

**Play of Positive Points**  
Autobiography of Andrew T. Fisher  
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## Introduction/summary

I've lived a very interesting and varied life. I was born in Oakland, California, raised in Manhattan Kansas for seventeen years, and have lived for most of my last fifty six plus years in Evanston, Illinois – just north of Chicago along Lake Michigan. I've visited India for three months in 1982 and Mainland China for six weeks in 1987. I visited Mexico, Holland, Germany, Austria, England and Quebec, Canada in 2018, and then visited BC, Canada, Galapagos, Equator, Australia and New Zealand in 2019. I flunked out of college the first time, in 1969, but about twenty years later had Chinese as my language as I finally earned my bachelor's degree at Northwestern University in 1988. Because I:

- Have learned about food and chemical sensitivities by living in Dr. Theron G. Randolph's "ecological unit" for a month,
- Started from scratch the student environmental group at Northwestern as well as being its first president,
- Designed and managed the website for the Nutrition for Optimal Health Association (NOHA) which my mother helped found over thirty years ago, and
- Was co-editor of the quarterly *NOHA NEWS*,
- Head the Environment Issue Group for the Unitarian Universalist Action Network of Illinois (UUANI)
- Am a member of the Green Sanctuary Committee (now Green Team) for the Unitarian Church of Evanston (which my mother founded)

I am an AVID ENVIRONMENTALIST.

By avoiding all the foods and chemicals they are sensitive to – the root cause(s) of their illness – (this usually means great self-discipline, great lifestyle changes, changing ALL your cleaning chemicals and/or perhaps even moving), much more physical exercise, and closely following the “rotation diet” eating only organic (grown without any toxic pesticides) food, any person can avoid most chronic diseases (cancer, Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, autism, diabetes, learning disabilities, and many more) or even reverse them without taking any drugs at all! Many complex “mystery” illnesses, for which most standard (prescribe a pill) physicians and specialists have all failed to diagnose or find a cure, have been successfully diagnosed and cured by this “clinical ecology!”

Despite the fact that so many anti-depressant and pain killing drugs are constantly advertised and this field is a huge business, I do NOT take any of these over-the-counter unneeded drugs. I want to know exactly how I am feeling all the time, and why go to the unneeded expense? This is causing the current opioid addiction crisis. My current chiropractor, Dr. Duke, has many video displays in his office claiming all that is needed to maintain good health is a proper mind and body with no drugs.

Because cars are unsafe causing so many accidental deaths, with all the CO2 they emit causing climate change, they jam up our expressways and streets during rush hour increasing commute times and diminishing productivity, most drivers become “couch potatoes” and don't exercise as much as they should contributing to the obesity epidemic, not to mention the costs of insurance, maintenance and gas, I do NOT own or drive a car. Walking, biking, public transit and carpooling are a lot better.

To have the positive points come out, the rest of your life has to be quite normal if not negative. Despite the fact that I was born into a very loving and wealthy family, I've had a number of quite dramatic ups and downs in my own social, educational and financial life. In sixth grade, grand-mal epilepsy started. In junior high (7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade) I was very bad socially and thought everyone in the school hated me. Mainly because my mother insisted I do all the high school homework, I hated it, and as soon as I was free from her in college, I didn't do any and flunked out after a year. As soon as I inherited a lot of money from Mom's mother and moved away to my own apartment, I was extremely lonely and “bought” a number of “friends” with marijuana “pot” parties, many said they would pay rent to sleep

overnight with me but never did, so soon all that money was gone and I had to move back home. It took a young lady from China living with us to shame and inspire me to study properly with all the motivation coming PROPERLY FROM WITHIN MYSELF (instead of being forced from the outside by Mom).

The current situation with my seizure/epilepsy problem is looking quite good. After a terrible time in (2016) when they tried to cure it with surgery, I developed an aneurysm pressing against my brain where they had operated – from too much exercise too soon – and they operated again. My sisters both visited and we got a new neurologist, Dr. Neil Allan, who is only using medications. He stopped two of my expensive ones and started a new one. Things are looking quite good and I haven't had a seizure since 2015! After being off it for over three years, I am finally resuming to bike since spring, 2017.

The Covid-19 corona virus pandemic in 2020 was an interesting challenge for me. Because I live alone anyway, my life was not that much different, but church, singing, and all other personal associations were.

My main remaining goal in life, hence the title of this biography, is to educate the public about these positive points – first about these great clean, powerful tools to fix almost all long-range chronic medical problems, and to give them at least the choice between all the drugs, junk food, gas-guzzling cars, perfume, cosmetics, and so many other polluting petrochemical products which are constantly advertised on radio and TV, and these other much cheaper, cleaner, healthy environmental alternatives.

Expensive drugs and medications do NOT cure disease and make you healthy. Instead, proper changes in lifestyle, purchasing choices, diet and exercise will properly maintain good health without ever getting sick. A good, simple healthy choice for food is the LESS people have processed and shipped it, the better it is for you. FRESH or dry fruits with NO sugar and preservative chemicals added are the very best. LOCAL organic fruit and vegetables are better (and consume less CO2) than those flown in from thousands of miles away.

And second, that another very important thing is to accept different people of all different races, cultures and income levels. There is ever so much MORE in life than dollars.

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**“The greatest wealth is health” – Virgil**

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Communicate much more with your neighbors to create a good, friendly, diverse, interesting COMMUNITY. The greatest “bridge” between people of all DIFFERENT races, cultures, religions, political beliefs, wealth and income levels, is MUSIC!

For many more details in my life about all of the education and activities outlined above, for much more about my many hobbies – music, biking, skiing, and sailing – several adventures in each, and my many fun activities – trips, camping, and canoeing – to mention only a few, read on.

## I The Young Growing Years in Kansas

### Chapter 1: Young – Hating Homework – Toxic Driven Epilepsy Starts

I remember nothing from Oakland California where I was born. I was born in 1950 during the McCarthy era and there was a dreadful scare of communists so they issued the “loyalty oath” where every professor at most universities – including Berkeley where my Dad was teaching – had to sign it. In a very brave move – for which my mother admired him for the rest of her life – he refused to sign this loyalty oath and resigned at Berkeley. One of the few universities brave enough to hire a possible communist at that time was Kansas State in Manhattan, Kansas, so we moved there.

My first memories are from Manhattan Kansas. Our first apartment had a sloped floor. When I dropped a ball, it would roll to the other side.

The first real house we had was on a nice dead-end boulevard called Legore Lane in Manhattan, Kansas. Because the street was a dead end, it was an ideal place to raise young children with no fast cars driving through, so we had many young friends as neighbors. Our house was a nice wood frame house



with 2 full floors plus a basement, an attic, front and back yards with a fence all around them. We lived only a few blocks from Kansas State University, where my father taught Economics. I remember Dad taking us to his first office in Waters Hall where we rode up in the freight elevator which he called with a key.

There were originally three trees in the back yard, an elm, a cottonwood, and a maple. Once the elm tree was blown over to the south – down to the fence, but we saved it by pushing it up and tying it to the cottonwood tree with a strong rope. Several years later, after all 3 trees grew a lot bigger, we decided to chop down and remove the cottonwood tree in the middle so the others could have more room to grow.

I loved to climb the maple tree as a boy.

Originally, during the early years there in the 1950s, there was a narrow gravel road going up the hill that ran behind our back yard. Often, we boys would climb up that hill and look for ring-neck snakes under rocks. This narrow gravel road was all that separated us from the poultry farm for K State. Occasionally my parents would have to chase chickens out of our back yard!

We had the largest sand box on the whole block. The stone wall to our garage had beautiful red roses on it and was leaning slightly out over our sand box where many of us children on the block would play.

A strange background sound on perfectly clear days sounded like thunder. It was the target firing of large military guns at Fort Riley, about fifteen miles west of us.

A much closer regular sound was at K State. There a loud steam whistle was blown at 8:00 AM, Noon, 1:00PM, and at 5:00 PM every weekday. I remember one of our neighbors about three houses to the north, the home of Eddie Edgar, was the only family on the block that had a TV set. They could receive channel 13 (CBS) from Topeka, 50 miles east of us. Every Thursday at 5:00 PM, they broadcast a 30 minute cartoon show for children. It was arranged that all the children on Legore Lane could come up to the Edgar's basement to see this show every Thursday. I remember very vividly how on every Thursday, as soon as we heard the 5:00 whistle, all of us would drop whatever we were doing and run up to the Edgar's basement to watch TV.

At first the show was "Woody Woodpecker," but it soon was switched to "Huckleberry Hound." I definitely remember that Huckleberry Hound was always brought to us by Kellogg's cereals. It would start with a package of Kellogg's corn flakes growing to occupy the whole screen, then the rooster on the cereal box jumping off and starting the cartoon show. I also remember one of the ads always was Tony the tiger claiming that "Kellogg's Sugar Frosted Flakes, are Grrrreeeat!!" (They still used that same slogan later, in 2005, to advertise Kellogg's Sugar Frosted Flakes – which are full of sugar, carbohydrates, and are nutritionally the farthest thing from "great" for anyone).

Most non-residents think of Kansas as mostly flat plains and prairie. Fortunately, Manhattan is located in the picturesque "Flint Hills" with many steep hills several hundred feet high. One hill that I definitely recall in Manhattan was called Bluemont Hill. There Julliette Avenue, a north-south street just over five blocks away from Legore Lane, went up a very steep hill – over 30 degrees. After any significant snow, the police would barricade off Julliette Avenue on this steep hill, and children from all over town would come with their sleds to slide down it.

A summer feature I definitely remember about Kansas was the swimming pool at the city park. At first I started in the separate baby pool, but soon I started in the big adult pool and worked up from the 3 foot to the 4 foot to the 6 foot depth, then eventually to the diving boards into the 8 to 10 foot deep end.

After the US Army Corps of Engineers decided to build the Tuttle Creek Dam in the Blue River valley to the north, in an effort for flood control, they decided to widen the narrow, gravel road behind our house and pave it. At first there was a little talk of taking all the additional land for the new road from our private back yards, but they decided to take it from the poultry farm instead. After this new, paved back road was built, my parents decided to build a new garage. As I stated earlier, the original stone garage leaned out over the sandbox. I remember when the bulldozer came and with only a slight tip from it's scoop against the stone wall leaning over our sandbox, it came crashing down the other way into where the garage once was. The new garage had a good sturdy wooden frame with NO danger of falling onto us kids in the sandbox.

Another example of "mountain climbing" roads in the Flint Hills was the road up to Observation Point from which we could see the progressive work on Tuttle Creek Dam – the seventh largest earth-filled dam in the world. There were at least five steep "zig-zag" switchbacks we had to drive up to reach Observation Point – a hill high above Tuttle Creek Dam on the west side of the valley. From up there we could see them slowly building the dam, the high concrete control tower, and the large cut on the other side for the many spillway gates. To get all the earth and rock they needed for the dam, this huge spillway cut was not enough. They dug a large lake about a half mile below the dam nicknamed "Dredge Pond" to get the rest. After the dam was completed, we would occasionally canoe on Dredge Pond.

I particularly remember the triumphal ceremony in which the engineers claimed they finally had “control” of the Blue River. Most all of the east half of the dam had been completed up to where the Blue River had originally flowed in the center of the valley. The control tower and its set of double tubes or concrete pipes – each at least twenty feet in diameter – and a small part of the west side of the dam over these tubes, had all been completed. A diversion channel from the river in the center of the valley to the control tower, and from the tubes back to the river below the dam, had been dug. A small earth dam had been constructed across the original Blue River, and a huge explosive charge had been placed beneath the small dam keeping the water from the newly dug dry diversion channel. The climax of the ceremony was when the charge exploded – with a large bang which we could hear in Manhattan – and water raced for the first time through the diversion channel, the control tower, and under the dam through the tubes. After the dam was complete, during a flood after many rainy days, it was particularly exciting to visit the tube outlets below Tuttle Creek Dam and see the huge amount of water racing out and splashing.

Although Dad was given an excellent ILG (an excellent brand made in Germany) 36 inch fan when we moved to Kansas, he decided to install a larger 48 inch “attic fan.” On summer nights this fan would draw fresh cool air in through our open windows, and blow all the hot inside air up and out through the attic. Workmen came to install and wire up the large attic fan in our upstairs hallway ceiling. They also had to make the small vents in the attic much larger on both sides and provide wooden covers to close them in the winter.

\* \* \*

I had a number of friends during my early childhood. Two stand out the most – Jim Bagley, and James “Pat” Neel. Jim Bagley and I share the same birthday – November 22, 1950. We later worked out that he was about 8 hours older than I. His younger sister, Jane, is about the same age as my younger sister, Carol, and his youngest sister Elizabeth is about the same age as my youngest sister, Dorothy. Other friends were David and John Searles. They originally lived right across the street from us on Legore Lane. David was about my age, John was about Carol’s age, and their two sisters, Edith was a little older, and Kate was a little younger than Dorothy. I’ve maintained a lifelong friendship with Jim and Pat. I drove to Kansas to visit them about 40 years ago, and we still exchange annual Christmas cards.

Our mothers had made an arrangement for all the kids from the Fisher’s, the Bagley’s and the Searles’ to stay together at one house (leaving the other two mothers free). Other young friends on Legore Lane were Wally Bowls, Eddie Edgar, and Bob Snyder – who loved to shoot off firecrackers.

The Searles had many more abrupt changes in their young life. Shortly after their “true” mother, Emmy, died of cancer, they moved from Legore Lane out to Elling Drive in the western part of Manhattan, a few blocks west of where Jim Bagley lived on Wickham Road. Their father, Scott, re-married Tonita – a short, black haired lady. After her youngest child, Paul, was born, their step mother devoted almost all her time and attention to him, virtually ignoring all the rest of the children.

I have been blessed with a very close, loving, and musical family. While we lived in Kansas, I got two younger sisters, Carol and Dorothy. My mother was very in to good nutrition with her cooking and meals, and Dad – because he learned electronics while serving in the Army during World War II – had built us a great record player with a beautiful hand sawed design over the twelve inch speaker. Dad also had a huge, beautiful Steinway Patent Grand piano which occupied at least a third of our living room. The piano was given to my father by his grandmother Fisher, because he was an excellent pianist (see photo of it rebuilt on page 102). My parents bought us many musical 78 rpm ILG records for children.

There are several that I particularly remember: “Animal Supermarket,” “Aladdin and His Magic Lamp” – set to the music of Scheherazade, “Walking Down the Street,” and “Pussycat Christmas.”

My mother was a very good, loving, caring devoted person. She nursed all of us as infants, and gave us superior, nutritious food – whole wheat instead of white flour, and brown instead of white sugar. She read and followed Addle Davis *Let’s Cook it Right*. She did everything possible to make our social life enjoyable and increase the number of friends we could make – therefore the arrangement with the Bagley’s and the Searles. However, she also developed many “cute” names for us children – most of which were only appropriate during our infant baby years (age two or less) – which she continued to use for us well into our teens. These included “angel bean-love,” “schnuckels,” and “umells-a-goo.”

My father was a quiet, reserved man, who hardly ever initiated a conversation or spoke without first being spoken to. However, in addition to being an excellent musician and pianist, he had a couple of other unique qualities I’d like to describe. First, he had an excellent sense of humor. Besides the auto “flapposis” disease (for other cars with the tarp over their luggage rack flapping which he pointed out on our many long auto trips), he would also frequently tickle us on our legs and called that “razzel-dazzel.” Also, while driving on many shorter trips in the country near Manhattan, he would often attempt to get us “lost” by following the smallest, narrow, virtually imperceptible two-rut roads. Despite all these attempts, he (and I) had an excellent sense of direction, and we always found our way home.

He avoided all “popular” spectator team sports such as football, basketball, or baseball. He believed that the less emphasis any academic institution placed on their team sports (paying a lot for the best players who usually come only for the athletic sport and not for academic study), the better its courses and academics were. The two universities my father was a full professor at, Kansas State then later Northwestern both had the WORST football team in their league when he joined them.

On Legore Lane, Wally Bowls father had built a basketball goal just below where my father and mother slept. Often students would be playing and dribbling the basketball late into the night (there was a street light just above the goal). On several occasions my father went out in his pajamas late at night and requested that the students stop playing so he could get some sleep.

However, my dad did like individual sports such as hiking and boating. After the Tuttle Creek Reservoir was completed, we bought a green canoe and often took it up to the lake reservoir and “Dredge Pond” just below the Dam for Dad to paddle in.



We also bought a Klepper Arius – a folding boat which was either a two person kayak or sailing boat, and its wooden frame and cloth/rubber hull could be taken apart and folded up into three handy bags, and a sunfish sailboat.

Dad had also sung in Bach's Saint Matthew Passion. For several years in Kansas, around Good Friday or Easter, we would drive over 60 miles to Lindsborg where a slightly shortened performance of Bach's Passion was sung each year at Bethany College.

I was taken on several trips to meet my grandparents on both sides. My father's parents lived in north Winnetka, or Hubbard Woods, a suburb north of Chicago. My Mother's mother lived in Vancouver, British Columbia in Canada. My father had four brothers and one sister so I have lots of uncles, one aunt, and cousins there, but my mother was an only child. I never got to meet my grandfather on my mother's side since he had died many years before I was born. "Grandfather" hereafter will refer to my father's father who lived to the ripe age of 99.

Father's mother, Katherine, would take us to all the museums, zoo, and the aquarium in Chicago. Grandfather was a lawyer in Chicago, and loved to watch birds.

Mother's father started a large, successful construction company, Smith Brothers and Wilson (SB&W) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan with a branch in Vancouver. I learned to love bridges when I was young, and Mom's mother would drive us over the "Lions Gate" bridge from Stanley Park to North Vancouver.

I spent the first half of my first grade year in Vancouver. I went to Prince of Wales school. There it rained so much that I wore out my yellow raincoat in only half a year. SB&W was building a large new post office for downtown Vancouver. I remember going there while it was being built on some of the upper floors where I easily could have walked right over the edge and fallen off! I had visited a high mountain north of Vancouver during the summer. We took a VW bus halfway up, and then switched to a jeep with a four wheel drive for the steepest high part. On the summit was Diamond Head Chalet. I remember the unusual "door" on the second floor because the snow up there would often get over twelve feet deep!

When I returned to Kansas for the second half of my first grade year, we had Miss Petty. We went to Bluemont School, a good one mile walk from our home at Legore Lane. I vividly remember when one of the friendliest of my first grade classmates was walking home with me. We stopped by a large tree; he motioned for us to sit down, and explained that he wanted for us to become friends. We exchanged names, addresses, sibling information (he had two older brothers, Ricky and Gary), and James Patrick, or "Pat" Neel has been one of my friends ever since. I remember riding home from Bluemont Hill on the back of Gary's motorcycle behind Pat.

We went on several long family auto trips. One was to the western coast. I remember seeing





Arches National Monument in Utah, and the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

Dad defined other cars with loose tarps over their entire luggage on top as having a moderate to severe case of “flaposis.” On a west trip we visited Mesa Verde National Park where Native Americans had built many cliff dwellings. One night at Mesa Verde, it was so clear that I could see the Milky Way and ever so many more stars than I’ve ever seen in the United States. Another trip was to the north where I remember visiting Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota where the faces of four of our greatest presidents are carved into the mountain top. Dad had mounted a large road map of the United States in our basement. The exact route of each of these trips was marked in a different color for a different year, and every overnight stop was marked as a large, black dot.

On one of these auto trips to the east to New York City, we took Jim Bagley along. I remember visiting Niagara Falls (the US side) and dressing in special clothes, including yellow raincoats to take the elevator down and see the falls from wooden stairs and platforms built directly below them with all the spray pouring down on us.

In New York City, I definitely remember going to the top of the Empire State Building, (the tallest building in the world at that time) and climbing the many stairs to the top of the Statue of Liberty.



I joined Cub Scouts with my friends at Bluemont School, and my mother was a “den mother.” We had many meetings and took several local trips. One was to Sunset Zoo where I remember Pat Neel playing taps on his trumpet. Another was to the telephone exchange. The thing I remember most about Cub Scouts was putting on our skit about going to the moon in the auditorium at Bluemont School.

For this moon skit we tried to provide as much realism as possible with scenery and props. After carefully measuring the two large scenery holders on Bluemont’s stage, we bought a roll of newsprint, carefully cut and taped it together to the exact size of the scenery holders, and painted vivid pictures of white mountains with a black sky in our basement. For the rocket taking off from earth, we painted the circular cardboard inside a paper towel roll silver, gave it a cone for a tip and several fins on the side. The biggest rocket was the life-sized one we would land on the moon with in the center of the stage. This was constructed of wood, cardboard, and paint at the home of our assistant den mother Mrs. Chatlain and her sons John and Mark, who lived on Haid Court – about halfway between Legore Lane and Bluemont School. This main rocket had two doors: (1) the main one from which we would step forth on stage to explore the moon, and (2) a secret one behind the rocket for us to enter and exit from.

Although it was small, the third rocket symbolizing our blasting off from the moon in several ways created the most problems. We wanted it to show smoke exhaust emitting from its bottom by putting dry ice in water inside the coffee can rocket, then the grey smoke would come out of the many holes we drilled in the bottom (which was really the top of the coffee can). I most vividly remember our dress rehearsal when the third rocket from the moon was slowly going up with its water and dry ice creating smoke, when suddenly the bottom fell off and all the water and dry ice spilled out on the stage floor! I remember Mrs. Chatlain telling Mom that she hoped this wouldn't happen that evening in front of the audience. We figured out a firmer way to attach the bottom.

That evening for the moon skit, when the rocket from earth was blasting off, all of us boys in the den made a huge noise back stage to show how the earth's atmosphere would carry the sound. During the main part of the skit, after emerging to explore from the large rocket in the center of the stage all dressed in space suits, all of us had different scientific tasks. I remember mine was to look through a telescope (another painted paper towel cardboard cylinder) mounted on the legs of my music stand for a tripod. Mom narrated the skit from the side of the stage describing what each of us was doing. After returning to our large rocket in the center of the stage and the curtains closed, our small moon rocket blasted off with lots of the proper smoke trailing below it, but in total silence because the moon has no atmosphere.

\* \* \*

For a musical instrument, I decided to play the violin. This was probably because there was a nice, old violin of my father's that I could start playing on. I vividly remember our first string teacher in grade school, Mrs. Wonderlick. When we were first learning to play, and the tips of the fingers on our left hand would hurt terribly from holding the strings down, Mrs. Wonderlick would always ask "is it bleeding?" Unless it was bleeding, we had no excuse to complain.

Once I learned the violin basics, I took violin lessons from Mr. Leedham at K State. I gave several recitals at the Chapel Auditorium, with my father accompanying me. My sister Carol took up the flute, and my sister Dorothy (after briefly considering the harp) ended up playing the clarinet. We were all competing for my father's limited time as an accompanist.

I am blessed to have been born into such a musical family. I've continued violin and choral singing through all my adult life, and my sisters have too. Many other less exposed and trained kids drop out in middle school because they don't believe they have the ability.

Through a friendly neighbor on Legore Lane who was directing the production, Mr. Evans, my two sisters and I acted in a dramatic production of "JB" – a modern setting of the biblical Book of Job which takes place in a traveling circus with a sub-play within it. Carol, Dorothy, and I were JB's three children – Ruth, Rebecca, and Jonathan. We were in the second scene of the play when JB is eating supper with his five children and his wife, Sarah. The one line of mine that I still remember to this day is after we say grace and the main course of a chicken or turkey is brought in, I say, while flapping my arms like a bird, "he heard, he heard, he sent a bird!" I also easily remember my youngest sister, Dorothy's, lines as Rebecca (she was only 6 years old): "and – and," "lucky lucky tell the lucky," and, in response to JB asking "why do we eat all this food?" she replies "because it's good!"



Sarah, Ruth (Carol), Jonathan (Andy), JB, and Rebecca (Dorothy)

Nicholas was the circus actor who masked as Satan, and Mr. Zeus was the circus actor who masked as God. Once, fairly close to the production date when rehearsals were being staged non-stop, I stayed to see how the play turned out. It was very sad and terrible for me, a young boy of ten, to see my “father” lose all five of his children, all of his wealth, his wife, Sarah, desert him, and get terrible wounds on his flesh. All these were acts of Nicholas (or Satan) in attempts to get JB to curse God, which JB never does. At this point my parents took me away. I wasn’t able to see the very end when JB instantly (by an act of God) gets all of his wounds cured (by a UV spotlight being turned off – and no longer showing the phosphorous in the make-up paint showing terrible wounds all over his back), And Sarah rejoins him to start a new life.

JB was a huge success. We had originally scheduled only three productions in the Chapel Auditorium, but because of such a huge demand for tickets, a fourth production was staged.

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During my fifth grade year (1960-61) my father earned a Guggenheim fellowship and was invited to do research for a year at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. We lived in the suburb, Hamden, just north of New Haven.

There, the students were much more advanced than in backward, rural Kansas. We got overnight studies, or homework. I had been spoiled in Kansas, and frankly was quite bored with school. As soon as the afternoon bell sounded, I was free at last to play at whatever I found to be interesting. In Connecticut, I hated this new, terrible imposition by the school on my free time with all the homework assignments.

Unfortunately, it was primarily my mother who urged and insisted that I do the homework. Because this additional studying was forced on me by the school and my parents, I built up a huge resentment to it, instead of becoming interested in it and building up ambition from within myself.

During that year in Connecticut I had my first (and only) exposure to a hurricane. It was hurricane “Donna.” First there was a heavy rainstorm with the winds from one direction. Then everything cleared off, we had blue sky, and the “eye” of the hurricane was over us. Then we had heavy rain for another 4 hours with the wind from the opposite direction. They closed the schools for that day, but by the time the hurricane got that far north, it did very little damage – the highest winds were only about 45 mph.

In Connecticut, I also had a new Violin teacher, Mr. Shire. He was an excellent musician with perfect pitch, and demanded a lot of practicing, but, a few times he would totally forget my violin lesson.

In my father’s high school, he sang several leading roles in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. In Kansas we had records of *HMS Pinafore*, *The Mikado*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*. While living in

Connecticut, we took two trips to New York City when D'oyly Carte staged live productions of *The Mikado* and later, *The Pirates of Penzance*.

After all that academic acceleration with homework in Connecticut, my sixth grade year at Bluemont grade school in Kansas was very easy and relaxed – with NO MORE homework. We had a very nice teacher for my last year at Bluemont School for sixth grade named Miss Schrader. I particularly remember her reading us *The Gammage Cup* by Carol Kendall for a half hour every day at the beginning of the afternoon after lunch. In the climax near the end of the book when a chapter ended with “a spear whistled through the doorway,” we begged her to read on, and she did.

However, in 6<sup>th</sup> grade I started having grand-mal epileptic seizures for the first time. I would stand up for no reason at all in the middle of a lecture, then that's all I can remember. My classmates told me that I fell to the floor, unconscious, then was taken to the principal's office as soon as possible. I recovered conscious in that office and returned to class.

Mom and I were already driving to Topeka to get allergy shots from Dr. Dixon for all the asthma I was having at that time. We asked him what to do about the seizures, and he recommended Dr. Segerson of the Menenger Foundation. I remember Dr. Segerson as being very friendly. They performed an EEG test on me to see that there was no physical damage to my brain. This test involved placing almost 30 wires on my skull then subjecting me to some audio but I remember most the many visual flashes at different rates to see how different sections of my brain reacted. The result of this test was that my brain was physically sound, so they prescribed a couple of anti-seizure medications which worked quite well at that time.

My mother, who had grown to be very environmental and anti-pesticide since that time, believed in her final years that those seizures and my epilepsy was caused by neuro-toxic pesticides. While we were away in Connecticut the family we rented our house at 1417 Legore Lane to, sprayed it extensively with pesticides to keep the bugs out. The following year when we returned, I was exposed to all those neuro-toxic pesticides and the epileptic seizures started. There can never be any cause and effect proven, but the timing certainly suggests it.

\* \* \*

In junior high school, which was immense after Bluemont grade school, I was exposed for the first time to black, Afro-American children.

Unfortunately, there was extreme segregation in those days (1950s to 1962). Virtually all of the black families lived in the local slum along two “streets” on the far south side of town which were actually railroad tracks! An example was one black family named Kidd which had developed a very successful “Anti-Pest” company for detecting and exterminating termites. When the Kidds attempted to purchase a home in an all-white neighborhood near where my friend Jim Bagley lived, there was a huge uproar from many white families in that neighborhood who feared an immediate drop in their property values if the Kidds move in.

In Junior High, I was exposed for the first time to “kidding around,” when children would say very mean, unfriendly things that they actually do not mean at all. I took all these unfriendly taunts literally, and thought almost everyone in the school hated me. In the typical mean way of young people, as soon as they realized that I was susceptible, they just poured it on.

My few real friends, Pat and Jim, would have nothing to do with me at school for fear that they might get taunted at too. I became very lonely, and would do anything for attention. Several particular examples stick out:

- A fairly ugly, fat girl named Barbara Quarry would always be sitting in the auditorium waiting for the next class following lunch. I made it a point to sit next to her, and everyone claimed that I loved her.
- Once at lunch, several boys told me to sing “Yankee Doodle” with “f” in front of every word. Of course, when I reached the word “stuck,” it came out as “fuck.” My father had read to me the medical dictionary about syphilis and gonorrhea, but had never told me the slang word for having sex. When the boys roared with laughter at that word, I didn’t have the slightest idea why. I went on repeating the “f” word and many girls screamed and I was very shortly sent to the principal’s office. They couldn’t believe I didn’t know what the “f” word meant, and thought that I was deliberately being obnoxious. I didn’t learn exactly what “fuck” meant until that evening when I asked my parents.
- Everyone started calling me “Fish-head” instead of my normal Fisher name.

All this negative social experience in the Manhattan junior high school started my extremely low self-esteem, which haunted me for over two decades of my remaining life.

One positive aspect of junior high school that I really found interesting and enjoyed was the shop work. In seventh grade we had wood shop, in eighth grade we had metal shop, and in ninth grade we had our choice of the two. The first year in wood shop, the two projects I remember (and still have) are a “cat” and a beautiful wood lamp. For the cat, I glued three pieces of wood together for the body, and two pieces together for the head. I then cut the curved patterns for these pieces on the band saw from both the front and the side. Next I sanded and finished all the surfaces. Finally, I cut a small hole in the head so I could properly attach the long neck of the body to it.

The lamp I made on the lathe. I started the main body by gluing two wood pieces together into a long, almost perfectly square piece. One end of the lathe is a conical metal point. The other end with the motor has a circular piece about two inches in diameter with four straight metal “claws” at right angles which rotate your piece of wood. For the lamp’s body, the first step was cutting away the four square corners until it was circular. This I did with a “round head.” You also had to wear protective goggles. The next step was to make a smooth curved surface in the middle, then several decorative small grooves at each end. At the bottom of the body, I had to leave enough for an inch projection into the base. For this inch, I cut in leaving a small post only a little over an inch in diameter was left to connect to the base.

The base of the lamp was made from a single piece of wood also on the lathe, but it was over twice the diameter of the body, and was only screwed to the driving side of the lathe with a large metal piece with no need for the conical opposite end. On the base, once it was circular, I made a short smooth “valley” in the center, and a double set of decorative grooves on each side. In the flat free side, I cut several more decorative grooves beyond the body. In the center of this side, I cut a large hole just barely big enough for the post extension from the body to fit into. For both the body and the base of the lamp, sanding and finishing on the lathe was much easier than for the “cat.” You only had to hold the sandpaper or rag with finishing oil over the surface and the motor rotating the wood did all of the “elbow grease” work for you.

The final steps were to put the lamp together. Our shop teacher took a long drill with a shank over two feet long to drill the hole for the electric wire through the middle of the body. I drilled another hole through the base to the hole in the center. A proper AC electric cord was strung through both holes, attached to a plug at one end, and to a proper light bulb fixture with attachments for a shade which could be screwed into the hole through the body. Once the light bulb fixture was screwed into the body, the final step for my lamp was to glue the body to the base. It is a beautiful lamp which my sister, Carol, now possesses.

The metal shop in eight grade had many different challenges. One of the most challenging was the metal foundry where we could create any shape we wanted from models in sand, pour molten metal into them, let it cool and harden, and there was our shape. Other challenges of the foundry were: (1) cutting proper connections between different parts of our model, (2) creating large vertical holes to pour the metal in and allow the air to escape, and (3) making it all sturdy enough so that when we removed the wood models and cut the channels for the molten metal to flow through, the sand would not cave in.

Other interesting activities in metal shop were using the tap and the die to create a circular screw and a matching hole it could screw into. The tap was used to cut the grooves in the hole and the die was used to cut the grooves in a rod. The one thing I remember making in metal shop was a long barbecue burger turner. The handle I forged in the foundry, drilled a hole into, and taped for a screw. I bent a piece of sheet metal for the turner itself, riveted it to a long rod which I cut with a die at the other end to screw into the handle.

For ninth grade shop, I chose wood shop. I really liked the lathe and my main project was a table with four perfectly equal tapering legs – straight from a little over two inches near the top to less than one at the bottom. My teacher told me the legs earned me the “A.” The table’s flat top was about two feet across and a little over three feet long. The legs are mounted to two cross wood pieces underneath.

