or stand. The doctor directed that I buy a supply of white cotton socks, which Mother was to boil after each use. He prescribed five different salves to rotate through for night time application. He also prescribed multiple foot powders to rotate through for morning application. He said that the different medications would

confuse the fungus. His methods did work, and my work day was once again physically bearable. However, before vacation's end I had determined that this was one more line of work that I did not want to ever do again.

1949 Summer Independent Door-to-Door Selling

I had seen people painting house numbers on curbs. First they would go door to door soliciting orders. The next day they would return to paint a white background on the curb. The following day they would return to stencil in black the house number, and, if the owner was home, collect payment. I had seen advertisements for a new super-white paint that would stand the weather for several years while maintaining its brightness by slowly powdering off the surface. It occurred to me that I could solicit for the order; use a brass fasten together stencil kit and this new paint to put the number on the curb; then collect payment: all in one stop. At \$.50 a house, I did fairly well, though not everyone was sold, and each transaction consumed time.

It then occurred to me, that, if I could raise the price, though I might sell fewer homes, I would pocket more money. I came up with the idea of putting metal house numbers on a sign which could be planted in the lawn, with a barbed anchor to prevent passers by from pulling it out. I bought a lot of aluminum numbers with caste in nails. I hired a fellow with a garage shop to make the signs. Then I solicited door to door; made up each sign on the spot; and collected my money. This was a quite successful Summer vocation.

Banned by SAE

During my Junior year, I was taken by an acquaintance as a guest to play poker at the SAE Fraternity. This was a real dumpy place, with worn out furniture and a bad smell. A generation before, Harvard had banned live-in fraternities. This holdover was a social club for those who wanted to be in the snobbish clubs, but who had not been accepted. It was known as "Sigma Alpha Everyone". There were more players than there were seats at the poker table, so I waited. Just as a seat opened up, and I was sitting down, another member arrived and wanted the seat. I ignored him. I later learned that I had been the subject of a specially called meeting. At this meeting I was banished for life. Imagine, a formal banishment by an organization of losers. What an honor.

1950 Summer Selling Fuller Brushes

Although the house sign business was OK, I thought that selling Fuller Brushes might be even better. Once in the swing of it, it was much better. Using the family car, I would drive out to my assigned territory to arrive at 10:00am (after the housewife had finished most of her morning chores, and ready for a break). I would work one side of the street to a reasonable turn-around point, then work back on the other side to arrive back at the car just before 12:00 noon. I would knock off to arrive back at 2:00pm and work until 4:00pm (before most housewives began to prepare for dinner and the evening activities). My approach was this:

I would ring the door bell. When she answered, I would show her a card illustrated with three articles, while holding my sample case with the other hand. "Good morning! Fuller Brush. Which would you prefer for your free sample: the Vegetable Brush, the Pastry Brush, or the Comb?" "May I step in to deliver it?" (Moving toward the door) Once inside I would open up the sample case on the Living Room floor. While digging to the bottom for her free sample, I would be spreading out the trays of product (watching her eyes for signs of interest).

Without delay, handing her the sample, I would try her interest in the products. If I could rapidly develop interest, I would proceed to the sale, promising delivery the following Saturday when payment would be made.

If three rapid tries had not aroused her interest, I would thank her for her time, and tell her that I hoped to see her on my next run through this area.

I enjoyed this work. I was on my own, using my own energy and fine products to determine my 40% commission.

"The Biggest Game in Cambridge"

In order to stop chasing around at night looking for a game, as a Senior I bought a professional eight sided felt top poker table, installing it beneath the drop ceiling fixture in the Living Room. I paid my roommate \$1.00 a night for his inconvenience. This was a big success. Then one night a policeman came by to collect for The Policemans Ball. He reported to the House Proctor that I was running "The biggest game in Cambridge." The House Proctor and his wife invited my roommate and me up to their room. He poured each of us a glass of wine, then, after some stuffy chit chat, he gave to each of us a sealed letter and we said good night. The letter was very Harvard. The sense of it was that he advised me to sell the table and close up shop, or I would be

expelled, and my roommate would be thrown out of Kirkland House. I sold the table to a social club, and went back to hunting for games. For a while, I even played at MIT.

Ensuring Graduation

The standard academic load was four courses a semester. The second half of my Senior year, in order to ensure graduation, I took five courses - one more than I needed to graduate. For the first time, I selected each course for its easiness. Once I had taken four of the five Finals, and was sure that I had done well, I did not even get out of bed to take the fifth. That semester I received the highest grades of my four years: two "A's" and two "B's".

1951 Last Term, Selling Fuller Brushes

Having been somewhat extravagant, including an extra trip home for Spring Break, I could see that I was going to run short of funds before graduation. So, I signed up with Fuller Brush for a territory in Watertown, Massachusetts. I had no car, so every day I carried my sample case on the streetcar. On Saturday's, I hired an acquaintance to drive me to make my deliveries. This was during a great flu epidemic, so many women were reluctant to risk infection. However, in those days, as few housewives worked, there were enough of them home who would let me in that I was able in one month to make all that I needed for the rest of the school year.

Stetson College Superiority

While the Harvard Diploma did have some value to me in job situations, I have often thought that my four years would have been far better invested in Stetson College, a small institution in Florida that had offered me a scholarship. I would have been a bigger fish in that pond; I would doubtless have had closer relationships with the faculty; I am convinced that I would have learned far more; and I was already friends with high school classmates who went there .

Poor Instruction Methods

Harvard's instruction methods in the liberal arts courses were, in the main, poor by any standards. The lofty professor would lecture once a week to groups as large as two hundred and fifty. The students would be assigned to course sections, with about twenty students each. These sections would meet twice a week. The sections were run by graduate

students, who couldn't care less about the undergraduates. Section leaders' duties included giving out reading and essay assignments, conducting tests, and grading tests and essays.

I am sure that there were stellar students, who were chosen for seminars and research projects, who got closer to the professors and fashioned a good education. However, the "Gentleman C" student, like me, was just serving time. The quality of education that I was receiving was definitely below the level that I had experienced at Ponce de Leon High.

Of course I am only one opinion. I could be wrong in my judgement. Here are tendered six specific examples of the quality of instruction at the time that I attended:

1. Economic 101: When I applied to Harvard, I was hoping to pursue a course of study that would prepare me for the business world. The closest major that I could find was "Economics". Widely known now as "The dismal science", I certainly found it to be so. The text for the course had been written by Marshall back in the 1890's. We were lectured about Adam Smith, Bentham, and others, but our required reading was Marshall. I have never read more turgid prose. Often, I felt that it was deliberately obscure, as the author leapt over a particular chasm of ignorance. Generally, as I read Marshall, I would find myself snapping back from a reverie, and having to reread an entire page.

2. Social Relations 1: Although I continued to take some courses in economics, this was my first taste of a possible change in major. The Social Relations major was a conglomerate of Social Psychology, Sociology, and Social Anthropology. As I was very weak at getting along with people, I thought that this major might be of particular help. Social Relations 1 was the introduction to this major. The department head was the lecturer, and he was very entertaining. I remember one topic was the efficacy of statistically sampling as the "scientific proof" of many of the tenants of group behavior. A special case was made of the imminent presidential election and the polling techniques being used to predict its outcome within a couple of percentage points. Several lectures, and several week's reading assignments were devoted to this case. Arrangements had been made for the Chief Executive Officer of the then premier pollster to address us at the first lecture following the election. This election was the Truman/Dewey contest. As the pollster had predicted Dewey by a landslide, the CEO regretted that he could not make the lecture date.

3. Sociology: Talcott Parsons was then head of Harvard's Sociology department. He was famous. As I write this, many of his writings are still in print. I was thrilled to get

into his course. It was one of the few cases when I took a course that was directly taught by "The Master". He devoted one of the early sessions to his current study of "The Influence of Dominant Mothers and Recessive Fathers on the Psychological Development of Sons." After spending his lecture on some preliminary findings, a student raised his hand to ask, "What is the size of the sample being studied?" Parsons answered, "Twelve families." I never went back to this class. I did the required reading; I wrote the assigned essay; I took the Final Exam.

4. The History of Economic Political Thought: This was another class taught directly by a full professor. It turned out that it was a rehash of content I had already had in courses in Economics and in Government. He had evidently given the same lectures so many times that he would often go for a while on automatic pilot, then he would suddenly snap up and ask, where was I?

5. Geology: A requirement for graduation was at least one science course. Having always been interested in unique rocks, I thought that this course would at least be interesting. The first four months, devoted to minerals and their identification, I found very entertaining. The second four months, devoted to memorizing the different ages of fossil layers, I found boring. I have not forgotten the time and vehemence expended by the lecturing professor in ridiculing the then new theory of Plate Tectonics concerning Continental Drift. Of course that theory is now well accepted and well understood by the average educated person.

6. Roman Law: I cynically took this course the last term of my Senior year, as a sure passing grade. It was well known that, the week prior to the Final Exam, the professor of Roman Law would post the questions that the last Final had contained, indeed what every Final for this course had contained for the past ten years. I never attended a single course session; I did not even know what the professor looked like. Several days before the Final Exam, I borrowed a friend's notes and read them, with my copy of the posted exam in hand. I got an "A" in Roman Law.

Enough of this diatribe.

No Nostalgia for Harvard

I read the alumni notices to compare my life with my classmates, but I have no interest in reunions. Even when traveling near, I have never returned to visit Harvard. During these four years, my work experience was the most important part of my education.

Minnesota Canoe Protage Trip With Father, Summer 1947



Spot the Deer

7. MILITARY ENLISTED SERVICE

I had four periods of military experience: The Boy Scouts, The Massachusetts National Guard, The United States Air Force, and The U.S.A.F. Reserve. This chapter takes me from Boy Scouts through the enlisted portion of my service in the Air Force.

Cub Scouts

At seven, during a train trip to visit relatives in Bay City, Michigan, I met a Cub Scout. He was in uniform, and I was impressed. I told Mother that I wanted to join. It was a disappointment to me that my parents never got me into Cub Scouts. I always felt that it was because they did not want to become involved themselves.

Boy Scouts

At eleven, a schoolmate told me of the Boy Scout Troop that met in a bungalow on the Oneonta School grounds. I went to a meeting and joined up. This was wonderful for me. The weekly meetings were devoted to marching drill, recreational games, and working on passing tests for advancement and merit badges. Outside of the rainy season, we went on monthly camping trips. The great thing about these trips was that we always hiked in some miles off the road, carrying everything we needed on backpack racks. We slept in sleeping bags inside tiny two man pup tents. It was the real thing. I was not interested in earning a lot of merit badges and becoming an Eagle Scout. I only advanced to First Class. I was in for the fellowship, and for those great hike-in adventures. We climbed up to spectacular views; we found rotten wood that glowed in the dark; we played war games; we learned how to flip pancakes in the frying pan; we learned various ways to start a fire, using dry tinder and friction between pieces of wood; we learned how to orient ourselves with a compass; and, most important, we were on our own out in the wild. Even a bad case of poison oak at the end of one trip failed to dampen my enthusiasm, though I did trot smartly all of the way back to the car, looking forward to home and Calomine Lotion. One of the boys was somewhat embarrassed by his mother complaining about the weight of the pack that he carried; however, it felt good that someone recognized how tough we were.

Scouting did wonders for me, and lessons learned translated directly in later Air Force survival exercises. However, when we moved to Florida, I was fourteen. I did not search out a new troop. It was time to take up other interests.

Massachusetts National Guard

When I was a freshman at Harvard, the Korean War was underway. Rumors were that the draft would net everyone. I had visions of being sent to the front with little training to face a battle-hardened enemy. So my roommates and I joined the Massachusetts National Guard, with a view to getting trained, and also possibly being deferred. Well, the training that I received was just about nil, so, when I read that the National Guard units were being sent over, it seemed that I would be sent to the front with no training at all to face a battle hardened enemy. I bailed out, pleading impact on my studies. As it turned out, my draft board deferred me until college graduation.

Pre-Draft Physical

Just before graduation, I was called in to take a pre-draft physical. The good news was that I was one of the few to receive a perfect score on the intelligence test; the bad news was that, after a late night studying for final exams, my eyes scored so bad that I was told that I could not qualify as an officer in any of the services.

Colonel Wine's Private Physical

Following graduation, I was home awaiting my imminent call to report to the Army. One of Father's old friends came for dinner. Colonel Wine had been recalled to the Air Force. When he was told my fate, he arranged for an eye test at the Air force Recruitment Station in Chicago. The enlisted man who gave me the test said that my eyes tested 20-45, and that, if I fudged a little, my eyes could qualify for flying status as a navigator. However, he told me, the available time before my ordered reporting to the Army was so short, I would have to immediately join up as an Air Force enlisted man, then apply for Navigator Aviation Cadets.

Enlistment in USAF

Well, this was indeed a gamble. My draft tour with the Army would be for only eighteen months. If I joined the Air Force, and did not make it past the eye physical for navigator, I would be serving a four year tour as an enlisted man. As I had no specific plans for a civilian career, I decided that I would opt for adventure, and my eyes would somehow qualify for navigator. Right then, I signed up.

Sampson Air Force Base

I was sent to Sampson Air Force Base, which specialized only in Basic Training. It was an experience to be endured.

This base was a dumping ground for enlisted men who had no skills useful elsewhere. Our barracks had manually fired furnaces. The firemen were merely airmen basics. As "Permanent Party" we were to treat them as though they were non-commissioned officers. For them, we were to stand at attention, answer their silly questions, and accept their verbal abuse.

Of course, as a Harvard graduate, I was made Colonel of the Latrine. In this exalted position I was responsible for the cleanliness of our barracks' bathroom. Each day I was given new "assistants", but I always was one of the scrubbers.

The low point of each day was a class on math at about the Fifth Grade level. A lot of my seventeen year old cohorts found this to be hard work. I had not endured such excruciating boredom since the First Grade "Dick and Jane" reading texts. However, I did not react by napping, conversing with my neighbor, or throwing erasers. Instead, I furtively wrote letters home. Looking today at one of these letters, you can see that I was so sleepy that I could barely control my hand to write legibly.

Qualifying as Sharpshooter

We had one day on the rifle range. I was ready for this. At twelve, fantasizing about holding off Japanese hordes in our South Pasadena hills, I had taken a target shooting course at the Junior College, and was pretty accurate. In the prone and sitting positions I was impressing the instructors - they made comments about my being about to break the base record; however, I blew it in the standing position: I just could not hold the rifle steady enough. I qualified as Sharpshooter, just two points short of Expert Marksman. Of the 127 men tested that day, I ranked a close second to a former Captain in the Hungarian Army.

Wearing Out My Civilian Shoes

The high point of each day was practice drilling, as we chanted, "You had a good girl but you left. You're right. You had a good girl but you left. You're right. Sound off: one two. Sound off: three four. Kick it on down: one two three four one two - three-four."

Figuring that I would immediately be issued uniforms, I had

arrived in old leisure clothes, including worn out shoes, that I planned to just throw away. On arrival, I was issued a set of uniforms, but they could not fit me in shoes. I marched for weeks in my beat up civilian shoes. Holes appeared in the soles that I covered on the inside with layers of shirt cardboard. Then the uppers started coming loose. One day, the base commander was being driven by, and he noticed my shoes standing out in our marching squad. He immediately invited me into his car to go to Supply; he stayed to see that I was fit with a pair of G.I. shoes. I walked back.

Kitchen Police Duty

Twice I pulled K.P. Kitchen Police duty was performed by doing whatever the cooks wanted done. In addition to cleaning up the hall, during one session I learned how to break one egg in each hand, while filling a large bowl with their contents. The other session, following a breakfast, my duties included retrieving all of the milk cartons from the tables. I was to pour together all of the partially filled cartons in order to create full cartons for the next meal. I idly wondered how much of this milk had been continually recycled from the day that the base had first opened.

Hiding My Illness

The base was located in the New York Finger Lake region, well known as the respiratory disease capital of the U.S. Sampson had been a Navy training base, abandoned, I was told, because of the endemic sickness. There was a base rule that if you were on sick call more than one day, you had to take Basic Training over from the very beginning. (I am only guessing that the reason for this rule was to cut the number of men going on Sick Call with only a bad cold.) More than half way through Basic, I awoke one night with fever and chills. Although the next week was bad for me, I did not let on. I wanted to get past this whole experience.

Boat Cruise

For the entire Basic Training, we were restricted to base, and we could not visit the Enlisted Mens Club. One weekend there was an opportunity to take a boat cruise on the St. Lawrence River. I wasn't interested in the cruise. Then I learned that we would have a good lunch and one bottle of beer. Nearly all of us signed up. It was a cold, damp day, but we still enjoyed our relative freedom.

Test Battery for Cadets

From the first day, I had pressed our Unit Training Noncom for the opportunity to take the test battery for Navigator Aviation Cadets. Week after week, I was put off. I finally went over his head to the squadron office, and was given my chance. I was first given a complete physical. The final step in the physical was the eye test. I entered a room with a line of men moving, one turn at a time, toward a chair to sit in for the test. On the wall just to the right of me as I entered was the eye chart. Walking backwards, by the time it was my turn, I had mastered the chart. I had been told at the Chicago Recruitment Station that all I had to do was fudge a little. Not knowing how to "fudge a little," I tested 20-20. This changed everything! Quickly reacting, I rushed out to the Airman at the desk who had my application. I asked him to cross out "Navigator" and to insert "Pilot". He refused, telling me that, (1) the Air Force currently needed navigators not pilots, and (2) once in the Testing Battery, my application could not be changed. Seeing a Captain in the room, I asked him whether or not he was in charge. He acknowledged that he was. I explained my wishes. He walked over to the Airman holding my form and made my requested changes. This was my only contact with Captain Stammara (sp?), but I will never forget his crucial shifting of my life's path.

Assignment to Radio Operator Training

It was true that the Air Force did not currently need pilots, so I was to wait for when they did. When I finished Basic Training, I received one stripe, but no one knew what to do with me. I just went into limbo. I had no duties; I just hung around. Finally, I talked them into sending me to Radio Operator School in Biloxi, Mississippi. I figured that the training might be of some use to me later as a pilot.

Selection as Barracks Chief

The first day, we new arrivals were lounging on our beds in the barracks. The Squadron First Sergeant came striding through, loudly saying as he came, "Does anyone here have prior military experience?" He finished just as he reached me. Remembering my short stint in the National Guard, I raised my hand. "OK," he said, "You are the Barracks Chief." He took me over to the squad room to brief me on my duties. Among these duties:

- I was to be responsible for the cleanliness and order in the barracks.

- Each morning, at 5:30 am, I would be responsible for the entire barracks marching to the Mess Hall for breakfast. The count taken at breakfast would govern the amount of food at lunch and supper, so every well man, without exception, was to make this formation.
- Following breakfast, the men would straggle back to the barracks for any personal or barracks cleanup. Then, at 8:00 am, I was to march them all to class.

There were other items of responsibility, but this gives you the general flavor of my duties. My privileges included:

- + I would have my own room at the front of the barracks.
- + I would not pull Kitchen Police, or squadron cleanup duties.

Anticipating that this would be valuable experience for a future officer, and also enjoying the special status conferred, I was delighted to accept the post.

Salvatore Iacabucci

On the day that I was appointed, I had the men form in front of the barracks. In order to begin our acquaintance, I called the roll, confirming, as I called each man, that my pronunciation was correct. I came to "Salvatore Iacabucci". Now this was a name! I exclaimed over its beauty, and, as I rolled it off of my tongue, it sounded wonderful! With a grim face, Salvatore challenged, "Do you want to make something out of it?" I assured him that his name to me was impressive, and would he trade me for "George Strehlke". Perhaps it was just his normal demeanor, but from then on I sensed that he was wary of our relationship.

Assistant Barracks chief

The number of men in our barracks fluctuated around eighty. I appointed an assistant chief to maintain order on the second floor, to assist me in my duties, and to substitute for me in my absence. As my mode of operation was giving orders, rather than conferring, I had a high turnover in this slot. There were three Assistant Barracks Chiefs in the less than six months that I was there.

Marching as a Source of Pride

I immediately found that I had a big problem with getting all of the men out to march to breakfast. 5:30 am was just too early. My method was to form up the group, sending my assistant to round up the missing. As we marched, I would watch for dropouts at one end, while my assistant watched the other. Even with our vigilance, every day a few would manage to slip away back to the barracks for extra sleep. One thing did keep nearly all of the rest marching along: they enjoyed really sharp marching. We kept a brisk pace, and swung along, with every foot landing as one, chanting or singing songs as we went. We developed very fancy halts at the final assembly point. I might order, "Double to the rear, by the left flank, right flank, halt!" They loved this kind of fancy showing off in front of the other barracks.

Passing Barracks Inspection

I felt that the best way of passing the Captain's Saturday Morning Inspection was to keep the barracks always at a reasonable level of cleanliness. I let everyone know that, as long as we passed inspections, I would not call for what I considered to be the dreaded "G.I. Party". The "G.I. Party" was when everything in the barracks is piled on the bunks and there is a complete wash down of the walls, the windows, and the floors. In Basic Training, I had hated these parties, and I assumed that everyone felt as I did. I was surprised when one day about twelve airman asked to at least have a G.I. Party in the bathroom area. I agreed. They had a great time slopping suds all over each other, as well as over the surfaces to be cleaned.

Exceeding My Authority

There was one airman who consistently had a disorderly bunk area. One night, exasperated, I sentenced him to a one man G.I. Party of his spot, then stood there watching him do it. The next day, I was summoned to the Captain. Ahead of me, in the Captain's office, was the one man G.I. Party. When I was called in, the Captain kept me at attention as he calmly told me that I had been charged with racial discrimination (the airman in question was black); he also told me that I had no authority of any kind, least of all to order what he called "Company Punishment". Having said this, he fell silent, leaving me standing at attention. Finally, he asked me whether or not I wished to relinquish my position as Barracks Chief and to rejoin the others in the open bay. I answered, "No, Sir". More silence, then, "You may go." Nothing more came of this incident. I was now much more careful.

Familiarity Breeds Language Degradation

Our barracks gained a reputation of doing well in inspections, and also of being the best marchers. I think that we all worked well together. However, my Biloxi experience did adversely affect me in at least one way: my speech. Most of the personnel were black. They spoke a lowdown patois. One favorite adjective, "Mother F-----", would often appear multiple times in one sentence. At first, I found their speech novel and amusing, then, I found myself using some of their phrases, together with their intonation. It took me several years of associating with other folks to shake this influence, man.

Electronics Education

With my childhood interest in radio, I found the electronic course material to be a breeze. In order to practice Morse Code, I had purchased a Hallicrafters short wave receiver. Often I would hear several stations at the same time. This made deciphering more difficult. In order to strain out the offending signals, at the base hobby shop I constructed a wave trap, which I then used to tune out the interfering signals. Our electronics instructor was impressed.

Morse Code

I was practicing listening to Morse code, so that I could do better in class. I did not have a natural facility for this activity. I developed the bad habit of hearing the five character code group, then repeating it in my head, before writing down the translation. This increased my accuracy at the lower speeds, but, by sixteen groups a minute, my mind was tripping over itself. When I left the course for Aviation Cadets, I was struggling to reach the required twenty groups per minute.

Christmas Leave

Christmas 1952 I spent with the family in Oak Park, Illinois. Gannadaddy had also come from Los Angeles. Ganna had died the year before. He seemed to be in good spirits, laughed a lot, and mixed at parties held by Mother for friends. We all seemed to have a good time together as a family.

Gannadaddy's Funeral

Almost immediately after I had reported back to Keesler, I was notified that Gannadaddy had died. I took leave to attend his funeral in Los Angeles. Father told me that Gannadaddy had asked to come live with he and Mother. Father had turned him down. Shortly thereafter, Gannadaddy had a stroke, lingered awhile in the hospital, then died at the age of seventy five.

Services were held at the church where Ganna and Gannadaddy had attended for many years. After the service, we were standing outside when Father was approached by a slight little man in a snap brim hat, together with his wife. I couldn't hear the opening remarks, then Father boomed out, "Well, you're too late!" I learned that the slight little man was Gannadaddy's brother, who had lived for many years within miles of Gannadaddy, yet had never contacted him.

Called For Pilot Training

Before Completing Radio Operator Training, I was called for Aviation Cadets.

My last requirement before leaving for Pilot Training was to undergo a quick physical just to make sure that I was not sick. The first check was of my weight and height. "Uh oh," said the airman with the height measure resting lightly on the top of my thick head of hair, "You are over six foot four inches and are not eligible to be a pilot." I ran to the base barber for a flattop haircut, with the top portion right down to bald. This time the check came out, "Six foot three and three quarter inches; you just make it."

Ahead lay real adventure.

Sampson Air Force Base



Wearing Fatigues on Barracks Steps

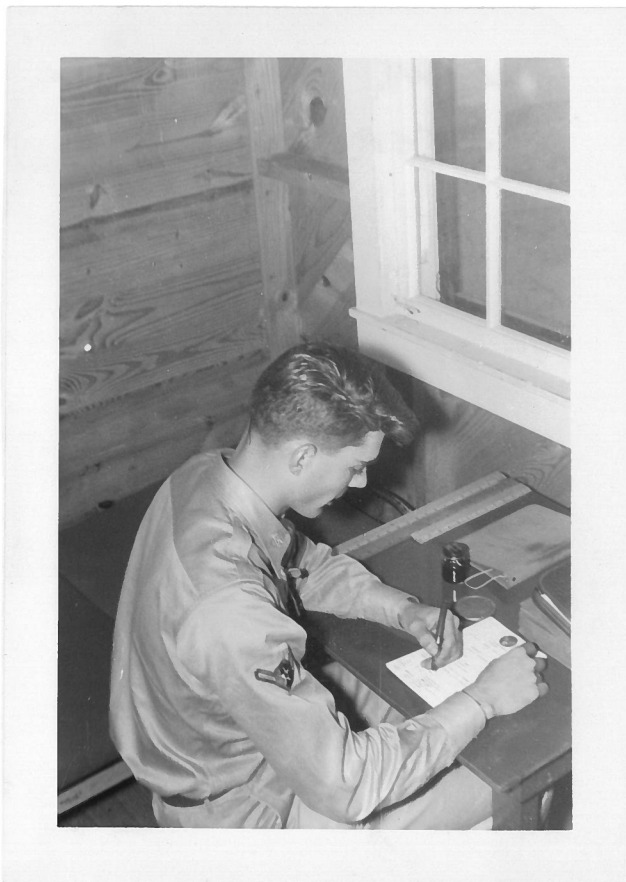


Outing on St. Lawrence River

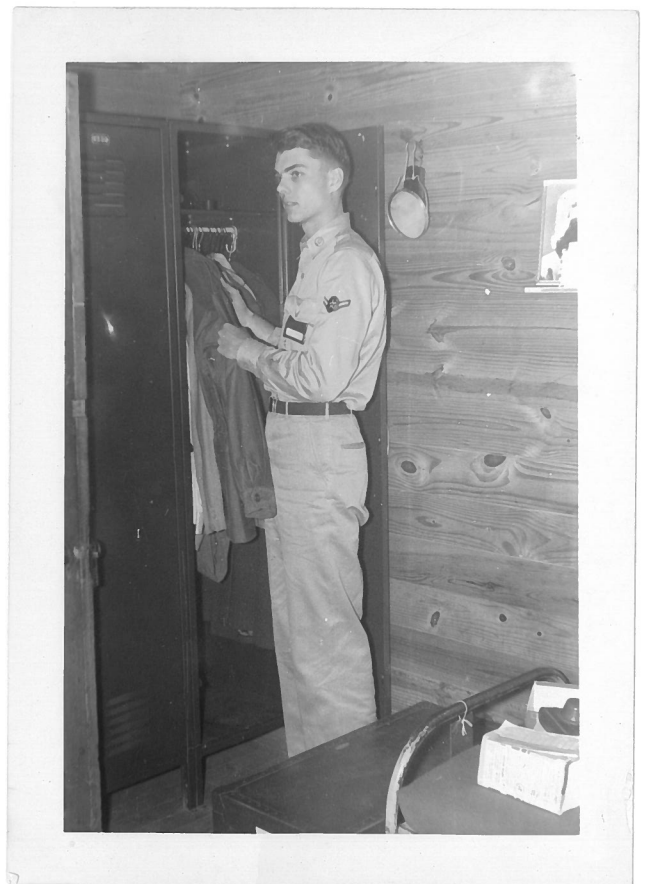
Keesler AFB: My Barracks Chief Room



All Luxury is Comparative

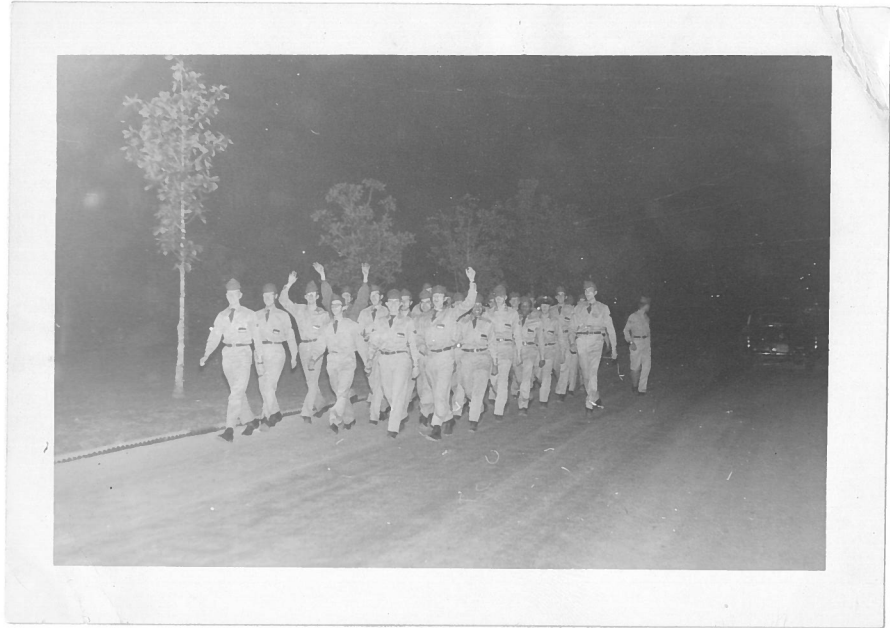


Desk I Made



Friend Got Me This Locker

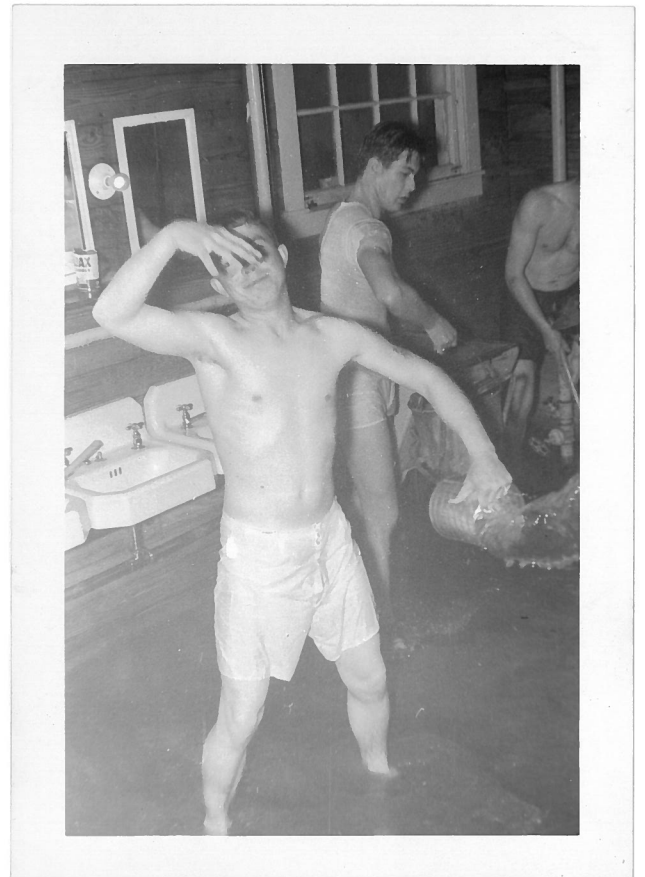
Keesler AFB: My Barracks



Swinging to Chow



GI Party for 1st Inspection



Later Volunteer GI Party

8. GULFPORT

I am told that Gulfport, Mississippi, is a resort community, with shipping and commercial fishing. As I only struck the town a glancing blow, I cannot confirm this. My visit, in March, 1952, was not pleasant; however, in recollection, my experience there does have some picaresque interest: kind of like a film noir with no dead bodies.

I was an Airman First Class Barracks Chief at the Air Force Radio Operator School, in Biloxi, Mississippi. A friend in the next squadron and I both received notification that we had been accepted into the next class of Aviation Cadets for pilot training. We decided to celebrate our good fortune. Somehow we connected with four strangers who had also been notified, one of whom had a large automobile. We all got into the car, and we set off on this Friday evening with no objective in mind, except to have a roaring good time.

We hit a series of bars, all of which had loud bands playing primitive versions of what was to become rock and roll. At first, I hugely enjoyed myself. Later on, the loud music began to grate, and the frequent getting in and out of the car became an effort. I was losing touch. I began thinking how great it would be to just go back to my bunk to sleep. At what turned out to be our last stop, I was the only one who did not get out. I remained, dozing, in the back seat.

All of a sudden, everyone was jumping into the car and yelling to start it up and "Get out of here!" Everyone was jumping in, that is, except the driver. Then, just as rapidly, everyone was jumping out and running.

Then I heard the burglar alarm. This gave me the distinct impression that at least one of our group was responsible for some wrong doing, and that the last one of our party remaining would be tagged "It".

As I emerged, I could see that we were parked at the curb of a large square. It was late. The town was asleep. The night was black. There were two rather dim street lights. I had no idea of where I was. Everyone else was running to the right, so I went left. At the first corner, I turned right, out of the square, moving fast. This street had no lights. On my right were buildings. On my left were railroad tracks. Far in the distance, moving along the tracks, I could see a lantern, swinging with a rhythm so slow that I had the fuzzy impression of being in a dream, sprinting without progress toward the unknown.

After a bit, several blocks in front of me, I saw headlights sweeping around toward me, then moving steadily, patiently, my way. It had to be police. I ducked right to plunge

through an alley. Within twenty feet of the end, I could see the headlights washing past me. Just then, a patrol car screeched to a halt across the end of the alley. A policeman gracefully exited the right front, spun to open the rear door, then, with a sweeping bow, invited me into the back seat.

When we arrived at the station house, the others had already assembled. Our group, and several policemen, were standing before a sergeant sitting behind a raised desk. It seemed that, while trying to open the security gate of a movie theater, one of our group had set off the alarm; he said that he had just been interested in seeing what film was in the can that was just inside.

Then it happened. One of the policemen, indicating our driver, said, "This punk was pissing in the middle of the square." My view was somewhat obscured of the instant altercation between "Punk" and his accuser. I did see the policeman stagger several feet backwards into a wall.

Without hesitating one beat, the desk sergeant sentenced, "These three to the Men's Cell, and those three to the Women's Cell."

Well, the accommodations for the Ladies were not luxurious. There was no seat on the toilet. There was a sink, with dripping faucet. The bed, with bare mattress, was just wide enough for two. There was a bright bare light bulb in the center of the ceiling. The floor was irregularly stained concrete. The door was solid, with, at face height, a view-port about six inches square. I have no memory of a window, though there must have been one: perhaps it had no view, or perhaps it was frosted.

As our watches had been taken from us, we took irregular shifts on the bed. With two always sleeping, there was no company for the one standing. While on my feet, I braced myself in a corner to contemplate my sorry future. I was seriously concerned that my acceptance in Aviation Cadets would be cancelled. In addition, I felt that I might even be reduced to Airman Basic to spend the rest of my four year enlistment doing K.P. Dawn was a long time in coming.

Morning brought little change. Through the door, I could hear footsteps and muffled voices coming and going. Surely, I would remember breakfast, and whether it was good or bad - I do not recall receiving anything at all. Indeed, until some hours had past, I do not remember any contact. Then, suddenly, the view-port in the door clacked open. There revealed was an Air Policeman. Great! Surely, he had come to take us to the base! No. He had come for our Names, our Serial Numbers, and our Squadrons. When the view-port

closed, my depression deepened. The hang-over did not help.

After what seemed a long time, the door opened and a policeman took one of the others away. Then, the other was taken. Finally, I was taken.

I was directed into a bare room with a table, some wooden chairs, and a seated police sergeant. He spread out my personal effects, for which I signed; he took \$10.00 for bail; and he handed me written notification of a hearing on Monday. In response to my question, he told me that the charge would probably be Disorderly Conduct. As he seemed a kind, fatherly sort, I asked his advice as to what I should do. He told me that, as the fine or punishment would undoubtedly be more than \$10.00, I could just fail to appear, forfeiting the bail, and there would be no consequences from the Gulfport authorities. Very bad advice, which I took.

I returned alone to my barracks; I do not remember by what conveyance. I spent much of the remaining weekend in my bunk. Skipping the judicial hearing, I spent Monday in marching the barracks personnel to and from routine activities, hoping all the while for no further involvement in Gulfport matters.

That evening, my friend from the next squadron appeared at my room. He and the others, not having received my bad advice to skip bail, had all attended the hearing. It seemed that the police had a somewhat confused case. They had produced witnesses; however, these "witnesses" had conflicting stories. In order to clarify the issues, the judge had continued the hearing until the next day. Having been announced as a bail jumper, unless I showed on Tuesday, I would be in serious trouble.

I went to see the adjutant of my squadron. I told him the whole story. The next morning, he drove three of us to the hearing: my friend's squadron adjutant, my friend and me. The whole gang was there, as well as "Punk's" father, who had traveled some distance to be present. After the two adjutants, together with "Punk's" father, met briefly with the judge, this worthy dismissed the cases against all of us. Happily, the "Bad Advice Police Sergeant" was not present, or I might have put myself back into trouble. As it was, I floated, with a feeling of happy prospects - rescued from military oblivion.

Soon, I was on my way to Marana, Arizona, for flight school. The other fledglings went elsewhere for their training. Since the hearing, I have not seen any of the Gulfport Gang. Should they ever call for a grand reunion celebration, I would firmly decline, with thanks.

9. AVIATION CADETS: PRIMARY

I remember nothing of my arrival day, except that after Lights Out, I suddenly remembered that I had packed my glasses. If they were found, I might be out. Waiting until everyone seemed sound asleep, I quietly went outside to ditch the glasses in a trash can. Relieved, I lay on my bed, smelling the clear night air, thrilled to be here at last.

Marana Air Base

Marana Air Base was a reopened World War II facility. Its only mission was to give Primary flight instruction and officer training to Air Force pilots to be. There were some officers: the Base Commander, the TAC officers for military instruction, the Flight surgeon, the Flying Safety Officer, and several check-flight pilots. There were a very few enlisted clerks. Everything else was handled by a civilian contract firm: including the Mess Hall, the Cadet Club, grounds maintenance, aircraft maintenance, as well as all flight instruction and aircraft ground schooling.

There were two rows of barracks, separated by a large grass parade ground, which was bounded on the North by the Mess Hall and bounded on the South by the Cadet Club. Flanking the Mess Hall were the classrooms and the Air Force command structures. Behind the Mess Hall was the flight line, with its flight briefing rooms, Control Tower, hangers, rows of parked airplanes, and the taxi ways and runways. Everything looked fresh and new.

This relatively small complex was situated all by itself out on the flat desert. The only prominence, some sixty miles East, was the rock spear, Picachio Peak. Some twenty miles to the West was the then one drug store town of Tuscon, whose largest industry was the University of Arizona.

The barracks were single level, flat roofed, concrete block. Two cadets shared a room, with two single beds, two closets, and a desk. The air then was so dry, that the barracks were efficiently cooled by devices on the roof that blew the outside air inside past filters saturated with water. Out in the sun, no matter how hot it became, it was always bearable. Nights were always cool to cold.

In 1952, the Arizona air was as pure as air gets. At night, when you looked up, the deep black sky, filled, horizon to horizon with sharply etched stars, could give you the illusion that you needed to grab on to something, or you would soar into limitless space.

As a place to learn to fly, Marana was matchless.

Ground Training

Before actually getting into a plane, we went through a period of officer training, as well as instruction on the theory of flight and the specifics on the aircraft we would be flying. With the large civilian presence, as well as the natural easy manner of those involved in aviation, the atmosphere was quite relaxed, except during barracks inspections. These inspections were conducted by the military training instructors wearing white gloves. Should a white glove become smudged while wiping the back of a shelf, the top of a door molding, or even the corner of a floor, the offending cadet(s) would be given demerits. When you had collected sufficient demerits, which could also be collected for other transgressions, you were sentenced to walk tours. Tours were solo marches, wearing class A uniform, back and forth across the parade ground, so everyone could view the "slovenly soldier". Thanks to my roommate, who was a cleanliness fanatic (he even had a spare shoe brush with which he would go over the floor after we had already given it a normal cleaning), I received very few demerits on room inspections. I do not recall walking any tours.

Flight Physical

When ready to begin flying, the Flight Surgeon gave us each a physical. Uh oh! No eye chart. He sat me down in a darkened room, had me cover one eye with a card, then he projected a chart line on a screen. By squinting, I hoped that I did OK. He did not think that I did OK. He said that I tested 20-40 in my worst eye. He told me to report back to him that afternoon. My lunch was spoiled. I was very worried. That afternoon, when I entered his office, I noticed that on his desk was my personnel file, as well as two open manuals. The net of what he told me was that, though I clearly did not pass the eye requirements for entering Aviation Cadets, I did pass the eye requirements for continuing to fly as a rated pilot (if I wore glasses correcting my eyes to 20-20); as he had no standards for eye requirements for those already in Aviation Cadets, he would apply those for rated pilots. Interestingly enough, he did not then prescribe glasses. Obviously he had fudged the rules. I do not know why he did so, and I did not ask.

The T-6 Trainer

Then I got to meet our aircraft. We trained in the T-6 low winged all metal monoplane, with retractable main gear, sliding greenhouse canopy, and a 450 horsepower air cooled radial engine. During World War II, this aircraft was used by all of our services, and by the British, in fighter pilot

Advanced Gunnery Training: this was the finishing school for advanced airbatics, mock dogfights, and for actual live firing of ordinance at targets on the ground and targets pulled by other planes through the air. After Advanced Gunnery Training, the pilot would be given brief Transition Training on a fighter, such as the F-51 Mustang, then be sent off to combat. To this day, the T-6 is a featured class in the National Air Races.

The T-6 was big, it was powerful, it was strong, and it was heavy. Its strength was that in flight it was very forgiving: given sufficient altitude, you could easily recover from just about any dumb mistake. One weakness was that its main wheels were set so close together, and with such weak side bracing, that the slightest mistake in a cross wind landing would result in wiping out the gear. Another weakness was that, with power off, it glided just better than a brick. Another weakness was shared with the F-51 Mustang: the engine exerted so much power that acceleration would cause the airframe to try to rotate in the opposite direction to the propeller; on takeoff, countering this rotation took a strong leg applied in a smooth timely fashion to the rudder.

During World War II, and again the year after me, cadets were started out in light planes, somewhat similar in flight characteristics to the Cessna 150. Starting right out with the T-6 felt challenging, indeed.

Introductory Flight

In the flight briefing room, grouped by three or four cadets, we met our assigned flight instructor. I drew a slight, sandy haired, shy-friendly fellow. I felt right at ease with him. As a group, he took us out to one of the T-6's to run us through all of the points of the Preflight Checklist. He then took each of us in turn up for a ride. For this introductory flight, he sat in the front seat. (From then on the student sat in the front seat). Over the intercom, he explained about weaving the plane for visibility while taxiing, about the Pretakeoff Checklist, about contacting the Control Tower before certain actions. Once cleared by the Tower, with a roar, we took off. In the air, he pointed out the sights, explained what he was doing for each of the flight maneuvers, including some tame airbatics, then demonstrated how to contact the Control Tower for landing. He explained everything that he did while entering the Landing Pattern, while performing the Prelanding Checklist, while turning Downwind, while turning Base, and then while turning Final for the landing. I had no fear during the flight, though some of the airbatics did disorient me a little. However, it all seemed quite complex, and to demand a high degree of natural coordination for the simultaneous

operation of stick and rudders, all the while looking out for other planes, monitoring some of the instruments, contacting the Control Tower, and going through the Prelanding Checklist. For me, this was not going to be easy.

