

My Life

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Foreword

I was inspired to write this autobiography after I read Jerre's Uncle Neil Bartle's autobiography that he only half completed before he died. It occurred to me that a lot of details of my own life are contained only within my head. I've shared a lot of my stories, but maybe not all of them, and certainly not in any kind of organized fashion. This document is an attempt to correct these deficiencies.

A word of caution about the dates. Some of them are guesses. Some I've been able to pin down because of association with events of known time (e.g. Kennedy's assassination) but others I just had to take a stab at. In any event, the exact dates aren't really important to the narrative, so just take them that way.

I have attempted to highlight key events in this narrative that had a significant impact later in my life. When I identify one of these events, I will mark it with a blue box, like this. These are important turning points for me. Things that changed the vector of my life in profound ways. These are what I will call *insights*.

The Early Years (1944-1950)

Most of what I understand about these years I was told by my mother. My dad was not involved in this, or in a lot of other aspects of my life, for that matter. I was born in Methodist Hospital in Dallas, Texas on July 11th, 1944. At the time, World War II was going on. My father was in the Navy and was not present. My mother, Vesta Laphine McQuinn, and my aunt Lena Pearl Elliott lived in Dallas at the time of my birth. Lena was working as a 'Rosie the Riveter' at the Chance Vought Aircraft plant in Grand Prairie at the time.

At some point, I'm not sure when, my mother and Lena moved to El Paso, presumably to join my father. This was probably shortly after the end of World War II in late 1945.

In 1947 my father bought the 20-acre parcel on County Line Road that was my home (the first one I remember) for my formative years, until I joined the Air Force in 1965. There was no street address. Our address for mail purposes was Route 1, Box 278, Grand Prairie. My dad and my grandfather Deolus McQuinn, whom we called "Daddaw", built



Our home on County Line Road

the home we lived in. Shortly after that my grandfather went blind, probably because of cataracts. My dad built a small house about 100 yards away from the main house for him to live in. These are some of my earliest memories. He lived in that house until the early 1960s when he went to live with Freda McQuinn in Bridgeport, Texas. Freda was the wife of my dad's brother Terrell, Daddaw's son. Terrell was the family drunk, but I never remember seeing him drunk. My father, Marshall McQuinn, had 3 brothers: Glenrose ("Glen"), Terrell, and Roswell Guy ("Toby"). No sisters. There was a clothes line that stretched between my grandfather's house (shack, really) to the main house, to help him navigate because he was blind. He would come up to the main house for dinner but made his own breakfast and lunch in his shack. Our farm always had cows, horses, chickens and the occasional pig. No ducks, goats or sheep. It was my brother's and my duty to feed them, especially in the winter when grazing was scarce. My mom had a jersey cow named "Bossy" that we milked for our own use. Her milk was rich and made wonderful butter, buttermilk and clabber.

To orient my readers, I have included a map of the County Line Road area where we lived. This is a current map (north is up) and the red rectangle is approximately where our property was. The blue rectangle shows where our house was. The creek which flows from west to east just to the north of the property is Bear Creek. It turns south at the extreme east end of our property. The creek cut through the north east corner of the property. The property is now the site of Omega Environmental Technologies, a maker of after-market automobile air conditioning equipment. The inset picture identifies this location with respect to DFW Airport, to the north. The green rectangle is the location of the Westbrook house (more on them later). The dashed green line is the previous location of County Line Road before it was rerouted, as you can see.



Above: County Line Road property overlaid on a current map

Right: Location of property (red rectangle) relative to DFW

Elementary School (1950-1957)

I entered Shady Grove Elementary School as a first grader in 1950. Shady Grove was a rural school that taught grades 1 through 8. There was no kindergarten. Students were bussed to Lee Junior High (now Lee Middle School) in Grand Prairie for grade 9 and to Grand Prairie High School for grades 10 through 12. I caught the bus every morning on County Line Road. Our house was at the end of the bus route and the bus turned around in our driveway. I remember three of my teachers during this period. First was Mrs. Menasco, my second grade teacher. She had an interest in science and I vividly remember a volcano the class built that actually spewed “lava”.

Insight: In writing this narrative, it occurred to me that Mrs. Menasco may have provided the initial spark of my life-long interest in science. I was fascinated by the many things she introduced me to. Her love of science was infectious. This never occurred to me before I started writing this narrative.

My second teacher is my most vivid memory: Mrs. Yancey. Mrs. Yancey was the oldest teacher at Shady Grove and had taught one of the other teachers (Mrs. Martin). I was a fourth grader and Mrs. Yancey taught fourth and fifth in the same room. Fourth on the right (from the teacher’s point of view) and fifth on the left. It was at this point in my life that I developed my bad study habits. I found the fourth grade materials easy so I just did my homework on the bus on the way to school in the mornings. Mrs. Yancey would teach a unit to the fourth graders and then move over for a similar unit for the fifth graders. Bored, I would listen to the fifth grade unit and raise my hand when she would ask questions of the 5th graders. I knew the answers. At the end of the year I was allowed to take the fifth grade tests, which I passed easily. I was double-promoted from the fourth to the sixth grade. I remember talking it over with Mom about whether I should do it. We decided I should enter the 6th grade, one of the worst decisions I ever made. Not because of the academics, but because of the maturity (or lack of it) on my part. I was in with way older kids that I didn’t really become friends with. Oh, sure, I could do the work, but developmentally I was behind. I stayed that way through high school.

I remember the election of 1952 only because it became a point of contention in the school yard. I guess I was in the 3rd grade. At recess I noticed that the kids had divided themselves into two factions: those that supported Stevenson and those that supported Eisenhower. The way they expressed themselves, being kids, was to push in different directions on the merry-go-round! Stevenson supporters pushed one way, Eisenhower supporters pushed the other. How they decided who to support was beyond me, but at the time the Eisenhower supporters were being pushed back so, being a supporter of the underdog, I joined them. Such was my introduction to presidential politics! I don’t remember who won the “merry-go-round” election but learned later that my guy, Eisenhower, had won the real one.

The third teacher I remember is my eighth grade teacher, Mr. Craig. He was my first male teacher. I think he saw the developmental problems I was having and took me 'under his wing'. I remember him taking me to a dog show.

When I was in the 4th grade Mom bought us kids the World Book Encyclopedia. I thought it was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen. It opened my eyes to the wide world outside Shady Grove. I would come home after school and sit down and go through volume after volume of it. It was geared to school kids and held my interest. It had lots of pictures. I thought it was well written. It really paid off one day late in the school year of the 4th grade when a woman came in to address Mrs. Yancey's class. Turns out she was a saleslady for, you guessed it, the World Book! They don't let salespeople do this anymore, but this woman came in with slides of interesting things one could find in an encyclopedia. This lady gave us her pitch and handed out material we were to take to our parents. To get us interested, she started asking questions that the encyclopedia could answer. Her first question was "What is the world's highest waterfall?" Lots of hands went up. "Niagara Falls!" "Victoria?" Nope. I knew the answer because I had read the very article she was asking about. It was Angel Falls in Venezuela. So high that the water becomes a fine mist at the bottom. She was stunned when I gave her the correct answer. Took the air out of her sales pitch. This episode probably had something to do with my double-promotion to the 6th grade the following September (1954).

One of my best memories of these years has to do with my handwriting. I was (and still am) left-handed and wrote like most left handers with my hand curled over the top of what I was writing, the way Barack Obama writes. In the 6th grade, one day at recess, Sharon Shanklin, another 6th grader, stayed with me during that recess and showed me how to turn my hand around and write straight up, with my hand below what I was writing, the way I write to this day.

Insight: That time Sharon spent with me had a lasting effect on me. I owe the way I write today to the hour that she spent with me on that day. She probably never knew the impact she had on my life.

I was pretty much a loner during these years. I had very few friends at school and hadn't yet befriended the Westbrook boys, Floyd and Jerry. More about them later. A lot more!

Shady Grove was a 1st through 8th grade school, so I graduated from the 8th grade in 1957. I was the "salutatorian" of my graduating class. This means I was the second place finisher. I don't know how I did it, with my bad study habits and all, but by brute force I guess I made it through elementary school. A girl named JoAn Kitchens was the valedictorian. I'm guessing she studied a lot more than I did. I'm now Facebook friends with JoAn.

In 1956 an amusement park opened close to us. It was Storybookland, a park for small kids that had displays of nursery rhyme characters. I got a job (my first job) earning 50 cents per hour doing maintenance and putting bumper stickers on cars. My boss was K.K. Stanfield, a very dynamic individual who owned and managed the whole park. I mowed grass, put kids on rides and cleaned animal pens among other things. One of the things I remember about Storybookland was the bathroom facilities. It had separate facilities for white and "colored" people. Stanfield



Storybookland on Hwy 183

owned another park next door called "Cowboy Town" that my brother, Ronny, worked at. Once Six Flags over Texas opened a few years later, Storybookland and Cowboy Town folded.

When I was about 9 years old my dad gave me a Holstein heifer. I raised and fed that heifer and she thrived and had a calf in 1955. We had a herd of cows and one bull. I know it was 1955 because the song "Sixteen Tons" was popular at the time. I would get up every morning at 5 am to feed the cow and let the calf suck. When my calf was only about 3 months old it got the "scours". In humans we call it diarrhea. It is a very serious life threatening disease for a calf. My dad knew what to do. He had a huge syringe with a 6-inch barrel and a needle about as long. Well, maybe it wasn't that big, but I was 11 years old and it looked pretty big to me! He gave me a vial of penicillin and the syringe and told me to give the calf a shot. I filled the barrel of the syringe and took off for the barn. As the cow ate in the manger and the calf was busy sucking I took out the syringe and pinched up the calf's skin like Dad had told me to do. I took a deep breath and plunged the syringe into the calf's hide. But something was wrong! I had actually closed my eyes and turned my head at the critical moment because I didn't want to look and had actually plunged the needle into my thumb that was pinching up the calf's hide! Ouch! I started to reflexively pull the needle out of my thumb when I noticed that the needle, in addition to penetrating the fleshy part of my thumb, was actually in the calf! Not wanting to try again, I pushed the plunger down and emptied the syringe through my thumb and into the calf. Only after I had emptied the syringe did I pull the needle out of the calf and my thumb. It hurt like hell! I never told my mom or dad about this. I knew I would get a lecture about how careless I was. I already knew that. I just came back to the house and put a band-aid on my thumb and went to school. The penicillin didn't work, however, and the calf died, but I had given it a try. That heifer, however, had more calves later and those calves matured and had calves and by the time I graduated from high school I had a herd of 9 cows. Dad sold them all for me and they were the "grubstake" for my college career. How much did I get? I don't remember, but cows sold for about \$200 back then so it must have been close to \$1800. A lot of money for 1961.

Junior High and High School (1957-1961)

I would still catch the bus outside my house on school day mornings, but the bus would drop us off at the intersection of Hardrock and Shady Grove roads where we would catch another bus to Lee Junior High in Grand Prairie. I remember very little of my 9th grade year at Lee. It was a bleak period of my scholastic life but my brother and I became friends with Floyd and Jerry Westbrook who lived about 200 yards away on County Line Road (see map on page 8). They were approximately our age and we 'hung out' together, in today's parlance.