Another interesting wood shop tool I used to make the evenly rounded edges of the table top was the router. A router has a round flat metal surface with a motor mounted in the middle spinning on a vertical axis with the motor’s body above the flat surface. Below the surface many different “bits” can be attached to cut different shaped patterns. For the table, I mounted a bit whose teeth were shaped in a perfect quarter-circle with the top exactly tangential to the router’s flat surface and the side exactly tangential to the round metal post in the middle of this bit. Thus, when I mounted this bit in the router and moved it slowly along the rough cut square edge of the table, it left behind a perfect, uniform round edge!

It was also during junior high that President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. By that age I was an avid Democrat, aware by parents had voted for him, and very sad to see him go. In junior high, we had a school-wide intercom, and our Principal, Mr. Chandelor told us when Kennedy was shot, then later when he died. If you are superstitious, this occurred on a Friday – my and Jim’s 13<sup>th</sup> birthday.

\* \* \*

In 1964 my parents decided to design and build a larger, modern house. There were only three bedrooms in our old house on Legore Lane. My two sisters, Carol and Dorothy, still had a room with bunk beds.

My parents bought a large piece of property on the slope of the high hill overlooking Manhattan. It included a deep ravine as well. My parents chose Mr. Edson, the same architect who designed Mrs. Wonderlick’s all-glass modern house, to design our new house. I was allowed to attend the initial planning meetings when Mr. Edison showed his plans to us. These meetings were fascinating for me.

We decided on a long, rectangular house facing south with a fallout shelter dug into the side of the hill behind it. To the north, there was a car-port and a “bridge” leading up to the front door. The fall-out shelter was under this bridge and the front lawn. To the south was a beautiful view overlooking the city where we could see hills about thirty miles away on a clear day. There was a balcony off the living and dining rooms. The master bedroom and my Dad’s study still looked south, but were at the east end of the house toward the ravine.

On the lower floor were three bedrooms for us children, a family room, two bathrooms, and two storage rooms. All of our stuff was stored in the two storage rooms since there was no attic. Instead, this new house had an exposed beam wooden deck for the ceiling of the upper floor. The lowest flight of

stairs led down to the shelter. There we had a ping-pong table tennis table, which could be folded up and removed, on top of a pool table. We enjoyed many games of ping pong and pool down there, and I became quite good.



Beautiful stonework, overhang and windows



Peggy, Grandfather, Andy making patio

One of the best features of the new house was its southern exposure. We got passive heat from the sun through the glass during the winter, but hardly any sun during the summer thanks to the roof's overhang. On a sunny day, we only had to turn on the fan without the furnace to heat the whole house during the day in winter. For the hot summer, we also had central air conditioning. Beautiful original stone-work went into the north, east, and west walls of this new house, in addition to all the retaining walls for the carport. Mr. Edison knew of excellent stone contractors, the Wexelmans, who did it.

Life went on while this new house was being designed and built. One of the activities I remember the most was helping Pat Neel walk his paper route. He lived on Thurston Street, and we had to deliver papers on both sides from Manhattan Avenue at K State at the west end, to third street at the east end. The Dairy Queen was located at Third and Thurston, so my "pay" for helping Pat each day was a free ice cream cone at Dairy Queen.

After the house was built, several events stand out. One was helping Dad with our own cement mixer build a "checkerboard" patio outside the family room. The rectangular patio was divided into twelve perfect squares. For half of the squares, which only touched each other's corners, we added a red dye to the cement so the final appearance was that of a chess or checker board.

Another was building a pedestrian bridge of our own, from boards and nails, across the small stream in the ravine. I remember Jim Bagley helping us and being present at our little ribbon cutting ceremony.

K State had an old auditorium. We had seen several plays there. On both the east and west walls of this old auditorium were two unique enclosed metal spiral slippery slide fire escapes. Many children in



Manhattan loved to climb up into and play in these spiral slide towers. I remember playing in them on several occasions with Pat Neel. One evening, after we had moved into our new house, we heard many fire engine sirens, and could see a large orange fire approximately where this old auditorium had stood. In the paper the following morning, we learned that the old auditorium had indeed been burned, and that a couple of music/drama students were suspected of arson. The sight lines in the old auditorium were very bad, and it had quite bad acoustics. For several years it had been called the “barn” among students, and many had advocated: “burn the barn.” A couple of months after the fire, a large crane came to remove the two spiral slide towers from the shell of the auditorium, and take them to the city park, where they were set up with stairs and repainted for children to slide in!

Kansas is notorious for tornados. I’ve never witnessed an actual funnel cloud, but while in our new house, I did witness a “messalow.” This is a brief front containing winds of over 60 to 70 mph. On that day we were witnessing the high wind from the upper floor of our new house. Almost as soon as the wind was getting so high we thought of going down to our shelter, it was over and (thank goodness) no severe damage was done to our beautiful new house. However, the following day we went to northwest Manhattan where many of the newer homes had had their roofs completely ripped off! Dad and I went to help many of the people who had lost their homes.

We also learned through the news that this “messalow” storm had intensified into a full tornado and had done very severe damage in Topeka – fifty miles east of us. By the time the storm reached Topeka, the full tornado cut a path of total destruction four blocks wide through the middle of the city! My youngest sister, Dorothy, is from Kansas (she hated it when other children would tease her at the beginning of *The Wizard of OZ*), but fortunately our house was never taken up by the tornado, and she never got to visit the Land of Oz.

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For those final years in Kansas, my two sisters – Carol, Dorothy, – and I had the privilege of attending a couple of great western camps in Colorado (instead of long auto trips). They were located west of Pikes Peak. The camp for girls was called High Trails Ranch, and the one for boys was Big Spring Ranch. They were both owned and managed by a nice couple, the Sanborns. There we could ride on horses, go on many hiking and camping trips, raft down rivers with rapids, and/or use their shop to craft wood and/or metal jewelry among MANY other fun and challenging activities. I slept in the northern half of a bunk-house my first year there, and in one of the many large, fixed tents my second two years.

At Big Spring there was a beautiful, large lodge where we ate breakfast and supper almost every day. Several times during the evening, some folk singers with guitars and/or drums would come so we could all sing, and sometimes dance with the girls at High Trails (which was only a couple of miles away). Big Spring also had a large, red barn both for keeping the horses, and the craft shop. Each camper had to choose two types of activities that they wanted to “major” in. I chose horseback riding for at least a couple of the years I went there. During one of the years all three of us were away at camp, and then stayed with friends, Mom and Dad finally got a chance to take a trip to Europe!

I remember an interesting event in our new house in Manhattan, Kansas, when the Sanborns came over and showed slides about Big Spring Ranch and High Trails so many of our friends with children in Manhattan could find out about these great opportunities out west. Jim Bagley was among those who attended and told me afterwards that he’d give anything to attend that place. Unfortunately, it was too expensive for his parents, but another family from Manhattan did end up sending their children there.



## II Growing Up in Chicago Area

### Chapter 2: Teenage Adolescents with its Many Pitfalls

In 1967 my father was offered a full teaching job at Northwestern University in Evanston Illinois – the first suburb north of Chicago along Lake Michigan. We had to move from our beautiful new house, and would lose all of our friends!

That first year at Evanston Township High School (ETHS) – over 4,000 students, much larger than Manhattan – I did make two friends that first spring quarter, Greg Mundie and Jim Rifleman. The city was busy constructing four huge new wings onto ETHS to accommodate all these “baby boom” students.

Our first winter in Evanston, we rented an old house looking out on Long Field – a full block just north of the University that was given to the city on condition that it never be built up with houses or stores so students and children can play there all year round. One particular event of that first winter in Evanston sticks out. That was the “big snow” when we received over 24 inches of snow in only two days! The student from Mexico living in our attic suite had no idea how to cope with all the snow he had to shovel (he probably had never seen snow before in his life), so Dad and I helped him shovel all of our walks. For the first time in its history, ETHS was closed for a day due to weather conditions.

That summer (1967) my Dad bought and we moved into a nice large house several blocks north along Orrington Avenue. It was right across from Orrington School, but that very year Dorothy had just graduated from grade school to Junior High and had to go to Haven Junior High school almost a mile away along Green Bay Road, instead of right across the street.

Life living near Chicago was very different from Kansas – there were so many more places to go and things to do. First of all, there was the electric “L” public transit train which ran all the way from Evanston (just three blocks from our house) to downtown Chicago. Most of the time you had to change at Howard Street (the border between Evanston and Chicago) to “L”/subway trains which ran above ground until about five miles from downtown Chicago, where they descended into subway tunnels. On weekdays during the rush hour, you could catch the “Evanston Express” which ran express at that time all the way from Howard to downtown Chicago over the old “Loop” elevated tracks.

From previous trips to Chicago with Grandmother Katharine, I was quite familiar with the Museum of Science and Industry (with its coal mine), the Field Museum of Natural History, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Adler Planetarium. Instead of the swimming pool in Kansas, we had the beach on Lake Michigan to swim from. That first year my parents went crazy over all the musical culture available to them. They bought tickets to both series of Chicago Symphony Orchestra concerts, and to the Lyric Opera. A number of concerts they couldn’t both make it to, so we children got to go.

We only held our opera tickets for one year, but we kept our season tickets in the gallery of Orchestra Hall for over twenty five years. The gallery is the highest balcony where we were looking down on the orchestra. The acoustics in there were excellent, and many experts claim that even though the gallery tickets are the cheapest, you can hear the best from up there. Grandfather’s second wife, Peggy, loved music, so almost every concert the two of them would be sitting in her season seats on the lower balcony where we could easily see them from the gallery. Every intermission we would rush down the stairs and try to emerge with “dignity” on the floor with the private boxes in the large ballroom just below the balcony to greet Grandfather and Peggy.

The Chicago Symphony’s summer home was Ravinia Park, a beautiful and pavilion and lawn, in Highland Park, several suburbs north of Evanston and Chicago along Lake Michigan. Grandfather and Peggy lived in Ravinia (south Highland Park). Often we would go up there to hear concerts in the

summer. You could either sit on the lawn for a low price, then under the current \$10, (and get rained on), or pay more to get seats in the pavilion (which was covered).

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In the summer of 1967, I was given the great opportunity to visit the “Expo 67” World Fair in Montreal Canada alone for a week. I had a French-speaking landlady, and learned more French that single week with her, than in my entire year of high school French in the US.



US (dome) and USSR pavilions to north



Habitat 67 – many concrete blocks stacked

Montreal had a new subway, the Metra, which stopped right at the world fair – on several islands in the St. Lawrence River. The most striking pavilions were the huge geodesic dome for the US, and the impressive large pavilion for the Soviet Union directly across a branch in the river. Also of great interest was “Habitat Sixty Seven,” – a unique set of large, one story high, concrete cubes assembled so the roof of a cube could be the balcony of the cube above it!

At Evanston Township High School (ETHS), I played second chair of the second violinists. For the musical my senior year (1967-68) we put on *The Music Man*. Our orchestra director was a nice man named Mr. Mistak.

It was at ETHS during my senior year that I finally had the first science class that I really found interesting. This was thanks to our excellent chemistry teacher, Mr. Bauder. I found the laboratory experiments fascinating. This was the first course in my life that I really enjoyed and didn’t mind doing the outside homework for.

At ETHS I joined the chess club and the computer club. The chess club met after school every Friday to play. It was there that I met my neighbor William Spawn, with whom I played chess a number of times independently, and eventually got invited to his monopoly parties.

The ETHS computer club had to contend with an IBM 1401, a huge computer – as large as two refrigerators – with 4K of memory. We programmed in Fortran, and used 80 column punched cards to feed our programs in for compilation (translation into machine code) and, if we were lucky, execution. Every single character had to be perfectly spaced and typed (or punched). One single mistake and you had to duplicate your card up to the mistake, correct it, continue typing and throw the bad card away.

After graduating from ETHS in 1968, I got my first job that summer as a job clerk at Northwestern University’s Vogelback Computing Center. There I fed large boxes of punched cards as data and/or programs into a high-speed card reader. The mainframe machine we operated was the 6400. It quite

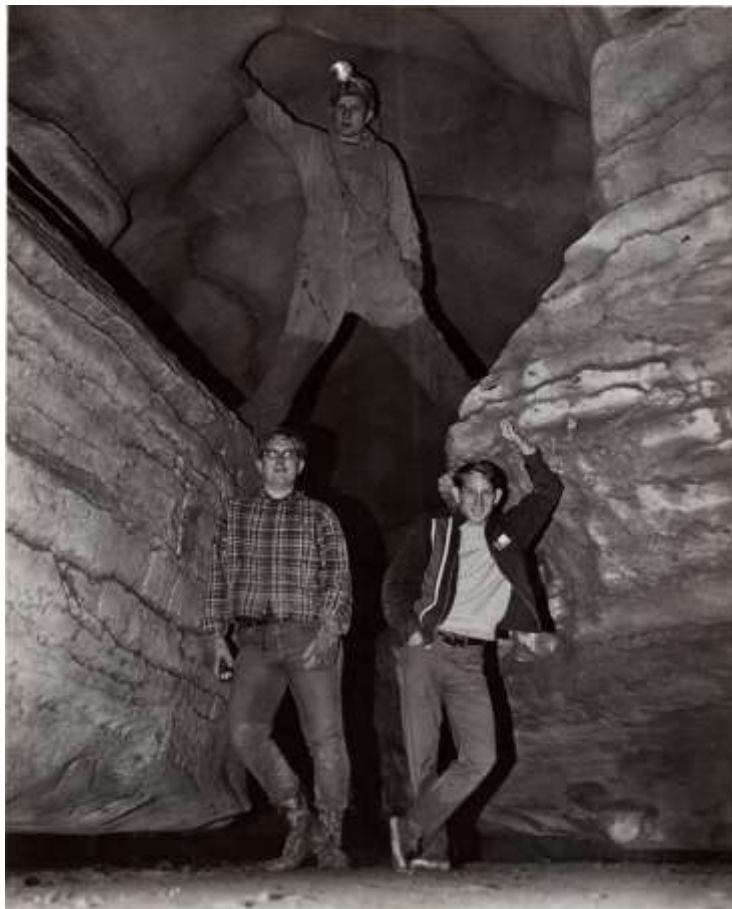
often went down, and we had a sign reading “the 6400 is Down” to place on the counter where all the students and professors gave us their card jobs to process. It was at Vogelback that I first met Ron Witt, an excellent programmer with whom I would do computer work much later.

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After I graduated from high school, my parents gave me an excellent gift of a Volkswagen “Beetle” to drive on my own. It had been over a couple of years since any epileptic seizures so we considered it safe. I got a valid Illinois driver’s license, but, at the advice of Collin Higgins, a lawyer and father to Coleen – a good friend of Carol’s – I did NOT tell the state about my epilepsy. I’d assume responsibility for safety myself. I still use that license as a photo ID today! After graduating from Evanston Township High School, I had decided on Rose Polytechnic Institute at Terre Haute, Indiana for my college education in engineering.

However, I had almost always hated “homework,” and the main thing driving my success in high school was my mother’s presence. As soon as I was truly free from her for the first time at Rose, I only did the minimal amount of homework. Because my parents had also disapproved of my watching TV, I spent a good deal of the Winter Quarter in the student lounge watching TV.

Since I was one of only a very few students who had a car, soon other students approached me with the possibility of exploring (or “spelunking”) nearby caves. I found this much more interesting than my studies.



Andy, Tom, and Chris in Salamander Cave, 1969

By the end of the Spring Quarter I was on probation with a “D” grade average. I decided not to return.

After returning home from flunking out of college, I did manage to land two jobs as a draftsman. This was way back in 1969, before the age of computer aided drafting or CAD, CAM systems. We only had T-squares and triangles (a  $30^\circ - 60^\circ - 90^\circ$  and a  $45^\circ - 45^\circ - 90^\circ$ ) in my mechanical drawing courses in high school, but on these jobs I had a drafting machine to work with. My first drafting job was with an urban renewal company called Barton Ashman. After three months, they laid me off due to lack of government funding, and I got my second drafting job with Honeywell. There I worked full time for at least five months.

At both of these jobs I had my own drafting board and a drafting machine with which to work. A drafting machine has two scales – one vertical and one horizontal. They are attached to the board by means of an “arm” with one “elbow.” Each straight section of the arm is really a pulley – with a strong straight shank in the center and a round pulley about three inches in diameter at each end with a thin metal band wrapped tightly around them. At the elbow the pulley from the upper half is really the same wheel as the pulley feeding the lower half – thus allowing NO angular rotation. In this way, with the pulley at the upper end of the upper arm fixed to the drafting board, the angular scale at the lower end of the lower arm could easily be moved anywhere on the drafting board but the angular scale would remain fixed – at the same relative angle – relative to the drafting board! The angular scale was quite nice to use too. It could easily be locked in tabular adjustments of  $15^\circ$ , or could be manually locked at ANY angle!

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About this time, I made several good friends. From ETHS, besides William Spawn, I had made three other close friends: Dean Woodman, Larry Marx, a very intelligent, mathematical guy, and Stan Perrin. Dean was a fascinating, intelligent guy, whose parents were divorced, but who tended to come up with crazy, wild ideas. Larry Marx, Dean and I attended Stan’s wedding.

Through Dean, I finally made some good, long-lasting friends – Chris Johnson and Jim Crews. My friendship with Chris lasted many years, but after he moved west I haven’t heard from him in over 20 years. When Chris and I first met, he was living in south Evanston on Hinman Avenue. Many nights we would stay up very late – after midnight – while he tried working out electronic radio and/or hi-fi projects in his room. Jim Crews was also into radios and electronics, and would occasionally join us.

This first year back in Evanston, my second cousin, Murney Gerlach, was attending Lake Forest College (in Lake Forest, a much wealthier suburb in Lake County, about six suburbs north of Evanston along Lake Michigan). Murney would often join us on the weekends and he got to know several of my friends, including Chris.

One warm spring day that involved both Chris and Murney really sticks out in my mind. On that day Chris and I decided to ride our bikes all the way up to Lake Forest in order to “boo” Murney. We couldn’t find him in his dorm, but finally located him studying in the resource center and definitely succeeded in “booing” him. After a nice visit with Murney, we rode our bikes back to my Grandfather’s and Grandmother Peggy’s house at 877 Dean Avenue in Ravinia.

We succeeded in booing Grandfather and Peggy as well. After a nice visit, Grandfather suggested we ride our bikes back on the Green Bay Trail. That was the first time either Chris or I had heard of it. The old North Shore and Milwaukee electric interurban railway had recently been closed down and was converted into a bike trail next to the Chicago and Northwestern railroad tracks. Grandfather still took the

Northwestern trains to work in Chicago almost every day. Chris and I found the Green Bay bike trail great. The best part of it was all through Winnetka where the trains had been lowered and all roads passed over us on bridges, we didn't have to deal with any cars at all for over four miles!

Larry Marx and I would ride our bikes north further and further north along this trail until we reached Kenosha, WI. Every ride we'd stop to eat at the Burger King opposite Great Lakes Naval Station. Since I was over 18, the object of our long ride to Kenosha was for me to buy a beer. Unfortunately, you had to show an ID that you were a Wisconsin citizen so our long ride was wasted! . Larry Marx did his undergraduate work at Northern Illinois University, but then his graduate work at MIT and couldn't afford to travel back to Chicagoland so we drifted apart.

Another good friend I got in Evanston was Larry Johnson. We were both fairly good at and would play many games of chess and table tennis together.

Our family took a trip south to the Caribbean Sea. I remember flying to the Miami airport, and then on out to the small island of Belize or Ambergris Cay on a small plane. One of my greatest memories from going down there – similar to Mesa Verde many years earlier – was that away from all the city lights and air pollution, we could see ever so many stars at night. I saw more down there than almost anywhere at any time in the United States, and more than when the artificial Adler Planetarium was fully lit up. We could see the Milky Way very clearly, and ever so many small stars between the normal brighter ones we see here.

For several years the entire Fisher family had been planning a huge family reunion to celebrate Grandfather's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. I have many cousins from many of Dad's brothers. From Uncle Roger I have Elliott and Peter; from Uncle John I have Laurie and David; and from Uncle Gerry I have Charles and James. Uncle Frank and Aunt Ethel have remained single. In 1972 my father, mother, and Dorothy were overseas in Belgium, but in February we all went to Uncle Roger and Aunt Carrie's in Massachusetts. Dad, Dorothy, and Mom came from Belgium, even though Dad had a broken ankle! (Right now [May 2019] Frank is the only living uncle of that generation).

After my mother's mother died, all three of her grandchildren directly inherited a lot of money. I soon moved away to my own apartment in downtown Evanston above Hoos Drug store.

It was here that I first learned about and experienced smoking marijuana or "pot". At the lowest level where I was, you bought it by the "lid" or a sandwich bag full of dried leaves. Depending on the quality of the "high" it delivered, these lids sold for anywhere from \$15 to over \$30. Most of the time, we had a number of papers and would roll up the marijuana in them to form a "joint" basically similar to a cigarette, and smoke it holding in the smoke as long as possible. Another method of smoking pot was in a pipe with water. You filled up the pipe with pot, lighted it then sucked in so the smoke bubbled through the water too cool it.

Often we would have "pot parties" at my apartment where I would buy all the pot, order a pizza (or two) then many friends – often including Chris Johnson and Jim Crews – would all come over to smoke pot, eat pizza, and listen to music (often very loud) on my stereo.

One other hosts to pot parties that I really remember were Bob and Alana. They lived in a high double floor apartment in Granville Tower facing Lake Michigan. Bob was a senior operator in computers which was why they could live so high. Bob had a beautiful 40 gallon aquarium.

Because I paid for all the pot, food, rent, and the stereo, for the parties at my apartment, this expense was slowly but surely eating into my inheritance. I didn't care because I was basically very lonely and longed for all the "friends" and companionship these parties brought. Even when several promised to split the future costs with me, they never did.

Several of the “friends” I made at this time stayed with me and promised to split the rent. Due to my loneliness at that time, I did not demand cash deposits up front, but simply took them at their word. I never collected a penny of what they owed me.

Since I moved back with my parents around 1975, I was cut off – both socially and financially – from obtaining any more marijuana so my addiction to it went away. I’m glad to say that I’ve never touched it in the over forty years since – even though I’ve often had the freedom and finances to do so.

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Since all their children were away, either at my own apartment or at college – Carol went to Colby College, and Dorothy went to Smith College, then Stanford – in 1974 Mom and Dad sold the huge house he had bought on Orrington Avenue and bought a smaller bungalow only three blocks away on Garrison Avenue – a pleasant one-block dead end just north of Evanston Hospital. The new dark brick bungalow had a full basement, first floor with two bedrooms (one was to be Dad’s study) and an attic with a bedroom at the west end. It has a wire fence around the back yard of much the same pattern as on Legore Lane in Kansas. It had a screened porch facing the back yard with a huge maple tree growing near the separate garage which you entered from the alley. Because the first floor was so high off the ground (six to eight feet), the basement has attractive windows near the ceiling of almost every room.



Mom and Dad in front of new house front door

Dad wanted to remodel the attic bedroom for my sisters whenever they returned. Since the original attic windows were high and narrow, when asked whether they would prefer a window or a bathroom, both Carol and Dorothy avidly chose a window. Since a bathroom would be necessary to conveniently live up there, Dad had the remodeling contractors build both a large almost square double pane glass window and a small attractive bathroom. The bath/shower only had about five or less feet vertical clearance below the steep, diagonal sloping roof so the shower had a flexible spray – similar to many in Europe – where you could un-hook it and spray yourself wherever you wanted. The first time the contractors tried to bring the bathtub up the steep, narrow twist at the bottom of the attic stairs, they accidentally dropped and cracked the bathtub. Fortunately, because this was a contract job, after they successfully brought up and installed the second bathtub, we were not charged anything extra.

\* \* \*

Dean Woodman's father, Andrew Woodman, ran a small, one-man company called Metrics Laboratories. He was a fascinating, intelligent man who could work out almost any engineering problem in his own house, but he was a chain smoker, coffee drinker, and usually spent over half of our time talking in his kitchen – mainly conservative politics – and calling my parents “liberal fatheads.” He told me the main point on which he disagreed with my parents was all the money they spent, when building our new house in Kansas, to build a fallout shelter to take refuge in case of a nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

Our business was primarily designing and manufacturing two-sided printed circuit boards. This was when the first miniature electronic circuits were available in dual in-line package (DIP) “centipede” shaped integrated circuits with each set of “legs” on each side a tenth of an inch apart, and the “body” separating the two sets of “legs” by three tenths of an inch. Each chip usually contained four logical “and” or “or” gates which required two digital inputs and gave one digital output. Each chip also required power, usually ground and +5 volts.

The first step was to use the schematic drawing (which showed exactly how everything was to be connected) to make a “red and blue” layout plan for a two-sided circuit board. The positions of each chip on the board was fixed relative to this schematic, the physical size of the board, and the connections to (usually 22) “fingers” at one end of the board where it would be plugged in to the “motherboard” of the rest of the digital device. Taking into consideration the distances between each narrow data lead and the much wider power busses, following the schematic I would draw all the horizontal leads on one side of the board in red, and all of the vertical leads on the other side of the board, in blue.

The next step was to make a set of two exactly aligned pieces of artwork on clear mylar at exactly 2-to-1 scale. Pre-designed mass produced artwork at this 2-to-1 scale of the DIP circuit connectors and of the 22 finger connector were already available. All I had to do with these was to peel off the backing and very carefully apply them to the mylar in exact position. A tenth inch grid was in place below both clear mylar artwork sides to make exact vertical and horizontal registration of the patterns quite easy. All I had to do was carefully line up the grid crossing marking the exact position of each DIP hole inside the small clear circle in the pattern marking where each hole would be drilled, and apply the DIP pattern. I had thin 0.075 inch black tape for the data leads which could be curved on the artwork without cutting it. I had thicker 0.125 inch black tape for the power busses. This tape could not be curved on the artwork, so it had to be applied in straight lines and cut for any turn.

All of this was done on a drafting board in Mr. Woodman's living room. He had a dark room off his bathroom and a full machine shop in his basement. When I first started working for him, he lived on Howe St. in Chicago, about two blocks north of North Avenue, and three blocks east of Halstead. At first I walked to his house from the North and Clybourn subway stop. In the later years during the summer, I



figured out a way to bike all the way down to his home from Evanston via Clark Street and Lincoln Avenue. (At that point Mr. Woodman claimed I was “healthy as a horse” for doing all that bike riding).

Since most of these boards were two-sided and required thru-plating (a cylinder of metal through each hole to conduct the electricity), at first we only made the simpler, one-sided circuit boards totally in-shop by ourselves. Then Mr. Woodman figured out a way for us to make proper 2-sided circuit boards by ourselves. We used to apply green laminate (which was sensitive to UV light) to the circuit board, then expose a reduced 1:1 **negative** image of the circuit pattern to the UV light so it would hit only where we wanted the copper circuit leads to be. We then developed off all the unexposed laminate and etched the circuit pattern. When we started doing the thru plating ourselves, we started by covering a pre-drilled circuit board with laminate, then exposing it to a **positive** image of the circuit pattern so the UV light hit where we did not want the circuit. After the laminate was developed off, the exposed copper was exactly where we wanted the circuit and connection patterns to be. We then submerged it in a special copper solution which applied a thin, conducting coat everywhere – not only to the circuit pattern – but also a thin cylinder to the surface inside each pre-drilled hole. Finally, we electro-plated a layer of metal to thoroughly cover all the circuit pattern and connect the two side to each other through all the holes. Since this plating metal was resistant to the copper etchant, we could then strip off the laminate and etch away all the copper leaving a two-sided thru-plated circuit board!

Bearing in mind the complexity of this process of making only two-sided circuit boards about forty five years ago, isn’t it amazing that many of the circuit boards inside our current PCs are FIVE or more layers thick, and that all the layout design graphics is done completely automatically with CAD/CAM systems? I’m sure the manufacturing process is also much more reliable with much finer tolerances. We never ran any leads between the tenth inch “legs” of the DIP integrated circuits, however, on examining some circuit cards inside recent computers, I found they often run TWO data leads between the tenth inch “legs!”

The etching machine and the box for UV exposures were also originally in Mr. Woodman’s living room. When business later picked up, we moved them to the upper floor of the front of the two narrow houses on Mr. Woodman’s lot.

About the time I was forced financially to move from my apartment above Hoos Drug in downtown Evanston to another much cheaper one on Kenmore Street in Chicago, Mr. Woodman also moved from Howe Street to Broadway in Chicago, only a few blocks from my new location! However, this great situation was too good to last, and within two years, Mr. Woodman moved with his wife to Arizona, and I was left without any job, income or savings!

I kept in touch with him for several years after he moved away by annual Christmas cards. I was sad to learn from Chris Johnson in March 2004 that Andrew Woodman had died.

\* \* \*

Mr. Woodman’s moving away to Arizona cut me off from the only job and source of independent income I had. I had to abandon my apartment on Howe Street in Chicago, and move back in with my parents – becoming a “little boy under mommy’s wing” again.

By this time both my sisters had either a Masters or a Medical degree with great, high-paying jobs. Dorothy, had majored in Geology and earned her Master’s Degree at Stanford, California. Carol had earned her medical degree from Dartmouth. For Carol to become an orthopedic surgeon, she needed to complete several years as a resident, in addition to completing medical school. Since both Carol and Dorothy were younger than I, but were ever so much more mature and advanced in both their lives and careers, this gave me a terrible inferiority complex and very low self-esteem. Shouldn’t I, the eldest brother be at least equal to them by now in education, if not family and income?



Around this time, Grandmother Peggy had died so Grandfather married again and we got a third grandmother, Laura Pollak.

However, at this time – around 1976 – Mom and Dad took me on a nice hiking trip to Cape Breton Island which is located off Nova Scotia, Canada.

### Chapter 3 – I Learn About Ecology, Statistics, India, and Common Cause – Mature a LOT

For my seizures/epilepsy in 1977, my excellent allergist, Dr. Robert Boxer, recommended that I meet with and visit a friend of his, Dr. Theron G. Randolph. Before I went, Dr. Boxer warned me that Dr. Randolph was not like any other doctor I would ever meet, and would require me to make perhaps many changes in my basic lifestyle. These included what I ate, when I ate it, and many items in my home such as the type of stove (gas or electric), rugs and/or carpets, and the soap I washed with – only to name a few.

Dr. Randolph was a nice, friendly, intelligent, elderly doctor, but, just as Dr. Boxer had warned, unlike any doctor I had ever met. Our first meeting was a long appointment – over an hour – in which Dr. Randolph took down my personal medical (or a better term would probably be “environmental” or “personal”) history while typing every word I said rapidly on his manual typewriter. He asked me so many questions that no other doctor had ever asked:

- a. Did I have a gas or electric stove?
- b. Did I have wall-to-wall carpeting or rugs at home?
- c. What foods did I normally eat?
- d. When during the day did I eat those foods?
- e. How often did I eat those foods?
- f. Did I normally cook food at home or eat out?
- g. Did I wear cologne or after-shave?

only to mention a few. It turned out that I had been hard-boiling a dozen eggs at once then shelling and eating eggs every morning for breakfast (so I'd only have to cook breakfast once a week). Dr. Randolph concluded that he could get the best results by placing me in his “ecological unit” at the American International Hospital in Zion, Illinois. (I also still had Prudential medical insurance through my father which, at that time, would still cover my hospitalization in such an “ecological unit”).

The ecological unit was as pure as possible. Many high-quality air filters were running constantly to purify the air. We drank only filtered water, and when we ate any food, it was ALWAYS “organically” grown – without the use of any toxic chemical pesticides or herbicides.

Every patient entering the unit for the first time has to first go on a four-day fast – with only water to drink – in order to completely clear their digestive system of all contaminants. When I started my four-day fast, at first I felt about normal. But by the second day, I felt terrible with a number of symptoms. I continued, and believe it or not, by the fourth day all my symptoms disappeared and I felt in many ways much better than when I came in! Dr. Randolph later explained that every new patient coming in usually has several food “allergies.” The new patients are addicted to the food they repeatedly eat – very similarly to the way other people are addicted to tobacco, alcohol, and many hard drugs like cocaine and heroin. You feel “normal” as long as you can get your repeated “fixes” of whatever you are addicted to. Before entering the ecological unit, you were getting repeated fixes of your addicting food(s). As soon as you went onto the four-day fast and were denied your addicting food(s), you soon went into complete withdrawal – with your system craving for the addicting food(s) it was being denied. This was the terrible feeling and symptoms at day two. But by day four, all the addicting foods are out of your system, your symptoms disappear, and you feel so much better!

The food testing stage came next. You ate only one single organic food sample for a “meal,” then you carefully monitored your pulse rate at time intervals of about five minutes after testing this food. If your pulse rate increased after the food test, that meant you were allergic or sensitive to it. As would be expected, I turned out to be quite sensitive to chicken eggs. I also tested sensitive to lamb. Often, Dr. Randolph would test other extremely sensitive patients for many chemicals as well.

Dr. Randolph’s “cure” for all food sensitivities was the four day “rotation diet.” There the patient eats only organic foods, and foods they are not sensitive to. At every meal, the patient records every food eaten. They cannot eat that same food for at least three or four days. They should also avoid every food in the same biological family for at least two days. This meant great self-discipline, cooking and eating only simple meals, and totally avoiding all commercially processed “junk” food – cookies, candy bars, all convenient fast food shops, and most all restaurants.



