

Down the Hill and More

Wheeeee, I speed down the hill like I am flying. The houses fly past me and I cannot keep my little feet on the pedals of my tricycle. What a thrill, racing downhill on the sidewalk. My hands on the handballs, every crack in the sidewalk jerks me and I keep careening downhill. Gradually the hill eases, I put my feet back on the pedals and come to a controlled stop at the bottom, just short of the traffic speeding by on the cross street. I hear a scream from behind me and when I turn, I see my mother running down the sidewalk with a terrified look on her face. She grabs me off the bike and holds me close, tears running down her face. I smile and say “Again?” “Never again,” she gasps.

I was two years old and we lived in Chicago. That is the first thing I really remember. There are other blurry recollection of younger times but I do not know if I really remember them or if my mother told me about them.

My mother and father were born in 1910 and 1911 in Atlantic City and New Jersey. My father was an electrical engineer and my mother worked as a secretary before I was born. They lived through the Great Depression and that experience never left them. They were lucky they both had secure jobs and really did not suffer much, but they never forgot it. My mother told me stories about people standing in the cold waiting for soup in long lines and children selling apples in the streets of New York City where they both worked. She told me how her mother (I only knew her as Binnie) lost all of her small savings in the stock market and how her father said they would never invest in the market again. She was a great storyteller and told me many stories of her youth with her brother and two sisters.

My mother, Isabel Gertrude Phillips maiden name Down, was very pretty. I would not say she was beautiful but vivacious with jet back hair that had a white widow’s peak right in the front left of her forehead, maybe an inch wide and two or three inches long. She had very sharp blue eyes and a slim face; she was always slim and attractive. At five-foot-eight-and-a-half, she

was a perfect match for my father who was six-foot-one. They were both trim as was almost everyone in those days, it seemed.

My father, Leo Everett Phillips Jr., worked for CBS when the company was inventing TV. During World War II, he was deferred from the draft because he was working on radar. He always said he wanted to enlist but could not because of the work he was doing. He was lucky as he was not one who would have made a good soldier and like so many others would probably have been killed, and then where would I be?

Somehow my father was able to take a six-month leave of absence and we started traveling, first to Chicago where we rented an apartment for a while and then onward.

I cannot really figure out how they did it, but they bought a new car and a trailer. The car was a Packard, I think, and the trailer was a 30-foot silver bullet-shaped aluminum home on wheels. We set out some time around 1946 when I was almost three.

It is surprising how much I can remember about being that age. We left Chicago shortly after my second birthday and traveled west through Omaha, then to the monument of the four presidents, and then through the Badlands. I remember our trip in the Badlands because while going up a pretty steep hill, we got stuck. The poor old Packard just could not pull the trailer with its dolly and all up the hill, and we stalled. I was sitting in the back seat, my mother was next to my father and was very agitated. The car was slipping backward slightly. Just a little but you could feel it and it did not feel good. My father pressed on the brakes and pulled the emergency brake as hard as he could and the car stopped, kind of cattywampus on the two-lane road. No one else was in sight for miles and we had not passed anyone for a long time.

Backing down a hill with a 30-foot trailer connected to a car via a dolly is very difficult and not something I could do to this day.

We sat there for what seemed like a long time as my father and mother stared at each other. “Can you start the car and continue?” my mother asked. My father started the car and put it in low gear. He gently released the brakes as he engaged the clutch and tried at the same time to give it some gas. It stalled again and rolled back a little more before he could get the brakes set. I looked out the rear passenger window and the road had a steep drop on the left, which looked like it went way down, so far I could not see the bottom. I sat there as still as a mouse – stiller.

My mother and father were both quite anxiously looking at each other. “What now?” my mother asked sheepishly. My father said as calmly as he could, “Well, I guess we will have to back down. Can you get out and direct me?”

I stood on the seat and looked out the back window. I saw the trailer sitting at about a 25-degree angle facing left toward the precipice but still in our lane. I did not say a word, not even a squeak.

My mother got out of the car and walked to the back left side of the trailer. My father started the engine again and slowly released the emergency brake, keeping his foot firmly on the brake pedal. I am sure he was pushing very hard.

My father had become pretty adept at backing up the trailer with the dolly and all but this was going to be a real task what with the hill, the precipice, and the fact that it was about dusk. My mother waved at my dad not to do anything and ran back to the car, opening the back door and pulled me out. She said, “I want you to stand over here and don’t move, okay?” I nodded, she patted me on the head and resumed her station at the rear of the trailer.

My father turned the steering wheel and let the brakes off just a little and the car, dolly, and trailer inched backward. It was still heading for the drop but as he skillfully maneuvered the wheel, the trailer gradually swung back to the right.

We had to back down probably 300 feet and my father, with my mother's expert guidance, finally got to the bottom of the hill and managed to turn the car and trailer around. My mother ran back up the hill and picked me up and hugged me tightly and said, "You were a very good boy. Yes, you were." By the time we were back in the car and looked at the map for a better route, it was pitch black dark and the stars were shining like I had never seen before there in the Badlands of South Dakota.

We continued our odyssey through South Dakota to North Dakota then to Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park where we stayed for a week. Back then you could walk right up to Old Faithful, no guard rails or crowds. My mother said, "Now be careful and hold my hand, what is coming out is very, very hot and you do not want to burn yourself." "Yes, mommy, I will be careful," I answered and held her hand very tightly.

We continued to Utah's Bonneville Salt flats and parked in a lot by the flats. It sure was white and there were people racing their cars over the salt. My dad unhitched the trailer and we went racing down the very flat but somewhat bumpy salt at close to 80 miles per hour. Wow, that was really fast and my dad let off the accelerator as soon as he reached 80. That was fast enough for my mother and I think also my dad.

Next Nevada. Reno, *The Biggest Little City in the World*. Well, it sure was little back then. Reno was officially established in 1868, the same year that the transcontinental railroad reached the town. Built on silver from the foothills near Virginia City and gold in California, it was "on the way."

My mother and father were not gamblers (you could capitalize the NOT) and we stayed only one night. We stopped in Virginia City though and stayed three days looking at the old building: the capital of Nevada. Then on to Las Vegas for a night: not gamblers. We did have a nice breakfast buffet which was very cheap and very good. As always, we overate and felt pretty awful for the rest of the day.

By then the Packard started to have overheating issues and we had to stop every 50 or so miles to let her cool down and add water. We found a little gas station right on the road and asked the attendant if it was all right to go out back and shoot our Remington .22-caliber rifle, which shot “shorts”. It was a beautiful gun with a long hexagonal barrel and a pump action. My mother, who was always the very best shot, would go blink, blink, blink at the tin cans and bottles we set up (yes, they were real tin cans, not the aluminum cans we have now). They flew into the sky or cracked into a million pieces and then we set up a new bunch and my dad took his turn. Never as good as my mom, he missed frequently. Then it was my turn. My mother or my father positioned the gun in my little hands and steadied me as I aimed and fired. Miss. Miss. Blink, a hit. Boy, was I proud.

My dad was a member of the NRA (National Rifleman's Association). It was just a group for gun enthusiasts, not a bad word or a huge lobbying organization. Back then most people who lived in rural areas had guns for hunting and target practice. There were no problems in general, no school shootings, no terrorist attacks, not a lot of killings due to gun violence. Per capita there were about the same number of guns as today, but the times were very, very different. The country had not lost its innocence.

We stayed a week at the Grand Canyon. Boy, that was a big big ditch. We walked all the way down to the river and then back up in one day. “I'm tired, mommy. My feet are sore and I am hungry.” She took a sandwich from her knapsack and gave me water from the canteen. By sunset we reached the top and went to eat in the beautiful dining room in the lodge. The table was set with a tablecloth, cloth napkins, wine glasses and a very pretty vase with local flowers in the center. My mother got a glass of red wine, which was most unusual as she really did not drink alcohol. My dad abstained, but my mother drank the wine with her dinner and said it was very tasty.

My father got a temporary job offer in Salt Lake City, Utah to work with a team of engineers repairing a radio transmitter. This was right up his alley and too good to refuse. We hightailed it to Salt Lake. The job lasted three months and we lived in a trailer park just outside the city. At the end of the

job, my dad was offered another three-month job repairing the sound system in the Tabernacle. I was able to go with my father one day to see the inside, which was usually only allowed to Mormons. It was an enormous hall with risers on stage for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, which was rehearsing. The music filled that grand hall, and it sounded like a group of angels singing. Of course, I did not believe in angels anymore than I believed in Santa Claus. My father got the sound system all working in two and a half months so we were back on the road again with our pockets full of cash.

We crossed to California and saw Tahoe, an awe-inspiring lake set in a mountain valley with water as blue as the sky. It was November and the mountains around Tahoe were snow-covered and my dad was worried that we might run into snow on the roads, for which he was not at all prepared. We stayed three days by the lake in a campground but my parents were very anxious about the possibility of snow, so we pressed on to warmer areas.

We drove all the way down the coast through San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Barbara and on to Los Angeles. We stopped at almost all of the missions along El Camino Real, 19 in all, clear down to the mission at San Juan Capistrano.

In Pasadena we stayed in the parking lot near where a wonderful older lady lived, a friend of my parents from back East. Her husband had died before she moved and left her with a very comfortable pension. She took us to a quaint restaurant in Hollywood called the Tick Tock. It had clocks on every wall. I was amazed. "Look at all the clocks. Boy, it must be loud when they all chime," I said. And later, one by one or sometimes two or three at a time they went off and it sure was amazing; the food was good too. The Tick Tock was around until 1980, 58 years of chiming clocks.

From Pasadena we headed back to Arizona and once again, stayed a couple of nights in the Grand Canyon. It was December and my father was even more worried about snow. We left the Grand Canyon and headed for Flagstaff. And sure enough when we got close to Flagstaff, it was snowing, and got harder as we got closer. We found a trailer park near the city and

stayed there for four days while it snowed like crazy. I loved it but my parents were really worried. Pulling a 30-foot trailer in snow is no fun and not safe. The overheating problem we had in Utah was fixed with a new radiator cap. Evidently the one we had was not right for the hot weather. We sure did not have to worry about that anymore as it was cold and my dad was putting antifreeze in the radiator now.

On the fifth day the sun came out and by the sixth, the snow had pretty much melted; we were off again. We stopped at Carlsbad Caverns and watched the bats fly out. A big black mass, fluttering and whistling at such high frequencies that I was the only one who could hear them. The black mass took almost 30 minutes to escape their deep ebony hole in the ground. I thought the caves were a little spooky when we went into them during the day but at night watching all the bats flying out of the very cave I had been in during the day, well, I would not have gone with my parents if I had seen that first.

From Carlsbad we headed to Colorado where my father had a job offer from a radio station in Leadville, the two-mile-high town. My father's father, my grandfather Leo Everett Phillips Sr., got mail for my parents and would forward it to their next location. My dad would call and say, "Is there any mail? We should be in Reno in four days, can you forward it all?" Sure enough when we got to Reno, or wherever we were going, the mail would be waiting at *General Delivery* under my dad's name.

Colorado

Bang, bang, bang. Red ants flying everywhere. I had successfully destroyed the stronghold of the enemy. My mother yelled, "Barton, what are you doing?" "Just playing, Mommy." She stuck her head out the trailer door, saw me standing about four feet away from a smoking ant hill with red ants scurrying around gathering their wounded. I had a big smile on my face. My mother came out, picked me up and took me into the trailer for lunch.

We were outside Leadville in a pasture next to a hill with a radio station on top. That is where my dad was working. It was a CBS affiliate and he was the sound engineer at the station and sometime announcer. We arrived there a couple of months before at dark and my father pulled the trailer into the pasture where he was told he could park; pitch black dark with only the brilliant stars and no moon as our guidance. Dad set up the trailer as best he could in the dark and we settled in for another night on the road.

My mother screamed. It awakened me. I slept on the couch in the front of the trailer, which doubled as a bed at night. My mother and father slept in the back of the trailer. What was going on? My mother was screaming and the whole trailer was rocking back and forth. I sat up in bed and was scared also. I heard my father calming my mother. "It's okay, dear. It's okay. I'll take a look." She stopped screaming, my father came out of the bedroom and gave me a quick tussle on the head, "It's okay." "Sure, dad." He opened the door and looked out. There were three cows rubbing their backsides up against our trailer. Boy, what a racket and what a wild ride. He stepped out and yelled at them. They looked up with amused disinterest and kept on with their rubbing. I guess when you have an itch, you just have to scratch it. My dad picked up a broom and shooed the cows away. The rocking and scraping stopped and my dad came back into the trailer laughing and said to me, "Go back to sleep; it was just a group of cows doing what cows do. It is all right." I think it took a little more to calm my mother down and I felt the trailer sway to and throw a little bit more. Those darn cows.

The next day my parents were happy and we finished setting up the trailer for a longer stay. My father worked at the radio station for about a year and a half, I think. I remember him taking me to Denver and to Leadville when he was recording for the radio station. They would air highlights of basketball games. It seemed that every time Leadville played Denver in Denver, Leadville lost, and every time Denver played Leadville in Leadville, Leadville won. It was interesting what an additional mile of elevation did.

Next to our trailer home there was a patch of wild asparagus, which would spring up in Spring. I had never had asparagus and at first I said I did not like it. Of course, I had never eaten any before, but I was sure I was not going to like it one little bit. My mother was one who always said, “You don’t know until you try it. So try some and then make up your mind.” That was my mother all over, she tried everything and then made up her mind.

One time a traveling airplane show came and landed in our pasture. There were about 20 people there to see the single engine WW II plane piloted by a young good-looking man. He was charging anyone who wanted a ride in his two-passenger open cockpit plane one dollar, which at the time was a fair amount of money. My mother was the first one to take a ride. My dad watched, holding my hand and saying, “She is a real adventurer. She’ll be okay.” I watched as the plane ran down the pasture and swooped up into the air, rolled over once and climbed up up into the sky. Wow! The flight took about 10 minutes and then my mom was once again on terra firma. She laughed, ran over, hugged my dad and gave me a big kiss. “Wow, that was wonderful. I have never had so much fun in my life.”

Well, I ate the asparagus and liked it. So it just goes to show, you cannot make up your mind until you try it. That Spring we ate asparagus almost every day. It was wonderful and to this day it is one of my favorite vegetables, and that adventure is one of my best memories.

The Bad Decision

When I was five my dad did a really stupid thing. We moved to Salida, Colorado and he bought a bar. My father was an engineer. He was a good engineer, I would say he was a great engineer. He was a very, very poor bar keeper. He had no idea what was involved and he was not prepared.

We were living in a trailer park just outside downtown Salida. I had just turned five and was full of it, and it was fun. I had several friends in the park and we did everything young kids should and should not do. I particularly

remember the Fourth of July. Fireworks were legal in Colorado and you could buy almost anything. We got a few cents from our parents and went to the local fireworks store in town to buy strings of ladyfingers, the little one-inch crackers they sold in two-inch wide strings two or three feet long. Two crackers tied head to toe by their fuses in a long ribbon. We started at one end and untied each cracker, lit it with a match or a punk and threw them at each other. They made wonderful sounds – bang, bang, bang. We put the crackers into red ant hills and blew them sky high. We hated red ants and I guess they probably did not like us much either.

On the Fourth my dad and some of the other fathers bought sky rockets, Roman candles, sparklers and crackers for the kids. We went out to the field in back of the trailer park and set off the most amazing fireworks display I ever remember – all for under five dollars, per dad back then. My dad let me hold a Roman candle and swing it around. He was holding my hand while it fired but I was doing it. It was the very best Fourth ever. Nothing since has been as amazing as that night. I went to the Los Angeles Coliseum when I was maybe 13 but nothing will ever be as good as that Fourth in Salida.

My dad's bar, The Hitching Post, was right accost the street from a movie theater. On Saturdays I went to the matinée with a theater full of screaming kids and watched the 'bouncing ball' as we sang song to the words on the screen. "Rosie, Rosie give me your answer true, I'm half crazy all for the love of you," bounce, bounce, bounce. I sat there and sang along with the rest of the kids. Then they played the serials, *Rocket Man*, *Flash Gordon*, and some film about zombies in Africa and some evil scientist who was creating them from beautiful women and men. Each serial was about 15 minutes long and always ended with a 'cliff hanger'. The hero or heroin would almost certainly be killed or dismembered and just before it happened, "Don't Miss the Next Episode," and there we were waiting with bated breath for next week. One never saw the end of the series; it just seemed to go on and on forever.

Anyway, as I said, my poor father was not made to be a bar keeper and sure enough, he ran the sad little business right into the drink. He went bankrupt.

My mother, whom I think had a better grasp of finances, went to the local banker one night. She withdrew \$1,000 from their savings account. It was all very mysterious and surreptitious. I was sitting on the floor next to a small safe about three by three by three feet. The safe door was open and while my mother was engaged with the banker, I started to play with the dial on the front, twisting it this way and that. And then I pushed the door shut. Click, thunk. I pulled and twisted the handle but it was not going to open. What had I done? This is awful and I will get in a lot of trouble. I moved away from the safe and tried to play with my toy and look innocent.

After a long conversation, my mother and the banker turned their attention to me. I kept my head down and looked only at my toy. After a couple of seconds the banker got up and came over, rubbed my head and then bent down and opened the safe again with the combination. I had been so scared for nothing.

That was the winter of 1949 and my mother and I took a train from Colorado to New York to visit her relatives. Trains, buses and automobiles were the only way you could travel. We took the train from Salida to Chicago, to New York's Grand Central Station with many stops in between. My mother's mother and father still lived in New York City, and her two sisters and brother lived in Long Island and New Jersey. Her sister Betty Williamson lived on Long Island in a lovely three-story home in a very nice area. She had married quite well, a stock broker on the New York Stock Exchange, and had a girl and boy, Jane and Peter. Florence, the youngest, married Griggs Smith whose father became a vice president at AT&T. My mother's brother, Edward Down the second child, had just returned from the war in the Pacific. He was a captain in the Army and was one of the last to return home. He worked for Pepsi Cola as an executive and eventually became a vice president. He also had two children, Peter and Paula.

We got to New York close to Christmas and I remember my mother's father taking me to Macy's to see all the Christmas lights and look at all the toys in the beautifully decorated windows. Christmas music was playing over loud speakers and I heard "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer" and asked my

granddad, “Can you buy that record for me, please?” Being a good grandfather he said yes and we went into Macy’s and purchased “Rudolph.” When we got home, I played it on the gramophone over and over. Finally my grandmother Binnie said, “I think we have heard enough of that for now. Isn’t it time for you to go to bed?” My mother quickly agreed and put me to bed, but I could still hear the sweet song in my head as I drifted off to sleep - “all of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names....”

While at my grandparents’ apartment in New York City my mother gave the secret \$1,000 to her mother. She said, “Please don’t tell anyone about this. I will write you once I get settled. Remember, tell no one!” Her mother assured her that it would be their secret and she would never tell anyone. My mother was very scared about what she had done but it was almost all my parents had after the bankruptcy. My father got to keep his Packard and the trailer, but that was it.

After New York we went to my mother’s brother’s house and stayed with Ed and his wife Patty and their two kids. Ed was about five foot nine and looked every bit a captain and someone who should be in charge. His wife was maybe three or four inches shorter but a very pretty woman. One night close to Christmas we had a big formal dinner and Ed had a very fancy phonograph. I had my “Rudolph” record and asked, “Can we play this? It’s “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer”. Paula and Peter will like it.” Ed said, “Sure, we can put it on right away.” I produced the record and there was “Rudolph” again. And then again and again. I think we played it five or six times before the grownups suggested something else. We children loved it and danced around the room being very childish. Oh well, we were just children after all.

I remember Ed telling my mother how awful the war was and that he, as a captain, had to stay in Japan until all of his troops were sent home. He said, “Thank God Truman dropped that bomb; otherwise, I might not be here today. They estimated that an assault on the mainland would have cost an unbelievable casualty rate. Maybe hundreds of thousands killed and wounded. I know it was a terrible decision Truman had to make but I think it

was the right one, given the circumstances.” All the adults agreed, while we children just wanted to hear “Rudolph” again.

Two days before Christmas we went to Florence’s home in New Jersey. She was the youngest of the four siblings and was pretty, but not as pretty as my mother or Betty W. or Betty D. Her features were not as smooth or refined as the other three. She had a warm motherly look that one had to like. Her husband, Griggs, was shorter than she was by maybe an inch and I always thought in later years that he probably had a small-man complex. He was always a little too sarcastic and acerbic. He was also in World War II but he never made it higher than Corporal.