For two of my classmates, this orientation ride was their final ride. Fear of flying washed them out. They may have experienced similar sensations to what I felt on heights, with the added Hell of nauseating airsickness.

Flying Came Hard to Me

We settled down to a set daily schedule of classroom, Mess Hall, and flying. The classroom work came easily to me, flying a plane did not. Seeing me sitting at my desk attempting to diagram on paper the foot and arm motions needed to perform maneuvers, one classmate remarked, "If brains alone can make a pilot, Strehlke will do it."

For me, flying was the big event of the day. Except for demonstrating a new maneuver, my instructor had me do everything. From the very beginning, I was the pilot. I loved every minute of it. My landings and takeoffs seemed to be acceptable; however, I did have a lot of trouble with maintaining my altitude in a turn. We climbed to ten thousand feet to perform airbatics (in a designated area). We were expected to lose some altitude in these maneuvers, but I lost more than I thought I should. I lost valuable instruction time having to climb back up. But what a thrill to do loops, rolls, stalls (with recovery), spins (with recovery). My nemesis was the Chandel. The Chandel was a maximum climb turn. The idea was, while making a 180 degree turn, to gain the most altitude possible, winding up just short of a stall as you leveled out. The whole maneuver was too subtle for me. You really had to feel it, you could not plan it out. I always wound up having to avoid a stall by leveling off before reaching 180 degrees, or winding up without having gained maximum altitude, with too much airspeed left. While I was struggling for smoothness, my instructor never indicated that I was not doing the job, and since we only flew one student at a time, I had no clear idea how my classmates were doing, though I felt that most were doing better than I was.

First Solo

Flying solo was our first goal. Once a week, a bus would take those deemed ready by their instructors to a satellite field. These ghosts from World War II each had two runways at 90 degrees to each other, a taxi apron, and nothing else. Came my turn. Once at the field, we awaited the planes being

ferried over by our instructors, we then stood in line. Well, one of the early solo's ended with the cadet wiping out his gear, thus blocking the runway proper to use with the prevailing wind. A message was radioed to base, and the Flying Safety Officer flew over. In landing on the other runway, he also managed to wipe out his gear. (You can imagine how embarrassed he must have been.) Anyway, it was back on the bus for me; solo's were over for this week.

The next week, I did get in my first solo. I had such a liberated feeling of power. I was in glee. All that I did was take off and land three times - never leaving the area. Between landing and takeoff, I taxi raced my classmates, trying to pass them before takeoff. One of these races took so much of my attention that I forgot to raise my landing flaps, which were full down. My next takeoff was an unscheduled very Short Field Takeoff (we were never to be instructed on Short Field Takeoff in this aircraft): I fairly popped up off of the ground way before anticipated. Pushing hard on the stick, I kept the nose down, and successfully kept the plane under tight control, as I slowly worked up the flaps. Apparently no one saw my little spectacular - at least no one commented. I sure did not mention it. I ended the day happy indeed.

Failing the Forty Hour Check Ride

Training continued until my instructor said that it was time for me to take the standard Forty Hour Check Ride. Being checked out by a military Check-Ride Pilot made me very nervous, and I gave a very rough ride. He gave me a failing grade. In several days, along with another cadet, I reported to the assigned plane for recheck. A different Check-Ride Pilot came over, and indicated that the other cadet would go first. I innocently asked him where he would like me to be on his return. He turned to face me pointing, and with a fierce demeanor said, "You be right here when I get back!" I am ashamed to say that his unexpected anger sent me into shock. I was so frightened during the ride that all of my actions, while technically correct, and much better than the first ride, were so timidly executed that his contempt came right over the intercom. He failed me. I was notified to present myself before the Washout Board. I couldn't understand how I could be knocked out so fast by failing two regular check rides - especially as I did not feel that I had done that poorly on the second ride. While in my funk, I learned that two cadets, who had recently graduated from this base, had died separately the previous month by stalling their T-6's while turning on final landing approach at Advanced Single Engine School. The Base Commander and his Check Pilots were under the gun to weed out the weak flyers.

The Washout Board

I phoned home to let them know that I was going before the Washout Board, that no one from this base had ever passed, and that I would just have to try for Navigator School. Mother said that she knew that I would be the first to pass the Washout Board.

I told one of the other cadets in my flying group that I was planning to ask our flight instructor to testify for me. His response, that this would be a mistake, gave me the first clue that something rotten was going on; I definitely now asked that the Board interview him as my witness.

The day of the hearing, I was sitting outside the meeting room, holding on my lap my billed cap. Someone advised me to leave the hat outside, so I would not be fumbling with it as I testified. So, of course, when I was called, I jumped up and carried my hat with me. As it turned out I handled it fine.

In the meeting room, I was seated in a lonely chair facing a row of officers seated behind a long table. They had previously reviewed my personnel file and the reports of the two check rides. They commenced with some polite conversation, which put me at ease. One of them then read the detailed report of the first failed check ride. Asked for my comments, I replied that though I had not previously seen the report, I certainly agreed with its general conclusions that I had failed the ride. The same officer then read the detailed report of the second check ride. I could not believe my ears. Asked for my comments, I first requested that the officer please confirm that this was indeed the report on my second check ride. When he assured me that it was, I felt a surge of fury that lent strength and eloquence to my refutation. Point by point in detail, I challenged the report as completely untrue. I simply had not committed the flying sins charged. I could see the officers move back in their chairs. I was then asked whether or not I knew that my first check ride was in fact a Washout Ride. I answered no, that that must be another mistake; my instructor had merely put me up for the standard Forty Hour Check Ride. At this reply, the officers looked around at each other. I was politely dismissed to wait outside in the hallway. Then, my instructor was called in. He was in there even longer than I had been. When he came out, he avoided my eyes. After a while, I was called in to receive the verdict while standing at attention:

1. I had passed the Board, and would not be washed out.
2. I had been granted "unlimited flying time" to bring myself up to standard.

3. In order to give me enough days to accomplish this improvement, I would be set back one month to be a member of the next class.
4. I would be assigned to another flight instructor.

Wow! This was unbelievably good news!

I did come through for the Board. The extra hours gave me a fluency in my flying technique that put me ahead of the curve for the rest of my pilot training.

Just Missed Outstanding Military Graduate?

Immediately after passing the Washout Board, I received notification to present myself, with three other cadets, before a board to determine the Outstanding Military Graduate. Of course, since the Washout Board had set me back a class, my invitation to this honor board was cancelled.

My Second Flight Instructor

My new instructor, Buck Buchanan, was a calm, confident, outgoing person. His two existing students accepted me just as though I had been with them from the beginning of training; there was never a word spoken about my having been before the Washout Board. Buck gave me valuable tips that improved my general flying techniques. He also assigned me a lot of solo time to work out my kinks. I do not remember having another Forty Hour Check Ride, so, if there was one, it must have been a non-event. After a few weeks, Buck took us into new flight challenges involving instrument flying.

Academic Instruction on Instrument Flying

Instrument flying was developed, and continues to evolve, to cope with flying at night and in weather, when the pilot cannot see outside well enough to determine that he is flying the plane in the proper attitude for the maneuver he is performing. As you can imagine, if you are tightly strapped in, if you cannot see outside, it is difficult even to be sure that the plane is right side up. A complicating factor is that your inner ear balance mechanism can play tricks on you. Try this experiment: Sit on a swivel chair; close your eyes; have someone turn you rapidly for several revolutions; now, keeping your eyes closed, try to stand up. Didn't you lurch about a bit? We were taught that, in conditions where you do not have good outside visual references, you have flight instruments to help you, and that you MUST believe

those instruments.

We started our instrument training in the classroom. There we learned the strong and weak points of each instrument then available to us:

- + The Artificial Horizon, with a little airplane superimposed on a moving horizon line, told us if our nose was up or down, and if our wings were level or tilted.
- + The Gyroscopic Compass gave us a much steadier indication of our direction than did the jiggle regular compass.
- + The Needle and Ball told us, with the needle, whether or not we were turning and a reference as to how fast we were turning. The ball told us whether or not we were skidding sideways through the air.
- + The Rate of Climb told us how many feet-per-second we were climbing or descending.
- + The Altimeter told us how high we were. Hopefully, this would be higher than any mountains in the vicinity.

The Link Trainer

Our next step was to do exercises in the Link Trainer. This device was the first practical flight simulator. There was this box just large enough to hold one person. Inside was an aircraft cockpit with rudders, a stick, the throttle, and the flight instruments laid out just as they were in the T-6. This box was balanced on the top of a pedestal. Motors responding to the flight controls would tilt and turn the box on the pedestal.

A cadet would enter the Link Trainer, closing himself in so he could not see outside. An instructor outside would tell the cadet what to do, and could monitor how well he did it. The cadet could be told to takeoff and climb at 500 feet-per-minute to 3,000 feet on a compass heading of 145 degrees, and then make a one Needle width turn to 90 degrees, etc...

The Link Trainer had one big weakness, it did not have the feel of a real airplane; however, it was all that we had then, and it did save a lot of valuable flying time in learning the instruments and in learning how to efficiently scan them.

Flying on Instruments

Continuing our classroom work, and our exercises in the Link, we then began instrument flying. Instrument training was done under the Hood. The cadet sat in the T-6's rear seat, and pulled forward a folding black Hood that sealed him off from any view of the outside. The cadet would then perform the exercises he had practiced in the Link Trainer. Of course, the instructor in the front seat watched for other planes, directed the cadet on what maneuvers to perform, and, when necessary, was ready to take over the controls.

Instrument Flying was where I really began to shine. This was precision work that did not depend on feel. To repeat, it was drummed into us to not trust our sensations, just to believe the instruments. One experience pounded this wisdom into my brain:

We were assigned to do one, and one only, blind takeoff. My instructor lined me up on the runway. I went under the Hood. The Control tower cleared us for takeoff. Concentrating mostly on the Gyro compass and the Artificial Horizon, I advanced the throttle. As we rolled down the runway, I could feel that we were turning slightly, and this registered on the Gyro Compass, so I added more pressure on the rudder. As we turned back, we started to lift off of the runway. Just then, I had an overwhelming physical sensation that we were in a steep turn to the right and, unless I immediately pushed the stick and rudders hard left, that we would crash. Two things stopped me, (1) if we in trouble, the instructor would have taken over, and (2) the instruments were serenely indicating straight ahead. I was convinced.

What I had experienced is termed "vertigo". There would be many occasions when I would experience mild vertigo, but, thanks to that cadet experience, I just believed the instruments. However, perhaps you share my sentiment that that blind takeoff maneuver was much too dangerous, even for the value of the lesson taught.

Three Cornered Cross Countries

The remainder of my Primary Training was routine and very pleasant. In addition to our under the Hood instrument flying, we also flew three cornered "cross countries", both in daytime and at night, landing back where we started (One fellow got lost and, landing at Yuma, Arizona, was nicknamed the "Yuma Kid").

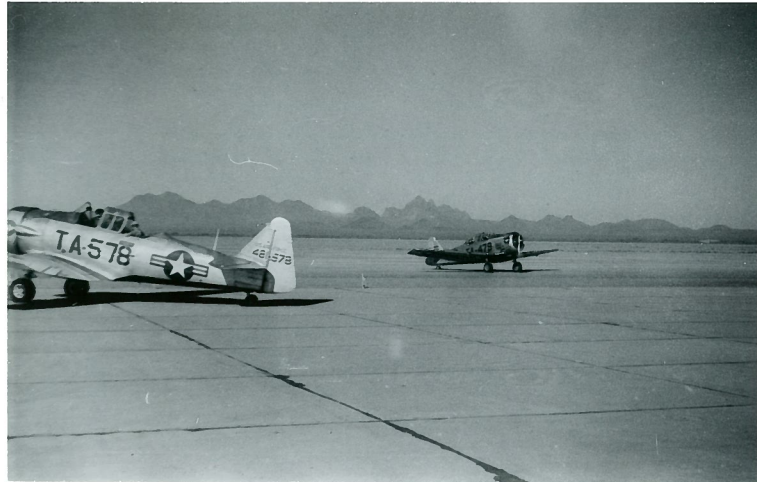
Final Check Ride

I did very well on my Final Check Ride. After I had accomplishing all of his assigned maneuvers, the check pilot and I challenged each other on airbatics. His last figure was the Hammer Head Stall: He took the T-6 vertically straight up, then just as it was about to fall backwards, he kicked in full right rudder to send us straight down in order to pick up sufficient airspeed to resume normal flight. I told him that, as I was not about to attempt that maneuver, he could retire as the champ.

Leaving for Multi-Engine Basic

I finished Primary with 140 hours in the air, 36 of that was solo. I was sorry to leave. I had met the challenges, and had enjoyed the life. Now it was on to Aviation Cadet Basic Multi-Engine Training at Reese AFB, Lubbock, Texas.

Marana Air Base: 1952



Self Portrait on First Solo Round Robin Cross Country

10. NIGHT SOLO

During childhood, night aroused in me two sensations: terror, and romance. Hidden danger, and the novel impressions of familiar objects made by contrast between light and shadow.

As an adult, the terror had receded to a nervous edge, while the sense of romance had heightened to lend drama to any new nighttime activity.

Lugging my seat pack parachute, I make my way toward the aircraft assigned for my first night solo. I am captured by the setting before me on the flight line:

Shafts of light switching around from flashlights. Soft apron of warmth spread out in front of a hanger. Rigid row of tiny bulbs defining the taxiway. Sweeping brightness from taxiing aircraft. Blinking navigation lights of the airborne, with sudden brightness of landing lights on Final Approach. Circling beams of the Control Tower. Flashes of all of these lights on metal. Darker than the night silhouettes of rank on rank of parked aircraft. Loud coughs of engines being started. Dull sound of planes moving on the apron. Roars of those taking off. Scattered voices, intermittently lost in the other sounds.

Now clamber up the T-6. Clumsily climb with my seat pack on down into the cockpit. Buckle up seat belt and shoulder harness. Battery switch on. Cockpit Lights on; the ultra-violet lights magically causing the instrument markings to glow in color, as other small lights illuminate controls and switches. "SWITCH ON!" "Clear." After three keening whines, the engine explodes to life! "Marana Tower; Air Force 4523 clearance to taxi." "Roger Air Force 4523, you are clear to taxi to runway Seven Left; altimeter two niner eight seven." Set the altimeter. Hand signal to pull the chocks. Two flashlights signal to pull ahead, then to turn hard right, then both lights chop forward, sending me on my way.

There are only two sounds now: the engine and propeller roar, and, in the earphones, the crackling radio traffic. Roll along; brake alternately to "S" curve down the taxiway; in order to clear, peer intently to one side then to the other.

Near the end of the Runway, diagonal park behind the aircraft ahead. Perform the Pretakeoff Checklist. Once the aircraft ahead is clear, "Marana Tower; Air Force 4523 clearance for takeoff." "Roger Air Force 4523, you are clear to takeoff on runway Seven Left; winds are calm; climb to and maintain an altitude of seven thousand in the local area." "Wilco. Air Force 4523 taking off to seven thousand."

Now in position on the runway. Release the brakes. Throttle full forward. Roaring, shaking, dancing instruments, the two rows of runway bulbs racing by ever faster. Lift off into solid black.

Scan the flight instruments, as well as the outside for other aircraft. Raise the landing gear. Throttle back to maintain 120 knots indicated, with a climb of 500 feet-per-minute. Turn to a heading of 145 degrees to avoid the landing pattern. Make occasional clearing turns, staying in the general area until 7,000 feet, then enter a rough holding pattern far above the landing pattern.

Below are other holding aircraft, each separated vertically by 500 feet. Far below is the field, with its active flight line, and its quiet barracks; dominant is the sweeping beacon on the Control Tower. The lights of Tuscon are clear. Phoenix merely glows on the horizon. The stars, obscured when viewed from the Flight Line, here own the sky. Otherwise, unrelieved void - sky and ground are one. The instruments are my only references to straight and level.

I am alone. While experiencing this beautiful novel setting, it gives me pleasure to be in control of my aloneness. However, I also feel vulnerable. I think of the emergency procedure that the instructors spring on us every daytime flight. The single engine fails, and you must simulate an emergency landing. Pick a field; fly a downwind leg; as you turn base at 1,000 feet, lower gear (if you are going to use them), when set up on final, at 500 feet lower flaps. Except possibly at an established airport, you cannot do this at night. I am happy this night to stay in range of Marana.

As time passes, the tower lowers me level by level, each descent at 500 feet-per-minute. Finally, I land. As I stroll back to my barracks, there are still the sounds of the later fliers. I look up and wonder whether or not their thoughts are similar to what mine had been up there in the cockpit, alone with the softly glowing cockpit indicators.

Several weeks later, we were called from our barracks for an unscheduled early morning formation. As we stood on the parade ground, the Base Commander was driven to our front. He stepped out to announce that they had found the wreckage of a previous night's solo. The cadet had been killed.

The wreckage was positioned consistent with a level wing 500 foot-per-minute descent into the ground. I learned later that the cadet had flunked that day's session in the Link Trainer. What had they been thinking of to send him up? What were they thinking about during the days following?

11. AVIATION CADETS: MULTI-ENGINE BASIC

I did not question my being directed to multi-engine rather than to fighters. I knew that fighter pilots needed sharper vision, faster reflexes, and more supple coordination than I had. I also knew that pilots of longer range multi-engine craft had more need for all weather instrument and navigation aptitudes, which I did have. They had me well pegged.

Reese Air Force Base

Reese AFB, just outside of Lubbock, Texas, had been around a long time. The buildings were wood sided frame structures, similar to Keesler's, where had I studied radio operation. Nothing about the layout sticks in my mind. The cadet barracks were two story, with four men to a room, sleeping in two decker bunk beds.

The only thing I remember of my arrival day is reading in the newspaper of the community outrage concerning the base airman who had raped and murdered a local girl, then thrown her poor body in a ditch. We Air Force folks were not too popular.

The first time I went in to town, I noticed that a big sale item was Cotton Picking Gloves. The newspaper had a running story on the great drought that had lasted for seven years there in West Texas. We were there in the fall and winter. There were many high winds. I remember one day that started with blowing rocks and ended with a brief hail storm.

I spent most evenings at the Cadet Club, and went to bed early. Except for sporadic formations, all military training was completed. I was happy and relaxed.

T-6 Instrument Navigation

The first three months of the six month course were devoted to training in navigation, and especially in instrument navigation. All of this training was practiced in the T-6. The extra flight time in the T-6, given me by the Board in Primary, left me so comfortable in that aircraft that I found it easier than average to handle the additional complexities of radio navigation. As a result, I wound up with all of this course's T-6 flight requirements completed, with a lot of assigned T-6 flight time left over.

Airbatic Movies

As a Christmas present, Mother and Father had given me an 8mm movie camera and projector. I used the free flight time I

had to go out to the airbatic area to play. I would get to altitude, set the throttle, control the camera with my left hand braced against the top of the instrument panel, then fly airbatics with my right hand on the stick, and my feet on the rudders. I still have the film. Excerpts are on our first family video tape.

The B-25

The last three months at Reese were devoted to education on the peculiarities of multi-engine aircraft, using, as our trainer, the B-25. This was the same model light bomber used by Doolittle in the first WW II raid on Tokyo, Japan. It was stable and easy to fly.

Crucial Flight Physical

Just before starting with the B-25, I had another flight physical. Oh boy! I again flunked the eye portion. I pleaded with my lieutenant flight instructor to intercede with the doctor. My arguments were that the Air Force had already spent a lot of money training me this far, and I would be delighted to fly multi-engine with glasses. The response from the doctor was that, yes he could get me glasses, but the real problem was that my eyes were too wide apart! No one in our group could figure out where this standard had come from - was it for WW I goggles? The doctor did relent. My mild myopia was corrected to 20-20 with three pairs of glasses: regular frame, sunglasses, and anti-reflective lenses in a sunglass frame for night flying.

B-25 Flight Instruction

Flight instruction in the B-25 was accomplished with the instructor in the right seat, and one cadet in the left seat. An additional cadet would wait his turn sitting in what had been the bombardier's position in the greenhouse nose of the aircraft. In addition to takeoffs and landings, routine flight maneuvers, and an introduction to formation flying, the instructor would surreptitiously create such emergencies as loss of power due to fuel starvation, or an engine needing to be shut down and its propeller feathered. These emergency drills prepared the cadet to be able to handle the shock of a real emergency with well drilled automatic responses.

Training in the B-25 did leave me with a disability. In order to avoid having to continually switch back and forth between the radio and the intercom, the instructor would have the cadet keep his earphone off of the right ear. The instructor would shout instructions into the cadet's ear.

The result of my right ear getting the full force of the loud engine racket was some hearing loss in my right ear. After flying, I would hear gaps in the music played on my radio in the barracks; I was temporarily deaf to a range of musical notes. Some of that hearing loss remains to this day.

Getting My Choice B-26 Assignment

As one of our final acts as cadets, we signed our preference for aircraft assignment on petitions posted on the bulletin board. Choices ranged all of the way from copilot on giant refueling tankers to pilot of small helicopters. The choice to pilot the B-26 (actually the WW II Douglass A-26) included the stipulation that you would be volunteering for Korea. I did not hesitate to sign up for this dream aircraft. The instruction staff reviewed these choices to make the final assignments. I got my wish.

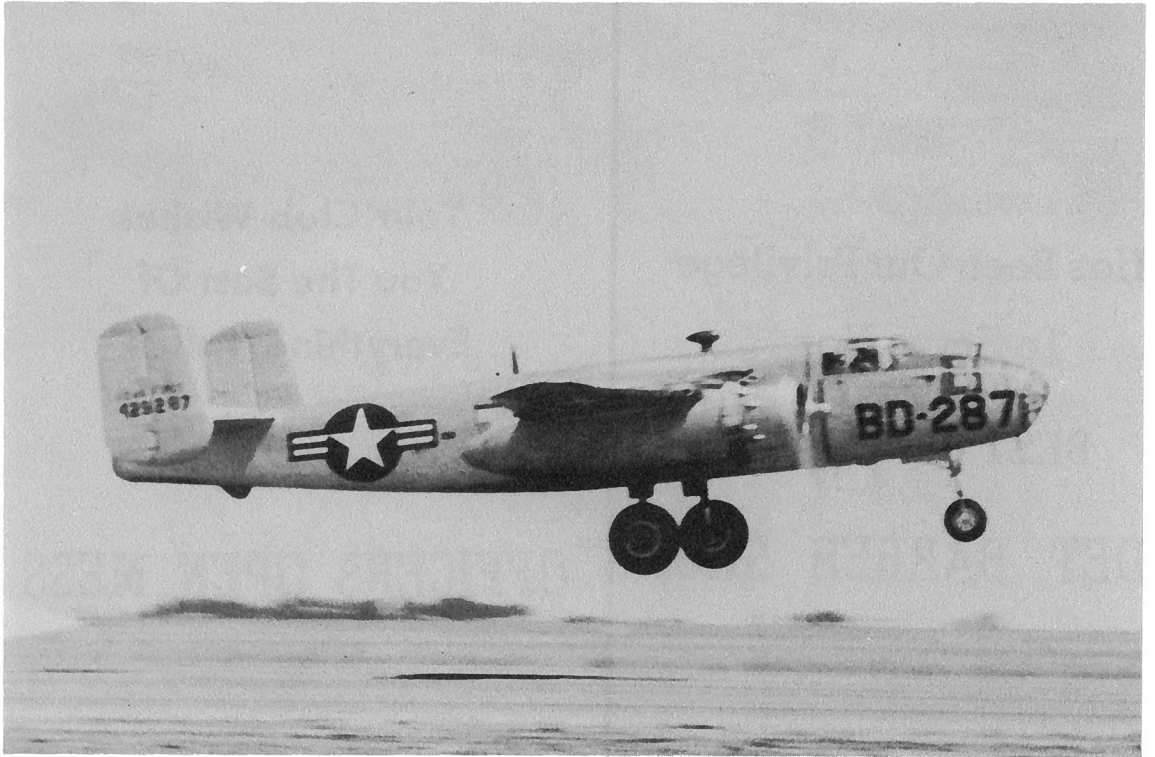
Graduation From Aviation Cadets

I graduated from Aviation Cadets on April 28, 1953, with a total of 290 flight hours. I was given my pilot's wings and my second lieutenant bars. I was now, by official proclamation, "an officer and a gentleman."

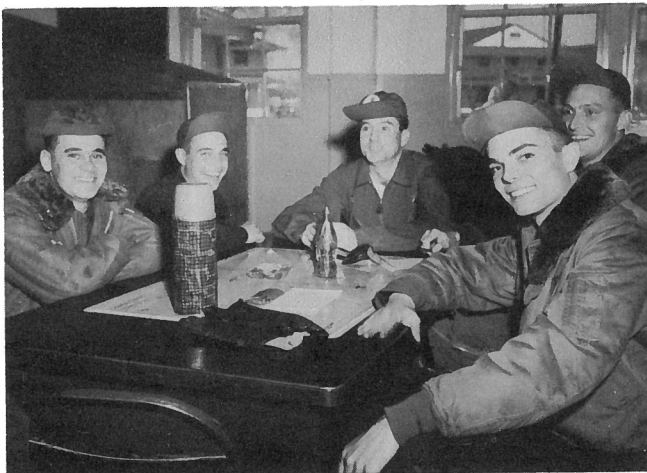
Leave in Oak Park

The day after graduation, a friend and I drove in his car to my parents' home in Oak Park, Illinois. As we left Lubbock, a high wind was still blowing fine dust, as it had been all week. The morning after we arrived in Oak Park, we noticed a number of muddy cars. On the weather news that night, it was announced that West Texas dust had travelled all of the way to Illinois, and had mixed with rain clouds, resulting in a rare storm of thin mud. Lubbock had not let go gracefully.

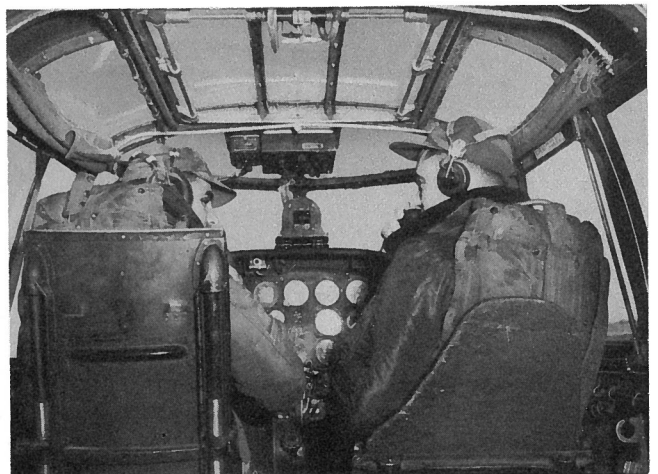
Reese Air Force Base



B-25



Lt. Kirk and We Four



Cockpit of B-25

12. JUAREZ

Nearing the end of my T-6 flying at Reese, I was up for a solo cross country. I had told my flight instructor of my disappointment in my dual cross country, when, because of a social engagement, that instructor had insisted on our immediate return. My instructor assured me that this trip we would have a good time at our destination city, El Paso.

The way these navigation cross countries worked, there would be at least one instructor, flying dual with a student, to three other aircraft. As we would fly just five minutes apart, should a solo cadet get in trouble, there would be an instructor close by to help him out.

At Flight Operations, I was given the route and altitude to follow, and the indicated airspeed to maintain. I drew the route on my map, then folded the map so it would show the entire route, yet fit easily on my small knee clipboard.

Checking the expected weather on our route, I used the reported winds aloft and my Weems Plotter, to determine the headings I would have to maintain, probable true airspeeds, and finally, my expected arrival over each reporting point. I worked carefully, rechecking my work. I believed in the adage that they had drummed into us:

"Proper Preflight Planning Prevents Poor Performance."

I filed my flight plan, then went out to check my aircraft, and eventually we took off.

I remember little of the flight down to El Paso. Once we landed and checked out of Flight Operations, we rode to the Mexican border, and walked across to Juarez. My instructor had a favorite restaurant where we ate a lavish dinner lubricated with Mexican beer. After dinner, we wandered through the town, stopping in some of the shops. I remember my instructor leaning on another instructor as he repeated, "Gotta find some boots; gotta find some boots for my kid." we all took up the refrain. We were having a really good time; however, we had forgotten something important: soon, we would have to fly our planes back to Reese.

At Flight operations, I gathered the weather data, and managed to put together a flight plan. My instructor told me that, because of the way our aircraft were parked, I would be the first to taxi out for takeoff. Sitting in the plane with the engine running, I realized that I was definitely under the influence of the last beers. I was not really certain that I could find my way, on this strange airfield, to the designated runway. So, I just sat there, as the others gunned their engines at me, until, one by one they passed me

by, and I took up the end of the line.

Some thirty miles out of El Paso was a high pass through mountains. On our flight down, I had seen several plane wrecks on each side of the pass, so I concentrated on getting up to our planned safe altitude. Of course, I now know that the higher you are, the more effect alcohol has. Soon, I was feeling very fine, indeed. Remembering that I had done a fairly rough job of flight planning for this return, and wishing to hit my "expect to reach" reporting points on the button, I pulled out my flashlight and proceeded to refigure my flight plan, just as though I was sitting in a library. When we had taken off, I had noticed that the night was not only black, but was also solidly overcast. Now, I saw that scattered stars had broken through. How nice, I thought, until I glanced down at my instruments to see that I was over the top of a wing-over. Those "scattered stars" were lights on the ground, and I was on my way down to join those other wrecks on the slopes of the pass.

I immediately, and roughly, got myself and the plane under control. I put away the flashlight and the Weems Plotter. I stuck quite satisfactorily with the original plan, making rule-of-thumb corrections as I passed each reporting point.

Months later, right after the cadet graduation ceremonies, I went over to thank my T-6 flight instructor. In the course of conversation, I mentioned the "stars coming out" on our El Paso cross country. His face registered shock. At first, I felt sorry that I had told him. On reflection, though, I became certain that it was a good thing that I had let him know. That way we both nailed down the wisdom of a fundamental pilot's rule:

"Twenty-four hours between bottle and throttle."

13. THE B-26: TRANSITION, AND COMBAT CREW TRAINING

After completing my home leave, I flew on a civilian airline to Vance AFB, Enid, Oklahoma, for transition training to the B-26. I well remember the beginning of that flight. At the start of the takeoff roll, I went into full panic. Perspiration pushed its way through my forehead. I rigidly clung to the seat's armrest, bracing my feet before me. At first, I could not understand what was happening to me. I had never before experienced fear of flying. Then it hit me. I had been spending a lot of time in the air, and, as I had flown, running through my mind were all of the things that I had to do, including preparing for any emergency. Here I was, taking off, and for the first time in over a year, I had no access to the controls. I knew of all of the things that could go wrong, yet I could do nothing. I certainly gained empathy for those who are afraid to fly. Luckily, this was my only experience of this kind.

Enid

Enid, Oklahoma, shared the dust I had experienced at Lubbock. The town itself was not a destination for weekend pleasure. I was there for just two months, attending ground school on the systems and procedures involving the B-26, and with flight training on how best to handle its special flight characteristics.

The B-26

The B-26 (during WWII designated the A-26) was a very hot twin engined, mid-wing light bomber. It was pulled through the air by two large Pratt and Whitney radial engines. It carried a larger bomb load than the B-17, at the same time that it could mount ten forward firing 50 caliber machine guns, as well as two napalm tanks, and a set of rockets. The crew was pilot, navigator, and rear gunner.

One major feature was its special laminar flow wing. This wing was curved on the underside as well as on the top in order to give less wind resistance, and hence a higher speed and longer range. The one weakness of this design was a very abrupt stall. Other planes were landed by slowing to the stall range and then nose high mashing into the ground. Not the B-26. This plane required engine power all of the way down. It was flown into the runway at a completely level attitude, and the nose was immediately dropped for the nose wheel to softly contact the runway. Ditching on water was not practical. Forced landings were not likely to succeed.

It flew like a dream. One of the fastest war planes of WWII,

it was so maneuverable that it had even occasionally been used as a night fighter. With all of its excess power, speed, and crisp handling, I have never met a pilot who did not rank it among his favorite aircraft.

B-26 Transition Training

In one letter home from Enid, I wrote,

Started flying Monday. That B-26 is a much hotter airplane than I figured. My instructor, Captain Hyman, has flown them all and he claims that it is hotter than the P-40 - still with all of the complexity of a multi-engine craft. I think that I'll do OK, but it is tough going because they demand absolute perfection. Since half of our class of eighteen are captains or above (one is a Lt. Colonel), you can readily see my competition. Many of them have many thousand hours in similar planes.

This B-26 reminds me of the "Spirit of St. Louis" when Lindbergh speaks of feeling as though he were balanced on a pin point: you just think "Right Turn" and you're in a right bank whipping around. It's a quieter, smoother running plane than the B-25, and the meticulous workmanship is obvious; my instructor compares the B-25 to the B-26 as the Model T to the Cadillac, but I think that the B-26 is more like a fabulously expensive, enormously overpowered, heavy racing car. It certainly isn't a light plane: 50 ft. length - 70 ft. wingspan - 30,000 lbs. - 4,000 BHP.

Borrowed Leave Time

Transition training proceeded without any hitches. When completed, I borrowed much of the leave time that I would have coming for the rest of my Air Force tour, and spent it with Father and Mother in Oak Park, Illinois. I did this because I figured that, once in Korea, whether I had leave time or not, I would get Rest and Recuperation time in Japan.

Combat Crew Training at Langley Air Force Base

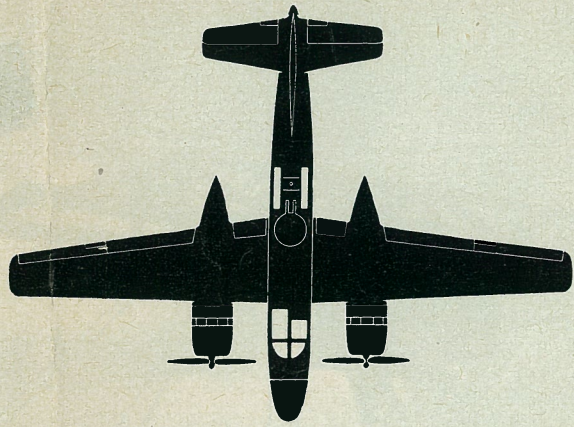
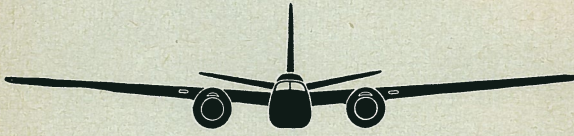
After leave, I reported to Combat Crew Training at Langley AFB, Virginia. There I was joined by the navigator, Lt. Dick Bashaw, and the gunner, Airman Stuart Hoffman, that I would fly with in Korea. Here we were checked out on all of the weapon systems, and flew day and night navigation missions.

Korean Armistice: Assigned to Laon, France

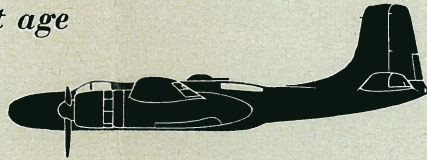
As we completed training, the Armistice was signed in Korea. Awaiting other assignment, we were held at Langley.

Happy days! We were assigned to Laon AB, France, to serve out the last two and one half years of my enlistment. The only black cloud was that smarty pants me had borrowed so much leave time that I could have used to enjoy Europe.

World War II Veteran



holds its own in the new jet age



the Douglas B-26 **Invader**

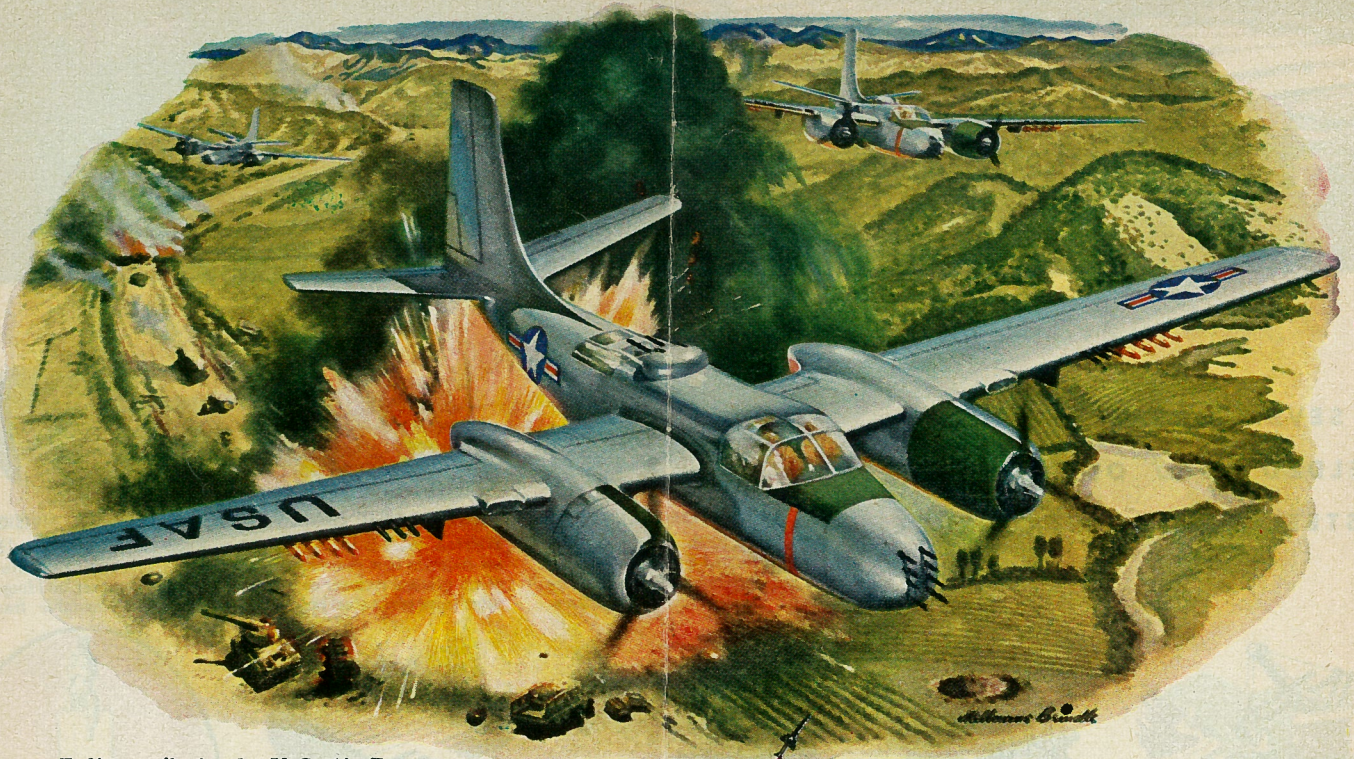
During World War II, over both Europe and the Pacific, the Douglas B-26 Invader spearheaded major allied advances. It was still the standard USAF light bomber when war broke out in Korea.

Laminar-flow, high-speed wing design gives Invader the speed and maneuvera-

bility of a piston-engine fighter. With 3-man crew and 6,000-lb. bomb load, combat radius is over 900 miles. Firepower is crushing . . . sixteen .50 caliber machine guns, fourteen of them in the nose and wings. Despite the advent of fast new jets, the Douglas B-26 Invader's

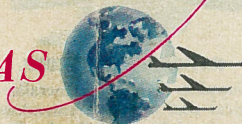
agility and heavy armament have made it a mainstay in advanced, low-level ground support of our troops.

Performance of the B-26 Invader is another example of Douglas leadership. *Faster and farther with a greater payload* is a basic rule of Douglas design.



Enlist to fly in the U. S. Air Force

Depend on **DOUGLAS**



First in Aviation

14. OVERSEAS SERVICE

Because of the large number of memorable experiences packed into this two and one half years, it is the longest chapter. There is not a day goes by that I do not reflect on some happening of this period.

Laon Air Base

On November 3, 1953, we arrived at Laon Air Base, France. This was originally a WWII German airfield, taken over late in the war by Americans. The Autobiographical movie, "A Fighter Pilot's Story", shows the tarpaper shacks that they lived in. Eight years later, those tar paper shacks were still there, and we lived in them. The shacks had a rough door at each end; a rectangular concrete floor; walls sheathed in plywood from packing crates; four non-opening windows, each covered with translucent plastic that let in light but no view; four metal cots; metal racks on which to hang our clothes; and, in the exact center, a pressed steel coal stove for heat.

During winter, we would be very cold in there. In order to get up on a winter morning, it was essential to have heat. So we would take turns being responsible for the stove. The trick was for everyone to go to bed at the same time. The fire tender would "bank the fire" by putting in fresh coal, then would set the damper in the stove pipe and would set the bottom of the stove air control so as to give just enough draft to keep the fire barely alive all night long. First thing in the morning, the fire tender would open the damper and the air control to give a quick roaring fire, then would jump back into bed, waiting for the room to warm up.

The showers and toilets were in separate squat concrete buildings. To go there, you slipped on your combat boots and your heavy overcoat. Meals were in the Officers Club. The runways were concrete, however the taxiways, roads, and some paths were interlocking Perforated Steel Plates over mud. The rest of the paths were just mud. There were no aircraft hangers. The maintenance crews labored outside in all weather, which in Northern France included rain, snow, sleet, and just plain cold. When they worked on an engine, they would rig a little tent over the plane's engine mounts.

During much of the year, Class A uniform did not include dress shoes, but rather combat boots, or paratrooper boots if you were aircrew.

A church official, who visited during particularly bad weather, was quoted in the state-side newspapers as saying that conditions at Laon AB were worse than he had seen in

Korea during hostilities there. I didn't care. I was flying a dream airplane on simulated combat missions. Luckily my health held good, and relief was close by in the town of Laon. For a weekend drive, on roads without speed limits, Paris was just 90 miles South and Brussels was just 90 miles North. Planes were also generally available for taking turns in going to Kaiserslautern or Munich, Germany, with Nice Airport on the Riviera named as the "Alternate" weather diversion ("It's always VFR at Nice Le Var").

That December, I flew to London, England. I found it to be more foreign than Northern Europe. Nearly all of the automobiles seemed ancient, especially the taxicabs. Yes, the food was all over-boiled. I often encountered undecipherable English, whereas Europeans who spoke English were generally quite clear. The purpose of this trip was to buy Mother and Father something for their upcoming twenty-fifth Wedding Anniversary. Shopping the silver district, I selected a sterling pedestal dish for serving treats. As I write this, we have it in our dining room.

My First Automobile

During a week of bad weather, most officers spent their evenings at the Club, drinking and gambling. I think that for many of them it was an expression of their manhood to be able to hold their own in a game of table stakes poker. Most of them were not able to hold their own - I was. My first week, I won enough to take a weekend train to Paris and, for \$1,650.00, purchase my first automobile, a brand new yellow MG TF Sports Car. I was one ebullient grand toff. I actually nurtured a fantasy of becoming an automobile racer.

This was during the romantic age of the English sports car, and I was swept up in the magic of driving on the edge in autos designed to really perform. Every month, "Road and Track" magazine regaled me with exciting reports of races run using standard MG's. As a young Air Force pilot addicted to risk taking, I could imagine myself double-clutch downshifting into a sharp corner, then storming past competitors in the tricky "S" curves. Just about every day, I would take my little beauty out to practice fancy maneuvers on the curvy back roads.

Most weekends, I would take little trips, eating in country restaurants; staying in little inns. On one of these jaunts, I came around a curve to see a blaze on the right hillside. Spinning around, I sped back to the last village to report it. Dashing into a little grocery, with a lot of arm waving I got across my message. The proprietor doffed his apron and rushed to a little park, with me close behind. Up in the gazebo bandstand was a brass band; its few members were in

resplendent uniforms. With shouts and pointing, the grocer interrupted the music. Whereupon, one of the players put down his instrument, doffed his hat, and ran off to gather his fire fighters. I stayed a while to listen to the music and watch the audience at their picnics. When I went on my way, I noticed that the fire had been put out; the firemen had departed.