Dad got my brother Ronny and me horses in about 1956. My horse was Buck, an albino palomino, and Ronny's was Tom, a sorrel. We had one other horse, Jitters. Buck was a very high spirited (read: nervous) horse who had been trained as a roping horse. I usually rode Buck bareback when we went out riding. He was a very fat horse and had no protruding backbone to make riding uncomfortable. Later I got a saddle, but I always enjoyed riding bareback. Buck had several "tricks" he would pull. One was that the "go signal", which for most horses is a kick in the ribs, was merely moving the reins up on his neck, close to his ears while leaning forward. At this "signal", Buck's rear would drop as his hind legs wound up for a mighty spring forward. You had to know this was coming or you'd be off his back on the ground. His other "trick" was a quick, leg-stabbing stop with his head down, which shed an unsuspecting rider. He was trained to do both these things as a roping horse. He only tried this last trick once after you got on him, but, like the other trick, you had to know it was coming. Jerry Westbrook learned this second trick the hard way as he went flying over Buck's head and broke his left arm, an injury that never healed straight, leaving him with a crooked arm that he took with him the rest of his life. Jerry never rode Buck again.

My life in high school was very much bifurcated (in two parts). There was the part with my brother and the Westbrooks and then there was the high school part. I participated in nearly no extracurricular activities in high school. I went to school, came home and looked for mischief to get into with Ronny, Floyd and Jerry.

At this point I should tell you about the Westbrooks, who lived just about 200 yards down the road and became our close friends. We didn't go to school with the Westbrooks. They weren't really in school. Floyd had quit school in the 6th grade to support his family. Jerry, his older brother, always had a job, all the time I knew him. Their mother worked but their dad was a worthless lay-about. His famous quote that all we kids remember was "*I do more work around here by accident than these farmers do on purpose*". I don't ever remember seeing him do any work, however. He did sit on his front porch drinking Pearl beer while his wife worked to support the family.

We met Floyd and Jerry at a point in our lives when we all got wheels (cars). We went out in each other's cars and did a lot of exploring with them. Jerry had a fake driver's license that indicated he was old enough to buy beer, which he did for us on many occasions. One of our favorite pastimes was to go get some beer, park on some lonely road and drink it in the back of my Dad's pickup. Exciting.

Author's note: The following story was included at the specific request of Mike Lockhart.

One especially memorable occasion occurred one weekend when the 4 of us (Floyd, Jerry, Ronny and me) went out in Jerry's car. Jerry used his fake driver's license and got us a couple of six packs, which we quickly downed. As we were on our way back to the liquor store we got into a discussion about who was going to buy the next round of beers. We had bought cigars at the liquor store on the first trip, so someone got the bright idea that we should have a "smoke out" to determine who buys. Great idea! So, on our way to the liquor store we rolled up all the windows and lit up. Cars didn't have vents in those days, either. The atmosphere in the car quickly got toxic so Jerry had to pull over on the side of the road to finish the contest. Floyd had shotgun and Ron and I were in the back seat. We all puffed away with tears streaming down our cheeks. I was down to my last few bucks so I really didn't want to pay. I had to close my eyes to reduce the stinging. Denser and denser. Finally, I started to convulse. I realized I was close to capitulating. No one could see anything. I had my hand on the door handle as I tried to stifle my involuntary heavings. Just as I was about to bail out, Ronny opened his door and rolled out on the side of the road, coughing and wheezing. He had lost!

On another occasion my dad had gotten Floyd a car, a 1950 Oldsmobile, which was in fairly good shape. That is, until Floyd got it! This is the story of the demise of that poor Olds. Floyd and I were on our way back home one day. I don't remember where we had gone, but we were driving back home from Shady Grove along County Line Road in his Olds. Now, the Rock Island railroad crosses County Line Road where it intersects with Rock Island Road, which parallels the railroad. This intersection is now called Valley View Lane and Rock Island Road. As Floyd was about to cross the tracks, without warning, he suddenly took a left turn and we were then driving west on the railroad track! I was pretty scared. We got about a half mile along the railroad and I pointed out to Floyd that this was a well-used track and that we should get off. Right. Floyd panicked and turned the wheel to get off the track but the quarter panel (the part of the fender behind the front tire) caught on the rail. We had to get out and put the jack under the side of the car. Unfortunately, Floyd had chosen a high bank to stop at. There was easily a 20-foot steep incline where we were. When we jacked up the car and the quarter panel cleared the rail, the Olds plummeted down the embankment, taking out a 6-inch diameter tree. Thankfully we weren't in the car. We scrambled down the hill and found that the tree had pushed the radiator into the fan and the radiator was leaking water profusely. The car would start, however, with the high pitched whine of fan-in-radiator. Time to get home! Floyd started driving as fast as he could go, parallel to the tracks in high grass that we couldn't see through. Finally, we got back to the intersection of Rock Island Road and County Line and headed home with the fan screeching and the engine belching white smoke. We pulled into the yard in front of our house and bailed out of the now-ruined Olds.

My mom and dad owned 20 acres but leased the 40 acres adjacent to our property on County Line Road. My dad grew various crops, principally alfalfa, on that adjacent property which he had baled (we didn't own a baler). We kids (Me, Ronny, Floyd and Jerry) were the principal hay haulers. We would stock our own hay barn and sell the rest. There was always a market for alfalfa hay. It's considered to be the best. We kids got 10 cents per bale to haul it. That's 2½ cents per bale apiece. To haul the hay, Dad had a flatbed truck that had 2 "granny" gears, one slow and the other REALLY

slow, about slow walking speed. We would get the truck going in low granny, pointed in the right direction, set the dash throttle, and then we had 2 of us on the truck stacking and 2 on the ground hauling with nobody in the cab. Every once in a while we'd have to go back to the cab to straighten it or turn it around for another row.

One day we were hauling hay to our own barn to fill it for the coming winter. We hauled all day and were exhausted, but we stacked an extra row of hay bales on the top of the last load so we wouldn't have to go back for another load. Jerry and I were on the top of the load as Floyd drove back to the barn. Jerry and I were on our backs, completely done in. As Floyd drove off County Line and toward the barn I looked up and saw the electricity wires from the road to our house coming at us, straight ahead! That extra layer of hay bales on top had made just barely enough room for the hay to clear these wires but certainly not with anything on top of them. Like Jerry and me! Floyd hadn't noticed the problem. We had about 3 seconds to do something. We both jumped off and rolled around in the rocks, bull nettles and stickers. Pretty well beat up now in addition to being exhausted. When we caught up with Floyd, who had backed the truck up to the barn, he said "What happened to you guys?" not realizing it was his fault! His brother roughed him up a bit and we got on with putting the hay in the barn. It was a tall barn, 14 feet high and we stacked hay to the rafters. Floyd was on top of the hay, hooking the bales we fed to him and stacking them. Finally, when all the hay was in the barn, we again sat down for a well-deserved rest. Floyd, in his exuberance, started a dance on the top of the hay. "We're through! We're through!" That started a "quake". The hay moved left, right and then the entire front half of the stack fell, taking the hay right from under Floyd's feet. Floyd grabbed a rafter and was hanging as the rest of us couldn't believe what had happened. What did Jerry do? Why, he found a 2x4 and started swinging at his brother, of course! After we all cooled down, we resolved to restack the hay which took another 2 hours. Whew!

On another occasion (in another year) my dad had sold the entire alfalfa crop to a man who had a farm a few miles away. This guy (I don't remember his name) was the owner of Southwest Airmotive, an aviation company that later became Southwest Airlines. We spent all day hauling the hay up into his barn in my dad's flatbed truck. I remember when we opened the barn door that thousands of field rats went scurrying. We had some fun chasing the rats. At the end of the day, the guy paid us ... in cash. The total cost of the hay and the hauling was \$2000 and this guy paid us with 3 bills: a thousand-dollar bill and two 500-dollar bills! These are bills that are no longer in circulation. The thousand-dollar bill had Grover Cleveland's picture on it and the 500 had William McKinley's. They were both retired from circulation in 1969, but this is what we were paid with. I had instructions from my dad to take them to the bank, so off to the bank we went. Four tired, dirty kids, shirtless, in the cab of a flatbed truck! I pulled into the drive-in banking window where I handed the 3 bills and a deposit slip to a very surprised lady teller, whose eyes got big when she saw the deposit. She looked up. We all grinned. She looked the bills over closely, holding them up to the light and then got on the phone. Here came a guy in a suit from the bank building out to the drive-in kiosk. He did the same thing. Looked us over. More grins. Held the bills up to the light, but finally accepted them. We drove off to get some beers with Jerry's fake ID. We had earned them.

One more Floyd story and I'll quit. For many of these stories I'm not sure of the date. Dad was selling cars so I had use of the pickup. I should tell you about the pickup,

by the way. It was a blue 1957 Chevrolet Cameo. Beautiful pickup with the 265 cubic inch V-8 engine, and fiberglass sides. Anyway, through a mutual friend (Donny Martin) Floyd and I found out that there was a preacher who lived on County Line Road, close to Shady Grove Road who was growing a “hydroponic” garden. We didn’t know what that was, but it evidently involved cow shit. A lot of cow shit. We went by his house and, sure enough, he needed all the cow shit we could bring him. He paid us \$5 per pickup load. Floyd and I went from farm to farm asking if they wanted us to cart away their cow shit. Guess what? They all did! So, Floyd and I embarked on a very lucrative enterprise. One day we hauled 20 pickup loads. We each made \$50. We were rolling in money! The pickup looked (and smelled) like hell, but it cleaned up nicely. Another of those enterprises my dad never found out about.

My first girlfriend was Linda Tillinghast. I met her on the bus to high school in the mornings and we became friends. She invited me over for dinner at their house, which was a trailer on a road off Hardrock Road. She had an identical twin, Brenda. I could hardly tell them apart. She and I went on a double date one Saturday with Brenda and her boyfriend, in Brenda’s boyfriend’s car (I didn’t have a car at that time). My first real date. We went out to a drive-in hamburger joint for dinner and I think we played miniature golf afterwards. When we got back to the twins’ home, we parked out front with the lights out and Brenda and her date proceeded to make out in the front seat. I was terrified. I didn’t know what to do. I sat there with my arm around her shoulders, trembling, until it was time for the girls to go in. I remember getting on the bus for the ride home one afternoon. I sat down next to Linda and got a ‘funny look’ from her. It was Brenda! With a hardly stifled grin she pointed to her amused sister in the seat across from us. Embarrassing! It’s hard to entertain a girlfriend when you don’t have a car (or much money) and Linda moved on to more interesting guys. I’m sure I wasn’t a very good boyfriend.



Linda Tillinghast
(from the yearbook)

One important class I took in high school was typing. All our typewriters were manual. There were electric typewriters in those days but our high school didn’t have them. Ours were big old clunky Underwoods and Royals. I struggled with typing until, about half way through the semester, it suddenly came to me like a bolt out of the blue. One day I struggled with typing and the next day my fingers flew across the keys. I worked up to about 60 words per minute on unfamiliar material on a manual typewriter. Not as fast as Neil Bartle. The next semester the teacher, Mr. Shaw, made me his assistant and I went around helping other students. I felt important. We even had a school typing team and went to a state-level competition, which we tanked big time because we seized up when the competition started. Oh, well. The ability to type has been very helpful throughout my life, especially now that I am composing this narrative!