Florence had a very nice home, three stories and very nicely decorated with a huge Christmas tree in the big living room. It was the nicest tree I had ever seen with lights and ornaments and tinsel and an angel on the very tip top. The tree was probably seven or eight feet tall and perfect. Florence’s living room was a beautiful, a vaulted ceiling with the children’s bedrooms upstairs with a very attractive railing that let us overlook the living room and that wonderful tree.

Florence’s two boys, Kent and David, slept upstairs, and I slept in Kent’s room. He was the same age as I was. On Christmas Eve we were sent up to bed early and we sat on our beds and talked. Kent still believed in Santa Claus and we talked about Santa and when he would come down their very chimney and pop out of their attractive fireplace. I, of course, by three did not believe in Santa or reindeer, not even Rudolph. I tried not to show Kent that I thought he was naive to still believe. After all, everyone knows there is no Santa, reindeer or God by the time they are three, don’t they?

Christmas morning was an amazing event with presents and paper and music. I even got a couple of small presents. After breakfast we were allowed to play with our presents as our parents picked up the aftermath of the explosive excitement of unwrapping and screaming with joy. All in all, that Christmas was pretty good, even without my dad and being in a strange place.

On the second day of Christmas my mother and I went to visit Uncle Horace and Aunt Emma who also lived in New Jersey about an half hour away. Uncle Horace was a kindly old gentleman who, according to rumors, contracted gonorrhea from a toilet seat. At least that was the story, though many winked when they said it. Aunt Emma was an old fuddy-duddy who had to have every doily and ornamental dish in its correct place. When I picked up her precious doily she jumped up and said, "Please, Isabell, don't let him play with that." My mother said, "Come here dear and sit with mommy."

My mother, who was the oldest of her siblings, used to visit Aunt Emma in summer when she was a young girl. I always wondered if the aunt was as uptight as she was when I met her. Anyway, my mother stayed with Aunt Emma and Uncle Horace over the summer vacation and she was always very glad to get away from home. Aunt Emma took my mother shopping and one day she took Isabell to a candy store and bought several sweets. My mother, always a fugal person, ate one of the candies and put the rest away for later. When my mother got the candy stash out, her aunt took the candy away saying, "I bought those candies for you to eat yesterday. You should learn to enjoy things when you get them." This seemed like an awful thing to say and really set a very bad example. How are you ever going to save if you do not start when you are young? It is probably one of the most important things a person can learn: delayed gratification. It is hard but it is something one needs to learn young. Aunt Emma's example was not a good one!

Before we left, Uncle Horace, who owned a toy store, gave me two little boats, each about four to five inches long. One was a stately ocean liner with red smokestacks. The other was a four-inch tug boat. "Thank you, Uncle Horace. Thank you very much," I said. My mother beamed at my polite acknowledgment. We left and took the train back to the station close to Florence's home and she came and picked us up.

When we got to Florence's home my mother said, "Why don't you share your toys with Kent. Here, let him have the ocean liner and you two can play." Those were my toys. I did not want to 'give' Kent my toy. He could play with

it but it was mine and I said, “To keep?” “Yes dear, you have two and it would be nice to give one to Kent so he has a toy.” I have never forgotten that and didn’t forgive Kent as he snatched the shiny ocean liner from my hand. I would have given him the old tug boat but no, my mother had to give him my ocean liner.

Chapter 4: California. First and Second Grade

First grade in Los Angeles, California. I had just turned six and my mother, who was living with me in a boarding house run by a nice colored lady named Mrs. Parks, was working at Fox Twentieth Century in downtown Los Angeles. My father was still in Colorado finishing up the bankruptcy. He planned on joining us in about three months. He was allowed to keep the car and trailer but little else.

I had not been in kindergarten because Salida did not have one so I was thrown into first grade with a bunch of kids who had been in kindergarten. The school was about two blocks from the Parks’ place and I went to school with about five other kids that lived at the Parks’. They were all black and were the first black children I ever met. In general they were all very nice considering they ranged from six to twelve. The school was about 80-percent white but Parks was all black except for me and my mother. We had a separate room while the other kids were all in a single dormitory without their parents. The Parks’ place had a large backyard with swings, a big sand box and monkey bars. There was a grassy area of about 200x100 feet where we could run and jump and rough-house. We all ate breakfast together in a small dining room. My mother got me ready for school and then took the trolley on Sunset Boulevard downtown to Fox. We were only four or five houses off Sunset so it was a short walk.

Los Angeles had trolleys on almost all the major streets and the rapid transit system really worked. My mother could ride from Parks’ stop on Sunset to downtown for five cents and it only took a few minutes. No car needed, no gas, no insurance, no parking lots. It was great. We would take the trolley west on Saturday to a Chinese place my mother liked and she got shrimp

chop suey and an egg roll for me. We did this almost every Saturday; it was her one extravagance.

First grade was hard for me. Some of the kids already could read quite well and I could not. In fact, I have never become a fast reader and it has been a great disadvantage. Later in my life I thought that maybe I was a little dyslexic as I am a very slow reader and I cannot spell at all. The simplest words give me trouble. I will get them right one time and the next wrong. While in college I carried a dictionary everywhere and had to look up almost every other word to make sure it was right. Thank God for spell-checkers now, one of the greatest inventions of all time. At least for me.

I think I was a little rebellious in elementary school. I remember one time in first grade when we were playing with blocks. I had a pretty little girl as a partner and we built some really great things for six-year-olds. When the teacher said, "Okay, children it is time to put the blocks away, then we will practice reading," I threw the blocks in the wall cubical and then put a facade of neatly stacked blocks in front. The teacher, of course, was smart and reprimanded me for not stacking all the blocks "the way they should be stacked."

The Parks' living room had a two-and-a-half foot cabinet about four feet high that we all gathered around in the evenings. It was a 12-inch black-and-white TV, the first TV I had ever seen. At about five in the evening the test pattern disappeared and the 15-minute shows started. The test pattern was displayed for an hour before real programming started, so the viewers could adjust their sets so that the pattern filled the screen and circles in the pattern looked like circles and not like a crazy skewed oval. Adults sometime sat for many minutes trying to adjust the knobs to get the image to look somewhat okay.

At five o'clock we had cartoons and puppet shows: *The Howdy Doody Show*, *Time for Bennie* and *Crusader Rabbit*. There were about four of those short shows and then at seven o'clock the Nightly News with John Cameron Swayze on NBC or Douglas Edwards on CBS aired. We children were not interested in the news and were hustled off to bed around six after the kids'

shows. My mother and I stayed up to watch the news because we had our own room and I slept with her. She liked to watch the news and always said, “Now you have to be very quiet so we can see what is happening in the world today. Just be still, the news is for adults.” I actually enjoyed seeing the news of the day; it was sometimes very exciting. It was a long time before programs grew to 30 minutes and by then we were no longer at Parks.

Within three months my dad showed up and took my mother and me to a new apartment over a garage in the back yard of a home. He got a job at CBS in Pasadena as a sound engineer. Back to engineering and no more bar keeping. Hooray.

A year later, we moved again. No more trailers for us; we were apartment dwellers and rented a home in La Crescenta-Montrose, California, just north of Los Angeles and Pasadena. It was up in the foothills and you could see Mount Wilson, where the 100-inch telescope and all the radio and television antennas were. Where we lived you could look all the way to downtown Los Angeles and on early summer mornings you could see the little streamers of smoke from the myriad of backyard incinerators. The smoke went straight up for maybe 1,000 feet and then became a flat pancake above the stream. As the day passed, the pancake would become bigger and deeper until you could no longer see Los Angeles or anything below us. It was probably about 1,500 feet elevation where we lived and by evening, even we were in smog. Usually it would blow out overnight but the next morning, the same thing happened.

My dad was still working at CBS in Pasadena but he no longer had good things to say about his fellow employees or bosses. That was a pattern that started early in life and remained till he died. He started a job saying that everyone was great and his boss was wonderful, and everyone thought he was great and he thought everyone there was great. Then, after six months to a year, things changed. His fellow employees were all stupid and his boss was an idiot and management just did not have a clue. Then he would find a “better” job and we would move.

But by then, we were in a nice three-bedroom home that was only about three blocks from school where I started second grade. My second-grade teacher was Miss Smith and I thought she was almost the prettiest woman in the world. She was probably in her middle twenties with black hair, a slim figure and a sweet smile. I thought she was absolutely wonderful, the loveliest woman in the world second only to my mother.

I teamed up with a little kid named Bobbie. He and I met up on the way to school and took a shortcut through the wilderness. It was really about two acres of weeds, low bushes and stubby trees with a myriad of kid trails running every which way but mostly toward school. We ran around in the bushes and played hide and seek and Cowboys and Indians on our way to and from school. Bobbie decided because he was Bobbie, and not Bob, that I should be Bartlie and not Barton. That is the only time I let someone give me a nickname. Later in life people asked what I liked to be called and I always said, "My friends call me Barton." So I have always been Barton, not Bart or Brad or whatever.

I was always the tallest kid in my class all the way through high school and as a result, I never got bullied much. Bobbie was about two inches shorter, a lot when you are seven. I remember one time when a third-grader in the school yard was picking on Bobbie. He shoved Bobbie down. I ran over and helped Bobbie up, stood in front of him and said to the big boy, "Stop it. If you don't stop it, I will tell the teacher." He stood up to me and said, "So ,what are you going to do right now?" Bobbie and I both gave him a big push, he fell on his ass and stayed down as we walked, quickly, away. Bobbie and Bartlie. What a team!

In second grade we had "show and tell" each day and the kids were encouraged by Miss Smith to have something to share with the class. My mother got *Life Magazine* and one issue had a five-page spread about "Man on the Moon." There were great illustrations of people in space suits living in huge glass-domed buildings driving Moon Rovers and mining. I cut out the pictures and gave a really great presentation. I always liked science and had a pretty great vocabulary for a seven-year-old. I stood up and explained how

man was going to the moon and build a second civilization there and how they would send all kinds of rare and wonderful things back to Earth. They said in *Life Magazine* that all this would probably happen within the next 10 to 15 years. Boy, were they wrong. It was 1969 before we even got to the moon and placed a flag there and then we were gone. Almost 50 later and no domes on the moon and none planned in the foreseeable future, except in science fictions novels and a few movies. It is funny how fast we think and how slowly things really happen.

My mother had an old car, probably one from the middle 1940s, that she drove and called Betty. Poor old Betty had vacuum-activated windshield wipers and when it rained, the wipers swished back and forth when she took her foot off the accelerator and then almost stopped when she gave poor Betty gas. She had to constantly accelerate and then slow down just to keep the windshield free of raindrops so we could see. That Christmas we could look out our back window and see all the way to Los Angeles and along the way we could see Christmas lights and ornaments hanging from the lamp poles. We took Betty down to La Crescenta to go shopping. Christmas lights were everywhere and Rosemont Avenue, which ran down the hill from where we lived, was sparkling with lights. It was one of the most memorable Christmases I can remember. I do not remember what I got or really anything about our tree but the picture in my mind of all those lights running almost from our home all the way down to Los Angeles and beyond was like a brand on my mind, never to be forgotten.

But all good things come to an end and my father quit CBS and got another job in Lawndale, which would have been a real long drive back then, so we moved. I started third grade in Lawndale and we lived in what seemed like a dingy little apartment. That job did not last long and soon we moved to another apartment on the second floor and I had to change school right in the middle of third grade. This kept on happening until I was 10 years old and we bought a new three-bedroom home in Gardena. Then my mother put her foot down and said, "This is our home and we are not moving any more, I don't care if you have to drive 50 miles to work, this is it!" and boy she meant it and my dad knew it. He had just started an engineering job at Northrop, about

three miles north off Crenshaw Boulevard. My father was working on the Snark missile. It would fly at 600 miles per hour and could carry a thermonuclear weapon. My dad took me with him to work one Saturday and we went into a huge room with maybe 100 desks all with big Frieden calculators that made a horrendous clatter that was almost deafening. This was the time before hand-held calculators. It was the time of slide rules and the Frieden was the very latest in calculating.

I remember my father telling me about an older Chinese engineer who would not use the Friedens but instead used an abacus. My dad said this guy could do the math much faster on his abacus than they could on the new-fangled calculator. Of course, it was mostly brain power as the abacus was just a place to keep track of what you were doing.

When we moved into our brand new home at 2812 West 146th street in Gardena, California, I started fifth grade. I rode my bicycle the one mile to Chapman Elementary school. My teacher was Mr. Fandy, my very first male teacher. He was a great storyteller and related a wonderful string of fantasies each day. Story time was about a half hour and the stories were marvelous and stretched on for days. He was truly mesmerizing. Fifth grade was great as I was pretty sure we were going to stay in one place for quite a while. As it turned out, we stayed there until 1973, or at least my mother did.

I went with my class to the Griffith Observatory close by the “Hollywood” sign in Hollywood Hills. The observatory was a great field trip. We got on a bus and drove all the way from Gardena to Hollywood. The freeways were not finished at that time so we had to go most of the way on city streets. But when we finally got to the observatory, I had a spectacular time. We got to see one of the planetarium shows featuring the amazing Zeiss star projector. As the light went out in the auditorium, the stars flashed onto the ceiling creating a truly grand spectacle. The projector moved the stars around the sky showing the different seasons and times during the night. The constellations could be outlined with a flip of a switch and you could see the zodiac against the night sky. I loved the observatory and wanted to grow up to be an

astronomer. I have been back to the Griffith Observatory many times and I love it every time. It brings back many happy memories of my childhood.

Sixth grade was Mrs. White and I really did not like her. She was pedantic and thought evolution was simply bunk and how could anyone believe that man came from apes and that the earth was not created by God in seven days. By that time I had read a lot of Darwin and embraced science, and archaeology seemed to show that there really was something before 5,000 years ago. Every day we said the Pledge of Allegiance and then she said a little prayer so we all would not go straight to hell. In 1956 President Eisenhower added "In God We Trust" to an otherwise perfectly good pledge. I refrained from adding that phase to the pledge. Just stayed quiet.

Sixth grade was the end of elementary and I was ready for junior high. We did not call it "middle school" back then, it was seventh, eighth and ninth grade. And it was in junior high that I first fell in love.

Perry Junior High School was three miles from my house and I had to take a school bus. Most days it was to and from via school bus, but some days if I stayed late for some reason, I had to take the public bus. Once in a while I rode my bike. Junior high was different from elementary. We had different teachers and classrooms every hour. We started the day in home room where I first met Bill. We hit it off right away. "Hi, I'm Bill Harrington. Did you come from Chapman? I came from 156 Street School." "Yes. My name is Barton Phillips," I said. "Do people call you Bart?" Bill asked. "No my friends call me Barton" and there it was, no nicknames for me. Bill and I were friends through high school and kept in touch even after I went to college. Bill went to Arizona State but dropped out after two years. I went to UCLA.

The new routine of both male and female teachers, different classrooms every hour and gym classes was hard to figure out. It really took me all of seventh grade to get comfortable. Then in eighth grade I met Elsa. Her last name started with a 'P' as did mine and because of that we sat next to each other in History and English classes. She was very smart and pretty in a five-foot-two

sort of way. In eighth grade, girls did not have much in the way of curves but she had a pretty face even with glasses. We became friends but not boyfriend and girlfriend. That did not happen until high school when she developed curves and a very nice figure. As I said, Elsa was smart, she had a straight 'A' average. In junior high I was waffling around with a 'B' average and taking it easy without any real direction – still liked astronomy.

Bill liked Elsa also and by summer Bill, Elsa and I were going to the beach together with some other friends. It was a great summer and by fall, we were fast friends. While this was good, it was not so good that Elsa seemed to like Bill. That never interfered with our friendship but it did give me pause. How could I compete with Bill? He was a 'JOCK' who played football and was a great swimmer and diver. He was also holding down a 'B' average so no dummy. I would just have to tag along. And tag along I did. Bill's mother took us to the weekly dance held by Perry Jr. at the Gardena Community Center. There was always a band from the high school and we could dance if we could only come up with the courage to ask a girl. I always wanted to dance with Elsa but Bill and other guys asked first. I would summon up my resolve during a slow dance and ask, "Elsa, would you like to dance?" She was always gracious and said, "Yes, sure. The band really is good tonight, don't you think?" "You bet, I think they have a new piano player, and he is great." Just small talk, but I tried to hold her as close as was allowed at those school-sanctioned dances. There were always two or three teachers watching over their little flock of sheep.

I was in the 'mans' chorus in junior high and that is where I met Ken Shaffer, who played piano and sang, and we hit it off almost at once. Ken lived about a half mile from school and he and I walked to his house, and he played the piano and we sang and rehearsed the songs the 'mans' chorus was going to sing at the shows we gave at the auditorium. Ken and I also put together routines and auditioned for spots on the program. We almost always got places, not so much because we were good but because we showed up for the auditions. Ken was one year ahead of me but chorus was one class that had students from all three grade levels. When I was in ninth grade, Ken was already in high school. Even though he was no longer a little junior high kid,

we still hung out together and when I graduated, he was already there to help me fit in.

Ken and I put a skit together and we needed a girl to sing with me so we asked a very pretty 'girls' choir member if she wanted to join us. It is funny how it was the 'mans' chorus but the 'girls' choir. Anyhow, she was thrilled and we spent hours after school at Ken's house and her house practicing. "You have a lovely voice," I told her. "Well, you have a very nice voice also," she responded. She was in the same grade as Ken, and I think she liked Ken a lot because after the show the two of them became a thing for a while. We did another show later in the year and she and Ken did a duet from *Carousel*: "If I Loved You." They did it beautifully and I was very envious, they looked so good together there on the stage. But Elsa was the one I really wanted. I divided my time between Ken and his now-girlfriend and Bill and Elsa.

Elsa's mother and my mother both worked at El Camino College, a two-year junior college. Elsa's mother worked as a lab technician and my mother was secretary to the dean of nursing. The nursing program provided an 'AA' degree in nursing, which was not quite an RN level but very close and girls could become RNs with just a little time on the job. Elsa's mother took Bill, Elsa and me to the college's indoor swimming complex on some Saturdays, one of the perks of working at the college. It was a really nice complex that would have excited any four-year college. There was a separate diving pool, a warm-up pool, and a 100-meter competition pool with 10 lanes. Very impressive. We could swim for up to two hours and Bill practiced diving for half the time. Elsa and I swam mostly in the practice pool (25 meters and only five feet deep) until Bill finished diving. Then we all went to the big pool and Bill and I had 100-meter races. One hundred meters is a long way and it always took everything I had to keep up with Bill. He was not even trying. Elsa would sit in the bleachers with a towel wrapped around her and cheer us on. There were usually only four or five other people so we really had the pool to ourselves. "Look at that, I beat you," I shouted. "Are you sure you did?" asked Bill with a smile. I could never beat Bill swimming, at least not then. He would graciously let me win every once in a while. Elsa's mother picked us all up and dropped Bill off first as he was closest to the

college. Bill always got into the front seat with Elsa's mother and Elsa and I were in the back. I do not know if Bill did this on purpose because he knew how I felt about Elsa or because he was getting out first. Either way, it gave me a chance to sit close. Elsa always had a warm cookies-and-cream smell that made you just want to eat her up. On the way from Bill's house to mine we sat in the back seat and whispered to each other, "Do you think you can go to the dance on Saturday?" I whispered and Elsa answered, "I don't know, it depends on how much homework we get for the weekend. You know how my parents are. I hope I can go. I'll give you a call when I get home on Friday." I sat by the phone waiting for that call. When it rang I cried, "It's okay, I'll get it." Sometimes it was my dad saying he had to work late; what a disappointment. But sure enough, Elsa would call. If my father had not called yet, my mother shouted from the kitchen, "Don't be on the phone long in case your father needs to call." "Okay, mom." "Hello, Phillips residence," I said very politely in case it was not Elsa. "Hi, it's me. I don't have much homework so I should be able to finish it all up tonight, so I think my mom will let me go to the dance. Should she drive or will your mom?" "I think my mother will drive if that is okay. She said she needs to do some shopping and then she can pick us up at 10:00 when the stores close. She is out early Christmas shopping." Christmas shopping did not start until after Thanksgiving. No decorations, no music and definitely no trees. Today the Christmas stuff is out before Halloween, but not back then.