Christmas Eve Mass

On Christmas Eve, 1953, some of the more religious officers convinced me to accompany them to Midnight High Mass at the Laon Cathedral. In the Middle Ages, Laon was a fortified town, with a still existing high stone wall surrounding the oldest part on the rounded top of a solitary hill. At its center is the cathedral. Not overly large, architectural authorities consider its style to be a link between the Romanesque and the Gothic styles. Gargoyles of screaming oxen commemorate the Miracle of Laon: during construction, the oxen voluntarily, without drivers, dragged the sleds carrying stone up the steep slopes to the building site.

We parked on the large cobblestone square in front. In the dark, I saw a steady movement of silent groups through the large portal into the dimly lit interior. There were no pews. As we entered, we heard the beginning of the ceremony. Though I could not see the altar past the crowd, I observed shifting shadows on the walls. The singing of the Latin High Mass completed the scene. I remember "fa/fa/fa/fa/fa - do, re, mi;" then the ka-ching of a small brass bell. I was convinced on the spot that ritual and setting lends magic to religious observance. I was certainly swept away.

Sidi Silimane

Because the B-26 did not have any anti-icing equipment, we dared not fly it in any icing conditions. So that first winter we flew our aircraft down to Sidi Silimane, French Morocco, to do our simulated combat missions. We had one big problem on the firing ranges: when we dove down to strafe targets, the locals would dash out to pick up the shell casings. The poor artisans needed the brass, and life was very cheap indeed. The range officers were driven to distraction. Luckily no local was ever injured. I gave Mother brass trays made by those artisans.

It was pleasant living in tents in that warm place. The radio phonograph I bought there gave my tentmates some pleasure. When I brought it back to Laon, it would not work. For the cold of Northern France, I had to disassemble the

turntable, clean out all of the grease and introduce light oil. Then I could play pieces like Debussy's "La Mer" conducted by Toscanini and Stravinsky's "Fire Bird Suite" conducted by Stokowski, until my fellows would cry for Jazz, swing, ballads, and showtunes, all of which I also enjoyed.

Our 38th Tactical Bombardment Wing had as its primary mission "Night Intrusion", so a good portion of our training was done in the dark. Of course, the night itself added dangers. While I was there, the few fatalities we suffered were during night operations. They were all during my first winter, there in Sidi Silimane:

We had two configurations of B-26's: one type had a solid nose to be fitted with machine guns, and/or 75MM cannon; the other type had a greenhouse nose for use by a navigator acting as a bombardier for level bombing. When our B-26's were at rest on the ramp, the three bladed propellers were set so that we could walk freely around the aircraft, without hitting a propeller blade. One night, on the dark ramp, after starting the engines, one pilot noticed the Bomb Bay Indicator "Open". After repeated tries of the switch, he asked the navigator to step out of the greenhouse nose to check the Bomb Bay. In the dark, the navigator walked back directly into a fast rotating prop. Much later, the pilot told me that he had heard loud thumps of body sections striking the fuselage. This horrible death affected all of us. That very afternoon this navigator had visited me in my tent to check out the radio-phonograph that I had just purchased. I liked him. His absent minded death was the kind of mistake that many of us could have made.

Another night, we had a low level bomber stream exercise. We were to practice flying a navigation course at several hundred feet over the flat desert, with bombers at five minute intervals. Again, it was pitch black on the ramp. There was a row of us parked with our engines running, waiting our turn to taxi out for takeoff, many having long ago gone. Suddenly a door of the Operations Shack opened, spilling a shaft of light, then spilling a stream of running shapes with waving flashlight beams. I wondered what was going on. One shape ran to the front of our plane, signaling a slash across his throat. I shut down the engines. I joined the crowd converging on the Operations Shack. There had been a crash!

Carrying a pilot, a check-pilot, a navigator (in the nose), and a gunner, the pilot had attempted to land in a farmer's field. He ended up plowing through stones piled up as a boundary. The navigator and the pilot had been killed. The check-pilot had been turned into a vegetable. The gunner in the rear had not been injured. I was told that their last transmission was the frantic check-pilot screaming,

"The road! The road! The field! The field!"

The Wing Flying Safety Officer held a hearing to determine the cause of the accident. I was one who testified. I remembered that I had flown that aircraft across the Mediterranean from our base in France. On that flight, I had discovered that one of the fuel tank handles was incorrectly set; when it was pointed toward the right wing tank, it was actually drawing from the fuselage tank. (It was as if you turned your shower handle to "Cold" but got hot water.) I wrote this up in the Maintenance Log as a serious "Safety of Flight" problem. As we flew a different plane every time we went up, there was no mechanism for the pilot writing up the problem to follow up. Following up was the responsibility of Wing Flight Test. Well, I gave my testimony, including my belief that, had the problem not been corrected, the crash could have been the result of the engines running out of fuel. (Just try to imagine the shock felt by the crew if both engines did shut down as they were cruising at night several hundred feet above the desert.) The reply to my testimony was that the fuel valve had been removed and found to have no restrictions to fuel flow. After explaining very carefully that that was not the problem, I let it go. A stupid mistake may have been made. If so, perhaps it was felt that court marshalling someone would not have brought back the dead or the comatose.

The Franc Run

In early 1954, the French franc was government pegged in France at 350 to the American dollar. In Brussels, the franc traded at 400 to the dollar. Those officers living off the base with their families spent a lot of francs. So, a monthly "Franc Run" was initiated. I was asked to make one of these runs. I was given a bag full of US Military Script, and away I went in my MG. I had a good weekend, then brought back the bag, now full of francs. Later, I learned that what I had done was illegal. Had the border guard who stamped my Carne de Passage searched the car, I might well have wound up in a French prison. The new rookie had been stuck with the dangerous job. I never made another franc run.

Base Construction

After that first Winter, construction went into full swing to give us better facilities. Beginning with paved taxiways and roads, we soon had a new Control Tower, movie theater, bachelor officers quarters, enlisted men barracks, and each squadron had its own beautiful hanger.

In the new BOQ, I had a private room, with a bathroom that I

shared with the next room. On the second floor, it had a commanding view of the entire base. To make it liveable, in my travels, I picked up Arabian rugs, camel saddles, a fine Grundig radio, to which I connected a Phillips phonograph turntable and a German AEG tape recorder. Off of the lobby wall of a German hotel, I purchased an oil painted copy of Rembrandt's "Man in the Golden Helmet", in which I saw a resemblance to my Grandfather Strehlke. As I write this, that painting is in the front hall of our home.

Quite a contrast with my previous Winter's quarters.

Cheating Death in the Air

During my tour, the navigator walking into the prop and the crew crashing in the desert were our total fatalities connected with the B-26. There were other crashes, and, of course, most pilots had near misses. Generally, these near misses were kept quiet by those involved. Although I was never involved in a crash, I was involved in two near misses, and neither one was kept quiet.

The first was while night dive bombing at the practice range. We had an optical sight mounted at the top of the instrument panel that projected an apparent lighted cross out in front. The target was illuminated with long-burning flares. During the dive, I would keep the target lined up in the sight. From the right seat, the navigator would monitor the altimeter. As we passed through 1,000 feet, he was to slug me on the right shoulder to signal me to drop a bomb and to pull up. On the first pass, the target suddenly looked way too big. I released a bomb and pulled back so hard that the wings might have come off, then I glanced down at the altimeter to see that we bottomed out below 100 feet. The range officer dryly commented, "Strehlke, wasn't that a little low?" I am afraid that I yelled obscenities at the new navigator. He responded that he had given me a light tap on the shoulder. Mercy!

The second was on a night navigation mission. Relive this with me:

Behind us, there are about six planes lined up for takeoff. As our navigator reads the Pretakeoff Checklist, I do the checks. The tower gives us clearance for takeoff. I acknowledge and we finish the checks. I take the runway, line up with the runway lights, and push forward the throttles. We surge ahead. The runway lights race past. Ahead, is a black void.

Luckily, no one had been hurt. The colonel was quoted as saying that I could not have gotten off the ground in High Blower. Of course, one difference is that I had pulled back on the throttles until detonation ceased, whereas he had left the throttles full on and continuously detonating.

At the time, I made no comments. However, I did believe that, when we had interrupted the Pretakeoff Checklist to acknowledge the Tower's permission to takeoff, we could well have been in the section that involves checking the High Blower's operation. When we resumed the checklist, we could have skipped over resetting to Low Blower. With complex aircraft, there are many opportunities for dangerous mistakes.

Now, please, some eerie music. The gunner assigned to me that night had never before flown with me. That same gunner was in the B-26 crash that had killed two and left a third comatose. He had been uninjured. While in gunnery training, a C-47 he was in had crashed, with several people killed. He had also been uninjured in that disaster.

The Mysterious Couple

After a few months, I tired of the MG automobile. Its top speed was only 72 MPH, which was really too slow for a sports car in no-speed-limit Europe. Besides, with the top up and the side curtains in place, at anything over 60 MPH everything would flap so violently that it seemed that pieces would fly off. In addition, it rode very hard on cobblestones. One American automobile critic compared its high speed ride to being dragged down the road in a box. A pretty thing, it was well suited to tootling at 25 MPH down an English lane. I thought that I was ready for a REAL car.

As the weather warmed, some weekends in the Officers Club I noticed the presence of a gorgeous young woman, always with an older civilian, both expensively dressed. I learned that they were Dutch. I could see no apparent reason for their presence. Our base was certainly not a ritzy spa. I assumed that she was a high priced courtesan visiting with her "promoter". When she was approached by my peers, she made it known that she was interested only in men who happened to own yellow MG Sports Cars. Suspiciously, I was the only officer in Laon who met her criterion. Had this mysterious couple learned of my poker winnings? In any case, I stayed way clear. A navigator of our squadron, however, was so smitten with her that he insisted on buying my ten month old yellow MG for fifty dollars less than I had paid for it, just so that he could fulfill her condition. Right after, the couple stopped visiting. I hope that it worked out for him.

My Second Automobile

Immediately after selling the MG, I took the train for Paris to purchase for \$2,300.00 an Austin Healey Sports Car. This was the first model. It looked similar to the later Austin Healey 3000, but had cleaner lines. As I drove off, I gave to the dealer a letter for him to mail to USAA Insurance, deleting the MG and adding the Austin Healey. Breaking the car in, I drove at variable slow speeds. After some miles, I fell in behind an old French car. When it slowed way down and pulled to the right, I passed on the left. Just as I came abreast, the Frenchman turned into the side of my car. I was sent directly into a high curb. The impact partially broke the frame at a left front wheel suspension attachment point. Immediately afterwards, the other driver motioned me to join him in an inn across the street. As he called the gendarmes, he had them serve me a bottle of wine. Did he think I was stupid enough to drink some? The gendarmes called the US Air Police. When they came, one of them very rudely interrogated me. This was one of the few times I ever pulled rank. I put him at a brace to establish our conversation on a more polite level. I have no idea whether or not the Frenchman had deliberately rammed me, or, as he said, had merely pulled far to the right in order to more easily make his sharp left turn. Incidentally, this was the time of the most violent of the "Americans go Home!" actions. Anyway, I limped the car all of the rest of the way to the base. Early the next week, when I contacted USAA about the accident, they informed me that they had not received my insurance order. I telephoned the Parisian dealer. My letter was still in his pocket; he had yet to mail it. After a touch of my anger, he phoned USAA. They accepted his explanation! They said that I had acted in good faith, and that they would pay for the damages! I have been with USAA ever since. Their adjuster gave me \$1,200.00. I sold the damaged car to a friend for \$1,100.00. He had a local welder effect a repair. When my tour ended, he and his wife were still enjoying it.

My Third Automobile

As I wouldn't again do business with the Parisian dealer, I hitched a B-26 ride to Kaiserlautern to buy another Austin Healey for \$2,200.00. This was when I discovered that German prices for most things were lower than those in Paris.

This car was a powder blue metallic, with chrome plated wire wheels. It looked light as a feather. One year later, a friend called it, "The prettiest car I had ever seen." It had three speeds forward, plus an overdrive that was engaged electrically by a toggle switch on the dash (or as the

English manual termed it, "the Facia"). A roadster, it had a convertible top, and side curtains to be mounted to keep out the weather.

On one of my practice runs, I was leaving the base, with the top down, dressed in full class "A" uniform. I decided to show off for the gate guard. Throwing a snappy return salute, I floored the accelerator. The rear tires squealed, the car shot forward, and my billed cap flipped off my head to land in the road behind. As I stopped and walked back to retrieve it, the guard silently turned away.

Bombing the Base Commander's Aircraft

On July 29, 1954, as more than fifty percent of our aircraft were in commission for combat duty, I was allowed to check one out for a weekend holiday flight (whoops! "navigational training mission") to Munich. So I made up a crew of a navigator friend and a gunner acquaintance. As I finished my preflight paperwork in Operations, my squadron commander grabbed me to order that I be part of a formation overflight of the base to happen immediately after my takeoff, then I could fly on to Munich.

The formation would be nine planes in three plane elements, with the elements in echelon right, off of his lead element. I was to be the leader of the third element.

We took off in a stream, climbed to 1,000 feet toward the North, then joined up in good form. Major Mathews made a turn toward the South that was rather too steep for us to follow crisply, we were the tail of the whip. He waited impatiently for us to regain position, then made another steep 180 degree turn back toward the base for our overflight. This turn started out not too bad, but then he steepened it even further, probably to line up more precisely for the center of the base.

I could see the second element struggling to get up with him, and could see that, without heroic measures, we had no hope of reforming before reaching the base. Failing in this, we would be the objects of scorn. So, gaining eye contact in turn with each of my wingmen, I pumped my right fist rapidly up and down. I then shoved in Mixture Full Rich, Full Propellers, and Full Throttles. After a maddening pause, we began to surge forward. I began planning ahead as to how to apply brakes as I arrived close to position, an over-shoot would be as bad as lagging.

Here we come! Throttles Full off! Cowl Flaps Full Open!
Gear Down! Bomb Bay doors Open! Cross-control with Ailerons Full Right and Rudder Left to hold our line.

As we slide in perfectly, Controls centered! Throttles back part way! Propellers back to Normal Cruise! Cowl Flaps Closed! Gear Up! Bomb Bay Doors Closed!

"George, you dropped something."

Another voice reported damage to the left side of our tail.

We landed. Our Munich holiday forgotten, we listened as a laughing crowd gathered to vie with one another in describing the view after the front end of the informally constructed luggage rack broke loose in the bomb bay, dumping tool boxes, parcels, and luggage, then broke loose in the rear to flip back for its encounter with the left horizontal stabilizer.

Some were quite inventive in their gestures as they charaded the bomb stream of objects tumbling down to crash on either side of the base commander's aircraft.

Some interesting results:

1. My B-4 soft sided bag, while cosmetically damaged, fully protected my gear.
2. No authority figure ever mentioned the incident to me. It must have been treated as a failed final product test of the squadron's luggage rack design.
3. Entries made in my "Individual Flight Record":
 30. Accident - Minor - B-26C, 29 Jul 54, Laon AB, APO17 - Lost bomb bay rack in flight when opened bomb bay.
 30. Cleared for flying following aircraft accident.
4. Other than a period of pointing and laughing as I entered the officer's clubs, I was still "George", with the same friends and enemies as before the incident.
5. To my knowledge, this was Major Mathews' last formation.

Wheelus Air Base, Tripoli

That Fall and Winter of 1954-1955 we again fled the ice of Europe for the climate of North Africa. This time we went to the kingdom of Tripoli. The USAF Strategic Air Command had built a gigantic air base, Wheelus, to serve its new B-52's.

SAC constructed fine facilities for its permanent party and for its flight crews; however, there was no room for us. We were housed in tents clear across the runways, and just off of the beach. This was great! As we were way off on our own, we could spend all day in our flight coveralls, or swim suits. I remember getting up late one morning, then meandering to our mess tent for a steak and eggs breakfast.

I ate it on the beach.

Of course we would get spruced up to go over to the main base, or in to town. The problem was the infrequent transportation. So, from a SAC officer rotating to the states, I bought a Vespa Motor Scooter for \$150.00. These were perfect wheels for me. When I came down from a night flight, I would clean up, jump on the scooter, and a few minutes later I would be joining the poker game at the base Officers Club. That Officers Club also had all Italian chefs with fine culinary skills.

In Tripoli's old quarter, I bought the rug that we now have in our den. The pictures I took there could serve as illustrations for the Arabian Nights.

A member of the permanent party remembered me from high school. He was a class behind me. I did not remember him, but we became friendly. He and his wife drove me to tour the ancient Roman resort of Sebratha, which was still being uncovered from the sands of time. You could not properly call them ruins as they had been covered too fast to have any significant weathering. Those Romans lived very luxuriously.

On another day, they drove me many miles inland to the abandoned German camp for allied prisoners at Garian. I was interested to see that, because of the shortage of wood, the mostly concrete construction was quite permanent. One end of the large dining hall was decorated with a large mural of the coastline of North Africa fleshed out as a beautiful naked woman: "Our Lady of Garian".

Tripoli is part of the great Sahara Dessert. At that time most of its people literally scratched a bare subsidence with sticks in the soil for planting seed. Nowhere else have I seen such misery. Nowhere else have I seen greater pride of bearing. Because of the danger of contracting disease, we were told to avoid any physical contact. One of their problems was the eye disease trachoma. I saw many men, women, and children with only the sight of one eye. I wondered what happened to those who lost the sight of both eyes. With all of the new wealth just arriving from oil and the USAF base going only to the king and his minions, I had no trouble understanding the ease with which Quadafi later took power.

I was up flying one afternoon, when way off inland I saw what looked like California surf just after a wave has broken. The Control Tower started repeating an urgent message for all aircraft in the area to immediately land and tie down. We were about to experience a Ghibli. Believe me, as I have experienced both, a West Texas dust storm is nothing at all compared with a Ghibli. Gathering its strength as it travels

over the entire Sahara Desert, it is a boiling tearing mass that can last for days sandblasting anything in its path. That was one crowded landing pattern that we joined. Once on the ground, I taxied at near takeoff speed over to our ramp. The ground crew was waiting to tie the plane down to the concrete. Crews also went around putting extra lines on our tents. Then we rode it out. This one was over by morning. Just a small one. We all awoke with our faces covered with fine pancake makeup.

One mail call I received a letter from Mother saying that she and Father were on a business/pleasure trip in Europe, and told me the itinerary. I got clearance to take a B-26 that weekend for a long distance navigational mission to Rome. I fired off a wire to the hotel where they would be staying. Picking up a navigator and a gunner, we took off. As we neared Rome, I contacted Champino Tower. The tower asked, "Is pilot's name Strohike?" I answered, "Yes." The tower continued that my Mother and Father were there and had been asking about me. Well, neither of them had ever seen me perform magic on the stage; neither of them had ever seen me make a high school speech or seen me debate; neither of them had ever seen me fly. I decided to put on a show for them. "Champino Tower, this is US Air Force 4567; clearance to land with 360 overhead approach." "US Air Force 4567; you are cleared to land Runway 170, 360 approach, winds calm." I brought the B-26 down to 500 feet straight toward the runway, then, before reaching the near end, I peeled up to the left in a climbing turn to 1,000 feet, preparing the power, and dropping the gear, continuing around dropping to 500 feet as I turned Final, I dropped one quarter flaps and brought it home. Father took a picture at the top of the 360, but the plane only showed on the print as a tiny dot.

This was their last night in Rome, but we did have the evening together. It was quite exciting to cross paths so far from home.

Our crew stayed at the Hotel Mediteraneo. That weekend we toured the sights. I took many slides. Knowing that I would soon be home on leave, on the mail-in processing tag, I put my parent's address.

Trashing My Car on the Autobahn

Just before flying down to Tripoli, I had left my second Austin Healey with the German dealer for its first tune up. It was by now fully broken in. After completing my Christmas shopping, on my drive back to Laon, France, I wanted to see some real action on the Autobahn. Relive this day with me:

The Autobahns have no speed limit. Built by Hitler to rush

military transport, there are no cross streets, and there are separate two lane roads for each direction. Just outside of Kaiserslautern, on a long straight stretch, with no other vehicles in sight, I floor the accelerator.

With quick glances down to the speedometer, I watch as the needle passes 100 MPH. Flashing by on my right is a large rectangular sign, with about four lines of German; as it is not in an international warning shape, I pay it no mind. My last glance down discloses 111 MPH. I look up at an automobile, coming straight at me, in my left hand lane.

WHERE DID HE COME FROM? I feel the full tingle of shock.

Steering wheel full right for the right hand lane. The softly sprung Healey leans left, and the rear end breaks loose to the left.

Steering wheel full left to correct and to throw me fully into the right hand lane. Over-correct, rather, and the rear end now drifts to the right.

Meanwhile, the other driver applies full brakes, and is now passing me on the left in a slow dreamlike pace. So close is he beside me that I cannot counter-correct without contact. "Come on! Come on!"

After an age of a second, he is clear, but it is too late for me. My car is in a full counter-clockwise spin, tending toward the left side of the road. My last look through the windshield impresses a snapshot of forest down below the railing of a bridge that I seem to be on.

As the car is now pointed toward the railing, I decide to maintain the spin. Stomping on the clutch and the brakes, I squeeze closed my eyes, and put both arms behind the steering wheel to clasp it to my chest (no safety belt).

Immediately, I feel a terrific smash to my back! Then a sensation of floating. My mind's eye sees me breaking through the guard rail and sailing down to the tree tops below. LAND RIGHT, I command, then immediately think, how could I possibly land right to survive this?

Another smash to the front! I must have hit a tree top. This is it!

Silence ...

Except for a soft steady hiss, no sound at all ...

My slowly opening eyes see the hood standing straight up, blocking the windshield. Out the left side, I see that I AM

STILL ON THE BRIDGE! I cannot open the left door. Looking to the right, I see that there is no right side to the car. I step out and see that I am neatly parked flush with the right curb. The front end is smashed up, as is the rear, and all four wheels are broken - the poor crumpled lump sits flat on its bottom.

The right seat passenger of the other car, a US Army officer, comes running toward me. As he arrives, the blood drains from his face, and he sits on the curb to keep from fainting. I, on the other hand, am in full manic elation. Born again! I laugh and laugh. There is not so much as a spot on my uniform.

After a while, people start to arrive: Some German road workers, two Air policemen, a tow truck. On its rear, the tow truck has a special over-sized fork lift, with which the wreck is scooped up and carried away to a service station in Kaiserslautern.

The Air Police take down my story: "Lieutenant, you may be in trouble." "Hell, they can put me in Leavenworth for thirty years and I figure I am still ahead."

With the German road crew, I survey the scene:

We determine that my first point of contact, with the rear end, had been the middle horizontal guard rail on the left side of the bridge. It was knocked loose to fall below the bridge. Luckily, I had also contacted one of the steel uprights, which was light weight enough to bend, taking some of the energy out of the hit. (Had I not struck the upright, I would have been decapitated by the top rail on my way flying off the bridge). Spinning across both lanes, I then struck the right hand middle horizontal railing, bending it, then slid to a stop at the curb.

We went down below the left side of the bridge to collect everything that had been in the trunk, including the leather-strapped-in spare wheel. Below the right side of the bridge, we collected everything from the car interior. Excepting the Atmos clock for my parents, I was able to salvage all of the Christmas presents I had purchased. I bought my parents another Atmos, and had the broken one repaired - it still keeps time in our living room.

Why was the other car facing me on the bridge? The Air Police explained that, during WWII, at this location we had bombed out the bridges for each direction. The Germans had to date only replaced one of the two bridges. Traffic from the other direction was routed onto the left hand lane of this new bridge - thus there were two lanes at this point, with only the right lane for my direction. To warn of this

hazard, there were no flashing lights, no lane marks, no yellow cones, only the large rectangular sign in German.

Returning to my base by train, I walked up to the officer's club bar and presented my driver's license to my friend the Provost Marshall, asking him to keep it for six months. We shared a laugh and a drink.

I have retained my affection for swift cars. However, that day on the Autobahn ended my fantasy of becoming a sports car racer.

Christmas in Oak Park, Illinois

Father, Mother, Sally, and I had a warm family Christmas, 1955. I delivered all of the presents that had survived the Autobahn wreck, including the Teddy Bear for the youngest Whitehouse. We also went to Bay City, Michigan, to visit with Mother's family.

One evening, father projected the slides that he had arranged for his lectures to travel agents' groups. "Hey Dad, I took that same gold leaf ceiling; I set the camera on the floor and guessed at the time exposure; what exposure did you use?" Father, "I'm not sure." ... "I took that same fountain, Dad; I was trying to freeze the water; you got it perfectly." ... "Wait a minute! That backlighted picture of the balloon stand features our gunner; you have some of my pictures mixed in here." Once we got it all sorted out, I was pleased that he asked to make copies of some of my slides for his use.

Escape and Evasion

This is how I came to be the Wing Survival Training Officer.

At the time that I served, the Air Force put combat air crews through "Survival Training". It can be no exposure after forty years to reveal that a major subject was how to escape from capture, or, even better, how to evade capture.

In April, 1955, my crew navigator and I were sent to the course held at Bad Tolz, Germany, in a former SS headquarters. With its high gates, stone walls, slate roofs, small barred windows, and dark confinement cells, the compound had been permanently established for very evil purposes. The very atmosphere of the place impressed us with the serious importance of what we were being taught. I would exert every effort to avoid confinement in a place like this.

After days of lectures and demonstrations, we were sent off on the field exercise. We were to play downed air crews, traveling in pairs through "enemy territory" to reach "friendly territory". We would be pursued by instructors, who not only knew the land, but who also had digested all of the tricks of previous participants. Capture would be by a simple tap on the shoulder. If captured, escape could be, either to "friendly territory", or, if taken all of the way to the compound, escape could be to the Dependents Snack Bar. They told us that no one, once captured, had ever escaped.

Wearing flight suits, we were each given some supplies: a portion of nylon parachute canopy, some nylon parachute cord, two cans of food, canteen, compass, roughly drawn map, flashlight, knife, etc. A truck, covered so that we could not see out, carried us into the night. We were dropped off in pairs, some miles apart. My navigator and I set off to prove our mettle.

To best cover our movements, we traveled by the light of the moon. Before dawn, we would settle on a good hiding place, and would bed down, with our nylon parachute material acting as very cold sleeping wraps. Encountering no rain, I soon loosened up to enjoy a wonderful camping trip. Think of it: we were traveling light through the beautiful Bavarian countryside. There was rolling, neatly tilled, farmland; each plot with its own little Catholic shrine. There were large areas of what looked from an airplane to be wild forest, but in fact were precise rows of large trees with their tops merging into solid canopy. Under these trees, there was no underbrush and little debris. Once, we spied a peasant couple, each with a giant rake, tending the forest floor just as though it was part of their own yard. Tucked here and there were pretty tiny villages, straight out of Disney's "Snow White and the Seven dwarfs." All of this, and the fun of cops and robbers.

Our first objective was an intermediate safe place that we were to reach in three days. There an instructor would resupply us. He would also furnish us with another map to the ultimate goal - the "friendly territory".

As we dribbled in to this half-way spot, we shared laughs over our experiences. When we had all checked in, surprise! We were each given beer, bread, a potato, other vegetables, and a live chicken. Available were kindling wood, pots, pans, and matches. I was convulsed watching some of the others struggling with their chickens. The instructor offered no help. Having raised chickens, I showed the others how to kill one, bleed it, dunk it in scalding water, strip off the feathers, dress it, then cook it. I am afraid that I was a bit of a show off. I am not so sure that the instructor was pleased with my making it a little easier for

the others. With my ego fed, as well as my stomach, I was now ready to cream the rest of the exercise.

Come dusk, we resumed our journey. In order to keep us apart, each pair was given a different direction to maintain for the first hour. Believe me, none of us wanted to clump together and be easier to catch.

After another day, I was getting mighty hungry. I was digging up tiny potatoes from farmers' fields (the dogs would bark, lights would come on, and we would slide back into the shadows). I also tried little green apples. I tried them every way I could think of: raw, boiled, cooked on a stick over our tiny fire - they were very unsatisfactory. One bonanza was a bush of wild blueberries. My partner wouldn't touch them, so I gorged. (Remembering this feast, when I planned our current backyard, I put in six blueberry bushes.)

On the final day, we broke our rule of not traveling in daylight. At midnight, not earlier or later, we were supposed to cross the boundary stream into "friendly territory". We wanted to be well situated in advance. Before nightfall, we hoped to reach high ground where we could survey the area for "enemy", then position ourselves for the final dash across the stream to personal glory.

As we topped our chosen hill, suddenly out of nowhere an instructor appeared running toward us. I told my partner, "You go left! I'll go right!" He was so tired that he was captured almost immediately. Meanwhile I dove into a thicket and burrowed in deep. I could hear my navigator say, "Why don't you just let him go?" Then steps went away.

Sitting in hiding, I considered my position. The thicket was not large. The instructor knew I was in there. Once he had turned my navigator over to someone else, he could come back for me. So, waiting for an extended silence, I then, with canny stealth, made my way out. The instructor was waiting for me behind a tree. A short race ended with his tap on my shoulder. Terrible! Captured in sight of the finish line! I was full of anger at myself for the bad decision we had made to move during daylight. The more I stewed, the more adrenaline surged through my body. I must get away!

I was driven to the compound. To forestall escape, I was made to strip down to my t shirt, long john underwear, and socks. When the attendant momentarily left the room with my outer garments, I bolted out another door. I was moving fast right and left through a maze of hallways and rooms, keeping in mind the general direction of the Dependents Snack Bar (the safe house). I remember storming down one long ground level hall that had windows to the central courtyard. As I passed each window, I could see on the outside my pursuers

keeping pace with me. With the front entrance to the Snack Bar on the courtyard, they probably thought that they had me sealed off. However, just like in the movies, I went in through the kitchen. One of the cooks looked very alarmed; he must have feared that I was violent; he backed away with a knife in his hand.

Once in the Dependents Snack Bar, I took my place at the end of the line of wives and children. With my one week beard stubble, in my sweat stained t shirt, in my long john underwear, and in my stockings, I must have been a very strange sight, indeed. I was studiously ignored. At the counter I ordered a hamburger, "medium please", french fries, and a chocolate shake. Nothing was said as I walked right past the cash register without paying, sat down, and, now thoroughly relaxed and pleased with myself, enjoyed my first real meal in days. I was free! I then went back to the barracks to get my camera. A passer-by took my picture in my escape outfit - I still have the slide. Then, without cleaning up, without even changing out of my underwear, I went straight to bed for a twelve hour dreamless SLEEP.

At next morning's debriefing, everyone laughed except the instructor castigating me for the escapade that had so embarrassed their commander. Wow! A legend in my own time! On return to our base, I was assigned the additional duty of Wing Survival Training Officer.

Alas, my fame was fleeting. I learned that my scandalous escape garb caused a rule change at Bad Tolz: "No more escapes in underwear into the Dependents Snack Bar." Some months later, two captured Navy fliers, who had been stripped to their underwear, had an inspiration: they obeyed the new rule by escaping into the Dependents Snack Bar in the buff.

At least I had challenged others to even higher achievement.

My fourth Automobile

Sometime around July, 1955, having retrieved my driver's license from my friend the Provost Marshall, I purchased a new Dyna Panhard Junior Sport. I was intrigued with its unusual construction. At that time I knew of only one other make that had front wheel drive, also French, the Citroen. Another unusual feature was its engine constructed with only two large horizontally opposed aircooled cylinders. The engine was mounted on large pieces of rubber. When it idled, those cylinders rocked about three inches. A true convertible, it had crank up glass windows. Putting up the top, involved first mounting two steel curved side pieces for the windows to crank up into, then raising the fabric cover to attach on the windshield, sealing the edges inside a split

rubber tube on top of the side pieces. It was truly weather proof. A little loud, it did drive nimbly. It was not so fast that I would get in serious trouble.

When flying the B-26, we were now required to wear cast-off jet fighter helmets. One day, my helmet was on the Panhard's flat floor. As I rounded a corner on the base, the helmet rolled over and was interfering with my foot on the accelerator. While reaching down to pick it up, I clumsily ran the car slowly off the road and into a shallow ditch. Without a word being spoken, four passing airmen each took one corner of the car and lifted it (me still inside) back on the road, then walked off - still without a word spoken. It was a very light car.

Transition to B-57's

Around spring, 1955, we were told that the wing was going to return to the states, one squadron at a time, to transition to the B-57. This twin jet had been designed by the British as their Canberra. Its mission was to be tactical nuclear bombardment. Only aircrew would be assigned who had more than one year of their tour remaining. As I was due out in just less than one year, I was not to be included. Unless. Unless I would sign an "indefinite enlistment". What this would mean is that I would serve at the pleasure of the Air Force, and could be let go at any time; however, I would have to petition to request discharge. During the last Reduction in Force, I had watched Captain Senior Pilots given the choice of leaving the service or being downgraded to enlisted men. In any case, I had never looked on the Air force as my career. The Air Force was my youthful adventure. And a grand adventure it had been. I was now looking forward to getting on with my adult life come April, 1956.

So, the squadrons went stateside one at a time. I flew my last B-26 on active duty in November, 1955. I was then assigned to base headquarters as Wing Personal Equipment and Survival Training Officer.

Board Participation

The wing Judge Advocate asked me to sit on a board action against an enlisted man. The charge was concerned with committing numerous offenses. The maximum penalty was a Dishonorable Discharge. As the junior officer, I was charged with gathering all of the facts, determining the witnesses, and presenting this material at the open hearing. It was as though I was the prosecutor, except that board hearings did not have prosecutors, I was a voting member of the board. Also, I was expected to gather facts supporting the charged.

To make it more complicated, the defendant had an assigned officer to present his defense.

Well, this man really had committed a long, long list of petty offenses. However, as he committed these offenses, his squadron commander had negligently failed to ever prescribe company punishment, or to counsel him on the consequences of his actions. It was an easy call. I voted with the majority for acquittal, and we sent a strong message to the colonel who had not done his job.

My Fifth Automobile

Around October, 1955, I decided to make the best automobile purchase I could for next year's civilian life. At a German dealer, I looked over the Gull Wing Mercedes 300SL. Wow! However, I couldn't imagine paying some \$5,000.00 for a car, so I passed it by.

In a London showroom. I saw a Jaguar XK140 Fixed Head Coupe. The room was dark. There were spotlights on the car. A beautifully dressed couple were looking it over, then sat in it as they asked the terms. When they were gone, I sat in it, smelled the leather, stroked the burlled walnut facia, and got out my checkbook. \$3,200.00 all in. There were none in stock, so mine was ordered.

When they contacted me to say it was at the factory, I later learned that the "proper form" was to contact the showroom for an appointment. Instead, I hitched a flight to London; took a train to the factory in Coventry; and presented myself at the factory gate. I was shown to a grubby waiting area and told that the car would not be ready until tomorrow. So, I got a room in a run down hotel. I do not remember my meals. The next day I waited in that same grubby waiting area. They refused to allow me to tour the factory. Finally, I was given my beauty. I could not believe the silky luxury of rolling along in that fantasy down to the dock, where I parked it on the large car ferry to France.

Arriving back at Laon, the headquarters colonel was furious. I had overstayed my weekend pass. He had even considered putting me up for court martial. Instead he docked me several days of remaining leave time. This was the same colonel who, as the squadron commander, had screwed up the handling of the enlisted man that our board had let off. He was also the same colonel who had totaled the B-26 on takeoff in High Blower. I was glad that I had only a short time to serve under him.

Tripoli, Winter 1955-1956

The entire wing went again to Wheelus for practice with the new B-57's. As my legs were too long to allow me to fly the Base Commander's C-47 (they couldn't get past the steering yoke), I was checked out on the T-33 Jet Trainer. I found this very easy to fly, like a very fast and smooth glider. Just a few flights, and I was soloing and taking pictures in the local area. I took some of my ground officer friends up for joy rides.

I returned for a while to Laon, France, then back again to Tripoli. One permanent party officer at Wheelus was surprised to see me return. A check that he had cashed in the poker game on my last trip had bounced. He refused to redeem it, saying that that was just my risk as a gambler. I phoned his commanding officer, explained the situation, and asked for an audience. He invited me over. As I waited in the outer office, the officer in question went into the commanders office. When he exited, he handed me a new check, which I immediately cashed at the base American Express office. The way I and the Air Force figured, gambling debts, being legally uncollectible, were debts of honor.

Winding Down

In early 1956, I made several flights to London, in order to get outfitted for civilian life. I had several suits custom tailored for me at Flights Limited, which was the favored establishment for the RAF. I also had a suit custom tailored at Gieves, which was considered one of the very finest tailors in London. The dollar was absolute king in those days. My suits cost around \$85.00 each.

Back at the Laon base Post Exchange, I purchased my father a solid gold Omega Constellation Certified Chronometer, and a gold Rolex for Mother.

I wanted to make the best investments that I could with all of my excess poker winnings.

The Cheat

It began in the common room of our BOQ. Early for the evening poker game, I sat alone, lazily playing with the deck someone had left on the game table. As I riffled, my eye was captured by strange wriggles. Close inspection revealed that the cards were shade marked.

Immediately, my mind extracted a strange bit from the previous evening: We always played seven card stud, and the Intelligence major who, the month before had joined the game, in spreading my tabled cards for a better view, also spread my three down cards. This same major was a consistent winner. Thousands of dollars was involved. Well, I ran down the hall to another major in our game, telling him of the deck. We rapidly spread the word to some of the regulars. Lots of excitement. First it was decided to go as a group to look in each of our footlockers ("George really does have a footlocker full of money"). We found no clues. Another player drove the 90 miles to Paris to check with suppliers of gaming supplies. Nothing. After several days, I proposed a plan based on my suspicions of the Intelligence major:

We would call a meeting for 7:30PM to discuss the situation. However, everyone but the Intelligence major would arrive at 7:00PM. We would remove all of the furniture from the common room, save just enough chairs to seat everyone but the major. The chairs would be arranged in a semi-circle facing the door. We would sit quietly, awaiting the major. Once he arrived, we would maintain silence to see what he would do.

My plan was adopted. When he entered, he was visibly jarred. He tried to engage individuals in conversation, but no one responded. He started to talk about how sorry he was; how his family was coming over from the States to join him; and how his life could be ruined. He asked, if he were to pay off all of those who were losers, would we let it go? We looked at each other, nodded, and all left the meeting - still in silence. I assume that the major privately contacted each of the affected individuals. Because he seemed to be a nervous person, I have thought that he must have had an occasional shiver in the months succeeding, as he considered the possibility of word leaking out. After the 7:30PM meeting, I heard no more on the subject. I had no further contact with the Intelligence major. We resumed our regular poker game.

Leaving the Air Force

In April, 1956, I drove the Jaguar to the designated French port. Soon after, I packed all of my other gear for shipment to my parents' apartment on Long Island, and boarded a plane for New York city.

It took two days to process me out. I was a full fledged civilian after nearly five years in uniform. I had flown a lot of hours; I had lived some unusual experiences; and I had measured up to tough standards. I was proud of my service. Now I was ready to leave youthful adventure behind and to build an adult life.

Laon Air Base: Winter 1953-1954



Reading "Road and Track"

My First Automobile



My Yellow 1953 MG TF Sports Car on a Belgium Street

Laon Cathedral



Lt. Dick Bashaw,
My Navigator at
Sidi Silimane



Solid Nose B-26



Looking Forward
From Right Seat
At Navigator in
Greenhouse Nose



My Third Automobile



My Metallic Blue 1954 Austin Healey Sports Car

Tripoli: Winter 1954-1955



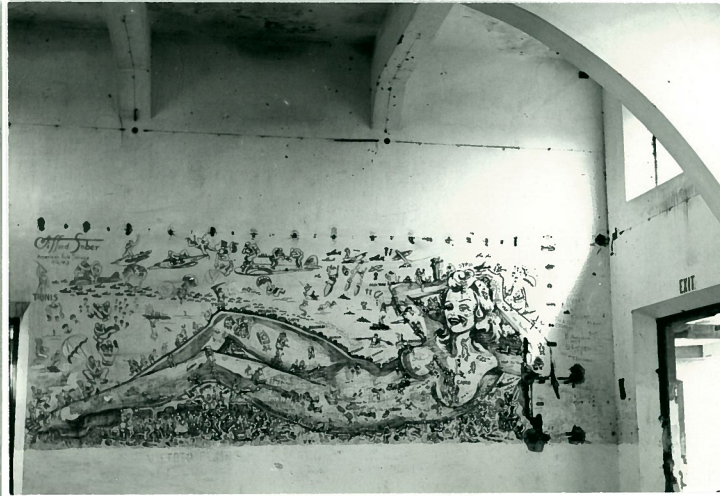
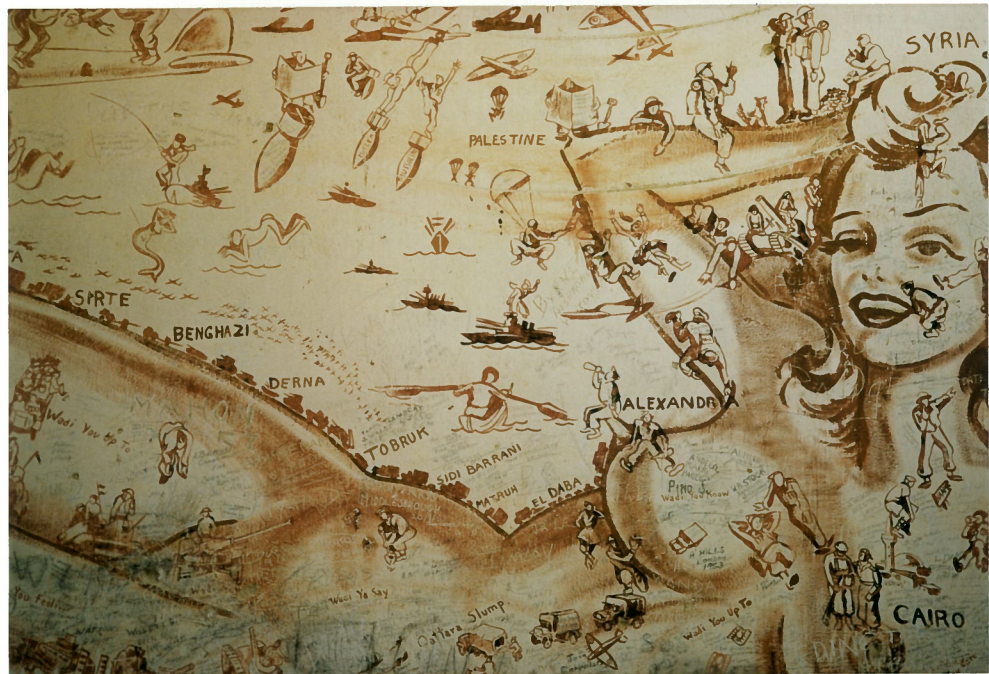
Tripoli:
Winter 1954-1955



Roman Ruins at
Sebratha



Across the Sahara to Garian POW Camp



Tripoli to Rome to Meet Mother and Father, November, 1954



Tripoli to Rome to Meet Mother and Father, November, 1954



Escape From Bad Tolz in April, 1955



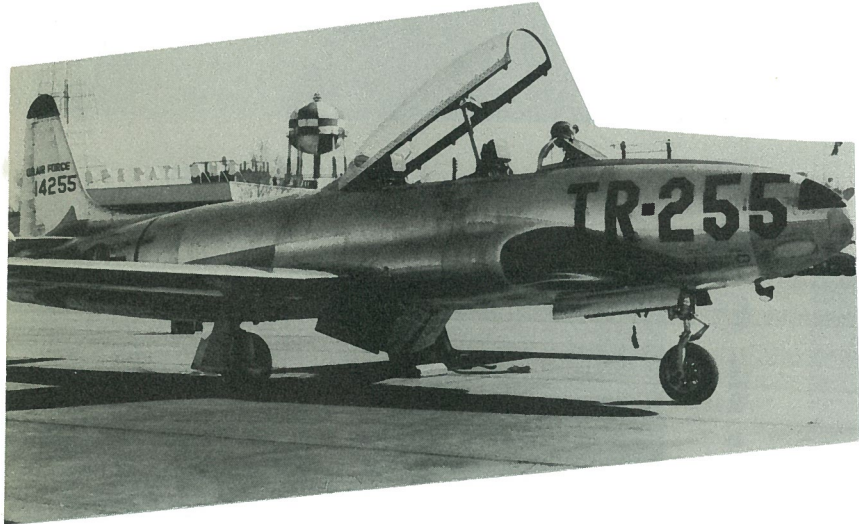
Immediately After Leaving Dependents Snack Bar

My Fifth Automobile



My 1955 Jaguar XK-140 Fixed Head Coupe
(Photos Taken by Father on Paris Visit)

Tripoli, 1956: Taking Lt. Wong for a T-33 Ride



15. NEW YORK

In April, 1956, once I was processed out of the Air Force, I went directly to my parents' apartment in Douglaston, Long Island, New York State.