No – This is NOT what is meant by a Rotation Diet

© 2001, Punchline Press, *Boxer's Shorts 3 – The Medical Version* by Robert Boxer and Darnell Towns

Another personal story regarding the rotation diet is in order here. While I was living with my mother at home and religiously following the rotation diet, I was attending Oakton Community College, where a math teacher had a great sense of humor. One day, he stopped in the middle of a lecture and asked several students what they had for breakfast that morning. They usually replied “a bagel”, “some toast” or “some coffee”. Fortunately, I was the next one asked and I replied “bear liver”. The class roared with laughter. In order to properly follow the rotation diet, Mom purchased at least four different kinds of wild game liver to cook for breakfast. After that, whenever the math teacher made a mistake, he followed with “oh, I didn’t have my bear liver this morning”.

While in Dr. Randolph’s unit, I learned that he accepted patients from all over the world. Most conventional “prescribe a pill” doctors were totally unsuccessful in curing many of these “problem” patients. Some of them had been bounced form conventional specialist to specialist for **YEARS**, before finally discovering the true **ROOT CAUSE** of their illness with Dr. Randolph. His cure is **much cheaper financially**, but it does require **much more restraint and discipline** on the part of the patient. They mainly have to simply avoid all the food(s) and/or chemical(s) that are causing their symptoms.

After staying diligently on the rotation diet for at least six months to a year, they can occasionally (once every couple of weeks) splurge and go off the diet for only one meal – perhaps a party with friends or relatives – without getting severe symptoms or regaining their sensitivities.

When I asked Dr. Randolph why so few people knew about food and chemical sensitivities, he replied that the food, drug, and chemical companies don't want people to know. It would drastically cut into their profits, and they care much more about making as much money as possible now, than helping people truly get well. These facts and my experience with Dr. Randolph have totally dedicated me to doing as much as I can to spread this truth and to educate the public. Once enough people become aware of what they are actually doing, they will finally change many of the items that they purchase – organic food instead of conventional food with toxic pesticides – then eventually, through their purchasing choices, they will economically “educate” the industries.

We celebrated Dorothy and Tom's wedding on April 22, 1980 on the west coast where ever so many of Tom's relatives could easily come too. There was lots of dancing and a big party.



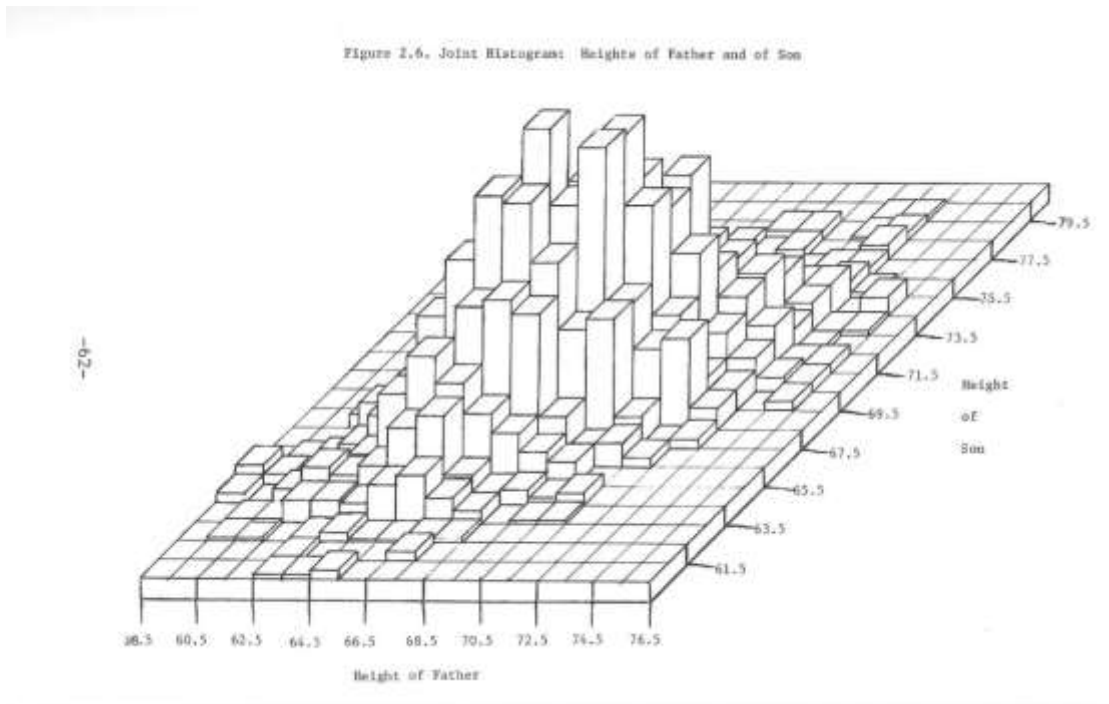
Carol, Dad, Dorothy, Tom, Mom, Andy

\* \* \*

In 1981 Dad wrote a university textbook titled *Statistics Economized*. Because I was very good at drafting, and had all the experience at Metrics Laboratories laying out two-sided printed circuit boards,

so I had very good graphic abilities, and the computerized CAD CAM machines had not been developed yet, I drew all of the graphic illustrations in it. I also ran several computer programs on Northwestern University's mainframe computer. He gave me credit in the acknowledgements.

A joint histogram in three dimensions is the most complicated and dramatic illustration in this book that I drew. It is the height of father vs. the height of son with the father on the horizontal axis, the son on the diagonal axis, and the number of points on the vertical axis creating "skyscrapers":



© 1981 by University Press of America, *Statistics Economized* by Walter D. Fisher

\* \* \*

In 1982, my father was offered to teach the winter quarter in New Delhi, India. He asked me, since I was both out of work and school, if I would like to come? Of course, I answered YES!!

We traveled to India via Rome, Italy, where we stayed for a week mainly so Dad could check in the UN Foster Agriculture Organization which paid our way, to see the sights and partially adjust to the great time change. We lived in Chittarangan Park, a suburb south of New Delhi. There cows and many animals were free to wander the streets. Every evening we would simply lay our garbage outside the back door, and it would be gone the next day because all the animals ate it – a quite efficient form of recycling.



Indian worker balancing bricks on his head in front of our flat in Chittarangan Park

We got the flat through old Indian friends – Mr. Roy was an old student of Dad's. Mrs. Roy gave Mom a list of all the proper, appropriate prices for food in the open markets on the street. All the Indian marketers first thought we were ignorant rich western tourists, and asked prices way too high. Mom just smiled and moved to the next stall. When they realized we knew the proper prices, they all gave reasonable requests and we were very friendly. I remember these delicious small bunches of bananas. We would buy only one bunch, eat them all up, then shortly go back to that same stall in the market and buy another bunch. Both we and the Indian merchants were very amused.

We arrived in January which was the customary month for weddings in India. We must have seen several dozen weddings during the first couple of weeks. The groom would ride through the street, usually riding a pony, in a great wedding parade. It would end up at a large tent where they would have a banquet and more festivities

In India, people very often carried loads balanced on their heads – be it a container of water, or a package of bricks for construction. When we were there in 1982, bicycles were still the principal mode for individual transportation. We hardly saw any cars or motorcycles so the city air was still relatively clean and pure.

After about two weeks, Mom, Dad, and I went on our first sightseeing tour of New Delhi. One of the first sights was the Qutab Minor – the world's tallest free standing stone tower. It had many attractive artistic carvings.

Next we saw Humayan's Tomb and an attractive white mosque nearby. We saw the India Gate – a large multi-story high stone arch near the center of New Delhi – vaguely similar to the Arch of Triumph in Paris, France. Then we saw the Lakshmi Narayan Temple, the Raj Ghat (tomb of Gandhi), and the Red Fort.

On January 26, 1982 we saw one of the most spectacular sights of our entire trip. This was the Republic Day Parade. There were hundreds of thousands of Indians gathered in downtown New Delhi, near the India Gate, to watch the parade. Many of the floats were of military tanks, planes, and helicopters, but there were also floats of ships and many people riding on top of spectacularly dressed elephants with large red capes!

In February we traveled to Agra, saw the Taj Mahal, then visited Akbar's Mausoleum in Sikandra – about six miles north of Agra. There I got to feed a monkey inside the court.



Next we visited the Tomb of Itmad-ut-Daula. Then we returned to Agra and while visiting the fort there, got our first glimpse of the Taj Mahal across the valley. Of course then we took a thorough look at the Taj Mahal close up.

The next day we visited Fatehpur Sikri with courts, fancy towers, and a great view out over many roofs. Later that day we visited a large bird sanctuary near Bharatpur. We saw thousands of beautiful birds and wildlife there. They had preserved the wetlands so many of the water-based birds such as ducks, geese, and egrets, could happily nest and reproduce there. Finally on that trip we visited Mathura's Museum. There we saw a religious parade.



In nearby Jaipur, we visited an ancient astronomical observatory and saw the world's largest sundial. It had a large, high diagonal wall (at least five floors high at the top) at a specific angle, and pointing due north. The shadow which showed the time was cast on two long curved stone surfaces on each side of the tall diagonal wall. We could easily see the shadow moving along the curved surface as time passed.

Later that day we visited Jaipur Palace, old Jaipur, and Sariska's Wild Life Sanctuary. The next day we visited battlements, a palace, and a museum at Alwar.

When Monique Dreze came to visit us a few days later, we visited the Lodi Gardens in New Delhi, the India Gate, a garden in the National Museum of Modern Art, the observatory and sundial. A few days later, when we were visiting the Red Fort with Monique, we saw people posing for a *National Geographic* photo there. Next we visited the Jama Masjid – an impressive temple in Delhi near the Red Fort.

In March, Mom and I finally got around to visiting the large zoo in New Delhi. There we saw flamingos, a rhinoceros nursing its baby, crocodiles, leopards, and a white tiger. The a few days later, we visited the Secritariat buildings in New Delhi and the beautiful Mugal Gardens.

In mid-March Mom and I visited Varanasi and later Sarneth. On the way to Varanasi, we noticed that many Indian people travel longer distances by simply sitting on top of railroad cars. At Sarneth we visited the archeological museum, the Damek Stupa, and a beautiful Buddhist temple. The temple had a

beautiful ten-story tapering tower. The next day we visited the Ganges riverfront at Varanasi. There we saw thousands of Indian people come to bathe and get blessed by these “holy” waters. There we also saw the beautiful domes of the Vishwanath Temple and a large marble relief map of India. This map was very large and must have taken up almost a quarter block, but it was all inside.

A couple of days later, back in Chittarangan Park, we saw an impressive wedding parade in which the groom was riding on a spectacularly dressed elephant (instead of only a pony). There Mom was often going to the fish market with many friendly Indians to help her.

In early April we took our longest sub-trip while in India. This was up a narrow gauge railway to Simla very near the Himalaya Mountains. We stayed at the Wildflower Inn where there was a beautiful view of the mountains, but the heat went off and Dad has to wrap himself in a blanket while he was correcting his student’s papers. All this just as summer was approaching with all its heat.

Upon returning, we said good bye to the Ghosh’s, our landlords in Chittarangan Park, then flew to Florence, Italy. There we saw the famous statue of David by Michelangelo in the Academy Gallery. We also saw several spectacular cathedrals and churches in Florence, before finally flying home.

We celebrated Carol and Jim’s wedding on August 17, 1982 in a small modest chapel on Northwestern University, just east of the giant Alice Millar Chapel at Sheridan Road and Chicago Avenue. The entire Fisher side of each family was there, including me



Tom, Dorothy, Dad, Carol, Jim, Mom, Andy

To celebrate Grandfather’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, we had a large family reunion. This time it was at Illinois Beach State Park.

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Dr. Randolph’s environmental illness support group met every month at Henrotin Hospital in Chicago. For every meeting Mom, Dad, and I would come with supplies and help run it. I particularly

remember an unfortunate young man named Sigmund who was excellent at talking and complaining, but very poor at listening.

I had quite an interest in politics and political science. After my experience with Dr. Randolph, I really wanted to reduce the influence of “special interests” on our society. When I heard of the social action group Common Cause, and their current work to pass campaign finance reform (definite limits on how much money any industry or individual special interest can contribute to any candidate or political party during an election campaign), this seemed like an ideal activity for me.

Common Cause of Chicago had a nice small office on the tenth floor in the Loop area on Michigan Avenue. I could easily reach it via the “L”/subway. I was soon doing volunteer work for them copying, stuffing, sealing, stamping, and mailing many mass appeals. The office manager was a nice and efficient lady named Shauna Babcock. (I would meet her briefly again much later at a different job).

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In 1983, my father became quite friendly with a Northwestern graduate student from Mainland China who was studying American Economic History. She was having some difficulty with her landlady. Her Chinese name is Yang Xin Zhong, which translates into Cindy Young in English. Dad invited Cindy to live at our house and join our family. There was the separate bedroom with a bathroom in the attic or third floor of our bungalow house on Garrison Avenue which Cindy could use because my sisters, for whom it had been built for, were both married and had moved away many years ago.

Cindy joined our family, and soon we were learning ever so much about Chinese history, culture, and customs. Cindy had been thrown out of college at the Cultural Revolution, which lasted almost ten years. She had to work instead. Since Cindy was about my age, this basically resembled my quitting college at Rose, and working instead. However, instead of re-joining her family for food and shelter, and only working part time for easy volunteer jobs, Cindy had re-enrolled in college, got her undergraduate degree, and was now away in a foreign country doing full time graduate college work. She could speak and write fluent English, as well as Chinese, while I only knew English (and maybe a little French).



Mom, Cindy, and Dad – March 27, 1984

Cindy’s much greater achievements, while being my same age and also having her education interrupted for almost ten years, made me totally ashamed of myself. As if it wasn’t already enough to have both of my younger sisters with a graduate college degree, and married, here was Cindy in a foreign country, speaking and writing the language fluently, and studying full time for a university graduate



degree, while here I was, with NO college degree, still at home with my parents, with no job, depending totally on them for food and housing, and only doing a little easy, simple part time volunteer work.

This made me determined to return to college and earn at least an undergraduate degree. Most important of all, all the ambition and drive was coming from within myself, and was NOT being forced on me by other people and/or society, which I could easily resent and resist. Virtually all the ambition and drive was coming from ME!

I am very grateful to Cindy for finally properly inspiring me. Even though she has moved back to China and lives there with her husband and family, I've visited her, we have kept in touch, and continue to correspond at least once annually for the last twenty years. We recently (in 2004) started exchanging pictures and more frequent messages via email.

The college I had attended for a few evening computer courses after dropping out of Rose, was Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). It is on Chicago's south side, but is very handy to the north/south L/subway line. I attempted to apply there as a full time undergraduate student, but was rejected. My college academic transcript, with so many terrible "D" grades from Rose, gave me a grade point average (GPA) way too low for them to accept. However, the counselor there recommended that if I truly have proper academic discipline, I could demonstrate it for a year at one of the community colleges. Their admission requirements are much lower, and if I could make good grades there for a year, IIT would be willing to re-consider me for admission.

The nearest community college to Evanston was Oakton Community College. It is about eight miles west in Des Plaines which meant a one hour commute each way via the "L" and the #208 bus out Golf Road. When you get to Oakton Community College, it is a nice, recently build college totally within a forest and hidden from Golf Road.

I tried my best, and did quite well there. All of my grades were at least a "B" if not an "A". I tended to do better in the math and science subjects, but was interested in everything and learned a lot. One course I particularly remember was in archaeology. We took it the second semester, and made an overnight weekend field trip down south to an archaeological site. There we would carefully sift through the dirt at specific places. What I found was perhaps a chip of an arrowhead, but nothing terribly fascinating. What I do remember was playing pool (eight-ball) with local men in the bar/restaurant after supper. Thanks to all my practice in the shelter pool room in Kansas, (and possibly because they all were somewhat drunk), I won every game we played. Those local men were furious when our teacher took us out to bed without giving them enough chances to (hopefully) beat me.

After my year at Oakton, I applied at not only IIT, but also decided to try Northwestern – right here in Evanston – an excellent university with very high admission standards. After **BOTH** IIT and Northwestern accepted me, I obviously chose Northwestern. Because Dad was a full tenured professor at Northwestern, we had a huge financial advantage that neither of my sisters had taken advantage of by going there. I remember taking Dad a long form for him to fill out which basically cut my high tuition at Northwestern by around 75%!

I started at Northwestern, did quite well, decided to take Chinese as my two-year language, and to major in Computer Studies. This was because I wanted to learn more about what was going on in the world, not just inside the "box".

### **III Finally Maturing, Spreading Environmental Education then Visiting China**

#### **Chapter 4 – University Education, President of Environmental Group then Mainland China**

During the “Reagan era,” when almost everyone was only concerned about themselves and getting a job to earn them the most money, I was very disappointed to learn that there was no student environmental group at Northwestern. I became determined to start one myself.

To start any formal student group at Northwestern (so the group could then legitimately request a room in the Norris Student Center, or any other university building, for its meetings and/or presentations) you had to first draft a constitution. You then had to have this constitution approved before a Student Council committee. Finally, you had to get signatures from a minimum of [50-100] fellow students who support your group. To initially get some fellow students to help me, I drafted, laid out, duplicated, and posted over fifty flyers about this new environmental group (all at my own personal expense). I remember getting about five or six students to attend our very first organizational meeting in a room in one of the older university buildings. Among those were three other students, Karen Hengehan, Charlie Sellers, and Bill Mosca (who started dorm soda can recycling for funding), all greatly helped start the current Students for Environmental and Ecological Development (SEED) group at Northwestern.

While studying Chinese as my language and majoring in Computer Studies at Northwestern, I also was president and responsible for running the student environmental group. I remember inviting Dr. Samuel Epstein to lecture for us, but after all the publicity and flyers about Dr. Epstein had been posted, he called about a week before the lecture and regretfully had to cancel due to his mother’s illness in England. However, he had arranged for a colleague to lecture in his place. After that, we re-scheduled Dr. Epstein to speak for us about a month later. On that day the weather was terrible. We had a nice room on the second floor on the Norris Student Center, but only about six to seven people showed up. Fortunately, one of these was a young man from Greenpeace who videotaped the entire lecture.

However, I also remember arranging another lecture when this topic fit quite closely into the course that another Northwestern professor was giving. He mentioned our lecture in all his class(s) and encouraged all his students to attend. We got an audience of over 100!

I also remember inviting my friend and neighbor Dave Kraft to speak on the dangers of nuclear energy, and my friend from the Unitarian Church, Bill Fischer, to speak and to play his guitar.

For every lecture we had to design, reproduce, and distribute many flyers about it.

All of our income was supplied by selling the soda cans we were collecting in many of the student dorms. I would take the cans to a recycling center in a park in Chicago where I could sell the aluminum. At that time, my seizures and epilepsy were under complete control and I drove a nice Toyota Corolla car. Whenever I walk or jog, I picked up these cans both for income and to clean up the city. I have made it a habit to collect those cans and recycle them to this day.

This student environmental group that I started simply as “Students for a Better Environment” or SBE, had expanded at Northwestern and still exists very actively today as “Students for Ecological and Environmental Development” or SEED! I have attended several of their lectures. They are very actively campaigning for clean, renewable energy – solar and/or wind – and against coal, oil, and all of the large powerful industry lobbies that are trying to keep the US society “hooked” on CO2 from continued use of cars and coal fired power plants. SEED is very concerned about climate change. They are also very concerned about air and water pollution, the wide use of toxic pesticides, and the best way to achieve a healthy sustainable society through prevention and good health (instead of expensive medical care).

I finally received my Bachelor's Degree from Northwestern in Computer Studies in June, 1988.



Andy graduating from Northwestern in June, 1988

\* \* \*

In many ways the most fascinating foreign trip I had ever taken was in June/July of 1987 when I joined a six week tour of Mainland China with a nice, intelligent, experienced leader, Fred Drake through the University of Massachusetts. This was one of the few US tours that went to Chengdu where my old Chinese friend Cindy was living with her family. You can see ALL of the beautiful pictures from this trip online at: <http://puregrassrootsinfo.org/Photowebs/China1987/index.htm>

I first had to fly from Chicago east to New York City to meet with the other members of the tour. Our main long flight was in a huge 747 jet from New York to Tokyo, Japan. The route took us all the way across the US, Canada, up over Alaska (where we could see Mt. McKinley) then down over the Pacific Ocean to Tokyo. They played two full length movies during that flight. Our final flight was from Tokyo to Hong Kong, China.

Hong Kong was a fascinating mixture of western economics and technology with eastern culture. Many of the scaffoldings for men remodeling old or building new buildings were made of bamboo, instead of steel. We got a chance to visit many shops, do a lot of window shopping, and to ride on the Hong Kong subway. We took the Star Ferry across the harbor, and then we took the train to Guangzhou (Canton). At most of the railway crossings, there were ever so many more Chinese people on bikes than trucks waiting to cross.



Bamboo scaffolding in Hong Kong

In Guangzhou there were ever so many housing buildings ten to fifteen floors high with a small balcony for each unit. We visited the National Peasant Movement Institute, and then the Mausoleum of the Seventy Two Martyrs. The mausoleum has a statue of a lady wearing a crown and holding up a torch, (very similar to our Statue of Liberty), on top of a pyramid of seventy two blocks, each having the name of a martyr carved in it. We also saw the Temple of the Six Banyon Trees, the Beacon Tower Mosque, and a food market containing live eels as well as fish and fruit. By the side of the road we saw men on siesta who were totally asleep.

We took a Chinese airline CAAC to fly to Guilin. There we first saw waterfalls, pagodas, and a cave. However, the main attraction was a river cruise among the spectacular steep hills, some partially hidden in fog. The cruise ended in Yangshuo where we saw many Chinese on bikes and some Buddhist carvings in a cave.



Beautiful steep hills in Guilin on river cruise – some shrouded in fog

Our next stop was Shanghai, China's largest city. On the way there we got to see a spectacular view from a high pagoda, a garden, and "Elephant Trunk Hill" – a curved stone arch going into the river shaped basically similarly. In Shanghai there was a circular overpass for pedestrians at one of their busier intersections. The police would direct traffic from their own "island" in the street. Often we would see over forty people waiting at a bus stop. Many of the buses were double in length with a flexible middle to let them turn corners.

Our first stop was the Exhibition Center. Next we saw a beautiful garden with pools and goldfish. The Shanghai Art Museum was next with many decorative bowls and pots. Finally that day, we took a river cruise and saw many of the huge derricks used to load and unload all the many products made in China and exported to the US and elsewhere. That evening we saw an acrobatics show where a man could juggle then balance many things on his chin.

The next day we got a spectacular show at the Children's Palace. There some of the best trained and most flexible children in China danced,



Flexible children at Children's Palace

played cultural instruments (the Yangqin – similar to a xylophone, and the Er Hu – similar to a small cello), sang for us and showed us their playground. Next was Mandarin Wu’s Garden of Happiness. It had many beautiful pagodas and lagoons, trees, and flowers.

That night we saw a spectacular acrobatics show. In one case up to SEVEN people balanced on only the rear two posts of chairs – each one on top of the next one! In another act, a man was riding his bicycle around the ring while a lady balance in a beautiful arabesque on a post at least four feet above his head balanced on his shoulder!



Seven people balanced on chairs in acrobatics show

After Shanghai, we took a train to Hangzhou. After the train we took a bus in the pouring rain. The bus roof leaked right above Mr. Fred Drake, so he had to use his umbrella inside it! In Hangzhou we saw many beautiful Buddhist carvings out of high cliffs right into the rock of the hill. Next we saw West Lake with its many beautiful lilies, gardens, lawns, and flowers. In China at that time (1987) in order to transport a large log, the Chinese men had to balance it on a single pair of small wheels and push it.

Near Suzhou, our next stop, there was a river with much barge traffic on it. Most of these “barges” were actually homes – with a roof, kitchen and all – for the Chinese families who lived in and ran them. There I also saw a large tricycle with a load of six live geese. The next day we saw the Tiger Hill Leaning Pagoda, and the silk embroidery factory – where the Chinese ladies make beautiful intricate patterns of silk that are all hand woven. Suzhou is in many ways similar to Venice, Italy in that many of the “streets” consist of canals for barges and boats. We saw one garden there with an arched bridge, water lilies, willow trees, plants and rocks.

Yangzhou was our next stop with its beautiful “Slim” West Lake, bridges, willow trees and gardens. Next we drove over a wide impressive bridge across the Yangtze River to Nanjing. Our first stop there the next day was Sun Yat Sen’s Musolium. It had many steps leading up to an impressive wide pagoda at the top. Next was the Lin Gu Temple Complex. Little children loved to ride on the life sized



animal statues. Ming Emperor's Tomb was next. Many double statues of camels line the road into it. Inside is a large pagoda and lagoon. The East Gate of Nanjing has many wide walls over the arched tunnel leading through them.

On the streets of Nanjing, I saw several examples of Chinese hard at work. One was two ladies pulling carts expertly balanced and highly loaded with bundles of supplies. The other was two men calmly riding their bicycles both carrying large rolled-up green carpets, the rolls extending probably **ten feet over their heads**, but still maintaining perfect balance! Our last stop in Nanjing was a Confucian Temple.



Two bikers balancing carpet rolls ten feet over their heads!

After that, we flew to Chengdu where my friend Cindy was living. We saw a large statue of Mao there on our way to the Temple of Precious Light. After that, we saw many panda bears at the Chengdu zoo, and a beautiful garden.

I had made previous arrangements to leave the tour group for an afternoon and evening in Chengdu so I could visit Cindy and her family.

I went to her house on one of China's many large tricycle cabs. By this time, my Chinese was fluent enough from a year at Northwestern plus several weeks in China on this tour, that I could direct the cab driver perfectly to Cindy's house. There I met Cindy, her husband, her mother, her son, and her nephew. We had a very nice meal together. Since our tour leader, Fred Drake, insisted that we all use chopsticks at every Chinese restaurant we visited, I was in excellent practice using them by the time I ate with Cindy and her family. She kept trying to speak in English, but since she had spoken in English while she was staying with us in the US, I insisted that we speak Chinese while I was staying with them in China. Her young nephew liked to ride on my shoulders. They arranged for much easier transportation for me back to my tour group in Chengdu.

Our tour's next stop was the Giant Buddha of Leshan. This is the largest Buddha statue in the world which is carved directly out of the solid rock on one side of a steep canyon. To get a rough idea of how large he is, when I stood right next to one of his toes, the toenail came right up to my waist!

We next visited Mount Emei and many beautiful pagodas. I had the opportunity to be covered by monkeys.



Mount Emei where Andy got covered with monkeys

Our next trip was to Xian by rail. We saw the Qing Shi Hang Lang with many stairs to the top of a hill. After the Banpo Museum we had the opportunity to see a show of songs and dance from the Tang Dynasty

Next day we saw a puppet show and the jade factory.

The next day we took a bus to Yanan where we saw the Tomb of the Yellow Emperor. On the way there we saw many large canyons and hills. The following day in Yanan we saw Chairman Mao's residence and the Seventh National Congress. We then climbed to the top of the Yanan Pagoda where we got quite spectacular views.

We then saw the Agricultural Institute and the 10,000 Buddha Temple. Our final views of Yanan were of its many markets.

Back in Xian, we got a great view from the top of the Wild Goose Pagoda. After visiting the miniature clay factory and the cloisonné factory the following day, we flew from Xian to Beijing.

In Beijing we first visited the Forbidden City with its many pagodas and lakes. In it is Mao's Tomb. We then visited the summer Palace with its beautiful lake, bridges, and its marble ferry.

Next we finally got to see the Great Wall. Most of it is in disrepair and only the small part open to tourists has been restored. We then saw the Ming Tombs.





Andy and many tourists on Great wall

The following day we visited the Source of the Law Temple, which is Buddhist. Next we saw Madam Song Ching Ling's residence, Ming Scholar's College, a Confucian temple, and an astronomical center. The next day in Beijing we visited the Temple of Heaven – a beautiful round high temple – did some shopping, rode the Beijing subway, and finally saw an acrobatics show.



Acrobatics show in Beijing with lady balancing and man leaping through hoop

I finally flew to Hefei where I visited Mr. Wang – a Chinese friend, his family, and He Fang. Mr. Wang is at the University of Science and Technology of China.

I finished up by flying to Shanghai, back to Hong Kong where I rejoined our tour group, then the final long flight home to the US.

## **IV Many Different Employment Experiences**

### **Chapter 5 – Post University Full Time Jobs and Consulting (Mostly) with Benefits**

After graduating from Northwestern University with a degree in Computer Studies in 1988, I had to find a job within reach of public transportation, since I didn't own or drive a car. A very nice, friendly man (who was also a Northwestern Alumnus) named Bob Lapp was one of the few who gave me an interview. His small company worked in downtown Chicago (right next to the Sears Tower) for programs dealing with healthcare insurance for Blue Cross and Blue Shield. It was called Health Information Reporting Company, or HIRCO. After a second interview, they accepted me as a permanent employee.

Among my co-workers at HIRCO were Ron Witt (remember, from many years ago at Northwestern's Vogelback?), Carol – our office manager, Gary – our president, as well as Bob Lapp. I started using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and the old macro language behind it to create dialog boxes.

Our main work at HIRCO was to develop an "Explore" health insurance claims cost estimation package in Excel, and the user's "front end" to a "CAP" Claims Analysis Package for Blue Cross Blue Shield data using SAS – a statistical computer software package.

Our president, Gary, was quite unknowledgeable about computer software and was quite irresponsible. Often he would make promises of presentations which we could not possibly keep. We often had to work evenings and on weekends to put something together for Gary to present which would not make us look totally incompetent.

However, there was one positive event involving Gary which, thanks to Carol, I'll remember for the rest of my life. On the day of Gary's birthday, Carol arranged for all the HIRCO staff to join him for supper in the Executive Club [Suite?] at the top of the Sears Tower (the tallest building in the world). It was a gorgeous clear evening, and we could see a fairyland "spider web" of streets with their lights leading away from downtown Chicago in almost every direction (except east into Lake Michigan)!

Several months later, when it was becoming apparent that HIRCO was not accomplishing very much and might get dissolved soon, Bob Lapp quit HIRCO and took a job at the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. At the time, back at HIRCO, we all considered him a "traitor," but, on hindsight, he did a very strategic and intelligent thing.

As it turned out, Bob Lapp had excellent foresight, and after only a few months, HIRCO was dissolved in 1990. We all at HIRCO were turned out in the cold with no job after our company had been dissolved and all of our work basically deemed worthless.

Next I had three jobs as a consultant: (1) At Blue Cross Blue Shield Association with Bob Lapp to "rescue" HIRCO work

Thanks to Bob Lapp having his job at the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, I was able to get a temporary job there too as a consultant. My main task was to "clean up" what was left of the HIRCO software – the "Explore" health insurance claims cost estimation package in Excel, and the user's "front end" to a "CAP" Claims Analysis Package for Blue Cross Blue Shield data using SAS – a statistical computer software package so it could be used by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. The Excel part was quite easy, but the statistical SAS part took quite a bit of new learning. This project lasted about eight months.

(2) At ACCO USA

They manufacture all sorts of common office equipment such as paperclips. My job there was as a programmer to develop "ABC" classes by sales volume for their new Resource Production Inventory

System (RPIS). We used the Easel computer language and SQL databases. This project lasted for about three months.

(3) At Healthcare Transformations in Hobart Indiana

For this consulting job, I had to move out-of-state to Hobart Indiana (just west of Gary?). Healthcare Transformations is a division of Ancilla Systems. There I developed, tested, and documented a “user friendly” health data prototype model. We used Excel macros and an Access database. This project lasted for about three months.

For my first consulting job at Abbott Labs in 1993, I was quite proud of what I accomplished, but was only being paid a fraction of what I was worth. I was paid directly from Accord, Inc., a consulting company, and they were paid by another consulting company who found the job at Abbott. Since both consulting companies had to make a profit, I’m quite sure that I was only paid thirty to fifty percent of what they charged Abbott for my services. I got NO health insurance benefit.

I was head of a three-person team to design, program, debug, and document easy, user friendly software, with which computer illiterate lab technicians could perform the many tests required on Abbott’s new AXSYM automatic chemical assay machine. The AXSYM machine was quite complex and spectacular to watch in operation. At one end were three concentric (one inside the other with the same center point) circular racks for test tubes from twenty five in the smallest innermost rack to over forty in the outer one. By rotating to line them up with its automatic pipette (a glass tube which can extend out and down to draw a specified amount of solution from any test tube), samples could be taken from a HUGE number of possible combinations. These specified mixtures could then be mixed and stored in a fourth inner circular test tube rack inside AXSYM which had temperature and humidity control.

We designed and tested it using Excel’s old macro language and dialog boxes with easy buttons, check boxes, and scrollable lists to select from, for the computer illiterate lab technicians who would be using it. I did all the primary designing of the software, writing of the technical documentation, and presentations of our progress at meetings of the Abbott managers. I worked at this project for about five months, until the president of Computer Publishers International convinced me to quit and join him.

My AXSYM manager, Rod Rasmusen, told me later in 1995 that Abbott had made over six million dollars selling AXSYM worldwide during the last two years!