I liked to go to the school dance especially around Christmas. The band played a couple of Christmas songs, the slower ones that you could dance to. There were a couple of girls who would dance with me. I was not the best dancer but at least I did not have to look at my feet. What I was always waiting for was a chance to dance with Elsa. By Christmas in ninth grade Elsa was warming up to me a little and when we danced to one of the Johnny Mathis' songs, like *Chances Are* or *Unforgettable*, I held her tightly and she looked up into my face and smiled the sweetest smile. But all too soon 10:00 came and my mother was there with our magic pumpkin and we had to go home. I got out with Elsa, walked her to the door and she knocked. She squeezed my hand as the door opened and I delivered her to her mother or worse yet, her father who would glare at me. He was about five-foot-six and

partly balding, probably 10 years older than Elsa's mother. "Here you are, sir, all safe and sound," I said trying to be polite and affirmative. He whisked her in like I was the devil incarnate. Elsa's parents were very strict and she could never go out during the week; once in a while on Friday if she got all her homework done, and sometimes on Saturday. Never on Sunday when they went to the Presbyterian church.

In the middle of eighth grade, a very studious looking young fellow showed up at one of the stops the school bus made. He had a valise and wore a sports jacket. Not an ordinary jacket but a quite formal one with slacks, not blue jeans, and a white shirt and tie. What was this? The other kids on the bus looked stupefied as he got on. I was sitting by myself and indicated that he could sit with me. "Hi, I am Joel. This is my first day; we just moved from Montana." I politely greeted him and we sat next to each other the rest of the way and said nothing. When I got to homeroom, there he was with the teacher who introduced him and sat him next to me because his last name also started with 'P'. And from then on it was Elsa, Joel and me in every class that we shared sitting together. Joel soon dressed down a little, he lost the sports jacket and the tie (at least most of the time) but he still had the brief case and the slacks. Joel was maybe five foot five with black short cut hair; a little heavy with a really bad handshake. We had to do something about that. When he shook hands, it was like grasping a limp fish. Over the next couple of years I worked on getting him to shake hands like a guy. It was hard but he finally got it. I met him and his wife in Santa Clara at the University where he was the head of the physics department while my wife was still alive. We greeted and shook hands. It was a nice firm handshake; I taught him well.

Joel was the smartest person I ever met. He could read like lightning, was a whiz at math, wrote well and had a spectacular vocabulary. My own vocabulary was quite good as was Elsa's. We three were way ahead of our classmates, and Joel, who had been set ahead a grade in Montana, was way ahead of everyone.

In ninth grade I also hooked up with Even Steven Cole, who went by Steve in those days. Later in life he would be Even. Steve was another very smart kid.

He was kinda athletic and ran cross country in junior and senior high. He was also an actor. He was in the class shows all through high school and entered into many off-campus contests for acting positions in local plays. Steve was about five foot four or maybe five three and a half; slim, wiry and agile. Both Steve and Joel were Jewish; more like reformed Jews or even less. Their parents attended synagogue except on high holy days and they did not pay much attention to the Kosher laws. But they were Jewish and they were different from most of the kids. I was drawn to that difference and became lifelong friends with them. In ninth grade Bill found a girlfriend and did less and less with Elsa and me. Steve and Joel became part of our group through me and Elsa. Joel only made one 'C' all the way through high school, and that was in gym. Elsa was the only girl in the gang, and she made straight 'A's, even in gym.

When we graduated from Perry Junior High, Elsa was the valedictorian, Steve was second and poor Joel, because of gym class, was third. I was something like seventh or eighth.

Summer vacation was great after graduation. Steve and I or Bill and I took the 'Beach Bus' from Perry right down Lawndale Boulevard to Manhattan Beach. We spent the day in the sun and came back with the bus at about three. By the end of the summer, we were brown as a chocolate chip cookies. Once in a while, Elsa came with us when her parents knew that a parent was going with us to chaperon. They were ever watchful of the straight 'A' student. Elsa had a sister Mary who was a year and a half ahead of us. Mary seemed to have much more freedom than Elsa. She was a good student but not straight 'A'. She probably had a 3.7 grade average. Mary was pretty but not nearly as cute as Elsa, and was taller, about five foot seven. She had a very determined attitude and was not going to let her parents run her life like Elsa did. I would not say the two were close because they were very different. Mary would say, "You should go have some fun. After all, mom and dad don't have to know everything you are doing. Break loose a little." But Elsa was a 'good' girl and did what her parents said. Not Mary. I think she even smoked in high school, and who knows what else. When Mary

graduated, she went off to a well-respected college and was on her own. She did not even come home for Christmas or Easter.

Gardena High

In those days Gardena High was 70-percent white and 30-percent Japanese. I think we had maybe 20 black kids. The school was almost five miles from my house so it meant taking the school bus, or getting a ride with a parent, or getting a ride with someone who was already 16 and a half, when you could get your learner's permit. With that, you were allowed to drive directly to and from school without a parent. Bill got his learner's permit the day he reached that age. That was only two months into our junior year, so Bill picked me up in his 1929 Ford Model A roadster with a rumble seat. It was the slickest car on the school lot: painted white with red interior and a convertible top. We could get three in the front seat and two boys or three girls in the rumble seat. Bill picked me up most days and when he did not, I would wait for the school bus just down the block from where we lived. Five miles was a long way to walk but I did it plenty of times when I stayed late at school. You could catch a public bus but I walked because the bus was always dirty and full of people. It was a darned good walk from the school to Western Avenue and down past the card clubs all the way to Compton Boulevard (now called Marine Avenue), then a couple of blocks to my house. I always walked fast but it still took over an hour and a half; good exercise.

When I got to high school, Ken was waiting for me. He was in a cappella choir and wanted me to join. I spoke to my homeroom teacher and he sent me to my counselor who enrolled me in choir instead of wood shop. I talked Elsa into joining in the second semester of her junior year just in time for Thanksgiving and Christmas. We did Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" from the *Messiah*. There were 60 singers and sounded wonderful. We got a huge round of applause. We did several other Christmas songs, all very traditional, and then "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer". Will I ever get away from him? At practice it reminded me of when I was back in New York as we sang the song over and over until we got it right. "Okay, one more time from the second

verse. And remember, smile and shake your finger when we sing ‘never let Rudolph join in any reindeer games’. Okay, one, two, three.” We sang our hearts out and afterward our teacher went to the piano and played the ending chord saying, “That was pretty good but the bases are a little flat. Think up. Keep your minds thinking sharper.” We all nodded at the bases (I was a baritone or sometimes a tenor). But it happened to everyone eventually. “You have dropped almost a whole note. Please keep your chins and eyes up, that will help you stay on pitch.” We all looked at each other as if to say, “I was just following the rest of the singers.”

I was in a cappella choir for my junior and sophomore years; there was some rule that said you could not be in choir for the full high school period. Why? I asked. Who thought up that rule? I never got a good answer; it was just the way it was. Ken and I always did some skit or song for the school shows. I also did skits with Steve and a couple of other kids. It was fun being a part of a stage show. The school put on theatrical performances each semester and the drama class was in charge. You could be in the plays even if you were not in the drama class but it required after-school time. I joined drama class in my sophomore year and we performed *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Steve was Algernon Moncrieff and I was Jack Worthing (Ernest). It is a funny play and got a lot of laughs though I feared many of the students did not get all of the double entendres for which it is famous.

Jack (Ernest): “On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I’ve now realized for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.”

Cute? No. All of the double entendres in *Being Earnest* are pretty innocent as it should be for high school. All in all, it was fabulous fun and I, and we, and they, all had a huge laugh.

Earnest was the only play that I performed with the Drama Club but I went on with my duets, trios and quartets for every show that was put on during high school. After a while it was just assumed the Barton and someone else would be on the program. “Barton Phillips and Ken Shaffer doing *Old Man River* by Stan Freeberg.” I was ‘Stan’ and Ken was ‘Tweedly’, a censor, who

interrupted Stan every time he heard a word that was distasteful, starting with the first word of the song 'Old', "which some of our more *elderly* citizens find distasteful." "Elderly man river" I would intone. On and on it goes until Stan (me) just gives up. It was a very funny skit that I did several times at other venues with Ken and others as 'Tweedly'.

In my sophomore year I joined the school cheerleaders. Ken was the head of the team and I got my Letterman's sweater for being a member. Much better than having your brains beaten out in football or having your fingers jammed playing basketball. "Two, four, six, eight, who do we appreciate? Panthers, Panthers Yay, Yay, Yay." We yelled and jumped up and down at the football games. It was as a cheerleader that I met Dennis Frisbee and Barbara Garrett. Dennis was in the same class as Ken, and Barbara was a half semester ahead of me. Dennis and Barbara were boy and girlfriend. I became fast friends with Dennis, who was maybe five foot four in shoes. He had a stocky build with lots of muscles, dark brown hair and eyes and a crew cut, as did most of my friends. Not real short so he could just get it to sweep up a little. Dennis and Barbara were both good students and were in the honors society along with Bill, Steve, Joel, Elsa and me. You had to have at least a B+ grade average to get in.

One day I went with Dennis and his mother to shop for shoes. We went to this orthopedic shoe store and it was then that I learned that Dennis needed special shoes because he had polio when he was about four. The polio caused one leg to be shorter than the other. He lost some muscle strength in that leg, his left; that was why Dennis was a cheerleader instead of a football player. Dennis, Bill and I were on an off-school swim team which met evenings at 6:00. Dennis' lame leg did not affect his swimming and he kept on swimming in college and for the rest of his short life.

Dennis died in his early thirties from an inoperable brain tumor. He graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara and was working for IBM. He was traveling to Boston for work when he started getting real bad headaches. When he got home, they just kept on and got worse. Finally he went to the doctors and they did some X-rays and found a quarter-sized

tumor. It was not cancer but it was inoperable, just as bad. Two months later Dennis died leaving his wife, Barbara, and two girls, three and one and a half. It was the only funeral I ever attended and I cried all the way to Santa Barbara and all the way home. My wife tried to console me but I was inconsolable (more about my wife later.) Dennis was my best friend, we stayed close all during his college years and through my service in the Air Force. Dennis' death has stayed with me all these years. We visited Barbara in Nevada City, California, with her second husband. With two little girls, she needed a husband and remarried after about five years. Her new husband had three girls. He was a widower and she was a widow; two people who needed each other. Even now, writing this brings tears to my eyes.

But back in high school we just had fun as cheerleaders, swimmers, students and just kids. No worries, just looking forward to what would be.

Dennis had a Ford station wagon that was jacked up in the back with a red undercarriage and glass-packed mufflers that produced a very base rumble when he gave it the gas. On Saturdays, when we did not have dates, Dennis, Bill, Jim S. and I cruised around Gardena and other local towns. Jim S. lived next door to Dennis and was in the same class. For some reason, I could always buy beer even though I was only 17. I was already six foot two and while not stocky, I was not skinny either. I bought a six pack of Coors, our favorite beer, and we cruised the area. One of our favorite hangouts was Los Angeles International Airport. Back then, LAX was new and the concourses and halls all looked like something from a science fiction film. The central domed building in the middle of the parking lot was iconic and featured in many TV shows like "77 Sunset Strip" and "The New Breed." We ate at many food courts in the plazas. There were no security check points or armed guards standing around. Passengers could check their luggage for free and walk right onto the planes. Again, it was a time before we lost our innocence.

With one six pack of beer between three or four guys we never got drunk, only a little buzzed and in those days there were no breathalyzers and you could drink without fear. Not that we never got drunk but it was always at someone's house in a friend's back room.

In my sophomore year Elsa and I were starting to get tighter. We went out with our friends and I asked her out to a couple of movies. We went to see *West Side Story* in Hollywood with Bill and his date. Bill got to take his dad's car on such occasions. We sat in the back seat and I got to hold Elsa's hand. She always had a little Shalimar perfume dabbed behind her ears and I loved the smell of it and her. At the movie I put my arm around her and she cuddled up close to me and put her hand on the inside of my thigh, and I thought I would explode. *West Side Story* was still in its Hollywood-only release and the big picture and great sound in the Grauman Chinese Theater were things to marvel about. "Don't you think that Leonard Bernstein's music was wonderful?" Elsa asked. "Yes," Bill said before I could answer. "He sure can write a good song," Bill continued. "Well, it wasn't just a *song*, he wrote all of the music. And yes I thought it was *wonderful*," I said, trying to be just a little uppity. "Do you guys want to stop and get a soda or something?" Bill asked. "I have to be home no later than 11:00 and it's already 10:00. I think we should go straight home or I'll be late." Poor Elsa was always on a very short leash. Her parents just could not let her loose, not even for one night. "Okay," Bill said, and we drove right to Elsa's house. I got out and walked her to the door. She stood on the step, which made her lips almost even with mine, and then she bent in and kissed me. Oh boy. My first kiss and it was the most exciting thing I had ever had. I felt it from my lips to my toes and everything in between. It was a nice long kiss and she put her arms around my neck and held on for almost 30 seconds. Then it was "I had an incredible time tonight, maybe we can go to another movie next weekend." I was spellbound and just said, "Sure, I would like that." In my heart I was saying, "Oh, yes, yes. I would love to go to the movies and then kiss you the rest of the night." But she opened the door and her father was standing there looking at us. So I just said, "I think I got her home on time, sir. Thank you." Why I was thanking him I was not sure.

When I got back to the car, Bill's date was sliding back into her seat. I think they had been kissing and petting while I was saying good night to Elsa. Bill drove me home and then took off with his date to pet some more.

It was not the next weekend but actually several weeks later that we went to the movies again. By then I had an old 1950 Austin Devon A40 that I painted white. It had funny little turn signals that popped out of the sides of the car just behind the front doors like little illuminated flags. It had a four-cylinder engine with a single carburetor that one could never keep tuned. It had a floor stick shift and two bucket seats in the front. With this wonderful limousine I picked up Elsa on a Saturday night. Her mother was at the door and reminded me that her daughter *must be home by 11:00*. “Yes ma’am, I will have Elsa back before 11:00 for sure. Thank you.” Again, that thank you. Elsa hopped in the front seat as close to me as she could get without sitting on my lap. With the floor shift and the bucket seats we were pretty safe I think her mother thought. I drove to the Lawndale movie theater that was playing *Splendor in the Grass* with Natalie Wood as Wilma Dean ‘Deanie’ Loomis and Warren Beatty as oversexed Bud Stamper. Bud is trying to lead poor little Deanie down the path of ‘you know what’. The story kinda reminded me of Elsa and her parents. Not me, as I surely was not oversexed, well maybe just a little.

The movie was great and when we left, Elsa took my hand as we walked to the Austin. We drove home; it was only 10:00. When we got to where Elsa lived she said, “We don’t have to go right home, it is still early. Let’s go over a couple of blocks and park and we can talk.” We parked in a nice dark area on an adjoining street and she slid over the stick shift into my seat and leaned in and kissed me. And then she kissed me again and again. I wrapped my arms around her and she said, “This is nice. Do you like kissing me?” Yes, Yes a thousand times yes, but I said only one “Yes.” We kissed and cuddled for almost an hour and then I started the Austin and she slid back into her safe seat on the other side of the gear shift. I got Elsa home just before the witching hour: 11:00, just before the coach turned into a pumpkin and the horses changed back to mice. One last kiss on the step and she was gone.

That Monday in school she acted as if nothing had happened and we went back to the way it was. Elsa, Steve, Joel and I going here and there and doing things together. It was several weeks before I took Elsa out again and we went to another movie. This one got out at 9:30 so we had an hour and a half

to kill and we killed it just like the first time. As I got ready to take Elsa home she said, "I really like you. Do you want to go steady?" I swallowed and said, "Yes, I really like you. Does this mean you are my girlfriend?" She smiled and said, "Yes, and you are my boyfriend."

What a night. On Monday Elsa came over to me at lunch and held my hand as we ate. From then on it was Elsa and me all the time. At football games when I was not cheering, at basketball games, at shows when I was not performing. On frequent Fridays and Saturdays, I went to her house after school and we did our homework together. Her parents sort of accepted me as Elsa's boyfriend but with a whole lot of restrictions. We sat on the living room floor and played cards. Her father came home, sat in his chair and started to watch TV or listen to music and after a couple of minutes, he fell fast asleep. Every weekday he came home, sat in his chair and went to sleep. I looked at Elsa and she shrugged. I vowed I would never do what her father did, and I never have. If you are that tired, go to bed.

That summer Elsa and I both took summer school to get extra credit. After all, a straight 'A' average just was not good enough. By that time my high school grade average was a solid 4.0 and we wanted it to be even better. Steve and Joel both went to summer school. We took classes that were not offered during the regular school year, like trigonometry and beginning calculus. After school there was still plenty of time to get to the beach or hang around and play games. That was one fun summer. Bill and Elsa and I drove down to the beach in his Model A on Saturdays and lay on towels on the sand and put baby oil infused with iodine on ourselves. Sometimes Bill brought a girlfriend or just picked up one at the beach. Bill had no problems that way, he could always find a pretty girl who would sit with us and sometimes go home with us. When Bill had someone, Elsa and I rode in the rumble seat. It was so much fun with the wind blowing through our hair. I hugged and kissed her as we drove. She was letting me get to second base, as they say. Our kissing had advanced to all-out petting, and Elsa was okay with that. What mommy and daddy did not know, as they say.

Senior year was upon us, we were all preparing for SATs and sending out letters to colleges. In our senior year Elsa got to drive her mother's car to school after taking her to El Camino where she worked. Elsa came by and picked me up and we drove together to and from school. Sometimes I drove the old Austin and picked up Elsa if her mother needed the car during the day.

After school Elsa and I drove to my house, which was empty since my mother also worked at El Camino, and Elsa's mother and my mother did not get off work before 5:30. Elsa and I had the house and the couch to ourselves and we made good use of the couch. From three to five we could kiss and pet as hard as we wanted, and boy did we want. It never got past heavy petting but that sure made us hot. At 5:00, if Elsa drove, she straightened her dress and fixed her makeup, what she had of it as she never wore too much, and then kissed me goodbye inside the house and drove over and picked up her mother. If I drove, I took Elsa home.

I remember taking the SAT one rainy Saturday. I picked up Joel and Elsa and we drove to the location where the tests were given. The SAT was a pretty hard test and it took several hours. There were math, English, and general tests. Joel took two or three other SATs and Elsa and I waited for him in the car and took advantage of the time to pet a little. When we got our scores, it was pretty amazing. Joel got a perfect 1,600 score on the main SAT and perfect 800s on the single tests. That year Joel had the best score in the entire United States. Elsa and I got very good scores as did Steve. Bill did not do quite as well on the SAT but he had a respectable score just the same. My score meant that I got the California SAT scholarship.

Joel and I entered the Optimist's scholarship essay contest given by the Gardena club. We went to China Town for dinner and after dinner we read our essays along with several other students. Joel and I were each awarded its \$1,000 scholarship. One thousand does not sound like much today but it was enough for all my books at UCLA and then some. I applied for every hand-out scholarship I could think of and actually got most of them. They were all \$500 or \$1,000 but every little bit helped. UCLA did not cost that much back then and there were no 'student loans' to trap and lock up kids for years. I

went to UCLA because I did not want to be a burden on my parents. I lived at home most of the time and worked nights and weekends. In summers I would take two semesters at El Camino Junior College. I could take two or three easy classes per summer semester.

During my senior year I got my first job at Zody's Department Store on Saturday and Sunday for minimum wage: 69 cents an hour. I worked there for three months and worked my way up to almost 90 cents per hour. Then I got a job at the Air Force Officers Club in El Segundo on Friday and Saturday nights. I got \$1.50 an hour and dinner. This job, however, really cut into my social life. Working on Friday and Saturday meant I had a real hard time seeing Elsa. Luckily, I did not have to work every Saturday so once or twice a month we could go out to a movie or to Disneyland or to the theater in LA. We still had time together after school at my house but even that was getting cut into as Elsa was the editor of the school year book. She worked with her advisor after school for an hour or so. I stayed with her and helped paste up photographs and wrote copy for the yearbook. It was all fun but not as much fun as kissing Elsa.