Floundering

Just months before, Pan American Airways had moved Father from District Sales Manager in Chicago to Interline Sales Manager at New York Headquarters. His new job was to convince domestic airlines to do joint promotions with PAA.

Their one bedroom apartment was pleasant. The apartment house was well managed. The town of Douglaston had good people, and was located right on a bay where sail boating was a major recreation. They rapidly built up a social circle, and lived a settled comfortable life.

I, on the other hand, was completely at loose ends. I had a healthy chunk of cash and was well outfitted. The problem was that I had just left a well organized existence, for complete freedom - to flounder. I interviewed several firms, not with a view to employment, but rather to learn just what they did. At the Veterans Administration, I took a battery of tests designed to disclose interests. The tests disclosed very low interest in any fields. As a matter of fact, the only professions that peeked above the zero line were pharmacist and mortician.

Meanwhile, I slept on a convertible couch in the apartment living room. There was a constant struggle to keep Mother from relating to this ex-officer as a child. When we went out, Father would never let me pay. "You can pay when you are employed." There was some pressure to show interest in the young chubby daughter of one of my parents' friends. While stewing away, I did spend some time in Manhattan. I had some happy evenings with Mother going to the theater. She had come up with the idea of arriving early at a performance to take the tickets of those who phoned in last minute cancellations. We saw the original casts of "Damn Yankees", and "My Fair Lady", among others. I would go alone to "The Village" to sit for the evening at a famous jazz bar.

Aunt Dorothy

During my stay, we twice went out for family visits to Mother's younger sister, Dorothy, who lived with her wealthy husband Freddy in Katonah, New York. They had sold off most of his family's ancestral estate. They had built a lovely home on the sizeable remaining land. I remember a panoramic

view from the back patio over a several acre lawn downsloping toward the Hudson River. The house's second story was a row of guest bedrooms off of a hallway with doors after each room. They reduced housekeeping by opening up only what was needed at the time. Also, in the backyard was an oversized swimming pool, a real luxury as they could use it for only three months out of the year. They had a live-in couple to do the cooking and housekeeping. Dorothy was careful to brief all guests that the couple were not to be treated as servants; however, I did notice that they were always careful to conduct themselves as though they were in fact servants in some English manor. Although Freddy's family was old New York, his manner was that of a friendly, innocuous English gentleman. His dress and the house decor furthered this impression. When Dorothy was younger, she had been a great beauty. Many years before, probably while attending Wellsley College, she had dropped any trace of her Michigan background and had developed toward a brittle "New York Sophisticate". My sister, Sally, felt warm affection for her. I found her pretensions to be irritating. Each time we visited, I felt that we had walked into the middle of a Noel Coward play. As a child, I had envied the wealthy Defoes. I did not envy Dorothy's life. Not even the Rolls Royce, a dowdy model.

Trip With Sally

To break out, I drove the Jaguar to Madison, Wisconsin, to bring back my sister, Sally, from the University of Wisconsin for her Summer vacation. Arriving a day early, I went off into the woods and slept by a lake that I had remembered. Once we were under way, we had fun. One middle aged couple must have suspected that I was taking advantage of a young girl. The husband approached our car to sound me out. Sally and I laughed, as I explained that we were brother and sister.

My big surprise for her was to take a side trip to Detroit to buy her a car, as her share of my poker winnings. Being practical, she declined, saying that she did not need a car at college, and that it would be an expense that she and Father could not bear. So, we drove directly to Douglaston.

Deciding on MBA

Back in my stew, it finally hit me. My many jobs had taught me what I definitely did not want to do. It appeared that I had better aim toward business. My problem was that I had very little knowledge of how business worked. How was a firm organized? How could you determine whether or not a firm was successful? What would be my best avenues in a firm for personal success? What I needed was knowledge. The most

efficient way to get the knowledge I needed, without false starts, seemed to be at a graduate business school. An added bonus would be that I could finesse being twenty six years old with an unsatisfactory college transcript, competing against twenty one year old's with excellent college records.

Since by this time I was fed up with the general rudeness of New York City, and wanted to get as far away from my parents' influence as possible, I decided that I would try for a California graduate school. I would use the school's contacts with local industry to jump start my career. Father knew the Dean of New York's Columbia School of Business. His recommendation was the University of Southern California. So I applied there and to Stanford.

Stanford's reply read as though it had been written by a Harvard type, "... So we wish you luck in pursuing your education elsewhere." (Later, it amused me to occasionally lecture at the Stanford Business School, and to have one course visit me annually at IBM to use the simulations of production control that I had created.)

USC warmly accepted me. They sent me materials that indicated that this was the place to go! I eagerly signed up, anticipating two years to an MBA, then a successful career. After four months with my parents, we were all ready for me to rapidly pack all that I could in the Jaguar, ship the rest to a Los Angeles storage facility, and hit the road!

Aunt Dorothy's Estate in 1956



16. USC

In August, 1956, I was driving across the United States from New York to Los Angeles. The new Interstate Highway System seemed to me to be almost miraculous. The roadway was wide, the surface was smooth concrete, and there were service stations and restaurants right to hand. To my mind, traveling this system was superior to the German Autobahn's in every way but one: there were state imposed speed limits.

I did not treat this trip as a vacation. Rather, I pressed on, hour after hour, to reach my destination, Los Angeles. I could see the different views gradually develop from the East Coast, through the Mid-West, through the prairie (Nebraska was mile after mile of mile after mile), through the desert, then the suburbs of and, finally, the center of Los Angeles.

I found the new freeways very confusing. At that time they did not post "get ready information": there were no signs that warned you that you were "1 mile", "3/4 mile", "1/2 mile", "1/4 mile", to the turnoff you wanted. Instead, you could be rocketing along in the left lane, and, too late, see the sign for your turnoff. If you got off at the next exit, often there was no entrance for the other direction, so you couldn't go back; you would then search around on the surface streets for the proper orientation. Lost near downtown LA, I checked in to a cheap hotel. After a good night's rest, I procured a map and set off for USC.

At USC registration I found out that I had not completely done my homework. Unlike Stanford and many other business schools that were strictly graduate programs leading to a business career, USC was primarily an undergraduate business program. Once completing the undergraduate program, you could then go on to graduate studies, with a view to teaching or doing research. Another surprise was that all courses for those who were not going through USC's full college program were taught in the evening.

The full story was that, if I wanted the full MBA program, I would have to take two years of undergraduate courses, then two years of graduate courses, plus write a thesis. My response was to attempt a double load of courses. I would finish the undergraduate load in one year, then, while writing my thesis, I would finish the graduate load in the second year. Knowing my past academic record, you may well wonder how I made this decision. The answer is that I was focused on a clear goal. I was confident that hard work would yield good results.

I signed up for the G.I. Bill, which paid my tuition, some miscellaneous college bills, plus \$110.00 a month living

allowance.

I had a total military service requirement of eight years, so I joined the 452d Tactical Bombardment Wing, Air Force Reserves, stationed in Long Beach. My monthly meeting attendance, plus flying time in the B-26, brought in an average of \$100.00 a month. I had a wonderful time again flying the B-26.

I paid \$50.00 a month rent for my bedroom to Bob Gerst. Gerst was a USC Law student who had rented a house with a buddy, and then rented out the three other bedrooms to Harry Boisevain, a Dutchman, and to an Italian and to me.

The house was located across the street from USC's first year women. I dated several of them. One in particular was Diane Kanduros. The following year she was named "Miss California Greek-American." Of course, I was a little old for these girls. At the class dances they liked to attend, I stood out like a sore thumb. The rest of the guys looked as though they were fresh out of high school, as indeed they were.

My life was very satisfactory: My classes went very well; it was fun jumping into and out of the military with the Air Force Reserves; and I enjoyed my society.

17. GLORIA

An old friend of Bob Gerst's (whom he later married) often visited the house during the day. I took Doreene to lunch a few times. One day she proposed to me that we should go out on a double date: Bob with her, and a friend of hers with me. OK, I was comfortable with doing that. I was to call up this friend to arrange picking her up. Later, overhearing my phone conversation with this friend, Gerst yelled out, "I'm not going on any double date!" So, I amended my invitation to be a blind date with me, "and where would you like to go?" She snapped, "You mean I have to also pick what we are going to do?" Before replying, I was silent about two beats as I decided whether or not to just hang up; just because she was a friend of a friend, didn't mean that I was obligated to continue a New York style rudeness duel. After the pause, I said, "No, I just thought that you might have a preference. How about dinner at the Tail of the Cock, then on to the Cathay Circle theater to see 'Around the world in 80 Days'?" She brightly agreed.

I came for her at her parents' home in Alhambra. She looked very nice, and her voice was pleasant. As she preceded me outside into the dark, she walked right past the Jaguar. I opened the passenger door, which caused the interior to light up. She turned and, with just a very little surprise in her voice, said, "Oh, is this your car?" (I thought, "Aha, the Jaguar strikes again!")

I enjoyed our conversation over dinner. I lost my way going to the theater; I had to consult a map to find it. The movie was so popular in its exclusive engagement, that we did not get good seats. Also, unfortunately, something in the meal forced me to make several trips to the theater's rest room. I found her to be so attractive, that later I tried to physically express my affection - she politely but firmly rejected these advances. As I delivered her to her door, I apologized for my behavior. I asked her if I might see her again. The enthusiasm of her reply surprised and pleased me, "Of course!"

This was the evening of January 12, 1957. Soon, I was seeing her anytime we were both free. Besides the evening dates, on weekends I took her on daytime outings. We went to Knott's Berry Farm. We also spent a day at the Santa Monica Amusement Park, where I infuriated her by taking her on the same roller coaster that had terrified me as a child. In the late evenings, we parked in the vacant South Pasadena hills - very near where later was built a house that we lived in.

Gloria's parents had two houses on one lot. I had met Gloria's sister, Rose, who lived with her in the front house. I had not met Gloria's parents. One day, I was walking down

the driveway when I saw a middle-aged woman in a housedress talking with someone. She introduced herself as Julia, Gloria's mother. There is no other way to put it: I was shocked. Julia had let her person go. As I later learned, she had good qualities; however, especially that day, she was not physically attractive. I saw no resemblance whatever to Gloria, so I completely rejected the old saying that the daughter will eventually look like the mother.

I could not convince Gloria to go away with me for a weekend. When I asked her to Las Vegas, she replied, "My mother would turn white."

As her family realized that Gloria and I were getting serious, I began to be invited to family gatherings. That July 4th I was included in a big extended family feed at Gloria's Aunt Armenia's. Warm companionship. Great food. I especially remember a small dish of what looked like green beans passing along. I took some. It did seem strange that several of them watched me as I put a forkful in my mouth. Wow! As my mouth burned raw, the perspiration was pushing itself out my forehead! Everyone laughed at my inexperience with their favorite peppers.

Gloria worked at a newspaper on the Society Page. One night she invited me to a party at the Los Angeles Press Club. After two cocktails, Gloria began to grin. Her smile lasted the entire evening. It warmed me to know that the object of my affections had only more good nature concealed beneath her normal good nature.

By that Summer's end my life took a giant step. I wanted to be with Gloria all of the time, for the rest of my life. Also, I judged unsatisfactory the three USC graduate courses I had taken. Deciding that I now had enough academic business knowledge to start a career, I asked Gloria to marry me. She agreed! We set the date at November 30, 1957.

One night late, Gloria and I were kissing good night when Gloria's mother, Julia, stuck her head out of the door, "You come in now, Gloria!" I replied heatedly, "Hey, we are engaged!" Julia then snapped, "I don't see any ring!" So Gloria and I selected an engagement ring and a wedding ring to go with it. Until the day that we were married, I felt that Julia's hard eyes were on me.

In August, we leased Apartment #9 at 314 Occidental Boulevard in Los Angeles. We also bought our first piece of furniture, a king sized bed. Until Gloria joined me in marriage, I lived alone in the bare rooms.

Dating Gloria in 1957



18. CAREER CHOICE

It was August, 1957. Gloria having agreed to marry me, I wanted to get going on a solid business career. There was no reason to delay, and there were many reasons to move rapidly. One of these reasons was that I had finished the school year at USC with excellent grades to show an employer and I felt that it was important that I show no more than a Summer vacation break before going to work.

At USC's counseling office, I went through all of their job listings. I set up eighteen interviews in one two week period. I had listed criteria:

1. Growth industry.
2. Strong company.
3. Interesting work.
4. I would be FORCED to grow.
5. At thirty five years of age I could not be replaced by a newly graduated MBA.

I wanted a career, not just a job. With my poker savings backing me up, I was not concerned about the starting salary.

The interviews were all interesting. Some managers were not used to the interviewee cross-examining them on the career possibilities. One manager even went so far as to say that he was not so sure that he wanted college graduates. One pimply faced youth, who had been delegated the task of interviewing me, administered a verbal psychological questionnaire, without having the slightest idea of how to do this properly, let alone how to evaluate the results.

The two that interested me most were Continental Can, and Burroughs Business Machines.

The Continental Can manager and I rapidly developed a mutual respect. He wanted me to come to work as an account representative trainee at \$525.00 a month. I would be taught how to work with customers and Continental engineers to solve particular packaging requirements. I was very interested.

The Burroughs Branch manager spend several hours with me going through the several step training program of first preparing me to sell ten key adding machines, then training me on the big accounting machines, and finally, if I then qualified, to train on selling their line of computers. Starting salary would be \$325.00. If successful in my training progress, I would wind up as a consultant on business systems with my customers. Burroughs appeared to be a perfect fit.

International Business Machines

As I left the Burroughs office, I noticed that right across the street was an IBM branch office. I knew of IBM and its miraculous punched card. I thought, why would I waste time with Burroughs, when IBM was the wave of the future? So I crossed the street and asked for the branch manager.

The branch manager was not in, so I met with Don Reithner, one of two assistant branch managers. Don politely answered all of my questions, as I answered his. As he went to lunch, I filled out an employment questionnaire. On its back, I wrote out in long hand all of the reasons that IBM should be interested in me. I also took a psychological interest test. It contained questions like: Would you rather repair a clock or go to a party? At that time, I would rather have repaired a clock; however, I was applying for sales trainee, so I checked "go to a party." I still think that those tests are not appropriate for employment selection.

Don Reithner told me that there was not sufficient time to check my references before the year's last training class started on September 9. He suggested that I reapply in December for the January class. I responded that, as I was getting married in November, I could not afford to wait until January. He then agreed employ me as a "temporary", at a salary of \$425.00 a month, pending the checking of my references. As I was never formally notified of my conversion to "permanent", I later joked that I was the longest employed "temp" in the history of IBM.

The beginning training was entirely technical. Each piece of punch card equipment was directed in its operations by a control panel. A panel had many holes into which double ended wires were inserted in order to route an electric impulse from one hole to the other; the principle was the same as that of a telephone switchboard. The control panels were specialized by machine. The panels, with the wires in place, were stored in racks ready to be inserted in a machine for accomplishing a specific task.

We were taught how to wire panels for all of the current equipment. It was complex work to plan the machine's task; wire the control panel; then repetitively test and correct errors, until the task was reliably accomplished. Some nights I would have dreams of masses of wires tangled up on a control panel.

The last two weeks of the course were to be devoted to an introduction to the Model 650 Computer. I missed the first week, as I had reached an agreement at the time of my employment that I would take a week off without pay for marriage and a honeymoon.

19. THE WEDDING

Gloria wanted our wedding to be Catholic at the Saint Peters Italian Church, near downtown Los Angeles. This church had been the religious and social center of the Italian section. Over the years, the Italians had all moved away to be replaced by Chinese. However, the old parishioners would still travel long distances to celebrate important occasions. Gloria's father, Sam Bonando, was still active there. His name remains today on a brass plaque in the big social hall.

As I am not a Catholic (I am a non-practicing baptized Methodist), I had to take instruction from the priest. He was a large jolly man who had once been a newspaper reporter. He thought that it was important for me to consider Gloria's ethnic background, emphasizing that her father had come from Bari. Bari, he told me, had been a major port used by the Crusaders, so the inhabitants became a mix of all of the European and North African types. Ho hum.

The day of the wedding, I drove over to the home of my Best Man. Of all things, his mother pointed out that I had forgotten to shave. I borrowed her Shick Injector Razor. I liked it so much that I bought an identical one and used it for nearly forty years.

It was a large affair. Mother, Father, and Sally came from New York. Father's cousin, Dick Della Vedova, came with his wife. My childhood neighbor, George Love, was Best Man. My USC friend, Harry Boisevain, was an usher. Sally was a bridesmaid. An IBM friend, Bob Jamond, attended. Gloria's family provided the rest of the wedding party, and all of the cousins attended.

In addition were some two hundred and fifty people who were complete strangers to both of us. These were all people from "The List". This list carried all of the names of people in the Italian community to be invited to weddings. A person was included out of respect, or because they had used The List at their wedding and now must pay back. These people did not bring gifts, they brought money in an envelope. As they entered the reception, they would give the envelope to the father of the bride. He in turn would use the money to help pay the expenses of throwing the wedding.

With all of those strangers, I felt as though I was one of the principal players in a movie with hundreds of extras. I have to say that those extras did their part con brio. At the reception, the Italian band got going and everybody danced and sang. The wedding scene of The Godfather movie had a similar flavor.

After all this, I really felt committed in marriage.

20. OUR HONEYMOON

We had reservations for one week at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas. At that time, this was the top hotel on the strip.

My Best Man, George Love, bragged that he was a personal friend of the pit boss. He said that he had phoned ahead. There would be a bottle of champagne waiting for us at the desk. His friend would take care of our show reservations.

Well, as a boy, Georgie had had a problem with his bragging slopping over into lying. I was disappointed to learn that he had not changed. There was no bottle of champagne waiting for us at the desk. The pit boss had made no arrangements.

The room was OK; however, we noticed that whenever we spent more than a few hours there, the thermostat would no longer work. The heat would come on and we would be driven out.

The next night we went to Dean Martin's dinner show. The food was good. Martin was awful. Drinking continuously, he did not finish a single song. His remarks were boringly slurred. This was not one of his good nights, only the band supported him with loud applause and laughter.

The next day we took an interesting tour of Hoover Dam, and did a little gambling. That night we went to Frank Sinatra's dinner show. We were seated behind a post at the back of the room. I loudly protested that we had a week's reservation at the hotel and we expected better service. The head waiter personally escorted us down to a raised table just to the right of the stage. Wow! Sinatra gave a dazzling performance! He was in great voice. He was crisp and dynamic. This was a thoroughly professional contrast to the previous night's Martin. At the end of the show, the head waiter came by to ask us how we had liked the show and tried to milk me for a tip. He got none.

The next morning we got up both feeling that we had had enough of The Sands. We checked out and flew home to our apartment. We let no one know that we were back. We enjoyed the rest of our honeymoon doing as we pleased in Los Angeles.

I was a very happy man. I had married the right girl, at the right time, and in the right place. I felt complete. I looked forward to mastering my responsibilities.

Father ended his story at this point in his life. By so doing, he left his children to tell their own stories, but he also left untold the story of his fatherhood and of his work. I shall continue my story; however, in Father's spirit, I will make only minor incursions into the lives of Gloria, Brian, Sabrina, and Rob.

Our Honeymoon





21. APARTMENT LIFE

We started our married life with the king sized bed as our only furniture. While living alone, I had purchased some basic kitchen utensils and a refrigerator. Wedding gifts of appliances also helped get us started. As we both worked, in the morning I would shower and shave first, then, as Gloria showered, I would fix the breakfast. Yes, I would squeeze the orange juice; I would fry the eggs and bacon; I would make the toast. When Gloria joined me, she would make her own coffee. After eating, she would then drive to The Culver City Star News, and I would drive to IBM.

The apartment was on the second floor in the rear. As there was parking at ground level, we were actually up three stories. There was no view. However, I was the first person to live in it; it was attractive; and we had privacy. The rent was \$100.00 a month. By taking my Jaguar out of its apartment slot and parking it on the street, I talked the owner into knocking our rent down to \$90.00. I was eager to rebuild our savings.

Many Saturdays I would play golf at Griffith Park with Harry Boisevain, my friend from USC. One Saturday, as I was telling Harry about my need to buy furniture, one of the other two members of our pick-up foursome revealed himself to be the president of the Angelus Furniture Company, a manufacturer and wholesaler. He gave me his card with a note on it to give me the dealer's discount. Gloria and I outfitted our place there. As I write this, Sabrina is using the cherry coffee table. The dresser mirror is hanging in our guest bedroom.

Basic Applications School

After several months of doing trainee work in the branch (mostly helping customers to wire control panels), in March, 1958, I was sent to the five week Application Course at IBM's San Jose Education Center on the plant site. We students were housed in downtown San Jose, at the De Anza Hotel, "The biggest little hotel in the world." We were transported each day by bus to and from the plant site, which was way South in the country.

"Newsweek" magazine was preparing a cover story on IBM. They took a picture of our class in the tiered classroom. Everyone else was dressed in the IBM "uniform" dark suit, I stand out in my very light blue suit. I was not a rebel, my tailored English suits had just not yet worn out. I did wear an IBM "uniform" white shirt. Because I had always had a taste problem with coordinating clothes, since junior high school all of my dress shirts had been pure white.

The course content was how to plan and sell the systems and procedures for the most widely used business applications for IBM's punched card equipment. The rather arrogant course manager emphasized that no one rented our machines for any other reason than to solve a business problem. "If you were selling a basic utility ball point pen," he would say, "You wouldn't sell the pen; you would sell the superior economy of its line on paper." In order to drive home this thought, he organized our class as a ball point pen manufacturer, then charged the different departments to come up with their business plan. Once set loose, I suggested that we go to the Telephone Company Yellow Page Directory, find a ball point pen manufacturer, then interview its department heads. This way we would save a lot of work and we would have completely realistic results. We did this. Well, it turned out that one of the reasons the course manager had been giving this assignment to classes was to exercise his ego by knocking off their presentations with his "superior" knowledge. During our presentations, as he tried to knock us off, one of his instructors laughingly reminded him that we had the straight word from the real world. He became furious. Learning that I was the one who had suggested our approach to the problem, he became personally angry with me. He later really went after me on the evaluated "Sales Calls".

By the third weekend away from Gloria, I was in a lover's stew. I got her to fly up to San Francisco and we had a romantic weekend. I well remember a softly lit dinner at "The Shadows" that we shared with the Dick Wilkies. I also well remember other activities.

I decided to drive down to Los Angeles the next weekend. Dick Wilkie said that he would like to join me, "If you are not going to drive too fast." "I will be driving as fast as I like, Dick." As he was also newly wed, he decided to come. On the drive down, I received three tickets for speeding. The third officer asked, "Have you enjoyed the trip? We have been radioing ahead on you all of the way down." I drove very carefully on the return trip. The State Department of Motor Vehicles sent me a letter advising me that one more moving violation in the next twelve months would cost me a license suspension.

In those days, IBM had really sharp employees in marketing. This excellence was not an accident. Hiring was very selective and the training was designed, not only to provide knowledge, but also to weed out those who would not be effective in the field. The Entry class before us lost seventy five percent (the remainder were shell shocked). Our Entry class lost twenty five percent. Our Application class lost thirteen per cent, and I ranked low. I had had trouble with reading and constructing system flow charts.

My First Raise

The first Monday back in the branch, Don Reithner called me into his office. I could tell that he had not yet received my class grade and evaluation, because he told me, "George, you have completed Applications School, so you will now receive \$50.00 more a month." "Thank you, very much."

As a sales trainee, my next big course would be Sales School, after which I would be assigned established customers and a prospecting territory as a full fledged Marketing Representative.

But first there were many tasks to be performed in the branch. I must make formal visits on customers in each of the industries represented in our branch, writing up briefing reports on each one. I was assigned reading of outstanding sales proposals in the branches files. I was assigned to assist marketing representatives in preparing sales proposals. And, I was assigned to help out accounts having problems with their systems and procedures.

My prickly personality would occasionally get in my way. At one wholesaler I completely changed their invoicing process: writing a new procedure manual and wiring all new control panels. I guess that the customer's data processing manager felt threatened by my greater expertise, so he sent a lot of sarcasm my way. When I finished in good order my several week task, I told him off, and announced that no I would not work on their problems with accounts receivable processing. The IBM marketing representative wrote in his evaluation of my performance, "George is his own worst enemy."

During this period, IBM specialized its marketing representatives into teams. Whereas before, a salesman would handle any of the industries in his geographic territory, now the goal was to assign people in teams to handle particular industries. This specialization brought more expertise to bear, and, incidentally, was a more efficient use of manpower. This affected me. There was not a crying need for more salesmen in this branch. Traditionally, sales training took one year. Unless I wanted to go to Bakersfield, or out of state, there was no slot for me. So I became a very experienced trainee, helping customers, helping salesmen with their proposals, teaching in evening promotional classes for customers, and attending district sales seminars.

In 1959, right next to the Ambassador Hotel on Wilshire boulevard, IBM put up a new building. Consolidated at one location was the branch office, the education center, the computer test center, and the district and regional offices.

Guest Services

I was named the Manager of Guest Services for this new building. My duties were to include greeting visitors, acting as the concierge, and conducting all sales demonstrations on the equipment in the test center.

The lobby receptionist handled nearly all of the greeting duties. An efficient secretary on the regional staff handled nearly all of the concierge duties. So I spent my time promoting and conducting application demonstrations.

Working with me was a constantly refreshed staff of two people. They were assigned to have their presentation skills sharpened up during their last two months before going to Sales School. I did not "hold their pay cards", nor did I write any formal evaluation of their performance. The honorific "Manager" merely meant that I was to conduct all evening demonstrations without overtime pay. I was given another raise, which brought me up to the offer made me at Continental Can of \$525.00 a month.

I designed flyers mailed to every salesman in the district, promoting the demonstrations that we created. We were effective in helping to close business. We were kept very busy, sometimes conducting more than one demonstration at a time in the different sections of the test center.

One day, I was alerted that the CEO of IBM, Tom Watson, Jr., was going to visit in the building. Sure enough, a member of regional staff conducted him through our demonstration center. I leapt up, expecting to be introduced. Ignored, I then hovered in the background to answer any questions. The two wandered through, treating us as though we were potted plants. My hovering evidently irritated Watson. He abruptly turned toward me, leaned over to closely peer at my name badge, then, without ever making eye contact, spun away. I had been dismissed with a Genuine New York Cut. The name Watson no longer held any magic for me.



Demonstrating RAMac 305 to Newsmen at New IBM Building Open House in 1959

22. OUR FIRST CHILD

I promised to make only minor incursions into my children's lives; however, birth is primarily the parent's story. Of course, it would also be unfair to presume to tell Gloria's story, so what follows by necessity may seem to be as egocentric as it is in fact.

Just as I had married not only the right girl, but had been driven by a ripening to marry at the right time, I was driven by a need to conceive a child at the time that we did. We had been married long enough for me to be sure that our relationship would be lasting. It was time to fully consummate our marriage in the creation of a shared life. The birth of our first born would convert us from a couple to a family. It would make me a "Father", with the honor of sheltering and guiding a life that might, in turn, carry life on to generations never to be seen by me. Something of me might live far beyond my existence. I was aware of being pushed by forces not entirely under the control of my conscious will.

Purchasing Our First Home

Once Gloria's pregnancy was confirmed, we started looking for a home. I was immediately drawn to Alhambra. This would be convenient for Gloria's job at the Alhambra Post Advocate. Far more importantly, Alhambra was home to all of the members of her family. Becoming even more closely joined with this extended family would be even more important with our child.

We finally settled on a three bedroom, one bath, twelve year old tract house, with shingle roof, raised floor, and a detached garage on a lot 50 X 90 feet. The front yard featured a beautiful triple trunk olive tree, plus a profusion of plantings that effectively camouflaged a busy, essentially ugly, house front. The inside was tight and of manageable size. The backyard was spectacular: the rosarian owner had nurtured to maturity eighty-eight championship rose bushes. Best of all, we could afford the down, and the total monthly payment, including mortgage, taxes, and insurance, was equal to our rent on the apartment.

I did have a slight contretemps with Western Bank, who gave us the mortgage and also handled the closing. Before buying the house, I had asked the branch manager to give me a list of all of the charges we would be responsible for paying. On the closing day, I noticed some additional charges. He responded that these would be no problem. The bank would be glad to lend us additional money to cover them. I rejected this proposal. I angrily insisted that the bank eat these charges. The bank did just that. We moved in July 2, 1959.

Brian's Birth

This was for me a gigantic life altering event. I stayed with Gloria in her room at the clinic until it appeared she was going into labor, then, as was the custom in those days, I was shooed out to the waiting room. Poor Gloria had a tough time of it. I was sleeping on a couch when the nurse awoke me, early in the morning, September 3, 1959, with the news that our baby and Gloria were doing just fine.

The name "Brian Howard" was selected as thoroughly masculine and not overly subject to pejorative nicknames. I joked that the "Brian" might attract a pretty Irish colleen into the family. I purposely did not want him named "George Louis Strehlke III". One of my college roommates was Charles Stuart Proctor Barker III; I found his name to be insufferably pretentious. I also did not want my son to go through the agonies that I had being called "Louis".

Once Gloria was at home with Brian, Gloria's family showered her with support, and baby Brian with loving attention.

Mother and Father flew out for Brian's Christening. This was a big celebration of the extended family.

Our First Child



Brian by the Swimming Pool at Rose and Mary's Alhambra Home



Play Area at Our Alhambra Home



JAN . 61

23. LEAVING THE AIR FORCE RESERVES

Late in the year, I received notice to report in January, 1960, to IBM Sales School. The job of IBM Marketing Representative would be challenging. Together with the newly added involvement with family and home, I realized that I could no longer afford the time I spent in the Reserves.

It was easy to leave. I would miss the pay of about \$100.00 per month, but that was all that I would miss. The year before, our mission had changed to Troop Carrier. The B-26's were gone. We now flew the C-119 Flying Box Car. The Reservists could not keep these planes in commission; too often I would come down to Long Beach to fly, and there would be no available plane. Another problem was the boredom of flying long level flights; it was torture to stay awake.

The Danger of Boredom While Flying

On my last Summer encampment, I was assigned to fly to New York and return. During the trip, I was to check out two pilots on the C-119. On our way back, we took on an airman passenger going to San Francisco for emergency leave. Flying high over the Rocky Mountains, I put the newly checked out pilots in charge and went to the back for a nap. When it was my turn to fly, I was awakened and staggered forward to the pilot's seat. I was no sooner belted in than both engines just stopped. Boy was it quiet. The fellow in the right seat looked at me and said, "What are you going to do now?" "Easy." I flipped on the fuel booster pumps and changed the fuel selector to another tank. The windmilling engines immediately caught and we continued the flight.

This incident had evidently been the result of the two pilots becoming so sleepy that they had neglected to keep track of fuel consumption. Sometime later we landed for refueling at a Colorado airfield. I told our passenger that we would take off in one hour. Came time to go, our passenger was not to be found. He must have had a healthy regard for his safety.

My Last Instrument Check Ride

I gave notice that I wanted out by December. Just to prove that I had not lost my flying edge, I took my last Instrument Check Ride that was due in November. As we took off, I noticed that the forecasted clear skies had become a little cloudy. Once under my partial hood, I depended on the Check Pilot to keep us clear. I followed his orders for the maneuvers to perform. Suddenly he asked me to pop the hood. Looking out, I could see that we were completely encircled by cumulo-nimbus that extended from below us to perhaps 25,000

feet. The hole that we were in was too small for us to stay in the clear!

Furious, I barked, "I've got it!"

Our problem was clear:

We had filed to fly Visual Flight Rules. This meant that we would stay out of weather; we would stay clear of other aircraft; we would keep visual track of our progress to our destination. We were no longer able to fulfill any of these requirements. We were a menace in the air.

I immediately contacted Los Angeles Control, telling our approximate location, heading, and altitude, requesting a change to Instrument Flight Rules and a holding fix. (Under IFR, with an assigned altitude and a holding fix, LA Control would keep track of our separation from other aircraft.)

LA Control asked us to stand by. As we about to go into the clouds, "Negative," I said. We must have immediate IFR clearance to a holding fix.

Given what I had asked for, I tuned the Automatic Direction Finder to the specified radio beacon. We then flew there at the assigned altitude. When the ADF needle spun to our tail, I reported arrival and set up a race track holding pattern of two minute legs with a 180 degree needle width turn at each end. While holding, I asked for, and was given, clearance to fly IFR to Long Beach Municipal.

Tuning in LGB on the Automatic direction Finder, I followed the indicator to Long Beach Municipal. When the ADF swung to our tail, I contacted the Long Beach Control Tower for an Instrument Landing System approach. I was given clearance and told to descend to 1,000 feet over the Outer Marker.

Reporting over the Outer Marker, I was given clearance to land. I kept in a perfect cross the two Instrument Landing System needles: one for horizontal position and one for vertical position on the glide slope. On the way down, we completed the Prelanding Check List. Above 500 feet we broke out into the clear, then landed and taxied in to park.

Once back in the Operations Room, the incompetent Check Pilot commented that I obviously had no problems flying weather. I made no reply at all.

My Quiet Leave Taking

The next morning, Sunday, I was mustered out and was given my Flight Log. I noticed that, as the paper work had yet to be

received in the office, my last flight had not been logged. So, in mid-November, 1959, I stopped flying at the top of my form. My total logged Air Force flying hours were 1,402:30.

In May, 1960, I was amused to receive an example of the slowly turning wheels of the military bureaucracy: effective April 30, 1960, I was promoted to Captain.

24. IBM SALES SCHOOL

Our January, 1960, Sales School was held in Endicott, New York. This town was the site of IBM's first plant. We were housed in the Fredericks Hotel, which was a ramshackle frame building built so long before that the water pipes ran inside the rooms along the ceiling. Each day, we walked blocks through the snow and slush to the IBM Education Center.

The course only lasted a few weeks. The intent was not so much to teach us techniques, as it was to inculcate us with the IBM way of doing business. It was also the last point at which IBM corporate could make sure that the proper sort of person was being put into the field. Much of the time was spent on the students giving application demonstrations on machines, and on evaluated sales calls. I did quite well. My two teammates on the final sales presentation told me that my contract closing was the best that they had seen. The instructor was also complimentary, though he did think that I showed a little over-confidence in rolling the pen down the contract for him to grab for the signing.

Father's First Operation

After graduation, I visited Mother and Father. I learned that Father was going in for exploratory surgery. He turned out to have colon cancer. He healed well after surgery.

Beginning IBM Sales

As of February 1, 1960, I was responsible for a sales territory of established customers as well as a geographic territory to prospect for new customers. The territory was not promising. I had put the branch under pressure to get me on quota, so they scrounged together a mixed bag of customers from Sales representatives who were becoming more and more specialized in either the petroleum or the insurance industries. The total rental paid IBM in my territory was less than \$10,000.00 per month. My geographic territory was mostly occupied by apartment houses or small shops. I was given six "C" prospects. A "C" prospect was to be called on once every ninety days, and was defined as a company that might grow large enough to someday warrant our equipment, so we should establish good relationships.

TransTech Bust

I worked hard. One prospect was a just forming firm named TransTech. This firm's idea was to place machines similar to Postal Meters with their customers. They would also provide

constantly updated pages for the least expensive shipping rates. The customer would deposit money in advance that would be set into the machine. Any time they shipped anything they would use the machine to enter the carrier and the amount for a stamp on the packaging. TransTech would pay the bill to the carrier. In response to their expressed interest, I spent considerable time developing a proposal on maintaining the rate books, and on doing their accounting.

When I presented the proposal, the president complimented me and said that they would keep it on the shelf until they were fully organized. Angry with myself for not having made sure that they were ready to act, I quietly picked up all of the copies of the proposal. I politely asked the president to contact me when ready and I would update the proposal to fit their needs at that time. The branch manager's secretary laughed as she told me that she had never before heard of a salesman retrieving a proposal. I did not join in her laughter; I had wasted valuable time on TransTech.

First Computer sale: Carnation

One of my customers was the headquarters of Carnation Milk. They had a small punched card installation to process their payroll. I approached their chief financial officer with the possibility of automating their accounts payable and general ledger accounting. I qualified him with an agreement that if I could prove the likelihood of a cost breakeven, while bringing them into the computer age with a new IBM 1401 Data Processing System, he would sign the order. So I went to work with the controller and the systems manager to survey just how they now accomplished these tasks, then I wrote a proposal detailing the costs and benefits of a transition to the IBM 1401 methods.

At a meeting of Reed Braithwaite, Chief Financial Officer, and the staffs under him, I passed out copies of the proposal and made a flip chart presentation of the major points. We talked it over. Reed agreed that I had met the agreed upon test, and, "We are very interested." Whoa Nelly! "Reed, I said, "Didn't we have an agreement that if I could show a breakeven in costs that we would move ahead?" Reed, angrily, "We were interested before, and now we are very interested; that is all I will say!" So I left.

Reed Braithwaite phoned my marketing manager inviting him to lunch. I was the subject. I learned that Reed felt that, since Carnation had been a good customer for many years, he had a right to ask IBM to make any studies that he wanted, without any obligation on his part. Evidently he ventilated himself right into the realization that he had indeed made a personal commitment to me. His staff was not about to tell

him, and my marketing manager was certainly not going to antagonize him further. In any case, the next week he phoned me to come pick up the order. I thanked him, as though nothing had passed between us. From then on we were on the best of terms. When installed the next year, this order would double the rental from Carnation headquarters, an account that had yielded only a \$3.00 per month rental increase in the previous five years.

The McKittrick Meeting That Changed My Luck

Around this time, two things happened that strained our finances further: The Jaguar had become so unreliable that I traded it in on a bare minimum Plymouth Valiant, which resulted in a monthly payment on the car loan; also, after the traditional three months, IBM had cut my salary back to \$425.00 a month, as I was supposed to be earning commissions. Gloria and I did what we could to par expenses.

At mid year, we got a new branch manager, Chuck McKittrick. The previous manager, Ed Strandine, was old and sick. He lacked enthusiasm and generally kept his office door closed. The new manager was only twenty eight years old and was a fast rising star. After he had been on the job a few weeks, I was called in for the meeting that would change my luck.

"George," he told me, "Last week I was on the mezzanine and I saw you eating lunch out of a paper bag, while playing bridge with some fellows from the Test Center. I brought this to the attention of Norm Glynn (my marketing manager). He told me that you were a hardworking new salesman, with a new home, a new child, a new car, and you were just now struggling to make ends meet. Then, the other day, I was visited by a member of regional staff who told me that he had seen you on the mezzanine eating lunch out of a paper bag, while playing bridge with some fellows from the Test Center. I gave him the explanation given me by Norm, but, you know George, it didn't sound right as I said it. George, you are supposed to be taking customers out to lunch, and we pay for them."

"Yes," I replied, "but who pays for me? Let's face it, Chuck, I am not making it. I think that you have two choices: either fire me, or take a look at my territory."

"Well, George," he tried, "we can always set you up on a draw against commissions. That is the traditional way to handle this sort of situation."

"No," I replied, "I don't see why I should mortgage my future. I should be able to make it as I go along."

I think that he was impressed by the fact that I had not come

whining to him, but rather had tried to tough it out. He did huddle with Norm Glynn. By August, they had arranged to specialize another salesman into the insurance industry team, giving me his old accounts and his prospecting territory.

While accomplishing this, Chuck held a branch prospecting contest, knowing full well that, with my Fuller Brush experience, I always won these. This time I won by such a wide margin that, at the next branch sales meeting, two of the salesmen did a parody of my technique. One played the prospect, sitting at his desk. The other entered, and after announcing my name, turned to reveal a cardboard sign on his back with a short list of questions. As the prospect answered the questions, the other quickly noted the answers, then took his leave, running on to the next firm.

I was given the \$150.00 prize to take Gloria on a weekend to Palm Springs. As Gloria was pregnant with Sabrina, we just had a nice relaxing time. On our return, a shame-faced Chuck told me that he had not had authorization to hold the contest. I wound up having to repay the \$150.00 prize. Knowing what he was doing for me in expanding my territory, I joined him in a good laugh.

By the end of 1960, I had raised myself to 85% of quota, and I had sold my first new account, Box Cards. I had earned \$8,500.00. In 1959, with Gloria's salary, and with my Air Force Reserve pay, our total earnings had totaled \$10,000.00; however, I had a lot of confidence in my future earnings.

Every payday, I turned over to Gloria my stable salary to use up on current expenses. My wildly fluctuating commission checks would go into a separate account to pay for our infrequent big ticket items and to rebuild our savings. We followed this plan for the rest of the years that I was an IBM Marketing Representative.

25. SABRINA'S BIRTH

October 27, 1960, Sabrina was born. We named her after the character played by Audrey Hepburn in the movie by the same name. She was dainty and feminine, thus disproving the then claims of some in the Women's Movement that boys and girls are alike at birth. Sabrina and Brian slept in the second bedroom. The third bedroom was our family room. With Sabrina and Brian, our house became the center of the extended family's activity. Our home was full of love.

IBM Sales: Second Year

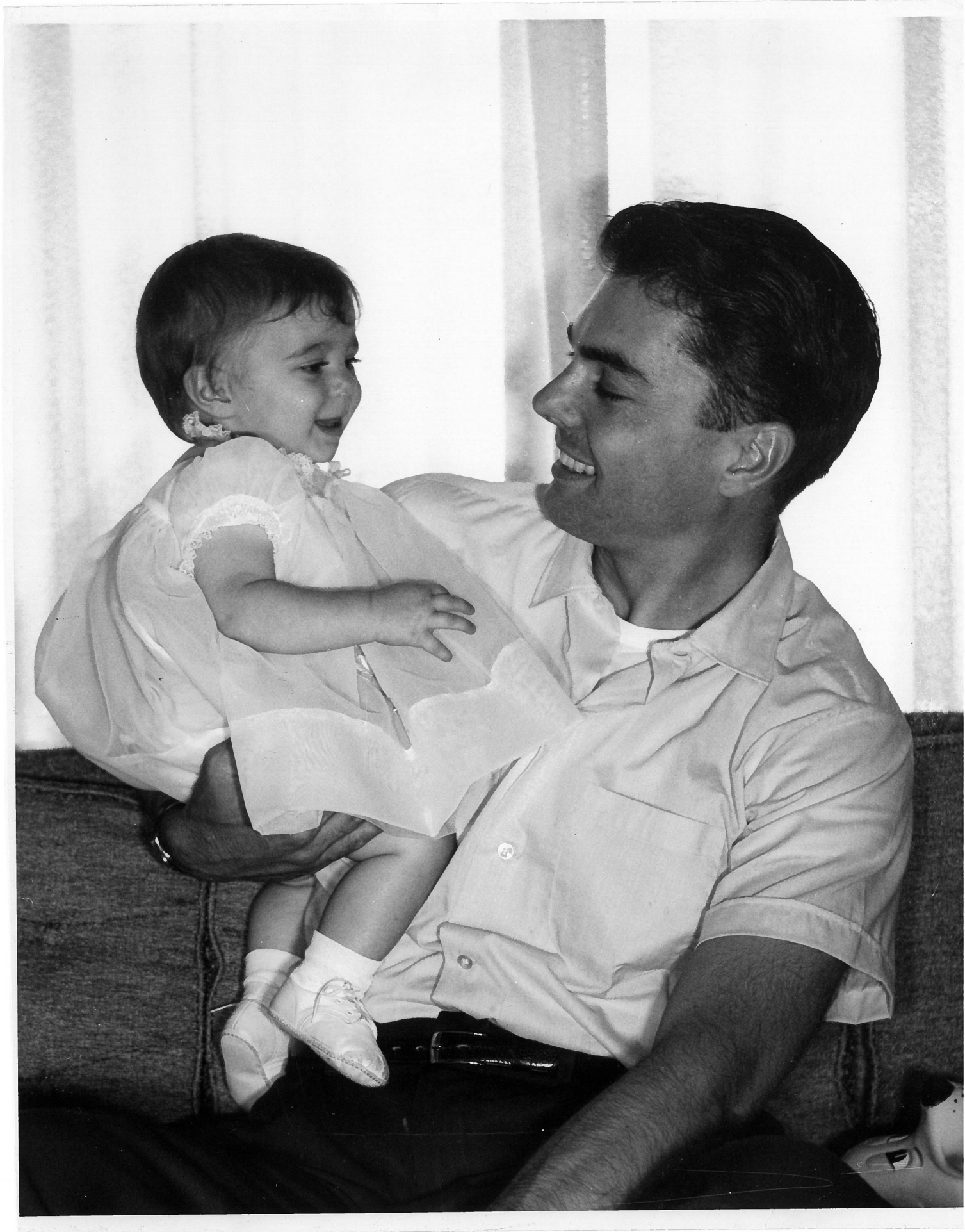
As 1961 began, Chuck McKittrick left, continuing his rapid rise to eventually become President of IBM's Federal Systems Division. I was very sorry to see him go. Our new branch manager was Warren Palmer.