Next I had six very different consulting jobs: (1) Computer Publishers International

The computer illiterate president had originally promised me that I would travel over to Holland in his attempts to get me to leave Abbott and join him. Once the other staff realized that I had no programming experience with “C” or on the Unix system, I was deemed next to useless, and only given writing jobs. I found this job much less interesting and well-paying than the president promised. This project lasted for less than two months before I was laid off.

(2) AC Neilson

Here I was a programmer and held the job through Decision Consultants, Inc. Here we developed both the user front end and the database calculation and query software for a “Product Variety” market data application prototype. It basically kept track by count, percentage, and several other factors, of production and sales of a variety of different products and services AC Neilson provided in several different basic categories. It was written using Excel spreadsheets and old macros with dialog boxes. We had a very bright, intelligent, and ambitious team of three programmers who were fun and a challenge to work with. Our manager from India was very ambitious. He believed adamantly in the work we were

doing and our goal, so he kept this project going several months after AC Neilson would normally have stopped it. It lasted for about nine months.

(3) Advanced Information Solutions

This was for a very small (4-5 person) software company in Chicago. Here we coded and tested Windows computer software using Visual Basic for Applications (VBA), Visual Basic, and Access databases. This project lasted less than two months.

(4) Abbott Labs as Technical Writer

My second consulting project at Abbott Labs was through the UQ Solutions, Inc. consulting company. Here I joined a team to both document the specifications and to test protocols for a large Clinical Data Management Environment (CDME) system which used the statistical package SAS AF and ran on a Unix HP network. This project lasted about ten months.

It was during this job that I found out how TRULY SENSITIVE MY SEIZURES AND EPILEPSY WERE TO ORGANIC vs. NON-ORGANIC FOOD and FOLLOWING the ROTATION DIET. I had been told by my neurologist, Dr. McMahon, that I could reduce my seizure medications so long as I did it very SLOWLY. I had successfully reduced my seizure medications to NOTHING with NO seizures before this consulting job at Abbott. I had eaten ALL my food from Mom who only got organic food and followed Dr. Randolph's rotation diet. At Abbott, every Friday our consulting team would eat out at a restaurant serving NON-ORGANIC food (and not following the rotation diet).

Since it was only once a week, I assumed everything was OK and continued driving my Toyota Corolla car. The seizures returned! I started having only a few seizures – not grand-mal where I fell to the floor in 6<sup>th</sup> grade – but only 5 to 10 minute “gaps” where I could remember nothing. Like an idiot, I continued to drive. In south Evanston, when I was only driving about 15mph. I had a gap, drove off the street, smashed my car into a large tree totaling the car, and broke my right arm! I had to pay the city \$45 for the damage to the tree. I've resumed different seizure medications and have resolved NOT to drive anymore!

(5) Amoco

Here my job as a Data Management/Software Development consultant was through Cara Inc. Here we developed automated management reports using Excel with VBA, and an Access database. This project lasted about three months. Here we got to work in the tall, white Amoco building in downtown Chicago. One unique feature of this building was its two floor high elevators.

(6) Northrop Grumman

My job as a programming contractor was through Technisource, Inc. Here my job was way out west near the Arlington Park horse racing park. I had to get up early before 5 AM every morning to catch an early north/south Metra train in to the Clybourn stop – close to downtown Chicago – and change there to a northwest train which made all the stops out to Arlington Park. Northrop Grumman ran a shuttle bus to that station, but mostly I walked from there to work. During this job I read through two Robinson Davis novels while commuting on the trains.

This job involved developing “Quality Spreadsheets” used to calculate statistical variance, which showed project managers how far ahead (or behind) they are in terms of both schedule and effort. I developed user friendly dialog boxes for easy choice of the tables and charts desired. We used Excel with VBA. This project lasted about four months.

In 1997 I had the good fortune to apply for then finally get interviewed by Tim Good who runs his own one-man PC database company, The Good Group, from his basement in Evanston. This was a full time “permanent” job, so after I got accepted, and it looked like things would work out, I finally moved away from Mom (after twelve years of living there) and got my own studio apartment on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor of

the newly completed “Park Evanston” 24 floor apartment building right above Whole Foods in downtown Evanston. It had a nice swimming pool, but it was on the roof and only good in warm weather.

Tim Good was a pleasant, intelligent, informal guy who I greatly enjoyed working for. Even though he was my boss, he was actually a couple of years younger than me. The first year I worked with him, we communicated almost entirely electrically by phone and email, so I did all the work on the Gateway 2000 PC in my apartment and hardly ever actually went to his house. During that first year he visited my apartment once and greatly admired the view.

In the latter half of my job with him, I actually walked or biked to his house almost every day. During the warmer days in late spring, summer, and early fall, we both wore only shorts and a T Shirt. I would always leave my white Bianchi lightweight racing bike in his garage – usually at the far end in front of the car so it would be out of the way for people entering the car and backing out.

At one occasion, Tim’s father and mother came over for a visit for a couple of days. Tim let his father drive the car. I had biked over and left my bike in the usual place at the far end of the garage. Tim’s father was pulling into the garage. Unfortunately, as he was attempting to stop, he mistook the gas accelerator pedal for the brake pedal and pressed down hard on it. The car leaped forward, smashed against my bike plus a few tools, and didn’t stop until it had partially broken through that far wall of the garage! Because the main frame of my bike was cracked, it was totally unsafe to ride and beyond repair, Tim very kindly paid me the full replacement cost (over a thousand dollars) of the bike his father had wrecked. Tim also knew that I don’t own or drive a car so a bike is my primary means of transportation. I now own and ride a blue Bianchi lightweight racing bike – thanks largely to Tim’s understanding and generosity.

It was while working for Tim that I had the most dramatic and scary bicycle accident of my life. I was biking north from my new apartment after dark on a Saturday to visit Mom on Garrison Avenue just north of Evanston Hospital, my front light went out, I hit the rear of a parked car, flew off my bike and through the rear window! (See details later on page 52).

I was not actually Tim’s employee so he did not withhold any of my federal and state income taxes. I did not receive any W2 forms and had to file a schedule C “profit or loss from business” with my federal income taxes. Basically, I was an independent business contracting with his.

When I started working for Tim, I still had health insurance coverage under the COBRA extension from my previous consulting job through Technisource at Northrop Grumman. Tim at The Good Group was too small and couldn’t afford to offer me any health insurance benefits. COBRA had a maximum eighteen month extension, as long as you paid the monthly premiums.

Our actual work at The Good Group was primarily designing, testing, and implementation for many changes and additions to a “TAMS” educational database system, which was written using MS Access. TAMS follows courses, tuition, lab and/or registration fees, institution, grades, advances, prepayment, refunds, and “CAP” limits. TAMS did this primarily to cover the courses and training of many staff members of large corporations where the tuition was paid for by the corporation.

Our one and only direct client at The Good Group was a medium-small company called CAEL (Council for Adult Education and Learning) located in downtown Chicago. CAEL’s clients included such well-known names as Chase Manhattan Bank, Bell Atlantic, and Levi Strauss. Tim quite often went to meet with them in Chicago. Most of our work was to customize and test TAMS for the specific needs of these different large companies. One of Tim’s main contacts at CAEL was Shauna Babcock (remember my manager when volunteering at Common Cause Illinois?). On one occasion I got to accompany Tim to visit CAEL in Chicago and got to see Shauna and visit briefly with her. (At that point she remembered me and Common Cause, but acted as if she would prefer to forget it).

During the second half of my work with Tim at The Good Group, I was working almost every day in his basement. There he had three computers wired together in a LAN (Local Area Network): a server, and the two PCs, one for him and the other for me.

At this time we were facing a dilemma. It was clear that I knew TAMS, Access databases, and was of great service to Tim. But the eighteen month extension on my COBRA health insurance was about to expire. He was covered under his wife's plan – she worked at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) – and there was no way he could afford to offer me a “group” plan with only one person, me, in the “group.” After considerable research, I discovered a plan run by the state of Illinois – the Illinois Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan (ICHIP). It was automatically available to anyone who had dutifully paid their COBRA premiums for eighteen months and was about to have their health insurance coverage dropped. The ICHIP premiums were considerably higher than the COBRA ones for a single person, but after I was accepted and had health insurance through ICHIP, both Tim and I heaved a sigh of relief.

Unfortunately, after such a long, positive relationship, the facts leading to my leaving The Good Group were primarily because we did not devote hardly any time, effort and/or money to advertising, promotion, and gaining clients other than CAEL. Around the year 2000 CAEL had a management shuffle so the staff knowledgeable about The Good Group and its excellent work were no longer in powerful positions or even in the company. Also, apparently another computer software consulting company approached CAEL with a lot of advertising. Once they learned that CAEL was depending entirely on a small, one-man company who ran out of his basement for all their database software maintenance and development, while they had a nice looking, modern office with a staff of several excellent database programmers, the new senior manager at CAEL, who was totally ignorant of The Good Group's excellent work, reliability and punctuality, easily decided to drop us and switch to the bigger consulting company.

In the usual “domino effect,” once all the TAMS database work was gone, Tim had to shortly lay me off. Also, his wife hated IIT and the entire Chicago area. Shortly after they lost all the CAEL work and I was laid off, they decided to move far away to Virginia.

Based on Tim's final words to me while here, he has probably learned Java and is heavily into internet, website database programming. He has given me his phone number and email address in Virginia, and we still correspond occasionally via email.

During the late 1990s, while fooling around on AOL, I discovered “My Place”, knew a little basic HTML, and started the “Fishwood Environmental Homepage”. I've designed and managed many other websites:

- a. For the Unitarian Church's annual Serendipity Auction, one of the first other websites I designed was for Sherry Nelson, a nice soprano in our church choir, called INNERCONNECTIONS in 2001. Its URL is [www.innerconnections.cc](http://www.innerconnections.cc) .
- b. I was manager and made many revisions to Dr. Epstein's Cancer Prevention Coalition website at [www.preventcancer.com](http://www.preventcancer.com) .
- c. About this time we got an independent server for the Fishwood Environmental Homepage, I greatly revised and expanded it, and added a program showing five green apples floating around after the cursor. The new URL is [www.puregrassrootsinfo.org](http://www.puregrassrootsinfo.org) .
- d. I designed a website for the Lake Michigan Inter League Group. The site no longer works though the group exists.
- e. I designed and was webmaster for the Nutrition for Optimal Health Association (NOHA). Their site is at: [www.nutrition4health.org](http://www.nutrition4health.org) After Mom's stroke they became the American Nutrition Association which is where this link leads now. If you'd like to see some of the



- best examples of web internet programming I've ever done, it is the subject, chronological, and name indexes to all the *NOHA NEWS* articles and writers at that time. You can see them by scrolling down to the center of my own web page [www.SuperiorSites3.com](http://www.SuperiorSites3.com).
- f. I designed websites for several companies and nonprofit groups that now no longer exist. One was the Chicago Media Watch.
  - g. I was webmaster for the Snowseekers Ski Club for several years in 2004, but am no longer now. Their website is at: [www.Snowseekers.org](http://www.Snowseekers.org)
  - h. In 2007 I designed a website for the fast food restaurant Eat a Pita in Chicago. Their site is at: <http://www.eatapitachicago.com/>
  - i. In 2009 I was approached by a nice lady, Kindell Youngblood, who managed a non-profit organization, Total Awareness, which helped low income children in Southeast Chicago and Gary, Indiana. Their website is at: <http://www.totalawarenesscorp.org/>
- 
- j. Since I've received a digital camera as a gift, I've designed and uploaded hundreds of simple websites of pictures of recent activities. The main root to thousands of photos on hundreds of webpages is: <http://puregrassrootsinfo.org/Photowebs/fishorgn.htm>
  - k. I designed and managed the website for the Hyde Park and Kenwood Interfaith Council (HPKIFC) at <http://www.hpkifc.org/> from 2009 to 2013
  - l. I designed and manage the website for the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) (they include all the Unitarian churches in northern Illinois, southern Wisconsin, Northeast Indiana, western Michigan, and eastern Missouri) – for which I chair the Environmental Task Force and edit their quarterly newsletter as Communications Director. Their website is at: <http://www.uusforsocialjustice.org/>

In 2001 to 2002 I worked a little for Mr. Jack Ross with a model for statistical financial projections. We used electronic correspondence so I worked at home on my own PC.

From 2003 to 2006 I worked for the part of the US Small Business Administration (SBA) known as the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) in the 500 West Madison building on the twelfth floor above the Metra train station in downtown Chicago. There I have developed an Access database for emailing their newsletter, and am learning all the office manager jobs so I could take over for Dave Woods when he goes on vacation and eventually retires. I took over and totally managed SCORE myself for ten days in 2004, and for two weeks in the summer of 2005.

Since 2006 I've started my own website design and/or management consulting company called "Superior Sites" which I run from my own condo. I've even designed and uploaded a website describing my services, rates, and past work at [www.SuperiorSites3.com](http://www.SuperiorSites3.com). One of the examples on the main page of this website – which displays samples of my past work – is the original Subject Index from the Nutrition for Optimal Health Association (NOHA) website before the American Nutrition Association (ANA) took it over. Here you can see the many sub-pages for each subject all with many links to the articles. Also displayed here are (1) the Name Index, (2) the Chronological Index, and (3) the many biographies of the many talented doctors and scientists who spoke to us and/or wrote articles. You can read these biographies only through the Name Index for people with the short "bio" link after their name.

I've also earned a little from a couple of clients. The main steady client – who is still with me now – is Allan Lindrup, Board member (and main manager of) the Hyde Park and Kenwood Interfaith Council (HPKIFC). The other is Kindell Youngblood, manager of the Total Awareness Corporation, which educates low income youth in southeast Chicago and Indiana.

Here is a copy of my current business card:

**SUPERIOR SITES**  
**WEBSITE Design & Management**

**Andrew Fisher**

**1580 Sherman Avenue, Unit 1108**

**Evanston, IL 60201-4494**

**847-492-1832, 847-868-5639(c)**

**fishorgn1580@gmail.com**

**www.SuperiorSites3.com**

## V Long Trips and Bike Rides and Sailing Sunfish then Larger Boats with Bill Luksha

### Chapter 6 – Trips, Biking and Sailing

In 1989 I visited my cousins Elliott and Nan in White River Junction, Vermont. They had a beautiful large house.

I have always appreciated, enjoyed, and respected travel by trains. You get to see so much more and become much better acquainted and friendlier with your fellow passengers since you are with them for such a greater amount of time. I got several chances during the 1990s to take long train rides (instead of plane rides) out west to visit relatives.

In 1990 I took the Amtrak train from Chicago to Seattle to visit my cousin Jamie, his wife Tristan, their son Sam, and their daughter Maggie. It was a long train ride over two nights – when I didn't sleep very well because I was in a coach seat which could only be tilted back and not in my private sleeper (you have to reserve the sleepers over a year in advance and they are more expensive) – but during the day you could see so much more of the country, and make a number of new friends with others on the train.

In 1991 I traveled back to Kansas to visit my old friends Jim Bagley, who now lives with his wife Dayla and family in Topeka, and Pat Neel, who is a postmaster in Wamego (the first small town east of Manhattan), with his wife and fifteen children! Both Jim and Pat were very friendly and pleased to see me but they were also very religious (grace before every meal), conservative, and obese. When I drove west to visit Manhattan, see both our old and our new houses, and to visit Jim Bagley's parents, there was the much more relaxed, academic atmosphere that I'm used to. The owners of our new house had used up a fair amount of the ravine to build a swimming pool just below the house.

I joined my old friend from Northwestern who had helped me start the student environmental group there in 1986, Charlie Sellers. We were also joined by a friend of his, Klaus Nietche for a spectacular hike in the Sawtooth Mountains, Idaho. We backpacked tents and enough food for two nights, then hiked up toward a pass to upper and lower Baron Lakes. The mountain scenery was spectacular!



Charlie Sellers, Klaus Nietche, and Andy in pass



Lower Baron Lake



Beautifully colored tree above Upper Baron Lake

I joined the Evanston Bicycle Club to get in some long bike rides. Their longest was the Milwaukee ride of about 145 miles which always took place in the late early summer when the days are the longest. We could start at 5:00AM just after sunrise, and finish usually by 7:00PM before it got dark. This ride took us from Evanston up to the southern suburbs of Milwaukee and back in one day with several rest and eating stops.

I met one of my best friends, George Ammerman, through the Evanston Bike Club. George was and still is an avid long-distance biker. One of the first long-distance rides I remember taking with George was to the annual Fall Retreat of the Unitarian Church of Evanston (UCE) near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin [date?]. From Evanston to Lake Geneva is a little over 70 miles. George and I had rear racks on our bikes for double bags (one hanging on each side) of luggage. Because the weather was getting cool in the morning by fall, we wore biking tights as well as shorts. Everyone else at the UCE retreat (who had driven up in cars) was very impressed with what George and I had accomplished.

The longest, most impressive bike ride I've taken was the Seattle-to-Portland (STP) double-century ride (200 miles in two days) in the Pacific Northwest in 1992. My first cousin Jamie Fisher is an architect in Seattle, Washington, and my youngest sister, Dorothy, lives with her husband, Tom, in Lake Oswego – a suburb south of Portland – Oregon. With relatives living at both the beginning and end of the ride who were avid cyclists inviting me, and being an avid cyclist myself, I found it hard to refuse. Two of the difficult tasks to accomplish before going were: (1) getting in shape – the Evanston Bike Club's Milwaukee Ride, and (2) putting my bike into a bike box for luggage on my air flight to Seattle. George Ammerman kindly helped me prepare the bike for the box. This involved removing both pedals and turning the handlebar stem sideways in order to get the bike narrow enough to fit in the box.

Upon arrival in Seattle with Jamie, Dorothy and Tom, our first task was extensive "carbo-loading" (eating lots of carbohydrates to provide us with enough energy for the long ride) at Jamie's house the night before the ride. The next morning we were all given large, 4-digit biker ID numbers to wear on our front and back. There were thousands of cyclists. There were two large balloons, one read "Drink Water" and the other "Ride Safely." In addition to the map we were given, our entire route with all the turns was clearly painted on the roads. About every 15 to 20 miles, there was a "rest stop." There we could get water, juice, fruit, and rest briefly.



Dorothy with Me and another rider in STP

For me, who was used to biking in the all but totally flat land near Chicago, the hills on the roads of the Pacific Northwest were quite a challenge. You often had to switch gears and pump much harder at a slower speed to get up them, but your reward was a beautiful, fast effortless coast down the other side. I broke my biking speed record (of 27 to 30mph) on one or two of these great, fast, downhill coasts when I biked at slightly over 35mph!

By far the biggest and longest “rest stop” was our overnight one where our sleeping bags had been taken, and we got supper, a good night’s sleep, and breakfast the next morning.

Despite all of my training, by the middle of the second day my butt felt very sore. I persevered, and finally finished the two hundred mile bike ride basically intact. I bought a welcome massage.

#### Double Century next year with Dorothy, Jamie and Tristan

The next year, 1993, I joined Dorothy, Tristan, and Jamie for a double century ride in Oregon. Jamie and Tristan rode their tandem bike. There are many challenging hills. The route is basically a large circle in the middle of the state of Oregon. I was extremely grateful for the “rest stops” where we could stop, eat some more fruit and carbohydrate, and get a brief rest before continuing. I barely got enough rest.

#### Century ride with Ken Massey and Chuck

Around 1999, I remember riding another century bike ride with Kendra Massey and her friend Chuck in the country south of the Chicago urban area. It was relatively flat terrain, and my only regret was a lack of training so my rear was very sore toward the end.

#### Evanston Bike Club’s “North Shore Century”

Every year in September, the Evanston Bike Club (EBC) holds a “North Shore Century” ride for riders of all ages and abilities north from Evanston along the suburban North Shore of Chicago. Since we are putting it on, we have to provide the riders with rest stops, food and water at all of them, cue sheets showing the routes, and marked turn arrows on the roads along all the routes along with drivers in trucks



along all the routes to help riders with a flat tire or any other problems with their bike. We have ride loops of 25, 50, 65, and 100 miles so the rider can choose what they think best fits their riding ability.

I've never ridden in the North Shore Century, but almost every year I've helped put it on. I remember driving around with George Ammerman using some paint and poles with several arrow markers marking the turn arrows on several of the routes just a couple of days before the ride. Since then, I've helped for many years manning the rest stop at Moraine Park in Highland Park. During the middle of the day, they often have a trio or string quartet playing music!

Biking on my own, I've "commuted" the twenty two miles from Evanston to Abbott Labs, and the fifteen miles from Evanston to downtown Chicago. I've enjoyed riding the forty mile trail in the forest preserve, over twenty miles north along the Green Bay Trail, and most of all down the Chicago lakeshore bike path to the Museum of Science and Industry. Once I biked past there and "booed" my friend from church, the Snowseekers, and bridge, Joan Horberg, at the hospital where she worked at 79<sup>th</sup> street South. Another time I biked south to "boo" my friend from Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) Allan Lindrup at his new house at 7617 S. Shore Drive, #1.

The most frightening and in many ways fortunate experience in my life was a dramatic biking accident in the late 1990s when John Giles was still directing the Unitarian Church Choir. It was Saturday evening, and we were to give our "Big Music Sunday" the following morning. It was after dark and I was biking the two miles from my apartment in downtown Evanston to my mother's in north Evanston. I had both my headlight and led tail light on. My headlight has a "Halogen" bulb which does not slowly turn dimmer and orange as the battery gets low, but suddenly goes out. This happened to me about two thirds of the way there. Since all the cars which might hit you approach you from the rear, my red tail light was still working just fine, and there was less than a mile to ride, I decided to continue without any headlight. On Ridge Avenue, opposite Evanston Hospital, there is normally no parking on weekdays. However, on that Saturday as I was speeding north along Ridge at over fifteen miles per hour with no headlight, and hugging the curb closely, I did not see this parked car in front of me until it was too late to turn aside so I hit the rear bumper, flew off the bike and my head went crashing through the rear window!!

Because I was wearing my helmet, most of my head and my glasses were not hurt at all, but my lips were cut and bleeding, and I later had to have a root canal on the right of my two large upper front teeth. After I was stitched up and properly treated at Evanston Hospital (I could easily walk there from my mother's), I called the Evanston Police. The owner of the car assumed that there had been a robbery and maybe even a murder when he found his rear window smashed and all that blood on his trunk. They were relieved to hear it was only a biking accident. I paid a couple hundred dollars to replace his rear window. Despite all this, I sang with the Unitarian Church choir next morning in our big concert.

From this time on I ALWAYS wear my helmet when biking, no matter how short the distance. The shock had cracked my old bike's frame, so I had to buy another. The same was true for my helmet.

\* \* \*

I first learned about sailing from this great children's series by Arthur Ransome starting with *Swallows and Amazons*. Mom's mother read that book to us during my first grade stay in Vancouver Canada. There you hear about all the basics of sailing – tacking against the wind, reaching across the wind, running with the wind, going about, and jibing.

In Manhattan, Kansas, after Tuttle Creek reservoir was completed, we bought the Klepper Arius – a folding boat which was either a two person kayak or sailing boat, and its wooden frame and cloth/rubber



hull could be taken apart and folded up into three handy bags. There we got lots of good, basic training and experience in basic simple sailing with the Klepper.

After we moved to Evanston, we bought a blue and white sunfish, kept our sunfish on a rack at Dempster Street beach, and sailed it often on Lake Michigan. During each summer there were often many sunfish races off Dempster Beach. You usually sail in a large triangle around three buoys so every boat is tested with the wind coming from every direction. One particular race stands out in which I was sailing with my sister Carol. The wind was quite light, and then appeared to drop to nothing. All of the other boats were drifting uselessly when I licked my finger and felt a very slight breeze in the opposite direction of the former wind. It had completely shifted 180 degrees! Carol and I rigged our sail for that wind, but all the other boats were still rigged for the useless former wind. Slowly, for about fifteen minutes, Carol and I drifted, slowly sailing past all the other competing boats. After that, the new wind picked up enough for all our competitors to realize what had happened and rig for it, but it was too late. Carol and I had passed them all and easily won the race!

After graduating from Northwestern University, I joined the sailing club at Northwestern (I could get a discount being a NU alumnus). There I learned how to windsurf on Lake Michigan. With the cold water (we almost always had to wear wet suits) and the large waves (usually at least two to three feet), it was quite a challenge. The teacher was right when he told us we'd have to fall over at least 100 times before we learned. A windsurfer has a triangular sail with a horizontal, slightly bowed out handle at about your chest height on both sides of the sail. To start up in water at least four to six feet deep, place the board perpendicular to the wind with the sail, bow-handle and rope on the far side of it, and you hold the rope to the sail with your back to the wind. Place your feet on the board and haul on the rope with the sail. This should bring you up onto the board and the sail up out of the water on the other side. To reach or tack, you hold the bow-handle with your back to the wind, and steer by tilting the bow-handle and sail slightly forward to steer away from the wind, or tilt it slightly aft to steer toward the wind. To broad reach or run, you hold the bow-handle almost perpendicular to the board with your back to the wind, and steer by tilting the bow-handle and sail in the same way. To tack, or go about, you steer the board into the wind by tilting the bow-handle and sail aft, when you are pointing directly into the wind step around the front of the sail then grab the bow-handle on the other side and tilt it forward to steer the board around enough to continue tacking against the wind in the other direction.

My first chance at sailing a much larger sailboat came when I purchased the sailboat ride item at the Unitarian Church's Serendipity Auction. This was to be on the beautiful wooden cabin boat belonging to John Nye called the Interlude, which is at least 35 feet long. John kept the Interlude in Wilmette Harbor, just under the Baha'i Temple and only a few blocks from where I lived with my parents in north Evanston. It was a pleasant day and the sail with John Nye on the Interlude was relaxed and slow. We first motored out of Wilmette Harbor, then set the main sail and the jib, and slowly sailed for about three miles over a couple of hours. Several times I commented to John about the many much faster sailboats passing us, and urged him to go faster, if he could. John prefers not to sail the Interlude fast, or ever to race her, but after I commented on sailing faster for at least the third time, he recommended that I contact Bill Luksha, and gave me Bill's phone number.

Bill Luksha was a nice, extremely competent sailor. Bill had sailed the Mac Race (an annual famous sailboat race from Chicago north the full length of Lake Michigan to and just through the Straits of Mackinac) at least three if not four times as crew before I knew him. Almost any good skipper/owner of a sailboat welcomes any crew who has some sailing experience and is enthusiastic to learn a lot more, so Bill and I were a perfect fit virtually from day one.

Bill Luksha owned a 17 foot Flying Scott sailboat and a Hobie Cat fast racing double hulled racing sailboat when I first met him. He kept the Scott in Wilmette Harbor (with John Nye's Interlude and many other boats), and Bill's Hobie Cat was on the beach in Gilson Park, Wilmette northeast of the harbor which was on Lake Michigan's shore. Bill and I had a lot of fun sailing and racing both the Scott and the Hobie Cat those first couple of years, and I learned ever so much more – telltales for wind direction; halyards, winches; the boom vang; the cunningham; a spinnaker or chute sail for sailing downwind with its pole with the need to constantly work the spinnaker sheet to keep it full; and harnesses for jacking out to lean against the wind on the Hobie Cat – just to mention a few.

Lots of work was involved as well. I usually helped Bill take the boats out for the season in the spring, and bring them in for safe winter storage in the fall. In mid-season, just before the annual "race weekend," I helped Bill haul the Scott out of the water with one of the vertical lift winches on the south side of Wilmette Harbor, scrape off all the seaweed and zebra mussels below the waterline, then re-paint the hull with fast-drying racing paint to minimize the water drag on our boat for the races.

A very important aspect I soon learned about Bill Luksha was his great respect for safety and how dangerous Lake Michigan – a huge, deep body of water – could get on very short notice. Every time we went out sailing, he insisted that we wear life jackets. Almost every day we went out he also brought along his small shortwave radio which could: (1) receive the nautical "weather channel" which constantly gives the wind direction, wave heights, forecasts, and if any small craft advisories were in effect or forecast; and (2) if we ever were in distress or need of help, he could broadcast the message to others. If ever the weather was borderline or looked like it might get bad, Bill would not go out, or he would return to harbor ASAP. Bill is married to a very nice wife, Dale, who was Principal at a private school when I first knew her. She now is a part-time substitute teacher. Dale doesn't like high pressure racing in a sailboat, but she very much enjoys casual day sailing.

In September, 1997 Bill Luksha bought *Earth Explorer* a 33 foot Tartan Ten racing sailboat with a full cabin which could sleep six. The main reason Bill was even able to buy *Earth Explorer* was its low price due to the fact that its engine would not work. I remember helping Bill on several long summer days in the Chicago boat yard where *Earth Explorer* was first stored when we knew her. There was lots of basic cleanup, hull painting, and the slow, cramped, dirty job of disassembling the engine. I also remember hearing rumors that in that boat yard that summer, often inner-city kids would gather and throw rocks across the North Chicago River at the boats!

Bill discovered a couple of critical pieces in the engine that were defective, we ordered them, and finally the new replacements arrived. With those new parts, fresh fuel lines, fresh fuel, and a newly charged battery, *Earth Explorer's* engine finally came to life. Bill had paid for and reserved a place for her in Belmont Harbor, Chicago, so now she finally could be taken there, launched and moored to her proper buoy.

This ushered in my first experience sailing and racing a large 33 foot boat. I had much more to learn, especially about the need for winches and winch handles. In addition to a winch to haul up the main sail with the main halyard, there were two bigger ones on each side for the jib sheets. With these bigger winches, you could either crank in the sheet rapidly directly, or crank in the opposite direction with geared leverage to slowly tighten the sheet into its proper position once it had a lot of tension on it already. The winch handles had special plastic pockets in the lower part of the cockpit. They could easily be snapped into the middle of any winch when they were needed for hauling in and/or adjustment, but always had to be taken out and returned to their pockets once you were finished.

1998 was *Earth Explorer's* first season under Bill Luksha as owner/skipper and we mainly raced off Belmont in Lake Michigan. *Earth Explorer* developed a rudder problem, but we finally fixed it by

June, 1998. A nice young couple, Jason Schwyn and Dr. Carrie Phillips lived in a high rise just above Belmont harbor, were excellent sailors, so they often crewed with Bill and me on *Earth Explorer* in 1999. In May, 2000 *Earth Explorer* won second in the Area 2 Fleet Race. Bill got a crew and took her on the Mac race in 1999 and 2000 for the first time as owner and skipper of his own boat. Due to my lack of experience racing big boats, but mainly the potential of an epileptic seizure, Bill did not invite me as crew – he wanted to win the race, if possible. However, Bill did let me and a nice guy, Fred, crew on *Earth Explorer* for the sail back from Mackinac in 2000 (see detailed story a little later).

Bill didn't win the Mac Race, but an incident in June 2000 involving Bill, Jason, Carrie, and I, along with Dorothy Cutrone, Dee Van Leeuwan, and Lyn Parsons aboard *Earth Explorer* earned us all much greater recognition. On June 10 the winds were from the southwest at a little over seventeen miles per hour and building, the air was 82° F, but the water temperature was only 58° F when *Earth Explorer* set sail from Belmont Harbor in the morning. As we set out, we noticed a Vanguard 15, already out sailing, capsize. In the gusty winds, the Vanguard's crew seemed to be having trouble righting the boat and each gust knocked the boat over. Despite trying many times, they always failed.

The capsized Vanguard's crew was wearing only T-shirts, shorts, and PFDs, so hyperthermia was a major concern in the cold water. After two Jet skies and a twenty-five foot motor boat came to their aid and helped them out of the water and to right the Vanguard, the crew returned but again the Vanguard capsized. By 11:30 the wind had risen to nearly thirty miles per hour and a storm was approaching. With the crew now utterly exhausted, she asked one of the Jet skies to take her ashore. Meanwhile, while the skipper, James Little, was struggling with his boat, they were blown dangerously away from the harbor and out into Lake Michigan.

As all other boats had left the area, *Earth Explorer* approached the Vanguard and took her with her skipper, James Little, in tow. The wind had built to almost thirty five miles per hour, with gusts to forty six, and the vanguard capsized for the final time. *Earth Explorer* abandoned the tow to rescue James Little. He was shaking uncontrollably! One of us tossed the Lifesling toward James; he grabbed it and was pulled to the rope ladder. Four of us dragged him aboard as if he were dead weight. Hypothermia had totally exhausted him! His skin felt cold and clammy after being in the cold water for over 45 minutes. Carrie, who was a doctor, found James' pulse to be at 90. He was cut and bruised, his eyes were rolling black, and he was nearly unconscious.

James Little was dried off, covered with blankets, and warmed. An assistance call was made on channel 16 as the rough conditions buffeted the boat and drenched the entire crew on the way back in. Upon arrival at the dock, James had improved. He was talking and drinking small amounts of water. Paramedics from the Chicago Fire Department arrived and administered oxygen for about fifteen minutes, and we all on *Earth Explorer* offered sports drinks with electrolytes. With James now feeling recovered, he declined transportation to a hospital. For this rescue, the entire crew of *Earth Explorer* received the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal from the National Governing Body for the Sport of Sailing! Because Bill wrote a detailed description of this rescue, that November all of us got to stand by the podium at the Chicago Yachting Association's Annual Ball while this story was read, and we earned the Arthur B. Hanson Rescue Medal.