We went to Disneyland several times that year. It was still new, it opened on July 17, 1955 and was only seven years old when we went. It was still *The Happiest Place on Earth*, with admission of under \$5 and a coupon book of A, B, C, D and E tickets for under \$3. While \$8 sounds pretty cheap today, remember I was only making a little over minimum wage part-time. The A, B and C tickets were usually left unused as they were only good for the most childish rides, but for an E ticket you could take a go on the Matterhorn Ride. really a roller coaster ride down the fake Matterhorn mountain in Adventure Land. In 1962 the lines were not nearly as bad as they are today and we rode several times. It was the best thing to do with an E ticket. Elsa and I climbed into the ride, she sat in front of me and pressed her behind hard into my crotch. I held her by her breasts and we flew down the Matterhorn, screaming and wiggling into each other, and I was holding on to those lovely breasts for all I was worth. She loved it and we got off at the bottom and jumped right back in line. It was, without a doubt, the most exciting three or four minutes at Disneyland.

During my second semester of senior year, I stopped working and just laid back. I was not a cheerleader anymore as both Ken and Dennis graduated and were off to college. Barbara graduated in the spring and followed Dennis. I was able to go to all of the football games, and Elsa and I sat on the bleachers with me on the upper one and her below me leaning between my legs. Bill quit football and was just a spectator sitting with us with his new girlfriend, a sophomore and the daughter of the mayor of Gardena. She was a pretty little thing with reddish brown hair, blue eyes and a very attractive figure of which I was sure Bill was taking every advantage. She was a real flirt at about five four and had that way of driving a guy crazy with her sexiness. Bill insinuated that he had gotten to third base and was sliding into home.

Winter wore on and Christmas was just around the corner. I wanted to get Elsa something that she would remember and looked at various jewelers for just the right thing. What I found was an opal necklace; it was simple but quite pretty. I wrapped it up and put it in the glove box of the Austin waiting for Christmas. Christmas Eve Elsa invited me to her church for the evening service. I accepted as I would do anything to be with her, even go to church. We sat a few rows behind her mother and father and held hands as we sat as close as physically possible. The church choir sang some traditional music and some pretty 'churchie' pieces. The sermon included a pitch for funds for a new roof, which I found pretty hard to listen to given it was Christmas and I felt he should have been talking about Christ, the Star and Wise Men with spices et al.

After church we drove to a nice dark street and started our regular routine. After a few minutes Elsa said, "I love you more than Jesus." I was not sure what to make of that; she loved me more than a fictitious 2,000-year-old misguided Jew? Summoning my best response I took the box with the necklace from the glove box and said, "I love you too. I got this for you." She gave me the brightest smile I have ever seen and said, "Oh Barton, I do love you so very much with all of my heart." That sounded better than the part about Jesus. She opened the box and took out the bright shiny jewel and held it up to the little light that came from the moon. The opal really did sparkle

like crazy as she placed it around her neck and asked me to clip it together. I did and kissed her again and again. Later she gave me my gift, which I cannot remember anymore. It must have been nice because Elsa was nice.

The second semester of senior year was the end of high school and those of us who wanted to go to college were sending out our pleas to the schools we figured might take us. I sent mine to UCLA and UCSB and a few other state schools. Elsa sent hers to some East Coast schools, some of which were girls' schools. This, of course, made her parents very happy. Mary, Elsa's sister, went to UCSB and moved out as soon as she could. She left in summer even before school started, never to return. Two very different sisters.

Joel also trolled the best East Coast schools as well as Stanford. Steve, like me, tried mostly state schools. Bill applied to the University of Arizona and a couple of others. It was a very hectic and stressful time. We all waited and waited. Joel, of course, got acceptances from every school he applied to. He finally selected Princeton where he had a full scholarship. Elsa was accepted at Smith, a prestigious girls' school, also with a full scholarship. Steve got UCSB and I got UCLA. Our state scholarships paid for almost everything and then the little extra scholarships paid for the rest. I probably could have lived on campus if I had worked, but I wanted to stay at home and help my father as much as possible.

My father had a heart attack during the summer between sophomore and senior years. My mother and father took a vacation and drove up the coast and over to Glacier National Park and then over to Tahoe and Reno, Carson City and then to Las Vegas. In the Vegas hotel where they stayed, my father grasped at his chest and let out a scream. He was taken to the hospital and diagnosed with a severe myocardial infarction: a heart attack. After several days, my father was released and they flew home for a prolonged period of bed rest.

They left their automobile, a Sunbeam Alpine sports car, in Las Vegas so someone had to pick it up. Steve and I drove his old car out to Las Vegas to handle it. The poor old auto overheated in the desert sun and we had to stop

numerous time both ways to let the old beast cool down and add water. At 17 we had a hard time getting into the casinos but a few of them looked the other way so we were able to lose a couple of dollars worth of nickels in the slots downtown. “You know, this isn’t all that much fun if you can’t play,” Steve said. “I can get in okay and if you looked a little older, we both could get in.” I complained. “Go to hell!” Steve retorted.

We stayed at a cheap motel on the outskirts and in the morning, we picked up the Sunbeam, filled it up with fuel and headed back to Gardena. I drove and again, we stopped frequently until we left the desert.

So my father’s condition was one of the main reasons I lived at home. He recovered pretty well but still was taking nitroglycerin pills when he felt a tightening of his chest. He was working from home and had a full workshop set up in the garage where we were building sound systems for several of the rich and famous: Andre Previn, Les Paul and Mary Ford, and a couple of studios. Most of the sound systems still used tubes and my father had been designing with tubes his entire life. Transistors were still new and my dad had gone back to school at El Camino to try to come up to speed with the new technology. It was very hard for him.

When Elsa got accepted to Smith, my heart sank. Smith is on the East Coast, Massachusetts, no less. Elsa would only come home for Christmas and summer break. A long-distance love affair; that does not sound good. I was going to UCLA and she was going to a high class hoity-toity Ivy League school. Well, at least it was a girls’ school so maybe she would not have too many distractions. We still had the rest of senior year and then all of summer together.

Our graduating class was huge, about 300. Joel and Elsa were class valedictorians and they both gave speeches. Joel joined the marching band, which was good for his gym grade. In junior high it had been only a C. As the drummer for the marching band, Joel got an A. We graduated in June and then it was off to the beach.

But first we had our senior class prom. It was after graduation and all the kids who smoked were able to do so without staff punishing them. The prom hall was in a large building off campus. Elsa and I went but did not stay long. Kids were drinking alcohol and smoking and the air was unbreathable. We left as neither Elsa nor I smoked. That changed after she went to Smith, where she stayed for only two years, and then she came back to UCSB to finish her degree. After we broke up, I met Elsa only once in her dorm room in Santa Barbara. She still looked good but she had a cigarette in her hand. While we talked, she lit three more. It was one of the saddest days in my life up till then. To see Elsa, my love, smoking was just too much. She had really changed in those two years. She had a very different attitude. After about fifteen minutes, I said goodbye and left.

But the summer after graduation was amazing fun. Bill and I rented a small house one block from the beach. I stayed there two or three days and then went home to help my dad. We had surf boards and a 13-foot surf catamaran that we could wheel down to the beach on a dolly and launch right into the waves. We ran it into the water and Bill yelled at me, "Come on. Jump on and start rowing while I put up the sail." Getting through the surf was a real task and required great skill. We capsized many times while learning the ropes but then we could slip the little cat right through the waves and out to the stiller water. Then with sail up, we flew over the swells and the cat almost tipped over as we stretched ourselves out over the skyward side. What a fantastic ride with the 55-degree water splashing on our sunburned physiques. We were the kings of the sea. Hell, we were the kings of the world.

At night we went to parties in the swanky homes by the beach and drank and just had a blast. Elsa and I were still together, and it was fun, but there was the dark shadow of the upcoming separation and the start of college. I took a couple of courses at El Camino right after graduation to get some of the easy classes out of the way.

Elsa was working as an assistant at a company in LA. I wanted to get a job at the post office. I went in to apply and was told, "You need to take the Civil Service test and then the postal test to be considered," the postal gentleman

said. “Well, how and where can I take it?” I asked. “It’s downtown but you are really wasting your time. Veterans get 15 to 20 extra points for their service so you would have to get an almost perfect score.” “That’s okay. I can go any time. I’ll take my chances, at least then I’ll be in the system,” I said and waited while he wrote down all the information.

The next week I hightailed it downtown and took the tests. The postal test was pretty strange with questions about boxes and ordering boxes. The Civil Service test was scheduled for three hours and I thought, boy this must be a humdinger. I sat down with about 30 other guys, all a lot older, and opened the test booklet. All true and false or multiple choice. I was out of there in 40 minutes. The next day I took the postal test. I guess I must have done well because a week later I got a call from the postmaster asking me to come in and get the initiation course for a temporary postman. As a temp I got \$3.50 an hour. That was huge, in only 20 hours I could make \$70. At Zody’s it would have taken two and a half weeks to make that much working full time. At the post office I worked from 4:00 to 7:00 every day. That schedule left me all day at the beach and my nights open. I kept that job all through college and by the end, I was actually making even more.

Baja California 1962

That summer, boy did I have fun. Boy, did we have fun. Toward the end of summer I was able to take a week off my post office job and Bill and I, along with two high school kids, drove Bill’s Range Rover down to Mexico. Actually it was Baja California, which is Mexico. Bill purchased the Range Rover during senior year. It was old, 1952, but it had a replacement engine that was way too big for the car. The original was a four-cylinder while the new engine was an eight-cylinder Ford V8. We had to replace the clutch and beef up the suspension just to be able to drive the beast. And that is what Bill called her; she was the Beast.

The other two kids were Bill’s neighbors and I do not even remember their names. One was a small skinny kid, maybe five foot three with glasses: I will

call him Jim. The other kid was stockier and taller, almost as tall as Bill: I will call him Bob. So Bill, Jim, Bob and I headed down south. We had two pistols with us, I am not sure why, but they were there. Both were .22-caliber long rifle weapons. One was an automatic that looked like a barretta and the other was a Smith and Wesson revolver. The revolver was my father's and he did not know I had it. It was the same gun we used to shoot at tin cans on our way across the U.S.

We crossed the border into Tijuana. The first day we all went to the bull fights. It was Saturday and in the summer they had bull fights every week. "This is great. I always wanted to see a bull fight," said Jim and snickered. "You bet," said Bill and Bob at almost the same time. "Just watch your wallets while we are in Tijuana as there are a lot of pickpockets," I said, always the careful one. I did not want to end up in Tijuana without any money or ID. You could end up in a *Tijuana Jail* and I remembered the Kingston Trio song of the same name. "You don't want to lose your money and ID, that could really be bad," I went on. "Put your wallet in your front pocket and keep your hand on it at all times," I said. "For Pete sakes, don't worry so damn much. We will be okay," Bill admonished. "Now, let's just get our tickets and find some good seats. I don't want to miss anything," Bill said again.

We got some pretty good seats several rows up and in the center. Then Bill and I went to get beer. "This should be fun. You don't have to be 21 down here. In fact, all you need to be is able to carry the beer. They will sell to anyone," Bill said with a big grin. We got four bottles of cerveza (beer in Mexican). We hurried back to our seats carrying our ice cold bottles. We distributed the bounty and I put my hand in my pocket to make sure I still had my wallet. Yep, it was still there.

The bull fight was as bloody as you could imagine. The star of the show, the matador, really screwed up the placement of the sword. Instead of dropping the poor bull like a stone he raced around the ring, gored several of the picador's horses and knocked one of picadors off his horse. Finally a second

matador (or bull murderer) came, this time hit the mark and the poor bull was taco meat.

“That was amazing. Have you ever seen anything like that?” Bill screamed. “That was the most disgusting exhibition of animal cruelty and brutality I have ever seen. How can you call that butchery amazing?” I admonished Bill with the final question. “I thought it was pretty sweet,” Jim said. “Yeah, that was great,” Bob said. They were not the brightest bulbs on the old Christmas tree. In fact, I think I remember Bill telling me that Jim had failed so many classes that he was left back in his junior year. Little Jim was really as old as Bill and I, but he sure did not look the part.

As we left the bullring, I looked back at the impressive structure. It was grand and one could imagine heroic deeds being performed by a single soul standing against a fierce animal adversary; while in reality, it was a gruesome way of butchering a poor bovine just to produce a couple hundred pounds of taco meat.

While still thinking about the spectacle we just saw, Bill said, “Boy, am I thirsty. Let’s find a bar on our way downtown.” The bullring was outside of Tijuana at the end of a long dusty road with plenty of little bars along the way. We really did not have to walk far before we saw a little ramshackled building with three colors of paint all in a stochastic pattern with a sign proclaiming the coldest beer in all Tijuana. “This looks like the perfect spot to get a couple cervezas,” Bill said. Bill took two years of Spanish so he knew what he was saying. I had only one year but was able to communicate with the locals much better than Bill. “Sure, this looks like a good place to get a beer,” I said, doing the translation for our less educated friends. We went into the saloon, which had a dirt floor and a bar that looked like it was probably held up by a couple of saw horses. I could not see the saw horses but I was sure they were there under the long green, white-and-red tablecloth that covered the bar. Green, white and red are the colors of the Mexican flag and I am sure that the bartender felt he was being very patriotic.

The beer was 10 pesos, about five cents. “Wow, this is really cheap,” Bill explained. “We could really get buzzed like crazy for just a dollar,” Jim said with real excitement. “Yes, we could, but I think we should save some of our brain cells for later on tonight. Don’t you think?” I said, looking at Jim as if he had just landed from some distant planet on a really hard rock that had jarred him senseless. “These are pretty good, and they are really cold,” Bill said as he swigged down the last of the bottle. “I, for one, want another. How about you, Barton?” Bill added. “Sure, but just one more for now; we still have a ways to go to get back to downtown. And, you know, we will probably pass a few more of these fine establishments,” I said jokingly.

We finished our beers and left a dollar on the bar. The bartender scrambled around and raced to the door. He said in Mexican, “Thank you very much, Señor. Please come again soon.” We acknowledged his graciousness with our best Spanish and shook his outstretched hand. After we were outside Bill looked at me and said, “I wish I could wash my hand. That guy looked like he hadn’t bathed in weeks.” “I am sure you don’t have to worry. And I am sure he takes a bath regularly.” I was a bit of a Pollyanna, always looking for the best in people.

We stopped at two other bars on our way downtown and were pretty buzzed by the time we got there. “I could eat a horse,” Bill said. “Well, you will probably be eating bull meat and it will still be warm when they put it on the skillet,” I said with a smile. We all had tacos and two enchiladas with rice and beans. There is no place you can get better Mexican food than in Mexico. Sounds pretty obvious but even the best Mexican restaurants in LA cannot compare to a dirty little hole-in-the-wall saloon in Baja. We ate from all those street vendors with the little carts with a grill and flies hovering over the cooking meat and never got sick, that is until the last day when I came down with Montezuma's Revenge. I was sicker than a dog all the way home.

After dinner, we went to the notorious Tijuana bars. There were girls on stage doing the most revolting things. At least I thought so. “Wow, look at that, have you ever seen a girl do that before?” Bill slavered. “They say there is a place here where a girl does it with a donkey. Can you believe that?” Jim

chimed in. "Yeah and you can get a girl to fuck you for two dollars. I want to find that place right now," Bob said breathlessly. "I don't think that would be a good idea," I said. "You are the most uptight guy I have ever known," Bill said with a sneer. "Well, just be careful and if you do find someone who will have sex with you, leave your wallet with me and let me do the paying," I said. "Yeah, sure. You'll be our manager and we will have the fun," Jim said.

We went out looking for a place where our boys could get 'fucked'. Sex was something that everyone had on their minds and I was no exception. But with some poor Mexican girl in a sleazy back room of a dirty bar; that was just not going to happen. I was happy to be their 'manager' this time.

Finally we found a bar where girls were available, I shelled out six dollars and my 'friends' went to the backrooms. I sat at a table in the bar and held the wallets. A couple of girls came over and asked, "You don't want some? Girls very pretty and clean." "No, thank you, I will just drink my beer." "Okay it's your loss. Girls very pretty, no?" "Yes, but I will just wait for my friends," I said with my eyes looking deeply into my beer. In one respect I wish I could have done what the others did but it just would not have been right. Right, what does that mean anyway? It meant I was the only one not to get laid.

The boys returned with big smiles and grins, laughing like they had just scored the final hoop in the big game. "Boy, that little bitch sure could suck dick," Jim said proudly. "Mine had a cunt you could have gotten lost in. She must have fucked ten guys tonight. But it was still terrific," Bill chipped in. "Okay, let's get out of here. Here are your wallets safe and sound, thank you," I said and we left for Ensenada, a little fishing village about 50 miles south. It was 50 miles but this was before the nice new roads and it took us over three and a half hours on the old road, a two-lane (sometime one lane) bumpy asphalt and dirt ditch, which zigzagged down the peninsula.

On the way we stopped for gas and the attendant was not very happy with us waking him at 2:30 in the morning. He grumbled and said some words in Mexican that I did not understand but was sure were not meant as compliments. He pumped the gas and we asked if he had any beer. "Si,

Señor.” We gave him the money for gas and the beers and got back into the car. Jim said, “We should have shot that asshole. I think he was cussing us out.” “Are you crazy or something? Shot someone in Mexico? Are you a complete moron? The federales would throw you into the deepest pit they could find and pour gas over you and strike a match. They don’t mess around,” I said angrily. “I was just kidding,” Jim said, but I knew he was not kidding. I knew taking guns down to Mexico was a real bad idea but Bill had said it was just for protection and we could do target shooting. It was a bad idea.

We finally got to Ensenada at twilight, before the bars were open. We found a place by the ocean and slept in the car until almost noon. When we woke I had the worse pain in my back and neck I have ever had. Sleeping in an old Land Rover was anything but refreshing. We ran down to the ocean and splashed water in our faces. Bill took off his pants and shirt and ran into the waves yelling, “Last one in is a rotten egg.” Not to be outdone, I followed my naked friend into the sea. The 70-degree water was much warmer than at Manhattan Beach and felt wonderful. Bill and I swam out through the surf and then about two miles along the shore. When we returned to the car, Jim and Bob were sitting there dry and bored. They were not swimmers and did not want to get wet.

We drove into the little town of Ensenada. It really was a fishing village back then. Most of the streets were dirt as were most of the floors in the bars and saloons. There was only one two-story hotel downtown and it looked like it was 50 years old and needed paint. There was a motel outside of town with maybe 20 rooms. The town was small with two streets east-west and two north-south. There were several bars on each street and it was evident that people spent a lot of what little they earned in those places.

We found a small restaurant and had lunch. After lunch we went out to explore the area. Just south of the town there was a long stretch of beach and in back of the beach there were great sand dunes, which stretched for almost a half-mile to the main road. The dunes were maybe three miles long and up to a half-mile wide. We took the Land Rover, put it in four-wheel drive and

proceeded to race across the dunes. Up one side and down the other, then up the next and down again. We were having the time of our lives screaming and yelling as loud as we could. Then while coming down a dune, Bill got the Land Rover a little sideways and slam, bam, boom, bang. We flipped over twice and landed on our side. Jim was thrown out of the back seat and Bob was holding on for dear life. Bill and I were wearing seat belts so we stayed in the car. We were stunned and for about two minutes no one said or did anything. Then discovering that nothing was broken and that we were all okay, we started laughing like we had just seen the most comical thing in the world. Jim was sitting about six feet away from the Land Rover and looked shocked but was laughing along with the rest of us. Bill unfastened his seat belt and fell over me onto the sand. I did the same and we looked at the Land Rover and scratched our heads. "Well, now what?" Bill asked. "I guess we just try to push her back on all fours," I said. All four of us got on the uphill side and pushed and bless my heart, the little Rover flipped back upright. Bill got back into the driver's seat and tried to start her. Rumm, raaaan the starter was working and after a second or so, the engine started as if nothing had happened. We all climbed back in and proceeded with much more decorum and calm. Slowly we wound our way to the beach.

It was lovely. Not a soul as far as we could see. It was just us and the sea birds which swooped down at us like vengeful rockets. "Damn those birds. I never liked seagulls," Bob said and looked in the car for the pistol. He took the one that looked like a Barretta and aimed at the colony of seagulls flying over us and fired four times. He hit one and it fell to the ground with a thud. It was not dead. Bob walked up to the bird and fired again. He hit it but the bird was still flapping on the ground. He fired again and then again. Still flapping. He emptied the weapon into the poor thing and it still was not dead. I picked up a rock from the shore and smashed the bird. Then it was dead. Bill grabbed the pistol from Bob and said, "You jerk, those bullets could have come down and hit one of us. You don't get to fuck around with the guns any more." "I'm sorry, I just don't like seagulls," Bob said and looked down at the dead bird under the stone. "Dig a hole and put the bird in it and it's over," Bill said thinking he had given the bird a fitting funeral.