Another very useful course I took in high school was trigonometry from Mr. Flewhardy. If I had to say what math has been the most useful in my entire career, I would say trig, with algebra a close second. I used it all the time, and hardly ever used any of the calculus I learned. It was Mr. Flewhardy who taught me “**Oscar Had A Heap Of Apples**”, the mnemonic that I used my entire career to remember the relationships between the trigonometric functions and the sides of a right triangle. (Opposite-

Hypotenuse, Adjacent-Hypotenuse, Opposite-Adjacent for Sine, Cosine and Tangent respectively)

The opportunities for mischief suddenly expanded when I got my first car, a red 1951 Chevrolet. Red. Boy, was I proud of that car! I paid \$100 for it. Like most of my early cars, this was a trade-in my dad got. Oh, I forgot to tell you that my dad sold cars. If I had to pick a person you know that most resembles my father, I would pick Danny DeVito in *Matilda* or *Tin Man*. Just a lot taller version. Here's a list of my first 3 cars:

1. 1951 Chevrolet. Cost: \$100. Year acquired: 1960
2. 1953 Dodge Cost: \$35 Year acquired. 1961
3. 1950 Dodge Cost: \$30 Year acquired: 1961

So, the total cost of my first 3 cars was an amazing \$165 dollars. This is not to try to impress you with what bargains I got because these cars were not bargains. They were worth approximately what I paid for them. The best of them all was the Chevy. I sold it to Floyd in 1961 when Gerald Owens sold me the '53 Dodge. I needed money for college. The '53 Dodge had a lot of problems. The gas tank just sat loose in the trunk with a rubber hose routed underneath the car connecting it to the engine. The previous tank had sprung a leak and when we examined it we found that not only was the tank rusted through but all the bolts and hangers that mounted it were rusted through, too! So, with our (mine and Floyd's) usual ingenuity, we went to a junk yard, bought a gas tank for \$5 and we were in business! The car made a lot of noise going around corners with the tank shifting positions in the trunk.

I only had this car for about 6 months because when I went to get new tags for it I discovered that the bill of sale hadn't been notarized and I couldn't get new tags. In Texas, bills of sale had to be notarized, a fact that a 16-year-old doesn't give much thought to. Gerald had merely turned the title over, signed it and handed it to me. He had left town (he had his own set of problems), so I couldn't find him and take him to a notary to solve the problem. So, the tags were going to expire in a little less than a month. I had a big problem. With more of our (mine and Floyd's) usual ingenuity, we came up with a solution. The next weekend I called Floyd and we set out in the Dodge with the full intention of walking back home. We were going to wreck the car and have a good time doing it! Naturally, Floyd was all for this plan! We headed down County Line Road and took out a series of mailboxes. Lots of fun but with minimal damage to the car. We needed something more. As we turned onto Shady Grove Road the tank in the trunk sloshed around and I could tell that we were almost out of gas. We went down to the gas station at Horn's Grocery at the corner of Hardrock Road and Shady Grove (where the bus picked us up for junior high) to put a couple of gallons in the tank, but as we drove down Shady Grove we saw, on the right side of the road about 3 blocks from the intersection with County Line, a new house under construction. No one was working on the house because it was a Saturday. In front of the house was a huge pile of gravel, about a full dump truck load, that was going to be the driveway. It sat about 20 yards off the road, across a shallow ditch.

As we put the two gallons in the tank I came up with a plan. What would happen if we drove the Dodge into the pile of gravel? We didn't know, but it sounded like fun!

After we finished gassing up the car we turned around and gunned the car, gaining as much speed as we could as we approached the ditch, new house and gravel pile. Floyd began to hunker down in the seat as we neared the point of no return. By the way, cars didn't have seatbelts in those days. At the last minute I cut the wheels, we flew over the ditch and dived head first into the gravel pile. Chuff! The Dodge blew through the pile, scattering the gravel, but both wheels had been ripped off the brake hubs. We ground to a halt on those hubs with no front wheels. We got out and examined the car and the wheels. The lug holes on the wheels had been splayed open, like a flower, as the front wheels were ripped from the car by the gravel with the lug bolts still snugly in place on the hubs. Undeterred, we jacked up the front of the car, got some washers out of the trunk and removed the lugs and put the wheels back on. Since the holes on the wheels had been splayed out, the lugs would barely fit. Not all the lugs fit, either, but we did get the wheels mounted (sort of) back on the car. At this point, we realized that we'd rather drive than walk, so we decided to head back home. We drove the Dodge back onto Shady Grove and then onto County Line headed home. The lugs began to loosen almost immediately and after only half a mile from the gravel pile first one front wheel came off and then the other. One wheel went into the left ditch and the other into the right one. Now we were driving down County Like on the brake hubs. The road had a slight crown (like most roads) and despite my best efforts, the car slid into the ditch as if it had been in a snow storm. Floyd and I decided this was the Dodge's final resting place so we took out the tire irons and began breaking all the glass in the car. About this time a dump truck pulled up. We thought we were going to get turned in to the police, but the driver leaned out and asked "You boys having a problem?" "Sure!" He was an older guy and he sat in his truck and waited while Floyd and I put the wheels back on the car. He towed us back to our house where ended our little adventure.

Sometime in the early 60s we got a German shepherd pup. This was King and he quickly became a member of the family. This is a story about King. On this occasion, Ronny, Floyd, Jerry and I decided to go rabbit hunting on the grassy fields of Amon Carter Field, a relatively little used airport to the west of our property in Tarrant County. We loaded our shotguns and took off for the airport. Security wasn't what it is now and all we had to do was crawl through an opening in a chain link fence to get onto the airport property. We were making our way across the expanse of grass, near one of the (we thought) unused runways when we saw a plane taxiing toward us. They've seen us and are coming to get us! We were at the extreme end of that runway, in the knee-high grass, so we just hunkered down, hoping they wouldn't see us. As it turned out they didn't see us at all. It was a Boeing 707 and it came down and turned around for a takeoff. The tail of the aircraft swung over our heads! The engines began to spool up and we had to cover our ears because of the deafening roar of those 4 big engines. It was all over in a few minutes after the plane took off. We stood up, shaking, with our ears ringing. We had bagged two rabbits so we took them back to the house and began butchering them, but when we cut them open we realized they both were 'wormy'. Full of worms. Ugh! We left the rabbits on the porch and went inside to eat dinner. After dinner we went back out onto the porch to find King laying where the rabbits had been, but there were no rabbits! Nothing was left of the rabbits except small tufts of fur. King was laying on his side, his legs sticking straight out, uttering "oof" sounds. He had consumed both rabbits completely. Everything except a couple of tufts of fur. It was cold that night so we let King sleep in the house, between Ronny's bed and mine. Shortly after crawling into bed we realized that this was a mistake. A green mist was floating in

the bedroom. King had the rabbit farts! Ronny and I both jumped up and kicked King outside. He looked like he was sorry about the farts.

King was an outdoors dog. Weighing 100 pounds and needing his exercise, he didn't fit well inside the house. On cold nights he slept between Ronny's bed and mine. Our routine was that we would let King in the house at night and he would eat his dinner (a can of dog food) in the kitchen. We had a sack of dog food and a dog dish that he ate out of near the back door. One evening we let King in, but didn't put his food out immediately because there was an interesting program on TV. The program was a long one (I don't remember what it was) and we had forgotten about King until he disappeared and came back in the living room with a can of dog food in his mouth! He dropped the can in the middle of the living room. It was time for his dinner! King had gone into the sack, extracted a can of food and brought his problem to our attention. We immediately fed him his dinner!

I should tell you that King had his own toy, a rock. My brother and I would go riding our horses, miles away from the house and King would follow with his rock in his mouth. We thought it was just some curiosity of his, a passing phase, but at the end of the day, when we were all back at the house King would be there ... with his rock. My brother still has this rock, complete with King's bite marks on it. Why did King have a pet rock? We'll never know!

I did a variety of jobs during my high school years, but one of the ones I remember best was as a helper on our neighbor's dairy farm. Mr. Hicks had a dairy with about 40 cows and Mr. Hicks's son, Jimmy, told me he needed a hand. I went to Mr. Hicks and asked for the job. I got it. The job was milking the cows in the afternoon, after school. Now, you might think that milking 40 cows was a big job for just one kid, but that wasn't the case. Cows are creatures of habit and his cows knew the 'routine'. Cows like to be milked because it relieves pressure. Of an afternoon, after school, I would go up to the Hicks' dairy and go out to the outer gate where all 40 cows would be waiting. Upon opening the gate, precisely 10 cows would come in. The milking barn accommodated 10 cows (5 on each side) and these first 10 were the highest ranking cows. They marched in to their stalls (always the same stall), began eating and I would wash their udders and attach the milking machines. Then their tails would go up and they would all shit. I stood there with a shovel to clean up. Twenty minutes later this group exited the other outer gate and I would open the incoming gate and the next 10 cows would come in. Always the same cows in the same order. Habit. It was actually an easy job.

I was about to start college and needed a car, so my Dad got me another one. It was a trade-in and was in almost as bad shape as the '53 Dodge. It was a '50 Dodge and had its own set of serious problems. Cost \$30. You didn't get a car for \$30 without a huge set of problems and this car had its share. The floorboard under the driver's seat had rusted completely through. The car had several floor mats that covered the hole, making sort of a platform for the driver's feet. Without the mats, you could watch the road pass below. Directly under the driver's feet (and the hole) was the muffler. It, too, had rusted through, and the previous owner had wrapped a Prestone antifreeze can around it, tying it up with baling wire. Baling wire was the universal fix-it in those days, sort of like duct tape today. That wouldn't have been such a big problem but for the fact that the car burned oil. A lot of oil. About a full can per day. I bought reconditioned oil by the case and kept the case in the trunk. This was Ruby Lube. Cost 10 cents per can

and smelled. Reconditioned oil stinks, unlike 'new' oil. I still remember those cans. They were red with a big gem under the label. Under the gem was the caption "finest lubrication in the world". I guess they were talking about oil being a better lubricant than, say, sand. I drove the Dodge to and from college, adding a can every morning before taking off. Every Saturday I would check the oil level and (usually) finding it down, put in an extra can. About 7 cans/week. Needless to say, this car trailed a big cloud of blue smoke behind it. One morning I was going to school when the cabin began to fill with smoke. What happened? I pulled off the road before my vision was totally compromised and I piled out of the car, a big billowing cloud of smoke following me. I removed the mats and examined the muffler and found that the Prestone can did not fully wrap around the rusted muffler. The muffler was round and the can left about a 1-inch gap. The gap had rotated around until it pointed up into the cab. The mats presented no barrier whatsoever to the smoke and led to the problem I was having. More ingenuity was needed. All I had to do was rotate the Prestone can around until the gap pointed at the road! I took a rock and dented the can to prevent the problem from occurring again. Problem solved!

The other problem I had with the '50 Dodge was more serious. I was going to school one morning when the engine began clunking and lost power. I had to pull off the road. My brother Ronny towed me back home where we took the head off the engine (it was a flathead 6) and we discovered that a piston had crystalized. This means that the combustion chamber had gotten so hot (probably from burning all that oil) that the top of the piston had cracked and the pieces fell into the crankcase. When we took the head off we could look through the top of the piston directly down into the crankcase. What to do? I had very little money, so we went to a junk yard and found another Dodge whose engine had been disassembled and parts lay strewn on the ground around the hulk of the car. Among these parts were some of its pistons! Apparently it had been disassembled for some other engine parts. We examined them and found one that had all the rings (and a little rust). I didn't want to buy new piston rings either. We replaced the crystalized piston with the 'new' one and I prepared to close up the pan without even replacing the gasket. Did I mention that I was poor in those days? The engine had always had a clunking sound and I now found out why. I grabbed the connecting rod of #1 and moved it up and down. Ka-clunk! Ka-clunk! I grabbed each of the other 5 pistons and they all had varying degrees of looseness on the crankshaft. The best one of all was the one I had picked up from the junk yard and just installed! I bolted the pan and the head back on (with the old gaskets) and she started right up. Problem solved! Well, it still burned oil, but it provided transportation again.

I've related earlier about how I've had a technical, scientific orientation most of my school years, starting with Mrs. Menasco in the second grade and that volcano. She started a spark in me. I can now see that I was a 'nerd' in high school, but that word hadn't been coined at that time. Something happened in my senior year at Grand Prairie High School that set my path for the rest of my life. You never recognize these events at the time for the importance they carry for you. Only in retrospect, in looking back, can you see how life-changing they were. This next story is one of those.