Even though Bill did not invite me to crew with him on *Earth Explorer* during the actual Mac Race that year (2000), he did invite me to crew with him and a nice guy, Fred Howe, sailing *Earth Explorer* back from Mackinac south toward Chicago to Ludington in July. Fred drove me up Michigan's lower peninsula in Bill's van so that Bill's Mac race crew could drive back to work on time. Our first day

of sailing between Mackinac City and Charlevoix was the most exciting. I greatly enjoyed the fine view we had of the Mackinac Bridge as we sailed under it.

As we were approaching Charlevoix, a thunderstorm came. We had lowered all sails and were going under our engine's power alone. We couldn't see any land, and Bill's Global Positioning System (GPS) – for finding our exact location from satellites – wouldn't work. After a bolt of lightning struck less than half a mile away, Bill brought the auto-inflatable life raft on deck in case a bolt would strike our mast and blow a hole in the bottom of the boat. Fortunately, that didn't happen, and after the storm cleared we could see that our basic compass heading was correct. We followed a much larger motor boat in toward Charlevoix, where the main drawbridge only opens every half-hour. The motor boat was over ten minutes ahead of us, but the bridge engineer kept the bridge open for us, instead of closing it and making us wait. Sailing between the other two ports before Ludington, Leland and Frankfort was relatively uneventful except us meeting Bill's sister in Ludington.



In 2001 Bill sold *Earth Explorer* and bought *Misty Winds*, a 27 foot Catalina 27 with a much more attractive cabin. *Earth Explorer* does not have any windows in its cabin, but *Misty Winds* has pleasant windows on both sides and a nice fold-down table in the wider cabin. However, *Misty Winds* has an outboard motor instead of *Earth Explorer's* built in engine.

In 2001 and 2002, Bill moored *Misty Winds* way up North in Winthrop Harbor, almost at the Wisconsin Border. In 2002 – for a special race weekend – Bill invited Dennis Lalama and me to sleep aboard *Misty Winds* for two nights. It was quite a nice harbor with buildings containing rest rooms and showers opposite each main wharf of moored boats. The only way you could get out to the boats was to enter a secret code at the gate leading to each main wharf. Fred Howe joined Bill, Dennis and I for several of the races.

In 2003 Bill moved *Misty Winds* back to Great Lakes Naval Base (where he had first bought her). This was considerably closer than Winthrop Harbor. The highlight of the 2003 sailing season was winning the Art McGee sailboat race in which Bill was skipper, with Dennis, and I as crew. It was Bill's experience as a good racer to stay away from shore where there was better, steady wind that actually won us the race. Apparently each boat gets a certain handicap/bonus figured into their race time based on their size and design. Bill, Dennis and I were not expecting anything, so we were quite surprised when the results were announced and we were the second place winners!

In January, 2004, on Super Bowl Sunday, Bill, Dennis, and I took the trophy to the large boat show on Navy Pier, Chicago, and had several photos taken with the trophy.

The highlight of the 2004 sailing season was winning FIRST place in the Art McGee race at Great Lakes. We got a larger first place trophy:

In 2005, Bill finally got a place for *Misty Winds* in the Wilmette Harbor and joined the Sheridan Shores Yacht Club. In my second sail of the summer and our first “shake-down” try on a spinnaker or “Chute” sail on *Misty Winds*, in a brisk north wind Bill, Rose, and I won the nine-mile yacht race from Wilmette to Montrose Harbor, Chicago over the long reigning champion, *Mistress Quickly*!

Due to Bill’s sailing experience, the total number of races he sailed in, and perhaps our experience (sailing out in Lake Michigan while *Mistress Quickly* hugged the shore) and support as crew as well as good luck, **Bill and *Misty Winds* won first place in 2007 for the Sheridan Shores Yachting fleet!**

*Misty Winds* was in Wilmette Harbor. With all of Bill’s time with the Sea Scouts on other boats (see below), he split her costs with another “partner” in 2008, but that didn’t work out so Bill has resumed complete ownership of her. She was there for several years with a different stall on the north side of the harbor from 2010-16. In 2017 she is moving up to Waukegan due to much higher prices in Wilmette.

In Waukegan 2017 was Bill’s final year as *Misty Winds* owner. That summer I only went out in her three times, the first as a substitute “committee boat” to properly monitor a race, (because the actual committee boat was having engine problems) and two more times cruising with Dale. Due to both the high cost of mooring her in the summer, having a cradle in the winter, proper maintenance, and finally how few times he actually took her out sailing, Bill finally sold *Misty Winds* to a wealthy doctor living in Lake Forest late in 2017.

In 2005 Bill became the main captain of another boat – the *Barcaorle* – for the Chicago Sea Scouts that was moored in Montrose Harbor, steered with a wheel and at least 30 feet long. The Sea Scouts are a branch of the Boy (and Girl) Scouts dedicated to teaching boating. It is through the Sea Scouts that many low-income (often Afro American) young people ever get a chance to sail on Lake Michigan in a large cabin boat.

To see ALL future photos online of sailing with Bill, visit:

[http://puregrassrootsinfo.org/Photowebs/SubInx\\_Sailing.htm](http://puregrassrootsinfo.org/Photowebs/SubInx_Sailing.htm)

It was due to Bill’s association with the Chicago Sea Scouts that I got my first experience at the huge, impressive annual Strictly Sail show held every January at Navy Pier (now at McCormick Place). This huge impressive boat show is held over four days in January every year. There are always many fascinating seminars – often with Power Point and/or movies – describing any aspect of sailing, rigging, and often the stories of sailors who have sailed around the world, braved terrible storms, or cruised to very attractive foreign locations.

Strictly Sail also has a large pool for sailing small electronically controlled sailboats from the side. There are four large fans at one end to create the wind, then each sailor has two controls for their remote sailboat: (1) a lever to control the rudder or steer the boat, and (2) another to control the main sheet – how much the sail is pulled in or let out.

You can also board (after removing your shoes) many large, impressive and very expensive sailboats at Strictly Sail. Catalina and Hunter always have at least one large boat for people to tour.

I often help Bill set up and take down the Chicago Sea Scouts booth at Strictly Sail. There is the banner to hang, several tables to set up, stools and possibly a chair, as well as much literature and still

photos about the Chicago Sea Scouts, and often a laptop PC running a color movie of our sailing experiences and more information.

In 2005 I crewed on several Sea Scout sails on *Barcarole* with Bill and several young Sea Scouts. On one of these trips we sailed all the way out to the Wilson water intake crib.



2007 was *Barcarole*'s final season as a Sea Scout boat. In 2008, the owner of a larger J-35, *Bretwalda*, donated her to the Chicago Sea Scouts for Montrose. In the 2008 Mac Race, *Bretwalda* was her section's winner and 4<sup>th</sup> of all 400 boats! Bill, Betsy, Gabe, and I took her back toward Chicago.

In 2009 *Bretwalda* won in the Corinthian Yacht Club "beer can" races with Sea Scouts as crew



Bill aboard *Bretwalda* in St. Ignace, Michigan, July, 2008



I helped Bill prepare *Bretwalda* for sailing in 2010 and have crewed on a couple of Sea Scout sailing training trips.

In July, we sailed her up to Great Lakes, stayed overnight, and returned the next day.

In 2010 I had another great long sail with Bill and Betsy from Mackinac Island to Waukegan. After a long drive north, we had to take a ferry to Mackinac Island. We got to spend several days touring the unique Mackinac Island before beginning our long trip home.

One of the most unique features of Mackinac Island is that it forbids motorized vehicles. Everywhere you go is walking, by horse and buggy, or biking.



Celebration in front of Grand Hotel with Andy and Bill



Bill, Betsy, Andy at Pentwater Yacht Club

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For my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, Carol and Dorothy – both knowing my love of sailing – “plotted” with Bill – who had now received his skipper’s license – to charter a boat for a week to cruise the British Virgin Islands (BVI) from May 14 to May 22, 2011.

Bill had arranged with a nice, highly recommended carter company, at Nanny Cay, Tortola, to charter us a very nice multi cabin sailboat *Perelandra*. We met my sisters Carol, her daughter Natalie and Dorothy there and first sailed across the Drake Channel to Norman Island where pirates were supposed to be.

The next day we sailed up the Drake Channel to the “Baths” – huge rocks with water below them in which you can hide. We got eye patches on as pirates the next day. That night we went to the “Full Moon Party” where they light huge “fireballs” as bonfires and dance in trains. One guy got up on high stilts.

The next day there was a huge wind to heel the boat over as Natalie steered us to Cane Garden Bay. There we kayaked, danced and saw a great sunset.

It took us two days to find an open mooring ball at Jost Van Dyke. There we ate at Foxys.

We had a rainy voyage to Soper’s Hole around the end. There were many colored houses. We then returned to the Indians where we snorkeled and saw many fish.

We had a very nice dinner together the following evening, our final one together after a GREAT cruise.



Andy with *Perelandra*



Andy steering southeast through the Drake Channel next day





Andy with The Baths



Carol



Dorothy



Bill, Dorothy, and Andy as Pirates the next day



Fireball at Full Moon Party



Train around fireball at Full Moon Party



Dorothy, Bill, Carol, and Andy at Full Moon Party



Andy next day



Carol, Natalie sailing to Cane Garden Bay



Bill and Andy with sunset



Carol, Dorothy, Bill in kayak in Cane Garden Bay



Bill, Carol, and Andy





Andy and Dorothy dancing at Myetts, Cane Garden Bay



Carol, Andy, and Dorothy



Foxy's at Jost Van Dyke in the evening



Carol, Natalie, Bill, Dorothy, and Andy at Foxy's



Andy, Dorothy, Natalie, Carol, Bill at Soper's Hole after rough voyage through rain



Dorothy and Andy steering to Indians





Many dark blue fish



Andy and Dorothy snorkeling



Carol with sun on water



Final night together at Peg Legs, Nanny Cay – Dorothy, Andy, Bill, Natalie, and Carol

Sailing on Bill's Catalina 27 *Misty Winds* in 2015 (Before she was sold) with Carol and Dorothy



Carol, Bill, and Dorothy



Baha'i Temple with reflections



Baha'i Temple



Baha'i Temple, Dale and Connie

Because I was being paid (\$100), I was NOT allowed to bring my camera and take any photos. From Belmont Harbor, we sailed all the way around Navy Pier to where we could see Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park. Just as we were turning north toward Navy Pier, the fireworks began.

## VI Skiing, Singing and Acting

### Chapter 7 – Skiing with the Snowseekers and on my Own, Singing, and Acting

It was Joan Horberg, who was running the folk dance group at the Unitarian Church and also encouraging me to attend the folk dance group at Lake Street Church in 1995, that introduced me into the Snowseekers Ski Club. She claimed that they really needed a new “Corresponding Secretary” (or actually a writer for their monthly newsletter). I knew how to write quite well, Joan knew it, and both my sisters Carol and Dorothy knew how to downhill ski quite if not very well, but I had hardly ever tried it at all and wanted to gain more experience, so I agreed to join the Snowseekers and become their Corresponding Secretary in 1995.

That first year I joined the Snowseekers, Stu Howes was president. He knew ever so much about different ski areas out west and throughout the US, and the best ways to get good, cheap group rates at them. Stu is very friendly. For every newsletter I wrote and/or edited together, Stu always wrote the President’s column as “Stu’s News and Views.” From past newsletters, and for sheer attractiveness, Stu urged me to use as many graphic pictures and diagrams, along with the text, as possible. From my past experience as a draftsman and layout artist, this was very easy for me.

Every Snowseekers monthly meeting is in a church in Libertyville, another Chicago suburb over 20 miles north of Evanston. Joan Horberg always has driven me to these meetings. Another friendly Snowseeker, Al Billings, is always in charge of refreshments for the meetings, and does an excellent job. One meeting every fall is “brot night” where we eat newly cooked brots. In addition, the Snowseekers have an annual Christmas party and an annual summer picnic.

The Snowseekers usually have at least two ski trips out west to Colorado or further, and at least one much shorter Midwest trip. The west trips usually last at least five days to a week or more, while the Midwest trips are usually only over one weekend. Stu Howes leads the first Midwest trip each year in January to Devil’s Head, Wisconsin (about 50 miles north of Madison). For this trip the Snowseekers join up with Rotary Club students and most of us ride up in a bus. Joan Horberg has gone on every single ski trip, including the west ones, and was quite a good skier back then. That first year in 1995, the slopes at Devil’s Head were a sufficient challenge for me, so I didn’t go on any other trips. I did take a number of pictures which Stu was delighted to have me put in the newsletter. I’ve gone on the Devil’s Head trip virtually every year since 1995 to Devil’s Head in 2014 with XC skiing only due to my epilepsy.

In the fall of 1995, Stu always had me send a sample of our newsletter to the Chicago Metropolitan Ski Council. I always did so, but didn’t have the slightest idea why until the summer picnic that next year in 1996. We held it in a park near the Illinois/Wisconsin border. I biked up there from Evanston that summer for over 45 miles each way. As usual, the other Snowseekers were very impressed with my long bike ride. After we had finished eating the beautiful, huge meal, Stu Howes called us all together for a few formal announcements. For one of the final announcements, Stu invited me to come forward and presented me with a beautiful award plaque – brass mounted on wood – the Steve Sutton Memorial Award for Newsletter Excellence from the Chicago Metropolitan Ski Council. For a ski club of our small size (category 1 – under 150 members), the editing standard I had met with all the pictures and graphics, in addition to the text, and the attractive page layouts had won us (or me) that award!

I’ve participated in a number of Snowseekers western trips. Now that I was getting a decent income from working at The Good Group I could finally afford to go on them. One was Lake Tahoe in 1997. On that trip I remember riding to the top and getting a beautiful view out over Lake Tahoe. My

skiing skills could use some improvement so I could only ski the beginner “green” or easy intermediate “blue” runs.

My second western trip with the Snowseekers was to Winter Park, Colorado in 1998. At that time my downhill skiing skills were only beginner/medium. I could ski all the green runs and some of the blue runs out west, but I fell over fairly often on the blue (medium skill) runs.

In the June of 1998, Phyllis Wells and her husband Clyde invited Joan Horberg, Jerry Lipinski, and I to go on an overnight rafting trip up in Wisconsin. Phyllis and Clyde have a very nice “camping” trailer in which we could sleep. Each “raft” had two orange pontoons on each side, and a comfortable seat to ride and paddle in. We each had a kayak paddle with a blade on each side. We launched and then rafted for about half a mile down a stretch of the river with several rapids.

I went with the Snowseekers to Whistler, Canada (above Vancouver) in 1999. I remember driving over the old Lions Gate Bridge on the bus to get there. In 1999 we had good skiing and beautiful views.

Unfortunately, the weather did not cooperate during my visit in 2001 to Whistler with the Snowseekers, there was quite a bit of fog and rain, so we did very little skiing up near the top.

One of the most memorable west trips I took was to Aspen, Colorado for a week in 2000.



There were many steep and challenging “blue” (medium skill) runs which I skied but sometimes fell down on. Joan Horberg and several other Snowseekers highly advised me to pay for and take a full day



private ski lesson. I took a ski lesson and got a lot better. Then I was able to ski a “black diamond” (most steep and difficult) run out west for the first time without falling down at all!

My second west trip to Aspen, Colorado, was two years later in 2002. I enjoyed skiing many “blue” runs, beautiful views of the mountains, and meals with my friends in the evenings.

Bill Murphy led us on a great ski trip to Park City, Utah in 2003. They had several high-speed lifts and a gondola. The skiing was great, but what occupied many of us a lot more was the news at home each evening. That was the date President Bush preemptively invaded Iraq, and there was lots of news about the war.

Each year the Snowseekers have an annual trip up to Devils Head in Wisconsin to practice up for the more challenging trips to come out west. Also each year, the Snowseekers have parties and events. These are the annual:

- Avalanche Party – a pot luck to get together
- Christmas Party – a party in December where everyone brings a “gift” then numbers are randomly drawn and in that order everyone can select either a new wrapped gift, or one from someone else who has already opened theirs. If it is from someone else, that person gets to select a new wrapped present. So it goes until everyone has a present and they all are gone.
- The summer Ravinia concert. A concert is selected, then as many Snowseekers as possible attend it, often bringing food and drinks to share.



Steve Andes with Ravinia Pavilion – 7/20/08



Joan Horberg and Andy at Ravinia

XC Skiing By Myself



Andy XC skiing in Evanston 12/12/16



A snowman in Evanston 12/12/16



Andy XC skiing on golf course in Oregon 12/28/16



Andy trying to XC ski Evanston Lake but all melting 3/15/17



Andy XC skiing in Clark Square, 2/1/19



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My first experience singing at the Unitarian Church of Evanston was under music director Avon Gillespie in the early seventies. Avon was a talented black choral director from ETHS who was fun and challenging to sing under.

One of the best and most memorable choral music directors I have ever had was John Giles who directed the music at UCE from 1981 to when he died of HIV in 2000. It was his great leadership and music that mainly persuaded me to join UCE as a full member in the early 1980s (my mother and father followed and joined several years later).

John Giles was a great music director. He had a fabulous funny personality that made learning many different challenging pieces of music fun and enjoyable, even though we often had to stop and practice hard passages many times in order to sing virtually to perfection. Under John the UCE choir got an excellent reputation not only in our own congregation, but also in the northern Chicago music community and our choir membership expanded greatly from barely twenty five to over sixty! For many years John would have us:

- Sing a large, challenging piece in combination with another Unitarian church choir both at their church and at ours.
- Have a couple of “Music Sunday” services for which he would often have a small orchestra come in to play with us.

In addition to directing, John also started composing choral pieces – several specifically for the UCE choir. There were at least half a dozen different pieces he composed for us, but the one I remember the most is an arrangement of “We Gather Together” for Thanksgiving (probably because we have sung it every year for at least ten years). We have performed several of his other compositions over the years.

Unfortunately, besides being HIV positive, John was also addicted to CocaCola. I took him aside and warned him several times about the problems with food and chemical sensitivity, but he continued to drink Coke. I think one incident which may have stopped this addiction was when I met John totally by accident in Whole Foods with a whole six-pack of Coke cans under his arm and mentioned the addiction again.

Many HIV drugs were being developed by the medical community, but not quite fast enough for John. In the late 90s he had to have both legs amputated, but despite this terrible handicap, John continued directing the UCE choir for almost a year from his wheelchair!

Toward the very end I remember visiting John in the hospital and presenting him with a chart I had obtained of all classical music composers. Vertically, they were alphabetic by last name, and horizontally they were chronologically by year. Several of the most famous like Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart had small pictures. I had added John at his proper spot in the chart I gave him. I will always respect and admire John for his great ambition and perseverance virtually until he died.

During the mid-1990s, Dad’s vision was getting progressively worse. To try to cure it, he was given a new drug. Unfortunately, rather than improving his vision, his entire health got rapidly worse as he approached death. Carol and Dorothy rapidly flew to Evanston, and we all sang Gilbert & Sullivan songs in his hospital room with the whole family together and him smiling and recognizing them. He peacefully died later that night. We had a nice memorial service for him later at the Unitarian Church.

One of the best tenors in the UCE Choir was a young, thin, blonde man named Bart Bradfield. Bart also composed and arranged choral music even before John Giles died. I remember John joking that we were one of the few church choirs with two composers as members! As well as an excellent musician, Bart was quite young and shy at first, but he has definitely outgrown those early limits.

Bart also started a professional choral group, the Chicago Choral Artists, whom I have heard several concerts from and have a couple of their CDs. They sing mostly accapella (unaccompanied) beautiful choral pieces perfectly in tune! Even though the Chicago Choral Artists had to be dissolved for a couple of years, they are now again together under new leadership singing beautiful accapella pieces.

Bart is a different style director than John Giles was. Under Bart, we end up singing just as beautiful and perfectly performed pieces – of a great variety of cultures, composers, and periods – but Bart spends much more time warming us up on Sunday mornings and at rehearsals so singing under him isn't quite as fun and enjoyable as it was under John. I still respect Bart for his great musical knowledge and choral techniques, so I enjoyed singing under him. Bart insists on us singing with open mouths, a lot of air, and properly connecting all the notes in a line or phrase of music. He also insists that we change or add shape to long notes on the same pitch. I had joined the UCE Music Committee which gave me much further background knowledge of our plans and resources.

Unfortunately, Bart's social or "people" skills were no match to his musical ones. He seldom gave the choir any advanced notice as to which piece(s) we will sing beyond the immediate Sunday, (except for large choir and music festivals). Apparently he and our new senior minister, Bret, did not get along well at all. Bret wanted the choir to sing at BOTH the 9 and the 11 AM services on a Sunday. When Bart's contract ran out in June, 2015, it was not renewed. The choir held a nice going away party for him at Three Crowns.

Our new music director, Vickie Hellyer, is much better. For each rehearsal, she puts on the white board every piece we will be singing in their order at the rehearsal, and on which Sunday we will be performing them. Also, for many of the pieces, Vickie emails us a YouTube or MRI to practice with.

\* \* \*

I decided to join the 150 voice NSCS in the late 90s. Donald Chen has been Music Director since 1984. He resigned in 2008 and we selected our new Music Director, Dr. Julia Davids, who has been our director since 2010. Auditions were quite easy, and when Don Chen heard my perfect relative pitch, I easily got accepted as a Bass/Baritone. The NSCS rehearses every Tuesday evening at the Trinity Lutheran Church on Golf Road west of McCormick – over a mile from my condo. Fortunately, alto Nancy Friday is willing to drive me during the cold winter when I can't bike independently.

Once I became a member, I had to purchase a black tuxedo with a black bow tie to wear at every concert. Every man has one. All the ladies have matching black skirts with a necklace of pearls to wear at concerts.

They normally perform three concerts a year. When they had a higher budget, they used to perform one at Northwestern University's Pick Staiger Concert Hall, at the Unitarian Church (before our stage was built, and mostly at the Parish Church or Saint Luke on Hinman Avenue just north of Main Street in Evanston. Our performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion there got excellent reviews.

For three summers we have had the good fortune and opportunity to sing "Broadway Hits" under Eric Kunzel at Ravinia Park. Those have been fantastic experiences for me. The first year we also sang a second concert at Ravinia under Doc Severenson.

John Shea, who used to sing lead roles in Gilbert and Sullivan plays, sang bass/baritone with me in the NSCS until he retired several years ago.

One of our greatest concerts was a recent partnership with the Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra (formerly Symphony II) to perform Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Northwestern University's Pick-Staiger Concert Hall in May 2005. It was sold out with an actual attendance of over 90 percent.

In 2008 our long time music director, Don Chen, announced that he would resign. This started a long involved process of selecting a new music director who was not only good, but the majority of the NSCS members appreciated and would get along with. Out of many candidates, the selection committee narrowed it down to three. For the next year, they each would prepare us for one of our three annual concerts, then we would vote on which was best.

Dr. Julia Davids, a talented soprano and holds degrees in Education, Conducting, and Voice Performance from the University of Western Ontario, the University of Michigan, and a DM from Northwestern, was selected. She is an excellent musician and director, but demands a lot more of us than Don Chen did. The year (2010-11) – our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary – we completed an excellent concert season and closed with the *Mass in B Minor* by JS Bach. We are also expanding our exposure by having smaller choruses (of which I'm often a member) singing for grade schools and at senior retirement homes.

When we completed the second concert of the 2011-12 season with a sold out audience of 500 available seats to over 480 people in the Unitarian Church of Evanston, we sang Carl Orff's *Carmina Barana* with the Evanston Children's Choir. We got excellent reviews including a superb one in the local Pioneer Press. We did Handel's *Israel and Egypt* for our final concert that season.

We've sang several more successful seasons under Julia Davids. We've expanded our normal seasons to include the Holiday Concert with the Evanston Symphony and frequently the Evanston Children's Choir at Evanston Township High School.



North Shore Choral Society performing at Unitarian Church with Director Julia Davids

Lillias Circle along with Frank Miller – first cellist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra – founded a drama group in 1975, the Savoy Aires, who produce a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta once a year.

#### Iolanthe 1988

In 1988 I was a “peer” or member of the British parliament in *Iolanthe*. I'd played the record with the full dialogue so often, I knew the music and story virtually perfectly. The biggest challenge was to work out the “blocking,” or positioning – the exact spot you had to be at every note of every song, and exactly when you had to move, bow, turn, enter, or exit. John Shea sang the Lord Chancellor in that production.

#### Yeomen of the Guard 1989

The following year I sang as a yeoman in the play *Yeoman of the Guard*. This play is sub-titled “the Merryman and His Maid,” and has beautiful music.

#### *Pirates of Penzance* 1990

The next year I sang (and danced) in the chorus of *The Pirates of Penzance*. In the first act I was a pirate, and in the second act I was a policeman! John Shea sang Major General Stanley.

#### *The Mikado* 2001

The most recent play I’ve been in was *The Mikado*. I helped paint and prepare some of the scenery, as well as singing as a “gentleman of Japan.” I especially remember Ms JoAnn Minds, who was Queen of the Fairies in *Iolanthe* (back in 1988), singing the part of Katisha in *The Mikado*.

My Many Musical Friends:

- Greg Shifrin – Current pianist at the Unitarian Church of Evanston (UCE) from 2002 to the present with great talent. He accompanies the UCE choir at all our rehearsals with great patience – playing one, two, or three choral parts as they are needed at any tempo, then finally the accompaniment. Greg also plays at the Music Institute of Chicago in Nichols Hall just two blocks away at Grove Street and Chicago Avenue in what used to be the Christian Science Reading Hall. Every Sunday before the 11:00 AM service, hand bells are rung to silence the congregation and get them seated. Greg has two of them and give me two more that will harmonize so we BOTH chime the congregation quiet at 11:00.
- Ken Smith – The original organist/pianist at UCE when I first joined UCE in the late 1980s, there was a small organ in the northwest corner of the sanctuary. Ken could play that very well (two keyboards and a pedal board underneath as well). Ken and his mate, Albert Thompson, live together in a house of Girard on the golf course – exactly one block west of the house at 2763 Garrison Mom, Dad, and I lived in for twelve years. Often, when Greg can’t make it, Ken fills in for him at UCE. Ken recognizes me and we are long old friends.
- Art Salzmann – besides formerly singing baritone with me the UCE choir, Art has been stage manager in a good many Gilbert & Sullivan plays for the Savoy Aires including *The Gondoliers*. In *HMS Pinafore* Art was Captain Corcoran, in *The Mikado* Art was head of the gentlemen of Japan chorus along with me. Unfortunately, Art recently passed away.
- John Shea – Sang and acted many lead single roles in Gilbert & Sullivan operettas with the Savoy Aires. When I sang in *Iolanthe*, he was the Lord Chancellor. More recently, he sang bass with me in the North Shore Choral Society.
- Alma Woods – Often she gives me a ride to and from the UCE choir rehearsals. Initially Alma was an alto, but now she is one of our three female tenors.
- The late Barbara DeCoster – she was an alto in the UCE choir. Also, Barbara would often bring refreshments.
- Inge Kistler – she sings in the North Shore Choral as well as the UCE choir and is an expert in German pronunciation.
- Gloria Boyell – Excellent pianist who accompanied all our rehearsals with the Savoy Aires. Also a good violinist who plays in the Evanston Symphony Orchestra. She’s over 90 years old!
- Robb Geiger – is a good low bass in UCE choir. He has also recently joined the North Shore Choral Society. In addition, Robb is a good pianist and Robb is an excellent wood craftsman.

He made the set of wooden slots for all of our music folder and hymnals. He has also made a great new wooden case for our electronic synthesizer, the new pulpit and helped with the new chancel or stage at UCE to include risers (see them in the photo on the previous page).

- Woody Haynes – Bass in UCE choir, plays Cribbage with Dave Woods and me, plays Bridge, and is an avid biker and swimmer.
- The late Bruce Johns has been a UCE bass ever since I can remember with Avon Gillespie. Bruce and I always liked to massage and/or tickle each other during the rehearsal warm-ups.
- Philip Martin – Phil was a fellow bass in the NSCS. Philip often gave me a ride home from the NSCS rehearsals. In addition, Phil is an excellent pianist. He gave me a free CD of his piano pieces recorded at a WFMT studio. Also, Phil invited my mother and me to a special piano duet at the Music Building plus the reception afterwards.
- Steve Warner sings baritone with me in the NSCS and is a good, talented singer
- Anthony Green also sang baritone in NSCS, and managed making CDs of all our concerts along with a neatly edited and folded version of the program which fits exactly into the CD case!
- Nick Krupp – A good tenor in the North Shore Choral Society
- Harry Jones sang bass in the UCE choir, can sing very low notes, and often gave me a lift home.
- Harry Vroegh sings bass in the NSCS. He is very friendly and has enjoyed a number of my photo websites.
- Jon Siegel sings bass in UCE choir, can sing the lowest notes of anyone, often records our concerts, sang in the Chicago Choral Artists and frequently recorded their concerts.
- Jim Miller sings bass in NSCS, and is very talented in IT – computer Information Technology. He was Webmaster for NSCS. He gave me the HTML code to upload video files like the one minute Brewers Parade in Germany, a MOV file for all to enjoy online.

## VII Other Hobbies, Activities, and Trips

### Chapter 8 Games and Trips

Other than the choir, the two activities I've enjoyed the most through the Unitarian Church are (1) the Men's Group meeting and retreats, and (2) playing bridge every other week there.

The UCE Men's Group meets every other week. We usually start with a topic that the host selects or makes up. After over an hour discussing the topic, we go on a brief break and then perform our "round." There, in full confidence, I can tell them all of my troubles and help all of them in any way I can with any troubles they describe. At least once if not twice a year, the Men's Group goes on an all-weekend retreat. Most often we've visited Illinois Beach State Park. Dave Woods has managed this group for years.

Every Friday my old friend Larry Johnson brings a movie over and we enjoy it together. Also many Sunday afternoons Larry and I play at least two chess games together at the Unicorn Café (just two blocks north). Larry usually defeats me. Then we walk north or to the Lake, and eat supper.

Almost every Wednesday Dave Woods and I play Cribbage, almost always at my condo. When not here, we play at Dave's house on Noyes Street. Most of the time, we are joined by fellow UCE bass and excellent bridge player, Woody Haynes.

The UCE Bridge group meets every other week on Friday evenings. It is run by Morde and Joan Horberg. Recently Dick Whitaker has been joining us regularly too. Woody Haynes from UCE Men's Group and choir is very good at bridge too.

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In the early 1990s my parents decided to totally replace their normal "American" lawn with an organic garden, a nice terrace in back, and totally remodel the kitchen as well as other parts of the house. My mother hired Camille Stauber and her husband, Joel, to do it. We were to replace the lawn in front with natural native flowers, blueberry bushes, and a bird bath. In back we got a beautiful new terrace, an organic garden to eat from, another bird bath, and a hedge of evergreen trees to hide us from the alley.



Andy on new back porch

Inside, the beautiful wooden floor was completely sanded and re-finished. We got a totally new kitchen with a new stove, cabinets, counters, and dishwasher and the basement room got a new ceiling. The former porch was remodeled as a sun room with double pane windows and an electric heating strip.



Camille is an avid environmentalist and intelligent, but unfortunately both she and Joel – our architect – were very unreliable. They took months after the final proposed finish date to actually finish everything. This is the house at 2763 Garrison – one block east of Ken Smith and Albert Thompson.

Both my sister Carol, who lives in upstate New York with her family, and my sister Dorothy, who lives near Portland, Oregon, visited Mom and I in our newly remodeled house here in Evanston for Christmas in 1998.



Court. Lynn, Carol



Nick



Natalie, Carol, Dorothy, Tara



Everyone plus Friends

My sister Carol has been National Wildwater Kayaking Champion for nine years beginning in the early 1970's. She met her husband, Jim Underwood, while on the kayaking team.



Carol, Jim, and 2 kayaks in early 1970s



Carol with her youngest, Nick, in October, 1994

She has been kayaking on many of the whitewater rivers throughout the US and Canada. All whitewater kayakers wear a waterproof skirt around their waist to cover the hole in the boat they are paddling. When Carol was a teacher, she taught her students how to “roll” so that if they tipped over they would continue in a complete circle and come up on the other side without getting any water in the boat. She taught them to roll during the winter in the swimming pool! She loved to kayak, and still loves to kayak and canoe. She is also into flatwater kayaking. When she visited us in Evanston, she paddled on the North Branch Drainage Canal. Carol and Jim have had a large boat rack with at least a dozen kayaks and canoes near their house.

I’ve visited Carol, Jim, and their three children – Nathan the oldest, Natalie, and Nick – several times over the past years – both summer and winter – mainly to help them finish the huge log house Jim finally completed building mostly on his own in Queensbury, New York in the beautiful Adirondack Mountains. He had to build it exactly on the “footprint” of the old one – see following pages. On several of these earlier trips, Carol took me whitewater kayaking for the first time in my life on the nearby Sacandaga River which has a number of rapids or “white” water. I considered it a great accomplishment to make it down the rapids the first time without tipping over!





Justin, Nick, Carol, Natalie launching kayaks and showing Carol and Jim's old original house



Carol and Natalie double kayaking whitewater on the Sacandada River

Jim started by building the garage (or “barn”) in which the cars can park and the laundry/furnace room is on the ground floor, but it also has a beautiful second floor with a kitchen, large bedroom, and a bathroom. He was building this while the family was still living in the old summer house right by their small beach on Glen Lake. The plan was to move the entire family to live in the barn after it was completed (Nick and Natalie slept in a small attic above the bedroom in the winter, on the balcony in the

summer, and Nathan slept downstairs in the garage). Then the old house could be torn down and the new log one constructed in its “footprint.”