I was alarmed by the great increase in my sales quota. This quota was not only a yardstick of my success, for the first time it directly affected my earnings. Before 1961, IBM commissions were directly linked to the rental value of machines ordered and machines successfully installed. Starting with 1961, each salesman was given a quota and a dollar amount was set for achieving 100% of quota. Commission checks were now based on the percent of quota achieved.

I protested to Warren that my quota increase was too large. His answer was to have me work out what I would have to sell in my territory in order to make quota, then we would jointly review whether or not these sales were achievable. Along with some customer upgrades, I calculated that I would have to find, sell, and install five new customer accounts. He felt that this was achievable and he agreed to give me the system engineering support I would need to prepare the new customers for installation.

I did sell five new accounts, all in the new territory I had received from the specializing salesman. That salesman, Jack Riker, feeling a little embarrassed, asked me how I had found these prospects. I told him that it was just dumb luck. Some of it was dumb luck, the rest was the result of the same kind of door-to-door cold calling that I had done as a Fuller Brush Man.

I ended 1961 at exactly 100% of quota. My total earnings were \$11,800.00.



26. FATHER'S DEATH

United Air Lines Flies Me to Visit Father

One of my customers was the district office of United Air Lines. One day late in Summer, 1961, the district manager phoned me to tell me that Warren Patterson, the president of UAL, wanted to fly me back to see Father. Warren still remembered Father and had learned that he had just had a second operation for his colon cancer. The outlook was grave. I was so grateful for this kind gesture, that afterwards I always tried to route my flights on UAL.

Father was recuperating in the hospital and looked all right. He did have a colostomy bag. At that time it was considered acceptable for doctors to keep from patients the gravity of their situation. Father mentioned to me that he had told the doctor of some transitory pain in his trunk. The doctor told him that this was just his wish bone. The doctor told me that he had been unable to remove all of the cancer.

Our Family Flies to Christmas Visit Father, Mother, Sally

In November, 1961, we received an invitation to visit Mother, Father, and Sally for Christmas. The invitation was in the form of an 8mm home movie. Featured were all of the sights of Douglaston, Long Island, but the real purpose was to kindly prepare us for Father's appearance.

We had a full family Christmas. Brian and Sabrina enjoyed the snow. A friend came over dressed as Santa Claus to entertain them. Everyone behaved really well. Mother and Father gave up their bedroom to accommodate us. They stayed in another building next door. I did not like to see Father walking through the snow on his way to bed. Also our visit was otherwise quite wearing to him. He told me that he had extended the invitation for the good of Mother. When I proposed cutting the visit short, there was no argument.

Flying home, Gloria got plane sick. She was pregnant again.

Father Dies

In March, 1962, I flew back again. This time for sitting by Father in the hospital while he was in his final coma.

At the funeral, in addition to Mother's and Father's friends, were six PAA managers who had flown in from all over the United States. One said that they had come to pay tribute to the man who had groomed more district managers than anyone else in PAA.

Father died at the age of sixty five, without having had any taste of retirement. He provided well for Mother, but there is some question whether he had enough to also cover himself in retirement.

The Birth of My Plan to Retire at Fifty Five

I resolved to plan for retirement at fifty five. I set up a chart with a savings line to this objective. Every month, for twenty two years, I tracked our actual savings to try to make this possible.

27. HOME ADDITION TO ACCOMMODATE ROB

By 1962, our first home in Alhambra was no longer large enough. We were anticipating the birth of our third child.

I designed a 450 square foot addition that would double our family room and would add a master bedroom and a master bath.

The total price for this addition was \$5,400.00. This included the raised floor addition, solid lath and plaster walls, carpet in the master bedroom, a forced air furnace in the attic, and a reshingle of the entire house's roof.

Because I was concerned that everything be done well in advance of the birthing, I included in the contract a \$5.00 per day penalty for late completion, with a \$5.00 per day bonus for early completion. I was delighted to pay a bonus.

Rob's Birth

Rob was born August 2, 1962, in the San Gabriel Community Hospital. I brought in Gloria, then her woman doctor shooed me into the waiting room. I had just settled down with a magazine when the doctor appeared to say that we had a new son and that Gloria was doing just fine.

IBM Sales: Third year

I sold several of my customers their first computers, and installed several new accounts. My biggest problem was that the branch manager was renegeing on his promised systems engineering support. Finally, I was seeing signs that customers were listening to competition. I wrote Special Situation Reports pointing this out. My then marketing manager, Jack Campbell, told me that Warren had advised him to not accept these reports and he pushed them toward me across his desk. I pushed them back, saying, "Throw them away if you like, but these are my honest reports of competitive activity." Jack then wrote me up in my annual review as unsatisfactory. I challenged this review in front of Warren. He indicated that the review would be changed were I to take back the Special Situation Reports. I refused, suggesting an alternative: I would transfer, as of January 1, 1963, to the Long Beach Branch, specializing in the manufacturing and distribution industries. This specialization was what I really wanted to do anyway. This allowed the two managers to save face, and got me out of an untenable relationship.

I ended the year way over quota and earned \$17,800.00. Father in his last full year had earned \$15,000.00.

Rob Was Our Third Child



Sally Flew Out
For Christmas
With Her Poodle



28. THE MARION APARTMENTS

In 1962, I determined that we had enough savings to start making small investments. Though a constant student of its workings, I did not feel comfortable trusting our capital on the stock market. I had noticed a best selling book with the ludicrous title "How I Raised \$1,000.00 to \$1,000,000.00 in My Spare Time." For fun, I purchased it. Nickerson's thesis was that, if you bought slightly run down rental properties from discouraged owners, and applied your energy and canniness, you could fix them up, raise the rents, then sell them for a good profit. The book was a collection of case studies showing just what he had actually done. I consider it a classic of its kind. Following his guidelines, we searched for and found our first (and only) Nickerson, a nine unit, three story, apartment house at 29 North Marion, Pasadena. It fully qualified as run down: built in 1886, it had been moved to its present location in 1924.

We made money on this investment every single year. In 1972, we sold it for a profit. The only drawback was that it sapped my energy. During the first year, on too many weekends I was there putting in a window, or replacing light fixtures, or working with the first manager to evict a tenant. Then we started to have real problems:

- When the typical tenant left, he would leave behind a complete mess. I would have to clean this up. I would often have to have the apartment repainted.
- Over the ten years of our ownership, we had several major roof repairs.
- The water pipes burst in the ceiling of the manager's apartment.
- The city inspectors wanted to condemn the building for unsafe wiring. We had the cost of major rewiring.
- As I refused to hold the top floor apartment rent free over the summer. The tenants kicked in all of the walls. I had to replace all of the sheet rock myself.
- With other tenants, the largest dope bust in the San Gabriel Valley was made in our top floor apartment.
- The city wanted to condemn the building for inadequate fire escapes for a three story wooden structure. We simply nailed up the door of the top floor apartment, leaving a two story structure.
- One of our managers turned out to be an alcoholic. She did nothing for the tenants. She refused to leave.

Sequestering herself behind her locked door, she ordered her liquor delivered by taxicab. Finally broke, she left. All of the apartments were vacant.

- In 1972, when we moved to Northern California, we hired as manager one of Gloria's Father's friends. One day he showed up with his family at our home in Saratoga. He was travelling in his giant motor home, just purchased with some of the proceeds of a disability settlement from a previous employer. He calmly let me know that no one was managing the apartments.

We hired a realtor to sell the property as soon as possible. We did make a profit, but we had to accept a large second mortgage. We had over one year of tedious handling of the buyer's failure to make payments. We created form letters for the proper notifications of the various steps toward foreclosure. At the last minute, he would bring his payments up to date, then, once again, go into arrears. Finally, he sold out and the new buyers settled up. I calculated that we had made 10% per year compounded on our investment. This was certainly better than losing our money. Many people would have simply given up. But the energy expenditure was far too much.

I was certain that real estate investment would make us big returns in the Santa Clara Valley, but I was even more certain that I just did not have the excess energy required.

29. IBM LONG BEACH

On January 1, 1963, I was transferred to the Long Beach Branch. Among the customers that I was assigned were the four customers who had ordered the new 1440 System. These systems featured the new replaceable disk storage drives. As there were virtually no application software programs on the market, the customer had to write his own. Two problems:

1. The 1440 was most attractive to those firms who could not afford sophisticated programming staffs.
2. The 1440 was as challenging to program as any of our more expensive equipment.

At none of these customers had any work been done toward installation. I shuddered. I planned an approach to each customer situation, then went to each customer to sell my action plan for their situation.

At one customer it was apparent that the 1440 was beyond their capabilities to use effectively. I convinced them to step back to a 1401 punched card system.

Another customer I convinced on a simpler approach to systems design, and convinced our branch management to provide more systems engineering guidance.

Because another customer's data processing manager had become frustrated with the branch's failure to answer his questions, he had ceased all work. I got one of our best systems engineers assigned to drop by twice a week to show interest and get the DP manager what he needed.

Then there was Smith Tool. Their DP manager was convalescing at home from a cerebral hemorrhage. His machine operator was quite bright, so I convinced Smith Tool to assign him to program. I also convinced branch management to assign a bright IBM trainee to work by his side.

I visited each account frequently, making sure that they had the IBM support and prodding that was necessary. All of these systems installed successfully and early. The branch manager later told me that he had not expected two of these systems to install at all.

In my move to Long Beach, I carried with me only one account. American Honda had left their old quarters on West Pico in Los Angeles for their newly constructed headquarters on West Alondra in Long Beach. Early in the year, I sold American Honda on upgrading to a medium sized 1401 system.

By June, 1963, I made quota. That year I earned \$28,000.00.

30. MY HOME LIFE IN THE 1960'S

While experiencing great tension on the job and with our Marion Apartments, I recharged at home.

I brought work home exactly once; I did not get much done and I brought more than usual tension into the home. Whenever work had to be accomplished out of normal hours, I did it at work. I can remember evenings of wandering the halls at IBM, with a portable dictation unit in my hand, stepping around the cleaning people, talking my way through an important proposal.

Some weekends I just wanted to flake out. Other weekends we would go out to places like Disneyland, Knotts Berry Farm, the beach, the mountains.

We also took vacations to Vacation Village in Mission Bay, San Diego; Sky Sierra Ranch near Yosemite; a beachfront hotel near Laguna; a round robin through the gold country and San Francisco.

Home Projects

I would also lose myself in projects:

- + The crafting of the vanity for the master bathroom.
- + The vinyl tiling of our newly expanded twenty seven foot long family room.
- + The installation in the family room of a top grade stereo music system, with the loudspeakers hidden above new closet doors.
- + The construction in the family room of bookshelves and built-in TV.
- + The through-the-wall installation of air conditioners in family room and dining alcove.
- + The construction of an outdoor playpen for Brian. Brian immediately figured out the door latch, so it was useless, except as a good anecdote.
- + The crafting of an electric train setup for Rob that could be stored under his bed.
- + The laying of a brick-in-concrete backyard patio.
- + The designing and construction of a two story playhouse/fort. The ground floor playhouse for Sabrina.

The fort for all of them. I had a playground equipment company fabricate a super long slide down from the fort. I made the first test run. With my adult weight, it became a test flight; I shot off of the end to hit the back concrete wall with both feet.

+ The crafting of a model of my home design. In 1968, we optioned a hillside lot and retained a designer-builder. We found his design to be ridiculous, so I drew a floor plan. Before spending a lot of money, I decided to prove out the design. Brian assisted me in contour mapping the lot. I then built a table top model of the lot. On this table top, I used balsa wood slabs to build a scale model of the house. The Architectural Review Committee liked it; they gave me clearance to have it built. However, the more I thought about it, the less I liked the idea of taking on so much additional stress. I had had most of the fun of building, with none of the pain. So I threw away the model and abandoned the lot.

Childrens' Organizations

I disliked organizational work, but both Gloria and I wanted our children to have the experiences that we had missed. For Sabrina, Gloria was a leader in the Brownies and the Girl Scouts. With Brian and Rob, I joined the Indian Guides. I was Committee Chairman and Gloria was an assistant Den Leader for the Cub Scouts.

Alhambra Home in 1960's



Patio and Fort that I made around 1966



Fort Made by Brian and friends around 1969

31. IBM SYSTEM 360

Early in 1964, IBM announced the System 360. The primary story was that here was a new family of data processing systems that would use the same programming languages and that would be compatible upwards from the smallest model to the largest most elaborate equipment. Once transitioned to the IBM 360, a customer could upgrade without reprogramming.

The announcement was all smoke and mirrors. Responding to competitive inroads, IBM had made a giant leap. Some said right over a cliff. Fortune Magazine put on its cover: "IBM's 5 Billion Dollar Gamble." The general feeling was that IBM had bet the company. The delivery schedules on all models of the 360 were in excess of two years. As these dates came closer, many were delayed an additional six months. Some models never did see the light of day.

IBM's "Paper Machine" marketing brought a flood of anti-trust litigation from competitors and from the US Justice Department.

As an IBM Marketing Representative, I was right in the middle of this maelstrom. In addition, my branch manager kept taking away the accounts that I had cleaned up, substituting customers where competition was making serious inroads. I once asked him why he did this. He answered that he knew that I would worry my way to success, and he could stop worrying about that situation. I managed to more than hold my own, but at cost to my health. I contracted a very bad case of colitis. This physical problem was somewhat alleviated when I jumped out of a brief partnership that I had been assigned with another rep: he and I were completely incompatible. Once back on my own, I was soon promoted to the newly created position of Advisory Marketing Representative. In September, 1967, I was one of the first recipients in our district of the District Excellence Award. However, by 1968, I had had it; I began actively campaigning for a job out of the field.

Promotion to Education

One glaring problem in 1968 was the ineffectiveness of the new "Metropolitan Branches". These branches were established to concentrate entirely on finding, selling, and installing new accounts. As one example of complete failure, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Branch, in its first year of existence had failed to install a single one of the new accounts sold.

I found out that one of the LA Education Center Managers was proposing a course on how to install a new account. I went to see him, making the argument that I had installed every

one of the fifteen new customers that I had sold. My stumbling block was that the job called for someone on a management track, which I, with my prickly personality, was definitely not on. I sold him and the Education Center Manager on my thorough knowledge and professionalism, as well as my ability to also instruct in the Manufacturing and Distribution Application Course.

I was hired at a salary of \$22,500.00 to be the major developer and instructor in the new course "Small Systems Application Installation." The course was a big success. IBM went on to incorporate our course materials in the training program of all of those new hires assigned to Metropolitan Branches.

IBM Marketing Representative Career Summary

I left my eight years three months as an IBM Marketing Representative with these career totals:

- + Seven straight Hundred Percent Clubs
- + All fifteen new accounts successfully installed
- + Every commercial computer sold, properly installed
- + No accounts lost to competition
- + Career total 131% of quota

In the course of business I sold and installed the first computers at the headquarters of these organizations,

- + Carnation Milk
- + U.S. Borax
- + American Potash and Chemical
- + Edward Hyman and Son (garment manufacturer)
- + H.L. Kirshbaum Industrial Laundries
- + American Honda (The first at any Honda location)
- + Allergan Pharmaceuticals
- + Robertshaw, Grayson Controls Division
- + Robertshaw, Aeronautical and Instrument Division
- + Borg-Warner, Aerospace Division
- + Interstate Electronics
- + Cinerama

To many of these, I also sold, and successfully installed, computer upgrades to Systems 360.

In addition, with changes in territory, I also successfully installed first computers at firms who had been sold the computers by others.

IBM Marketing Representative



1967 Tenth Wedding Anniversary in Las Vegas

32. THE LOS ANGELES EDUCATION CENTER

In addition to developing and teaching in the successful Small Systems Application Installation course, I also taught in the Manufacturing and Distribution Applications Course.

My New Lecture

For that course, I developed a new lecture Warehouse Order Pulling and Consolidation. My lecture was based on the system that I designed for American Honda for their replacement parts warehouse. That system was so successful that they became a pioneer in high speed data transmission over telephone lines. Every day, they prepared the order pull tickets and order consolidation sheets not only for their Long Beach location but also in Racine, Wisconsin, and Pensaukin, New Jersey. Building some props in my garage, and using pull tickets and consolidation sheets from Honda, I had students running around the classroom to see which of four teams could pull and pack their orders first. The students had a lot of fun while learning a valuable application.

IMB

I also taught my share of the standard course material, including role playing parts in the mythical Ideal Milk Bucket Company. The Ideal Milk Bucket Company, familiarly known as the IMB, was a play on the initials for the International Business Machines Company. At the beginning of this one week section of the course, the class manager would stride to the class front to tell the students that they were about to become management trainees of the Ideal Milk Bucket Company. During their employment they would learn all aspects of the firm directly from its executives, managers, and key personnel. Any person who broke the mood of this total immersion by mentioning such words as IBM, punched card, computer, programming, etc., would be fined one dollar per instance. Approaching the large magnetic letters, "IBM", on the whiteboard, he would say, "Are you ready?", then he would move the letters to "IMB". "And now, it is my honor to introduce to you our beloved president, Mr. J.F. Brown." Mr. Brown would use slides, a sales promotion movie, an organization chart, and humor (some of it broad) to immediately slide the students into their new environment. The rest of the week, the students worked during the day on learning all aspects of the duties and motivations of various members of the firm. On two evenings, they worked late into the night using IMB's manual methods to solve problems in providing the right material at the right time, and in scheduling production most efficiently on the shop floor. By the end of the week, the students had not only learned the

essentials of how a job shop manufacturer operated, but also had reference points on how managers felt and were measured in the various departments. Later, sometimes much later, we would receive letters from former students saying things like, "Last week I actually met 'Bernie Sharp'; he was amazed at my knowledge of his problems in the Purchasing department."

In addition to these two courses, I also taught in seminars on the principals of that kabuki dance called The Sales Call.

Marketing in the 70's

In 1971, we also devoted much of our time to teaching a tightly structured two week course for experienced IBM marketing representatives entitled, "Marketing in the 70's." This course was intended to break experienced people loose from thinking only in terms of the old standard batch processing of large quantities of data for applications such as Payroll. The new way was thinking in terms of item-by-item on line processing of such applications as order entry, payment receiving, customer inquiries, production changes, etc. The objectives of the course were to counter the negative business climate, and to make use of IBM's new capabilities in accessing central computer data bases through the use of the new terminals that worked like TV sets with keyboards.

"Marketing in the 70's" was, I think, successful in getting across the new strategy to the salesmen. Where it fell down was in the tactics of making these new applications work. What was missing was software packaged ready for the customers to use.

COPICS

Just suppose that at the time of this writing, I were to come to you with a personal computer and a printer and tell you that, once you wrote your own word processing program, the hardware would make it much easier for you to prepare your correspondence. Wouldn't you laugh? Wouldn't you tell me that you would wait for a word processing package to become available? Well, the situation in 1971 was worse than that for our manufacturing customers. There was not only no transaction driven computer software available for their applications, the conceptual logic was missing for designing this software.

IBM's Manufacturing Industry Center in Munich, Germany, was given the world-wide responsibility for creating this conceptual logic for manufacturing. Their end product was a

one foot set of manuals with the name Communication Oriented Production Information and Control System, which went by the acronym "COPICS". Once written, the plan was that COPICS would provide a blueprint for IBM software developers to create marketable software. Our manufacturing customers could then dive into practical terminal oriented data processing. IBM would profit greatly.

I looked forward to a golden age of influencing people to take advantage of these wonderful new capabilities.

33. SOUTH PASADENA

Once I had given up on building a new house, Gloria started looking at houses for sale. By 1969, our Alhambra home seemed too small for our very active family. Each of the boys needed their own bedroom. Also, we adults wanted to live in a newer, prettier place.

Gloria Finds Our Next Home

Gloria found one house that she particularly liked in the same South Pasadena hills where we had abandoned a lot. As I still felt bitter about our treatment by the designer-builder that had been recommended by the lot sales people there, and our subsequent loss of our \$2,800.00, I told her that I was not interested. She finally prevailed upon me to at least take a look.

Well, it was another instance where the trumpets sounded. When I had designed the entry way for my model, I made an exact copy of the entry of this house. When I had looked out from our lot, I had envied the view from this house that looked into the morning sun. I wanted it right now! The owners were asking \$56,000.00. I thought to myself that we should be able to bargain down the price.

Back in the broker's office, I said, "I guess that they will have no trouble getting \$56,000.00, but let's offer \$51,000.00 to start." As my words came out, I was amazed at my stupidity. My enthusiasm was completely in charge. Of course the broker is the agent for the SELLER! We did buy the house. We did pay the full \$56,000.00. I loved that house every day that I spent in it.

From the street, behind the neat shrubs and lawn, was what looked like a graceful single story house with over sized shingle roof and a flat roofed garage jutting forward. The garage opened to the side. There was a small flat side yard. The backyard was two paces deep, then went down a steep hill to end just short of the bottom. The back view was of a small canyon full of trees and shrubbery, and, off to the right side, the brand new grammar school and the great variety of nice homes. As it was situated on a knoll, the front view was of the single story homes across the street of our cul-de-sac; there were only hammered glass windows on this view. The result was privacy, with complete openness to the rear.

As you entered, a straight staircase floated up to the right. On the second floor were the three children's bedrooms, and their bathroom, all on an open hallway with a railing that overlooked the two story entryway.

Back on the first floor, the dining room, with rear view window, was partially screened by the staircase.

To the left of the entry was the living room, with side view of plantings on the slight slope to the neighbors, and with sliding glass door for the rear view.

Off the living room, to the front of the house, was an alcove leading to the master bedroom and bath.

To the right of the entry was a stub hall leading several steps down to the family room. Off of this hall was the guest bathroom.

Between the family room and the dining room was the kitchen. On the rear side of the kitchen was the breakfast room. As I write this, we still have the glass topped white wrought iron table and white upholstered wrought iron chairs that we sat in as we laughed and ate and watched the birds fly below us up our semi-private canyon.

Rear Terrace Landscaping

I did have some concern about erosion on our back slope. Gloria's father was still a track foreman on the Southern Pacific. When they removed ties still usable for landscaping, he would route the trucks to our side yard. He gave me an old pair of tie pullers - they looked like the ice tongs that the door-to-door icemen had used. I bought from junk yards a lot of used two inch pipe. With these materials and concrete, I constructed several terraces that I planted with dwarf citrus trees. This gave us some erosion control, while keeping combustible material away for the house.

Our Children and Their Friends Build Playhouses

I loved this home. The only drawback was that it was just hard enough to climb the street to our place to somewhat discourage our children's playmates. To give an added attraction, I fabricated and painted floor sections, pre-drilled posts, and pre-drilled plywood wall sections, then had the children invite their friends to bolt together three two story playhouses. I figured that, having some labor stake in the playhouses, the playmates would visit more often. At least, this was my hope.

Our Children's Schools

Brian went to the same junior high school that I had. Only it was not the same. The club period was gone. A teacher said that the school had become more focussed on the standard curriculum.

Sabrina and Rob went to the new grammar school just down the hill from us. The state education bureaucracy suddenly discovered that all of the Asian, Black, and Latino students in South Pasadena were concentrated in this one school. Alarm! This was the age of integration. They sent a study group. The study group found that this school had higher achievement than any of the other South Pasadena schools. The study group retreated without so much as a murmur. Of course, the students were preselected; the above average cost of the homes here guaranteed stable households of some intelligence.

The Mini-Parks Crusade

Gloria got us involved in a Catholic social group. In order to give some purpose to the group, it was decided to campaign for pocket parks in the hill area where we lived. The idea was to dedicate small green areas where mothers could take their babies and toddlers. I even spoke on this before the city council. We put in some real effort on this. Then it came out. One member of the Catholic group had become upset that a builder was going to erect some cheaper houses on his block. He had us running around getting partitions signed, so as to blackmail the builder into building more expensive houses or he might lose his lots for pocket parks. I felt very foolish for having been taken in. We dropped out.

Our Family Bicycling Habit

At this time, one of our family activities was bicycling up around the Pasadena Rose Bowl. Part of the outing was a big brunch at the Pasadena Country Club Coffee Shop. We did this many weekends during good weather.

Earthquake

We had been in this house about one year, when, at 5:30am a big earthquake hit. Centered in the San Fernando Valley, we were quite a distance away. We had another advantage; located high on a shale hill, we were not subject to the ground amplification that happens on deep layers of valley silt. Our disadvantage was that this split level house, with one wall of view windows, was very flexible.

I awoke with a start, jumped out of bed, and ran to the front hall to look after the children. Here they came: Sabrina, whose room was furthest from the stairs, was coming down first; the two boys were piled up behind. I was trying to urge them on, but all that came out of my mouth were croaks. We all went out front in our nightclothes. I was so glad that we were all safe.

During a week of aftershocks, our three children slept in the front hallway, ready to spring for the door with the first motion.

We were lucky to receive absolutely no damage.

Brian's Boy Scouts

Brian was ready for Boy Scouts. He wanted to join. I wanted him to have the experience. I took him to a meeting at the closest troop. Talk about well established. The meeting room looked as though it had been one of the first organized in the country. Brian knew no one. The adult leaders did nothing to break the ice. I thought that this would never work. I contacted the Boy Scout district. With all of the new population in the South Pasadena hills, they thought that a new troop was the answer. I would not be the leader, but I devoted some time and energy in getting it going. The fellow that I understood would be the leader I took to be twenty one. Well, he was only seventeen. I did get a group of fathers and sons together. Finally, I agreed to be a leader. I had three requirements:

1. I was a figurehead only, the seventeen year old would lead the troop.
2. Every father would give time.
3. There would be no elaborate "Base Camping"; every campout would involve hiking in, with every boy carrying a pack.

In the actuality, I only went on two campouts. I broke my foot before the third, then I was promoted to San Jose, and I turned over the troop to another father.

South Pasadena



Rear Terracing
Rob, Gloria,
Brian



One of Three
Playhouses



Happy Times

1969:
South Pasadena



1972: Seeing Me
Off on a Trip



1973: Easter
in Saratoga



34. PROMOTION TO SAN JOSE

The New COPICS Strategy

In early 1972, my career prospects became very confusing. The IBM Headquarters Manufacturing Industry Marketing Group was about to make COPICS the center of a complete organizational shift in strategy. Whereas before, headquarters Manufacturing Industry Marketing was composed of less than one dozen people, setting sales strategy and lending consulting expertise to the sales branches, now MIM was to become an organization of several hundred people carrying the COPICS strategy down to the details of programming specifications, programming the code to be marketed, writing the details of education courses for the field and the customers, and having dotted line responsibility for a new force in the branches entitled "Manufacturing Industry Specialists". Composed of former branch Systems Engineers who had helped in the technical installation of systems at manufacturing customers, these specialists would now be responsible for consulting on the selling and the installing of the new COPICS systems.

Manufacturing Industry Education Was Leaving Los Angeles

MIM was taking over all manufacturing application education. There were to be two centers for this: Poughkeepsie, New York, and San Jose, California. These sites were picked for two main reasons:

1. As the two most advanced IBM manufacturing plants, the plan was to install COPICS at each and be able to demonstrate the great success of these systems.
2. There already existed full facilities for housing customer executives in their Homesteads established for existing customer executive courses.

Once again, I was caught up in a maelstrom. With the IBM LA Education Center losing its manufacturing courses, there was no longer sufficient work for our specialized group. As the rest of our people were on management tracks, these people scrambled to get placed in branches as Marketing Managers or as Systems Engineering Managers. Awaiting placement, we conducted seminars in selling skills, and helped write "sentences that sell" for courses that had fees. One that I wrote for an introductory course: "Provides a confidence base for all later training." For a self-study course, another of us wrote, "Puts the student in a class by himself."

My Struggle to Find a New Position

Everyone else got placed on the next step in their careers. But what about George? My manager sounded me out about going back to the field as the sales team leader on a large account. I knew that my colitis would surely return, so I turned it down. My manager did get a tentative feeler from Manufacturing Industry Marketing that they would be interested in hiring me for six months to go up to San Jose to help the new staff get started. NO THANKS! At the end of the six months, I would be cut loose, without even a home base from which to find another position.

The Position of Senior Manufacturing Industry Representative

This gave me an idea: it occurred to me that an absolutely new staff direct from branches would be sure to flounder. I decided to try the tack that had got me the education job in the first place: if all of the new staff was on a management track, shouldn't there be at least one professional who really knew what he was doing? This would not only provide continuity, but would insure that every class was conducted at a level of excellence.

I was flown back East to interview with MIM management. With my excellent record at the LA Ed Center, they bought my arguments and they acceded to my request for the title of Senior Manufacturing Industry Marketing Representative. Though my raise was only to \$27,000.00, I was assured that this was the bottom of my title's pay range and I would be able in time to reach as high as \$40,000.00. As my back was once again to the wall (which this seasoned poker player never let them know), this was an absolutely wonderful solution to my situation.

The Down Side to the Promotion

Of course there was a VERY bad down side to this promotion: the move to San Jose. For some years now, Mother and Sally had been living near us. Gloria had spent her entire life happily entwined with her large extended family. Brian, Sabrina, and Rob received very important loving support from all of these good hearts. All of this would now be remote.

Unfortunately, I could see no choice. If I stayed to scramble in LA, I saw only a downslope to our economic fortunes and to my health. Here was a chance to be "the expert" and to ride a wave to solid success. We would find a nice neighborhood in which to thrive. Southern California was not even a full day's journey away. We would visit, and those down South would visit us, especially with our

closeness to the attractions in San Francisco.

We had several family discussions, so everyone could air their own feelings. One night, Gloria woke me with, "Don't take the promotion!" But there was really no practical choice. All that we could do was make sure that everyone in the family got a really good shot at adjusting to the new realities.

I did not ever discuss my dilemma with others on the staff. In those years, IBM also stood for "I've Been Moved." Especially for those on the management track, successful people expected to move as frequently as once every two years. Three years in one place was one symptom of a flagging career. No sympathy there for us.

Four Positives For Our Family

1. The Father would be at his best.
2. This new position was somewhat stable.
3. We would have enough money to live well.
4. There would be a lot less smog.

35. SARATOGA

In March, 1972, I was given four days off for Gloria and I to go up to San Jose to find and to buy a house. We drove up on Sunday and settled into our room at the Los Gatos Lodge.

School Research

Our first priority was to live in an excellent school district, so we had obtained information on test scores and letters of introduction to school superintendents. First thing Monday, we met with the superintendent of the San Jose School District. He was honest and a great help to us. He told us that the only area in San Jose that we might consider was the Almaden Valley; however, the area had been building up so fast that the schools were overwhelmed: they were on double sessions. As if that were not enough, all state funds for education were being spent in an effort to help those schools with a large minority population. He recommended that we consider the schools in Cupertino and Saratoga.

That afternoon we met with the superintendent of Cupertino schools and were favorably impressed. Friends had already told us that Saratoga schools were excellent, so it was settled - our next home would be in either Cupertino or in Saratoga.

Hunting with Realtors

We made an appointment for first thing Tuesday morning with a realtor that had been recommended, telling the broker the areas we were interested in and our price range of around \$55,000.00.

We did not hit it off with the realtor. He insisted that there was nothing for us available in our price range. He showed us dumps in the sixty thousand range and beauties in the eighty thousand range. By noon, we were so depressed that when he suggested that we knock off for lunch, I instead dropped him off at his office, telling him that, "We are so depressed that we do not want to spoil your lunch."

After lunch, we dropped in on another realtor and teamed up with a very nice upbeat high-energy lady. Convinced that we would have to raise our price range to the mid-sixty's, we set out to really see houses. Feeling that volume was the key, I prodded us on. With loose leaf books of listings on her lap, our broker efficiently directed my driving. Buoyed somewhat by her manner, and also by the quantity of houses available, we charged through the rest of Tuesday, all of Wednesday, and all of Thursday.

For Sale by Owner

Suddenly it was the end of Thursday. We still had not found our house. We had looked at some fifty-eight dwellings. No house. I was supposed to report back to work on Friday morning. We had failed. We faced waiting until I reported to my new job, then my looking alone for a house, which Gloria would then travel up to confirm. We were depressed. As a last stab, I bought a newspaper and looked in the classified for houses for sale by owner. I found two possibles in Saratoga. We made the decision to stay one extra day to give them a shot. To cheer us up, we went for an elegant dinner at The Hacienda. The elegant dinner did not cheer us up. All we accomplished was to associate The Hacienda with our mood. It was some years before we could go there again, and never for dinner.

The next morning, we phoned for appointments at the two houses. We liked them both! At a coffee house we discussed the features of each. On a piece of scratch paper, I constructed a table of offers that we would make on each in turn that led up to their asking prices. Back at the first house, we openly told the owners what we were doing and made our first offer, \$61,000.00 against their asking price of \$65,000.00. As I waited for their counter offer, the husband turned to his wife to ask what she thought. She nodded, so he accepted our offer. This was it! We had our house!

Three Coincidences

One weird coincidence. As we sat signing papers in the dining room, another couple arrived to look at the house. Turned away, we later learned that they bought the second house that we were going to offer on.

Second coincidence. We learned of their purchase when we and they joined a four couple gourmet cooking group organized by my new manager, Jack Callon.

Third coincidence, our house was in the same tract as Jack Callon's and had an identical floor plan. His home had an impressive two story pillared front; however, his lacked a second story balcony, had a tiny back yard, and cost him \$65,000.00. Heh, heh, heh.

Saratoga Home
The Day That We Purchased In 1972



36. SELLING SOUTH PASADENA

To provide time to sell our South Pasadena house, we purchased the Saratoga house on a ninety day escrow. We took full advantage of IBM's Home Purchase Plan. IBM sent out three independent appraisers to set a price on our home. We had ninety days to accept or reject this offer. If we accepted, then IBM would pay for the house and would sell it to someone else. One reason that I had been so concerned about the purchase price of the Saratoga home was that the market had been slow in South Pasadena. The IBM offer was \$59,000.00. Now we had ninety days to do better. As IBM would pay the real estate commissions and most of the selling closing costs, I felt absolutely solid. Well, as it turned out it was a good thing that we had the IBM floor price under us. No one came to look at our house. No action. Nada.

Then, a chum of Sabrina's told her uncle about our house. He was an Air Force dental officer leaving the service. He gave us our asking price of \$61,000.00, and purchased the three playhouses for \$2,500.00. What luck! The only ones to look purchased. We set closing for just after the end of school.

Separation

Gloria stayed behind with the children. I went up to start my new duties. Until June, 1972, when the escrow ran out on our new home, I lived in the Los Gatos Lodge. When I moved into the new home, I slept on a new convertible couch in the family room. During the week, I was very lonely rattling around the empty house. On several weekends, Gloria came up to help with the decorator, the painters, the landscape designer, and the swimming pool people. The objective was to have everything ready prior to her move up with the children.

The Family Move to Saratoga

Were it not for the Great Concrete Strike of 1972, everything would have been ready for them. Everything was ready, except for the swimming pool. Later, when the strike was over, the driver of the first load could not find us. Worried about the concrete hardening in his truck, he dumped the entire load on some vacant ground by Cox Avenue. For years, as we drove past we would call out, "The Strehlke Monument!" We would not call out so loudly that anyone else could hear us.

So we were now established in Saratoga. We were in a nice town convenient to all of our activities. We had a three thousand square foot home. We had a sunny backyard, with a five hundred square foot redwood deck and a forty-four foot long swimming pool. The children soon had friends. Great!

37. MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY EDUCATION

Jack Callon, my new manager, and I were the first on board the new education staff in San Jose. Jack's last job had been manager of the Manufacturing Industry Center in Munich, Germany, where the COPICS set of manuals had been written and published. He had ambitions of becoming a high level executive at IBM. On his new job, I was somewhat of a danger to him. We had a history.

Previous History with Jack Callon

When I first met Jack, he was an IBM Marketing Representative in the Los Angeles East branch. He was being promoted to a staff assignment in Tokyo, Japan, Manufacturing Industry Marketing. One of his accounts was being transferred to our Long Beach branch. I was to take over the account. They had ordered a good sized System 360. I would be taking over responsibility for its successful installation. Jack introduced me to the firm's management, then I made a study of the soundness of our business relationship with them. My study clearly showed that the on order System 360 was not sound business: the firm was not large enough, applications for the system had not been identified, and no justifying proposal had been written. At that time, some fast rising IBM stars would book a lot of flaky business, then would run up the IBM ladder before the orders collapsed behind them. Jack was one of those stars.

I wrote a meticulous report for my branch manager proving that this account was a bad bargain. Unfortunately, my branch manager's ego was involved. He had fought a battle to take the account away from LA East and could not bring himself to now back away. So I was stuck with it. I made it clear that I was going to waste none of my time and none of IBM's resources on this bad business, but would just take it in the chin when the inevitable cancellation was booked.

Later, when I was put on a team with another representative, this account was included in the team's holdings. When I insisted on breaking up the team, most of the accounts, including this account, were given to the other salesman. Although by then I had no responsibility for it, when the cancellation came, I did accept one half of the charge-back.

The Beginnings of MIM Education

So here we now were, Jack and I alone together, making plans for the new organization. Neither of our families were yet with us, so we even dined together. I never spoke of our past, but it was there. He had had no part in my selection

for his staff; I was selected before he was. Later events proved that he would have avoided me if he could have.

When our families did arrive, Linda Callon and Gloria really hit it off. Living so close, for a while we got together each Friday. Jack formed a gourmet cooking group with two other IBM couples and ourselves. When Linda had a car wreck, our daughter, Sabrina, was in the front right seat. Sabrina told me that she had seen nothing. Jack was angry that I would not order Sabrina to say that she had seen that it was the other driver's fault.

Of the two MIM education groups, Poughkeepsie was planned to be dominant. Their staff of fifteen was charged with developing new course material for both of the centers, as well as instructing. Our staff of ten was just charged with instruction. This plan ignored the personalities of the two managers.

The Poughkeepsie manager was marginally intelligent. He was the sort who will try to impress you by adopting a superior manner as he reveals banal information as though it is brand new to you, and is perhaps beyond your understanding. He had such a strong fear of failure that he stifled any efforts of his staff to innovate, although that was an important part of his charter. Members of his staff told me that he based his annual personnel evaluations almost entirely on the ratings questionnaires filled out by students at the end of classes. In their several years of existence, the Poughkeepsie group created nothing at all.

Jack Callon was highly intelligent. He was sharp and quick. He was a risk taker. He encouraged the development of new material to use with new audiences. A major sin was not to be charging ahead with an over-full load. He was aiming to rocket up the promotion ladder by achieving spectacular results. We were to teach far more student days than did the group in Poughkeepsie.

If we couldn't fill the calendar with formal classes, he would phone branch offices all over the country to solicit our coming to them with special programs tailored for the needs of their marketing efforts. During one six month period, I class managed an executive conference in San Jose, an executive conference in Lexington, Kentucky, and the first MIM middle management institute ever at UC Santa Barbara. These programs were composed of presentations by our most successful customers. These presentations were effective as validators of our message; they were also valuable as sources of references for our instructors to use in our courses. During that same six month period, the Poughkeepsie group mounted only one conference.

We were also sending Poughkeepsie new course material that we had developed. When I complained to Jack that the conceptual material in the COPICS manuals on "Master Production Schedule Planning" was pure baloney, he agreed to my spending several weeks traveling around the country visiting our customers most successful with production planning systems to learn what was practical in this area. One result was that my new course material was used from then on by both groups.

Distribution Industry Applications School

Established at the same time as our group in San Jose was a new Distribution Industry Education organization. They had as many people as we did. Their initial mission was to teach the third week of the Manufacturing - Distribution Applications School to IBM trainees. There were now twenty people teaching the title that four of us had been teaching in Los Angeles. Of course the content was to be on a far higher plane. There was trouble from the start. No one on their staff had any previous teaching experience. Their section of the course bombed - class after class. First they thought it was because they taught the third week, when the students were getting tired. So they were put on first - bombed.

Their manager heard that I used to lecture on Honda's order pick and pack system. He asked me to give it a try. This turned out to be another blow. The students not only bombed their class, but gave my lecture raves: several went into detail as to why my session was so effective. Unfortunately, none of his staff had sat in on my work, so they had no chance to learn from it. The discouraged manager pulled the plug. I was told that he wrote his higher management that the Distribution Industry was too diverse to be covered in any one class. Their group just blew away. Tough world.

Additional Seniors Hired in San Jose

The original MIM Education organizational plan was for each of the two groups to have one "Senior" who would give professional guidance to the others, would be able to fill in for absences, and would lend continuity with staff changes. This held true for Poughkeepsie, but Jack had his own agendas. Almost immediately he brought in as an additional "Senior", Bob Wimmer, who had been on his staff in Munich. However, Bob was not up on what we were teaching; he never did really take hold.

Then, Jack brought on board as an additional "Senior", a second level manager from the San Jose plant floor. This Ken Newton became a big favorite with higher level MIM management

and was well liked by most of our staff. He handled himself well in customer executive classes; he handled himself less well with IBM classes. The plant experience he brought did not translate into our courses, but he was a good learner. He was a direct threat to me.

I began to get offers to join branch offices as their Senior Industry Specialist. I suspected that Jack was promoting these offers. (As one branch manager volunteered to me at this time, "Just because you are paranoid doesn't mean they are not out to get you.") My response was to continue my development to be the best instructor in every subject that we taught, as well as the class manager with the highest class ratings. I could not be faulted on my performance.

COPICS Strategy Blow-Up

It was during this formative period of our staff that the MIM COPICS strategy blew up. It was determined that the COPICS concepts manuals were not adequate to serve as the logic base for writing application programs for IBM to market. The knowledge just did not exist. The programming group in Des Plaines, Illinois, was disbanded. The foundation was gone beneath the whole MIM organizational expansion. Bureaucratic lag was all that kept our two educational groups going. We were teaching concepts only; our customers would have to detail design and program their own systems.

Jack Promoted - Ken Newton Named Acting Manager

Jack, being nimble, obtained a promotion to district marketing staff in San Francisco. Ken Newton was named acting manager of our group. Jack and his wife Linda came to the last gourmet cooking group dinner at our house. My relations with Jack were now openly sour. I was the last on the staff to know of his promotion; I was the last to know of the appointment of the acting manager. I realized that I was not a candidate for the job of acting manager: I was not popular and I lacked basic management skills. It would have been nice, though, to have been told first, not last.