In the spring term of my senior year, Miss Roye, my English teacher, gave the class a term thesis project. She told us we could write our term paper on any subject we wanted. My eyes lit up at this. Any subject I wanted? I had been drug through "*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*" and any number of poems by John Donne and Percy Shelly and I saw this as escape! She was undoubtedly expecting papers on the imagery in Romeo and Juliet and other such literary topics. These were the topics the girls in the class typically chose.



Me at graduation. I was 16

Miss Roye liked the girls....and hated the boys. I had probably

not said 3 words to her all semester. Now I had my chance.

Any subject I wanted? I chose "*The Measurement of Extraterrestrial Distances*". I was fascinated by astronomy at that time and knew there were a variety of ways to determine the distance from earth to stars, galaxies and the like. I began my thesis. I had taken and mastered typing so I resolved to type my paper. I had a little Smith Corona portable and I started the paper. I wrote about the use of parallax and supernovae and variable stars (Cepheids and RR Lyrae) to determine distances to distant objects. I wrote of the stellar light spectrum red-shift which had been discovered by Edwin Hubble in 1929 and how it was used to determine the distance to the most remote objects due to the expansion of the universe. I was fascinated by this topic. It was a wonderful 17-page single-spaced paper complete with footnotes and a bibliography. I must have written 20 drafts of that paper. This was before the time of word processors, so the addition of a single sentence early in the paper could necessitate the complete retyping of every page following the addition. I didn't mind. On the day the paper was due I sat there at my desk with my 20th draft in a folder. In looking around, I could see that not many students had papers and almost all of them were handwritten. One of the girls, one of Miss Roye's darlings, a girl who contributed to almost every class discussion (which I never did), raised her hand and complained to Miss Roye that she needed more time and so Miss Roye gave us another week. That gave me time to polish up a 21st draft which I turned in the following week. Beautiful paper with not a single typo. A week later I got my paper back. I had gotten a "B" on it. Not a B+, a B. Miss Roye had written in a diagonal note across the title page "Too technical". I was crestfallen. I had given it my all, my best effort, and it was only average in Miss Roye's eyes. The girl in the desk next to mine (not the girl who asked for the



Miss Roye, from the yearbook

extension) had submitted a handwritten 10-page paper on that Shakespeare subject I told you about earlier and had gotten an “A+”.

Insight: I can now see, 50 years later, that this was what propelled me into college as a physics major and my later career as a computer programmer. I had always had a scientific bent, but this paper, that B, was what put me over the edge. The bare truth is that I owe my technical career at least partially to my English teacher, Miss Roye. I later used that same paper (retyped, of course) in a college English course and got an “A” on it. Some vindication, but a little late. Sadly, I lost that paper and don’t have a copy now.

College (1961-1965)

I enrolled at Arlington State College in Arlington, Texas in September, 1961, as a physics major. Arlington State became the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) shortly after I graduated in 1965.

Insight: In looking back, I now realize that my mom and I never sat down and discussed whether I would go to college or not. It was just assumed that I would. I didn't realize this at the time. Mom had a quiet influence on my life that I've only come to realize as an adult. She didn't lecture or cajole. She just ... set expectations and I certainly didn't want to disappoint her. I hope I never did.

I had some money from the sale of my cows so I got a room in the cheapest dormitory on campus, Pacht Hall. I was excited about college and moved into Pacht and started classes in the fall of 1961. Pacht was a men's dorm and while not exactly like Animal House, it came close. A room was only \$100/semester but I had to have a roommate. My roommate, whose name I don't remember, was not a very studious guy and, for some reason, had pissed off some of the other residents. He was a sophomore and I came back to the dorm after classes one day and when I unlocked the door, I met with resistance in opening it. Forcing the door open revealed the fact that someone had taken a can of shaving cream, put a straw over the spout and emptied the can under the door leaving a huge mound of cream just inside the doorway. It took a couple of days to clean it up. My roommate knew it was because of him but didn't know who did it. Such was my introduction to dorm life. I didn't have to put up with my roommate very long because he flunked out the very next semester, leaving me alone in my room.

I lived in Pacht Hall for 2 years before I realized I was going through my cow money at a clip that wouldn't last until graduation, so after my sophomore year I moved back home.

Author's note: when I returned to the UTA campus in 2013, Pacht Hall was gone, and the young woman at the campus reception office had never heard of it. It was demolished in 2001.

In my sophomore year while I was still living in Pacht, I learned that the Dallas Symphony was going to be playing Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* in the Arlington High School auditorium, which



The kids and I when we visited Pacht Hall in 1996
(My room was the one immediately to the right)

was about a mile away from my dorm. I had a record of it and it was one of my favorite classical pieces, so I walked the mile down to the high school for the concert. Another reason I wanted to attend this concert was that it was free. I had never seen a live performance of a classical orchestra before. I was embarrassed for the Dallas Symphony because the auditorium was sparsely filled. I took a seat in the very front row, right in front of the first violinist. The first violinist plays a major role in *Scheherazade*, introducing each of the themes as Scheherazade goes from story to story. I was mesmerized. It was easily the most powerful piece of music I had ever heard at that time. At the very end, when the story of Sinbad ends with his ship crashing on the rocks and the Scheherazade theme comes back, sweat was pouring down the violinist's face. He had given it all and I had absorbed it all, right along with him. Very moving.

One thing I should mention is my terrible study habits which followed me into college. I had been salutatorian of my 8th grade graduating class and had OK grades in high school, all without much studying, but in my freshman year at Arlington I met my match. I actually flunked my freshman algebra class! Flunked! This was a real wakeup call. Scared the crap out of me. I had never flunked a class in my life. Oh, sure, I had a few Cs in high school (none in elementary school), but never an F. Until now. I was in a funk in my room at Pacht Hall when I got my grades and resolved to fix the problem. I started spending more time in the library because there was always someone running up and down the hall at Pacht yelling. Finally, I learned how to study. Sad to say, it took until college for me to learn this lesson. The hard way. I never flunked another class. In my senior year I had to make up the algebra class I had bombed and, as a result of the algebra necessary to do any physics, breezed right through it with an A. Piece of cake!

I should mention an episode that happened at about this time that had some bearing on the rest of my life. It concerns my brother Ron (he wasn't Ronny any more). I'm not too sure of the details because I wasn't there. I was living in Pacht Hall at the time. My dad had come home drunk one day and got into an argument with Mom. Dad always had a hot temper and occasionally would get into a physical as well as a verbally abusive argument with Mom. On this occasion he either slapped or shoved Mom down. Or both. Ron wasn't there either, but the next day Mom told him about what had happened and my brother's blood began to boil. That afternoon Dad came home. He was sober this time. Ron took him out the back door and told him that if he ever hit Mom again that he (Ron) would do him bodily harm, or words to that effect. My brother was about 17 at the time and was a physical match for Dad so he had to take my brother's threat seriously. I don't believe there were any more incidents like this one. I have my brother to thank for that. To this day Ron hates Dad's guts. I just dismissed him as a nonentity in my life. Recently, when we were in Texas for Lena's funeral, I told Ron that Jerre and I were going to the Bethel Cemetery outside Decatur where Dad was buried. He didn't want to go until I told him our Uncle Toby was also buried there. He (and I) liked Toby, so Ron agreed to go.

Another episode that actually involved Dad and me occurred sometime later. I had to move back home from the dorm because of money issues. Dad showed up with a brand new Chevrolet Corvair one day, Chevy's new rear-engine air cooled car. He was a salesman for a Chevy dealer in Irving and had brought this car, a '62 model I think, home. It was a demonstrator. He let us take it out for a test ride. Bad idea. On the drive the serpentine belt that drove several things on the engine (including the cooling

fan) came off and the engine overheated. Catastrophic things happen to an air cooled engine when air isn't flowing over it. We pulled into the driveway with the engine smoking. Dad was livid. Thought we had abused the car. I tried to explain, but he wasn't having it. The lack of an apology on my part was the final straw and he told me to get out. He threw me out of the house! Floyd told me that his brother, Jerry Westbrook, and Gerald Owens (who later sold me the car I couldn't get tags for) were going to rent a house in Irving. I got in touch with them and they agreed to let me live there if I took a share of the rent. I lived there for almost a year in conditions that can only be described as squalid. Gerald worked on construction projects and I briefly worked for him on the construction of an apartment complex in Grand Prairie. I needed the money. Gerald stole stuff off the construction site and sold it. Our house always had kegs of nails and other construction materials he was selling. The nails were stacked in the bathroom, but that wasn't a problem because the bathroom had long since backed up and was unusable. I remember one party where Gerald got particularly drunk. Gerald had one 'trick' he liked to pull. Being in construction, he knew how to find the studs in a wall. He would go tapping along the wall until he was sure of the placement of the studs. Then he would move back, lower his head, run forward and put it through the wall, between the studs! Like I said, the conditions at this house were pretty bad.

After most of a year Mom told me Dad had cooled down and it would be all right if I moved back in. I was low on money (again) so I had to swallow my pride and move back in. Dad and I never really came to grips with what had happened. We just didn't talk about it anymore and moved on. It was as if the blowup had never happened. I don't believe he ever apologized for anything in his life, but he owed me one for that damned Corvair incident.

Because my money was running low, (again!) I decided to get a real job. I got a job as a "specials driver" for the Golman Baking Company in downtown Dallas. They were makers of Holsum bread and Twinkies, among other things. I drove a truck delivering buns, rolls and muffins mostly to restaurants in Dallas. We (the other specials drivers and me) always hated the foot-long hotdog bun orders because they were always in the seedy parts of town. On November 22nd, 1963, I ran my route early that morning and then drove down Elm Street and on to my classes in Arlington. When I got out of class that afternoon and went home, I turned on the TV and learned from Walter Kronkite that President Kennedy had been killed in the early afternoon on that very stretch of Elm Street that I had travelled that morning. I was devastated, as were most people. I'll never forget it. It was the "9-11" of my era.

I should tell you that the driving job for the baking company was not the first job I got while I was in college. I don't really count this other job, but I should tell you about it, anyway. I answered an ad that promised a hundred dollars a week. I couldn't believe it! I applied for the job and discovered that it was a door-to-door sales job selling encyclopedias. The American Peoples Encyclopedia. I was given the choice of a low salary (way less than \$100) or a commission. You could only make the \$100 if you were on commission. We had 'quotas'. Had to sell a certain number of sets per week. If we met our quota we got the \$100. Otherwise we didn't make a dime. That's where the big money was made so I chose the commission. We (there were 2 other guys and our boss, who drove a Buick Riviera) would go out into a neighborhood in the morning and he would let us out to canvas the neighborhood. He would pick us up at the same spot at 4 pm. We had a pitch. We weren't actually SELLING the encyclopedias; we were

PLACING them! The encyclopedias were free! All you had to do was sign up for the yearbooks, the yearly updates. The idea was that your friends would see these nice encyclopedias in your home and go buy some on their own. Complete BS! Turns out, the cost of the yearbooks easily paid for the encyclopedias after only a few years, but we didn't tell our suckers, er, our customers that. I immediately saw through the ruse but off we went into different neighborhoods to "place" these sets. I wasn't very convincing because I never 'placed' a set. My time as a salesman was rapidly coming to a close. My boss was unhappy with me because of my poor performance. I couldn't help it. I couldn't go through the pitch with a straight face. This all came to a head one day when we went into a neighborhood and we were let off, as usual. This was in Waxahachie. I was let out first and the other 2 guys after me in other neighborhoods. At the end of the day, the boss picked us up in the same order he let us out. When we got to the last guy's pickup point, he was standing there with a stack of books! He and the boss loaded the books into the trunk. Turns out he knocked on this elderly woman's door and half way through his pitch she told him she was not interested because she had a one-year-old set of Encyclopedia Britannica! He immediately changed his pitch from the "placement" argument to one where he would let her have the American Peoples Encyclopedias for free AND TAKE HERS IN EXCHANGE! Obviously a good deal because the American Peoples books were newer! Unbelievably, she fell for it. She had to buy the yearbooks just like all other customers! He had STOLEN her 1-year old Britannicas! It was at this exact point in time that I knew I was not fit for sales. The boss was beaming! I quit.