That first summer, I helped Jim complete the roof of the garage/barn. After it became apparent that the building was not a perfect rectangle, at my suggestion we constructed a long, narrow triangle and attached the narrowest tip to the peak and the short base to a bottom corner of Jim’s wooden roof structure so we would not have to individually cut and trim all of the long, rectangular metal interlocking roof pieces. On each side every roof piece extended from the peak to the bottom gutter.

The second summer the “barn” was basically complete and the family was living in it. We were tearing down the old summer house to make room for the new log one. I remember the vindictive energy in which Nathan, his friends, and I swung the sledge hammer to smash apart old walls and windows.

The next summer, the log walls, roof, windows, and most of the interior walls of the large house were complete. Jim had already put the walls together – similar to large Lincoln logs, except that Jim carefully scooped a circular “trough” from each lower log so that they all could fit firmly together and provide good thick insulation all the way up and down (instead of barely touching between the logs as Lincoln logs do) – out in the field to make sure everything fit, so it was largely a matter of moving them once the foundation was complete. To insure even better insulation, all of the windows had TRIPLE pane glass! I mainly helped that year in stuffing and stapling lots of insulation to the ceiling between the roof joist boards. There is hot water radiant heat in all the floors. The small furnace in the barn heats BOTH the house and the barn. The thick log walls and special triple glass windows give excellent insulation.

In December, 2000, Jim had finished the beautiful new house sufficiently to finally invite ALL the Fisher relatives – Dorothy and Tom as well as Mom and me – to celebrate Christmas there. They invited Jim’s family – his parents and siblings – as well.



Others, Carol and Dorothy



Jim, Jim Sr., Ann, and Natalie





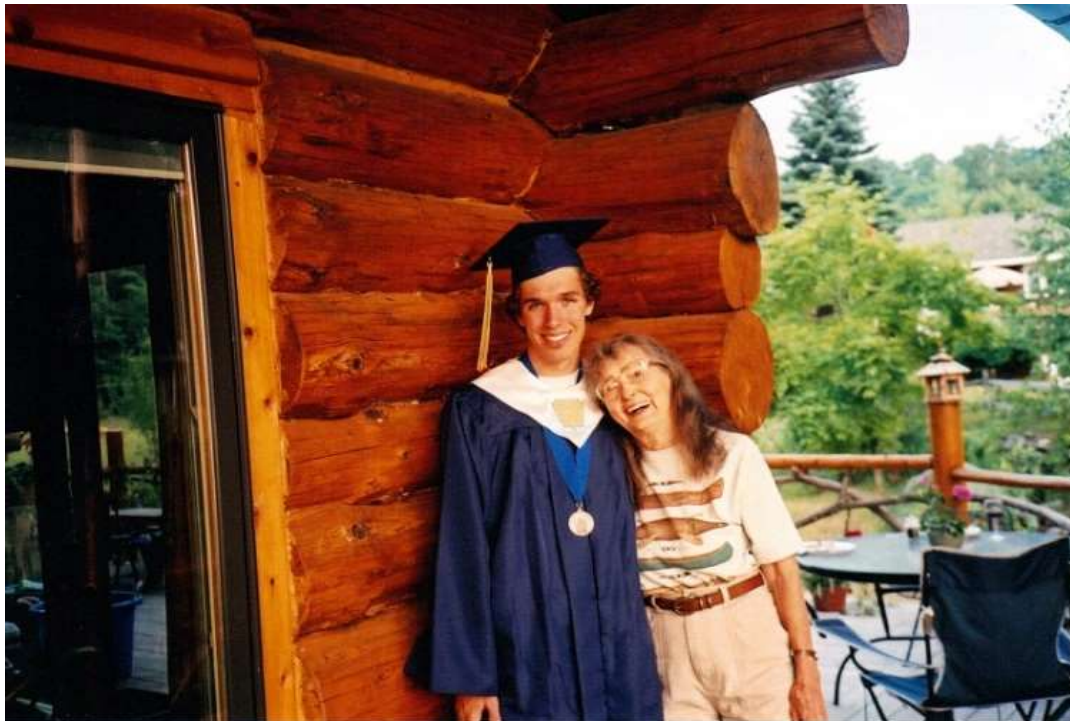
Tara, Dorothy, and others



Jim Sr., Ann, Tom, Marjorie, others, Carol

Jim has finally completed this house. He has replaced the original simple two-by-four board balcony rails with beautiful artistic ones – a large round log on top and many smaller curved interlocking branches below.

Dave Woods – a friend from the UCE Men’s Group – drove me up there in the summer of 2003. That summer, I helped lay tile in the “connector” – the enclosure between the barn and the main house. Nathan had a HUGE high school graduation party.



Nate and Marjorie

Our last visit with Mom was Christmas in 2007. That was after Mom had her first stroke, but still she enjoyed it very much and was pulled in a toboggan with Carol and Dorothy skiing to pull her.

They have bought a nice electric piano. Nick is taking lessons and he is becoming quite good. Carol is playing the piano too, but she freely admits that Nick is ahead of her. The photos of this visit are later in section **XI 2007 Great Trips and Mom's Tragic Stroke** .

The most recent time before my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday (see below) that I visited Dorothy and Tom in Lake Oswego, Oregon was in 1999. They had adopted both Duncan and Tara from Korea, and their main hobby had switched from biking to Dragon boating. This is a sport from Asia where many paddlers race in long thin boats, each with 20 paddlers, a drummer to keep them all in time, and a large dragon face mounted on the front of the boat. I got a chance to go out with them a couple of times on the Willamette River on practice runs. We also went up Mount Hood and skied near the top.



Paddling dragon boat



Duncan, Andy, Tara halfway up Mount Hood



Andy Skiing on Mount Hood



My sisters Carol and Dorothy plotted together to give me a great 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party in Sun River, Oregon for which I did not have to pay any transportation or food costs! It actually took place several months after my real birthday (11-22-2000) in March of 2001. Dorothy's husband Tom's parents own an attractive home in Sun River. Carol, her daughter, Natalie, and Dorothy came initially. The Sun River house had a sauna or hot tub right next to it. On the first day, we three siblings and Natalie enjoyed soaking in it very much.

The Sun River house has many miles of bike paths nearby, so we could easily bike or paddle on the Deschutes River. Dorothy and I went paddling the third day.

However, most of our time was spent downhill skiing on Mt. Bachelor, about twenty minutes away by car. On the fifth day our cousin, Jamie, from Seattle Washington, joined us downhill skiing at Mt. Bachelor. Jamie, Duncan, Tara, and I enjoyed the hot tub that evening.

The sixth day Carol, Dorothy and I went cross country skiing near the base of Mt. Bachelor. That evening was the big birthday party with a large cake, and a huge number of trick candles which couldn't be blown out. Tom and Jamie helped extinguish them in a glass of water before burning the cake.

On the final day we tried cross country skiing at Mt. Bachelor again. On the way driving back to Dorothy and Tom's home in Lake Oswego, south of Portland, Oregon, Duncan made several silly faces at me in the car using a rubber band.

I enjoyed this party and chance to get together with my relatives very much. I resolved to split the expenses for similar parties for both Carol and Dorothy.

Since both Tara and I have the SAME birthday – November 22 – Mom and I took a trip to visit Dorothy, Tom, Tara, and Duncan to celebrate that double birthday and Thanksgiving in November, 2001. I helped Duncan with his model train set, we went walking and biking, we visited Duncan at his Tai Kwon Do class, then we had a great double birthday party. Ron (Tom's brother) and Rebecca came over to join us.

### Chapter 9 – Buying My Own Condominium

In 2002, at the urging of BOTH my sisters, due to the rapidly raising rent rate on my studio apartment and the record low interest rates, I decided to buy my own condominium. This way, I could have fixed monthly payments which could not be increased, and would be building up equity or ownership (for increased value when I decided to sell it).

Mom's friendly next door neighbors to the north are the Dickmans. Betty Dickman was a real estate agent for Prairie Shores. We first asked Betty to recommend an agent for me because she had recently retired. Betty recommended a very nice, young agent named Coralie Norwell.

Coralie and I met and discussed my desires:

- A high rise with a view
- In Evanston – near Mom and the Unitarian Church
- Within easy reach of public transportation (since I don't own or drive a car)
- Fairly decent soundproofing since I own a large good stereo system and like to play classical (and other) music at a fairly decent volume
- A southern exposure for maximum sun in the winter, and minimum sun in the summer – “natural” solar heating – plus a good view of Chicago.

At this time Evanston was rapidly expanding, and several older banks and other buildings in the downtown area had been demolished, and new, multistory high rise (13 floors or more) were under construction and being planned. Due to both by music/soundproofing and my high rise desires, Coralie

decided it would be best for me to purchase a unit in some of this new construction in downtown Evanston (handy to trains, the Unitarian Church, and Mom).

Coralie's first choice for me was in a new 17 floor building being built on Church Street just west of the Metra train tracks where my condo would be a one bedroom unit with a balcony facing west, but only on the eighth floor. It was in an excellent new building, very handy to the trains, but it was only on the eighth floor with no view, and it was facing west instead of south so I turned it down.

Another building under construction was already ten floors high. It was being built where a bank used to be on the southwest corner of Sherman and Davis, just north of the twenty-four floor Rotary Building. All of its balconies appeared to have orange railings. This was the new "Optima Towers". Upon visiting the Optima development office, Coralie and I discovered that there was one unit my size (one bedroom) on the eleventh floor facing south with a beautiful view to the southwest, a little of Lake Michigan, most of its windows faced south, and (as I precisely worked out with its basic block layout relative to the Rotary Building and my street map of Chicago) I could see the Sears Tower and about half of the west Loop (downtown Chicago) from my unit which projected west of the Rotary Building. I would also have gorgeous views of sunsets to the west and southwest (which were all blocked from my studio apartment by the twenty-floor Bank One building).

Another very nice feature of Optima Towers is its enclosed swimming area. Unlike Park Evanston with its open roof pool for use only during the warm weather, Optima Towers has its pool and hot tub COMPLETELY ENCLOSED for use the ENTIRE YEAR!

After I learned that all the stoves being installed in Optima Towers were gas by default (which creates terrible indoor air pollution), I asked if I could switch my unit to electric since it hadn't been built yet. Their initial answer was "yes," but I soon learned that they wanted an immediate payment of \$30,000 "earnest money" to be sure that I was actually going to purchase the unit since their contractors were about to pour the concrete for the eleventh floor, and they needed to install special, large conduit pipes for the electric stove. They wanted to be sure that I was actually going to buy the unit before they changed the construction from the standard default gas stove design. I easily raised the money by selling some of my municipal, tax-free bond funds, and that matter was settled. They also offered me a choice between the standard coiled element stove burners, or a deluxe flat marble-top. I chose the latter. It is very similar to the one my Mom has and is much easier to keep clean.

By default, all the units in Optima Towers were wall-to-wall carpet. Because this is much harder to keep clean, and emits terrible indoor air pollution at first, I decided to have a hardwood floor installed instead. Coralie recommended a great contractor: "Mr. Floor." During the month of October, 2002, I had to both pay rent for my studio apartment and mortgage on my condominium unit after I "closed" (for another \$10,000). I made plans to lay my own speaker wire, and, at Coralie's suggestion, a TV cable, under the proposed wood living room floor. After I closed, and was given my own copies of the keys to the unit, I gave Mr. Floor the cables and the layout of exactly where to put them. Mr. Floor laid the beautiful hardwood floor (plus special required insulation underneath) for all the living/dining area, my bedroom/study, the hallways, and both of the large closets in only two days! They put in pre-painted white baseboard against almost all the walls. However, they installed beautiful wooden quarter-round against the windows (which extend from the floor to the ceiling), and against the wooden panel wall under the buffet counter into the kitchen.

Also during September and October, I acquired a number of cardboard boxes to pack all my books, videos, CDs, cassettes, and clothes for the move. However, before I could move in, I had to paint the entire white baseboard. The men from Mr. Floor pointed out the many tiny nail holes in the pre-painted white baseboard. I should buy some filler at the hardware store, carefully fill every nail hole, allow it to dry, sand it, and give it another coat of paint. To do this without ruining the beautiful, new

wood floor, I bought and carefully applied paint masking tape which I could paint onto below then take up neatly with the edge exactly where I wanted it.

There was only room in my furnace/utility room for a stacked washer and dryer. I bought a good, front-loading kind from Sears and arranged to have both of them delivered. The front-loading washer uses much less water than the old top-loading kind, and is much more efficient. The dryer is better too. It has its own humidistat and stops automatically as soon as the clothes are dry.

Even though I could easily move all the boxes of books, videos, etc. that I had packed with the new large dolly, which I had just bought, for the two blocks between my apartment and condo, I had to hire movers to move the biggest things – my couch/bed, my tilt-back black chair, and all of my bookcases. Mom bought and gave me as a beautiful gift my new double bed which she had delivered. My final step was moving my double thirty-gallon aquariums – fresh water, and a salt-water stacked above each other and all the live fish in them. For this my two best friends – George Ammerman and Bill Luksha – volunteered to help for a day.

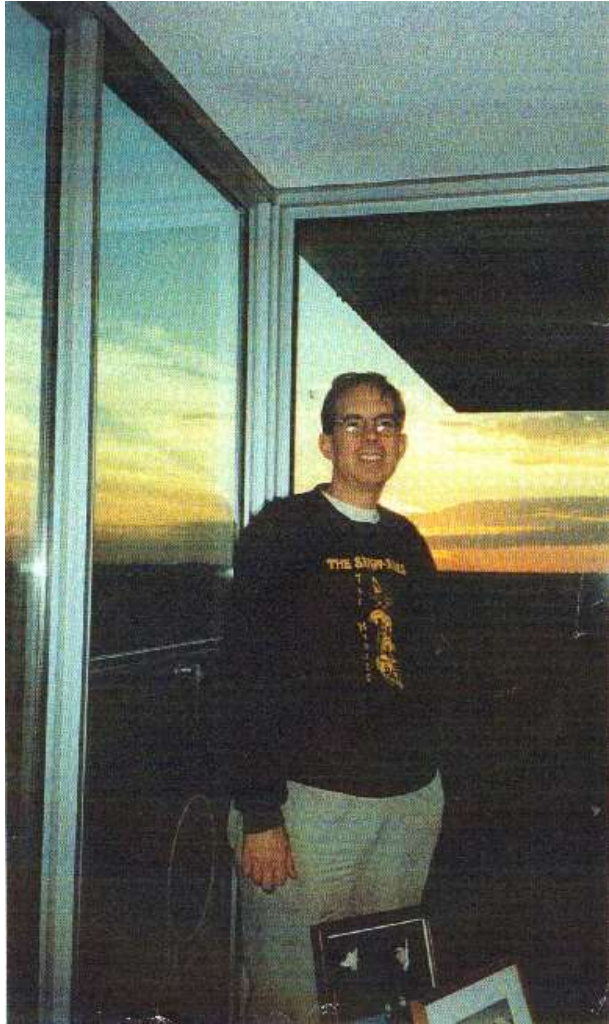
After everything was moved, I was basically settled in, and the place was tidy, I invited both Betty Dickman and Coralie Norwell over to see it. They were both quite positively impressed. My only slight regret is that the orange paint on all of the balcony rails – which I had assumed was only a primer and would be covered over – is the final color. I now have over twice the area I had in my studio apartment for only about 130% the cost! I can now easily refer to my new home as “the orange balcony building.”

In early 2003, I was pleased and surprised to meet my old friend from Kansas, John Searles, who is now an artist and was living in Oak Park (just west of Chicago), at an Evanston Art Festival where he won first prize for sculpture. I purchased his “Rotating Triangle” which is four feet seven inches on each of the outer three sides. Each consecutive, slightly smaller inner triangle is stacked upon and rotated at a slight angle from its larger “base.” All sixteen triangles John carefully cut from a single sheet of beautifully colored copper glued to a large sheet of wood which he then painted black! The copper is the front and the black wood is the edge of every triangle. For all fifteen outer triangles, each “side” of any triangle appears to be only one inch wide! John and his wife Jill Underhill came over to mount it on the west wall of my condo where I decided to put it. He had time to make two Rotating Triangles and gave me the choice between them. I chose the fancier sixteen level one. To see more of John’s excellent work, visit his website at [www.searlesart.com](http://www.searlesart.com).

My friend and former fellow singer in the Unitarian Church Choir, Gay Menges, also lives in a unit on the top floor of the Optima Towers. (She couldn’t stand the orange balconies at first, but now more easily tolerates them). She gives me rides from church in bad weather. I look after the pool room and lobby plants under Gay’s supervision. Whenever one looks bad, I go to Home Depot with her for a replacement and load it in and out of her car. I’ve also helped Gay move large objects. Gay has cared for my fish when I was away on vacation.

Another friend from church, Alex Sproul and his wife, Mary, have also recently moved into Optima Towers. They live on the fourth floor. Unfortunately, Alex recently passed away, but Mary still lives there.

In 2005 they finally started actual construction of the huge Sherman Plaza which occupies almost all of the full city block immediately to the north of us. It is 26 floors high! I used to see Baha’i Temple from my balcony leaning west and looking north, but can’t anymore. When I learned that developers had planned another 25 floor building just to the west of us, but had re-designed it down to a “mere” 18 floors, I posted a petition in protest and got 28 other Optima Tower residents (including Gay) to sign it. I attended the hearing at city hall, but it got built anyway. Albion has built another high – 15 floor – building to the southeast which blocks my view of the Willis (Sears) Tower in Chicago.



Sunset from my new condo



John Searles, Jill, and I with his newly mounted rotating triangle in my new condo

## Chapter 10 – More Trips

In March/April 2003 I went on a double trip, first to attend the Beyond Pesticides conference in Austin, and then to join my Uncle Frank – who does research at the University there – along with both my sisters Carol and Dorothy to celebrate Mom’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in Austin Texas.

The Beyond Pesticides conference was quite interesting. The first day we toured the Boggy Creek organic farm. In the conference there were many good speakers and panels, all speaking about their experiences with and/or the hidden harms from pesticides – including three ladies from Bhopal, India – and some music. I got the chance to videotape one of the smaller workshops “Global Ecology – The New Age of Solutions” by Hendrikus Shraven from the Netherlands. One of the greatest surprises and honors was Mom winning a lifetime award for all of her work against these toxic pesticides, and being presented it at the final dinner.

After the conference, Carol met us in the lobby and we joined Dorothy and Frank to celebrate Mom’s 80<sup>th</sup>. Frank goes swimming in an attractive, natural, chlorine-free springs. He would take a hose

and water the flower boxes on the roof of the men's dressing area. Frank chased all the men out so he could show these beautiful flowers to my mother, Carol, and Dorothy. We all joined him there for a swim. Swimming in the water there was very pure and pleasant, so I don't blame Frank for choosing it for his swimming hole. The next day we borrowed two canoes. Carol and Mom were in one, Dorothy and I in the other. We followed an attractive creek where we saw swans and turtles down to the Colorado River where we ate lunch, saw a swan with many young, and then returned.

The third day we toured the Texas capital building and visited the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Sanctuary. That evening, Mom got an all-organic meal at a special restaurant Dorothy had found. It turned out that they got their produce from the Boggy Creek Farm – the same one we had toured for Beyond Pesticides.

\* \* \*

Carol would not have any special birthday party until the log house her husband, Jim, had been building for eight years along the shore of Glen Lake, New York, was completed. It finally happened in March of 2004 (over two years after Carol's actual 50<sup>th</sup> birthday).

Once Carol gave the green light and specified the exact place and dates she wanted the party, Dorothy and I got in full communication to make it happen. I arranged for the rental of the "Sierra Chalet" in Soda Springs, California for eight nights giving us seven full days there. Carol wanted to bring all three of her children – Nathan, a freshman at Bowdoin College, Natalie, and her youngest son, Nick.. Dorothy would bring Duncan, Tara, and Tom. Then there was me too for a grand total of nine. The Sierra Chalet sleeps nine comfortably with two full baths. It had a full kitchen, dining room, living room with a wood stove, and a basement. I made all of the deposits and payments in my name, and Dorothy paid me back half later. She and Tom made arrangements for all of Carol's travel tickets. Tom gets ever so many free miles on United because of all the travel he does for his job with Sun Microsystems.

Carol was flying from Albany, New York to Chicago, then to San Francisco, and finally to Reno, Nevada. Dorothy told me exactly which flights Carol had from Chicago to San Francisco, and then to Reno, so I was able to purchase my own tickets on those same flights. On March 19<sup>th</sup> the flight from Chicago to San Francisco was beautiful with hardly any clouds. We had a great view of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada Mountains and everything in between! Our flight to Reno on a much smaller plane was quite nice too. We had a great view of Lake Tahoe coming in.

In Reno Carol had rented a full sized SUV with four wheel drive. We were to head west along I80, past Truckee to Soda Springs, but we weren't sure there was an exit at Soda Springs. Because of that, we got off the interstate at Truckee and took the winding, much slower Donner Pass Road until we reached the flashing yellow light and finally made it to the Sierra Chalet in pitch dark. Dorothy, Tom, Tara, and Duncan were all there to meet us and very glad to see us. Dorothy and Tom had purchased a lot of organic food in this all organic store in Truckee and we all enjoyed supper together.

The next two days we spent at the Royal Gorge ski area. The first was a lot of all kids ski races. The second was the main reason Carol came here: the "Gold Rush" cross country ski race. Carol entered the 50K "Gold Rush;" Nate, Dorothy, and Tom entered the 25K "Silver Rush;" I entered the 15K "Bronze Rush;" and Nick entered the 6K "Junior Rush."

Carol, Nate, and Nick all won medals within their age groups for their races. Dorothy, Tom, and I were just grateful to have completed the course. That evening we all enjoyed a dinner in Truckee.



The next day we tried downhill skiing at “The Sugar Bowl”. There was over ten feet of snow on the ground so even though it got over 60F in the afternoons, it dropped just below freezing at night. This meant the morning skiing was excellent, but by the afternoon, it got quite slushy. The Sugar Bowl had four high-speed lifts and a number of good runs. It was only 10 minutes from home by car.

The next day in the morning (with good skiing) I accompanied Nick and Duncan on a 6K XC ski at Royal Gorge to a refreshment hut and back. In the afternoon, we all drove through Reno to Virginia City, Nevada – an historic old mining town. There we visited an old church, took an underground tour of a mine, and visited a number of shops and museums.

Then, since we had two cars, we split up. The ladies and Nate all went back to Reno to shop, but Tom, Nick, Duncan, and I drove back a totally different way. We visited Carson City, Nevada’s capitol, and then drove home along the scenic shore of Lake Tahoe. We had supper at a Chinese restaurant. The hostess greatly admired (Asian) Duncan.

The following day we visited Squaw Valley where the winter Olympics was held several decades ago. It has been greatly built up since then. Since then, Squaw Valley has been built up extensively (a single day adult lift ticket cost over \$65). In addition to an excellent gondola, they have a large tram that can lift 30+ people to the upper lodge at a time! One of their high-speed lifts is a hex that will carry up to six people in each chair. At the upper lodge, they have a heated swimming pool, a large spa hot-tub, and an ice skating rink as well as the usual gift shops and restaurants! At Squaw Valley I paid for a group ski lesson, but received an individual one!

That evening I treated Carol, Dorothy, Nate, Nick, and Tara to supper at Tahoe City. Tom and Duncan were skating at the rink in the upper lodge at Squaw Valley.

The next day it got considerably cooler and started to snow. After a brief tryout of runs at the nearby ski club, Dorothy, Tom, Carol and I all returned to home the Sierra Chalet. Carol, Nate, and Tom drove back to Reno to shop, while Dorothy, Tara, Duncan, Nick, and I stayed at home maintaining a nice fire in the stove, then shoveling all the new snow off the deck (and having snowball fights).

After the snow, Tom could not move his smaller – non four wheel drive – van from our driveway and was very worried about having to buy/rent chains. That final full day we got to downhill ski at the Sugar Bowl in fresh powder.

There were many ski tracks way up through the rocks by steep peaks where I would never dream of skiing! Both Carol and Dorothy loved skiing down into the powder and often taking tumbles in the soft snow.

Nate claimed he was sick (but was really making Carol’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday cake). That evening was Carol’s 50<sup>th</sup> party with the cake!

Carol took her lesson from my 50<sup>th</sup> and dowsed all the candles in a glass of water without even trying to blow them out (only half of them were trick candles). The streets had been plowed and the sun had melted a lot of the snow, so Tom had no difficulty getting his van out the next morning.

My brother-in-law Tom had enough free air miles from his job flying all over the world for Sun Microsystems, to offer me the opportunity to fly out to Oregon and “boo” my youngest sister Dorothy for her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 15, 2005. It was a fun, event-filled weekend in which I watched my Korean nephew Duncan, who had just won his junior black belt, practice Tai Quan Do, play softball and volleyball, played with my Korean niece Tara not only musically, but saw her perform great flexible

acrobatic tricks, got “lost” in the swamp, jogged each day, mowed their lawn, attended Dorothy’s great birthday dinner where she opened her presents, and paddled in a dragon boat – the Wassabi – which Dorothy founded in honor of paddlers with breast cancer where we scattered many flowers in the river.

## VIII 2007 – Great Trips, Then Mom’s Tragic Stroke

### Chapter 11 – Belize then Mom’s Stroke

In March, 2007, we truly celebrated Dorothy’s 50<sup>th</sup> birthday by taking a trip to Belize and staying at Carribbean Villas on the beach at Ambergris Caye (for the second time in over 30 years). Of course Dorothy’s complete family was there with Tom, Duncan and Tara. Carol came but brought only Natalie with her, and I came with Mom. Mom didn’t want to go on skiing trips, but gladly accepted when we invited her down to Belize.

There we snorkeled, visited the Mayan ruins on the mainland, fished, went bird watching, enjoyed meals at several good restaurants, relaxed, swam, and enjoyed ourselves. One afternoon I went windsurfing (for the first time in over 7 years), and was able to sail around and return (without being rescued).



Carol, Dorothy, Mom



Duncan, Dorothy w cake, Carol, Natalie



Dorothy, Carol, Andy, Mom at restaurant

Just before we left Belize, Natalie and Andy went biking, she climbed a coconut tree and was able to drink the milk fresh from the coconut!

In June, 2007, Andy attended the Unitarian Universalist annual General Assembly (GA) at Portland Oregon, and visited Dorothy.

I found the GA quite interesting. There were endless meetings, and I got to meet David Korten, the author of *The Great Turning* and one of the founders of *YES Magazine* – an ad free quarterly magazine of powerful ideas and practical actions which I still get.

\* \* \*

We were very lucky that Mom got to enjoy Belize in March while she still was healthy because that next July she suffered a very severe stroke. She could only speak a few words and move only her left side while most of her right side was paralyzed. However, both her eyes were open; she could smile, read, recognize us, and understood most of what we said. After two weeks at Evanston Hospital, she slowly recovered at the Mather Lifeways Pavilion at 820 Foster Street in Evanston, IL 60201, just east of the Foster “L” stop.

The initial diagnosis with a cat scan in the emergency room was a devastating stroke of the left side of her brain. A large blood clot from atrial fibrillation (fast and irregular heartbeat instead of proper pumping in the top part of her heart) had totally shut off the main artery to the left side of her brain. However, a subsequent MRI/A showed that Mom had remarkable secondary circulation through the many smaller arteries around her brain so the damage to her left-brain was much smaller than was originally estimated.

To help her recover in the hospital, a temporary peg feeding tube was installed to her stomach (Mom had pulled out the uncomfortable nose feeding tube before they could hook it up). In her living will, Mom had requested that no “heroic measures” be taken to keep her alive after a severe illness or injury. She was always frowning at all the IV tubes on her left wrist, and toward the end, she was pulling to remove the feeding tube.

Initially after she was discharged from the hospital, at Mather Mom had her tube feedings stopped and was placed on hospice since we all assumed she would soon die without food. For minimal “pleasure feeding” we bought some organic fruit sauces and baby food. Both of her daughters: Carol – an orthopedic surgeon from upstate New York; and Dorothy – a hydro geologist from near Portland Oregon, flew in to visit her. I helped every day.

However, again Mom surprised us by eating a lot more than anyone ever thought possible – at least three 4oz containers three times a day! She was feeding herself with her left hand (even though she is right handed) and was sitting up in a wheelchair at least once a day! On a nice sunny day, Dorothy and I wheeled Mom over three blocks to a nearby park in Evanston where we read to her for over half an hour. With Carol, Mom was wheeled to the lakefront on two other days.

Due to the large amounts of food Mom was eating, the hospice nurse suggested that we return her to Medicare so Mom could receive physical, occupational, and speech therapy. This was all arranged and the forms signed. Mom was learning many more words, and working on strength. On Sunday, September 9, 2007, Mom was able to attend the Unitarian Church of Evanston for the meeting of the Green Sanctuary committee, the “crackerbarrell” discussion group, and the first formal worship service on the 2007-08 year. She planned to attend about every Sunday. She attended the first evening NOHA



lecture. To get her there and often to church, I ordered the Medi-cart – a van with a lift for a wheelchair – to pick her up and take her back. Dick Whitaker took over as Chair of the Green Sanctuary Committee.

The fall of 2007 I was kept very busy attending to all of Mom's financial matters as well. All of the many different investment funds she has for a trust (for which I am the first successor trustee) as well as personal, I had to send lots of paperwork in to properly gain control of them.

In late November, 2007, I took a trip out west to celebrate two birthdays – mine and Tara's – as well as Thanksgiving with Dorothy and her family in Oregon.

In all the even years, all the Fishers can gather together to celebrate Christmas together (in the odd years, Dorothy and Carol join their in-laws). In December 2008, we all gathered to celebrate Christmas with Carol, Jim, Nate, Natalie and Nick in upstate New York.

Carol and Dorothy took Mom for a skiing trip by pulling her in a sled at Queensbury School.



Two Grannies – Marjorie and Annie



Tara, Carol, Mom, Andy, Dorothy

After the first stroke, there are still at least two major possible setbacks: First, the atrial fibrillation which caused this stroke in the first place is still not completely under control by medication, so Mom could have another stroke at any time now, and second, with all of the food she was slowly swallowing, some of it can silently go down into her lungs and cause pneumonia. Mom didn't not want any antibiotics or another feeding tube, should this occur.

She got visitors as well as cards and/or flowers. Due to her great popularity not only with NOHA, but with fellow church members – particularly those on the Green Sanctuary Committee which Mom chaired – as well as several choir members who have sang hymns to her on two occasions, the Evanston Inter-Religious Sustainability Circle, many of her local neighbors, her grandchildren, the Evanston Food Group which is working on an organic “Talking Farm” in southwest Evanston, the League of Women Voters, and others, the entire south wall of her room at Mather is covered with cards!

In early 2008, Mom suffered a second stroke and shortly after passed away. She did NOT want to be hooked up to an expensive machine to be expensively maintained as a “vegetable” in the hospital. Several months later, when both my sisters Carol and Dorothy could conveniently come to Chicago, we held a nice memorial service for Mom at the Unitarian Church.

## **IX Healthy Lifestyle and Educating the Public**

### **Chapter 12 – Exercise, Nutrition, Chiropractor, Acupuncture, plus Education About Issues**

#### **Biking**

Freedom from an auto definitely encourages much more riding around on one's bicycle. It also encourages much longer distances to be biked – the 145 single day Milwaukee Ride with the Evanston Bike Club, the STP double century (200 miles in two days), and many Century rides – 100 miles in one day. Many of my daily rides are over at least 50 or 60 miles. During the warmer seasons, I do many of my shorter errands around town by bike. When I worked in the Loop (Downtown Chicago) and up at Abbott Laboratories, during the summer I would often commute by bike both ways. At Abbott they had a nice shower, but in the other places, I could simply take a sponge bath in the men's room. Almost every time I visit my dentist for teeth cleaning, I bike the 10+ miles there. This has kept me in great shape physically, and spared me all the costs of trains, busses, or taxicabs.

Unfortunately, after an epileptic “gap” as I was riding my bike in full traffic on Sheridan Road as it curves from going around Calvery Cemetary, and I fell on my left elbow. I had to have orthopedic surgery and extensive rehabilitation for over three months. For the last three years I haven't ridden my bike or downhill skied. I'm back on my bike in the spring of 2018.

#### **Running**

To help keep in shape I have continued jogging regularly – at least 2 to 3 times a week all year. When I was living with Mom and Dad on Garrison Avenue in North Evanston, we were only one block from the Peter Jannis Community Golf Course which ran on both sides of the North Branch Drainage Canal from the Baha'i Temple to the Northwestern Railway commuter tracks next to Green Bay Road. By running the length of the Jannis Golf Course, I easily ran at least four miles. Later I would extend my runs to include Gilson Park in Wilmette – under Sheridan Road, by the boats in Wilmette Harbor, all the way to the end of an old stone/concrete pier into Lake Michigan which separated Wilmette Harbor from the beach where all the Hobbie Cats (including Bill Luksha's) were locked on the beach. These later runs along the golf course AND through Gilson Park were closer to five miles!