Ken Newton floundered. He had no plan. Rather than set ideas in motion that might have resulted in his being made permanent manager, he behaved as though he was just the temporary substitute for a manager on vacation. He whined a lot to our staff about the lack of support he was receiving from higher management. I am sure that he also whined a lot to higher management about the lack of support that he was receiving from our staff, especially me. Hey, I did no back stabbing. I kept my head down and just made sure that I did more than my share to bring excellence to our efforts. Of

course, just because I did well in the classroom, some members of staff felt that their own mediocre efforts looked bad by comparison. Also, I was never reticent to let someone know when their poor performance was dragging down the students' enthusiasm. These people felt that they would look better were I not around.

After a little while, the manager of the Poughkeepsie group was sent out. In a private meeting with me, he emphasized what a fine person was Ken Newton. He also emphasized that I should work a lot harder at getting along with everyone. He left with nothing resolved.

Ed Sandel Made Manager MIM Education San Jose

Then, we got a manager. Ed Sandel was promoted from manager of a small branch in Ohio that he had proposed be merged with a branch in a neighboring city. A very strong personality, there was no question that he was the manager. A kidder with a deprecating humor, he would allow no kidding in return. Of course he had been briefed that I was one of his problems. Jack Callon must have told him that Ralph Schaefer (a good friend of Jack's) would be his best sounding board and confidant. They walked the halls joined at the hip. I kept my head down and pursued my independent path.

In his first few weeks on the job, Ed and I had few meetings. At one of these, Ed mentioned that in a discussion with Ken Newton, my name had come up. Ken Newton supposedly told Ed that he was one of my good friends, but there were a few things that Ed should understand about me. I blew up. I told Ed that Ken Newton and I were not good friends, and that I would appreciate Ed not taking anything that person had to say in that light. Immediately after that meeting, I found Ken Newton, invited him into a private room, told him what Ed had said, then blasted him for claiming to be my friend. Poor Ken Newton never had a chance to speak. I do not even know whether or not Ed had been telling me the truth, I later learned not to trust his version of events. In any case, the air was cleared on that subject.

Ed believed in hard work and in promises kept. Just after he came on board, I pointed out that we were just a few months away from the Automotive and General Manufacturing Institute, with few speakers and no involvement from the automotive industry. My suggestion that we cancel this program was met by anger. He directly charged Bob Wimmer with using his automotive industry contacts to build that portion of the program. He charged me with the rest. Ralph Schaefer succeeded in getting as our kick-off speaker the plant manager of a General Motors plant. I fleshed out the program with speakers from a wide range of manufacturing firms.

Wimmer waited until the week before the starting date to announce that he had absolutely no speakers from the automotive industry, "Because their industry is so secretive." Luckily, as the format of the institute was largely composed of time periods with choices of alternate speakers, we were able to proceed with fewer choices than planned. As there were no application sessions on automotive topics, there were no attendees from our automotive customers. So, everything worked except our title, "The Automotive and General Manufacturing Institute." Bob Wimmer did not attend.

I had just recently received another of my mysterious job offers. This was to be the Senior Industry Specialist in a Virginia branch. Bob Wimmer had spoken to me of some day wanting to get back to Virginia and to his extended family. I let him know of the opening. He dove for it.

Certified as APICS Fellow

As a part of my professional development, I joined the American Production and Inventory Control Society. I gave many presentations before their California chapters. I also taught preparation classes for their Certification exams. In 1976 I passed the requisite examinations at the top level. I was now a Certified Fellow of APICS. There was only one other APICS Fellow in IBM's entire MIM organization. Gloria had the certificate framed. I hung it in my office.

Italian Branch Offices Create COPICS Programs

About this time, Italian branch offices began writing crude programs of the COPICS modules. A new COPICS group was established in our office area. As part of their efforts, TV terminals with keyboards were installed in our main classroom. It was christened, "The Classroom of Tomorrow, Today!" There was pressure to incorporate the new Italian programs into our classes. Ken Newton was against it as the programs were imperfect. I was all for it, as I knew that I could create demonstrations that avoided the rough spots and would bring the concepts of COPICS alive. Ken Newton class-managed the customer executive courses, so he metered in the demonstrations very slowly.

Ken Newton Leaves for Des Moines, Iowa

In 1977, the top IBM members of the John Deere team traveled out to visit me to get my ideas on strategy and planning for manufacturing systems at John Deere. I met with them for several days. I began to get the impression that they were

about to offer me a place on their team. I headed this off with repeated references to my satisfaction with my current position, with no desire to leave Saratoga.

Just before the John Deere visit, Ed had talked to me about a session he had had with Ken Newton in which Ken had made a strong pitch to stop teaching in the IBMer classes, and to confine his teaching, in the customer classes, to Master Production Schedule Planning. I laughed as I pointed out that Ken knew nothing original about Master Production Schedule Planning; in fact, when he did teach it, he used my materials - right down to my jokes and war stories. I also pointed out that keeping on with the customer classes gave me new insights that I was able to relate to the IBMer classes. Ken then made the attempt to merely class-manage customer classes, leaving all of the actual teaching to me and other staff members. Ken Newton had squeezed himself out. He accepted the position with the IBM John Deere team.

MIM Education Poughkeepsie Wiped Out

Of course I had been expecting our unit to be closed down. Instead, higher management cut loose the Poughkeepsie manager and transferred the entire remaining staff, except Jim Clark, to Raleigh, North Carolina. They were given a new mission: create marketing and instructional material for the new System 7 hardware for shop floor information control. Interestingly enough they failed there, as they had failed in their mission in Poughkeepsie, and were eventually all cut loose for new assignments.

Ed Sandel was now the manager of Jim Clark in Poughkeepsie, as well as our staff in San Jose that had attrited faster than turnover and was down to five.

COPICS for Managers Class Turnover to COPICS Group?

Ed now approached me with the idea that, as the "Senior," I should just sit with my feet up on the desk and think of how we should improve our mission, turning over all activities to others. I pointed out that I had been submitting ideas that had each been turned down with the comment, "I don't want to be in that business." He had already taken us out of the business of conferences and institutes, turning these programs over to his manager, Ed Bullard, in White Plains, New York. Now he ruled that we would turn over my "COPICS for Managers" class to the new COPICS group in San Jose. We did two transition classes, which I class-managed. Two of their staff taught along with me. The customer class reviews were devastating - the worst that I had ever seen. I was rated tops, however the other two just did not have the

charisma, organization, or content required. Furiously, Ed backed away from his plan.

COPICS Terminal Workshops

For over a year, the COPICS group had been trying to come up with workshops for us to use in classes and presentations. They had imported a fellow from Canada, who worked two months without any results. They brought in a professional from the IBM San Jose Plant, who worked for months without result. Then ED assigned Ray Fritsch of our group to do the job. Ray spent several weeks getting nowhere. I wanted workshops to be done by next month's COPICS for Managers, so I sat down with Ray and proposed to rough out my ideas. He accepted. I knew the programs well enough to know what could be made to work. And I was very good at scenarios. In one afternoon, we had all of the workshops roughed out. In one week we had them all done. Again, Ed was furious. He insisted that Ray was the gating factor. I didn't argue. I didn't need any overt credit. The job was done. The workshops were a hit.

IMB Introduced into COPICS for Managers

To give a big opening to COPICS for Managers, I came up with a skit. I would be in front of the room welcoming the customers, when one of our staff would bust in the front door asking if I had seen Bernie, "No, but can I help?" "We are short some 07085 parts that are needed right away!" "Hang on (as I keyed on the terminal in the front of the classroom that broadcasted to all of the other terminals throughout the room) -- I see that there are none in stock, but there are 50 being made on the shop floor." "Thanks, I'll go hunt them up!" "Hang on (as I keyed in for WIP status) -- they are now undergoing operation 50 in Milling." "Thanks, I'll go push them through. Gee, I expected to spend all morning on this. Maybe I'll go get a cup of coffee. That thing doesn't also dispense coffee does it?" "Not yet," I answered.

The response was electric. Customer managers were sitting with their mouths open. Big applause! I pointed out that this brief skit demonstrated what this class was all about. They would be involved on their keyboards solving problems common to their operations.

I decided to expand on the opening skit idea by introducing new subjects with the characters of the "internal only" class, "The Ideal Milk Bucket." Ken Newton heard of this. In trouble on his John Deere assignment, he told me that he would really like to work with me on this. I gave him no response.

The COPICS for Managers class was a smash hit. Many customers cycled through all of their VP's.

IMB Self-Study Course Development

In 1978, IBM higher management decided that we would gain productivity were we to put much of our IBM internal course material into self-study format. It was decided that the basic concepts of manufacturing and the IMB were now stable enough to freeze. The manual project was assigned to Mary Jane Lawler. She was given a professional writer. I was assigned to write up only one topic, "Forecasting." Mine was the first done. It was also the only topic in any form for the professional writer. I offered to Mary Jane my services to dive in and work with her and the writer to make the other sections come alive. She gladly welcomed me. We worked late into the night. Along the way, I was given responsibility for the videotape skit package that would accompany the manual. I realized that the interactive play that we had enjoyed in the classroom would be absent, so I put in major work in coming up with vignettes that would get across the big points. The professional writer than polished it all up, and we published the manual and we made the videotapes.

For the video production, a professional TV director was hired. He put out a casting call in New York City. After an audition, he decided that I should play the IMB president, JF Brown. We used the TV studios in the basement of IBM Corporate Headquarters, with the then new remote microphones and the latest studio gear. The biggest problem was that the actors did not understand the material, and it shows in the final result. However, together with the manual, the whole package was a landmark event. I still have a copy of the manual, and a black and white video of the skits: my best effort is in the final scene.

After the self-study course became a prerequisite, our Manufacturing Applications class was shortened to one week. At the opening, the class-manager would call out the name of each of the instructors, who would then stand up in the rear of the class and give a word of greeting. He would introduce me last. I would snap to my full height and say the opening line of my last video skit, "Let's get to work!" The response was always very ego gratifying.

1978 Director's Excellence Award

For all of my efforts, in the classroom and in development, I was the recipient of the 1978 Director's Excellence Award. This was the pinnacle of my achievement in MIM Education.



IMB Staff Meeting for Training Video

38. FAMILY IN CRISIS

Up until 1975, my view of our family was one of love, pride, and a secure sense that everything that we experienced was within the range of a tame television situation comedy. Certainly none of our children exhibited any signs of the extreme anguish that I had experienced as a child.

Then, things began to fall away from the center, rapidly, so rapidly that I began to experience real fear that we might lose children to the dark side. I felt the heavy weight of responsibility, without having any clear idea of what to do.

I continued to support any positive activity. I was there in the home. As each negative activity surfaced, I would have long talks with the individual, trying to understand what was going on. Gloria and I had sessions, in which I would try to analyze a situation, then come up with an approach that we would agree on; however, Gloria would never really agree in her heart, so we were often working against each other.

We tried counseling with priests, psychologists, and psychiatrists. We tried family therapy. We tried different types of adult group therapy: "I'm OK, You're OK," "Tough Love," Gloria in one group and me in a separate group. Nothing brought Gloria and I into a solidly cohesive team. And nothing brought the children together as a group to support each other.

Was I part of the problem? Of course I was. I have never been a paragon in interpersonal relations. What flabbergasted me was that everything had seemed better for the children in our family than it had been in my parents' family. Gloria told me that it was far better in our family than it had been in her parents' family. Yet our children were flying off in three different directions.

Retracing Strehlke Roots: Colorado, 1978

1978 was a big year for me at work. It was an even bigger year for me with our family. The way things were going in our family, I felt that a big family trip might just help. We had talked of someday experiencing something of the real old West experienced by the Strehlke immigrants. Coupled with the scenic wonders of Colorado, this theme trip might help us. With the way things were going, this might be our last chance to do it. So we did!

We flew first to Denver, then to Grand Junction. There we rented a nine passenger Chevrolet Station Wagon similar to our car at home and proceeded to drive to any spot that had figured in "The Strehlke Saga." Our theme was uncovering the

Strehlke past. We were remarkably successful.

Meeker

In Meeker we found a little museum. Inside was a group picture that included Ganna. On a shelf was a glass bottle embossed "Strehlke Brothers Pharmacy." We spent a lot of time looking over the artifacts. I asked the lady docent if she knew the location of Julius Leopold Strehlke's ranch. She phoned a friend for the location. We drove there and took pictures. Downtown was the building with faded "Strehlke Brothers Pharmacy" on the side. We stepped into the little hotel Father wrote of in "The Strehlke Saga." We saw a row of little log cabins that may have included Father's first abode. We saw the Episcopal church where Father served in the choir. The town was well kept up, with paved streets the only modern touch. We visited the family plot in the graveyard that overlooked the river and the town; the scene was straight out of the movie "Shane."

Leadville

I became overtired driving to Leadville. Also, the altitude and general drabness threw me into a bad mood that lasted much of our time there. Rob played the piano in Senator Tabor's Opera House. Brian found records of the location of Alvina's boarding house - now a vacant lot.

Montrose

When we arrived in Montrose, I was again overtired. The town looked seedy; our motel was dismal; and the restaurant below standard. After a good night's sleep, Montrose seemed cheerful and alive; the breakfast was on target; and I started the day off with a light heart. We found Gannadaddy's Busy Corner Pharmacy, their home (which hadn't changed one bit), and Jack Dempsey's sparring shack.

Telluride

Telluride was a surprise. We arrived during a hang gliding festival. We watched flyers breaking the altitude record. Very colorful. We found Gannadaddy's drug store. We stayed in a new condominium. The town was in transition to hip ski resort; however the abandoned mines were all around. We went on a jeep tour of the mountains and some mine remnants.

Rest and Recuperation

The rest of the trip was designed purely for pleasure. We visited Mesa Verde. We ended with a few days at a luxury resort outside Durango.

Gloria's Album

On our return, Gloria constructed a wonderful picture album. In the midst of our family's darkening days, we kept it handy to relive this bright spot.

Colorado Family Trip in 1978



39. BICYCLING

In 1976, with tension increasing at work and at home, I badly needed relief. Gloria had joined the Cupertino Bike Club for exercise. She got me interested. Some members had found some great routes to ride. This lack of knowledge of routes is what had closed down our family cycling on moving to Saratoga. The more I got into cycling, the better I felt. I found that, if I went for a ride first thing Saturday morning, on my return I had energy to tackle yard work. Before, Saturday had been a day to just flop around the house.

Manufacturing My Own Custom Bicycle

The more that I rode, the more inadequate seemed my Raleigh ten speed bicycle. For one thing at 25" it was not quite tall enough. Shopping around, I found that I already had as large a bike as any available, including custom made. So I thought of perhaps making my own bicycle. Talking it over with Spence Wolf, who ran a professional bicycle shop out of his garage in Cupertino, I was overheard by a group of serious riders. They laughed at my silly idea. So, of course, now I was set on doing the job.

First I designed the 27" frame on paper. I took weeks doing this to get the lengths and angles just right. I took my design to Spence. He looked it over and recommended the tubing I would need: he sold me Reynolds 531 single butted magnesium molly fork blades and double butted top tube; Columbus single butted chrome molly chain stays; and items that looked like pipe fittings to align all of the tubes. Mail order from my old customer Pacific tube I purchased straight gauge chrome molly tubing to cut for the down tube, the seat tube, the head tube, the steering tube, the rear down tubes, and mixte style bracing tubes. I drove to Oakland to purchase the special silver bronze brazing metal. At Orchard Supply, I purchased a propane torch, as well as some angle iron to make a triangle fixture against which to spring clamp the tubes for brazing.

With my complete inexperience, it took months to finish. But finish it I did. Then cleaning the frame with lacquer thinner, and brushing it with acid to etch the surface, I hung it in the back yard on a still morning and spray painted it with blue lacquer (lacquer for easy repair of scratches). I laid down about eight coats, drying and rubbing with compound between each coat.

From Spence, I bought all of the fittings I would need, as well as having him custom make me two wheels with super light double butted stainless steel spokes and sealed bearing hubs.

Once I finished assembly, I triumphantly rode it to Spence's shop. None of the original hooters were in attendance, but everyone there was suitably impressed.

Gaining Expertise in Cycling

Learning of a course in cycling taught by John Forrester, the then national president of the League of American Wheelmen, I signed up. The course was held out of his home in Palo Alto. There were about twenty of us. All comparative neophytes. His course covered the essential riding techniques for hills, traffic, endurance, and accident avoidance. He also made it a condition of successful graduation that you could fix a flat within three minutes. This last he considered an essential skill. We all rode high speed touring bikes. There were only two differences between touring bikes and road racing bikes: road racing bikes rode somewhat harder than touring bikes, and road racing bikes had super thin tire casings sewn over the inner tubes while touring bikes used one inch in diameter casings that clinched on the wheel rim over the inner tube (like an automobile tire). These clincher tires were quite vulnerable to flats. Just a small burr could do the job.

By the end of his course, I had become a fairly good bike handler. Brian and I signed up for a fifty mile sanctioned ride. I did quite well, until I broke one of Forrester's rules and by-passed a food and drink stop. Soon afterwards, I "hit the wall." Also called "The Bonk," this phenomenon is experienced when the body's store of quick energy glycogen is exhausted. As the brain operates solely on this substance, once short, everything shuts down: no strength to move - a splitting headache - minutes drag like hours. The only relief is to eat and to drink fast energy drinks. On this day, it took me hours to be back up to par. It would be years before I again experienced The Bonk. A lesson well learned.

As my strength built, and the training effect worked on my cardiovascular system, I took on more challenging rides. Brian and I together did a century ride: 100 miles. This was our last sanctioned ride together.

By 1978, I was doing all of the century rides. My favorite training jaunt was a fifty mile loop from and to our home in Saratoga. A brief statement of the route would be:

- + Our home to Big basin Way.
- + Up Big Basin Way to Skyline Boulevard (climb 2,000').
- + Right on Skyline, up and down to Alice's Restaurant.
- + Down Highway 84 to the bottom.

- + Over to Sandhill Road.
- + Sandhill Road to Foothill Expressway.
- + Foothill Expressway to the city of Cupertino.
- + Over to Saratoga/Sunnyvale Road.
- + Saratoga/Sunnyvale Road to home.

As I became addicted to the training effect, I began taking 1/2 day vacations each Wednesday to do the ride a second time each week. I was becoming quite strong, and wasted little energy. One sanctioned ride I succeeded in was the Mt. Hamilton Challenge: yes, from Sunnyvale, across San Jose, then all of the way up Mt. Hamilton and return.

Building the Tandem

I had become such a strong rider that it was no longer fun cycling with Gloria. Our speeds were far too disparate. We both thought that a tandem might be the answer. This was far more difficult to build than my single:

- The frame design was very challenging: I needed a 27" front, while Gloria needed a 19" rear.
- As I used oversized tubing, the pipe fittings I had used on the single would not fit. I had to braze the tubes together with fillets of excess bronze, then file off the excess.
- As the bronze melted at a much higher temperature than the silver braze used on the single, I needed a hotter torch. I settled on a Solid-Ox torch. This was cheap and hot enough; however, the oxygen pellet would only burn for three minutes, which meant a lot of frustration in brazing large fillets.
- As I was not a skilled brazer, and would certainly occasionally overheat the tubes at the ends - right where maximum strength was needed - I slipped cut-away tubing inside the tubing ends. I then silver brazed these cut-away reinforcers in place.
- Certain exotic parts were hard to round up. The off-center bottom bracket fitting needed to keep the timing chain taut came from some machine shop in Florida. The rear disk brake for downhill drag was no longer being made.
- In order to give the requisite side to side rigidity, I needed a large horizontal bottom tube with oval cross-section. I grooved two pieces of 2x6" lumber; backed these pieces with angle iron; then squeezed the tubing between them.

- I obtained heavy Columbus chrome molly fork blades and chain stays, Reynolds 531 single butted seat tube for Gloria, over-length steering tube, and straight gauge chrome molly tubes for all of the rest.

- I had Wheelsmith of Palo Alto built me custom wheels with 48 heavy gauge stainless steel spokes and sealed hub bearings.

The tandem took many months to build. When finished, Gloria and I used it often. During good weather, we frequently biked from our house in Saratoga to Sunday brunch in The Stanford Shopping Center and return. We took it on three 50 mile sanctioned rides. We took club outings on it - one across the Golden Gate bridge and through Sausalito. We also made two club 50 mile trips from San Jose to San Juan Bautista, where we camped overnight in our tent. It worked well and gave us many hours of pleasure.

The Davis Double Century

Finally, in 1980, at the age of fifty, I thought that I was ready. I thought that I could handle it. The then biggest challenge in sanctioned rides: The Davis Double Century! This was two hundred miles of cycling, with over 6,000 feet of climb, to be accomplished in one day. To be accomplished by a fifty year old who had done nothing athletic in his entire youth.

My preparations were meticulous: regular water bottle in its frame cage; extra water bottle held under the seat; a third water bottle in the handlebar bag; also in the handlebar bag, supplementary food to gorge on between rest stops, consisting of bananas, apples, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches; a night light on the end of a stick stuck in the front pocket of the handlebar bag and fed by a wire going back to a generator fastened to a rear chain stay; small flashlight; extra tubes, patch kit, and tools fitting everything on the bike. Folding up the route map in my plastic map case on top of the handlebar bag, I was ready to go.

I arrived early in the afternoon before. I checked in at the Motel 6. I then rode my bike over to the starting area and looked it over. A restaurant meal of pasta, then early to bed.

My alarm clock woke me to shower, shave, dress, and eat some cereal and orange juice. Then off to the starting area. This was on a street right in the middle of Davis, with a lovely park to the left. Behind the starting line were section markings. You were on your honor to put yourself in

the right speed group. This was to avoid crashes on starting caused by the racers running over the plodders. I put myself in the last group. I had about half an hour to wait before the 5:30am starting time. Looking about me, I noticed that the young Asian lad ahead of me had the lever of his rear wheel quick release sticking straight out. I briefed him on how to put it right and hoped that he would fare well with his obvious inexperience. Then it was 5:30am. A gun shot. Cheers and the loud send-off from a brass band. One section at a time moved off into the blackness. Before our section had moved, there was the sound of commotion ahead. Everyone stopped. Then the sirens. The first section had experienced a big pile-up. After about 15 minutes, the mass started again. And now I was moving, in the Davis Double!

At first it was very crowded, and I carefully picked my way. The faster crowds moved off, and the traffic thinned. Soon, I began to pass people sitting by the side of the road fiddling with broken bikes, or merely exhausted by trying to keep up with the true racers. All of these looked like young students from the college.

I kept in a comfortable cruising gear, pedaling about 60 rpm, doing about 14 mph. For me, this was not a race. I wanted to finish. I knew that I would not finish if I put in any exertion at all. I was just rolling along with a song (in my heart). It became light just as I hit the first rest stop. What a mess. The racers must have each grabbed an orange on the fly, then, as they sped away, each must have thrown the remains in the road. I gorged myself, then was on my way.

By this time, no one was passing me, but I was slowly passing others. It would be this way the rest of the day. Much safer for me.

On the first climb, I came abreast a lady about my age with leg muscles defined as large rubber bands. She was obviously in good shape. I tried to engage her in conversation by opening with, "Isn't this a great day for it?" I was surprised that she did not answer. I figured out that she was conserving every bit of her energy.

After a couple of rest stops, I started looking for a porta-potty. Big relief when I found one unoccupied.

Sometime after 60 miles I came up on the one rest stop that was in a roadhouse and charged. Entering, I found a line. So I went back outside and consumed some of my private rations. On the gentle climb immediately following I observed a few poor bonked out souls who had evidently skipped that same rest stop, but had had no private rations.

Around 80 miles I came upon a rest stop surrounded with about

100 fagged out riders, all just laying on the ground looking sad. I ate and drank, and, as I replenished my water bottles and my private stock of food, I looked over what faced me. What faced me was an approximately 1/4 mile climb at what appeared to be the steepness of a flight of stairs. I was told that, until last year, it had been called Cardiac Hill. Then a guy my age actually died of a heart attack on it.

Well, I backed up about 1/2 mile, got a sprint start, and hit the hill. The sprint start was a waste of time and energy. The hill used it all up in about the first 100 feet. I rapidly flipped down to my third chain wheel and the biggest wheel on the rear cluster, giving me 27", my lowest gear. I was able to maintain around 50 rpm. It felt as though I was a one man manual cog railway. When I made the top, I took another rest stop, watching the thin file of people struggling up, some walking their bikes.

The next thing I remember, I was pulling into the lunch stop at 100 miles, at Lake Berryessa. I clocked in my ticket on the time clock. I had one hour for lunch. First things first - the head. I was surprised to find a short fast moving line. Then I was in and all was clear. The toilet was stopped up. It was filled to the top and overflowing. The floor was awash with filth. I immediately thought of the old joke, "Don't make waves!" Very luckily, I soon found a porta-potty. The fruit and carbohydrates and drinks I had been gorging on would not be denied!

After grabbing some lunch, I lay down on the grass under a tree, and asking the timekeeper to wake me on time, took a blessed siesta. I woke myself just in time to punch out. I was on my way. I made a first wrong turn and lost some time before I realized that there was no one ahead or behind. Backtracking, I joined a group until I was well established on the correct route.

Sometime later, I was climbing a long gentle hill when I heard a voice behind me, "Do you mind if I draft on you?" There was a breeze in my face, and I didn't mind helping him. It cost me nothing to do so. As we talked, I heard his voice fainter and fainter. After rounding a curve, I looked back to see that he was gone. The poor guy didn't need a draft, he needed a tow.

Then I hit Resurrection Hill. This was a tough long climb. As I neared the top, I chuckled to myself as I read the one foot tall words painted as an unscrolling column in the road about 50 yards apart like the old Fuller Brush Signs,

"AND THE DEAD SHALL RISE AND WALK AGAIN"

The top afforded a magnificent view of the entire Davis

valley. This had been the last climb. I stopped to drink and eat a little of my private stock. I then shifted into my top gear and let the bike drift rapidly down the sweeping grade. I soon reached terminal velocity, which was something over 35mph. "Hell, it is still light," I thought, "I may finish before dark!"

Well, that did not happen. While still on the downgrade, my arms got very tired holding me up in the drops. Once on the level valley floor, my legs became very tired. At the next rest stop, I rested a long time. John Forrester had told me that, when he became worn out, he could still maintain 12mph forever. I soon learned that it was about 10mph for me.

Of course, down on the valley floor, it became dark much sooner than I had expected while up in heights. When I could no longer see the road ahead, I stopped and engaged the light generator. As I started up, the light worked OK. Then I heard the thump, thump, thump - once with each revolution of the back wheel. With my flashlight, I was able to see the very slight rim dent, and, much more ominously, the bulge in the side of the tire that was hitting the generator. Sometime during the day, I had run over something. Should the tire blow out, I was done. I had spare tubes but no spare tire. My only hope would be to buy one from a repair service truck at a rest stop. For openers I let a little air out of the rear tire. I always overfilled the tires for maximum efficiency, now efficiency took a far back seat to tire preservation.

I shall never forget how alone I felt out on that country road, with only a little spot dimly illuminated by my lamp, as an ocean of frog sound enveloped me, nearly drowning out the thump, thump, thump

There was no repair vehicle at the next rest stop. I did stay for a sit and chat. From then on, I ignored the tire.

At my slow pace, my lamp did not throw enough light to see the directional arrows painted for us in the intersections. Several times I made a wrong directional decision, then had to stop and wait until I could see the light of another bike and go toward that light.

At the last rest stop, I was asked if I wanted to join a caravan. "Sure!" About 24 of us formed up on the road two abreast. An automobile stationed itself behind us. Rolling down the road the automobile gave us great visibility. The lead cyclist knew the route, so we couldn't get lost.

When we reached the outskirts of Davis, the lead cyclist sped up. Not wanting to get lost, I also sped up. Soon we had outpaced the other cyclists. Then the car headlights washed

back. It was just him and me. I shifted up to my 92" gear and spun those cranks. We rounded the last corner. There were a lot of lights, and even some cheers as we finished The Davis Double Century in a full sprint!

After clocking out, I went to the all-night restaurant for a double chocolate milkshake. Evidently the carbohydrates that I had gorged on all day had not digested fast enough for the muscles. So my well trained body had also been running on my body fat. The milkshake craving was for the fat content.

Now past midnight, I phoned Gloria, then went to bed. At the awards breakfast, the lady that I had spoken to early in the ride got the oldest woman award. Some guy in his sixties got the oldest man award. They had each finished at nearly 24 hours. Several weeks later I received in the mail a list of finishers in elapsed time sequence. I was right in the middle of the list at 18:15.

Finishing the Davis Double Century was a very big thing for me. I luxuriated in the sweet memory for quite some time. I consider it one of my key victories. I didn't give up!

The End of Cycling

I planned to go again in 1981. I wanted this time to try for more speed. Unfortunately, illness kept me home. I had been teaching a class in Hong Kong, and must have picked up a bug. On my return, I had several nights of sweats that smelled of the sickly sweet odor of an alley I had passed in Hong Kong.

IBM was using my last JF Brown skit as part of a promotional video for customers. They told me to report back to White Plains to shoot some additional footage. I would have to travel on Mother's Day. As I had a big family day planned, I flew back on the red eye that night. Arriving at the White Plains Motel, I just had time to shower, shave, change, and report for shooting. Once through, I went back to the motel. Then rather than taking the day to rest, I jumped in my rental car to JFK and flew home. On the flight, I broke down. Seeing that I had a high temperature, the stewardess lay me down with an oxygen bottle. In the San Francisco airport emergency room they got a normal EKG, so they put me in a prepaid cab to my hospital at Kaiser Cupertino. There I was sent home.

Once recuperated, I noticed that my heartbeat was irregular. Diagnosed with Atrial Fibrillation (which I still have), I was put on heart medication to prevent my heart from running away. Unfortunately, this medication interfered with my cardiovascular training for cycling. I bonked out on the 1982 Davis Double and I entirely gave up cycling.

1980

Just After Davis



1979

Saratoga Home



1982

S.J. Bautista
Tandem Camping



40. IBM PERSONAL COMPUTER

At the 1981 announcement of the IBM Personal Computer, I placed my order through employee sales. Because of the unprecedented response to this new product, my order was not filled until August, 1982. I was thrilled to receive it.

My configuration included the standard 5mz 8088 Micro-Processor, 128kb ram storage, two single sided 5 1/4" floppy disk drives each holding 165kb, and the monochrome monitor. I also received the IBM 9 pin matrix Graphics Printer. After the employee discount, I paid \$4,300.00. What a bargain I thought! The 128kb ram storage was larger than the total of all of the central processor storage of all of the full-sized computers I had sold while on quota as an IBM Marketing Representative.

Very little software was available. The miracle product was Visi-Calc for spreadsheet analysis. I immediately began using this for analyzing convertible stocks, and made a bundle. The only word processor was Easywriter, which was full of bugs. The only game was Adventure, which was a totally text based search for treasure.

The big idea was to become "computer literate," which then meant "Able to write you own programs in 'BASIC' or 'Assembly Language.'"

IBM Announces It Will Market Employee Written Programs

To promote sales among employees, IBM announced that they would market worthy employee produced programs and pay royalties. I thought that it would be great to round out my IBM career by accomplishing something really technical, so I began thinking of a program that I could write.

I first wrote a program for Gloria to use in maintaining the mailing list for her friend Megan's theatrical productions. I gave her the ability to maintain the entries; to print out current lists; and to print mailing labels. As I write this, Gloria is still today using this program: now she uses it to maintain the membership lists of the two local women's organizations, WIT I and WIT II.

Feeling that this program was too specialized, I began work on a generalized file program. As the months rolled by, file programs began to appear on the market with more power than I was contemplating. I set my project aside.

As I continued writing programs in "BASIC," I found it difficult to keep track of my variables and my "go to" addresses. If you have never programmed in "BASIC," here is

a simple explanation of these two terms:

+ Variable = the name of a value used. Take for example this "BASIC" expression: $X = A + B + C$
"X", "A", "B", "C" are all variables whose values can be set and calculated throughout the program. In a large program, it is easy to lose track of where each variable is modified, thus it is difficult to track down errors in calculation.

+ Addresses = The line number of a particular expression. Take the example expression used above, its program statement would include a line number where it could be found in the program: 170 X = A + B = C
Other program statements could direct the program to "go to" line number 170 to process that statement. In a large program, it is easy to lose track of all of the "go to" references to a given line number, thus it is difficult to understand errors in processing sequence.

My Decision to Write PC BASIC Search

I decided to write a program to solve this common problem. The challenge turned out to be huge. My program had to process all of the different statement types, identify the variables and line numbers, then sort the results in a useful format. No wonder there were no adequate products to do this on the market.

I worked every spare minute on my product. When teaching classes in Poughkeepsie, New York, on the weekend I would go to a lovely park overlooking the Hudson River. I would sit in the shade with a pad of paper and a pencil writing code.

At home late in the evening, I would fire up the IBM PC and work on my program. Occasionally, I would become so absorbed that the sun would rise with me still obsessing at the keyboard. I could not resist adding great little features and fancy printouts. I could not bring myself to finally freeze the product until I had run out of ideas. It took me three years and 3,500 logged hours on the computer to write and test the product on all IBMPC types and all versions of BASIC. Finally, I submitted the program and documentation.

IBM Stops Marketing IBM Employee Programs

Unfortunately, as my program was being evaluated, in early 1987, IBM decided to shut down the project. My effort was decided to have merit. I was awarded \$7,000.00. I was told that my product would be put in storage. I have a vision of the warehouse in the movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark", with

the fork lift truck carrying my "PC BASIC Search" product to be sequestered on some remote shelf, never to be seen again.

My First IBM PC Gave Long Service

My original IBM Personal Computer served me well for ten years. Along the way, I built up the storage to 640kb, substituted double sided 5 1/4" floppy disk drives, and added a 10mb hard disk. I also added the Writing Assistant word processing software that I am using today to write this book.

41. RETIREMENT

My career Was Just Coasting

1978 was my peak productivity year at IBM. Afterwards, I came up with little new development. Up until 1980, my COPICS for Managers class was consistently filled with eager and pleased customer executives. Our staff had attrited to four, and I was doing more than half the instruction. The others had additional assignments compiling statistics and writing reports. IBM had fallen into the bureaucratic trap of large staffs writing reports to each other.

In 1980, we started to have attendees at our COPICS for Managers class who already had COPICS software installed and it was not doing the job. Before throwing COPICS out, they were attending to see if the fault was somehow their own. This, of course, did not help our efforts with the other attendees. The San Jose COPICS group was moved to Palo Alto, where they sat around and theorized. No one was maintaining the COPICS software; the original programmers in the Italian branch offices had long since gone on to other assignments.

IBM was making large profits, so I received healthy raises. We were also sent off on expensive boondoggles to teach at foreign locations: twice to Toronto, once to Cuernevaca, once to Hong Kong, once to Thailand - Gloria accompanied me on three of these trips.

I was just coasting. In 1982, I obtained my first IBM Personal Computer. It was obvious to me that future developments would be toward nearly all computing being done on the desk top, with the large computers used for message switching, large central data bases, and system security. Yet all IBM marketing was still devoted to the use of dumb terminals tied to large central computers where all of the computing was done. It just did not make sense to me. Top management reportedly looked upon the personal computer as a fringe toy-like item. I guess this could be expected when the top executive didn't even know how to use a dumb terminal, "I have people to do that sort of thing."

Desire to Retire at Fifty-Five

I would be fifty-five in 1984. Our savings line was right on target, and I had made a small killing in 1982 in convertible bonds. Our Saratoga house appraised at \$250,000.00. However, inflation had taken its toll. Our savings line was just not adequate. I wanted to retire, but it would have been irresponsible: I was now being paid \$66,500.00 annually.

IBM Buyout Offer For San Jose Plant Site

Then IBM came up with a buyout offer for the overstaffed manufacturing division at the San Jose plant. If they met the criteria, people from our Data Processing Division could take advantage. As stated on the brief announcement, I did not qualify: I would not be 55 years old by April 30. There was to be an evening meeting for all interested parties in the Research Auditorium. Gloria urged that we attend. We did. I was a meeting disrupter, as I asked a lot of questions that were covered in the large packets that had been given to all members of the manufacturing division. "Do I understand that you merely need to give notice by April 30, but can be 55 as late as December 1?" "Do you mean that the offer includes half pay for four years, in addition to retirement pay and full medical benefits for life?" It was all I could do to keep from shouting, "Yippee!"

My relations were so sour with Ed Sandel, my manager, that I did not give him notice until the last offer day, April 30.

Later in the year, I conducted the last COPICS for Managers class given anywhere.

My Retirement Dinner

I did not want a Retirement Dinner, but Sandel got to me through Gloria. It was held at La Forete, a tip top San Jose restaurant. Our staff attended, as well as our two people from Poughkeepsie, and from White Plains, Sandel's manager, and his manager. The dinner was great. The following roast was in poor taste: you should never roast someone that you do not love. My turn came last; I politely gave back as good as I had received. My best revenge was in knowing that my leaving removed the last excuse for their existence.

MIM Education Disbanded

Within four months the staff was disbanded. Sandel took over management of another Customer Executive Education program, where Jack Callon was now an instructor. Within one year, that program in turn closed up. Sandel went back to heading a field sales team. Jack Callon left IBM to teach at San Jose State.

Since I left, the IBM San Jose Homestead that had housed executive course attendees has been bulldozed away. The nine hole golf course has been leveled. The Education Center has been converted to offices for the manufacturing division.

The Joys of Retirement

For the first several years of retirement, Monday was my favorite day of the week; I would wake up in the morning and say, "I don't think that I will go in today."

Of course, in my driving about, I can generally avoid the heavy commute periods. When I cannot avoid a commute period, I am with Gloria and we are eligible to use the "two person or more" carpool lane and we zip by those poor devils stopping, then going a little, then stopping, then going a little

My retirement timing was absolutely perfect. I have never felt a single regret. I had tasted modest achievement. Now my time belongs to me and my family.

Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore: May 26 to June 12, 1984

Hong Kong



Thailand



Hotel Dusit Thani



Ayuthya



Singapore



I sang,
"Mad Dogs and Englishmen..."

November, 1984

Celebrating Last
COPICS For Mgrs.



1984

Retirement Dinner
at La Forete



42. THE LAST YEARS IN SARATOGA

Our family turmoil was continuing. For me, the highest points of this period included Brian's college graduation, Brian's marriage to Shelley Johnson, Sabrina's AA degree, the birth of our first grandchild, Nicholas, and Sabrina's marriage to Mitchell Magnisi. The very lowest points were Rob's steps down his continual deterioration. I continued to be deeply affected by my childrens' actions. I did what I could to lend support to positive directions; I refused to be an enabler in negative or random directions.

Preparing to Sell

I knew that we must sell our Saratoga home. It was too large for just we two; we no longer even used the swimming pool. Capital was tied up in the property that could be invested. Gloria agreed with my analysis; however, in her heart she could not accept the idea of leaving. As the need for selling was not urgent, I just continued my efforts to fix it up for ever greater sales appeal. Along with a list of minor items, I faced the replacement of our large deck.

The backyard 500 square foot deck was in bad shape with termites, rot, and general wear. I took on the project of replacing it with all new materials from the piers on up. Buying construction heart redwood directly from the sawmill, I received green wood. Moving out the cars, I ricked it up in the garage, filling it completely. I bought a number of cheap 24" window fans and ran them day and night for months.

Stripping out the old deck entire, I set new piers, then placed beams, and finally forced the 2 x 6 surface boards into place straight, using a crowbar and wedges.

In early 1987, we replaced the furnace, and had the outside trim painted. In May, we replaced all of the carpeting with a very light color; this really brightened up the place. To keep the carpeting fresh, we covered all of the traffic patterns with plastic runners. I remember thinking that I was certainly glad that we would not have to keep it clean for long.

By late 1987 we were down to final cleanup. I got a dumpster to fill with all of our "good junk." Everything that we did not need for daily living, we boxed and labeled and stacked in the garage. I took down the window screens and had new ones made; we discarded the old screens and held the new ones in the garage to be put up once the house was sold.

Selling Our Saratoga Home

Our hand was then forced by the October Stock Market Crash. Saratoga was then in the midst of a housing price inflation. I was afraid that the bubble would break with us sitting on a lot of frozen house equity. So I rushed Gloria into agreeing to an immediate sale. Luckily, Gloria had for years been using a cleaning service, so the house was ready to show.

Comparable houses had recently been sold in our neighborhood for as much as \$375,000.00. I figured that a 6% real estate commission was too much, so I decided that I would sell it. I obtained all of the professional forms, purchased an area earthquake report, hired a lawyer to keep me out of trouble, then placed a classified ad. In order to provide room for negotiation, we set the price at \$425,000.00.

The phone started ringing. I set up appointments at twenty minutes apart for showing that weekend. We soon had thirteen appointments.

The Guo's were first. I gave them the two page briefing sheet, then I conducted them from the entryway, through the living room, the dining room, and into the kitchen. Mr. Guo then stopped me, saying in his broken English that he wanted to buy the house. I told him that that was ridiculous, he had yet to even see the whole house. So he and his wife dutifully followed me through the whole house. Whereupon he repeated his wish to buy the house. I gave him the professional counteroffer form and asked him to bring it back the next day filled out. I promised him that I would not accept any offer before his.

The Butler's were next. At the completion of their tour, they took a counteroffer form. Within five minutes they were back at our front door with the form filled out. Announcing that they were licensed real estate brokers, he said that, as they were offering what we had asked, that we must accept their offer. I repeated what I had told them that we had to wait for the Guo's offer, and I absolutely refused their demand that we sell them the house. I told them that we would be glad to hold their offer pending Guo's.

Continuing to show the house, we took everyone's phone number in case the house was not sold to the first two. One Chinese woman asked what direction that the house was pointed. I answered that the front door faced directly South. Noticing that there were no windows East or West, she said, "Lucky house." All but one looker wanted to offer.

The next day, we met with Mr. Guo and his Chinese real estate broker. I pointed out that we could not complete our

business without Mrs. Guo, and that the presence of his broker was welcomed but that I would pay no commission. When I pointed out that the counter-offer form was not completely filled out, the realtor said that that was all right, it could be filled in later and that Mrs. Guo could sign it later. Gloria pulled me to one side to mention that they were both laughing at me. I knew that, but I was trying to be businesslike. When I suggested that we stop and resume the next day with the form filled out and with Mrs. Guo present, Mr. Guo said that he could not afford the time off business to come again. I broke off the discussion and told him that I would phone him the next day.

Meeting the next morning with our lawyer, I told her all that had transpired. She confirmed that I did not have to continue with the Guo's. I told her that I did not trust the fast talking Butlers. She said that I did not have to accept their offer either. When I told her of the many eager lookers, she agreed that my idea of a closed bid auction was a good one.

I reached Mrs. Guo to let her know that the house was indeed for sale "but not to you." I let the Butlers know of their offer rejection and the closed bid auction with the bids to be opened at 2:00pm on the following Saturday, with our decision by the following Monday. I then phoned all of the other interested parties.

By Saturday at 2:00pm we had sealed offers from everyone except the Butlers. We had begun opening, when a BMW u-turned to park in front. The Butlers. So I went down to the curb. Looking straight ahead, Hillary Butler lowered the window to pass me an envelope, then they drove off.

One of the offers was for less than our price, the others ranged up to \$432,000.00. Except the Butlers, who offered \$455,000.00. They asked for only the standard inspections.

I was very nervous about the Butlers, but the paperwork was straightforward. I told our lawyer that I was concerned, but I sure did like the extra money. We decided to be extra careful: I had the Butlers choose the inspectors, and I wrote an eight page disclosure of every flaw in the house, right down to each hairline cracked tile.

Finding Our new Home in Gilroy

Once we were into escrow on the Saratoga house, I made a crash effort to find a new home for us. A moving company quoted me \$12,000.00 to put our belongings into storage, and then move them to a new place. We needed a direct move, house to house. Already knowing that the area we were then

living in was too expensive, I started looking with a realtor in the Almaden Valley. I saw a lot of houses and, with Gloria, eliminated them all. As work commuting was no longer a consideration, I went farther South to Morgan Hill. We found one house that had some appeal. Up on a hill, it had a beautiful view. Its interior was bright, cheerful, and a little unusual. Its drawback was that it was two story. I preferred a one story plan, as easier to cope with in old age. I also found a tract house just being finished in Gilroy. The house was perfect: one story, tile roof, large enough at 2208 square feet, with a good sized back yard. The problem was that Gloria did not want to live in Gilroy; Morgan Hill had more prestige. So we offered on the Morgan Hill house. Our offer was rejected without any counteroffer. We signed up for the Gilroy house, with my agreement with Gloria that she would have six months to decide whether or not she wanted to stay in Gilroy. Now that we were signed up for the new house, our efforts were concentrated on an efficient close on Saratoga that would meld with our moving into Gilroy.