I had several jobs while I went to school, one of which was operating a gas station at night. It was a good job because it didn't get much business late at night and afforded me the opportunity to study while earning some bucks. This station was at the corner of Beltline and Shady Grove roads. One particular incident stands out in my memory of this job. One night, shortly before closing time at 2 am, I was studying in the station for a physics test when the door chime rang. I looked up to see a black guy who had just come into the station and was waving a gun! "Hey, man! Gimme 5 buck's worth of gas for this gun?" I was stunned. He wanted to trade the gun for gas! **YES!!!** Still shaking, I went out and pumped the guy 5 bucks' worth of gas and he gave me the gun and drove off. I went back inside and examined the gun. It was a J.C. Higgins 9-shot 22 pistol. I think Sears sold it. I hadn't noticed that it wasn't loaded. At closing I put 5 dollars of my own money in the safe and took my new gun home, happy to be alive.

At the end of my senior year at Arlington, in 1965, I had stayed with the same major, physics, throughout and had a few electives at the end. Most people change majors at least once and those classes in that previous major become their electives. Not me. I had that algebra class to redo, but I also had to select a couple of classes to get the required number of credit hours. One of the classes I took was called "Music Appreciation". You might think this involved deep insights into the thinking of composers and musical structures and the like. Nope. All we did was sit in an auditorium and listen to classical music pieces. In the final exam the instructor played excerpts from some of the pieces we had listened to and we had to identify them. Piece of cake! I got an A. To this day, there are about a dozen classical pieces of music that I dearly love that I first heard in that course: Finlandia, Pictures at an Exhibition, La Mer, Bolero, Night on Bald Mountain, Grand Canyon Suite, Peer Gynt and more.

Insight: In looking back, this course, which I only took to get the credit hours, turned out to be a major musical influence in my life. Go figure.

Air Force (1965-1969)

It was during this last summer session of college in 1965 (June to mid-July) that I suddenly started thinking about what I was going to do after graduation. You know how we parents give our kids finger-wagging lectures about planning ahead? How about one month? This was my planning horizon. Do as I say and not as I do! It suddenly, in July, occurred to me that after graduation in August, one month away, I was going to be drafted! Drafted!! The Vietnam War was in full swing at that time and virtually everyone classified 1-A was drafted in those days. There was no lottery. That was later. I panicked. I didn't want to go into the Army. The Air Force promised more interesting things to do for a guy with a science degree, so I decided to join the Air Force. Sure, joining the Air Force was a 4-year commitment and the draft was only for 2 years, but it sounded like the better thing to do for me. I signed up, not as an officer, but as enlisted. If I had thought ahead I could have taken ROTC in my last year and after basic training and 3 months of Officer Training School (OTS) started as a second lieutenant, but I didn't think that far ahead. Another reason for selecting the Air Force was that Army draftees had a high probability of being sent to combat in Vietnam.

I'm not sure of the exact date in August that I flew down to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, but Mom took me out the night before my departure to see "*Cat Ballou*" at the Paramount Theater in downtown Dallas. I could hardly concentrate on the movie, thinking about what was going to happen to me the next morning. I reported to Love Field (the only Dallas airport at the time) and took my first airplane flight ever to San Antonio. My first flight was in a Douglas DC-6, piston prop plane. There I began my Air Force career in a barracks that was older than Pacht Hall. As it turns out, my experiences in Pacht Hall stood me well in basic. I had a nasty-tempered sergeant who constantly found fault with what I and the other recruits did, but it didn't bother me like it bothered some of the other guys. For some, this was their first excursion away from Mommy and they weren't doing too well. It was my first excursion away from home, too, but I was 3 years older than most of them.

The first thing they impress upon you in basic is how important they are and just how unimportant you are. There are arbitrary rules that have no real meaning that you are expected to follow to the letter. Inspections! I failed my first inspection because there was toothpaste in the barrel of the tube. It was supposed to be clean. Supposedly, you were supposed to use a Q-tip to clean out the toothpaste barrel after use. I quickly learned that I needed a tube of toothpaste (and a lot of other items) that just stood inspection and were never actually used. That was the first lesson. The second lesson had to do with reveille in the morning. When reveille played on the PA system you had 5 minutes to be outside in uniform and in formation with your bed made tightly with what they called hospital corners. Impossible! Some guys slept on the floor next to their bunks. Others (like me) slept on top of the bunk and tightened the blanket before leaving. Virtually no one slept IN the bed. We quickly learned that we could get a few seconds of extra time due to a quirk of the PA system. The reveille they played was from a vinyl record that was well worn. It had scratches and the first notes of reveille were preceded by a "skitch-skitch-skitch" that alerted us that it was time to move.

I made it through basic training OK and after 30 days I got an assignment to Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico in September, 1965. I had to look it up on a map.

Insight: Of all the insights I have identified in this narrative, this is probably the biggest one. It changed the complete vector of my life. I met my future wife because of that lack of planning that propelled me down to San Antonio in August, 1965. Many friends I have today I met in the Air Force. It changed the scope of my outlook on life. I gained a broader, more tolerant perspective. One of the biggest effects of it is that I learned my profession, computer programming, in the Air Force. They taught me how to program computers. That one decision, to join the Air Force, was the biggest thing that ever happened to me. A pivotal point in time.

I was assigned to the Air Force Weapons Laboratory (AFWL) at Kirtland. I was put in an enlisted barracks on Kirtland that was as if Pacht Hall had been transplanted. I felt right at home. I arrived in late September, 1965.

It was there that I met some guys that became life-long friends. Apparently I wasn't the only guy who hadn't done sufficient planning and there were a number of us E-2s (Airman 3rd class) who had their college degrees. This was because Kirtland was a largely scientific base. I was roommates with an Airman 1st class named Terry Pieper who had a degree in Double-E. I thought I was a nerd, but Terry stayed in the barracks over the Christmas holidays and wound his own induction coils to make an electric motor! He did talk me into buying a Heathkit TV, one of the last black-and-white TVs Heathkit made and helped me put it together. Turns out my soldering technique needed some work, but he showed me how to do it and the TV actually worked! Across the hall were Wayne Knodel and Gail Houser and in the room next to them was Willie Knox. Down the hall was Bill Shaffer and Gary Harrington. We all became fast friends because we were all in the same boat. Gail helped me make a cabinet for that Heathkit TV in the woodworking shop which was across the street from the barracks. Once again my life became bifurcated. There was the life in the barracks and with my newfound buddies. And then there was my job in the lab. None of my friends in the barracks worked with me at the lab. It's a leitmotif of my life.

I reported to the Weapons Lab where I was assigned as assistant to Captain Ron Saqui. I was to help him program the newly delivered, fastest computer in the world, the Control Data Corporation 6600. The first time I saw the computer through a bank of plastic job submission windows, I was in awe. It had been delivered just 6 weeks before I arrived and was in early operation. It was the world's first supercomputer. It had been rushed into the most demanding scientific laboratories in the world (Livermore, CERN and Kirtland) and had a very primitive operating system called Chippewa, after Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin where it had been developed. This operating system had no permanent disk storage! Everything done on the 6600 had to be reloaded from source cards (or tape) after the system was booted (from the 12X12 toggle switch boot panel) every morning. Like I said, they had rushed it into production. CDC later introduced a more capable operating system called Scope for the 6600.

I was assigned to a division of the Air Force Weapons Lab (AFWL) that simulated airborne nuclear “events”. Atomic bombs. The main simulation program the division supported was called Sputter. It consisted of 4½ boxes of cards that had to be read into the computer and compiled at the beginning of every computation. It was written in FORTRAN and simulated a nuclear event from one “shake” (10^{-8} second) after ignition to a few 10s of seconds. On the fastest computer in the world at that time, it took over 70 hours of computing. The initial conditions came from Los Alamos. It was in supporting this program that I learned my career skills as a programmer.

I will now go into some detail about the problem we were solving with Sputter and my part in its solution. This problem occupied a good 3 years of my life so I feel I must describe it. Those of you interested only in the narrative can skip this paragraph. Sputter modelled the air around a nuclear device as a set of concentric shells or “zones”, like an onion. These zones had to be periodically combined as simulation time progressed to prevent numerical error because they were getting compressed into infinitesimal size. We called this activity “rezoning” and it was a delicate procedure. In a nuclear event, the main mechanism for the first few seconds after ignition is radiation pressure, the pressure exerted by highly excited photons trying to escape; heating, ionizing and compressing the air in front of them. After about 2 or 3 seconds simple hydrodynamic pressure takes over as the main force. Sputter was a “finite difference” program that stepped through a computation using carefully computed time steps using von Neumann criteria. If the time step was too large then computational errors began to creep into the computation, ruining it. If the time step was too small, then it took too long to run. After a few hours of computation, Sputter would punch out the state of all zones (on cards) to be used as input for the next computational phase. My job was rezoning, the computation of new zones that aggregated the compressed zones into larger ones but not so large as to lose fine detail. We used auxiliary programs to compute the size and hydrodynamic states of these newly combined zones. Once these new zones were completed, these were input into Sputter and then computation was resumed. A typical computation required 8 to 10 rezones to take it out to 10 seconds after ignition.

We all ate in the Chow Hall because we didn’t have money to eat elsewhere. In my first 2 years I had to pull “KP”, kitchen patrol. I had to help out with the meals for a full day about every 6 weeks. There were about 6 jobs on KP, ranging in difficulty from “DRO” (dining room orderly) to “pots and pans” (self-explanatory). DRO involved keeping the dining room clean, filling napkin holders and making sure the milk machine was full. Cleaning up spills, if any. You signed up for a job upon arrival. Early arrivals got the better jobs and late arrivals got pots and pans. You had to show up at about 3 am for DRO. Not everyone ate in the Chow Hall. The guys that had been there a while and had gotten promotions and made more money often ate out evenings, especially right after pay day! Typically, the meals just before pay day would be the less desirable meals: Macaroni and cheese. Hot dogs. Beans and weenies. After pay day would come the steak and shrimp. Yes, we actually did get steak every once in a while.

I had never really been out of the state of Texas before coming to Albuquerque so the world was a brand new place to me. I discovered I liked to travel. Bill Shaffer and I became good friends because we both liked to get out and do things (camping, exploring) and go places. We would jump in his old ‘56 Volkswagen bug on the weekends and go all over the state. Bill’s degree was in geology so he pointed out the

geologic structures along the way. Fascinating. Bill opened my eyes to the possibilities of travel. My love of travel these days can be traced to getting in Bill's dilapidated bug.

To step back to gain some perspective at this point, entering the Air Force was a big eye-opener to me. I will here expand upon the **insight** I identified earlier. Up to that point my life had been very circumscribed. That is, very small. Like a lot of people who don't travel, I thought that where I was born (Texas) was the best place in the world to live and that people and things got progressively worse as you got away from it. I had prejudices about people from other places (I won't go into detail on those). I learned, after meeting some of them in the Air Force, that they weren't so bad after all. It was like taking a look around you at ground level and then getting in a balloon to go to heights that show you the world you never understood (but thought you did). A farther horizon. Oh, you may have known it existed, but now you see it as it really is, not as you saw it through the cloud of your prejudices. My horizons expanded and my view of the world too. I don't claim to be the world citizen my kids are today, but I'm a lot more open-minded and see the world more clearly than I did in July of 1965. I have the Air Force and those guys in the barracks to thank for that.