As it got dusk we headed back to town and the bars. Ensenada was not nearly as salacious as Tijuana and there were no *nudie* shows or girls in the bars. In fact, most of the bars were empty or almost so. We went into the best-looking bar we could find and walked up to the counter. It still had dirt floors but they had been swept and the tables and bar looked clean as well. We ordered four beers, sat on stools and drank the first beers of the day. As we drank, four mariachis entered and the leader came over and said, "Would you like to hear some Mexican music? We play very good." "Sure," Bill said and gave the guy a five-dollar bill. The leader looked at the bill and said, "We play for you all night wherever you go. Okay?" "Sure, that sound great," Bill said and slapped the guy on the back. At once the music started and it never stopped. We went from bar to bar and the mariachis were always with us. Bill ordered a round of tequila for all of us, including the musicians. That was it: we were friends for life. We must have gone to 10 bars that night and music followed us everywhere we went. Finally at about 3:00 a.m., we headed for our Rover and the musicians were right behind us. "Okay. We go to the beach and go to sleep. No more music. Okay?" Bill said. "Okay, Señor. We be here tomorrow. Okay?" They did not want to let us go. After all, five dollars and tequila was more than a poor musician got in a week or more.

We headed for the dunes and slowly made our way close to the ocean. The headlights and the stars were the only lights. The stars were so close you thought you could reach up and touch them. In LA you could hardly see any stars. This was spectacular, marvelous, mind-blowing. We spread some blankets on the sand and four pretty buzzed and tired boys fell fast asleep.

It was the screech of the gulls that woke me in the morning. I was the first up and took off my shirt and pants, which I had slept in, and walked into the Pacific. The water was just cool enough to wake me up for sure and I splashed around and then swam out and caught a wave back to the shore. After about 30 minutes, the rest of the group was awake and Bill was in the water with me. "Go for a little swim? How about down to those rocks and back?" Bill asked. It was probably a mile to the rocks so it would be a two-mile swim and the current would be against us on the way back. "Sure. Let's

go,” I said, and we swam out and Jim and Bob just stood by the car and watched.

The way back was indeed pretty hard as the current was strong going south. We really had to pull and by the time we were back on the shore, we were pretty tired. Bill looked around and found a couple of beer cans but no opener. This was way before the ubiquitous aluminum cans with pull tabs. What to do? Bill looked all around and then spotting a rock with a sharp edge, he slammed the can with the rock. Pop, splatter. Beer spewed out like a fountain and then stopped. Bill threw the can to me and opened the next one. It was wonderful. I was worn out from the swim and without breakfast, the beer really tasted good and even gave me a little buzz. Boy oh boy, what a great feeling: wet, sore, thirsty and drinking the first beer of the day. ‘Coors breakfast of champions.’ Oh, yes it was.

Jim and Bob looked at us and Bill said in a very authoritarian voice, “No beer for you slackers. This is only for the big boys.” We drank the first two warm beers and then two more and none for the others.

We got our stuff together and drove back into town looking for breakfast. The one and only hotel in town was serving a Mexican breakfast and we went in. “Huevos rancheros,” Bill ordered with some authority. “Si, Señor, and something to drink?” “Si, four bloody Marys, and four coffees,” Bill responded. We got enormous plates of refried beans with three eggs, rice and warm tortillas. The bloody Marys were very good with a slice of celery and hot sauce. We finished them and ordered four more as we drank some coffee. The huevos rancheros were great and very filling. When we left the hotel Bill said, “So, what now?” We all looked at each other. Bill said, “Let’s go south and try to find the spot where the sea shoots through the cave and spouts way up into the air. Do you know what it’s called?” Bill looked at me. “I think it’s called La Bufadora but we would have to cross the second border.” I remembered more Spanish after one year than Bill did after two. Of course, Bill had his current girlfriend do his homework. Elsa, my girlfriend, was taking Latin so she was no help and I had to do everything myself.

The second border was about eight miles farther south before the town of Maneadero. You could cross the second border with a visa for one day. We figured one day would be enough so we proceeded. In 1962 the roads in Baja were not like they are today. Today you can take a bus from Ensenada to La Bufadora in about 45 minutes. Back then, it took much, much longer.

When we crossed the second border, the roads got worse. We headed for the little peninsula or out-jutting where La Bufadora lay. Bill wanted to take a side road that had an old decapitated sign that said in Mexican “Alternate Route to La Bufadora. Proceed with caution.” Bill had no fear and we turned onto the road. It was dirt while the main road was at least somewhat paved. We raced the *Beast*, Bill’s old Land Rover with the new Ford V8, along the rutted and often somewhat washed-out trail (one could hardly call it a road). Higher and higher into the hills we went. And worse and worse the trail became. Big stretches of almost washed-out trail where we had to cling to the right side of the road and even slightly climb up the hill a little to make our way forward. Bill was having a great time and was yelling and screeching with joy. The old *Beast* with four-wheel drive was doing just fine – until. We came to a section of the trail where the way ahead was really not there. The ground had washed out the poor trail completely and the ground sloped down at a 15-degree angle for about 30 feet and then dropped off at maybe 45-50 degrees for almost 50 feet.

Bill revved up the *Beast*’s engine and shot onto the slope. We must have raced 15 or 20 feet before the *Beast* started to slide sideways down the hill and stopped forward progress. Bill gave her more gas and she just slipped a little farther down. Bill took his foot off the gas and stomped on the brake. We stopped all forward motion but were still slipping a little bit farther toward the precipitous drop-off. Then the *Beast* stopped its slide toward doom. We all sat there not making a move. “Now what, genius?” I asked with the most sarcastic tone. “You guys get out, carefully, and I will try to ease her back toward the trail over there. You push from the back and the left, okay?” Bill sounded hopeful, so we all got out of the *Beast* as gingerly as we could. The car slipped just a little and we took up our posts: me on the side and Jim and Bob in back. “Okay, I am going to try to move forward and up a little.

Here goes,” and Bill took his foot off the brake and gave her just a smidgen of gas. The car inched a foot or two forward but at the same time, slipped a foot farther down the hill. We stopped. Bill tried again and we all pushed as hard as we could but the car made no headway toward high ground but instead moved about a foot forward and a foot farther downward.

I must say I, for one, was getting pretty scared as the *Beast* was now sitting at about a 20-degree angle. Bill turned off the motor and got out very carefully. We walked up and over to the trail we had left. We sat there and looked at the *Beast*. “What in the Sam Hell are we going to do now?” I asked. “I think we better get our stuff out of the car before it tips over and goes down into the ravine below,” I said further. “Don’t worry, it will be all right. We just need to find someone who can pull us out,” Bill said with some confidence. “Exactly where are we going to find this *someone*?” I asked with some anger. Bill thought for a while and then said, “Let’s get our stuff up here and then we will just have to walk to the water spout, I guess.” We all looked at Bill but since no one had a better idea we all just shrugged our shoulders and went down to the car, picked up our things and walked back up to the trail.

The poor *Beast* was sitting about 10 feet farther along and about seven feet down the hill. She looked very sad and I really think humiliated – if a car can look that way. We gathered the little food we had and the one canteen of water and crossed the washout on foot, which was pretty difficult. No wonder the *Beast* failed. Luckily, I had a khaki sun hat that I put on right away. Bill had a baseball cap but Jim and Bob had no head coverings at all. I said, “You guys should put a handkerchief or a towel over your heads or you will get roasted,” Jim said boastfully “Don’t worry about us.” But Bob searched through his things and found a big red bandanna, which he tied around his head. We started down the trail towards La Bufadora, we hoped. We had no idea how far it was or if this trail really went there. The sign, we thought, said “Alternate to La Bufadora” but it was in Spanish. Did it really say that? I was pretty sure but not certain, and there was no mention of the distance. It was now about 11:00, the sun was pretty hot and was just getting hotter. We walked for over an hour and saw nothing but cacti. We drank most of the single canteen of water and were pretty thirsty. All around us were the big

barrel cacti that were supposed to contain liquid. After another hour of walking and finishing the last of the water, we were desperate enough to tackle one of those big thorny cactus. Bill had a small pocket knife, about four inches long, and he used it to open up the barrel cactus. First we smashed as many of the thorns off with a rock and then Bill cut into the plant. It had a very tough skin but once past that, it was full of a soft yellow mass of fairly soggy pulp. We each cut some out and squeezed it into our mouths. It was not a great drink but it was watery and we got a couple of mouthfuls. We packed the rest of the barrel cactus, wrapped in a towel, in the one knapsack we had.

About 2:30 we finally got to La Bufadora. No one was there. Back then it was not the tourist attraction it is today, partly because of the second border and mostly because of the long bumpy bus trip. We went over and watched the sea water as it rushed into the tunnel and then exploded up into the sky. It was very interesting and quite a sight but there was no one there who could help us. Not a soul. "Now what?" I asked. "Well, let's go out to the main road and hope someone comes by," Bill said, and he actually sounded scared.

We went to the main road and waited, and waited, and waited. After another hour (now almost 4:00) a ratty old Ford pickup came down the main road. We jumped up and down and flagged the driver and his passenger. They looked at us and said in Mexican, "You lost? Where is your vehicle? You need a ride?" I said in my best one year of Spanish, "Yes, please give us a ride. We got stuck on the 'Alternate Road'." They looked at each other and laughed for over a minute. "The 'Alternate Road'? You can't use that, it is all washed out; you would get stuck." Yes, indeed that is exactly what happened and it was too bad we did not have that advice about five hours ago. The two Mexicans had us hop into the back of the truck and drove on, laughing as they went, "The 'Alternate Road,' that is funny," I could hear in the bed of the old Ford. By the time we got to Maneadero, where the two owned a service station, it was starting to get dark. "Can you please take us back to Ensenada? We can pay you. Please," I begged in my best Spanish. Yes, they would do it for two dollars. Of course, gas was only 10 cents a gallon in Mexico.

By the time we got to Ensenada, it was totally dark, only the stars were shining. As we drove, I told the other three how the light from the stars was actually many years old, some thousands of years, and those stars might actually not even be there anymore, they may have exploded as super novae and we would not know for years. Everyone was vaguely interested as they had nothing else to do but listen. When we arrived in Ensenada I asked our driver if he could help us tomorrow get our car back onto the trail. He said he would and we could take the bus at 6:00 a.m. to Maneadero, and he and his friend would help us if we gave them some more money. "Sure thing," I said and we set off to find a place to stay.

As I said, there was a motel just out of town and we got a room for Bill and me and then smuggled Jim and Bob in with us. That night, even as tired as we were, we walked back into town, maybe an eighth of a mile. The first bar we entered we found our four mariachis who immediately started playing for us. Bill offered them another five dollars and the leader said, "No, Señor, for you we play all night for only two dollars and maybe a tequila or two." What a bargain, he would not even take our five dollars. There really are ethics in musicians. We went from bar to bar and drank much beer and a few tequilas and had a time of it. We went back to the motel about midnight as we had to be up early to get the bus.

We paid for two nights. Then in the morning we found the bus terminal and waited for our bus, which was circa 1930 and needed paint badly and also new tires. About 25 men, women, children, chickens and one goat boarded along with the four of us. It took almost an hour and a half to get to Maneadora but when we got there, our two Mexican helpers were waiting for us. "Have you eaten?" our driver asked. No, we had just made it to the bus, "No, we have not. Is there somewhere we can get breakfast?" I asked in my best Spanish. "You can come home with us and my wife will make you something that will stick to your ribs," he said, I thought, as I was not too sure of some of the words. We thanked him profusely and off we went.

His wife was younger than he was by probably 10 years and she still was pretty at about five foot even. Jet black hair and still a nice figure even with one son who was running around her all the time she cooked. The meal was outstanding with handmade tortillas, rice, beans, eggs and salsa. Add a beer to it and it was the perfect breakfast for those embarking on a true adventure.

When we finished and thanked the wife for the great breakfast, we got in the truck's bed with tools and a long steel line with a big hook on each end. We drove almost another 20 miles to where our car was stuck. It is only 10 miles as the crow flies to La Bufadora from Maneadero but the road did not take such a straight path. In fact, it was the most circuitous trail I had ever seen. I did not notice it before as we raced along and up the sides of the trail, but now I noticed that it wound this way and that and that there was only maybe 200 feet of straight trail anywhere.

After some treacherous washouts, we finally got to the *Beast*. She really looked in a sorry state almost on her side seven feet off what once was the trail. Now what? "We take off one of the tires. Just the tire, leave the rim," said our driver. He seemed to already have a plan. He gave us the steel line and hooked one end to his truck. We went down to the *Beast* and secured the line to the chassis and the driver pulled it taut. We proceeded to jack up the left wheel and remove the tire. It did not go well and finally the driver and his friend came down and used an ax to cut the bead on the tire. That was one lost tire but what could we do? Bill had a spare, thank God.

Once the tire was off, the driver and his friend removed the line from the chassis and wrapped the line around the bare wheel hub a couple of times and secured it. Then he said to Bill, "You get in, start the engine and put it in reverse. When I tell you, release the brakes, ease off the clutch and gently give it a little gas." He had to tell Bill that a couple of times and I had to try to translate before Bill understood. "Okay, I'll put the car in reverse and that will pull the car out. I get it. That's a great idea. I hope it works," Bill said hopefully.

Bill got in the car, started it, put the car in reverse, released the emergency brake and gave the *Beast* a little fuel. The line was taut and the Land Rover slid down the hill a bit but this time face first. The line was pulling the car back up toward the trail. The driver also pulled his vehicle forward and within five minutes the *Beast*, minus one wheel, was sitting on the trail. She, and the Mexican's truck, were both facing the wrong way but were safe.

Bill stayed in the car but the rest of us got in the back of the truck. Bill backed the *Beast* almost two miles down the trail until he got to a slightly wider spot where he could turn around. Then we drove all the way back to Maneadero on the rim. That rim was a goner but we were safe. The driver saw our pistols and asked if we could pay him by giving him the automatic. I was not sure that was a good idea but Bill said, "Sure, is that all you want?" That was all. Bill said, "That isn't enough; please take ten dollars also." "No, Señor, just the gun and some cartridges please. Thank you very much." We had five packs of .22-caliber long rifles each with about 50 rounds per pack. "Here, take the pistol and the ammo and please take the ten dollars, and will you put the spare on? You can throw the hub away, it's ruined." The driver took the pistol, the ammo and the ten dollars and removed the hub and put the spare on the *Beast*. I think she looked happier with all four tires back in place.

The driver, his friend and both wives took us to dinner and we laughed and they sang with a new set of mariachis to whom Bill gave two dollars rather than the five as we were only there for dinner. The small restaurant was one of two in the town but it was evidently the best. The meal was scrumptious and the beer and tequilas were the best. We got the real good tequila and it was smooth and with the salt and lemon, it was delicious.

After dinner we parted from our friends, I say friends because we really did think of them as friends. We drove back across the second border and back to the motel in Ensenada and did not go out that night. We just went to bed. After all, it was already ten-thirty.

The next day we played around in Ensenada, ate breakfast, lunch and dinner and then went to a couple of bars. Then we headed back toward Tijuana but stopped just outside of Rosarita Beach and slept on the sand. That night I did not feel well and around 2:00 I was throwing up and shitting like crazy. Shitting while throwing up on the sand by the beach is not a whole lot of fun. I was sick as a dog. No one else was sick. They all felt fine and were really annoyed that I was keeping them awake. By morning I was really dehydrated and feeling pretty bad. Bill said, "I think we should drive straight home, don't you?" Yes, you bet, that's what I thought so we drove right past Tijuana and crossed the U.S. border through San Diego and all the way back to Gardena. We got to my house about 4:00, I took my stuff and went into my home. My mother was there, she took care of me and by the next day, I was on the mend.

Goodbye to Summer, Hello UCLA

At the end of summer I said good by to Elsa at the train station in LA. It was a wonderful old station and was still being used a great deal as airplanes were still mostly propeller jobs and quite expensive. I kissed Elsa goodbye with her mother standing there, she got onto the train and waved me a fond farewell. We wrote almost every day for the first year. She came back for Christmas via air and returned the same way. But it was not to last another year.

That was the end of summer 1962. I already had several college credits under my belt from El Camino Junior College and I was ready for UCLA with my nice new 1962 Spitfire sports car. I bought it with some of the money I made at the post office along with a small loan from my bank. The bank loan and insurance were really more than I could handle but I figured if I kept on working at the post office, I could squeak by. I drove to UCLA every day with a black girl I knew from high school. She was quite pretty and very smart. She had her first class at nine and mine was at ten three days a week, so I always had an hour to prepare. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we both had classes at nine. Three days a week we drove home together and two days she

took the bus home, which was a long boring trip but she was able to read on the way so she said she did not mind.

In 1962 even in LA, you got some pretty strange looks if you were with a black girl. I would sometime hold her hand when we walked around Westwood and I could see people looking at us. I really did not care and do not think she did either; after all, we were above such petty bigotry. She was definitely not my girlfriend but she was a friend.

Taking a little more than a 'full load' as they called a full 15 credits a semester was hard and I really did not have much of a social life in college. In those days an engineering degree required four semesters of a foreign language and I chose German, not Spanish. I was fascinated with books by Spinoza, Kierkegaard, Einstein and other Germans. I wanted to be able to read those authors in their original language. German was a five-day-a-week class with an additional two hours of language lab per week. For that you got five credits, same as English or History. It just was not fair. Try to cram a five-day-a-week class and two hours of lab into an already cram-packed schedule. It was not easy and I had to make a lot of sacrifices. One was taking a couple of classes at El Camino in summer, which I would have liked taking at UCLA. Most of what I took at El Camino were subjects like English and History. I was not really interested in either and felt that since I could read, I could find out anything I needed or wanted about those courses. But I did have to take one summer semester of calculus at El Camino, and believed I really missed the UCLA approach.

After the first year at UCLA and El Camino, I had almost half of my needed credits. If I kept this up, I would be out of college in a little over two years or maybe even just two. I was swimming for my gym requirement which also cut into my spare time. We had required meets and while I loved swimming, it was hard to keep up and after a year, I quit and got my gym credits in summer school. So yes, I probably was going to do it in two years.

As a result, college is kind of a blur. I do not remember anyone other than the girl I was driving to school, and I never went to a football or basketball game. I was pretty familiar with the library, however.

Great Books 1963

During the second summer of college, after summer school, I tried my hand at selling *Great Books of the Western World* published by the Encyclopedia Britannica. This was a 54-volume set of extravagantly bound and gilded-page books that made any bookcase or library self look gorgeous. The books were in every school and public library and were truly a fantastic adjunct to anyone's education. The problem was that the people who sold the wonderful compendium of knowledge, handed down over the past 4,000 years or so, were the worst con men and probably should have been arrested.

The guy that took me under his wing for the first month was about 45. He had light brown hair with blond highlights, back in the days when no one highlighted their hair unless you were a movie star. The hair was cut just a little shaggy with a straight cut in back rather than tapered. His face was just a little too flabby, light brown eyebrows, a somewhat down-turned mouth with a fuzzy, light brown, neatly trimmed mustache. If he had curled it up at the ends, he would have made the perfect bad guy in old silent movies where the heroin was strapped to a log heading toward the enormous saw blade – “Come back next week for the startling conclusion.” Randy said he made almost \$400 a month, pretty good for two days a week. Hell, my dad was only making \$600 a month and he was an engineer. Mr. Con Man lived by the beach with his *friend* and a big female dog that licked both of them in the most disturbing way. After a month with *Randy*, I cannot recall his real name but Randy kind of sums him up, I was sure those two were more than friends and the dog was more than a pet.

Randy and I covered the area west of El Segundo, not the best of neighborhoods but close to the ocean with some appeal to guys who were *temporarily out of work* and whose wives (or girlfriends) had eight-to-four

jobs bringing home just barely enough to pay for the rent and beer for the man of the house. We got leads via postcards that were in every magazine. The guy, in a moment of weakness, looked at the beautiful leather-covered books and thought to himself, "If I get these, I will turn my life around, get my GED, go to college and really become someone." Then he filled in the perforated tear-out postcard and sent it in. Those leads were much better than cold-calling at someone's door. We made a list of six or seven leads all in the same neighborhood, drove to the location, parked Randy's car and with our burden of three books, paperwork for a loan and a bunch of fliers, we hit the street. Randy, I must say, had his 'patter' down pat and seldom walked away without a signature for the almost \$800 commitment, for which some poor schmuck signed up. When the schmuck's girlfriend or wife got home, she cried and pointed out that she did not make that kind of money. He would counter, "Look dear, I am going to turn my life around, get my GED and go to school. I'll be someone." Sure he would, if only he could read.