Closing on Saratoga and on Gilroy

When the Butlers came to Saratoga for their own inspection, they said that they would prefer to look through on their own. I agreed, but only after I pointed out such items as the water spots in the office ceiling, and the cracked tile at the waterline of the swimming pool.

Their termite inspector found a small spot of dry wood termites in the garage, for which he charged \$350.00 for a fifteen minute correction. He also pointed out the water spots in the office ceiling. If asked, he could tear out part of the ceiling. If he found anything, we would be charged; if he found nothing, the Butlers would be charged for that inspection and for putting the ceiling right. The Butlers did not wish to proceed.

Their roof inspector found some loose shakes, which repair cost us a few hundred dollars.

As we were getting close to closing and had not heard from any swimming pool inspector, I contacted Butler, who waived that inspection.

To ease our move, I asked that the two closings be coordinated. Butler demurred with a sweetly nasty little note that our agreement called for closing on Saratoga when all documents were ready. I answered through the title company that our agreement stated that closing could be as late at Christmas Eve, and we would make that happen. This threw the Butlers, who then compromised.

On the day before closing, I rented a van, hired two fellows to help, and we moved everything in the Saratoga garage to the garage of our new home. (We were not allowed access to the Gilroy house proper.)

On the closing day, the Butlers declined to make the traditional final walk through. We met at the title company, signed the papers, received the check, went to our bank to pay off the old mortgage, met the movers in Saratoga, went to Salinas to close on our new home in Gilroy, met the movers in Gilroy, got everything into the house, returned to Saratoga to clean up the old house with the generous help of our friend Eunice Watts, then we left the keys for the Butlers in the mailbox, drove to Gilroy, and, after 36 hours without sleep, collapsed on a bare mattress on the bedroom floor.

Net Sale Proceeds

We did very well on the sale of the Saratoga house. We had paid \$61,000.00 and over the years had added another \$30,00.00. As no realtor was involved in our sale, only \$800.00 for the lawyer, we realized nearly all of the \$455,000.00 sales price.

The new house cost \$196,000.00. As we were over 55 years old, the IRS allowed us \$125,000.00 profit without tax. We paid income tax on the rest. As we made improvements on the new house within two years, we did get a partial refund.

I now felt solidly secure in my retirement.

After Sale Problems With the Butlers

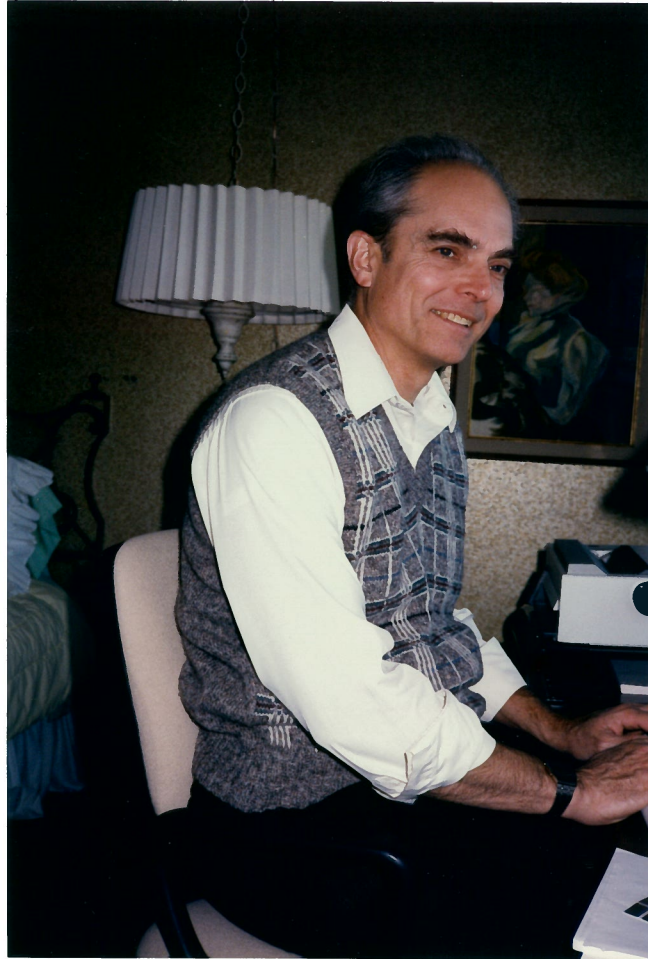
Then it started. The Butlers said that we had taken the "crystal chandelier" from the dining room and replaced it with a shoddy substitute. We had not done so. The original chandelier was shoddy. When I phoned Hillary to clear this up, she would not listen. Instead, she repeated that we owed them a chandelier. Our conversation closed with my calling her a crook. Interestingly enough, they did not ask for the "original." They had priced a \$550.00 chandelier that they wanted us to buy. Although our lawyer advised us to give them the money and be done with it, I disagreed: we had done nothing wrong, giving them the money would be admitting that we had, and would open us up to a flood of other demands. Butler then said that he had a picture taken by the mortgage appraiser showing Gloria standing by the "crystal chandelier." Our lawyer asked Butler for a copy. Butler said that he would save the picture for the trial. The appraiser could have taken no such picture; our lawyer

confirmed this with the appraiser.

Next, Butler wrote us a letter accusing us of selling him a "swimming pool that leaks." He said that a professional swimming pool contractor said that it would cost "over \$2,500.00 to fix," and that Butler wanted the money in advance of the work being done. I agreed with the lawyer that there was a separation at the top bond beam, and that we would be willing to go a reasonable amount for repairs. So the lawyer wrote Butler asking for a firm bid from the pool contractor, as we would not send a blank check. The lawyer received a nasty letter in return saying that they would store up all of the charges that we should pay, then would sue us later for fraud - up to ten years later - together with accrued interest at 8% compounded.

As I write this, it has been ten years since the sale closing. We have heard nothing from the Butlers.

The Last Years in Saratoga



Working in Bedroom on Personal Computer, Early 1986



Saratoga Home in 1985

Brian and Shelley Wedding in 1985



Sabrina and Mitch Marriage in 1987



43. GILROY

Once we moved in, in December 1987, Gloria invited down our decorator from Saratoga. She wanted to make many changes in our furniture, which I vetoed. We did need window coverings. Emphasizing that we had a Volkswagen budget, she went to work. She proposed \$12,000.00 worth of window coverings. I angrily told her that that was for a Mercedes budget, and dismissed her with a check for her troubles.

Through JC Penny's decorator, we custom covered the windows for less than half the Saratoga decorator's estimate. Until she had made her decision on whether or not to stay in Gilroy, Gloria agreed to hold off on further decorating.

Fortunately, we had some really friendly neighbors. Through Saratoga friends, we met other nice folks. The new friends, the lovely countryside, and her decoration urge, all may have influenced Gloria to decide to stay in Gilroy.

Decorating

Once Gloria had made her decision, in 1988, we started work on making our house our home. As the JC Penny decorator's Volkswagen had left a large oil spot in our driveway, we decided to not ask her back. Gloria phoned a local professional. She showed up in spike heels, flamboyant makeup, and a cocktail dress. I wondered whether or not Gloria had made an appointment with the right profession. Once this person understood that we were not interested in a total replacement of all of our furniture, we never heard from her again. We then went through a parade of five other decorators. Each clicked with an idea or two, not one became our total guide. Over the years, no room has escaped unscathed. New wallpaper; special window treatments; additional pieces of furniture; built in vanity; reupholstered couch; new custom throw rugs; new backdrop for our bed; custom cabinets, files, bookcases; and Gloria's family picture wall spectacular in the hallway, lit by new track lighting. Most recently, a redo of the back bedroom, with new convertible couch, new counter, new parquet tap dance floor, with large mirror for dance practice. Over the years, Gloria and I have made this home our very own. Now, every room really works for us.

Landscape Design

The grounds outside were also a challenge. Looking through the course catalog of the local junior college, we found the name of a local landscape designer teaching a class. As an example of her work, the catalog mentioned the Nob Hill

Family Park. I assumed that this was a municipal park. I called the city for directions. Driving up Hecker Pass Highway, I took a private road until I reached a construction trailer. Inquiring within, I mentioned that I wanted to see the work of Karen Aitkens. A nice fellow took me in a pickup truck to an overlook. There spread before me was a several acre artificial lake, surrounded with lovely landscaping, and fed by a very large artificial rapids. I was told that this was the brainchild of the owner of Nob Hill Foods, a grocery chain. Karen Aitkens was indeed the landscape architect.

In 1988, we hired her to give us preliminary treatments for our house. She did not understand my desires. Neither of two treatments was what I had in mind. We decided to hold off until I could articulate more precisely what was wanted. Some months later, I gave her rough designs. She proceeded to make finished drawings for construction, planting layout, water systems, together with plant lists. The planting layout and the plant lists were most useful, the construction plan somewhat less useful, the water system layout was completely useless. With modifications that I made in her plans, I felt that I had enough to go out for bids on the construction.

Landscape Construction

I then ran into a strange peculiarity in Gilroy business that I had not encountered elsewhere: contractors and trades people in Gilroy sincerely did not care to work. In other places, I had always been able to get competitive bids from eager workers. In Gilroy, I contacted ten different contractors. Of these, several did not even come out; several who did come out, were not at all interested; four took copies of my plans to make bids, and never called back.

The son of a concrete contractor then came out. He told me that they did that type of work, but that the total project just seemed too large for them. I was so desperate, that I broke one of my cardinal rules and sold him on bidding. In the course of our conversation we were actually passing the plans back and forth as though the last person who touched them lost the game. I think that my clincher was that he should think of it as a number of small projects, or perhaps the clincher was that I seemed so desperate that he knew that they would make a lot of money on the job.

Seeing that we were going to put a fountain in the middle of the front patio, he mentioned that he knew a fellow who was an artist in fountain construction, Lupe Ajeda. When Lupe came out, it was apparent that he spoke little English. He did understand what I wanted and he sketched on a piece of paper what the fountain basin would look like. Beautiful

design! He suggested that I purchase the fountain itself separately. I was very encouraged. I was also hooked.

Phoning several references, I found that indeed they generally did very small projects: little patios, driveways, and the like. Each reference praised the end results, saying that the contractor himself was businesslike, but all said that the son was a flake.

Meeting with the contractor, his son, and Lupe, I expected forms to be filled out and contracts to sign. They all thought that we should do business on an informal verbal basis. No. First, I insisted that I was only contracting with the licensed contractor, Lupe would have to be his employee. Second, I hand wrote a contract detailing everything to be done. I accepted the price of \$16,000.00. (I had no choice; they had me!)

For our money, we got machine contouring of the front and back ground, with excess dirt hauled away; a 4" slab, with 1/2" steel reinforcing to underlay the front tile patio and walkway; mission tile paving for the front patio and walkway; two good sized concrete rear patios and four foot concrete paving surrounding the house, with a concrete drive to the side yard and a concrete landing strip next to the driveway, all reinforced with 6" mesh and stained Yosemite brown; a two foot retaining wall with 1/2" steel reinforcement next to the East side fence; 2x3' concrete stepping pads leading to the existing back retaining wall; a pumped in 2' wide path with uphill curb behind the tall existing retaining wall; a 40' long low concrete block retaining wall in the back yard and 25' of low concrete block retaining walls in the front yard; a cast-in-place reinforced concrete fancy fountain base; waterproofing and tiling the inside of the fountain basin.

Nine years later, except for some hairlines in the path behind the retaining wall, there are no cracks in any of this work. It is all as solid as when first laid down. With the fine quality workmanship and materials, I am very pleased.

We purchased the fountain in Palo Alto. It had been constructed in Mexico of soft volcanic stone. It came in rings to be stacked with mortar. Brian and I did fine until we reached the largest ring, we couldn't quite lift it into place. Seeing our distress, a neighbor, Wayne Pitts, ran over to help. Once erected, the fountain looked gorgeous!

Unfortunately, we were in the middle of a drought so serious that we were not allowed to run our fountain.

The restrictions were so tough that I installed a hose on the second faucet in our master bath. When we turned on the hot water, it would take a little time for it to run hot from the

faucet. We would run this warm up water into large buckets for use in watering our new planting. Dividing the front yard into three sections, we planted one section at a time, using the water buckets for the extra water needed to establish young plants.

In 1989, when I was ready to construct the rear yard patio shade covers, Karen Aitkens' plans did not satisfy me. I drew up detailed plans, then took them to Karen Aitkens for her to copy in the same format as her other plans. She wondered why I could not just submit my plans for the building permit. I told her that I felt that her professional drawing touch would better insure passage without nit picking changes from the city.

With permit in hand, I then bought the redwood beams and the many metal fittings I would need. When a friend said that he wished that he had my hardware concession, my answer was that I built for no future maintenance. I even presoaked in priming paint all beam ends and closed surfaces. I did all of the construction single-handed, constructing scaffolding to hold pieces in place as I fastened them. I remember thinking, as I was in a precarious position installing the cross beam of the A-frame peak, that it would be very chancy should an earthquake hit just at that moment.

The 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake

The following week, the framework completed, the city inspector passed it, asking whether or not I was perhaps in the bridge construction business. That afternoon, I was at the top of the stepladder, painting the peak, when the Loma Prieta Earthquake hit. As the thrust was in line with the ladder's steps, I was not thrown. Hanging on there at the top, with all of the rumbling, the roof tiles clacking away, I had this silly feeling that I had pretty good sea legs. No, I had better get down. Then I heard a woman screaming. Going out the side gate, I saw one of the neighborhood women in the street with her children. She begged me to check her house. Well, it was a mess, with broken articles all over the floor, but the structure looked OK. Not smelling any gas, I advised her not to turn it off, as only the gas company could safely turn it back on.

Returning to my back yard, I was mounting the ladder to resume my painting, when it finally got through to me that perhaps I should check our home's interior. Well, the piano had fallen forward to put a gouge in its bench. All of the lamps were on the floor. In the dining room, all of our wedding crystal goblets were shattered (Gloria and I agreed that this was no loss; our taste had changed). We lost nothing major. The house structure was absolutely sound. I

returned to my painting. We experienced weeks of after-shocks. It got so that if we hadn't had one in a while, it made us uneasy.

Our situation on solid hillside was much better than other parts of Gilroy on the loose alluvial plain. Several dozen houses were seriously damaged. The old city hall was visibly wrecked. \$4,000,000.00 of federal tax dollars were spent to restore this structure that had escaped the bulldozer in 1960 only because a citizen committee fought to save it as history, with no needed restoration cost at the time.

Fighting City Hall

In 1990, the drought continued. When water restrictions again came before the city council, I was again resigned to another year of not seeing the fountain run. Watching the council meeting on the TV local government channel, I saw the question of decorative fountains raised then squashed dead by a statement from the city manager, Jay Baksa, that ran something like this, "Running decorative fountains gives exactly the wrong impression; there is not a city from Monterey to San Francisco that allows the use of decorative fountains."

Just for fun, the next day I phoned ten cities from Monterey to San Francisco to determine their policies on the use of decorative fountains. Surprise. Surprise. Only three prohibited their use. A representative sample remark from the other officials was, "Why prohibit them; don't they all use recirculating pumps?" With my information in hand, I phoned Jay Baksa and asked him to reconsider. He would not. So, I got on the next week's council agenda. At the conclusion of my presentation, the council unanimously voted to allow decorative fountains. I videoed my big moment.

The next day, I went to the hardware store to purchase a small pump, a water filter, hose, and fittings. Soon, I had a working fountain. But, I also had a problem: the soft stone in the fountain could not tolerate acid in the water. Without acid, chlorine would not be effective in preventing green algae. Also, I discovered that the basin was a breeding ground for zillions of mosquitoes. What to do?

Contacting the company that had sold me the fountain, I was given the name of a potent chemical concoction that would take care of the algae. I mail ordered this from San Diego. Taking the container to the fire department, I obtained an environmental waiver for small quantity use. The chemical has been working like a charm ever since. As a serendipity, it also kills mosquito larvae. Our fountain continues to be a magnet for mosquitoes to lay their eggs. When the eggs

hatch into larvae, they die by the zillions. During mosquito season, when I hear neighbors say that they have noticed no bites this year, I warm with the knowledge that I, Super Strehlke, am protecting them from harm.

With front landscaping completed, and the fountain plashing away, we received the 1991 Gilroy Beautification Award.

Working on my own, by 1995, the rear landscaping was nearly complete. I had installed some 500 feet of drainage; I had stabilized the back hillside with a framework of 2x6 redwood, held in place by 125 3/4" steel stakes, supporting plastic netting and a one foot layer of shredded redwood bark; I had installed a small lawn; completed 40 feet of planter; and I had every plant under automatic electronic irrigation. When cancer struck at the end of 1995, left unfinished was a small planting area outside the master dressing room window, and a 600 square foot area directly behind the master bedroom.

Social Life in Gilroy

In early 1988, new friends Ted Kiel and Dave Coffman got me into the Sons In Retirement Gilroy chapter. I joined them monthly for lunch high on a hilltop at the Gilroy Elks Lodge. This was pleasant and led to meeting other people.

Taking ballroom dance lessons nearly continuously from 1988 to 1995, led to our meeting other nice people, and gave us a joint hobby. We went to more dances these few years than we had the rest of our marriage.

Gloria taking on the job of Western Welcome for Gilroy, in which she visited new arrivals to brief them on local services, led to more new friends.

Finally, I was convinced to join the Gilroy Elks, and our social circle was fairly complete. In order to fulfill what I took to be my obligation to the organization, I served for one year as Lapsation Chairman, contacting those behind in their dues and, when merited, pleading their cases for dues excuse during the recession year of 1990.

In December, 1988, we threw a large open house mixing up neighbors with our other area friends. Our social life was now at a much higher pitch than it had been in Saratoga. In addition, we still met quarterly with friends from Saratoga.

Our friendships have deepened into mutual support.

Family Matters

Rob continued inexorably down his lonely tragic road. Although he rejected my contact, I helped where I could be effective. When he was struck by a train, I coordinated his obtaining excellent medical care. I made payments to Gloria's grandfather covering his electricity and I paid his phone bill; he was receiving government money through Social Security, so money was not a real problem for him. All of my other efforts were rejected.

Although there have been struggles, the stories of my other children continue largely positive, with the great highlights being the births of Nicholas, Marc, Tony, Shannon, Angelica, and Serena. The next generation is firmly in place.

In 1991, I invested in a slightly used Lincoln Town Car. My rationale was that we were traveling down to LA more than once each month to see Mother and Gloria's parents, and we needed better transport than Gloria's tiny Honda CRX. The 1972 Chevrolet Impala station wagon could not be trusted at 176,000 miles. At \$23,500.00, including tax and license, the Town Car was a bargain. It also cost more than the total of my first nine automobiles.

Mother Dies

In 1991, Mother died at the age of ninety of the effects of stroke. Several years before, I had taken on the load of managing her finances. This relieved her of the unnecessary nagging worry that she might go broke; she had done so well that she could have maintained her financial independence indefinitely. She was rational to the last. She totally enjoyed the total family celebration of her 90th birthday.

The Fence Dispute

In 1991, a next door neighbor came over to see me. Telling me that he was putting in a swimming pool, and wishing to increase his family's privacy, he was planning to put in a new fence that outsiders would not be able to see through. We did not need a new fence for our purposes. Furthermore, the new fence would clash in style with the rest of the fencing surrounding our back yard. However, as this neighbor had been stand-offish, and I felt that this might warm up our relationship, I said fine. I figured that, in order to disguise the joining, I would just plant a vine where the new fence met my other fence. He told me that the new fence for the three sides of his yard would cost around \$1,500.00. As a good neighbor, I volunteered to pay for half of the portion that separated our properties.

His contractor tore down the fence between our properties, put up the new fence, then went away. Nothing was done to the fence separating him from his other neighbor, and nothing was done to his fence fronting the street. Strange.

Some weeks later, on our return from three days in LA, we were shocked to see a new much taller fence fronting the street, and much closer to the street than the old fence had been. The fence separating our properties had been extended toward the street. The total effect was of a freeway sound barrier. With the extension toward the street, our home was buried from sight to anyone approaching from his direction.

When I politely let him know that this was not satisfactory, he evenly let me know that he could do what he wanted on his own property.

I contacted the city with the news. The first reaction I got was that this was a civil matter between the neighbor and myself. I went to the city offices, obtained the relevant regulations, and pointed out the violations that I expected the city to handle.

The city planner assigned, Ms. Durkin, contacted our neighbor with our complaint, with the suggestion that we work it out between ourselves. So I met with him and his contractor at the fence site. He offered no concessions whatever. So I tried another tack. I asked him how much I owed for half of the fence separating our properties. The contractor stated that my share would be \$900.00. Reminding the neighbor that he had originally told me that all the fences together would be \$1,500.00, I whipped out my checkbook. With a shaking hand I wrote him a check for \$900.00 as full payment for one half of the fence separating our properties. He accepted the check. I then said, "As one half owner of this fence, I demand that it be moved back to where it was previously." He shrugged. The meeting was over.

I again contacted the city and demanded that the proper actions be taken. In due course, the neighbor was sent thirty day notice to correct the violation, or to appeal the ruling. At the end of the thirty days, he was given a thirty day extension. He then applied for a variance to be granted at a meeting of the Planning Commission.

He presented his case very briefly. It concerned privacy and the hardship caused by the fact that he was surrounded by higher lots. (Even though his is a two story house surrounded by single story houses).

To my surprise, he was supported in his plea by a recommendation for variance presented by Ms. Durkin of the Planning Department. The performance of this young lady

seemed like the presentation of a college project that was perfect in form, but whose conclusions were just a little off. When there were no questions at the end, she smiled as though she had surely earned an "A."

I guess that he thought that everything was cut and dried, and that he had quashed his troublesome neighbor. He and his wife were all smiles.

The chairman then asked if there were any comments from the audience. He also stated that with the heavy meeting load, all presentations would have to be kept to three minutes.

I rose, introduced myself, and asked for indulgence for more time. I stated that I had been told by Mr. Dorn, the Manager of the Planning Department, that I would have all the time that I needed. Mr. Dorn then commented that that was before the agenda had become so crowded. I stood mute. After a moment the Chairman told me to proceed. And proceed I did.

My preparation had included letters I had sent in advance to each member of the commission succinctly stating my case - my brief as it were. I later learned that several had become interested enough to visit the site. (It was nice that the Gilroy Beautiful Award sign was still posted in our front yard for them to see what was being hidden by the fence.)

I had giant photo blowups of the three relevant views that were designed to show up well on the television broadcast. I had a handout for each commission member with photos and measurements of all of the comparable neighborhood fences.

I started by respectfully disagreeing with Ms. Durkin's conclusions, reading from the relevant passages of the Gilroy fence regulations. I proceeded to the damage done to our property in hiding it from view. I emphasized my cooperation with this neighbor, and my payment of one half of the cost of our separating fence. I closed with a plea to reject that portion of his variance request that injured us, and a plea to allow that portion of his request concerning the extra height of the fence separating our back yards.

The members of the commission struggled with completing a succinct ruling that encompassed every detail of my request. I was especially pleased that the clarification was rendered into legal terms by the city attorney in attendance: Mrs. Linda Callon. Yes, the wife of my first manager of IBM MIM Education in San Jose witnessed my victory. I video taped this event.

Since that evening, I have had no contact with that neighbor. He keeps up his property, and we each lead our lives undisturbed by the other. A fine resolution of antagonists.

Gilroy Home
As Moved In
1987



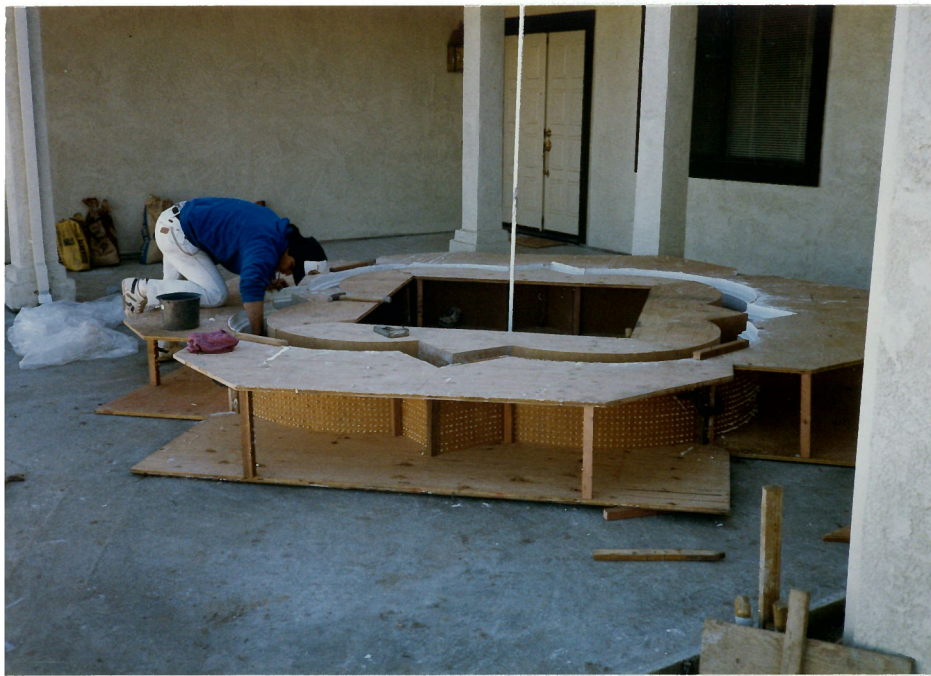
Easter, 1991



Gilroy
Beauty
Award



Lupe Ajeda and
Crew Constructing
Fountain Base



Gilroy Back Yard Construction



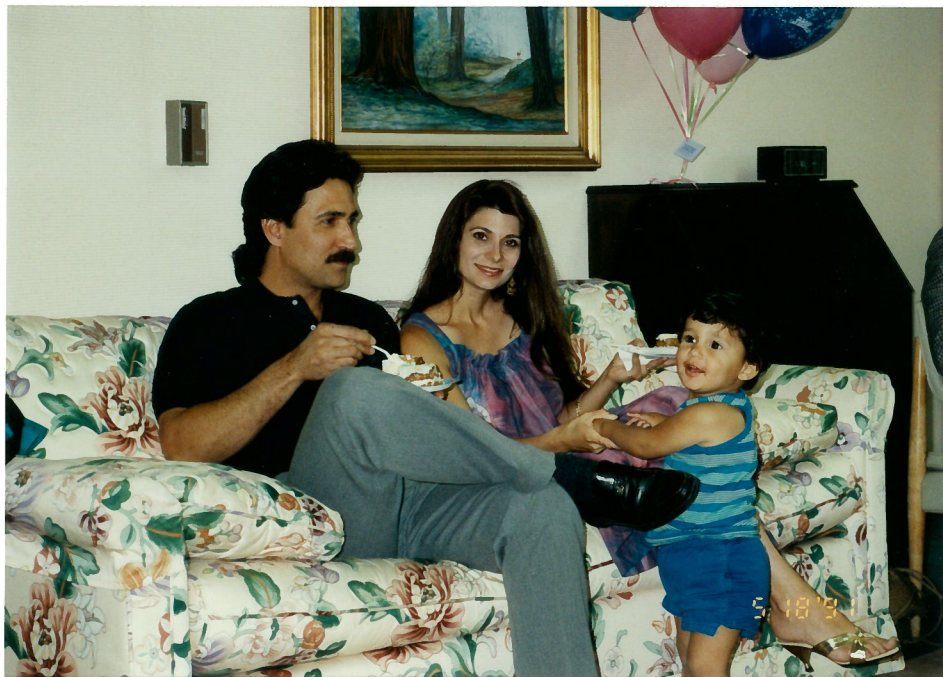
Where I Was During
1989 Earthquake



Mother's 90th Birthday in 1991



Brian, Marc, Nicholas, Me, Shelley, Sally



Mitch, Sabrina, Tony

44. THE GILROY GROWTH TASK FORCE

In 1992, there was a call for volunteers to serve on The Gilroy Growth Task Force. At the time there existed a clash of interests on the future of home building in Gilroy. There were factions ranging all the way from wishing to somehow regress Gilroy to the backward agricultural community of years ago, to the other extreme of letting developers build as many houses as they wished and let the market govern the quantity of houses built in any one year.

I thought that it would be very educational to serve on this task force that was charged with coming up with a recommended number of houses to be allowed constructed per year for the next ten years. I also felt that I could weigh in with some reasoned judgement, which seemed to be in short supply in all of the public rhetoric.

I was selected to serve. We met every week for several months. We insisted on presentations and study materials from the relevant city departments, as well as from university professors, county agencies, developers, and concerned citizens. I looked forward to each meeting. I was also careful to leave each meeting the minute it adjourned; this way I avoided any arguments with fellow members. There were rabids at each end of the issue.

Knowing in advance who would be addressing us at a given meeting, I tried to come prepared with questions that would give us insight.

Education Concerns

At the end of a blah, blah talk by a representative of the school district, I asked, "In regards to home construction, what is your biggest nightmare?" The answer was large peaks in construction that are unanticipated in planning for funding, facilities, and staffing. This led to my probing on the closeness of coordination between the school district and the city government. It developed that there was no coordination; they each had been going their separate ways.

Twenty Year Plan For Traffic Circulation

At the end of a statistics filled talk on the twenty year plan for traffic circulation, I asked, "I see by your map that it is planned to make an extension of Mantelli a major traffic corridor, yet you show it T intersecting with Church, with a short right turn to intersect with Welburn, another major traffic corridor, isn't this a preplanned congestion disaster?" I also questioned the dependence on tenth street

as a major traffic corridor when the traffic was already bottlenecked there in the vicinity of the high school. The answers were that the consultant reported that these would not be problems. My argumentative response was that in my experience consultants often will tell you what you want to hear, and in any case will not be around when the problems arise. I announced that, to me, this twenty year circulation plan made no sense at all.

Concern About Immediate Development

A major concern of the no-growthers was that whatever figure we recommended as an annual limit, the developers would immediately build. When developers called me at home to sell me on their ideas, I listened in a learning mode to everything that they had to say, then I would ask, "If you were allowed to build all of the houses you wished, how many would you build in the next three years?" The answer was always, "None." We were in the midst of a housing recession, and none of the builders wished to build now; what they wished to do was to stake out the right to build when the market was right.

When we heard from Mr. Bob Dorn, the Gilroy Manager of Planning, I asked him what would happen if builders were given allotments to build in a certain year, then elected to build in a later year. Wouldn't this lead to a year when, after years of no construction, there would suddenly be thousands of houses under construction at one time? His answer was that this would not happen, because each builder would be held to construction in a given year or would lose his permit.

I incredulously then questioned that Dorn would actually see a builder put out many thousands of dollars on permits, fees, and preliminary ground preparation, then Dorn would jerk the builder's permit to build. Furthermore, if what he said were true, how did Dorn explain the backlog of 400 permits now on the books, some of which dated from 1982? Mr. Dorn just sat there; he was out of gas.

My Sample Report Format

As I say, these discussions went on for several months before we decided that we were ready to come to some conclusions. Knowing that our chairman, an ex-chairman of the school board, was not too organized, I prepared a sample final report format. My aim was to avoid flobbling around over form, but rather discuss and vote on specifics. Surprise, he did show up with a sample format; unfortunately it was half-baked and vague. Wishing to not be trapped by "Roberts Rules

of Order," I immediately raised a motion that vote on his format not be taken until my format had at least been considered. Motion passed. Once my format was seen, there was no further interest in his format (which visibly miffed him). He immediately, and angrily, took exception to one of my sentences, as talking down to the City Council. I instantly proposed a motion deleting the sentence, which took him aback. I really didn't care on the exact wording, what I was after was a cogent report.

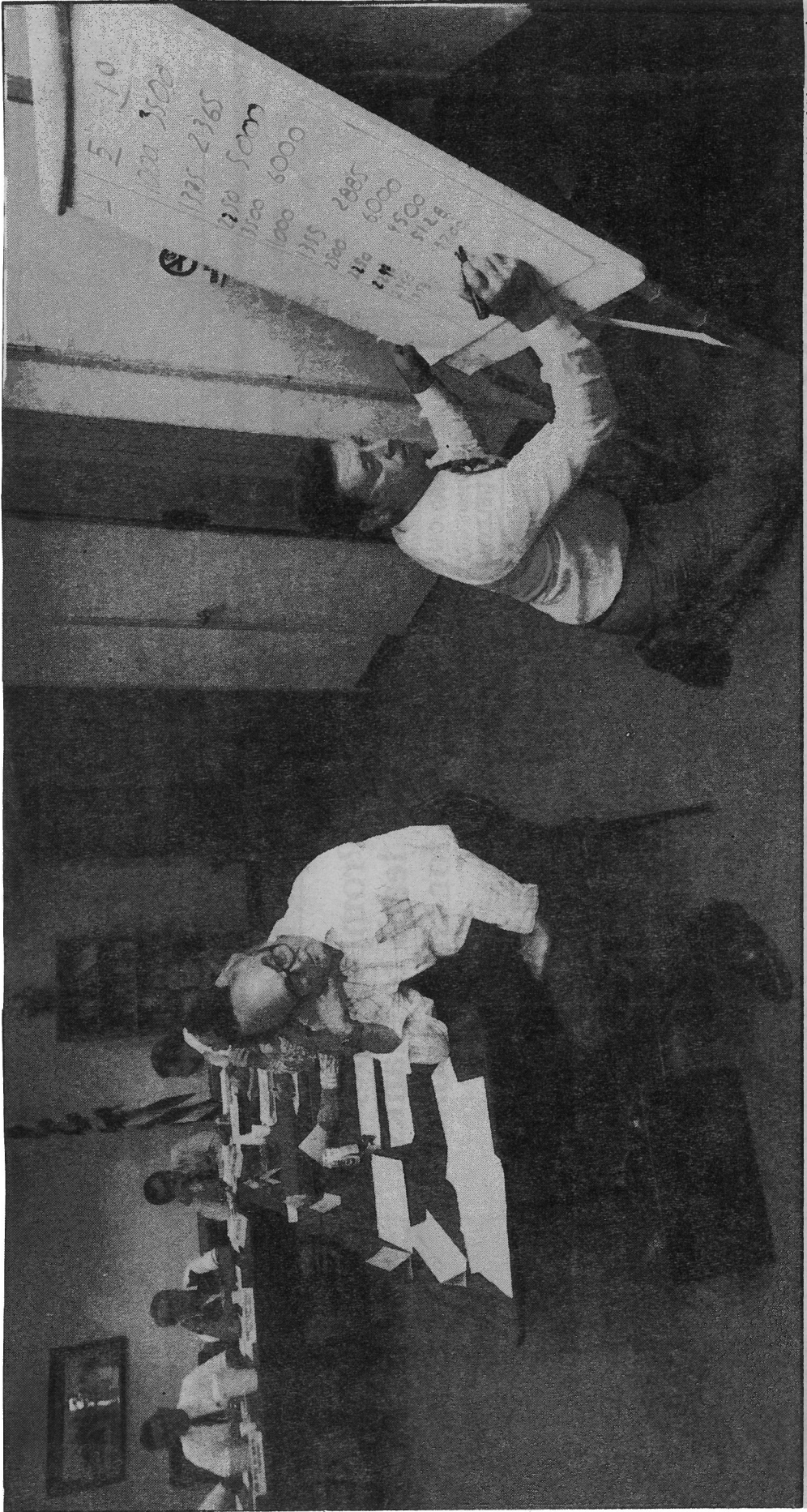
After votes on the items in my proposed format, he made a final stab at reasserting his authority by appointing a committee to draft the final report: a committee that did not include me. Fine. My most valuable contribution had been made, and I would not have to haggle over details. It was also determined that each committee member would submit his own findings to be submitted along with the final report.

Our Task Force's Effects

The final report was presented pompously by our chairman before the City Council. Our efforts did carry weight in setting building limits. Control moved forward with less rancor. There have even been some signs that the twenty year circulation plan is being revisited, and that the school district and the city are getting together on setting construction fees to be used for new schools.

My Wish To Help Develop The New Twenty Year Plan

This year, 1997, the call went out for volunteers to serve on the group drafting a new Gilroy Twenty Year General Plan. I put in my name. However, when my cancer resurfaced, I called to remove my name from consideration. Checking his computer, the clerk told me that I had received several nominations. I am also gratified that I receive mailings giving the dates and subjects of their proceedings.



KORY W. HANSEN/Chief Photographer

Task force member George Strehlike looks over his shoulder as Mike Dom records five- and 10-year recommendations from task force members.

45. STOCK OPTION SPECULATION

Stock Market Investment Education

In 1992, I decided that I should build my education in stock market investment. I purchased a large library and studied assiduously. I then decided to cement, and build on, this new knowledge by a concentrated period of short term trading. I set aside \$10,000.00 for this exercise. I purchased a new IBM Personal Computer. I installed the Prodigy on-line service for current stock and market information. I also purchased the Metastock technical analysis software.

Decision to Trade IBM Stock Options

For my investment medium, I wanted lots of transactions and fast movement: I chose stock options.

As I knew IBM, and I felt that its weaknesses had not yet become generally known, I decided to concentrate on that one company. That way I could relate my "fundamental" knowledge of the company and its industry to the timing edge to be provided by my growing "technical" knowledge of stock market fluctuations.

My First Option Purchase

In May, anticipating a resumption of the stock's fall, I purchased \$1,000.00 worth of "Put Options" at a strike price of 85. This gave me the right to sell a particular quantity of IBM at a price of 85 any time prior to the expiration of the options. As IBM recovered, indeed rose all of the way to 100, I lost my money in those options.

My Second Option Purchase

After months of careful study and tracking the movements of the entire stock market and those of IBM within these movements, in August, I again bought Put Options in IBM at 85. This time, I was able to sell the options for a good profit before they expired.

My Daily Trading Routine

I now established a daily routine. I would rise at 6:00am. Eat breakfast. Read on the computer Prodigy's overnight stock market news and any news on IBM. Set up my paper worksheet for noting for each time of day entry, the corresponding price of IBM, together with the price of each

of the different strike price options that interested me. I would decide in advance what actions I would take in the case of certain eventualities.

At 6:30am, I would make my first phone call to the Charles Schwab stockbroker "Options Trading Line" (a toll-free 800 number). I would ask the Dow Stock Market Average, the IBM price, and the prices of the options I was following, noting all of these down on my worksheet. When one of my plans was triggered, or events took a particularly dramatic turn, I would act. Depending on the pace of trading, I might call twice an hour, or as frequently as every five minutes.

Periodically, I would also refer to Prodigy for news and to keep track of the day's IBM high, low, and last prices, along with the volume of shares traded.

At the 1:00pm market closing, I would eat lunch and perhaps take a nap. At my leisure, I would enter from Prodigy the day's IBM open, high, low, last prices and volume into my Metastock data base for analysis. I had a pet series of technical analyses that I would run and printout for study and planning.

Steady Gains Achieved

By December, I was \$14,000.00 ahead. I felt pretty good about what I thought was my superior trading technique action on my good knowledge of the rot at the core of IBM.

My Little Flyer

At this point, IBM had retraced some of its losses to a price of 69. News analysts were forecasting that IBM would be announcing good profits for the quarter, and that IBM would probably go higher. I thought not. I thought that IBM could very likely soon drop again to as low as 60. As I wrote to my friend, Don Brown, I took a little flyer: I purchased \$1000.00 worth of IBM Put Options with a strike price of 65, and \$1000.00 worth of IBM Put Options with a strike price of 60. I expected to make enough profit on the 65's to more than cover my bet on the 60's, which would only pay off were there a major surprise.

Well there was a major surprise! The embattled CEO of IBM announced that the coming quarterly earnings (not yet announced) would come in considerably less than anticipated by all of the news analysts. Pandemonium! The stock dropped like a stone. I pulled out over \$24,000.00 from my options! I then made two separate \$1000.00 purchases of IBM options at the strike price of 55. "Mr. Strehlke, are you aware that

these options expire this Friday?" "Gee, that must be why they are so cheap," I said with laughing exuberance. On Friday, I unloaded these options for a further profit of \$18,000.00.

Large Profits Achieved

I finished 1992 with a profit of \$56,000.00. I had never dipped further than \$2,000.00 into my original \$10,000.00 stake. Wow! I was omnipotent! I had the secret of great wealth!

Continuing my activities as I had, I invested in a second IBM computer to carry a service providing a continual update of all of the stock market indexes and the stocks that I now followed. I was to become a legend!

Steady Losses Erase Profits

Well, in the course of 1993 and through August of 1994, I managed to give back all of my \$56,000.00 of 1992 profits. To add insult to injury, Christmas of 1993 I even received a Christmas card from the Chicago Board Option Exchange specialists that were taking me to the cleaners.

What I Had Learned Trading Options

So, I quit cold. I still had intact my original \$10,000.00 stake. I had learned not to trade options. I had learned that I was not omnipotent. I realized that my original coup had been due to my solid realization of IBM fundamentals and luck, and had nothing to do with trading prowess.

Of course I had not come out even. I had had to pay a hefty income tax on my 1992 gains at a very high rate. It will take many years of claiming short term capital losses at a maximum of \$3,000.00 per year (at much lower tax rates) to recoup some of the taxes originally paid.

My Investment Strategy

I do feel that I have a very good grasp of stock market investing. For our needs now in retirement, I do very little with the stock market for these reasons:

1. We receive enough in return on bank CD's to more than sustain our present standard of living.
2. With my present precarious health situation, I do

not wish to leave Gloria with any economic risk.

3. With the current high level of the stock market, now beyond all previous measurements of solid value, I feel that the odds favor loss rather than gain.

In other words, I do not intend to be the man who took \$1,000,000.00 to Monte Carlo (more than enough for a lifetime) and lost it all while attempting to gain more.

Should there be a major stock market break, taking stock prices down to attractive values, then I would consider investing A PORTION of our capital in order to gain better protection against inevitable inflation. Before I would do this, the value would have to be there, not only in the individual stock, but also in the overall market.

46. TWO CRUISES

In early 1994, Our friends, Mel and Diane Barbaria, told us how much that they had enjoyed cruises and aroused our interest. The big question was, with her inner ear problems, how well would Gloria tolerate life on the bounding main?

We decided on a training wheel cruise, three days from Los Angeles to Catalina Island to San Diego to Mazatlan and return. If Gloria got sick, we could quit and fly home. Eight of us went. Mel and Diane Barbaria, Dave And Bettsy Coffman, Ted and Marian Kiel, Gloria and I. At least until the final night, we all had a fine time. There was the adventure, the great food, the dancing, the entertainment, the shore tours, and the sharing it all with good friends.

One highlight for me was the formal dinner. I had never owned a tuxedo, and in fact had only rented them for my wedding and for the weddings of Brian and of Sabrina. I saw an ad in the Elks Magazine for really cheap tuxedos. Gloria and I thought that it would be a gas for me to buy one of these, treating it as though it were a costume for a ball. Our friends knew that I did not own a tux. They assured me that a dark suit would be all right. It was worth it to see their faces when I stepped out of our room resplendent.

The last evening, the ship started rolling in swells; several of our friends got ill. Gloria, with her sea sick prevention patch held up quite well. Even with that last night, Gloria was ready to take on another cruise.

Then, Diane Barbaria got a line on a real bargain of a nine day Caribbean cruise. So we signed up to go with her and Mel. This was the genuine article. The seas were smooth for the entire time we were afloat. The food was wonderful, with great service. Most nights the dance floor was empty, which made our efforts all the more romantic. The shore trips were of exotic places, of tropical forests, colonial British outposts, and even a tour of a town on Martinique that had been wiped out by volcanic eruption in 1902.

That day I was in particularly good spirits; on the little tour boat that took us around the island, I even got to learn the Calypso from a mulatto girl: It was a misty day. As we walked the doomed town and listened to a lecture in broken English, I had an eerie sense of what it must have been like. I even enjoyed watching an old truck with a flat right front tire struggling successfully up the crowded single lane road. That whole day melded together into a seamless experience.