After one year in the Air Force Terry Pieper left (his tour was up) and Gail Houser moved into my barracks room. Gail became one of my closest friends. He was a complicated guy, though. He was from a very small town called Paradise, Kansas. Population 140. He was the mildest, meekest guy you'd ever want to know until he had a few beers. When he had a few beers he got loud and, some would say, obnoxious. He also had a latent interest in fire that manifested itself after a few beers. I've only been thrown out of one establishment in my life and it was the Rathskeller in Albuquerque. Gail was lighting fires in the ash tray. The owner came over and ordered us out, so Gail, naturally, left by way of the fire exit! Red faced and humiliated, I followed him.

Over the next 3 years the 5 of us: Wayne, Gail, Bill, Gary and I, did a lot of camping all over New Mexico. Camping is fairly cheap when someone else provides the transportation. Wayne had a little Corvair, Bill had his Volkswagen bug and Gail had his brand new 1966 Mustang. I had an old '56 Oldsmobile that periodically broke down. Those camping trips were a lot of fun. Other guys in the barracks joined us from time to time. Willie Knox and Ben Sellers, but mostly it was some subset of the 5 of us.

I remember one camping trip up into the Sandia Mountains where we made a camp near the Sandia Cave where Sandia Man was discovered. We explored the cave (it wasn't controlled like it is today) and then made camp beside a small stream. We had taken a case of beer and were working on this after eating our dinner when Ben Sellers, slightly inebriated, threw an unopened can of Coors into our camp fire. We watched the can as it expanded with creaks and pops until finally it stopped making noise. About 3 seconds later it exploded, taking the entire campfire with it. The burning logs were strewn across our blankets and sleeping bags and we had to put them out. Great fun!

There's a story that melds the story about Gail's demeanor after a few beers, and his car, his pride and joy, the Mustang. There was a lady Captain in the Weapons Lab, Bonnie Kautz, who threw parties at her apartment complex just off base. Most of the officers kept to themselves and didn't socialize with us enlisted guys, but Bonnie was a true democrat (small D). We were usually all invited and, because this was an opportunity to have some fun without spending a lot of money (I usually brought a token

6-pack), we almost always attended. Her complex had a party area next to a pool. On one occasion Gail had just bought his new car and we all went to Bonnie's party in it. At the party Gail had his couple of beers and started lipping off, as usual. Someone (I don't remember who) grabbed Gail and threw him in the pool, much to the amusement of all the other partiers (and me). When it came time to leave (which was soon after the dunking), Gail didn't want to get his car wet so we put him in his trunk and drove back to the barracks with him shouting instructions all the way. I should point out that all of this was fairly lighthearted. Gail was a 'happy drunk' and never got angry during these inebriated episodes.

In my third year in the Air Force, 1967, all of us finally had enough money to enjoy some off-base entertainment, especially on the weekends. It was during this period of time that I succumbed to peer pressure and started smoking. Gail and Wayne smoked (not Bill) and I picked up the habit. Bad decision. I smoked Pall Mall Golds and within a short period of time was smoking a pack a day. I realized it was a bad habit and had made a couple of tries at quitting but without success. Anyone who tells you cigarettes are not addictive doesn't know what they are talking about. This all came to a head when we were at a Shakey's Pizza Parlor one Saturday listening to music. Unlike today, Shakey's was a swinging place in those days. There was Gail, Wayne and me. We had a booth and were enjoying ourselves listening to music and drinking beer when, late in the evening, someone noticed that our ash tray had 2 unfiltered butts. We all smoked filtered cigarettes, so this was a mystery until someone noticed that my latest cigarette was flaming up. The filter was on fire! I was smoking through the wrong end of the cigarette! I had smoked through 2 filters and was working on the 3rd! It was shortly after this that I resolved to quit this nasty habit. I worked with a first lieutenant named Bob Reynolds and, at work, I discussed my desire to quit. Bob made me a \$20 bet that I couldn't quit for 3 months. After some consideration I took him up on his bet. This was serious because \$20 was a lot of money (my paycheck every 2 weeks was \$27.97). This was in May, 1968, and so, to make the conditions easy to remember, I resolved to quit at the end of the month. Bob wrote it out in a flowery document which both he and I signed. At the end of the day on May 31, 1968 I smoked the last of a full pack of cigarettes and quit. This is called "quitting cold turkey". Let me tell you, this was one of the harder things I have ever done. I wanted a cigarette BAD! Every morning Bob would give me encouragement and, to my own amazement, after 3 months I collected the \$20! I've lost contact with Bob, but I'd like to give him his \$20 back. I got way more than that in the freedom from cigarettes for the rest of my life. This is not to say that it was over in 3 months. Two years later I still had yearnings for a cigarette at certain times. Times of stress. After meals. But I resisted them and am proud to say I never smoked again. Thanks, Bob!

1968 was one of those great years in my life. I actually bought a new car! A brand new 1968 Volkswagen bug that cost me \$1749. Boy, was I proud of that car. My first brand new car! For the last year and a half I had driven a 1956 Oldsmobile that my dad got for me. That car had a lot of problems and it was constantly draining my wallet with repairs, so I resolved to get a new car. I was an E-4 by this time (Buck Sergeant) so I had the means to buy it, on time of course. It was my turn to take the guys on trips and I did my part. We went out a lot of nights to various night spots. Life was getting better. No more KP, either! Yay!

One place we liked to frequent in Albuquerque was Okie Joe's on Central Avenue at the intersection with University. It was a bar with a dining area that was used for lunches but was empty at night. Bill, Gail and I were there one afternoon with the intent to make it our first bar of an evening of bar-hopping. Like I said, we all had some money now. They famously had a 10-cent beer night and that's why we were there. With 10-cent beers they were catering to the kids from the nearby University of New Mexico, but they got us, too. The sun was still up and I remember Gail telling me how it was dangerous to drink in the daytime because your eyes dilated in a dark bar and then your brain went numb after a few beers and when you went outside into the bright sun you'd get ... RETINA BURN! I think this is where my highly tuned bullshit detector got started. Anyway, there we were at Okie's enjoying a few cheap beers. After each beer Gail had to go the bathroom. One beer, one trip. That was Gail. The bathroom was in the back through the lunch area and adjacent to their kitchen. All of this area was empty at this time of the afternoon/evening.



Okie Joe's

Everybody was in the bar. On one of his several trips to the men's room, Gail came back and remarked that he had taken a detour through the kitchen and found a freezer full of meats. Steaks and the like. Uh-huh. On his next trip back, Gail came back with his shirt bulging. "Let's go!" He headed for the door and Wayne and I followed. Gail had stolen 3 steaks. Three FROZEN steaks! One for each of us. I had never stolen anything in my life and was very nervous. We got in my bug and drove to Rio Grande Park, a park adjacent to the Rio Grande River. There we started a fire and threw the steaks on it. After a while, when they were mostly black on the outside, we took them off. They were burned on the outside and still frozen on the inside! Yum!

In the summer of 1968 Bill Shaffer and I often took weekend drives in his bug around the New Mexico hills. One trip in particular trip took us to Madrid (pronounced "MAD-rid"), New Mexico, a small mining town about 30 miles south of Santa Fe on route 14. Bill knew of some abandoned gold mines just outside of Madrid that had been owned by Thomas Edison (or so Bill claimed), so we took off to find them. We located a mine by sighting a shed that we saw just off the road. When we got there, the rafters of the shed were filled with bats. But that wasn't what we were after. Adjacent to the shed was a pit mine, a vertical shaft with metal rails going down into it, presumably to haul the gold ore out of the mine. We looked down into the mine and it was pitch black, but there was a ladder next to the rails that went down into the shaft. We decided to go down the ladder to see how deep the shaft was. Bill went first and I climbed onto the ladder after him and we quickly descended into that pitch blackness I described. Down and down we went until, finally, Bill said "Hey! I can't find the next rung of the ladder".

He figured we were probably at the bottom, but he asked me to go back up top and retrieve a rock to verify the depth of the mine. I climbed up, found a rock and climbed back down the ladder and handed the rock to Bill. He let the rock drop. It took what seemed like an eternity for the rock to hit ANYTHING, and when it did it ricocheted off the sides of the shaft and continued plummeting for another 4 or 5 seconds before we heard it hit water at the bottom of a shaft that had to be several hundred feet below us! It was at this point that we realized how dangerous our decision to descend into this mine was! Not only that, but here we were, two not-small guys, both on a ladder that was abandoned at about the turn of the century and the reason Bill couldn't find that next rung was that it had rotted off! It was then that Bill gave me the best advice I have ever received in my life "Don, slowly climb back up the ladder". "Right!" We crawled out of the mine, gradually realizing on the trip back to Albuquerque how lucky we had been. In our time in the Air Force, we made many mistakes, but we never made THAT mistake again!

Bill was pursuing his masters in geology at the University of New Mexico and was doing a thesis on the graben that the Rio Grande River lay in. A graben is a collapsed or down-dropped block of rock that is bordered on its long sides by faults. His thesis was to measure and locate the edges of these faults by use of a gravitometer that he borrowed from his lab. This was a very sensitive instrument that could measure the difference in gravity from a table top to the floor. Bill asked me to assist him one weekend so we put the gravitometer in his bug and took off. Bill laid out a line across the graben that, unfortunately, took us very close to Manzano Base. Manzano was, at that time, where a good portion of the US nuclear stockpile was stored. The base had several fences around it. Bill and I would drive across the desert, get out, take the gravitometer out, take a measurement, write it on a clipboard and then get back in the car and move another 100 yards and repeat. Very soon after we started doing this a big dust cloud came our way. Two MP (military police) jeeps from Manzano. "What are you guys doing?" Bill explained about his thesis and the MPs called his boss who, miraculously, was at his desk in the lab and vouched for our presence. The MPs suggested we take our measurements elsewhere. We took their advice.

Author's note: On a recent visit (2015), Bill told me he never completed that masters that I helped him with. He later got his masters in Montana, but this effort didn't contribute to that degree. So, he didn't get much out of those efforts, but I sure did!

At the end of 1968 we all had about 3½ years of service under our belts and were looking forward to getting out in late 1969. We learned late in the year that the Air Force was going to give "early outs" to enlisted personnel. We were going to be civilians in January! Hurray! With such a short planning period we all started brushing up our resumes. We couldn't take time off to go interviewing, so we had to wait until we were discharged to begin job searching in earnest. We were all discharged in late January, 1969, about the time Nixon was taking the oath of office, and Gail and I rented a small house just off base to serve as a base of operations while we went on interviews. After a month or so of searching, I got a job in Alexandria, Virginia at a company called Environmental Research Corporation (ERC). Its address was 813 North Royal Street. Gail got a job with TRW in Houston. Environmental Research was a small 20-person company that, among other things, did simulations of underground nuclear 'events' for the government. These simulations were funded by Lawrence Livermore Labs in Livermore, California. My experience was just what they wanted and they offered me

the huge salary of \$12,000/year. About \$5.77/hour. I couldn't believe it! Taking this job was the first and only time in my life that I quadrupled my income! I was rolling in money! What a change from those bleak days of early 1966. I know \$12K doesn't sound like a lot of money today, but in 1969 it was a lot! I said goodbye to Gail, vowing to keep in touch, and drove my new bug back home where I spent 2 weeks reconnecting with my family on County Line Road. It was like going back in time. My brother Ron (he wasn't Ronny anymore) had graduated, gone to OTS and was a newly minted Second Lieutenant in the Air Force. He had so wanted to meet me while I was still in the Air Force so I'd have to salute him. It didn't happen!