After my operation for the epilepsy in January, 2016, I was prohibited from ALL exercise for at least three months which definitely included running. It was my resuming the exercise too soon which caused the aneurysm and the need to operate again. After carefully only walking for six months, I've began running slowly in 2016 with nothing bad (yet).

After I moved out to live in my own studio apartment (for the second time) in 1997, and was on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor of the new high-rise above Whole Foods on Chicago Avenue in downtown Evanston, I did my regular jogging on Evanston's lakefront from the northeast corner of Northwestern University's landfill south all the way to at least Clark Square – on the lakefront just south of Main Street. From my apartment along the lakefront and back was about five miles. While I had been running on the golf course, I learned that running on the grass both uses up more energy, saves your knees in old age and makes your ankles stronger. Every time I've been running the Evanston lakefront from both my old studio apartment and my new condo (since October, 2002), I have been running on the grass.

#### **Walking**

Unfortunately, these days most Americans cringe at the thought of walking more than a couple of blocks. They have been so used to going everywhere in their cars. I have walked to and from the Unitarian Church for Choir rehearsals, North Shore Choral Society Rehearsals, Church services, and Men's group.

To church is about eight blocks and takes me only 15 minutes. When I worked for Tim Good, I walked from his place to my apartment which is at least two miles. It's also at least two miles from my Mother's on Garrison Avenue in North Evanston to my Apartment or condo in Downtown.

There was one Indian doctor at the Unitarian Church who claimed that he walked from Wilmette (the suburb north of Evanston) to downtown Chicago with a stop at the beautiful lakefront campus of Loyola University, Chicago – a total of about 15 miles. He claimed in a “Crackerbarrel” church discussion group that walking was a lot like meditating. In 2003 I spent one weekend afternoon for over 3 hours walking from Evanston to Downtown Chicago at the John Hancock building (at least 12 miles)! Returning from Jury Duty at the Daley Center in the Loop on Wednesday, October 3, 2007, I walked over 13 miles home in three and a half hours!

#### Working Our Regularly at Health Club

LA Fitness health club, I use to go there twice a week until they closed. Now I have an elliptical machine at home I used during the pandemic. Our condo has a health room with machines and weights.

Before going on our trip in May, 2013, to the Florida Rowing Center to celebrate Carol's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, Carol gave me a “present” of learning to scull properly at Northshore Fitness and the Alliance Rowing Club (at Lake and Ridge in Wilmette). Sculling is very basically similar to rowing except the seat slides and most of the power from your stroke comes from pushing with your powerful legs while your arms are totally straight. The basic pattern is to “reach, rock, and row”. After I returned from Florida, I had really got to know and like my rowing coaches – Brian Easter and Ron Boi – and my fellow student Warren Levins. All year we work out inside at the Wilmette studio on Concept Two ERG machines, but during the warmer weather, we scull on the north drainage canal launching at the Oakton dock. Sometimes we make it the 3.5 miles to the Baha'i Temple and back.



Andy at Baha'i Temple 11/22/13

It was Brian Easter from the Alliance Rowing Club that recommended that I start seeing his Chiropractor friend, Dr Den Duke, at Elite Wellness. I've been seeing Dr. Duke for about six months now. He took some X rays of me when I first came in, then took some more last week. He is extremely favorably impressed with the improvement for a person of my age. My height has increased from 5' 10 and 1/4" to 5' 11". Besides seeing him twice a week, I exercise regularly, eat nutritious food, and get acupuncture treatment. I do not take any drugs other than those three prescriptions needed for my epilepsy.

With urban sprawl which drives more people to use cars, our expressways are "parking lots" during rush hours. Think of all the wasted energy and potential productive work hours that are wasted with so many people caught in traffic jams! A person riding a mass transit train can read the paper, sleep, or work on the day's requirements on their laptop computer, by reading, and/or writing. To a lesser extent, any carpooling which could be worked out would help.

Most all the scientific community as well as many politicians now accept that all the CO<sub>2</sub> that we are spewing into the finite earth's atmosphere is having some effects. These would include more violent weather storms, a rising of the world ocean level as the polar ice caps melt, and a drowning of valuable low lying islands and coasts. With so many more people in Asia – particularly India and China – demanding cars, and with such little or low environmental regulations in those countries, we will soon see massive pollution and its effects. These include particulate matter and asthma, as well as global warming.

With more reckless drivers, auto insurance – particularly in urban areas – is bound to continue increasing. My mother was amazed at the reduction in auto insurance rates when we moved from the Oakland, California urban area to Manhattan, Kansas.

Fuel costs are now at a record high and are bound to continue increasing. Over the next 20-30 years, a barrel of crude oil will increase to \$150 to \$200 from the current \$60. This is primarily due to the great demand on world oil supplies from the blooming economies in India and China – both with HUGE populations.

It is VERY IMPORTANT to spread information about: (1) food and chemical sensitivities, (2) nutrition, and (3) how you can avoid high medical costs by simply changing what you buy, use, and eat. This productive knowledge should go to the public at large because almost all medical insurance plans after (2012) will **no longer cover** hospitalization in an "ecological unit" like the one I stayed in under Dr. Randolph in 1977 for close to one month with full medical insurance at that time. Instead, today people have to learn how to test for food and chemical sensitivities on their own at home in order to learn what foods and/or chemicals they should avoid, healthy lifestyle changes – such as regular exercise – they should adopt, and/or very effective-but-cheap alternative medicine – like chiropractor and/or acupuncture in order to get well (without any expensive medications, many with very negative side effects).

The Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) was a large union of all the Unitarian churches in northeast Illinois, southern Wisconsin, northern Indiana, southwest Michigan and east Missouri. The active members are mainly from the Social Action and Green Sanctuary committees.

UUSJ had several task forces: (1) Economic Justice and Homelessness, (2) Environmental, (3) Peace, and just recently added (4) Prisons and Restorative Justice. Each task force can send out "action alerts" (see description later), hold meetings and do as much as possible to help their cause. I am Chair of the Environmental task force and have been for over ten years. We mainly wrote and issued



environmental educational inserts to be sent to all the churches in UUSJ as well as many environmental organizations. Several we have sent out are on Eating Organic Food, and Bottled vs Tap Water (tap water is much better), and Recycling Update.

Action alerts were sent via email to many in the UUSJ who wish to receive them. Whenever there was a specific pending political decision regarding any task force's area, they often decided to issue an action alert. The specific letter with the bill number or issue was composed and sent by Allan Lindrup, our action alert Manager. Late in 2011 the Environmental task force issued an action alert to President Obama urging him to oppose the Keystone XL Pipeline. In 2013 we sent out one urging more state regulation of fracking, and another encouraging renewable energy.

I was also Communications Director for the UUSJ. This means it is my responsibility in the Fall, Winter, and Spring, to gather reports from every task force, a "Chair's Corner" from the current UUSJ Chair, and any other important announcements such as Board Meetings, and combine them into a neat, two-column, six (or eight) page newsletter. Allan often sent me corrections and additions. All of these people receive the newsletter electronically. Allan also is current Chair of UUSJ, Chairs the Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force, was Treasurer, and was a member of all the task forces. UUSJ could not have existed without Allan.

Unfortunately, due to lack of young members, UUSJ was dissolved in January 2023, and merged into Unitarian Universalist Action Network of Illinois (UUANI). I designed the Environmental section of the UUANI website so many of our old UUSJ environmental education pieces are not totally wasted. <http://www.uuani.org/environmental-justice>

By far my largest and greatest accomplishment in spreading worthwhile, useful, information on nutrition and the prevention of disease is the website I have designed and managed for the Nutrition for Optimal Health Association (NOHA) – see description in section about designing websites with my company, Superior Sites. After Mom's tragic stroke, NOHA was taken over by Mike Stroka and was renamed the American Nutrition Association (ANA). All of the nutritious and environmental articles that I posted on the NOHA website are still available as archives on the ANA website, but the ANA website is managed by someone else.

Most of this information is unavailable to the general public through the mass media because it is controlled by their large corporate advertisers and sponsors. As I mentioned previously in the section about staying in Dr. Theron Randolph's "Ecological Unit," the root causes of many chronic diseases, such as cancer, come from a lifetime of tiny exposures to "safe" low doses of many common chemicals and/or to many common foods. These chemicals are all around us in this modern, industrial age – in soap, perfume, cleaners, plywood, pressed wood, and in all pesticides. Naturally the large, powerful companies who make and use these chemicals do not want the truth about their harm to get out for fear of losing profit.

I greatly admire the founders of NOHA, because they refuse any financial support from and large companies or foundations. This gives them the freedom to present the truth on many subjects which would not be available elsewhere. This is both in the lectures they present and in the articles they publish in their quarterly newsletter, *NOHA NEWS*.

The NOHA website I formerly managed contains many pages:

- One is on the upcoming programs or lectures,
- One lists and describes all the audio and video tapes you can purchase of past lectures,
- One describes an option to have a box of fresh, organic produce left weekly on your doorstep,
- One describes our program to teach teachers to teach nutrition

- One is an order form to buy tapes or past issues of *NOHA NEWS*,
- One is a membership page containing all the text boxes for new members to fill in

But by far the largest and most extensive page is “Newsletter” which contains links to our on-line library of over 280 *NOHA NEWS* (now renamed Nutrition Digest) articles. It contained three index pages, Subject, Name, and Chronological. By far the largest and most extensive index is the Subject index listing one hundred forty four subjects alphabetically in three columns.

I have written an extensive Access database program with, several routines in Visual Basic, to decode and then to count and report all the “hits” logged on every page – both unique and total for every *NOHA NEWS* article – on the NOHA website. The last period I ran it for was for the twelve months previous to last November, 2006. For that report, it counted 31,104 hits total hits and 11,517 unique hits to the main home page! Several of the articles got over three thousand hits. One on oral yeast infections go over 37,000 hits!

However, after Mom’s first stroke NOHA was sold to a different manager who has renamed it the American Nutrition Association (ANA) and has hired a new webmaster. Also ANA gets much of its financial support from large foundations and companies, as well as membership, so I’m afraid that future presentations will not be nearly as free and unique. However, you can still access all the old *NOHA NEWS* articles via my subject, name and chronological index pages online at my personal website for Superior Sites [www.SpueriorSites3.com](http://www.SpueriorSites3.com) . Scroll down the main page to the fifth website shown.

The Talking Farm is an organic farm planning to grow and sell organic produce from an area near the sanitary canal in the southwest corner of Evanston. I am just starting to volunteer there.

In 2011 The Talking Farm finally purchased a decent sized piece of land to grow organic food on and educate others how to do so. It is just southwest of Evanston on Howard Street on the south side about five blocks west of McCormick Blvd. In 2011 I went out there several times in 2011 just to help them clear unwanted weeds, bushes, and small trees away.

### 1. Our Family Fishwood Page

The first webpage I started designing on my own is our “Fishwood” environmental homepage. How we got the name is amusing. My youngest sister, Dorothy, has changed her last name to Atwood, but my middle sister, Carol, who is a doctor, decided not to change her name to Underwood since there are several quite negative future implications from that name. Whenever Dorothy wrote personal notes to Carol, she used the half-in-half name “Fishwood.”

I started it in the “my space” on our AOL connection. It now is at [www.puregrassrootsinfo.org](http://www.puregrassrootsinfo.org) . I’ve added a neat graphic program which has five green apples following the cursor wherever you go.

### Growing Power in Milwaukee, WI – Orgainc food for the Poor in a Food Desert

Will Allan – a black basketball star – started a unique and positive way to grow good organic food in a “food desert”. This is a low income area where any good nutritious food is miles away. He employs low income youth in growing organic food instead of pushing drugs and/or joining gangs. They grow and sell good organic food year round using effective plastic hoop greenhouses. Will Allen has also developed an effective, low-cost Aquaponics system which allows him to grow fish and use their feces as good fertilizer for the plants. It is totally circular and self-feeding so he never has to buy fertilizer!

I met Will Allen in person over fifteen years ago when they were just getting started. Now they are famous nationwide (and hopefully worldwide). A couple of articles about them have been published in *Yes* magazine. He is described at: <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2012/willallen>

I've also supported Growing Home, an offshoot of Growing Power, here in Chicago.

2. Edible Evanston from Evanston 150

Evanston has celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. For this reason Evanston 150 was formed to work out and decide the best ten ideas to improve the city. One of these ten ideas was “Edible Evanston” to encourage more local organic gardening and farmers markets, and to teach good nutrition. I joined Edible Evanston and am Co-Chair of the Education sub-committee. I've been to several meetings so far at the Ecology Center, and several good ideas have been discussed, but no action taken yet.

3. Black Lives Matter and Keeping an Eye on President Trump

Every Sunday after the church services, a number of members line up along Ridge Avenue holding a smaller “Black Lives Matter” sign beside the very large one for our church. About one in four cars going by honk to approve of our signs.

Now that he is sworn in, we should spend even more time and effort properly social networking to make sure President Trump doesn't roll back too many of our social, health, and environmental rights.

4. My Serendipity Sermon at the Unitarian Church on Clinical Ecology

Every year at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, for the past 12 years Rev. Bret Lortie, our senior minister, submits an item at the live serendipity auction – the winner gets a complimentary lunch and can describe and submit a subject for Bret to give a total service and sermon surrounding. Because (1) the title of this autobiography is to spread the truth about food and chemical sensitivities – how much the large food, drug and chemical companies are slowly harming us without any of us knowing, and (2) my mother left us a very generous inheritance, I decided to bid over everyone else and get the sermon this year – 2017 to 18 – which I did.

I spent a lot of time putting together a notebook from (1) the table of contents, the introduction/summary and the section on my stay in Dr. Randolph's “ecological unit” from this autobiography, (2) many pages from the introduction and summary “who is to blame” from Lynn Lawson's book *Staying Well in a Toxic World*, and some philosophy articles from The Land Institute – based in Salina, Kansas to find much more perineal instead of annual ecological and sustainable agriculture. This has much deeper roots to both survive droughts and hold the land together against both dry and water erosion. Bret and I had a nice lunch together at KOI in January where I gave him this notebook to study, and he just presented my service “Precious Earth, Precious Lives” on March 25<sup>th</sup>. I got praise from many people, though Bret deserves it just as much for putting the sermon and service together.

## X Trips following Mom's Passing

### Chapter 13 – Trips 2009 to 2014

I visited Carol, Jim, and Nick in August, 2009, where we hiked, canoed, biked, and sailed.



Andy canoeing on Glen Lake



Andy on bridge that Jim helped to build.





Gorgeous Sunset over Glen Lake on last evening

I got to ski as well as celebrate Thanksgiving in Oregon with the Atwoods in November.



Dorothy playing our beautifully rebuilt Steinway Patent Grand piano.





Andy and Dorothy with Mount Hood

Carol, Dorothy, and I agreed to spend the 2010 Christmas gathering in Oregon where we skied. Nate, Natalie and Nick joined us.



Jim, Tom, Nate, Andy



Carol, Andy, Dorothy



Jim, Nick, Nate, Natalie, Tara





Carol with beautiful trees, sky and snow



Riding up lift with trees totally covered with snow



Dorothy and Andy XC skiing on golf course

In March, 2011, to celebrate my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, Carol and Dorothy gave me a cruise to the British Virgin Islands (BVI), which has already been described with photos in the “Sailing with Bill Luksha” section earlier starting on page 60.

Again, in November, 2011, Dorothy and Tom invited me over for Thanksgiving, the multiple birthdays, and to run and hike. We also got an old 32 mm projector, and saw some of Mom’s early life movies that had been stored away in the attic for so many years in the theater Tom had built in the attic.

In late October, 2012, I took a week-long trip east to visit Carol and Jim in upstate New York. Then Carol and I drove east to Cambridge, Massachusetts for the memorial service for our Uncle Roger. Dorothy and Nate joined us in our hotel suite for this trip, then we met almost all of our first cousins, and almost all of the second cousins (like Nate) got to meet for the first time since they were truly mature!

In the first part of this trip at Carol’s in New York, Jim and I took a bike ride over to Lake George. I helped Carol and Jim pick and preserve their home grown pears. Jim could make delicious juice from the pear peels. The glass jars had to be boiled then wrapped to cool slowly over 24 hours.

After Carol drove me east to Boston, on that beautiful clear day we walked the “Freedom Trail”





Beautiful lagoon in the Boston Commons before we walked the “Freedom Trail”

The day before Uncle Roger’s Memorial Service, many cousins and relatives gathered. My cousin, Elliott, Roger’s oldest son, gave the main speech at the memorial service.

Later that day, all the cousins gathered for supper. This included Elliott, Nan, Peter, Carol, Dorothy, Me, Laurie, and Duncan. The next day Carol, Dorothy, Laurie and I met Frank for breakfast. We had a fascinating talk about computer education methods Frank had developed over 20 years ago!

After Carol had driven me back to Queensbury, New York the next day, Carol and I had a nice paddle through the swamp, the “northwest passage” over two beaver dams, and then all around Glen Lake.

Since my birthday (and Tara’s) both fell on Thanksgiving Day in 2012, Dorothy invited me out to Oregon for four days to celebrate. Since we had already scheduled our flights to the Florida Rowing Center in April, 2013, to celebrate Carol’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, on the first day Dorothy arranged a private sculling lesson for me in a marina in downtown Portland on the Willamette River.



Fortunately, the day of my sculling lesson was relatively clear and the sun was shining when these pictures were taken. The rest of my time there, it was overcast and or raining. It rained the entire day we were to see a game outside so Dorothy and I didn't go.

For Thanksgiving and our birthdays, we had Natalie (my niece & Carol's daughter) come up from San Francisco to join us. We also had Ron (Tom's brother) and Rebecca (his wife) as well as Phoebe (Tom's mother), Sandy, David, and their daughter, Kira.

Despite the bad weather, I enjoyed this trip quite well. I got to work out in Dorothy's gym a couple of times. On the one day it poured rain during the ball game, Dorothy, Natalie and I enjoyed watching the latest Alice in Wonderland movie by Walt Disney in the Atwood's new "Skybox Theater". They have consolidated all their storage to the north end of the attic so Tom has set up a huge screen with a projector and surround sound. Duncan likes to use it most of the time to play violent computer games, but at other times it can be used to watch any of the many digitized movies they have!

Since it was the Fisher's turn to gather for Christmas, we all got together at Carol's. There was thin Ice on Glen Lake, but Nate sculled on it all the same. Then we went XC skiing.

Cousin Charles joined Carol and Dorothy playing Christmas songs.



Charles, Carol, Dorothy & Andy – Fisher Cousins



Snow trims fine twigs

## Chapter 14 – Trips 2013 to 2018

Carol's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday trip to Florida Rowing Center and many other Activities in April, 2013

In the morning we went out sculling on the large lake with the coaches following us in motor boats taking many movies of us showing all of our bad technique.

Upon returning to the rowing center, our next activity was to attend a (sometimes very long) lecture about proper sculling, then to watch the individual videos taken of all twelve students that morning showing what each of us did wrong and did correctly.

Being a beginner, and not having developed any bad habits yet, my sculling technique was above the average! After the first two days (at the insistence of Carol and Dorothy), I requested a narrower, faster boat. They started me out on the widest, slowest, but least likely to tip over, boat. I could only row the length of their lake and back (about 3 miles) once each session. I got promoted to a narrower, faster boat twice, so by the end of the week, I could row to the end of the lake and back twice (about 6 miles).

Our second sculling session was from about 12:30 to 2:30PM where we could learn and apply all the sculling techniques we had learned about and seen on the videos. The coaches were there to help us in their small, white mini-launches.

This meant that from around 3PM on we were free to do and see whatever we wanted! Here is a list of our non-rowing activities. The photos follow:

- Sunday – we all meet and have supper at Peppermint Thai
- Monday – Southern Palm Bed & Breakfast, Wakodahatchee Wetlands with great bird life, eating at Cafe Luna Rosa, Delray Beach, Carol made us wade into the Atlantic Ocean in rain and dark.
- Tuesday – Seeing fish at B&B, speaking with and getting to know Brad & Cheri. Brad told us about the great Loxahatchee River canoe trip we took Friday and guided us!
- Wednesday – Robert D. MacArthur State Park, long boardwalk, Mangroves, Swimming in Atlantic, Sunset, Havana Hideout
- Thursday – The Morikami Museum and Japanese Garden, Pistachio (French) restaurant
- Friday – Canoeed with Brad in Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park, saw two alligators, Riverbend Park, Swam in Atlantic, ate at Guanabana, saw Harlem Ballet
- Saturday - Carol's birthday feast and party at B&B with Brad and Cheri



Dorothy & Carol at Peppermint Thai



Wakodahatchee Wetlands with great bird life



Andy with hot chocolate at Cafe Luna Rosa



Robert D. MacArthur State Park





Carol and Andy with mangrove trees



Andy and Carol with Atlantic



Robert D. MacArthur State Park – sun over inland water



Dorothy and Carol at Havana Hideout





Full moon over palm at Havana Hideout



Carol and Dorothy over bridge into Morikami Museum and Japanese Garden



Carol and Dorothy cross Twisted bridge



Carol and Dorothy on each side of the Kodai-mon "Ancient Gate"



Twisted bridge from across lagoon



Children playing in fountains when gushed higher



Carol, Dorothy, Andy at Pistachio French restaurant



Approaching arch bridge going downstream



Carol and Dorothy shoot waterfall



Andy and Brad





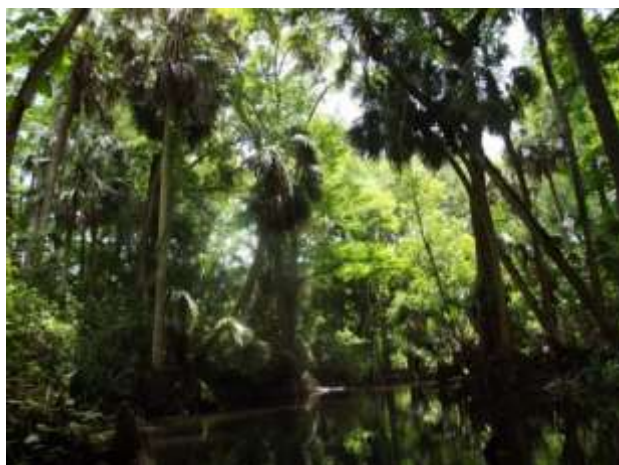
Low bridge ahead



Boat with beautiful overhead canopy



An alligator!!!



Beautiful overhead canopy



Tree with high and long vertical creepers



Six turtles sunning on a log



Carol at Atlantic



Wind boarding in Atlantic



Children on calm water from Guanaba's

On the last Saturday of our rowing camp, they were teaching students how to get back into overturned shells if they capsized. Also Richard stood up in his shell and paddled like a gondolier in Venice Italy!

Also, we bought many fruits, vegetables, meat, chips and (secretly by Richard and Reg, a birthday cake for Carol). This was for a final farewell birthday banquet to be held at Southern Palm Bed and Breakfast. Several of our fellow rowers were also staying there, and Dorothy talked Richard and Reg into coming too.



Capsized rowers trying to get into shells



Richard standing up with coach launch



Another capsized rower trying to get back in



Carol and Dorothy in double





Carol with her birthday cake



Richard, Carol, and Reg

In July, 2014, both Carol and Dorothy flew here to properly toss Mom's ashes.



Carol and Dorothy by Mom's Rain Garden by Unitarian Church of Evanston

In June and July 2016, I visited Dorothy in Oregon for a regatta with Carol and MUCH more.



George and Dorothy with medals and Mt. Hood





(above) Jim August 2016 with trail map; (below (sculling with Carol)



In 2017 I went on two major trips, one to each sister. The first was to Dorothy and Tom with my sister Carol during a regatta in June. Besides the regatta, canoeing the Tualatin river, hiking in Columbia River gorge, watching a scorer game and meeting Carol Pelmas, the main highlights were:



Many beautiful artistic birdhouses by David Britton – Dorothy ended up buying the one at left  
Seeing Natalie, Tom Marks, and the new gazebo Tom Atwood had just made



We saw iris in Japanese Garden, we also visited the Rose Garden on last day with Dorothy.



With Carol we first biked up a very steep mountain north of Schroon Lake. I then helped check Jim's wilderness trails in Glens Falls and Queensbury. I then paddled the swamp in Glen Lake with Jim:



The following morning I then sculled on Fish Creek near Saratoga with Carol:



Most of the rest of that day I indulged in going on the rides at The Great Escape. That evening, after a nice supper, we enjoyed a concert of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with an excellent blind pianist, Marcus Roberts, *An American in Paris* then after intermission, *Cubin Overture*, and *Porgy and Bess, A Symphonic Picture* by the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC). SPAC is very similar to Ravinia except the lawn audience can see the stage sitting on a steep lawn behind the pavillion:



After kayaking around Glen Lake the following day, I joined Carol and Jim for a 26 mile ride around Scroon Lake. The far side had a few difficult hills, but with the aid of “blood” – a hydrating drink Carol uses. I made it. Later that day. We all three picked lots of blueberries. The final day Jim, Chris, Carol and I canoed the Schroon River:



The Fishers all went to Carol and Jimmy's to celebrate Christmas in December, 2018. Everyone in the immediate family was there except Natalie. This was the first time I'd seen Nick in four years. He is studying maps from a different "story" instead of geographical point of view. Nate just got a new job. It was with a company designing new much more efficient batteries for electric cars and renewable energy.

The first day, Carol, Dorothy and I played Christmas carols with Charles.



After seeing a number of Santa's carved and painted by Jim Sr., we went XC skiing at Garnett Hill.

There were a number of shoes instead of stockings on Christmas morning. After opening presents, we went walking/hiking on several trails on the other side of Glen Lake. There were six people out skating playing hockey on Glen Lake. That afternoon we had Jim Sr. and Granny Anny over for dinner.

A day later we had Adam, his wife, Druet – aged 8 – and his sister all around Carol's table – a record 14 for a table meant for 6!





Jim Sr. Santas



My arm, Daughter, Druet, Duncan & Dorothy as 14 squeezed around table for 6!



## **XI – Abroad and overseas Trips At Last!!**

### Chapter 15 – Overseas Trips to Baja Mexico

In 2018 my epilepsy was under control so I FINALLY could use some of my inherited trust to do what I had always dreamed of doing – travel overseas to Europe on my own. I reserved a cruise through Grand Circle Tours in May from Amsterdam through Germany along the Rhine River by MANY castles to the Danube River into Austria to Vienna. I also reserved another trip through *National Geographic* “Walking England Coast to Coast” to see some of the lakes Arthur Ransome had based his *Swallows and Amazons* books on.

However, my first trip abroad was in February 2018 to celebrate Dorothy’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. My brother-in-law, Tom Atwood, Dorothy’s husband made all the reservations for us.

For Dorothy’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration – a couple of years delayed – we went to Baja Mexico to see whales, kayak, see sea lions, then see whale sharks all based from LaPaz. Natalie joined us, and Duncan joined us for the kayaking, sea lions, and whale sharks.



Andy and LaPaz



Cormorants on way to view whales – Sunset below



Whale steeping above - Sunset next page



Kayaking above

Dorothy with birthday cake below



Beautiful blue/green water above





Sea lions above – Sunset below





Final dinner: Duncan, Tom, Natalie, Dorothy, Andy, Carol – Sunset below



## Chapter 16 – Great River Cruise from Amsterdam, up Rhine, Danube to Vienna

My first trip over to Europe was in May, 2018. It started in Amsterdam, Netherlands, then continued mostly through Germany up the Rhine River, by so many castles, ancient cities, churches, through so many modern as well as ancient bridges, through over 60 locks, up the Danube River and into Vienna, Austria.



Old Amsterdam train station



Modern Amsterdam station with MANY bikes



*River Harmony* – our cruise ship

The weather in Amsterdam was TERRIBLE, almost constant rain. After arriving on a beautiful, high-speed (90+ mph) train from the airport, I did a little exploring on my own of the modern three arched train station and the old impressive two tower one. I am at the top of our hotel and saw a number of

churches. After finally boarding our beautiful, medium/small tour boat, *River Harmony*, we went on a wet tour of the canals and harbor in Amsterdam.

The weather improved as we started up the Rhine River through many modern bridges to Cologne to see the great gothic cathedral, the DOM, which escaped all bombing in WWII on May 2.

After going up the river to Koblenz, the best part of the cruise began on a clear, sunny day, May 3, with castles on both side. Here are only three of the fifty we saw:



Liebenstein after passing it



Katz Castle





Ehrenfels

The next day, May 5, we went up to Frankfurt and saw Heidelberg Castle:



Andy in Heidelberg Castle

There were so MANY castles, churches and bridges we saw on this trip I cannot show photos and descriptions of them all.

Another very important event was our “homestay”. Here just three or four individuals from our trip got to stay with a nice German couple or family for half a day. Our leaders selected about 40 interested

and willing German couples for the 120 members of our trip. We go to see their house and garden around it, and have a delicious meal with them. They learned a lot about us as individuals and we learned a lot about them – **MUCH MORE** than you do in generalizations in the news or even in books.

There are a few more I do wish to share with you. First was on the Rhine River, we did see a sculling quad shell which reminded me a lot of the Alliance Rowing Club at the north shore of Chicago at home. The next is this huge “Residence” in Wurzburg with a beautiful garden behind it:



Scullers in quad on Rhine River



Huge “Residence” with a beautiful garden behind it – May 6

On May 10 in Regensburg, we saw the brewer’s parade, then finally on May 13 in Vienna I rode on the oldest Ferris wheel in Europe. Note every other car is missing due to WWII damage.

To see ALL the photos from this great trip, with a long chronological index on the first page, click below:

<http://puregrassrootsinfo.org/Photowebs/GreatRiversOfEuropeMay2018/index.html>





Oldest European Ferris Wheel in Vienna – May 13

The last two are at the captain's farewell dinner on May 13, first of me and Rene, our blue group's leader, then of Robert Mulvaney, Jr. – my chess competitor.



Andy and Rene – our blue group leader – at Captain's Farewell Dinner





Robert Mulvaney, Jr. – my chess competitor

### Chapter 17 – Hiking England Coast to Coast, and Ransome Lakes

In July, I went to England on a different, much more physically challenging trip – thru *National Geographic* – to walk about 80% of the way across at the north end near Scotland from St. Bees on the Irish Sea to Robins Hood Bay on the North Sea.

I flew into Manchester then took the train to Penrith up in the rolling Lake District:



Sherry, Jo and Jennifer with lighthouse and Irish Sea

At the George Hotel in Penrith I met Guy and Laura (from Idaho – I showed them my Sawtooth photos).

The following day we went to St. Bees and according to tradition, dipped our foot in the Irish Sea. On the high bluffs above, the others rapidly gained on 80 year old Sherry and me. Sherry's daughter Jennifer, our leader Jo and I stuck together as the slower group. Sherry didn't hike the entire distance, and got lifts in the bus, but I hiked ALL of it – maybe a bit slowly. I got a final shot above the Irish Sea.

There was much purple fireweed on this trip. We also saw heather in bloom.

The first Inn we stayed at, I saw Sherry and Jennifer feeding horses.



Jennifer and Sherry feeding horses

We visited Wordsworth's pavilion, then hiked up a high pass to a tarn.



On the way down, we saw Helvellyn, England's third highest peak. Pete, our other excellent director had lots of experience hiking in high mountains, and accompanied me through these high Lake country mountains and passes. Sherry celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.



Pete – Our experienced hiking guide

After crossing a lake on a steamer, we made our last climb out of the lake country into the rolling moorland farm country. We first visited the Hawes Reservoir.



Rolling moor farmland – 7/19/18





Driving sheep with dog – 7/20/18

We were progressing over the rolling moorland farms. One day it rained so heavily a horse wore a raincoat. The totally mortarless stone walls were very common.

We finally arrived at Richmond and I climbed to the top of the castle.



View from top of Richmond Castle – 7/22/18





Old fashioned train we took a ride on – 7/26/18



FINALLY – the North Sea with bluffs above Robin Hoods Bay – 7/27/18

Following tradition, I took my pebble from the Irish Sea and threw it in the North Sea.

\* \* \*

While I was still in England, just after the Coast to Coast hike, I took the train back to Penrith via Manchester to meet Veronica Priest – the north region director for The Arthur Ransome Society (TARS) with which I had made arrangement to see the actual lakes in England he had based his famous *Swallows and Amazons* books on. The lakes are Windermere and Coniston and the *National Geographic* hike goes within ten miles of them (which was the main reason I had signed up for that hike in the first place), but *National Geographic* refused to alter their hike a bit, and suggested I see these lakes before or after it.

We had quite good weather for the hike all across England, (except when the horse had to wear the raincoat and we all wore rain gear). Unfortunately, for those two days I had to see the Ransome lakes, we had TERRIBLE weather and it either rained or had too high a wind to go out in a boat. Perhaps this is what I have to pay back for the excellent weather I had on the German cruise with warm sunny blue skies past all the lovely castles.

Veronica met me in Penrith. 7/27/18. Then we met Sophie Neville (Chair of TARS and Titty in the 1974 *Swallows and Amazons* movie).



7/28/18 – Andy with Sophie Neville and *Swallow*

We then tried to go out in the lake on Captain Flint’s houseboat, but it was blowing too hard so we just got to pose for a picture instead. Veronica and I had a nice lunch instead (it had started to rain), then went to a theater where they played *Swallows and Amazons*, then Sophie gave a talk urging others to join TARS.