Randy got a commission for every sale or loan document that went through, and he made pretty good money. So after my month with Randy, I was on my own. I received an envelope in the mail with about 15 leads and I planned my Friday and Saturday nights. Knock, knock, knock. "Hi, am I speaking to Mr. Davis? You sent in this card. I am in your neighborhood and I brought you these, *The Great Books*," and then I showed him those beautiful books. Sometimes the guy invited me in and I got right to work. "I see you have kids. How old are they?" He looked around at the clutter in the room and said, "Well, Sally is 11 and Bobby is nine. Do you think they could read these?" "Definitely, this series is designed for younger folk and has an index and a separate book with study guides and summaries of all the books written especially for young readers." The guy stared at the books and I showed him a brochure with the books in a very attractive book case, which we also sold.

I think because I was so young and because the wife showed up a lot of times, I really did not make enough to warrant wasting my Friday and Saturday nights. I tried for two months and only sold three sets. I always looked like I was ashamed of what I was doing and I think even those customers sensed my relief when they ushered me out the door with a, "I'll

think about it” or “I have to run this by my wife.” I just was not as good a con man as Randy, and I hoped I never would be.

A Real Shock

I was in the ROTC, which took up a lot of my time, but I figured that coming out of college as a second lieutenant would be better than being drafted. Boy, was I mistaken. My mother, who worked at El Camino as the secretary to the dean of nursing, invited her boss, a retired Colonel in the Marines, over one night for dinner. The Colonel asked me, “Well, you will be graduating soon, what do you have planned?” I said with great pride, “Well, sir, I am in ROTC and I will be a second lieutenant when I graduate and then I’ll be a first when I join up.” He looked at me sternly and then delivered the most shocking and frightening statement I ever heard, “Well, son, you will be dead in six months or less if you go into the Army as a lieutenant. You will be shipped right to Vietnam and either the enemy or your own troops will kill you.” My mother and father looked shocked and stared first at me and then at her boss. What did he mean? How could that happen? What could I do? I said, “But sir, I am already in ROTC and have already taken all of my final tests, so I am just waiting for graduation.” The Colonel looked straight at me and said, “If I were you, son, I would go right down to my Air Force recruiter and join up, maybe even tomorrow. No one in the Air Force, except officers, will be forced to go to Vietnam. Only if you volunteer. That is what I would do, the ROTC or the government can’t do anything if you enlist.” I could not believe my ears. Here was a Colonel in the Marines telling me to enlist to keep from going to Vietnam. Sure, I had been watching the news and understood that the conflict had escalated to the point that we were no longer training South Vietnamese, we were in a full war. Combatants were being flown home daily in body bags.

The next Monday, a week before graduation, I went down and enlisted in the Air Force. “You have a degree, right son? You can go in as a lieutenant in about three months,” the recruiting agent said. “Yes, I have an engineering degree but I want to enlist as a regular soldier. Can I do that today?” I was

ready and I sure did not want to die. “Sure, son, you can enlist but all we have open right now is *general*.” General was cooks, MP, weather, photography and a couple of other things. “You bet, I will take anything,” so he scheduled me for a couple of tests that day and then my physical the next at 9:00 a.m. downtown. I showed up with probably 300 others and we all bent over, turned our heads to the left, coughed, and gave blood. Three days later I got the letter in the mail and a week later I was on a bus to Lackland Air Force Base just outside San Antonio, Texas. It was a long ride, and we only stopped for rest breaks. We slept on the bus and in a little over two days, we arrived. It was August and hotter than hell when we stepped off and were greeted by our TI (Training Instructor) who started his sentences with four-letter words and followed through with more.

Air Force 1964: Basic Training, School, Okinawa

It was August 1964 and I was in the Air Force, basic training. My approach to was to do anything the TI told me and not talk back, even once. There were guys who did not follow that path and the TI made their lives miserable. Basic training was less than a month, so I figured I could put up with anything for a short while.

The first couple of days were spent marching from one place to another. First we marched to a depot where we received our uniforms: three khaki shirts, three pair of khaki pants, one khaki jacket, one pith helmet, and a pair of brogans. Then back to the barracks to get dressed like good little khaki soldiers. Off again to a classroom where we were given tests. Then to the hospital to get our fist round of shots. They used a kind of pistol to administer the shots instead of a syringe. This approach probably saved the service a lot of money but the pistols hurt more than syringes. We walked in a line past three corpsmen with those weapons. Pop, pop, pop. One shot in each arm and then one in the left arm. I saw a couple of trainees pass out right in front of me. Once again to the classroom for more tests and then to the field for calisthenics. We, the trainees, were in pretty poor shape and it was the TI's

job to shape us up and fast. A half hour of jumping jacks, push-ups, deep knee bends and then jog three times around the workout field. Then lunch.

At lunch we were told to stand in line and not talk. “You hear me. Keep your God damn mouths shut and stand at attention. Do you understand?” Our reply was “Yes, Sir!” “Did you hear me?” And now much louder, “YES SIR!” We all took a tray and were served by four other trainees who had been there a little longer and had the pleasure of doing KP duty (Kitchen Patrol). I must say that the food was good and we were given plenty, and we were all pretty darned hungry with quite sore arms. We ate and back to the classroom and the hospital for our Small Pox vaccinations. One more half-hour of physical fitness hell, and back to the barracks for an hour to get our beds and lockers ready for our first inspection.

“I want you grunts to remove every inspection sticker from all of your clothes, is that clear?” Again, we answered in the affirmative twice, each time louder. The TI showed us how we were to make our bunk beds and set up our foot lockers. Then he left us to do as we had been taught. In 30 minutes the TI returned with a Captain and the inspection started. “What in blue blazes do you call this? Didn’t I show you assholes how to make a bed? This is the worst job I have ever seen.” The TI pulled all of the bedding from a bed onto the floor. He went down the line of trainees swearing and cussing as he went. The Captain was about a foot behind our TI and said nothing. Some of the beds passed his inspection but most did not. Then he started at the front again and looked at our foot lockers. At every couple of footlockers he picked up a shirt or pants and quickly found an inspection ticket. They were small white tickets about two inches square with a number or letter printed on them. If he found one of those hated signs of inexcusable negligence, he threw the garment on the bed and shouted, “I said you were to remove ALL of the inspection tickets. Are you trying to purposely defy me? Drop down and give me 10.” Every time an airman did something wrong, he had to do 10 push-ups. We were all still pretty weak so many of the trainees were not able to comply. That received a barrage of expletives from the TI, accusing the poor trainee of being everything from a treasonous bastard to a homosexual degenerate. “You worthless piece of shit, can’t you do 10 simple push-ups?”

Didn't your daddy show you how or are you so queer you just didn't want to learn?" Some reply was always required but sometimes one just did not know which one. "Yes, Sir!" was maybe the wrong answer but "No, Sir!" was definitely not correct.

When the TI got to me, he found one inspection ticket deep inside my brogan. I had looked but did not look deeply enough. "What's this, trainee? Didn't you understand my instructions? Get down and give me 10." I dropped to the floor and pounded out 10 pretty good push-ups, then sprang back to attention. The TI looked at me and figured I was not going to be a problem and moved on to the next victim.

After three day of similar abuse, we were led into a huge office space where there were many tables and chairs. That was where we were going to select our three choices for a career in the Air Force. When my time came, I went to a desk where a very pretty WAC with the most amazingly blue eyes I have ever seen was sitting looking at my test scores. I had taken the language test, which was not given to everyone. I looked into her blue, blue eyes and when she asked I said I wanted to have 1) language, 2) weather and 3) photography. "Thank you, ma'am." She looked back at me and thought for a second and then said, "I think we will give you Air Traffic Control as your first choice." What the hell was Air Traffic Control? I think that maybe I had heard of it but I had no idea what it really was. "Excuse me, ma'am, what is Air Traffic Control?" I asked somewhat bewildered. I thought we were supposed to get one of the three choices and here she has changed my first choice. What was up? "Your test indicated that you are right for Air Traffic Control, and we need them. That will be all. You are dismissed," she said with a wave, and there I was an Air Traffic Controller, whatever that was.

The only other thing that happened in basic training was right toward the end. It had been 104 degrees or more every day since I arrived at Lackland. After our daily routine of marching, calisthenics, more marching, eating, and then more of the former, we were all standing at attention outside our barracks, sweating like crazy with our pith helmets on when the TI announced, "Tomorrow will be Winter Ventilation. You will fall out with your jackets and

no pith helmets. All the barracks windows and doors are to be shut. Do you understand?” No, we did not understand. It was still over 100 degrees at 6:00 p.m. and he wanted us to fall out in jackets. That was the craziest thing I had ever heard, and I was sure they were planning on killing most of us. But, of course, we all responded, “Yes, Sir. We understand, Sir,” even though we did not.

That night at about 11:00, a cold front passed over Lackland and it rained like the deluge that Noah faced. By 5:00 the next morning, the temperature was just below freezing when we turned out for inspection. It was amazing and I, for one, thought that maybe they really did know something. The next two days were cold as hell but then on the third, the temperature was back above 90 and we really were going to die. Thank heavens that was my, and our, last day of basic, and the TI said how proud he was and what a splendid troupe we had been and how everything he taught us was to make us good soldiers and good Air Force privates. Yes, we advanced from nothing to private second class to private. We all felt like we had accomplished something.

Depending on the school you were headed for, we got on separate buses and said goodbye to Lackland Air Force Base forever.

Next stop Biloxi, Mississippi. This was Air Traffic Control school, among others, a six-month course where you learned everything about aircraft, weather and control terminology. Everything had to be from the Air Traffic Control book the FAA published and each of us got a copy to read and memorize. Yes, every single word. Air Traffic Control was a very precise discipline because you never knew what a pilot’s native language might be. Every pilot also had to learn the FAA book, even if he spoke Swahili.

Biloxi was a most unusual place. It was backwards and Southern. In 1964 they still had separate bathrooms for whites and blacks. Black people rode in the back of the bus. Everything was segregated. We Air Force privates did not understand that as most of our airmen came from the north where segregation was much more subtle. So when we got our first pass to go downtown, we

gathered our friends, of whom several were black, and via military bus headed to downtown.

When we arrived, we were greeted by the spectacle of separate bathrooms, separate bus benches and separate bars where we could drink. It was a real eye-opener and after walking around a bit, we all went into a bar. The bartender waved at me and I went over. He said, "Son, you can't come in here with those niggers. I don't want to make a fuss so please just leave. Okay?" I was shocked but quickly went back to my friends and we all left before things got ugly. We went to the military bus stop and right back to the base. That was just not somewhere we wanted to spend any time.

After a month I did venture back to Biloxi and onward to Gulfport which was a nice seaside semi-resort location. Gulfport was not as outwardly segregated but there were still the signs, separate bathrooms and all.

I cannot say I liked Biloxi or the Air Force base much. We were still in barracks but at least we had single beds and not bunk beds. There were about 30 of us and most were in Air Traffic Control. We went to class every weekday. On Saturday and Sunday we were off and it was expected that on Sunday, we would go to church. While in basic training they asked me what my affiliation was and I said I was an atheist. I was told, "You can't be that, you have to be one of the normal denominations." That did not seem right but I thought for a minute and said I am Jewish. They did not like that but it was a normal denomination so there was not much they could say.

So in school, I was Jewish and got all the Jewish holidays as well as all the Christian ones. The small congregation on the base was affiliated with the one in Biloxi and the one in Gulfport so on holidays, we were bused downtown and then usually to some nice Jew's home for lunch or dinner. Jews do not seem to have a problem if you are an atheist as many famous Jews were atheists like Spinoza, Kierkegaard and Einstein. They always accepted me as one of them and I had many friendly discussions with the Jews I met. I still kind of think of myself as a Jewish Atheist.

I got through the six-month course in four months as I was pretty bright, at least in comparison to most of the privates. When I graduated from Air Traffic Control school, they told me I could pick my location, and I said I wanted to go to Germany. Once again, the Air Force had other ideas. Sure, they told me the best student always got a choice. When I got my orders, it said Okinawa, Japan. What? I had the best score in the whole class. There was no arguing. I was going to Okinawa, but first I got two week's leave to go home. I took a MATS (Military Air Transport Service) flight back to LAX and stayed with my mother and father for a couple of days. Then I drove my friend Joel and his father up to Stanford where Joel was taking his doctorate in theoretical physics. Joel finished Princeton with his master's in a little over two years and would get his doctorate in two more years. We were still good friends, but he had passed me by. I felt like a three-year-old talking to an adult. He came so far in just two years. His knowledge of everything was amazing. Joel had always been an extremely fast and comprehensive reader and had plenty of time to read at Princeton.

When we got to San Francisco we stayed for three days at a motel Joel's father had booked for us. His dad flew back to Gardena, and Joel and I explored the city. We went to the wharf and we eat in China Town. The next day we drove out to Stanford; a truly beautiful campus. Joel met with his counselor and we walked all over campus. School had not started in earnest yet so most of the classrooms were open and we looked at some of the huge lecture halls. "Boy this is huge. You should have a great time here." I said. Joel looked at me and said, "It will probably be pretty lonely, but I will manage just like at Princeton." I actually felt a little sorry for him but I know he would make the most out of it and would probably find someone to love once he was through with all the studies. The next day I flew home and wondered if I would ever see Joel again. As it turned out I did years later with my wife. He was the head of the physics school at Santa Clara and he had found someone to love and had a daughter who was also quite smart, he told me.

Off We Go to Okinawa

I said a tearful good by to my mother. Father drove me up to Travis Air Force Base which is between Sacramento and San Francisco, basically in the middle of no where. We had lunch and I said good by to my dad. I had to stay overnight at Travis. My flight was at seven the next morning. I got on the C135 which is the military designation for a 707. This was the first jet plane on which I had ever flown. The route we were going to take to Okinawa was 'mid pacific' which would take us first to Honolulu, Hawaii, and then to Wake Island.

As we approached Wake I looked out the window and there was a very tiny dot. We were at two thousand feet. My God how small was this thing. We started our final approach (yes that is an 'Air Traffic Control' word) and all I could see out the window was water. Water on the left and water on the right. As we touched down it was still water on both sides. Then some land. The runway was sticking out over the ocean for several hundred feet just to give our C135 enough room to land. We went to almost the very end of the runway before we stopped with the engines roaring into the clamshells that create reverse thrust. The whole aircraft shook, and then we stopped and the engines were calmed. Wow! We turned around and taxied off the runway. This was the smallest, flattest island I had ever seen. The only thing we could see from our porthole windows was the base operations building with the control tower perched on top of it. There were a few Quonset huts in the distance probably for the unfortunates who were serving on this postage stamp in the middle of the pacific. We were not allowed off the airplane. They refueled the C135 and we were off again; using every inch of the runway.

Okinawa was at least a little bigger than Wake at 466 square miles instead of two point seven. Okinawa is about 70 miles long and twenty miles wide at its widest point. Kadena is where I was stationed. We landed the MATS C135 on one of the two 12,100 foot parallel runways; plenty of room unlike Wake. There are two major cities on Okinawa: Kadena and Naha. All of the population was on the south 20 miles and the rest was jungle and hills. There

was one road that went the length of the island. Naha was the southern city and Kadena was at the other end of the 20 miles of civilization.

I arrived and went to my barracks and checked in with the Airman on duty. He signed me in and took me to a room upstairs that had two sets of bunk beds, a table by the window and lockers for our close by the door: ten foot wide by twelve foot long. These were three story reinforced concrete buildings built to withstand typhoons. That worked out to 12 rooms, a bathroom, showers and a social room per floor. At that time there were only two per room so I took the empty lower bed. The Airman said, “You can get clean fresh sheets each day. There is a hundred watt light bulb in the bottom of the locker under the screen. Always – I mean always put your brogans in the locker over the screen. Do you understand?” Yes I understood what he said but I did not know why. He said, “You can go over to the enlisted mans club or to the mess for dinner. It is up to you.” He pointed out the window towards the building across the street. That was the enlisted mans club. I was twenty at the time and would turn twenty one in April. GI’s could drink beer from eighteen on, so after unpacking my duffel bag I headed over to the enlisted mans club for a beer.

The club had all of the major US beers as well as Sapporo, Kirin and a couple of other Japans beers. There was also a local beer called Orion. The Airman had mentioned “The US beers sit out on the flight line in 100 degree sun for weeks so they have a lot of perspectives added. The Japans beers are a little better but if you don’t want to have a headache order Orion.” That sounded like good advice so that is what I did. I did that several times. Then I had dinner and then some more beer. By the time I got back to my cozy little room I was pretty buzzed so I took my uniform off and put it in the locker. I took off my brogans and set them under the bed and then I fell down and slept till the next day. As I arrived on Friday I had Saturday and Sunday before I had to officially sign in.

When I woke up Saturday at about nine o’clock I looked around and saw that my room mate had come and gone. I got up and put on my uniform and then looked for my boots. Where were they? I looked under the bed but all I found

were two fuzzy white things. Ops. What had the Airman said? “I mean always put your brogans in the locker over the screen. Do you understand?” Oh yes that was it. Well now I had white fuzzy brogans. What the hell. I spend the next half hour cleaning and polishing my brogans. I will never do that again; live and learn.

Okinawa was an ‘unaccompanied tour’ only 18 month. For me it was the longest 18 months in my life. It was hot and very very humid in summer and cold (down to 40 degrees) in winter. We had frequent water shortages and power outages. We had Typhoons and torrential rains in Spring and Fall. There were almost no white girl because it was an ‘unaccompanied tour’. I did not find the local woman very attractive and I was not going to go downtown and buy some bar girl drinks all night. Some of the guys loved it in Okinawa and took every advantage of the fringe benefits: whores, blow-jobs, crazy sex. Somehow that just did not appeal to me.

I remember going downtown Kadena with a couple of my pals. We walked past ‘suckahachi alley’ which was a six foot alley in the bar district where GI’s went to get a blow-job. There would be seven to ten guys leaning against the wall, pants down to their knees, with a very ugly whore doing the job. I tried not to look. Jim my coworker said, “Stupid you aren’t supposed to stair.” Jim was a heavy set Italian about five foot eight with jet black hair. He would have liked to ware a mustache but that was not allowed. He and I use to go to the gym and he was teaching me to box. I would try to hit him and he would doge and duck and then give me a good punch in my side or stomach. Jim was a pretty good boxer. He had a wife that he worried about all the time. “I sure hope she is behaving herself.” he would say with a sad expression. He would get letters from her every couple of weeks and he liked to read the “Not to personal stuff.” out loud to me. “She says ‘I love you and miss you.’ I sure hope that is true.” Jim would say. He would write her every other day.

Jim never went to ‘suckahachi alley’ but he did visit a whore house every once in a while. He would say, “Come on Barton try it just once.” I would fob him off with, “Not tonight. Maybe some other time.” One night we were in town drinking and Jim wanted something and he was insistent that I should

join him. I was pretty buzzed so was much more mailable than usual. I followed Jim to his favorite whore house and he said, "Come on I'll pay for it. You can't say no." So he selected his whore and picked one out for me. "You like this one?" Jim queried. She was probably thirty five or maybe even forty. "Yeah sure." I said and Miss forty and I went to her room. She closed the door and said, "How you like it. I do anything you want." I looked at that poor old body and said, "It's OK, I don't think I can get it up. You keep the money and we can just sit here for a few minutes." She looked extremely put out. "You no want suckie-fuckie?" I smiled and said, "Not tonight, I'm sorry. Maybe next time." We stat there for five minutes and then we went back out. She smiled and I saw she was missing an eyetooth, then she said, "He was very good. Nice GI, but a little stinko." I thought that was nice of her as I was afraid she would spill the beans and say I did not perform. 'Stinko' was such a well used work. The bar girls would use it all the time, "Hi stinko GI, you buy me a drink?" Or "GI way too stinko. You take him home." Stinko meant very drunk. When we would got back to the barracks Jim would sit down and write his wife a sanguine account of his day. He of course left out the part about the whore. I am sure her letters left thing out also.