Insight: While briefly at home, I reflected on just how much my life had changed in 4 short years. I was a kid in 1965 with a very narrow view of life. Now I was a man with a much-expanded world view. I had grown up while I was in the Air Force. On my own and in charge of my own destiny. It felt good. I owed the Air Force for that. Going back home and seeing the narrow point of view in my friends there, a point of view that had been my own at one time, brought these changes sharply into focus.

I drove east to Alexandria (a DC suburb) to start the next phase of my life. I got an apartment in Southern Towers, a high rise complex of 16-story buildings at 4901 Seminary Road, if you want to look it up. Mine was an efficiency apartment on the 14th floor, costing a whopping \$108/month. Southern Towers was full of yuppies (young urban professionals), like myself, in a fairly nice area of town.

I reported for work and began getting used to being a civilian. My life in a barracks-like environment, which had started in 1961 in Pacht Hall, was at an end. It was at this time that I got a bad case of homesickness. I had never been homesick before. Not when I joined the Air Force, leaving my Texas home for the last time. Now I missed my Air Force buddies and the whole supporting environment that they provided. I was alone. On my own. In a strange city. With virtually no friends. I was homesick! I addressed this by throwing myself into my work. The simulations ERC ran were in FORTRAN, my native language, so I took right to the task. Gradually the homesickness went away in the early summer of 1969. I remember being on the phone one day when my boss, Dr. Guillermo Lamers, came in my office and wrote "I like your work" on the blackboard. It was the first sign that I was actually going to be worth those \$12,000 they were paying me. I was happy. Later, he gave me some professional advice I have appreciated for the rest of my career. In periods of stress, I always refer to this advice he gave me in 1969: "*Do good and don't fuck up!*" I've tried to hold up to that high standard ever since! Not always successfully.

Insight: Dr. Lamers writing that "atta-boy" on my blackboard was a turning point for my own self esteem. Up to that point in time I hadn't really gotten any positive feedback about my work. I was worried that I wasn't worth the \$12K they were paying me. At the Weapons Lab it was all about the officers and their experiments and papers. I was just their "programming lackey". Captain Saqui was not a guy who passed out compliments freely. This marked the first time that someone told me they thought I was doing a good job. It was the first of many, but it was the first.

That summer was the summer of Woodstock and I briefly thought about going. It was a 'happening'. But I had a new job and didn't have vacation time yet, so I decided not to go. In retrospect, maybe I missed something very important, but I had different priorities at that time and needed to establish my credibility in my field before frivolous pleasures like a rock festival. I guess I made the right decision.

Dr. Lamers took me on a business trip to San Francisco with a stopover in Las Vegas. He was a flamboyant German who was very good at people interactions. He was responsible for much of the work that I was doing. The San Francisco trip was to consult with researchers at Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, who funded our work. I was there as the holder/creator of the data he was presenting. I was Dr. Lamers' 'gun-bearer'! The Vegas stopover I mentioned was for the 1969 Fall Joint Computer Conference. Boy, was I dazzled! A conference presenting the latest in computing with contributors from all over the world. This was before the personal computer and in the early stages of the minicomputer era. Lots of applications with racks of electronic equipment and hardware powered by PDP-8s and Data General Novas.

Early in 1970 Environmental Research was absorbed into its parent company, Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) when our funding dried up, and I was transferred to work at CSC in Silver Spring, Maryland. There I began work on a contract to NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. The work was actually at Goddard with occasional trips to the home office, so I got an apartment close to Goddard with Paul Doran. This was in support of scientists who processed data from scientific satellites including Landsat and a lot of smaller satellites for specific scientific investigations. We wrote programs to decode telemetry, condition the data (remove bad data, convert counts to physical units, associate with earth locations, accumulate with other data in to a big picture, etc.) and present it in an understandable form (usually graphs and maps) for the Goddard scientists. It wasn't the simulation work I had done previously, but it was interesting work. It was also in my native language, FORTRAN. The platform we mainly used was an IBM 1130, a desk-sized computer.

Early Marriage (1970-1981)

As I have explained earlier, when I got to Alexandria in early 1969 and had no friends, I was homesick. I knew that a friend, Captain Bonnie Kautz, now Major Kautz, had been transferred from Kirtland to the Pentagon and was close by. I called Bonnie and asked her what I should do. She told me I should join her bowling league. Fine. I had never really bowled, but I was lonely and wanted to meet people and Bonnie was a person who knew, and kept track of, a lot of people. She is one of those 'switchboard' people, who sit at the hub of several social groups, providing a conduit for members of the groups to maintain contact with other members of the group and other groups. I joined the bowling league and it was somewhat fun. I wasn't very good at bowling but that didn't matter. The bowling alley sold beer! So it became the major hub of my social life in late 1969.

Early in 1970, on bowling night, I met a girl that I had known as an acquaintance in Albuquerque. Jerre Caputo. At the Weapons Lab she had been a 'data tech', working to assist the researchers while pursuing her degree in math at the University of New Mexico. After graduating in 1967 she took a job in California and subsequently in 1969 joined Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC). DEC made the PDP series of minicomputers. After a brief 3-month training in Maynard, Massachusetts she was deployed to a newly opened DEC office in the Maryland suburbs of DC. Like me, she had no friends in the DC area so she called up Bonnie to find out what she should do. "You should join the bowling league!" Good advice. There she and I renewed our acquaintance and began keeping each other company. After bowling we would go to a Shakey's Pizza Parlor and enjoy pizza and beer along with Bonnie's younger sister, Paulette. Friendship blossomed into love and I asked her to marry me. Amazingly, she agreed.

Insight: My friendship with Bonnie Kautz, a Captain who invited me and the other enlisted guys to her parties in Albuquerque, turned out to be the key that led to my marriage to Jerre Caputo. We both knew her and she 'hooked us up'. Little did I realize back in Albuquerque how important her friendship would be to me.

We flew back to Texas to introduce Jerre to my family and announce our intentions.

There she met Mom and Dad, Floyd and his wife Carol, and Lena. Ron was in the Air Force and was stationed in Japan at the time. We went horseback riding with Floyd. I think



Mom, Lena, Jerre, Dad and me, 1970

this may have been the last time I saw Buck. I don't ever remember riding him again. We set the date as August 15th and were married in the United Methodist Church on the campus of the University of Maryland in College Park. Mom and Lena flew out to attend the ceremony. It was a small ceremony with only 8 people in attendance. Ten if you include the preacher and his wife who acted as a witness. The attendees were Paul Doran (my roommate), my Mom, Aunt Lena, Paulette Kautz, Ruth Caputo (Jerre's mom), Ruth's friend Cleo, Jerre and me. Significantly, my dad had other more important things to do. Jerre's dad was estranged from the Caputo family (because he had divorced Ruth) and didn't even know of the wedding until sometime later. Families. Our wedding reception consisted of a reservation for a single table at a Holiday Inn in College Park. We were on our way.



Ruth, Jerre, me and Mom at our wedding



I moved into Jerre's apartment on Karen Elaine Drive in New Carrollton, Maryland. At Jerre's urging, I agreed to grow a beard. The accompanying picture is of me and my beard in our apartment. Those are computer punch cards in my pocket. I shaved that beard off shortly after this and have never had one since.



Don's beard

I'd like to call these our 'salad days'. Jerre and I were both making pretty good money (I had gotten a raise to \$13,200!) so we had both the means and the opportunity to expand our lives. And boy, we did. The first thing we did was a weekend get-away to Williamsburg, Virginia. Paul Doran handled getting our moms to the airport while we drove down for our first night as husband and wife. We got a room in a motel and went out to a nice restaurant. We ordered a bottle of wine. As the waiter was on the way to our table with the bottle of wine, Jerre said "I just love this little ceremony". "What ceremony?" I asked. In the 15 seconds it took the waiter to get there she explained how he would open the bottle, pour a little out for me to taste and wait for my approval. I pulled it off! It could have been gasoline and I would have approved it!

Shortly after that we went on our real honeymoon to England in September. This was the first time I had ever been outside the United States. We only spent a couple of days in London before taking off in our (right hand drive) rental car. I got a 'crash' course in driving on the left. We toured the Cotswolds and the English countryside for a wonderful two weeks. We got to meet a lot of friendly English people, too. The England we saw on this trip was significantly different from the England you see today. Here are the main differences we saw:

- In restaurants, if a table was occupied but had room for more people, you could just invite yourself to someone else's table. And you didn't just ignore the other people at the table. You were expected to hold a conversation with them.
- Virtually all the bathrooms in hotels were down the hall. No in-suite.
- The breakfasts at bed-and-breakfasts were almost always at a big table where all the people who had spent the night ate together. You were expected to hold up your part of the table conversation. Everyone at the table knew we were 'yanks' as soon as we opened our mouths. In one, a lady turned to Jerre and said "My husband wants to play 'mum' for you". He wanted to pour her tea!
- There was virtually no American fast food. There was an English fast food chain called "Wimpy's", however. And all of the sandwiches were skimpy: two slices of bread with a thin slice of meat.

- On two lane roads, cars would pull out to pass by straddling the median stripe, even when meeting other cars! Both the cars being passed and the cars meeting the passer moved over to accommodate a 3rd temporary lane. Unnerving to an American!

Sadly, England has become “Americanized” in the years since. All of the differences I have outlined above have disappeared. Wimpy’s got wiped out by American fast food chains later.

One particular experience stands out on this trip. On vacation, Americans tend to travel all day and then get a room in the early evening. Six o’clock or so. The English tend to get their rooms in the early afternoon. This means that we often found ourselves looking for a room and finding everything already booked. In the Cotswolds, in the town of Stow-on-the-Wold I think, we had more trouble than usual finding a room. We finally found a pub that had an available room upstairs. Wonderful. Except for the fact that the room was directly over the pub and there were a group of very happy (and loud) firemen students celebrating their graduation in the bar. The noise was deafening. We couldn’t sleep, so we finally gave up and went downstairs to join the firemen, retiring much later in the wee hours of the morning.

I worked with CSC people on a contract at Goddard Space Flight Center. Jerre worked at the local DEC office which had a very ‘interesting’ personnel mix. There were three groups:

1. The salesmen (It really was all men) They were like the officers I dealt with in the Air Force.
2. The field service guys. They were the blue collar guys who installed and repaired the hardware.
3. The software support team. This team was the smallest of all and consisted of only Jerre and one other guy, Dan D’Urso.

The salesmen were somewhat aloof and ‘clubby’. The field service guys, however, were partyers par excellence. We had to choose which of these other 2 groups to associate with because the DEC software support group consisted only of 2 people. Clearly we had to have a few beers with the field service guys! And so, our decision to become a social part of the field service group began another chapter in the two-part lives I had led many times in the past. I worked at Goddard. Jerre handled software installations, updates and troubleshooting for the PDP-8, PDP-12 and (later) the PDP-11. But we hung out with the field service guys. They seemed to have the most fun. There was a seedy bar close to the DEC office, the Lanham Inn. This became our ‘watering hole’, much like the Yardarm is today.



The Lanham Inn

Jerre and I wanted to get into camping so we became friends with Don Churn, one of the field service guys, because he had an interest in camping, too. We went on many camping weekends in the Shenandoah Mountains in western Virginia and West Virginia. Don was a single guy who had a cocker spaniel, Sandy. Sandy went on all our camping trips. We went camping in good weather and bad. It didn't matter, we just loved to get out in the woods.