The cruise ended just before I became completely spoiled.

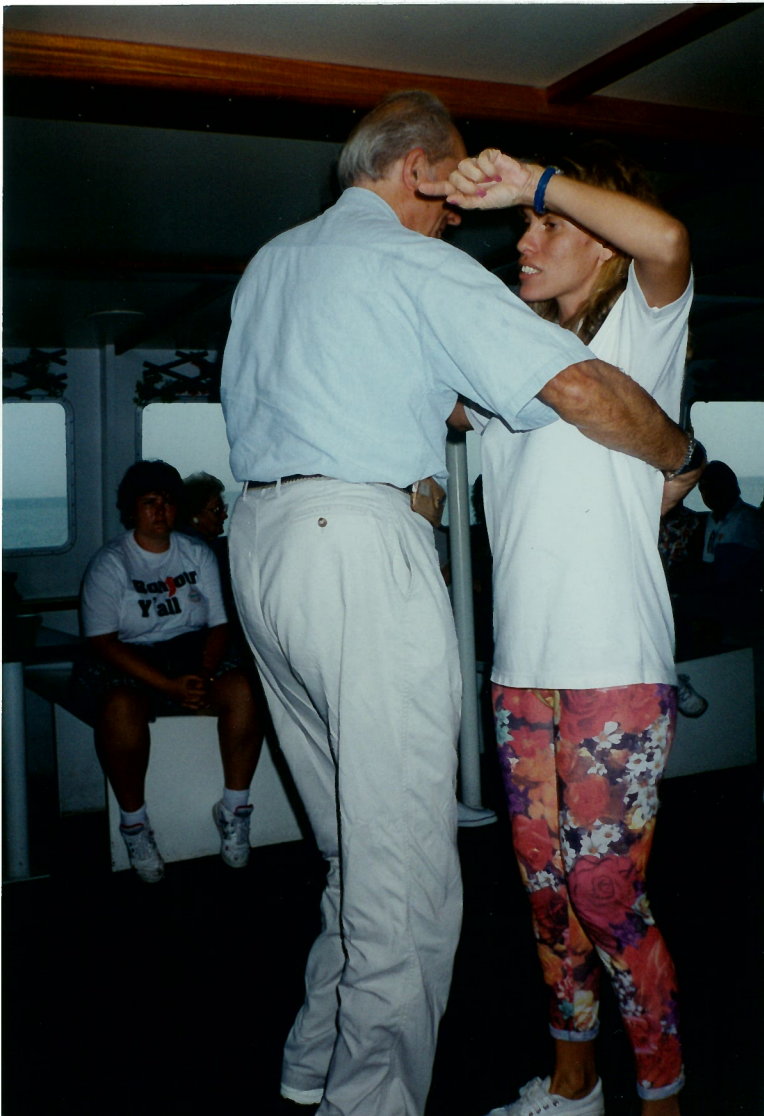
Baja Cruise: February 14 to 18, 1994



Me, Mel Barbaria, Ted Kiel, Dave Coffman
Diane Barbaria, Bettsy Coffman, Gloria, Marilyn Kiel



Carribbean Cruise: October 15 to 22, 1994



47. PONCE DE LEON REUNION

Later in 1994, we went to Coral Gables for a reunion of all those who had attended Ponce de Leon High School before its conversion in 1950 to a junior high school. I agonized about going. The only person that I was in contact with from those far off days was Don Brown of the class ahead of me. Don was going to present a reprise of the kind of magic show that he had done in high school. Without my OK, he told the committee chairwoman that I would also perform. By the time I learned this, she had already scheduled the program. Rather than turn her down flat, I wrote a poem, "Why Come to the Reunion?" I volunteered to read it in my spot on the program following Don Brown.

We stayed in a grand luxury hotel, that I thought would be a dump. I had performed there when it was a hospital for combat veterans of WWII, and remembered it as a grim place. Well, it had been restored to its glorious past in the roaring twenties. What a thrill it was to be surprised.

The first night was an informal buffet held outside at the city swimming pool carved out of coral in the 1920's. My class and Don's class combined for this get together. I recognized everyone and had a great time swapping stories.

The next day, we went to the school to tour it and then to perform. The tour was depressing. The lovely place I remembered was quite drab. I was particularly saddened to see signs warning of drugs and weapons in the school. All of the windows fronting on the street were covered with heavy steel mesh.

Then we all went to the school auditorium for the show. It was really great.

There were the Cavaleons. This was a group of girls in Spanish uniforms that always performed at half-time at the games. They had saved their uniforms and did their drills on stage as though there had been no time passed since the last game. There was a demonstration of jitterbug dancing, just like the best had done at the school hops. Don Brown did his magic show featuring vanishing the bird cage, and plucking fans of cards out of the air. Then it was my turn.

I knew that I had to break the mood from Don's act, or I would be off before they realized that I had come out. So I fiddled with the mike. Then I made some introductory remarks mentioning how I remembered Ponce like a movie "starring all of us and Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland. It really was another world." I wondered if others had agonized as I had about coming. I read this poem that expresses my musings:

WHY COME TO THE REUNION?
(Presented at the 1994 Reunion)

Why come to the reunion,
Nearly fifty years gone by?

From L.A. came,
At Ponce just three brief years,
Then many places, other lives did try.

Why come to the reunion?
For really what was there?

Shifting memories of memories,
Yet these impressions haunt:
 Soft curls
 Swirling skirts
 Warmth and caring
 Knowledge, clear and sure
 Simple clean bright classrooms,
 Open to exotic air.

Why come to the reunion?
Then, was I there beguiled?

Yes.
But also was I challenged
To prepare for struggles that did come,
And also was I dared
To try adult,
While still somewhat the child.

Why come to the reunion,
Nearly fifty years gone by?

To feel as once I think I felt
At Ponce de Leon High.

George L. Strehlke, Jr. '47

The response was very gratifying. Applause followed me clear across the stage, down the steps, and back to my seat. We have video tape of my performance.

Several people asked my for copies of the poem. When I got home, I sent some to the committee chairman who said that she would pass them on.

That night the dance was held at the Coral Gables Country Club, where our Senior Prom was held in 1947.

I was floating on air. We both had a great time, with no sour notes. All the loops were closed. Ponce de Leon could now sleep in my mind as a perfect memory. Nothing had happened at the reunion to mar it.

When in 1997 I received notice of our 50th Reunion, I demurred. It wasn't really my illness. It was that I had rounded out and closed that chapter of my life. There was nothing more to experience.

Ponce De Leon High School Reunion: April 29 to May 1, 1994



With Don Brown at Banquet



Ponce De Leon

Ponce De Leon High School Reunion: April 29 to May 1, 1994



'46-'47 Buffet



Biltmore Hotel

48. DANCING AND JET BOATING

Still later in 1994, we drove to Newport Beach on the Northern Oregon coast to attend a Dance Camp. Renowned dance instructors from all parts of the US were here to give advanced instruction. I was completely beyond my depth. It turned out the many of the students were in fact professional dance instructors here to learn the latest techniques.

We did what we could to have a good time. We certainly enjoyed the resort atmosphere.

After the camp we drove the spectacular Oregon coast down to visit Gloria's relatives at Florence. We then went on to meet our Saratoga friends at the mouth of the Rogue River.

Gene and June Levitre had made arrangements for us at a nice motel overlooking the river. It was fun for all of us getting together so far from home.

In the morning we got all suited up for warmth and water proofing then got on a jet boat. These boats were equipped with large pumps and steerable nozzles to literally squirt there way up river at very high speeds. With no propellers to fowl, they could go fast in very shallow water. There were two objectives, (1) to go far up the river to see the wild sights, (2) to enjoy the sheer pleasure of going so fast on the water and enjoy such high-jinks as spinning and drenching.

At the furthest point of our ride, we stopped for a hearty lunch, then came back. It was an exhilarating day with good friends.

The next we drove to Redding to rest the night, then home.

So, 1994 was the year of trips:

1. The short cruise down to Mazatlan.
2. The Caribbean cruise.
3. Coral Gables, Florida, for my reunion.
4. Newport Beach and Rogue River, Oregon.

I felt as though we had experienced the cream.

Rogue River Jet Boat Excursion August 16 to 18, 1994



Sacramento Overnight on the Delta Queen August 24 to 25, 1995



Me, Mel Barbaria, Bettsy Coffman
Dave Coffman, Diane Barbaria, Gloria

49. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

When I get stirred up about something, sometimes I will act. In recent years, I have taken advantage of the "Opinions" page of our local newspaper, "The Dispatch," to voice my concerns. Here are three that were published, and received comments in support from other letter writers:

The first letter was in response to an editorial "Cheer and Jeer" column that jeered family members standing in line to register in a particular school. It happens that Gilroy still as this is written has a substandard school system. One school has consistently outscored the others in student results on standardized tests: Brownell (now Luigi Aprea). The line for registration started this year on Wednesday for the Saturday registration. Sabrina established a position to register Tony for Kindergarten. She took the afternoon shift, Mitch took the early evening shift, I took the 9:00pm to 6:00am shift (sleeping in the car), Gloria took the morning shift.

EDITOR: (March 11, 1994)

You jeer "a kindergarten registration system that gets more ridiculous each year" and focus on Brownell. You close with, "Not all parents have the luxury of sleeping outside the school for four days. But when you think about it, should they really have to? Hope for rain that may bring a dose of sanity."

Please excuse me, but in my humble opinion you not only have missed the boat on this, you haven't even come to the right pier. Year after year, there is more demand for Brownell than there are slots available. At two in the morning, I talked to one man who claimed that he was in line for his fifth child to go to Brownell. Hello, is anybody listening?

Last week, a neighbor talked us into seeing the Rucker Elementary School's performance of "Quilters." I was amazed and enthralled. I saw a professional caliber performance of difficult material that expressed family love, loyalty, responsibility, and endurance. Afterwards, the students took questions from the audience regarding the play and about their feelings of what the play expressed.

So is Brownell the only worthwhile school in Gilroy? I for one do not believe it. However, our family feels that Brownell is right for the child in our care, and we are willing to sit 24 hours a day, in the rain if necessary, to get him started in the school experience we feel is best for him.

GEORGE L. STREHLKE

The second letter concerns a sensational piece covering a year earlier fracas between a husband and wife that was tied in with his recent killing of the wife. I was acquainted with Mrs. Joyce Little through her position at the Elks Lodge. Also her husband, who had recently deceased, had been the Elks Secretary for many years. I was outraged that "The Dispatch" had suddenly gone out of character and emulated sleazy journalism.

EDITOR: (May 17, 1995)

YOUR HANDLING OF THE TRACY LITTLE CASE IS BEYOND THE ACCEPTANCE OF THIS COMMUNITY!

I first thought that I should preface that opening remark with an "I feel," however every resident I have seen today is as outraged as I am.

Your first news item was fine: it contained the relevant facts on the immediate case, and caused no more pain than was necessary to inform the public.

Your front page article on May 17, entitled "Abuse plays a role in homicide," belongs at the supermarket checkout stand, along with stories on three headed babies, hermaphrodites from out space, and the latest revelation from Simpson's doctor's dog.

Consider,

1. At least some of your "facts" appear to be hearsay, and may prejudice any trial.
2. None of the principals are celebrities.
3. Both families being gratuitously tarred are established contributors to this community.
4. You, personally, are heaping unnecessary additional pain on innocent people.

I hope that you wake up to the fact that this is small town Gilroy and not Hollywood. This kind of trash will gain you neither the Pulitzer, nor the affections of your readers.

GEORGE L. STREHLKE

The third letter is in response to a columnist who supported a proposition on the ballot. His untruths, as well as his characterizing anyone against his choice as whiners and those ignorant of civil engineering, aroused my ire.

EDITOR: (October 25, 1995)

Huck Hagenbush's column today regarding what he calls the "storm drain fee," exposes that he has not read the ordinance, nor has he checked with Gilroy's Department of Public Works. He made the whole issue old drain pipes. Further he claims that "the precise condition of virtually every foot of a system can be (and in Gilroy's case, has been) determined." Neither statement is true.

To take the second point first, today I checked with Gilroy's Department of Public Works and was told,

(1) There has been no detailed check of the drain pipes.

(2) There needs to be a check of the drain pipes.

(3) There are not the funds available to make the check.

To take the first point, the whole issue is not the old drain pipes, the whole issue is Proposition I, which is our vote on ratifying Gilroy Ordinance No. 95-8 "to provide for a storm and surface water management enterprise and utility."

The Storm Drainage Facilities to be included: "...They include all pipes, apurtenant features, culverts, streets (to the degree they act as water conveyance facilities), curbs, gutters, pumping stations, channels, streams, ditches, wetlands, detention/retention basins, ponds, and other Storm and Surface Water conveyance and treatment facilities whether public or private..." In other words, wherever the rain shall fall and surface, water shall flow. Too broad. Among other things, this includes the curbs and gutters continuing to be destroyed due to the poor tree selection and maintenance by the city (take a drive down Welburn and notice the young liquidamber trees that will surely do to the curbs and gutters what the older ones are doing now).

Should the need be proven, would I support a detailed study of the older drain pipes? Sure. will I support the Proposition I wide end run around the property tax code? No.

GEORGE L. STREHLKE

p.s. Proposition I lost resoundingly.

50. MAGIC

Since early 1992, I had been regularly corresponding with Don Brown, an old friend from high school. Our mutual interest was stock market technical analysis. He also tried to reawaken my interest in magic that I had left behind when I graduated from high school. Outside of performing for several of my children's birthday parties, I had done nothing with magic for forty five years. However, once I dropped my intense involvement with stock option trading, I tentatively looked again at magic, this time not from the perspective of performing, but rather from the development of true art in the accomplishment of sleight-of-hand. I was not interested in paraphernalia but rather the self-satisfaction of developing true skill.

I started by purchasing a few books, which has now grown to an extensive library of five feet of books and six feet of video tapes. Yes, I do like to study a subject for full mastery.

I did perform for several of my grandchildren's birthday parties. And I have done a few mysteries at gatherings of our friends. But the old desire to perform has not reawakened.

In 1995, I joined the International Brotherhood of Magicians, as well as a local group, The Mystic 13. I never clicked with the local chapter of the IBM, which is oriented toward performing. I have had some pleasure with the Mystic 13.

In 1995, I attended the national convention of the IBM, held that year in Oakland. I had a fine time, until I finally pooped out. Conventions of all types do that to me.

That year, I also attended the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians convention held in Sunnyvale at the Marriot Hotel. I actually performed in the Brown Bag Contest. In this contest, entrants are given a brown bag containing an assortment of everyday articles with which they are expected to perform a few minutes of magic. My presentation was well received. And, even though I did not receive a prize, I was very pleased with my ingenuity. We have a video of my performance.

With my hemipelvectomy in July, 1997, I have ceased all magic social activities. However, I do still find pleasure in continuing my studies in legerdemain.

51. CHONDROSARCOMA

Getting into the Fall of 1995, feeling a little sluggish, I began hiking in the hills above our tract. I would walk up to the highest point on Mantelli, turn right up a dead-end road to the top of the hill, walk the spine of that hill to a fence barrier, then go right down the hill on a deeply rutted road to the bottom at Rancho Hills Drive, then home.

From the hilltop on, I was on dirt, looking for the tracks of deer, possum and snake. I was watching the soaring hawks and listening to their "squee." And I was feeling the exhilaration that my muscles felt in once again operating to a higher level of performance.

On the day after Thanksgiving, I pulled a shift ringing the bell for The Salvation Army. My station was at the third section of the Gilroy Outlets on this busiest shopping day of the year. Although I began feeling a little pain in my right hip, I assumed that it was a muscle pull from all of my hiking.

The rest of December, this pain never completely left, and at times seemed to be worse.

On January 7, I went to my Kaiser doctor in Gilroy. He gave me a referral to physical therapy.

I went that day to Kaiser Santa Teresa and met with a therapist. She demonstrated some stretching exercises that she felt would straighten me out. She also advised me not to favor the leg, but rather force myself to walk straight.

After several more sessions through January that, I felt, caused me problems with my back, I went back to the doctor. He referred me to the Back Clinic at Kaiser Santa Teresa.

After reviewing my X-rays, the doctor there said that while there was some deterioration in my lower back vertebra, that this would not explain my hip problem. He ordered a Nuclear Bone Scan.

The bone scan showed a lot of activity. He said that this could be rheumatism (ruled out as not showing up on the x-rays), capillary necrosis (which is death of the tiny blood vessels feeding the joint cartilage), or cancer. He thought that it was capillary necrosis and sent me to Orthopedics.

A nurse in orthopedics fitted me for crutches.

Doctor Barry Miller, orthopedics, was 80% sure that it was capillary necrosis but ordered an MRI to be sure.

The March, 1996, MRI showed a growth. Before doing any biopsy, Dr. Miller said that my Gilroy doctor should order a "complete workup" to find the primary cancer source, as "In twenty years of practice I have never heard of a primary cancer at that location."

When the results came back negative, he was angry. "They just did not find it; I'm going to find an ugly fleshy thing that can be analyzed for its type, then you will be in the hands of an oncologist."

By this time I became disappointed in my Gilroy primary care physician, because he had gone on a one week vacation during the middle of my workup without turning me over to another physician. I changed primary care physician to Dr. Joseph Mason, who was an internist with a fellowship in oncology. Being based at Kaiser Santa Teresa, he could also better coordinate my case.

Next a needle biopsy was performed, by Dr. Hoffman, under the direction of a CT scanner to get to just the right spot. A local anesthetic was used, but as this could not penetrate the bone, the procedure was the most painful I have endured.

The results being inconclusive, a full surgical biopsy was performed by Dr. Miller. The Kaiser pathologists being uncertain, samples were sent to Stanford. Some weeks later the diagnosis was rendered chondrosarcoma: cartilage cancer.

On May 30, Dr. Miller opened and Dr. Mohler of Stanford, visiting Kaiser, excised the growth, washed the cavity with liquid nitrogen, then filled the cavity with acrylic cement.

I was told that I would be on crutches for three months, and that then they would CT Scan my lungs for possible spread.

By late August, I had received no appointment to see Dr. Miller, or for a CT Scan. I contacted his office to be told that the doctor was on vacation and that September was already booked up. I prevailed on the nurse, who knew my case, to squeeze me in and to also schedule the CT Scan.

On his return from vacation, Dr. Miller phoned me to angrily chew me out, "I'm not supposed to see you for six months, and how dare you schedule a CT Scan." I politely reminded him of all that he had told me at the time of the operation; he calmed down somewhat.

Immediately prior to this September visit, he ordered a pelvic X-ray. Reviewing the X-ray with me, he said that there was no evidence of recurrence of the growth. Asking me to try walking without crutches, he then told me to use the crutches for another three months and, if I was not off them

by then, he would put me in physical therapy. He also sarcastically told me, "The CT Scan that you ordered showed nothing in the lungs." His tone implied a wasted test.

At the December visit, I demonstrated that I could walk a little, but with a limp. He angrily said, "I told you that you would be on crutches for a solid year!" Again he reviewed pelvic X-rays taken just before this visit and pointed out that there was no recurrence.

Now becoming concerned about Dr. Barry Miller's behavior, I complained to Dr. Mason about the crutch dialogue and asked him to check out my case. At our January meeting he said that there might be a little cancer, but that it would be slow growing. He said that I might need a hip replacement.

At my March meeting with Dr. Miller, he again began by reviewing the just taken pelvic X-ray, and said that it showed no recurrence of the growth. I was not now walking as easily on crutches as I had in December. I was worried. I lashed out at the doctor for all of his rudeness and the "bullshit" he had been directing at me. I reviewed the whole history of his crutch pronouncements, and his yelling at me on return from his vacation. As my finale, I asked, if pelvic X-rays had not shown the original growth, why should they be expected to show any recurrence? In the tiny, barely audible voice of a whipped bully, Dr. Miller said, "In your twenty years of medical experience, surely you know the difference between a pre-operative and a post-operative X-ray." Having run out of steam, with a somewhat embarrassed Gloria I left for home.

In May, my hip began to ache. When I brought this to Dr. Miller's attention, he ordered a new MRI for June. He said that the growth was back. He ordered a new Nuclear Bone Scan and a detailed CT Scan. He told me that he was referring my case to Dr. David Mohler of Stanford. "But I will still be available for consultation." I thanked him for the referral, and have not spoken to him since. I am afraid of what I would say, and I am sure that he knows how I feel about him.

As Dr. Mohler was in Russia, there was quite a delay before seeing him in early July, 1997. He explained that the only course was a hemipelvectomy: removal of the right half of the pelvis along with the right leg. He gave me the names of two other doctors for a second and a third opinion.

Dr. O'Donnel of Kaiser South San Francisco concurred. After waiting some time for his return, we saw Dr. Johnson of UCSF, who also concurred. From Brian's car phone we set up the surgery for the next Tuesday, July 22, 1997, at Stanford.

After surgery, I stayed for some time at Stanford, I was then

transferred for a day to Kaiser Santa Teresa, I then was moved to Pacific Hills Manor in Morgan Hill.

There it was discovered that a section of the incision was not healing. There followed weekly trips to Stanford for the removal of dead tissue, with over two months of three-time-a-day wound cleansing and dressing, first at the convalescent home, then by visiting nurses and Gloria in our home.

When finally healed, I told Dr. Mohler of my continuing pain.

Three months after the operation, an MRI was taken. Dr. Mohler wanted this to serve as a baseline against which to compare future MRI's in watching for recurrence. However, this MRI was so suspicious to the radiologists at Kaiser Santa Teresa that they conducted a Nuclear Bone Scan and a Detailed CT Scan. Finally, on November 4, they conducted a needle biopsy under the guidance of the CT Scanner. The material was sent to the Mayo Clinic, which ruled it cancer.

I had an 2:30pm appointment with Dr. Mohler at Stanford on a Wednesday. I was kept waiting in pain until 4:10pm when the building was cleared due to a gas leak. We waited in our car until, at 4:30pm, we went home. Dr. Mohler would have had to get into the building to review the material that I had brought, then examine me, and I was due to start chemotherapy the next morning. The chemotherapy was to possibly head off metastases to the lungs. It did not have a solid clinical record of being effective, but, after undergoing the hemipelvectomy, I wanted to go all the way.

That evening, Suzy, Dr Mohler's nurse, left a message on our recorder that Dr. Mohler had reviewed my material. She said that he wanted me to go ahead with the chemotherapy, and that surgery was not at this time appropriate. I took this to mean that surgery could wait, but not the chemotherapy.

After the Thursday morning chemotherapy, I phoned Dr. Mohler for further discussion. Suzy said that he was out of town until the following Wednesday. Probing for more, she told me that my cancer was now inoperable.

Well, I cancelled the last three days of the chemotherapy, and Dr. Mason concurred. Chemotherapy had been on the agenda just to head off metastases. That seemed fruitless if the primary were to be allowed to go. No one had championed chemotherapy to tackle the primary growth.

On the next Wednesday, I phoned Suzy, insisting on dialogue with Dr. Mohler. That evening, he called me from his home. He said that the cancers indeed could not be operated on in their present state, but that there was a chance that chemotherapy would shrink them enough for operation. In any

case, he said that I had at least a year to live, and, after chemotherapy, I would have at least a year, plus the time in chemotherapy. He also told me that the odds of a cure were now five to ten percent. I asked him to contact Dr. Mason, so everyone would be singing out of the same song book.

I met the next Monday with Dr. Mason. The two doctors had conferred. I received a point blank recommendation from Dr. Mason to resume the chemotherapy. He said that after two complete sessions they would do another set of MRI, Nuclear Scan, and CT scan, then make a further determination. He did not back up Dr. Mohler's promise of at least a year to live, saying that he did not like to make those kinds of promises.

So, the next day, I resumed chemotherapy, and my second round of four sessions will start on December 30.

My aim at this point is for an extension of good quality in my life. As always, I try to live life as it unfolds.

52. BEGINNING WITH CRUTCHES

To get a drink of fruit juice,
the glass is moved by stages:

From its place on the sink,
to the island cart,

Then from the island cart,
to the counter by the frig.

Filled with juice from the frig,
the refreshment is enjoyed.

Then the glass is moved by stages,

From the counter by the frig,
to the island cart,

Then from the island cart,
to the sink.

Here it is rinsed,
and returned to its place.

What was before a swooping continuous process,
Has been broken up,
into small discrete steps.

Just like a lucky beginner at checkers,

Who cautiously jumps his piece,

Pausing at each landing,

All of the way to the King Row,

Then returns,

Pausing at each landing,

All of the way to his starting position.

George L. Strehlke
May 7, 1996

53. ROB DIES

In May, 1996, Rob died alone in an empty Alhambra warehouse.

My sister Sally had devoted months to a heroic effort to get Rob into treatment for his mental illness. She was stymied at every turn by the intricacies of laws meant to protect individuals from abuse, but which also prevented the rescue of truly lost people, such as Rob, who would not cooperate in their own salvation.

On May 27, 1966, in order to share my feelings, I wrote this to my high school chum, Don Brown, who had not known Rob:

Dear Don,

Saddest news at this end. Our youngest son, Rob, has died. He would have been 34 on August 2.

As a child, Rob was a favorite of our entire extended family. Bright, sunny, loving, and self-motivated.

As a toddler, he loved to romp. I remember coming home all stressed out from a tough competitive battle to ask Gloria to keep everyone away: all I wanted was a salty dog drink, Time Magazine, and my big red leather chair. Here came Rob. "No, no, no, Rob, I'm too tired!" "Yes, yes, yes!" Then they were all in my lap, and I felt warm and loved and OK.

A favorite of his early teachers, he loved to learn. He became a strong reader, and researched his interests.

He also loved to play competitive games to win. More than once, I would come home around 6:00 p.m. to our home on a hill in South Pasadena, and look over to the school to see Rob, all alone, practicing handball against a backboard. He became famous among his fellows for "The Strehlke Slice."

He was the only Strehlke I know to pursue athletics: He insisted on my taking him to enroll in Little League - they took him young. He insisted in getting into youth soccer. Framed in our hallway picture gallery is a photo of Rob in action, taken by one of his coaches, with the inscription,

It's been a great pleasure coaching you this year, Rob. Whatever position you're at, you always give it everything you've got. And your serious attitude on the playing field gives me a lot of confidence whenever the ball comes your way.

Merry Christmas & remember The Orioles

Ed

When he was around four years old, seeing his interest in music, Gloria enrolled him in the Yamaha general music class for pre-schoolers. He took to it right away: keyboarding, singing, dancing, learning the notes. He pressed for a piano. I agreed, but only if everyone in the family took lessons. We all did. Our teacher was a wonderful person, 80 years old, who gave us our individual lessons. I was the first to drop out. By the time we moved to Saratoga, Rob was THE musician in the family. He was really good on ragtime. He liked some popular tunes. But he finally concentrated on rock and roll, and fixated on the Beatles. He had no problem sight reading music. He could also listen to a record, then write his own arrangement for piano. Now into his teens, I bought Rob a keyboard. He began to play in practice bands, sometimes in a garage, sometimes in his own bedroom (we fabricated a particle board and rug stopper for his window).

The came the terrible battles over drugs; the Counseling; the high school drop out (he did pass the high school equivalency test). By his mid-twenties, he could no longer be reached in mental illness. Accepting no treatment, a few months ago, his behavior became too out of control for him to any longer stay with family. Now he is gone. Tomorrow, family is joining us from Southern California to mourn the Rob that was. He never did physical harm to any person.

In Friendship,
George



54. THE GREAT AUTOMOBILE RESCUE

From November 26 to December 10, 1996, we received 11 inches of water, which I measured as I drained the fountain. This is a full season for Gilroy. Then, after Christmas, it really started to rain. The first week of 1997, I again drained the fountain. On the night that streams here were overflowing, we got a panic call from our neighbor, Sue Larson, regarding other neighbors, the Lynch's, who own the Ford Dealership: 350 cars were in danger of flooding. I put on a waterproof coat, took one crutch, and drove over in Gloria's old Honda CRX (risk the Lincoln?).

A dramatic scene indeed. Rows of cars, running, with lights on, waiting for drivers. "Take it to the Gavilan College Lower Parking lot. Here is a lock box key to secure the car key when you get there." Into the first car. How do I get the brakes off? Indeed, where is the door handle to get out? Off into the drenching rain; up the dark Thomas Road; across the bridge over the swollen Uvas Creek; past the "Road Closed" sign; slow bow wave through the flood; up to Santa Teresa Boulevard; left to the Gavilan College Parking Lot; waving flashlights leading me on (reminding me of aircraft parking); lock it up; into the van with other soaked drivers (oh boy; as we were to go out, I haven't yet cleaned up - I must smell somewhat like a wet dog); back to the dealership for another car. Where's the parking brake? Oh boy, I popped the hood. "Between the seats!" Of course. Back into the night; whoops, as the light truck swerves when the right wheel catches the water (too much feedback on this model through the steering wheel); park it; into the van

In all, I counted seven cars ferried. The nicest was a new Thunderbird; the worst was a used Aerostar mini-van with the stuffing coming through the front seats and the armrest: "Are you sure you want to save this one?" When I got home, Gloria had already phoned our regrets to the friends we had been invited to visit that evening. A warm shower. To bed.

The Ford lot did not flood. Two days later, employees drove all of the cars back to the dealership. So much trauma with no result. Still, it could have saved our friend a financial disaster. Ten years ago, the dealership did flood, and it took our friend's father years to recover.

55. CLOSING THOUGHTS

My sister Sally left today to drive back to her home in San Pedro, California. She stayed with us for the Christmas holidays. We had some good talks.

We celebrated the season with Sabrina's family, and with Brian's family. I thoroughly enjoyed them all. It was a warm loving time.

Early in the week, some of the neighbors held a surprise celebration for me at our house. As it got dark, I noticed that little bags with lighted candles had appeared lining our front walkway and the base of our fountain. I knew that friends were coming over, but I didn't know that they were bringing treats. We were all enjoying each other's company, when the door chime announced the arrival of a group from the high school choral. They came in and very professionally regaled us with Christmas carols. I felt very good, indeed.

This time of good feeling is a good place to end this book. Stories continue to bubble up, and if I do not stop now, I might keep going indefinitely.

For example, I didn't tell of Caroline, my partner at the Cotillion ballroom dancing class. How as a twelve year old, I would put on suit and tie to ride the streetcar to Pasadena and choose Caroline for every dance, and, when it was the girls' turn to ask, she would choose me. And how I would fantasize about what our relationship might be, yet we never saw each other outside of the Cotillion.

I didn't tell of being tricked into humming along the Horst Wessel song, the Nazi anthem, with a group of singing Germans in Munich's Hofbrau House.

I didn't tell of the luncheon where I convinced the executives of Dorena Drugs of the advantages of IBM processing of Accounts Payable and Payables Distribution, using a diagram I wrote on a nubby paper napkin.

I didn't tell of being a passenger in a commuter plane, when the pilot flew into the jet wash of a giant aircraft and stood our plane on its left wing.

So I shall end now: loving Gloria, loving Sabrina and her family, loving Brian and his family, loving Sally, and so proud of all of their achievements.

Blessed with friends who care, I have been buoyed by their support. I hope that they are all blessed in return.



Christmas, 1996
Me, Sally
Mitch, Sabrina, Tony, Angelica, Gloria



Serena Baptism, September 3, 1995
Shannon, Brian, Don Johnson, Shelley, Me, Sally Johnson
Marc, Nicholas, Sally, Serena, Sheila, Gloria

Christmas, 1997, Surprise By Four Close Neighboring Families



Candles Surreptitiously Placed By Neighbors



Gilroy High School Choral Hired By Neighbors

A. FATHER'S CAREER

As you can tell from a reading of his story, "The Strehlke Saga," Father was ambitious. He was always searching for a faster route to high levels of importance and wealth.

Unfortunately, as he and I did not speak of these topics, I can only sketch out his career from 1929 on from chance remarks. I write these scraps primarily in my search for understanding in my relationship with him.

As I have already mentioned, he left his job with Boeing's airline for a brief employment with the Carnation Company. This was mentioned to me many years later, when I told Mother that I had just completed my first computer sale to the headquarters of Carnation Milk. Both she and Father cautioned me not to mention his employment to Carnation executives. Apparently this was not a happy association.

Sometime in the 1930's, he again left the airline to be the campaign manager for a candidate for the governorship of California. I have no idea who the candidate was, or how far the campaign went.

Father may have taken other jobs in this period. If so, I do not know what they were. I was told that on one of his leavings from United Airlines (the successor to Boeing's airline), William Patterson, the president, questioned his judgement. On his return to the airline, he never again made progress there.

Father finished his last employment with United Airlines as a salesman in their small office in downtown Los Angeles. I remember that, when I visited earlier at around 1935, this office did not even have a full rest room; Father held me up to a wash basin while I urinated.

Father had a good friend, Pete Peterson, who was the branch manager of the Pan American Airways branch office in downtown Los Angeles. Around 1939, Pete convinced father to join his sales force. When Pete joined the Military Air Transport Service as a commissioned officer, Father took his place as branch manager.

When Pete returned from the service in 1943, he demanded his old job back. Father was transferred to Miami as Assistant to the head of PAA's Latin American Division.

In 1946, Father was lured away from PAA, with the offer of a big title and a salary boost to join a new airline being formed by Howard Hughes. TACA did not get going. Within a month, Father was in New York pleading to return to PAA.

He was taken back as a salesman in the Chicago branch office. Father later told me that his assignment made the then branch manager very nervous. Sure enough, father was soon made the branch manager.

Later he was promoted to District Manager.

In 1956, he was made Interline Sales Manager, which was still his position at his death in 1962.

I feel that the turmoil in his employment may have affected his nature and may have had something to do with my childhood insecurities.

B. WORK

1934. Mother tried giving me a small allowance. I do not recall any tasks connected to this largess. With glee, I asked to go to the market. There I spent it on candy. Disappointed, Mother wondered why I did not save it. I could not understand why I would want to do that. The allowance stopped as quickly as it had started.

1937. By this time, I was doing some chores: helping with washing the dishes, taking out the garbage and the trash. There was no allowance.

In order to gain the \$.09 admission to the Saturday movies, I went door to door collecting wood coat hangers. The local cleaners would pay me \$.005 each.

1940. By this time, I was receiving an allowance of \$.50. My chores had expanded to include cutting the tiny lawns front and back with a manual mower.

1942. I began selling "The Saturday Evening Post" magazine door to door. I received half of the \$.05 price.

1943. I gave up on "The Saturday Evening Post". I began cutting lawns with the owners' own manual mowers. I charged \$.50 an hour for this hard work, soliciting door to door for customers. When we left for Florida the next year, I remember one unhappy woman asking me how she would get her lawn cut. I remember thinking that I was a little young to shoulder her problems.

1945. The South Miami General Store hired me to bag groceries and to restock shelves. I was soon fired. I was told that it was because I had mouthed off to the cashier. Another of my sins was that I had gone, full of horror, to the owner with a cellophane bag of rice that was alive with lice; he coldly told me that some of his customers liked it that way.

I got a Saturday job as a bagger at a super market in Coral Gables. The pay was only \$.225 an hour, but people tipped for carrying out their groceries to their cars (super market carts had yet to be introduced). I averaged around \$10.00 for a ten hour day. I continued there until Summer vacation.

That Summer, I went to work in the downtown Miami shop of "Jahn the Magic Man". I was there to learn all of the tricks. I was paid \$15.00 for a six day week of 10:00am to 10:00pm daily. After spending \$.50 for a combination lunch and dinner at Woolworth's of a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich and a milk shake, as well as \$.50 for bus fare, I did not save much before I was fired, again for talking back.

1946. I began performing magic for children's birthday parties. I charged \$5.00 to \$10.00.

That Summer I worked as an apprentice house painter at \$.50 an hour. All interior work was done with a oil paints with heavy fumes. All work was done with brushes, as rollers were yet to be introduced. While painting a large closet, I was knocked out by the fumes; I was sick for several days and left the painter's employ.

On my own, I painted the exterior of a stucco house with cement paint at \$.75 an hour.

During the first term of my Senior year at high school, I sought painting work. At \$.75 an hour, I varnished the floors in one of Hervy Allen's guest houses. Also at \$.75 an hour, I painted the exterior of the Hjorts' guest house. The Hjorts then wanted me to paint their main house, but I really did not like the painting business, so I demurred.

1947. That Summer in the Chicago area, I needed to make money for college. I had \$150.00 savings. I figured that I needed \$350.00 more for the college year. I looked in the telephone Yellow Pages for firms to phone for interviews.

My first job was with a furniture mover. I worked one fourteen hour day that included helping with three local moves. One move included being the bottom man on a baby grand piano down a spiral staircase. Another move included having a strap passing under a small refrigerator wrapped around each wrist, then my lurching down a staircase with the gait of the Frankenstein Monster. The next morning, my muscles hurt so much that I could not get out of bed; also, I genuinely feared permanent injury. When I did get up, I resigned by phone. I don't recall my pay.

My second job was with a tree surgeon. Hired as a "Ground Man", my job was to clear away the debris sent down by the people working above, and to go for things that they needed. My pay was \$1.00 per hour. Toward the end of the second week, I was given some instruction and sent aloft to trim, from the top down, the dead wood out of a tree. There was a lot of green growth that obscured my view: this was good in that I had a fear of heights and couldn't see down - this was bad in that I lost track of my supporting rope. Leaning back, with my feet planted against the trunk, I was sawing away when I felt a sudden give. Leaning forward to look around the trunk, I discovered that I had nearly severed the rope. Cutting it the rest of the way, I knotted the rope together, let myself down, and quit.

My third job was with the Holland Furnace Company, soliciting

door to door for furnace cleaning. For every \$10.00 furnace cleaning job sold, I was paid \$5.00. I was to sell this service only to those who had the ancient hot air furnaces that were built up by stacking large cast iron rings, with asbestos sealing paste between each ring. The sales message was that the cleaning truck was going to be doing other homes in the neighborhood, so we could give a special rate to vacuum out all of the ducts, as well as disassemble the furnace to clean it and to give it a safety inspection.

Sales were slow. Some people reacted negatively to the company name. Then, on the fifth day, an elderly lady told me, "You seem like a nice boy; do you know that you are working for crooks?" Her story was that, during WWII, she had had the company clean her furnace. With the furnace rings spread around her basement, a company "inspector" told her that her furnace was so old that it would soon start cracking and would flood her home with deadly carbon monoxide gas. The company would not expose itself to liability, so her furnace would not be reassembled. She would be given a "special deal" on a new Holland furnace. She refused, so they left her furnace all apart. It was well into winter before she found someone to put her furnace back together.

When I returned to the office, I confronted the manager with the lady's story. As he fumbled for words, one of the old hands lounging against the partition said, "Why don't you tell him the truth? He's going to need to know eventually." I quit on the spot. Years later, the top executives of this company were sent to federal prison. This was the first successful prosecution of fraud in interstate commerce.

I next worked for the Blackstone Manufacturing Company of Cicero, Illinois. My pay was \$1.00 per hour for a forty hour week. Starting by stacking incoming steel in racks, I eventually worked at all of the positions in their shop making custom designed steel link conveyor belts for industry. I worked at the steel saws, the punch presses, the steel bending brakes, the steel shear, the spot welder, assembly, and crating for shipment.

Summer ended without my reaching the monetary goal. Once at college, I looked for evening and weekend work.

I was hired as an usher at the Paramount Theater in downtown Boston. The ushers were outfitted in elaborate uniforms, and operated with military marching drill. Shift relief looked like the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. The ushers were stationed two to each door into the auditorium; one inside and one outside. The inside usher was to maintain his night vision by not looking at the movie in progress. The outside usher would open the door for patrons, then, with a flashlight, the inside usher would take them to available

seats. As movies ran continually, with no requirement for patrons to leave, occasionally the outside usher would pass along to the inside usher a request for a count of empty seats. The inside usher would then rapidly walk down the aisle counting in half way on one side; walk back up the aisle counting in half way on the other side; then report the count. I lasted one night. The whole parade was just too ridiculous for me. The pants of the uniform I used that one night came down only to my shins, and I could hardly breath in the tight coat. At least I saved them the cost of getting me a uniform that fit.

My next job was at Filene's, the major department store in Boston. I was made a salesman in the men's shirt department. With my boredom, I quit within the week.

As my college studies were not going at all well, I then abandoned all idea of working during the college year. I would just have to live poorer.

1948. That Summer, I returned to the Blackstone Manufacturing Company. I worked there the entire vacation. After one month, I received a raise to \$1.25 an hour. As there was no air conditioning, the heat, together with the hard labor, would result in my sweat rolling down into my one pair of work shoes. I developed a world class case of Athletes Feet, which made it painful to walk or stand. The doctor directed that I buy a supply of white cotton socks, which Mother was to boil after each use. He prescribed five different salves to rotate through for night time application. He also prescribed multiple foot powders to rotate through for morning application. He said that the different medications would confuse the fungus. His methods did work, and my work day was once again physically bearable. However, before vacation's end I had determined that this was one more line of work that I did not want to ever do again.

1949. I had seen people painting house numbers on curbs. First they would go door to door soliciting orders. The next day they would return to paint a white background on the curb. The following day they would return to stencil in black the house number, and, if the owner was home, collect payment. I had seen advertisements for a new super-white paint that would stand the weather for several years while maintaining its brightness by slowly powdering off the surface. It occurred to me that I could solicit for the order; use a brass fasten together stencil kit, and this new paint to put the number on the curb; then collect payment: all in one stop. At \$.50 a house, I did fairly well, though not everyone was sold, and each transaction consumed time.

It then occurred to me, that, if I could raise the price, though I might sell fewer homes, I would pocket more money.

I came up with the idea of putting metal house numbers on a sign which could be planted in the lawn, with a barbed anchor to prevent passers by from pulling it out. I bought a lot of aluminum numbers with caste in nails. I hired a fellow with a garage shop to make the signs. Then I solicited door to door; made up each sign on the spot; and collected my money. This was a quite successful Summer vocation.

1950. Although the house sign business was OK, I thought that selling Fuller Brushes might be even better. Once in the swing of it, it was much better. Using the family car, I would drive out to my assigned territory to arrive at 10:00am (after the housewife had finished most of her morning chores, and ready for a break). I would work one side of the street to a reasonable turn-around point, then work back on the other side to arrive back at the car just before 12:00 noon. I would knock off to arrive back at 2:00pm and work until 4:00pm (before most housewives began to prepare for dinner and the evening activities). My approach was this:

I would ring the door bell. When she answered, I would show her a card illustrated with three articles, while holding my sample case with the other hand. "Good morning! Fuller Brush. Which would you prefer for your free sample: the Vegetable Brush, the Pastry Brush, or the Comb?" "May I step in to deliver it?" (Moving toward the door) Once inside I would open up the sample case on the Living Room floor. While digging to the bottom for her free sample, I would be spreading out the trays of product (watching her eyes for signs of interest).

Without delay, handing her the sample, I would try her interest in the products. If I could rapidly develop interest, I would proceed to the sale, promising delivery the following Saturday when payment would be made.

If three rapid tries had not aroused her interest, I would thank her for her time, and tell her that I hoped to see her on my next run through this area.

I enjoyed this work. I was on my own, using my own energy and fine products to determine my 40% commission.

1951. Having been somewhat extravagant, including an extra trip home for Spring Break, I could see that I was going to run short of funds before graduation. So, I signed up with Fuller Brush for a territory in Watertown, Massachusetts. I had no car, so every day I carried my sample case on the streetcar. On Saturday's, I hired an acquaintance to drive me to make my deliveries. This was during a great flu epidemic, so many women were reluctant to risk infection. However, in those days, as few housewives worked, there were enough of them home who would let me in that I was able in

one month to make all that I needed for the rest of the school year.

1951 - 1956. Following Harvard graduation, I went into the Air Force for nearly five years. See "Military Enlisted Service" and chapters immediately following.

1956 - 1957. For the year following the Air Force, I took business courses at USC. See the "USC" chapter.

1957 - 1984. Until my early retirement, I worked continuously at IBM. See the chapter entitled "IBM".