While I was in Okinawa we had several Typhoons. They would come up form down by the Philippians and the B52's from Guam's Anderson Air Force Base would have to evacuate to someplace with a long runway. Kadena had a long runway and if the storm track was not looking like it would hit us we were the place. As an 'Air Traffic Controller' I worked in the Rapcon (Radar Approach Control) and when those flight of B52's came in from Guam it was one crazy event. The flights would come in as three or four B52's flying in formation. A long line of them. When they were within radar contact we had to break the flight into individual aircraft. "B52 flight B155 leader squawk 0633 IDENT" We used the *IFF/SIF* (Identification, Friend or Foe) to track aircraft because it gave us a much bigger and better image than the raw radar response. Back then we were all using the old ten inch CRT (Cathode Ray Tubes) radar screens, not the great big screens they have today. We had radar out to 60 miles with ranges from 60, 30 and 20 miles. Outside of 60 miles we had *IFF/SIF* radar up to a 400 mile radius. The CRT radar image of a flight of four B52's was about an eighth of an inch wide. Once the

aircraft were separated the image was less than a sixteenth of an inch. With *IFF/SIF* we could see the raw radar image with a rectangle of about quarter of an inch by an eighth of an inch in back of it which made it much easier to see the targets.

When I first got to Okinawa we had a nice air conditioned cement RAPCON. It was roomy and the radar almost always worked. After about six months the RAPCON was refurbished and while that was happening we were relegated to a GCA (Ground Control Approach) trailer. The GCA trailer was cramped and in summer every time the door was opened for shift change the entire GCA trailer would drop to zero visibility as a thick fog engulfed us. At that point the radar would fail and would stay off for about fifteen minutes while the radar technicians worked frantically to get it back on the air.

As a result when we had a shift change the new shift would knock a secret knock on the door. This signaled the crew we were going to relieve to take all the aircraft they were controlling via radar transfer them to 'conventional' approach control. That meant using *TACAN/VOR and ILS landing systems*. This process was not simple and took up to fifteen minutes. When everything was setup the old crew would open the door and we would race in along with all that super humid air. Zero viability for up to three minutes then things started to come into view again. Of course the radar was out. The new crew would take their places and the old crew would stand behind them and explain everything. After around five or six minutes the old crew would open the door and race out as the humid air raced back in. Zero again.

Now the poor radar techs started to work and usually after fifteen minutes we would have radar again. This was the most bazaar process I had ever seen, but we had to do it every shift change. At night it was not quite as bad but we still usually lost radar. After about another six months we moved back into the cement RAPCON. Good by GCA trailer and shift change craziness.

While I was on Okinawa we had two Typhoons that came close to the island. During each of these I sheltered in the barracks which was all cement and had huge iron shutters for the windows. We usually stayed for two days and eat

'K rations'. The cigarettes in the 'K ration' packages were from World War II and the guys who smoked had to hold the cigarette tilted up so the dry tobacco would not fall out. I could not imagine how they could smoked those 25 year old 'cigs', but they did coughing and chocking. The 'K rations' were pretty bad and some of us had some real food stashed away. I had a couple of cans of chili and a single burner propane stove. I could heat up the chili and some of the meat in the 'K ration' packs. It was not good but it was OK for two days.

The last typhoon that threatened Okinawa made its threat good. It came right over the island. I volunteered to man the RAPCON which only had a few overflights to contend with as everything from the base had been evacuated. All of the F105 fighter-bombers and the KC135 refueling aircraft had been evacuated to safer locations. Everything else was either in hangers or tied down. The Typhoon was sporting winds of 165 miles per hour when it hit the island. Even inside the RAPCON I could hear the wind. Then the eye of the storm came right over us. We all went outside and stared. The clouds were 360 degrees around us and were a pail greenish color from all of the ozone that was being generated by the storms lightning. It was absolutely still. Not a sign of a breeze. I picked up a feather from a seagull and dropped it. It fell straight down, not even a flutter. We stood outside for about fifteen minutes and then the breeze started up and as we scurried back into the safety of the concrete RAPCON the wind grew ever stronger. We locked the door and the storm proceeded to demolish everything in the city of Kadena and Naha. The Air Base being constructed of reinforced concrete suffered almost no damage. A couple of stop signs were pushed over but not much else. Downtown the only structure in Kadena standing was a concrete bank. Everything else was demolished.

My tour was almost over and once again I asked for Germany and this time I got my wish. I would have to extend my tour for three years as that was the duty time in Germany. In October I flew back to Travis Air Force base and then caught a flight from San Francisco back to Gardena. I had three weeks leave before having to report to Wiesbaden, Germany.

My father was seemingly doing pretty well and had no further attacks. He still took the 'nitro' once in a while. He had his own business now: Engineering. He still designed and built sound systems for clients. He also did movie and TV sound work. Things looked quite sanguine. When it was time I flew from LAX to New York with a TWA jet. The seats were spacious for tourist class. The meals were very good and the stewardesses were young and very pretty. Those were the days before deregulation and airlines could make a decent profit. From New York I flew to Frankfurt, Germany. I found the military bus to Wiesbaden Air Force Base. It was cold and rainy and the days were starting to get pretty short.

Germany 1966

When I arrived at Wiesbaden I was directed to my barracks and was signed in by a couple of black Airman First Class. They showed me to my room on the third floor. The rooms here were quite spacious, almost twenty feet wide and about the same in length. This was for only two airmen. Boy what a difference from Okinawa. This was living. The two airmen said, "Get unpacked and meet us downstairs and we'll show you the town. John has a car so we don't have to take the bus. I will show you where the bus stops so you will know for later use. See you downstairs in maybe twenty minutes." It was about six o'clock and it was already dark. Wiesbaden, Germany is much further north than anything in the continental US and as a result it got dark very early in winter.

I put away my belongings in the closet and selected some civilian clothes from my wardrobe. I got dressed quickly and shot downstairs to meet my two new friends: Henry and John. When I got downstairs they had another friend with them, Rauch, who was a white guy. We all piled into John's VW (Volkswagen) and drove the five miles from the Air Base at Wiesbaden-Erbenheim to downtown. "We will drive around a little bit and we can show you the lay of the land." Henry said. "Then let's go to our favorite bar and get some beer. You haven't had any German beer yet, have you Barton?" No I

had not had any yet but I sure wanted some. They say German beer is the best in the world, and they are right. "That sounds like a plan." I said.

We drove down the main street, Wilhelmstraße, and up around the Casino and opera house. Then through the many back streets of Wiesbaden until we finally ended up at a small bar or Gasthaus. We hurried in and sat at the bar and Rauch ordered, "Vier großen Beer, bitte." That is "four big beers please". I asked, "What is a großen beer?" Rauch said, "Here in mid Germany it is a half liter of beer but in Munich it is a full liter." Rauch laughed and slapped me on my back.

Rauch was a short guy maybe five foot four in his shoes with black hair and a somewhat foreign look though I could not put my finger on it. He was from European ancestry that was for sure. He had kind of a weaselly face though not unattractive. Rauch and I would become good friends and I would bunk with him for a while.

The beers were wonderful and we had several. John drank a little less than we did because he was driving. The driving laws were not nearly as strict in 1966 as they are today. There were no Breathalyzers so if you could walk a straight line you were OK, still John was a responsible drinker and driver. Every bar had a Fußball game and I was shown how to play. The table was about four feet long and two and a half wide with bars running from side to side that had little figure of Fußball men on them. You would grasp the handles and spin the bars and try to hit the ping-pong ball that represented the Fußball. We could play with two or four people divided into teams each protecting their goal. It was really a great game and I played it all the time. We even had one in our barracks so we could practice and become world class Fußball champions.

We stayed until almost two in the morning and then we drove to an all night Gasthof on the Autobahn and had breakfast. What a great arrival in Germany, fantastic beer, Fußball and now breakfast at almost three. We got home and I stumbled into my room, found my bed and fell fast asleep. When I woke my room mate was sitting at the table in our room and was writing something. I

said, “Hi, I’m Barton, Barton Phillips. How’s it going?” Sammy said, “OK, you an air traffic controller? I’m a diddy-bopper. That’s code, you know ‘mors’ code. I guess we is room mates for while.” Sammy was a quite short Negro and I could tell he had an attitude just by looking at him. “Yep air traffic that’s me. You been here long?” Sammy squinted up his eyes and said, “Yeah I been here ways too long. I hates this place there nothin to do here.” He got up and went to the door and said, “I guess I go to the e-club and gets breakfast, you interested?” I smiled and said, “Not quite yet I still have to take a shower and stuff. I’ll see you later.”

As I said Sammy had an attitude and it got him into real trouble. We had been room mates for just a couple of months and he ended up in the brig. He was there for two weeks and when he got out he was a new boy. No more attitude. He had seen God and God was a big six foot five 250 pound MP Staff Sargent and according to Sammy he had beat the crap out of him every time he said something. Sammy was stripped back to private. He only had two months left on his enlistment and he sure as hell was not going to go back in the brig and he really was not going to see that Staff Sargent ever again. Those last two month Sammy was one outstanding soldier with a, “Yes Sir.” and a “No Sir.” and that was it.

When Sammy shipped back to the states my new room mate was Rauch. Rauch was neat and he kept the place looking good for inspections. Because we were in Air Traffic Control and under FAA rules we could work no more than eight hours, four days in a row, with three days rest, and that included anything, inspections, parade duty or barracks duty. You name it if it was anything that sounded like work it came off of our eight hours. Because our teams were very short handed we did not have to do anything other than show up at our post. I was for all intent and purposes a civilian wearing a uniform. Those basic training test sure figured me out, if I had been anything other than Air Traffic Control I probably would not had made it to an honorable discharge.

By the time Rauch moved in with me he had a car and we would go downtown several times a week. We did not make much money, about \$300

per month, but we did not have to pay for room or board so the money went pretty far. I was always able to save about \$150 a month from my meager wages. I tried to eat at the mess hall most of the time and I did not need much else so I had plenty of money for beer. At the time a half liter of beer was fifty pfennig (about twelve and a half cents). You could have a lot of beers for \$100. The exchange rate was four marks for one dollar so \$300 was 1200 marks and that was about what a junior engineer made in Germany.

Rauch and I had a favorite bar that we called the 'Hole in the Wall'. It was literally that, a single door that led into a hallway and then into a very nice Gasthaus with a small bar and about ten tables and a big TV over the bar. They actually served good German food and we would go there most of the time especially during the days we had off together. We were the only GI that came to the 'Hole in the Wall'. They usually had two or three patrons watching the Fußball games on TV and drinking beer just like us. During the day the bar was a bright friendly place with several big windows facing onto a small back garden surrounded on all sides by buildings. "Lets go to the hole in the wall today I have off and you just finished your mid shift." Rauch would say at about twelve o'clock when I woke up after spending the whole night in the tower. I would get off at six in the morning after spending eight unbelievably boring hours with nothing to do in the tower except give a couple of radio checks to the aircraft maintenance men working on the airplanes overnight. "Sure, let me get a shower and we can go." I said with sleep still in my eyes. I yawned, "The hole in the wall should be good today as there's a game at two." In fifteen minutes we were off in Rauch's old VW. We would be there just before lunch and could order a beer and something good to eat. At noon the hole in the wall did a brisk business with about half of the tables full of workers all with beer and good German food. By two when the game started most all of the lunch crowd was gone and it was just one other table with two older Germans drinking beer and watching Fußball with us.

Because I took German in college I know the grammar and had a smidgen of a vocabulary from witch to work. Rauch had been in Germany for almost two and a half years and he could speak pretty good pigeon German. He know

more words than I did but the grammar was hard for him. I was taking the optional military supplied language labs and was getting my vocabulary up to snuff pretty fast.

We would talk to the guys watching Fußball and sometime buy them a beer and sometime they would buy us a beer. Real camaraderie. I have become a super Fußball fan and every time my wife and I return to Germany we try to be there for the World Cup, the premier sporting event in the world. More on my wife soon.

Summer of 1967 was spectacular and it was then that I found out that I was allergic to almost every grassy thing that grew in Germany. That Spring I started to have what I thought was a cold. It lasted and lasted and finally after a full month of misery I went to the flight surgeon and said, "Sir I have had this cold for a month and I can't stand it any longer. What's wrong? I can't go on working like this." The "I can't go on working" was the magic that got attention. The flight surgeon looked up my nose and down my throat and said with a slight smile, "Well son you have allergies. And because you are on flying status as a controller I can't prescribe antihistamines." "So what am I to do? I can't keep on working like this." I said. "Well I can prescribe some nose drops that may help and set you up for an allergy test later this week." So later that week I got the bus to the military hospital in Wiesbaden and got stuck with dozens of needles with various allergens. Sure enough I was allergic to most grasses. "Well airman we can make up a serum for you and you will have to get a shot every week. It should start to work after a couple of weeks to a month." the doctor said. So from then on it was a trip to the infirmary on base for my shot each week. After a week or two thing got a little better but I still needed the nose drops. This affliction stayed with me until I was sixty. Weekly shots and then one day I stopped the shots and no more allergies. It was like a miracle I was finally cured.

One Saturday in summer our group of Air Traffic Controllers and some of the others in the barracks like the radar techs got to go on a trip to a winery or Weinegut in German. It was at Eltville am Rhein about thirty minutes west of our base. We all piled onto a military bus and off we went about thirty of us

along with a van that had a DJ and equipment. We were scheduled to get a tour of the wine cellars and then dinner, wine and music.

Weingut Koegler

Our rowdy bunch of GI got off the bus and were greeted by Frau Koegler the owner of the winery. She was a rather plump woman in her late fifties or early sixties with straw brown hair and a pudgy face but with sharp eyes that you thought could see the mischief we were after. She was maybe five foot five but had a considerable authority and know it. She lead us to a big wooden door and opening it. We could see the stone steps leading down into blackness. The steps were very warn from many trips up and down. She entered the doorway and found a light switch and turned it on. The lights were lined on the ceiling running down the stairs and then running left into a huge cellar. We followed her down the steps into the wine cellar and lined up in rows of about eight and waited. Frau Keogler walked up to an enormous cask and started to speak in German. We had a translator with us and he explained what she was telling us about the wine and how it was made. We were all waiting for a taste, all the other information was uninteresting to most of my fellows. I could somewhat understand Frau Keogler as she spoke very good high German which is what I was taught in college. She went on and on and we waited. Finally she called out to a very pretty waitress all dressed in a Dirndl and looking very attractive. The Dirndl is an outfit that is worn by many waitresses and is made up of a dress that goes up over the shoulders with a low cut bodice, a white apron and a pretty white blouse. The dress usually had flower pattern or embroidered figures on it. All Dirndls are very attractive. This outfit makes a woman look almost irresistible, or at least that is what I thought.

The Fraulein had a tray with many small glasses on it and she brought the tray over the Frau Keogler who drew wine from the cask into a pitcher and then pored small samples into the little glasses. Then Frau Keogler said in German, “Now Ingrid give one glass to each of the Armies.” We were called Armies by the Germans and now I knew the Fraulein’s name, it was Ingrid.

After we did several tasting from different casks we went back upstairs and through the Weingut to a beautiful garden with tables enough for all of us. Another waitress served everyone an eight ounces Römer wine glass full of wine. Now we were happy, finally a full glass of wine.

The DJ set up his equipment and started playing GI songs. This is what most of the gang wanted, good old US music. I looked around and saw Ingrid was bringing dishes of food out. A roll (Brötchen), and a Bratwurst on each plate. She scurried around the tables placing one dish in front of each GI. When she got to me I said, "Danke schoen." and she looked at me and said sweetly, "Bitte schoen." And gave me we a most alluring look.

As the night wore on and the drinking continued everyone got looser and happier. Frau Koegler was no fool, after the wine tasting and one glass of free wine the next wine cost a mark. The two waitresses were kept very busy bringing refills. Later I walked over to Ingrid and said in German, "You are very pretty, would you like to dance?" Ingrid spoke no English and her reply in German was, "Yes I would but I do not think Frau Koegler will allow it. I would like to dance with you why do you not come back tomorrow, it is my day off and we can do something." And then she leaned close and kissed me on the mouth. A good long kiss. Shortly after that we all got back on the bus and headed home.

As luck had it I had the next day off and I got Rauch to drive me up to Eltville. Ingrid was at the Weingut but was not working. She saw me and said, always in German, "You came. I am so happy. Lets go for a walk down by the Rhein." And away we went. I had asked Rauch to come and pick me up at about nine that night so we had the whole day together. We went to a couple of other wineries and had an early dinner at one of the places. Ingrid looked deeply into my eyes and said, "I have a weeks vacation in a couple of days and I am going to Switzerland would you like to come with me?" Wow that was a surprise and I would have loved to go with here but I could not get a weeks leave just like that. In the military you had to put in a request and it had to be approved all the way up the command chain. That could take weeks so I said reluctantly, "I can not get a week off right away." She looked a little

sad and said, “OK but will you come and see me when I get back? I will be here working almost every night. I will look forward to seeing you in a week or so.” And that was it. Rauch drove me home and all I could think of was what I was going to miss.

The next week crawled by as I waited until I thought Ingrid would be back from Switzerland. A week and a half and I had a Saturday off so I got my buddy Rauch to drive me once again up to Eltville. He dropped me off and said, “I’ll wait till you let me know if your sweetie is there.” I went into Keogler’s and there she was in her pretty Dirndl with a tray of Römer glasses full of wine ready to serve a table. She saw me and her lovely smile told me she was very glad to see me. She served the table and then came over to me and said, “You came I am so glad. I was not sure you would come but here you are.” I blushed a little and she took my hand and went into the kitchen where Frau Keogler was making lunch plates. She said, “Frau Keogler this is Barton he was here with the Armies two weeks ago. Can he have a glass of wine and wait until after lunch. Then maybe I can have an hour off and we can take a walk.” Frau Keogler looked at my slender, almost skinny frame and then into my eyes. She paused for a couple of seconds looking at me and then said, “Yes Ingrid that will be fine. You let him sit in the garden and bring him a nice glass of wine. Then after lunch you can have off until the dinner crowd starts.” Ingrid was very pleased as she had only hoped for an hour. I put on my best smile and said, “Dunka, Dunka.” and Frau Keogler said, “That is good no need to thank me Ingrid is like family.”

I sat in the garden and drank my glass of wine and when I was finished Ingrid brought me a second glass. By two o’clock the luncheon patrons had left and there were only two tables in the garden with folks drinking a glass of wine. Ingrid quickly took off her apron and we escaped Keogler’s as fast as she could move. We walked once again by the Rhein and watched the Rhein cruisers unload their passengers at the dock. I said, “I would love to take a Rhein cruise some day.” Ingrid smiled and said, “Maybe soon.” We spent the rest of the day walking around Eltville and looking at the old Church.

At five o'clock Ingrid was back at Keogler's and I was once again sitting in the garden. The weather that summer was warm and we did not have much rain so the garden was perfect. Ingrid brought me another glass of wine and a plate with Handkäse mit Musik. Handkäse is a small, translucent, yellow cheese with a pungent aroma that is formed by hand, thus the name 'hand cheese'. Musik is finely chopped onions in vinegar and olive oil. This is served on a piece of Mischbrot which is a yeast bread of quarter rye and three quarter white flour that is double baked to give it a wonderful hard dark brown crust with a dense but soft inside. It is possible the best bread in the world or at least I think so. This dish is a favorite of wine drinkers in the Rheingau area which is the section of the Rhein that runs almost east-west from Wiesbaden to Rudesheim and produces some of the best Rieslings in the entire World.

I had never had Handkäse mit Musik so Ingrid showed me how to cut the cheese and spread it on the bread along with the onions. It tasted wonderful. I love the taste of good stinky cheese and this cheese fit the bill. I know that many Americans think that sharp pungent cheeses are awful and hold their noses. Most of my GI buddies felt that way but not me; a glass of wine a good stinky cheese and a piece of fantastic bread was the best thing. I always remember the line from Omar Kahyyám:

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread – and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness –
O, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Well he did not mention the good cheese and I did not have a Book of Verses. Anyway it was beautiful in the garden with the smell of the wine, the cheese, the onions and the bread.

At eight o'clock Rauch showed up with my ride and I had to say good by to Ingrid. I said I would try to come again soon and she smiled and said, "Please come back soon, I will be here." With that farewell I jumped into Rauch's VW and we were off to the airbase.

Frankfurt

Besides Rauch I had a couple of other friends: Steven and Ralph. Steven Bruckner was about six foot with a Germanic face and blond brown hair. I think his father was German and he had been to Germany many time before he enlisted. He had relatives in Frankfurt: Herr and Frau Störkel. Their daughter Dagmar was studying at the University of Frankfurt and her may friends were also Steve's friends, and by association my friends.