Captain, Andy, Sophie, and Veronica in houseboat – 7/28/18



“Rio” on Coniston water – 7/28/18



Andy with Amazon – 7/29/18

That evening we drove to Coniston Water and had supper at “Rio”. The rain had somewhat cleared off and that evening was the best weather. – 7/28/18

The following day it was foggy again but we boated down to Peel Island (Wild Cat Island in the movie and book). – 7/29/18





South end of Peel Island looking into secret harbor

Later that day we visited the farm house that was Holly Howe in the movie. – 7/29/18



Holly Howe looking up the field Roger “tacked”

Chapter 18 – Biking Le Petit Train du Nord (the Little Train of the North) with Carol and Jimmy

My Sister Carol invited me to ride our bikes on a nice old rail grade in Quebec, Canada with her husband, Jimmy, in September – Le Petit Train du Nord (the Little Train of the North). It is 200K long but with 3 B&B stops so it would be no strain at all. I flew to Albany, sailed their Sunfish for a day on their lake, then we drove north. We stopped in Montreal to see the Biosphere – all that is left of the US pavilion in Expo 67, then on to Saint Jerome where the bus for ride starts.



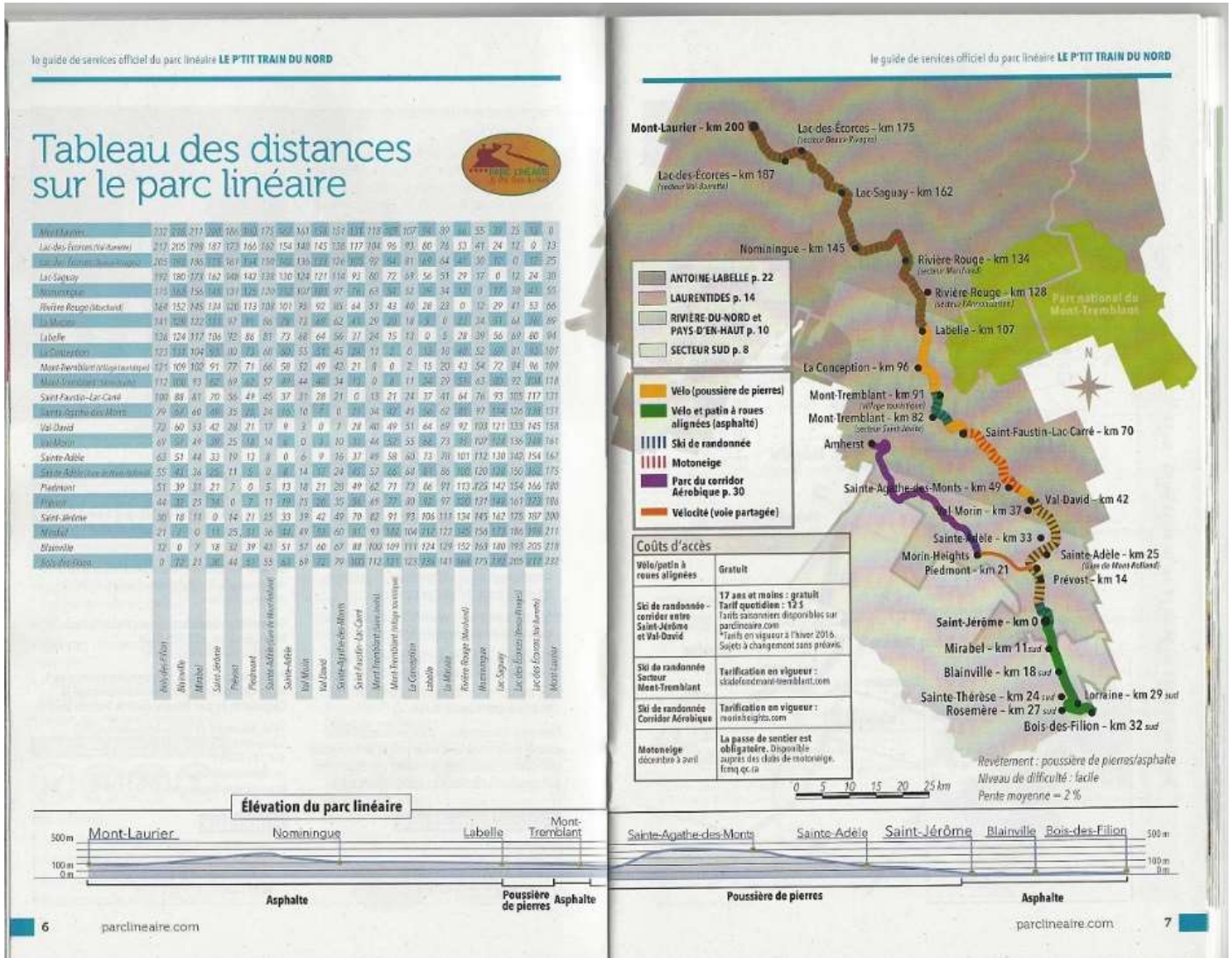
Andy in Biosphere in Montreal – 9/6/18



Sunset at Saint Jerome – 9/6/18



A bus drove us from Saint Jerome the 200 K north to the start of the ride. Then everyone filled up their tires, checked their bikes, and started south.



Map of trail with heights along bottom



Trail and small lagoon

Since September 7<sup>th</sup> is Carol's birthday, I told the management of our first B&B and they brought in a HUGE flaming cake!



Carol, Jimmy and huge flaming cake – 9/7/18





River Diable



Wetlands



Andy on bridge – 9/8/18

We continued south, over the highest “Everest” pass, to our last B&B and the finish.



Carol and Andy at the highest “Everest” pass





Sunset at last B&B



Carol and Andy at the end

Chapter 19 – Sculling then biking in Vancouver then BC, Canada (July, 2019), Sculling then biking in Vancouver then BC, Canada (July, 2019)

In July was a combination of three trips: (1) a regatta with my sisters Carol and Dorothy in Vancouver, Canada. The three of us sculled in a quad with a fourth coach. Thanks to my many weeks of training with the Alliance Rowing Club here, we did not come in last in any of these races I did for the first time! (2) The Kettle Valley Rail bike ride over many beautiful trestles and through a few tunnels. Both my sisters and brothers-in-law – Jimmy and Tom plus my cousin Jamie and his wife Tristin went on this ride. (3) Just my sisters and I saw the Grand Coulee Dam.



Regatta with quad



Andy on KVR ride





Beautiful trestle on KVR ride



Grand Coulee Dam

Chapter 19 – Trip to Peru, Equator, Rainforests and Galapagos – August, 2019

Through Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT) I flew south to visit Peru then Equator with the Galapagos Islands. The Peru trip was a previous extension and there were only three of us on it – Gloria and Don plus me. We visited Lima, Peru then Cusco with many historic churches, architecture and government buildings. We visited Ollantaytambo – another historic monument before Machu Pichu. We then flew north to join the rest of the group at Quito, Equator. We saw many historic churches and buildings there. We then visited the Amazon Rainforest on the Napa River at the green, independent Napa community. They generate their own power with solar and recycle or properly dispose of waste! We saw much wildlife, a bird blind, observation tower, and cultural living and cooking. We also saw a school and native ladies dancing. We finally visited the Galapagos Islands. We had our own boat to cruise in with many dry and wet landings. There was SO MUCH wildlife there: giant tortoises, sea lions, dry and marine iguanas, ever so many birds – blue footed boobies, herons, penguins, pelicans, and flamingos – only to mention a few.



Andy at Machu Pichu



Sparrows in blind





Group pose with children at their school



Giant tortoise at Galaapagos

Chapter 20 – Australia and New Zealand – December, 2019

We started at Australia landing in Melbourne. Much architecture, churches, buildings with history to visit there. We next flew to Alice Springs – much warmer and dryer. We saw sunset and sunrise. Much native culture along with the Ultra Ayers Rock. School of the Air allows remote rural children to learn via the internet. Then we flew to Port Douglas to see the Great Barrier Reef. Then a rainforest walk, and wildlife cruise. Next we flew to Sydney. We got a ferry ride through the harbor then a tour of the Opera House. We flew to Wellington, New Zealand. There we toured the lakefront, got involved in the native canoeing, the museum of New Zealand, went up the gondola, down through the Botanic garden, and got a tour of the government capital building. After flying to Christchurch, we drove to Hokitika visiting a sheep farm on the way. After visiting Hokitika Gorge, was a long bus ride to Queenstown where we got a boat cruise through Milford Sound then I jet-boated at Glenorchy. We then flew to Rotorua on the north island. After activities, we drove to an all organic dairy farm on the way to Auckland. We drove up to Paihia for two full days. First we got a cruise through the bay seeing sea otters and going up to Cape Brett. We then saw Waitangi Treaty House.



Andy at Ultra Ayers Rock



Andy at Sydney Harbor





Milford sound, New Zealand



Andy on Arapuni Pokaiwhenua bridge, NZ

Safari near Victoria Falls, Africa (sometime, 2021, rescheduled due to pandemic, to 2023)

.

## XII The Covid-19 Corona Virus Pandemic, then Trips After

### Chapter 21 – The Corona Virus and Coping

In early 2020, the Covid-19 Corona virus hit worldwide, rapidly spreading from mainland China to every other country. This was probably due to the extensive worldwide air travel and the fact that no-one was really prepared for it.

The extent it harmed other countries varied extensively depending on how well they prepared for it. The least harmed was South Korea, but the most harmed were the United States and Brazil. President Trump at first did not even acknowledge that it existed, and has never personally worn a mask.

We are all supposed to keep a “social distance” of at least six feet, frequently wash our hands for at least twenty seconds, and always wear a mask when within indoor public areas like stores or our condo hallways and post boxes.

Illinois Governor Pritzker and Evanston Mayor Hagarty have both issued very good, safe “lock down” orders: Initially, all non-essential stores have to be closed and all schools, churches, movie theatres, and sporting events closed and cancelled. This included our final North Shore Choral concert which was cancelled. It also included the Unitarian Church which was physically closed. Each Sunday service has been virtual electronic over our computers. This year I attended the virtual UUA General Assembly – five days in front of my PC. All of our choir rehearsals have been safe electronic virtual ones on Zoom, but we have still put together six virtual pieces: (1) *Set Me as a Seal*, (2) *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, and (3) *O Love*, (4) *Stopping in the Woods*, (5) *Torah Orah*, and (6) *Life Calls Us On*.

I wore a mask, but first made my own because they were in such short supply. I have “leg warmers” for bike riding in greatly changing temperatures. I start off wearing shorts, then these over my knees and ankles for the cool morning to protect ALL my legs. Then, just before noon as it is warming up, I remove my shoes, un-zip these, put back on my shoes and bike in shorts for the rest of the warmer weather. These leg warmers are woven very finely. So I just pin them behind my head and they make a great mask to cover my nose and mouth. Our condo building REQUIRES us to wear a mask in all the public areas. This includes the halls, elevators, post boxes, and lobby. The pool and hot tub are closed, but Omar, our custodian, lets me in there every Monday and Friday to water the plants.

The fitness room and LA Fitness are closed as well, but I’ve purchased my own “go elliptical” fitness machine for about \$600, assembled it, and now I have it here in my condo to use whenever I want! My chiropractor, Dr. Duke, did not shut down, so I walk or bike up to see him in Plaza de Lago, Wilmette every Tuesday and Thursday. I wear my mask in downtown and crowded areas, but take it off elsewhere. Whenever I approach someone else walking or running, I walk on the grass into the parkway to give them at least six feet social distance. In 2021, our condo FINALLY opened the pool and fitness rooms.

### Chapter 22 – Sailing again on Lake Michigan with Sherwin Dubren and Bill Luksha

Sherwin has a nice, VERY OLD 25 foot sailboat with a cabin which he docks and stores in Racine, Wisconsin. Even though it is a two hour drive up there from Skokie or Evanston where we live, Sherwin prefers it up there mainly due to the lower docking costs than Chicago or the nearer north shore.

Also, to reach Lake Michigan from his docking slip, you have to motor the sailboat with its tall mast under TWO drawbridges that have to open for you. The inner drawbridge will open directly on any signal (a hoot from your fog horn), but the outer bridge – with more traffic driving over it – only opens three times an hour – on the hour, at twenty minutes after, and at forty minutes after.



Inner drawbridge opening



Outer drawbridge opening



Andy on boat



Cabin in boat



Jib and mainsail



White lighthouse N. of Racine



Chapter 23 – Visiting Carol and Jimmy, summer 2021

By the summer of 2021, the pandemic had reduced enough for us to take trips within the US. From August 10 to 17, I took the overnight “Lake Shoe Limited” train from Chicago to Albany, New York. For the first time in over three decades, I rode in my private roomette. This not only protected me from Covid-19, but also provided a great horizontal bed to sleep in. I got a fair amount of good sleep but since my car was near the front of the train, the engine had to whistle at least two times before crossing any grade crossing, which kept me awake. You see so much more from a train than a plane.

With Carol and her husband, Jimmy, we did a number of things. Paddled their canoe on Glen Lake (Jimmy’s beautiful hand built log house is on the shore), sailed sunfish, sculled with Carol twice in



Sunset over Glen Lake



Carol and Andy sculling



Jimmy’s beautiful log house



Jimmy and Andy biking on 3 Lakes ride

Saratoga Springs, listened to a beautiful concert at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC), went hiking with Jimmy, went biking with Carol and Jimmy on a picturesque and vertical (for me in horizontal Chicago) three lakes 30 mile ride, rode with Jimmy over the 6 mile old rail pass to Lake George, cut wood

and built a “Hugel Kulture” for Natalie, and processed peaches for preservation. I got a bottle to bring home with me.

### Chapter 24 – Visiting Dorothy and Tom in Oregon

November 21 to 29 was for both our and Dorothy’s daughter (my niece), Tara’s birthdays and Thanksgiving. We celebrated the birthdays where they live in Lake Oswego – a nice suburb south of Portland. Dorothy’s husband, Tom’s brother, Ron and his wife, Rebecca, joined us for supper. I had a “cake” of 3 scoops of ice cream and a single candle.



Duncan, Dorothy and Tom at Duncan’s house



Andy and Three Sisters



Dorothy with turkey



Dorothy and Andy climbing Smith Rock

We then drove to the Atwood’s vacation house in Sun River, OR, over 150 miles away to the southeast near Mt. Bachelor. We had a delicious dinner with their other adopted son and my nephew, Duncan in his new house about 6 miles away. Even though we drove over through a terrible blizzard, the next two days were beautiful blue sky and we had great views of Mt. Bachelor, the Three Sisters and Broken Top. Thanksgiving morning I rented XC skis and went skiing up there with beautiful views. We had a great Thanksgiving dinner. I had a great time soaking in their hot tub there twice. We went hiking on Smith



Rock State Park and saw Crooked River Canyon. After driving back to Lake Oswego, we decorated their Christmas tree. Flying home, I had a beautiful view of Mt. Rainer and of Mt. Adams.

### Chapter 25 – My 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Trip (at last) to Hawaii – April to May 2023

Due to the pandemic, my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday decade rewards trip – where both my sisters pay for all the travel, housing, and food for me – was delayed from 2020 to 2023, but then it FINALLY took place. Because I had never been there, I chose to go to Hawaii. My sister Carol had never been there either.

My other sister, Dorothy, and her husband, Tom, recommended that we go to the big island, Hawaii, because it was so unique, with volcanos, waterfalls, an observatory, snorkeling and much more. The other islands are quite urban and similar to Chicago.

We started in a beautiful hotel in Hilo overlooking Coconut Island:



Carol, Andy, and Dorothy

I rode an electric bike for the first time in my life and went hiking in Volcano Park.





Tall Akaka Falls – twice as tall as Niagara Falls. Opaekala’ole Shrimp can swim up it!





Orchid



Artificial stream w waterfalls



Red flowers



Tree growing around rail.

All in tropical botanic garden – designed, grown; and given to Hawaii by a couple





I had never ziplined before. Here I am ziplining across a ravine for ½ a mile at 44 MPH!



Dorothy, Duncan, and Tom at Black Sands Beach





Carol, Dorothy, Tom, and Duncan at Luau festival



Carol, Duncan, Dorothy, and Andy at Luau festival



Dorothy and Carol with sunset



Dancing at Luau Festival





Andy by large Banyan tree (above), Sting ray (below)



## **XIII Communication Cures Loneliness for Two Larrys and I**

### **Chapter 26 – Regaining Larry Marx and Larry Johnson as Close Friends**

In December 2021 and since into 2022, I have regained my old high school friend Larry Marx for the first time in 55 years as a close friend. We are both still single, live alone, and get mutual enjoyment from our currently weekly phone conversations. Unlike most people in the US, Larry is trying to GAIN instead of LOSE weight. He has a nice, 30 year friend, Katie, who tries to keep him concentrated on a few things other than work.

It started in 2019 when I received the current ETHS alumni directory, saw Larry listed with his current mailing address in Maryland, wrote him a letter giving him a very brief summary of my life since ETHS in 1968 (which was over 3 pages). When I received no reply within a couple of months, I assumed that either the letter hadn't reached him, he lost it, or he did not desire my friendship.

Conceive my joy when I received a Christmas card from him last December. He had lost my 2019 letter, but then found it again recently. It's quite difficult for Larry to compose and write text. After several emails, we've set up an arrangement where we call each other every Tuesday. We are both very interested in science, engineering, history and MANY OTHER topics.

These weekly phone calls help both of our loneliness, especially Larry since he has no church or choral communities. Our phone calls last at least 1 hour 20 minutes and our topics include:

- Energy diagrams -- Livermore vs EIA
- Renewable energy via Renewable Portfolio Standard (state) and Community Solar
- The race to the moon and how China (and Russia) are a military threat to the US out there. The expansion of "the last frontier" for the US to defend.
- All the junk floating in space and the threat to the space station and to GPS satellites
- The moon is a good first step on the way to men on Mars
- The new James Webb space telescope, how to properly interpret the new images sent in human visible light frequencies and what true invisible frequencies they represent
- Is there life away from Earth?
- Communication to anywhere in the universe via (6 or 7) dimension Quantum Entanglement
- How unrealistic the sci-fi series Star Trek was
- How BAD the US education system is:
  - There are many more Chinese and Asian science students than US ones
  - So many US kids aren't interested in math and/or science
  - We need higher pay to attract good teachers from currently higher paying jobs in business
  - Find a way to lure coal miners to train for high tech "clean" jobs in renewable energy
- How Larry's job works with Excel spreadsheets and many variables being calculated at the same time!
- The rich and upper middle class can work at jobs and go to school virtually, the poor bus drivers, workers in stores, fast food restaurants and warehouses cannot.
- How do poor people commute? An example from Brazil
- Example of where Masterpiece's "Downton Abbey" was actually filmed
- It takes so long for a large (Federal or private) project to get designed, approved, funded, and finally built, it is usually obsolete by the time it's finished. This goes for "Green" energy, green roofs. A canal, dyke or drainage system.
- High speed rail is probably quite unlikely here in the US due to:

- Its high cost
- Length of time to build
- Far distances
- Difficulty in acquiring proper right of way with the needed (1) long curves for (200 mph) trains, (2) urban congestion for needed grade separation with bridges at every cross street, and (3) pre built stations with terminals (trains go in and out the same way)
- There are too many things to learn – indigenous culture and its many benefits to the environment – that there is NOT ENOUGH TIME to teach it all in high school. We need paid community colleges.
- Of the two types of workers in the US – white-collar and blue-collar – the white-collar tend to “look down their noses” and consider themselves “superior” to the blue-collar ones. That’s probably why President Trump won.
- Larry finally got his leaky roof fixed
- Andy donated power red blood to the American Red Cross
- This company using AI computers for drugs, can make lethal chemical weapons simply by turning one of the AI formulas “upside down”
- A whole lot about Ukraine, Putin, Russia, and China
- Larry’s plans and dates to retire, future consulting possibilities. It will depend on future money grants.
- Medical retirement coverage from Medicare, Supplemental and from Larry’s university.
- Larry’s articles, how he co-authors them then they get published.
- How to get Andy’s autobiography possibly published and to Larry – after Larry retires and will have time to read it. Probably with a PDF file on a thumb drive instead of an email.
- How to truly describe combined power generation, which is over 50% more efficient

And MANY others. It is now difficult to find a topic we have not discussed before.

\* \* \*

I re-gained touch with Larry Johnson, first with our Christian Science discussion group at the main Evanston Public Library with Marcia Kemp. After those discussions, we would play chess at the Unicorn Café. This was before the pandemic. Larry and I would often walk together north or south by the Evanston lakeshore.

After the pandemic struck, we would play chess over the phone every week, each having a board and stating the moves over the phone. Now that the pandemic has eased, we still play phone chess every Saturday evening when Larry calls me at 8:30 PM. We also get together in person on Sundays for a Potbelly sandwich, watching professional tennis while eating, then a full length movie. There are so many different movies from the past and currently being made, Larry has no difficulty finding a new one each week.

I’m sure that this weekly get together with both old Larry friends eases the loneliness for everybody.

## **XIII Positive Points – How to Improve the World**

### **Chapter 27 – Has Our Life TRULY Made This World a Better Place?**

The Main question in this section is, what have we done (or could we do) with our lives to make this world a better place in addition to simply enjoying our own lives (with vacations, more material goods, wealth, and/or power)? Are there any things that will BOTH increase our own happiness AND the happiness of others?

#### 1. Communication and Community

With the growing number of people in the US and the world, it is amazing how little people truly know each other with face-to-face (NOT text and/or social media) conversation. Every time I am walking down the street and/or riding on public transit trains or busses, almost everyone has their face on a laptop computer or an iPhone (or the ground) with little or no acknowledgement of people around them.

I've made it a habit of looking up and smiling at every stranger I meet on the sidewalk. Over half the time they at least look up and smile in return. Often we have very brief conversations of "Hi," "Hello," "Good Morning," "Good Afternoon," or "Great day." This is so much nicer than just walking by each other in silence.

If they are walking a dog and neither of us is in a hurry, I stop and (if allowed) pet the dog and ask a few questions about it. The dog walker is usually glad to engage in a conversation. This is a welcome break in the monotony of both of our walks.

After reading about the loneliness epidemic in the US from the book *Them – Why We Hate Each Other and How to Heal* by Ben Sasse, comparing it with my own lonely experience, and noting how little high-rise neighbors TRULY KNOW each other, I decided to spontaneously organize a pot luck party in November, 2018 for the 9 other units on my floor. Often high-rise close neighbors only know each other from very brief talks in elevators, by the mailboxes or even briefer passing in the hallway. I composed my invitation and idea, made 10 copies and slid it under my 11<sup>th</sup> floor neighbor's doors. In a couple of days I got two positive responses, and after knocking on doors, got two other positive responses from four people in two units! A total of six people joined me in the pool room.

On a much more important general level, now – in this era of the internet, laptops, iPhones, social media with texting, Facebook and Twitter – COMMUNITY with direct face-to-face contacts and communication is more important than ever. In our current urban areas with high-rise modern condo buildings with so many people jammed together into such a small area but HARDLY KNOWING EACH OTHER AT ALL, direct contact is dreadfully needed. Get to know your neighbors at parties and meetings. In nicer weather go outside and meet people in parks or on the street. Find out what issues are bothering them and you so we all can get together and SOLVE THEM AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL!

To make our US democracy truly work, we ALL HAVE TO VOTE in every election, no matter how bad and terrible the politics and politicians appear to be. In order to sell advertising, unfortunately the news media reports on only the BAD and/or TERRIBLE situations, and totally omit the good or "normal" ones. I've voted ever since I was able to at age eighteen. Since retirement with more time on my hand, I've taken the training courses and served as an election judge at least six times. You have to



set up all the equipment, check in the voters from 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Election Day, compile and broadcast your results, and put the equipment away. I'm so SAD TO SEE THAT EVEN IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, **ONLY ABOUT 30% OF THE VOTERS TURN UP TO VOTE!!**

## 2. Drama

Another thing that draws many very different people together is drama – plays (with no music) and operettas (with music, songs, and dance). As previously mentioned, when we were very young my sisters and I acted in JB, a modern setting of the Book of Job in a circus with two men playing God and Satan. Only two productions were planned, but it was so popular that a third production was staged.

Both my parents loved both plays and operas. After moving to the Chicago area in 1967, we saw a number of both, mainly at Northwestern. My dad loved the summer outdoor plays near the speech building at Northwestern. We saw several Shakespeare plays there. He also loved Gilbert & Sullivan – having sung a lead during high school in two of them: Lord Toller in *Iolanthe*, and Giuseppe in *The Gondoliers*. A nice G&S production group, the Savoy Airs, produced one G&S operetta every year and Dad, Mom and I attended many of them

Much later, beginning in 1988, there were four G&S operettas I by the Savoy Airs I actually performed in (as mentioned previously) – *Iolanthe*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and, ten years later, *The Mikado*.

## 3. Music

The single art form which draws the most people from very DIFFERENT cultures together, is music. My father was very musical, played the piano and sang. My mother sang in our church choir in Kansas as well. Both my sisters played an instrument – Carol the flute and Dorothy the clarinet – and I played the violin. We all loved to attend concerts as well as play.

My first true music production – after violin recitals in Kansas – was to play second chair second violin in the orchestra at Evanston Township High School's production of *The Music Man* under our music director, Alvin Mistak, in 1968. I'm afraid I've stopped practicing the violin.

But, I've already mentioned singing in the Unitarian Church of Evanston Choir and in the North Shore Choral Society. I've sung baritone in both of these groups under different directors for twenty years up to the present.

Not only to enjoy all the very different music – Afro-American spirituals, country, classical rock, as well as classical – I am in a very small part contributing to the positive musical experience of both all my fellow choristers in all our rehearsals, and to our audience during concerts.

## 4. The Environment and Social/Political Action

Perhaps the area I've contributed to the most is environmental education and improvement. Driven by my knowledge of food and chemical sensitivities and how little the medical, food and drug industries are doing about it from my experience with Dr. Randolph, I started the student environmental group at Northwestern University. Under President Reagan, most students only wanted to earn the most money and few were concerned about social issues. This was way before global warming and climate change. This NU student environmental group is still going.

To fund it, we needed aluminum cans so I picked up all I saw on the streets and sidewalks. I continue this habit to this day and have probably recycled over 800 cans. This cleans up the city and recycles the cans. It may not be much, but I feel it's much better than if I just walked by ignoring the cans.

Ideally, people should maintain their good health by nutritional prevention and to follow Dr. Randolph's "rotation diet," keep a food diary, eat mainly organic food, omit all perfume and cologne, and change to safe cleaning products. My mother helped found the Nutrition for Optimal Health Association (NOHA) and I was its webmaster. Many excellent nutritional articles are still online at: <http://superiorsites3.com/>. Scroll down to "NOHA NEWS Subject Index" to read them.

Besides Clinical Ecology and Nutrition, there are many other healthy, non-pharmaceutical means of maintaining and achieving good health such as a chiropractor and/or acupuncture. This all gives you good information about preventive health. You have the choice of whether to follow it or not.

When I moved into this condo building, I could feel the warmth of the incandescent bulbs in all the EXIT signs. Looking online, I found a source of LED lights just for EXIT signs. I bought some and replaced the lights in the EXIT sign by my door. It was no longer warm. The company will ship them free if you get over 100. I carefully counted the over 100 EXIT signs in our building. The old lights had to be replaced every three months, but the LEDs lasted over ten years! I finally approached the condo Board with these facts and the fact that the power saving from the LEDs would more than pay for the new lights in one year! They obviously went along and replaced all the old EXIT incandescent bulbs with these LEDs. This reduces the power consumed and assessment cost in the building for everyone!

For many years I was Chair of the Environmental Task Force for the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ). I also edited and mailed the UUSJ quarterly newsletter and wrote and managed the UUSJ website. We've issued a number of educational order of service inserts and pieces to show others about a number of environmental issues in such areas as energy, travel, water, cleaning, and how to make a difference. I also joined the Interfaith Criminal Justice Task Force.

After UUAI merged into the Unitarian Universalist Action Network of Illinois (UUANI), I designed the Environment Issue Group page, and many of these UUSJ educational pieces are online there: <http://www.uuani.org/environmental-justice>

Allan Lindrup was our Action Alert Chair. He also Chaired the Economic Justice and Homelessness Task Force. He was a member of most of the others including Peace, Environmental, and Interfaith Criminal Justice. He is currently UUSJ Treasurer.

Whenever the Environmental Task Force had an Educational piece to issue, I emailed it to over 100 people, but it was Allan who printed all the education pieces, the mailing labels, bought all the envelopes for the two mailings – Congregations and interested non-profit organizations. He counted all the printed education pieces, mailing labels, cover letters, stamps and envelopes then neatly puts all the material in two bags, one for the Congregations, and the other for the nonprofit organizations and brought the two bags to our Task Force meeting! As I said before, UUSJ could not exist without Allan.

The UUSJ issued many political "Action Alerts" to local, state, and federal politicians about upcoming bills which need support (or defeat). Our group may be small, but between both our education pieces and our Action Alerts, I'm sure we made some difference. UUANI is now continuing to issue similar alerts to politicians about social issues.

## 5. Summary

There is so much more to life than simply wealth and materials. Besides keeping yourself healthy through exercise and a proper nutritious diet, you get such a wonderful POSITIVE FEELING, so

much more than can be described in words, when improving the situation for others AND yourself in a win/win! Besides those situations already mentioned, there are so many more: (a) whenever long-time and/or good friends get together for a meal and/or mutually enjoyable activities such as chess, Cribbage, gardening in the bird sanctuary, moving furniture and/or setting up for the rummage sale, or moving boxes for the friend's move, (b) A rowing sculling club for trips as well as racing, (c) a bike club for short and very long trips, (d) discussion groups like Men's Group, a women's group, Forum, many covenant groups, (e) knitting clubs for women, and MANY others.

The greatest truth I've learned in this life is that to accomplish anything, you have to truly want to do it yourself, and NOT have it hammered into you by other people (Mom and studying homework). You resist that positive force and when you are free, you accomplish nothing. It took me fifteen years and Cindy from China to shame me into doing things MYSELF.

We always should try to correct the many problems around us, but we should also naturally ENJOY life at this current moment. FEAR gets you nowhere, but HOPE is what gives us the power to unite and solve the many complex problems in the world today.

There are ever so many problems and new issues we see that need work every day, it seems almost overwhelming, but we are beginning to see some progress. Many local communities want to be totally energy independent – running on only clean renewable energy by 2030 or 2040. There are groups in low income areas like Growing Power in Milwaukee and Growing Home in Chicago that get low income youth to grow and sell organic food in former “food deserts” which formerly had no grocery stores at all, instead of selling illegal drugs. Several large grocery chains like Whole Foods and Jewel have half their produce offered as organic. And at the federal level, there is the “Green New Deal.”

I won the Serendipity Auction sermon topic in 2017 before Rev. Bret Lortie left us. It was about food and chemical sensitivity, how little the medical, food, and drug industries are doing about it (to protect their profits), but the many cheap and complex ways each unique individual can cure these chronic symptoms. I gave him this graphic I'd done many years ago and he displayed it:

THE MORE YOU GET DONE  
SEE THERE IS TO DO

PARADOX OF  
PEOPLE  
PRACTICING  
POSITIVE  
PRODUCTIVE  
PROGRESS

ANDREW T. FISHER



### **XIII Much BEAUTY if you Pause to Appreciate it – Both Man Made and Natural**

#### **Chapter 28 – So Much BEAUTY, Artistic and Natural, Which We TOTALLY MISS**

So many of us are rushing through life, with our noses narrowly fixed on the specialty we work at, the current specific task we are doing, calling and/or texting on our cell phones, working on our laptop computers, or following which team is winning the ball game, even if we practice YOGA, meditate, or relax, many of us seldom appreciate all of the beauty – both natural and man-made art – which is constantly around us to enjoy. I wish to close by sharing with you only a few of these priceless moments of beauty I've opened my eyes (and camera) to experience so far in this life.

##### **1. – Man Made Art**

I've seen so much of it in my trips to India, China, Canada, and Europe (photos in previous chapters) There is also my friend, John Searles, who created the beautiful rotating triangle still in my condo (previous photo) plus the untold number of other artists – both professional and amateur – with beautiful creations. Here I would like to share only a few of the many works by a skilled amateur artist, Omar Kheschi. He is an auto mechanic and thus very skilled with his hands. He created many **artistic sand castles** on Lee Beach, Evanston. He used many different tools to carve steps, windows, doors, and create stonework lines. About every 10 to 15 minutes he sprayed all his art with fine water so it won't blow away.



Omar's sand castle on Lee Beach 7/17/2011

All of Omar's sand castles I've photographed are available online at:  
[http://puregrassrootsinfo.org/Photowebs/SubInx\\_ArtisticSandCastleSculptures.htm](http://puregrassrootsinfo.org/Photowebs/SubInx_ArtisticSandCastleSculptures.htm)

## 2. Natural Beauty

It would be impossible to even mention if not share here all the natural beauty I've seen. Already shown in skiing photos after a wet snow is the beautiful way the snow trims the thousands of small twigs. Here I will share a few of (a) flowers in the spring, (b) fall colors, and (c) sunsets.

### Flowers in the spring:



Blooming redbud in Evanston (above) and crabapples in Wilmette (below)







Red maple tree at East Prairie and Isabella

Sunsets 2011 through 2017









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