Ralph McFadin was only five foot five, brown hair, blue eyes with Scottish or Irish features. Ralph could play the guitar passably and we would sing German songs with the Störkel's and our very good German friend Lutz Babkust. Lutzie, as we called him, was shorter than Ralph, maybe five-two, with curly blond hair and blue eyes. Lutzie looked decidedly German and his parents were well to do.

Steve, Ralph and I would drive over to Frankfurt every time we had a chance and stay at the Stökel's in their third story bedroom. It was a bit cramped up there but then again most of the time we were pretty buzzed by the time we got back to the Stökel's nice row house in a good section of town.

Our German University students would say, "We can help you with your German. We will speak only German with you." This sounded good but there were two problems; first, Ralph did not speak any German, and second their English was so very good that the conversation soon degenerated to only English. There is one thing I have learned and that is if someone speaks better English than you speak German you will always end up speaking English. If you really want to learn German you have to find someone who speaks no English or very very little. That was Ingrid and Frau Keogler and most of the people I meat in Eltville.

The University students loved American and British music and in 1967 the Beatles were all the rage. We would sit around in the dorm rooms at the

University and listen to American Rock and Roll, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and of course Bob Dylan. German students loved Bob Dylan as did I. I had gone to one of his first concerts at the Hollywood Bowl in 1962 and I fell in love with his musical poetry. The University students felt that Bob Dylan was speaking for the majority of Americans and it was just the corrupt government of Lyndon Johnson that was keeping the Vietnam war going. They did feel that Johnson's stance towards Negroes was admirable.

I had many wonderful times in Frankfurt and my memories of Sachsenhausen and Apfelwein will always be with me. Sachsenhausen is just across the Main river from Frankfurt and Apfelwein is a bitter somewhat salty wine made from apples. The beverage is served in a Bembel which is a fired ceramic pitcher of from one to two and a half liters. One never knew what size the Bembel would be, it just depended on what was waiting to be filled.

Our group, which usually consisted of Lutzie, Steve, Ralph, myself and maybe a girl or two, would order a Bembel and we would get it with four tumblers glasses. We would fill the glasses and drink. It was awful but we drank it down. There was always music, played by two old Germans with violin and accordion. All old German songs; we would link arms with whoever was sitting on the long benches with us and sing and sway with the music. Every German knew all the words and it led to great camaraderie and fun. When we finished our first tumbler of wine we would refill it and drink some more. It was truly amazing how good that second glass tasted and how easily it went down. Before long we were ordering another Bembel and hoping it was a big one.

As the night progressed other people would order Bembels and all were shared, each one tasted better than the last. These Apfelweinkneipen also served several authentic German dishes from the Sachsenhausen area. We would order food after a couple of Bembels and sing and sway with the crowd. As the night progressed the girls there started to look more and more attractive.

By the end of the evening we were pretty buzzed and headed home to Stökel's. We usually take a taxi to the Aphelweinkneipe but often we walked home. It was maybe two miles. We staggered over the bridge and Lutz, who knew the way best, led us home without incident. We went many times to Sachsenhausen with and without dates, it was always a sumptuous fun time.

First Date with Ingrid

Ingrid had said she would like to go to Wiesbaden to the Rhein-Main-Hallen and watch the upcoming wrestling matches. I thought this a strange first date but what the hell. As it turned out Rauch and I both had that Saturday night off and Ingrid had arranged to have another waitress cover for her, with Frau Keogler's approval. Rauch had a date he picked up from the train station in Wiesbaden. She had just come back from Munich and she knew that we were going to the wrestling matches. We drove out to Eltville and picked Ingrid up. She was wearing a pretty dress and had her hair put up in a bumble-bee style which accentuated her lovely cheeks and bone structure. She got in the back of the VW with me and we were off.

Rhein-Main hall is a huge complex of arenas and other venues. The arena that the match was in seated 2,600 people. We were seated about midway up and could see the ring very well. Ingrid was ecstatic and yelled and clapped for her champion. I just sat and watched her, she was so lovely all existed and happy.

We got some Bratwurst and bread, a beer and eat, clapped and shouted. I felt a little silly watching a wrestling match here in Germany. There were a couple of famous names from the US that I knew from when I was about six years old watching on TV. There were four matches and a 'tag team' event. It was the same stuff I had watched all those years ago. Just as phony and rehearsed, just as loud and of course exciting. Ingrid loved it and I was falling for her so I went along with the crowd.

The event ended at about nine-thirty and we headed back to Eltville. Rauch's date lived in one of the villages a little further down the Rhein so he dropped me off at Keogler's and went on his way and said, "I will be back at two-thirty to pick you up. Do you think that will work?" I thought about that. What would I do till two-thirty, but I said, "Sure, I'll keep busy." Rauch smiled a evil smile and said, "I bet you will. See you then." And he and his date were off. I was wondering what he had planned to take up his time.

Ingrid and I went into the Hof (parking area) in front of Keogler's and she said, "Do you want to come to my room?" "Sure." I said wondering. We went to her room which was to the left of Keogler's large facility. The room was actually two rooms each about ten by ten with a bed, a sink, a chair and a closet. The other room was where her seven year old son slept. She had told me that she was devoiced and had custody of only the older boy, the younger being still with his father.

We took off our coats and she hung them in the closet. I sat on the bed and she proceeded to undress by the sink. All the way. She washed herself with a cloth and then put on a pare of pajamas. I was surprised to say the least. Ingrid smiled at me and said, "You should get ready for bed. You can hang your cloths on the chair." I stud up and she got into bed. I did as ordered and took off my cloths and neatly placed them on the chair. Waring only by shorts I looked at Ingrid. She said, "Please turn off the light and get into bed, it is cold."

This was the closest I had ever been to a woman. She put her arms around my neck and kissed me. It was a French kiss and it tingled from my head all the way to my toes. She kept on kissing me and soon without even thinking I had a huge erection. We kissed some more and I ran my hand over her breasts. They felt great under the pajama top. Slowly I slipped my hand under the pajama top and caressed her. She was still kissing me and she said, "I really like you. I really like kissing you. Do you like me?" Oh yes.

I slowly pulled her pajama bottoms off and my shorts. I unbuttoned her top. We continues to kiss and then we made love. It was amazing. It was much

better than masturbating. I never felt so wonderful. I rolled off her and lay there breathing heavily. She was also breathing heavily and she rolled towards me and kissed me some more.

This was the first time I had sex with a real woman and it was everything I had hoped for. She continued to kiss me and we made love four more times that evening. At two-fifteen I kissed Ingrid goodbye and said I would be back as soon as I could. I told her that I was buying a brand new Triumph Spitfire sports car. She laughed at that and said, "That is good then next time you can stay all night. I love you. Goodbye." And with that I had my cloths on and was out the door to the street where Rauch was just arriving. Perfect timing. I got into the VW and Rauch leered at me and said, "Well did you find something to due for four hours?" I sure did, but said, "Did you have a good time also?" Rauch did have a good time and the two of us drove back to base both very satisfied.

Within a week I had my new car. My parents had taken money from my savings account that I had all during high school and college and while I was working at the Post Office. The car cost just under \$2,000 and it was a beaut and ran like the wind. It was delivered on Friday and the soonest I had off was Sunday which I though Ingrid had off as well.

On Sunday I drove up to Eltville about nine o'clock and went to Ingrid's little room and knocked. She answered and said, "Frau Keogler is giving me a nice apartment right over there in that building. It is on the second floor." The building was another of the structures that the good Frau owned. It was right across from her current room and was on the same side as the cellars. There was a big iron gate between the cellars and this apartment building. The building had two stories with four apartments. Ingrid was to get the one on the upper right from where we stood looking. She was very exited and she kissed me and throw her arms around me. I said, "Do you not want to see my new car?" She smiled and laughed, "Of course I want to see your new car. Where is it?" I had parked it in the public parking lot across the street and behind the village stores. "But first come and look at my apartment." She lead me up the stairs and opened the door. It was much larger than her old

room. It had a fairly nice living room, an adjoining master bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a nice sized room for Christian, that was her son's name. It all looked nice and again she kissed me hard.

We took my car for a nice ride all the way down the Rheingau to Rudesheim at the bend of the Rhein. The Rheingau runs East-West but from Rudesheim all the way to the ocean the Rhein ran southwest. Rudesheim is a famous tourist town full of little shops and Gasthause with lots of Riesling wine and good food.

We drove up the hill behind Rudesheim to the Niederwalddenkmal which is a huge statue of a woman all dressed in armor with a sword in one hand and a crown held high in the other. The statue is of Germania the 'Wacht am Rhein' and has reliefs and the allegories of war and peace. Its inauguration was on September 28, 1883 and was to commemorate the Franco-German war. Germania, the woman with the sword, stands on a 86 foot high stone base which is high on a hill behind Rudesheim. There is a cable car that takes visitors up from Rudesheim but we drove right up in my new robin-egg blue Spritfire with a white convertible top. It was a spectacular day and the clouds against the dark blue sky made the scene look like a picture postcard. I took several pictures with my Pentax 35mm camera; now all those picture are in a box somewhere as slides for which I no longer have a projector. I have often thought of having some of them scanned and put on a CD or a flash-drive but just never get the time. Maybe someday.

We had a late lunch in Rudesheim and walked up and down the picturesque narrow streets and alleys. We walked down the Drosselgasse and listened to the music coming from the many bars and Gasthof's. It was a thoroughly wonderful day. At about seven o'clock at night we drove back to Eltville. In summer the days are as long as they are short in winter and the twilight lasts well into eleven o'clock or longer. With my car I could now stay the night as Ingrid had suggested. Monday morning I would have to be in the tower by seven but the sun would be up a long time before that so I was not afraid that I would oversleep. That night we went to bed for the last time in the little

room and we made love a couple of times and then again in the morning. I got up and drove off to work a very happy Armie.

Soon Ingrid and son were ensconced in their new apartment. I would stay with Ingrid as often as I could. Some time she would have to work quite late at Keogler's. It was summer and the wine drinking and music often went on well after two o'clock. Sometimes I would go up to the apartment and go to sleep or watch TV until Ingrid got home. Other times, if I showed up just after lunch and she said she would have a very late night because of a party, I would head over to Frankfurt and meet up with my University friends.

I liked Ingrid very much, but she was just my girlfriend, we were not engaged or anything, so when I went to Frankfurt I would go out with other girls. Lutz had a girlfriend who had a friend that I started dating when in Frankfurt. Her name was Anna Borgward. I never know if she was any relation to the famous Borgward Automobile dynasty but she did have a very nice apartment in Frankfurt that she shared with a French girl. The apartment looked much too nice for what Anna earned as a secretary.

Anna and I would go out with my friends to bars and restaurants, to consorts, clubs and dance halls. I first started seeing Anna before I met Ingrid. Our relationship was always platonic at first. Anna only spoke a little English so she was a good fit for my language studies. She liked to kiss and we did a lot of that but nothing more. We had been seeing each other off and on for a couple of months when I first met Ingrid and I kept on seeing Anna even after my first time with Ingrid. Anna was nice. She had deep red hair, blue eyes, a pretty face but with a little too much makeup. She was only five-four which made her a lot shorter than Ingrid at five-eight, and a lot shorter than my six-three. Still she was a good fit when we danced and kissed.

On one of those occasions when Ingrid had a very late night and I went to Frankfurt, Anna and I went to Sachsenhausen and drank quite a bit of Apfelwein and then went back to her apartment. She said, "You should stay tonight we have had too much to drink. You should not drive." I could not agree more so I assented. She said, "You can sleep here with me. Get undressed and I will freshen up a little and then we can sleep." She smiled a

very come-hither smile and she went into the bathroom. When she came back out she was wearing a very transparent babydoll teddy and nothing else. She hopped into bed with me and kissed me. She rolled on her side facing away from me. I put my arms around her and she said, "Not tonight you are too drunk, but maybe in the morning." With that she turned off the light and we slept.

The next morning I awoke and she was not there. I wondered what had happened and then I heard the bathroom door open and she reappeared as last night. She hurried over to the bed and jumped in and said, "Oh it is cold this morning. Now you can keep me warm." And I did. This was the second and last woman with whom I would have sex. She was great fun and we had sex almost every time I came to Frankfurt which was maybe two or three times a month.

With two girlfriends in opposite directions from Wiesbaden my next several months were pretty hectic. A couple nights with Ingrid and then a night with Anna. Back and forth I went. I really liked Anna as a girlfriend but my feelings for Ingrid went much deeper. I thought I loved her and maybe wanted to marry her. I was not sure how she felt. We were having great fun but she had already been married once and divorced. Would she want to do it all over again? Another country, a new language.

I thought hard about my problem but in the end I did not want to acquire a good thing and for the time being I just went with the flow, and the flow was great fun.

Armies Marching Up the Rhein

Meanwhile my Air Traffic Control just in the tower was dragging on. I worked two day shifts, two swing shifts, two night shifts and then three days off. The day shifts were not too bad as there were a number of upper rank officers who wanted to get in their flying hours so they would not lose the substantial salary benefits. We would have five four to six airplanes in our

traffic pattern doing touch-and-goes most weekdays. Swing shifts would be somewhat busy up until about nine o'clock. But night shifts were dead. Nothing to do all night. The Spring of 1967 I was reading War and Piece by Tolstoy and nigh shift was the perfect time for reading. Usually there was only one Airman on duty at night so it was very very peaceful.

That spring was a very turbulent weather story. We had cold fronts moving up the Rhein for almost a whole month. You would look out the control tower window towards Rudesheim and you would see enormous back clouds racing down the Rheingau towards Wiesbaden. The lightning was flashing in the clouds and as the front got close to the Air Base the viability dropped and dropped until the line of rain at the end of the runway was so thick you could not see anything beyond. The front would march across the Air Base like an angry army with thunder and lightning echoing like volleys of cannon fire.

This siege went on day and night. Down the Rhein would come a new army. It would sweep across us and march Up the Rhein. Once the battle had passed all was clear and you could see all the way down to Rudesheim, and there came another angry army. As I read War and Piece that Spring I felt that I was sitting on a hill outside of Moscow watching as the French stormed towards the city with the Russians fighting valiantly to save their home town. I could not have asked for a better reading room or a more appropriate book.

After I finished War and Piece I read The Lord of the Rings by J. R. R. Tolkien which also had spectacular battles of Orcs, Elves, Dwarves, Hobbits and humans. As night would ware on I would see myself standing with Fredo, Gimil, Aragon, Legolas and Gandolf the Grey fighting off the evil forces of Sauron and his puppet Saruman the White. If you have not read The Lord of the Rings I highly recommend it, but first you should read The Hobbit which I read in college.

I figured that every Spring would be like the Spring of 1967 but I was sadly mistaken. In 1968 and 1969 we had a couple of showers but not massive armies of cold fronts on the march. I am very glad I was there to see the spectacle of Spring 1967.

Munich 1967

As fall arrived I was still seeing two girlfriends but the call of October Fest was calling me. Rauch and I got four days off and we took the train from Wiesbaden to Frankfurt and then all the way to Munich. When we went without any idea where we would stay. Rauch said, "Hay I know a guy who is a Jesuit priest, or at least he wants to be one. He lives in Saint Michael's church. Lets find it and see if he is still there?" Sure I had no ideas.

We went to Saint Michael's we asked if Rauch's friend was there. I do not remember his name so lets call him Paul. Sure enough Paul came to the office where we were and greeted Rauch warmly. I introduced myself and he asked if I was also a Catholic. I said with a somewhat worried expression that I was either an atheist or a Jew depending on who was asking. Paul laughed and said, "Then we shall have some fine debates. Where are you staying?" Yes where were we staying. Rauch smiled and said, "I hope you have some space in the inn for us." Paul laughed at the apparent reference to Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem. "Sure if you don't mind sleeping on a fold away cot. I have a small room but I can get two fold aways for you to sleep on." That sounded wonderful and we hardily accepted his kind invitation.

That night Paul, Rauch and I walked from the church to the Hofbräuhaus. The Hofbräuhaus is possibly the most famous beer establishment in Munich. It is in a large plaza and is an enormous old ornate building of about four stories with a huge drinking hall on the ground floor. This is of course where we were headed. We went into the hall which is as big as a football field with bench after bench set up for drinkers. The ceiling was painted with colorful decorations and the enormous windows let the fading Fall sunlight into the hall. There were enormous casks, about twelve feet high by seven feet wide, these must have help 5,000 liters or more. The keeper would move an empty stein under the wooden spigot and fill it to the brim, one after the other. Then the Frauleins would pick up eight to twelve of these liter steins and carry them propped up on their ample bosoms to the waiting customers. Each

customer had a coaster where the Fraulein would set the beer and then make a mark to indicate how many beers she had served.

We sat at one table with about fifteen other customers and ordered, "Three beers." Paul looked at us to see if we were all right with that. We sure were. The beer came and it was wonderful. Beer in Munich is about six to seven percent alcohol but surprisingly one could drink several steins and still walk. After two steins I had to go pretty badly and excused myself and headed for the bathroom.

The bathrooms are at the back of the hall and they were pretty primitive by American standards. The large room had tiled walls on two sides with a long trough where you relieved yourself with water that ran constantly at a trickle. On the other side there were three stalls where one could sit if one needed. On the other wall there were three normal sinks and one huge sink with a very large drain and a front that was formed like someone's chest. The purpose was pretty obvious, it was for those who had consumed way too much of that wonderful beer and could not hold any more. One did not see that in America.

I finished and washed my hands and then returned to the table. An Om-Pah band had started to play and the whole place was joining hands and swaying back and forth. Germans were singing and clapping with the music. The band was comprised of about ten rather husky, some might say fat, Germans in Lederhosen and Bavarian hats. The band was all brass with trumpets and trombones, and a couple of Sousaphones or tuba. All very traditional playing very traditional Om-Pah music.

We decided to eat at the Hofbräuhaus but not in the beer hall, so we went upstairs where there is a much nicer restaurant and not as strong a smell of spilled beer. I ordered Weisswurst with Rotkol and Bratkartoffeln. Weisswurst is found predominately in Bayern and you can not find it anywhere in the US. It is a sausage made from primarily veal with a little pork and German spices. It is one of my favorite but as I said only in Bayern.

Paul and Rauch ordered equally traditional meals. Add a stein of Beir and you have a wonderful dinner.

By the time we left the Hofbräuhaus it was going on ten o'clock and as it was the first week in October it was quite dark. We got back to the church and to Paul's little room and sat around talking about primarily religion. Jesuits are amazingly open and accepting of other opinions and we had a lovely discussion of Judaism, Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism and of course Atheism. We had every 'ism' you could think of. We talked way into the night and Paul asked if I could write something about my views. I assured him that I would try and he wrote down his address.

The next day we eat a nice breakfast in the church kitchen which consisted of apples from the cold cellar, two eggs and Bratkartoffeln. Bratkartofflen are sliced potatoes, pan fried with lard and onions. Somehow German lard is much tastier than American lard. The potatoes are very good and filling. After breakfast Rauch and I were off to the Oktoberfest. The festival area is expansive, a little over 100 acers, and all of the beer tents and the amusement center are there.

We went to as many of the beer tents as we could and then ended up in the tent where they served beer and fish: Fisher Vroni where they have Steckerlfish, fish skewered with a wooden stick and baked over a very long pit of hot embers. It is a real delicacy and I love it. The bit is outside of the tent and there are hundreds of fish laid out over the hot coals.

After we ate we went out to the amusement area and walked up and down the rows of spinning, jumping, clanging rides. We went on one which spun us around and moved up and down. When we got off I said, "You know maybe that was the wrong ride to go on after all that beer and fish." Raush said "That's for sure I feel like I am going to throw up." He did not but I also felt that way.

The rides might have been more fun if we had girls with us but for two guys it just did not do it. We headed back to the beer tents and the fun music and people swaying and clapping. That was more our speed.

Oktoberfest shuts down quite early and by ten o'clock everyone was being ushered out of the park area. There were attendants at all of the exits checking to make sure you were not taking a stein with you. We caught the trolley back to the church and stayed with Paul another night. No long discussions this night as we were pretty drunk.

The next day was pretty much the same: breakfast, beer, lunch, beer, dinner and then bed. On the fourth day we spent some time looking around Munich and then headed for the train station. The trains in Germany are point on time and we caught ours back to Wiesbaden.