Camping with Jerre, Laura Schwartz, Paulette Kautz and Mike King

One particularly memorable trip was on the Appalachian Trail in western Virginia. The trip started off on the wrong foot when, in unpacking the car, I let a fifth of Jack Daniel's roll out of the back and crash on the pavement. Jerre and I drank Boone's Farm wine and beer, but Jack was Don Churn's drink of choice. We were too far in to go back for more, so we just shared our cheap wine and beer with Don. On the trail Don let Sandy run free and she went ahead on the trail and got lost. Don was beside himself. We went up and down the trail, calling to the dog to no avail. Finally, we made camp and the smell of steak cooking finally brought Sandy back. Don was a 'happy camper'!

In 1971 we drove up New England to visit two of my old Air Force buddies, Gary and Caroline Harrington, and Wayne Knodel. It was a wonderful trip.



Wayne and Me in Buffalo



Gary and Caroline Harrington

One of the people I worked with at CSC that I did become friends with was Mike King who was new in town and had not made friends. When we asked Mike if he wanted to go camping, he enthusiastically said yes. Mike was a 'man of few words' and with a huge head of hair, a beard and his pipe that he smoked, presented a fearsome sight, but we knew him for the pussycat he was. Jerre once asked him if he enjoyed camping and he said "Not particularly, but I do enjoy the company". That was Mike.

One weekend we went camping in western Virginia with Mike King, Paulette Kautz and Don Churn. We were in Churn's van and on the way back Mike casually asks if we can go by Dulles Airport. "Why, Mike?" "My dad is coming in". Mike was supposed to pick up his dad, Bill King, and we had just found out about it! We had been camping all weekend and the van reeked of campfire and dirty camping gear when we picked up Bill. This was our introduction to Bill King, who became a close friend in the following years, but I don't think we made a good impression on him when we picked him up because he paused before getting in the van because of the smell. Yikes! Turns out Bill was familiar with Mike's lack of planning and was grateful for the ride.

Jerre and I had been living in apartments all our adult lives, except for barracks and dorms, and we wanted to get a house of our own. We looked around Lanham and New Carrollton and found a nice starter home in January of 1972 at 6112 Seabrook Road in Seabrook, Maryland. It had about 1000 square feet, cost \$28,500 and our loan was at 7.57%. The monthly payment was \$264. We owned it from 1972 to 1978. We did a lot of living in that house. Jerre and I threw a lot of parties in those days. The house had a



Our Seabrook house

relatively big back yard and that was the place that most of our parties were held. Big back yard with lots of parking next door. The house was small and cramped. This picture was captured off Google Earth and is a current picture, but the house looks almost exactly like it did when we owned it. That house was a party house and most of the parties we had with our friends were at that house. After work on Friday (and other days as well) we would go over to the Lanham Inn, across the street from the DEC office and socialize until late in the evening. On more than one occasion we threw parties at our house that spanned entire weekends. Everyone would party until the wee hours of the morning and if Jerre and I got tired we merely went to bed and the party continued. Hours later we would get up and rejoin whatever parties were still there. This almost always included Gary Howell, who was a regular on our living room couch. I should tell you a little more about the Howells, Gary and Ingeberg. Gary was a small skinny guy and Ingeberg was a big German Brunhilda of a woman. With a temper. She and Gary fought quite often and Jerre and I witnessed at least 2 fights between them. Fist fights! Ingeberg won them all. On one occasion Gary, who was a field service guy at DEC, showed up for work one day with his glasses taped up. Jerre asked him how

his glasses had gotten broken. “Inge sat on them”. “That’s terrible!” Jerre sympathized. “That’s not the half of it. I was still wearing them at the time!”



Jerre dressed for work at DEC 1972

I took this picture of Jerre one morning as we were on our way to work. She was on her way to DEC and I was on my way to Goddard. This was her ‘power business suit’, suitable for meeting customers.



Ward and Jerre, 1972

In 1972 Jerre’s uncle Ward Bartle came to visit. The accompanying picture is of Ward and Jerre in the front yard of the Seabrook house. You can’t see much of the car behind them, but it was a 1972 Ford Torino, a “DEC-mobile”. DEC provided cars for their employees and this was Jerre’s company car. I still had my ’68 Volkswagen I had bought in Albuquerque.

In the summer of 1972 a developer approached my mom and dad with an offer to purchase their property on County Line Road in Texas. The new Dallas Fort Worth Airport (DFW) was under construction just a mile north of the property and their property was in a prime location for industrial support to the airport. They sold the property to the developer (he didn’t have a customer for the property yet) with a contingent that if the buyer defaulted on the payments that the property would revert to their ownership. This was a major change in my parents’ lives because the only thing that had been keeping them together was lack of funds for their separate maintenance. After the sale and after the payments began to be received, my parents divorced. They both went their separate ways. Mom bought a house in Garland and Dad bought a trailer to live in. Most kids are torn up by their parents divorcing but that was not the case here. Both Ron and I considered it a good move. Both of their lives were better after the divorce.

In 1973 Jerre and I vacationed in Germany. Bill King had been transferred by CSC to a job in Germany and invited us over. It was our first trip of several to Germany and we enjoyed it thoroughly. The accompanying picture was in the Hofbrau tent at Munich's Oktoberfest Festival.



Hans, Carol, Bill King, Jerre and me at Oktoberfest, Munich, 1973

On the trip back from Germany we stopped in Reykjavik, Iceland for a 2-day stay. We were flying Icelandic Airways and they offered a special rate to drop into their home city. We thought that we would never plan a vacation to Iceland, but as long as it was on our way, why not? We took a tour of the geysers just outside town and marveled at the strange landscapes. Earlier that year an island off the coast, Heimaey, had erupted and destroyed the only town on the island.

In 1974 Mom invited us all (including Dad) to her new house in Garland to celebrate Thanksgiving. The accompanying picture was taken around the Thanksgiving table. The people in this picture are: me, Carol Westbrook, Sandy (Ron's first wife), Lena (my aunt), my Mom, Floyd Westbrook, Jerre (below), my brother Ron, and, finally, Dad. One thing I remember about this dinner was that it was after Mom and Dad's divorce and this was the first meal Dad had with Mom since the breakup. He loved her beans and gave her a compliment on them, the first compliment I ever heard him give her.



Thanksgiving dinner at Mom's - 1974

We also became good friends with Jerre's secretary, Sherry Brooks, and her husband, Randy. In 1973 we went on a vacation to the Virgin Islands with them. It was a wonderful vacation in which we played golf and snorkeled around Buck Island. Sherry was very light-skinned and got a nasty sunburn. In the accompanying picture, Randy actually had hair.



Randy and Sherry Brooks 1973



Jerre and I silhouetted against a Virgin Island sunset 1973

We also became friends with Dan and Mary Davis. Dan was a field service guy with DEC and had a sailboat that he invited Jerre and me out on often. They became very good friends. They had one boy, Lincoln, who always came along wherever we went. One Halloween we came up with the idea of a “pumpkin cruise”, that is, a Halloween cruise on his sailboat, the Mandala, on Chesapeake Bay over to one of the picturesque little villages on the inlets on the other side of the bay. We would put a carved pumpkin on the bow of the boat and enjoy a leisurely cruise over to a small town like St. Michaels, and back. It was a tradition we all loved. I recently got reacquainted with Lincoln and when we were reminiscing about old times, he brought up those pumpkin cruises as one of the things he remembered most.



Jerre and Dan Davis with a very pregnant Mary. She was pregnant with Krissy who was born a month later.

One most memorable boat trip I remember with Dan was not one of the pumpkin cruises but a cruise we went on with Ken Wormald up the Chesapeake to Baltimore. Dan berthed his boat in Annapolis, so the three of us set out one lovely Saturday afternoon, intent on enjoying a few beers in a tavern in Baltimore harbor, staying overnight in the boat and then sailing back to Annapolis on Sunday. I’m guessing the year we did this was 1973. Not sure. The cruise started out well enough. We had brought ample beer with us. About half way to Baltimore we noticed a squall coming up ahead of us. It was boiling low over the water, dark, and was coming fast. Should I mention that Dan rarely consulted weather forecasts for his cruises? We barely had time to get the sails down before it hit. We were suddenly in 6 to 8 foot seas, in Dan’s little 20-foot Mandala, and Dan started his motor. The motor was coming out of the water at the crest of each wave with the engine screaming before hitting the water on the way down. Rain was pouring down when suddenly the motor stopped. The prop had gotten tangled in a bunch of twine that was floating in the water! Dan, unperturbed, got out his pocket knife and was cutting away the twine from the prop when Ken noticed that a tanker was coming up behind us, also on its way to Baltimore. Chesapeake Bay isn’t all that deep, so to get big tankers to Baltimore they had to dredge a channel deep enough for them. Guess

what? We had hit that snag in the channel! The tanker started blowing its horn. There was nothing the tanker could do. It couldn't stop in less than a mile and could not deviate from the channel for fear of running aground. We had to get out of the channel! Wormald, in a brilliant stroke of genius, put up the storm jib, a small sail on the front of the boat, and we squeaked out of the channel. Barely. The tanker passed within about 50 feet of us. Whew! The railing of the tanker was lined with sailors wanting to see the idiots they had almost run over! By this time Dan had freed the prop so we restarted and motored our way to the Baltimore inner harbor, the prop screaming out of the water with each wave. Needless to say, we were frazzled by the time we tied up in Baltimore.

In 1974 I celebrated my 30th birthday with a party in our Seabrook house back yard. We had about 30 friends attend and it was a wonderful celebration, accompanied by 2 kegs of beer. We finished them both. Nothing to say about this party that a few pictures don't convey, so I've included some of them here.



Don and Bill King with Churn's two dogs



A 30th birthday toast with Horst Adler

In 1974 our friends Randy and Sherry Brooks moved to Cincinnati. We drove to see them one weekend and, while there, noted the large number of beers that we had never heard of. Wiedeman's, Hudepol, Iron City! Fascinating. It was on the way back to DC that we hatched the idea of a beer contest to see how many different brands of beer we could assemble and taste. That September, we held our first beer contest in our back yard on Seabrook Road. The rules were that everyone who attended had to bring a six-pack of a beer that no one else was bringing. We poured the beer into small medicine cups and numbered them so that no one would know what beer they were



Jerre at our first beer contest in 1974. That's potato salad in the 2 crispers!

tasting. We sat people down, six at a time and they would sample 8 beers and rate them from 1 (Quick! Call an ambulance!) to 10 (Nectar of the Gods!). It was a wonderful idea that started a yearly trend. We held those contests through the remainder of our time in DC and even after we move to Seattle. They were a lot of fun, and spawned other beer contests amongst our friends in Denver, San Diego, and continued in Maryland, even after we moved.

In 1976 we went to Peru with CSC friends Bob Cecil and Don Berman. Goddard Space Center had a special package they had negotiated at a very low price. We flew into Lima and toured the town and then flew to Cusco, a town at an altitude of 11,200 feet high in the Andes. It was the Inca capital and exhibits large scale Inca architecture. From there we boarded a train to go to Machu Picchu, the famous Inca citadel high in the Andes.



Inca architecture in Cusco, Peru



At Machu Picchu

Then we flew to Iquitos, a Peruvian town on the Amazon River, where we took a boat that strongly resembled the African Queen down the Amazon to a resort on the Yanu Llacu River, a tributary of the Amazon.

On this trip I traded with the Jivaro Indians (formerly head hunters) for the blowgun darts I now have. I wanted the blowgun, itself (they had one for sale), but Jerre argued that it would be difficult to get home on the plane. It was 6 feet long. It was a wonderful trip that Jerre and I will never forget. For completeness sake I should mention that I got the world's worst case of Montezuma's Revenge in Lima. They had all sorts of wonderful food we had never encountered before and I was trying it all. I think the dish that did it was a plate of Ceviche, a fish dish that isn't cooked but marinated with lemon, which actually cooks the meat. Wonderful, but the consequences were horrific!

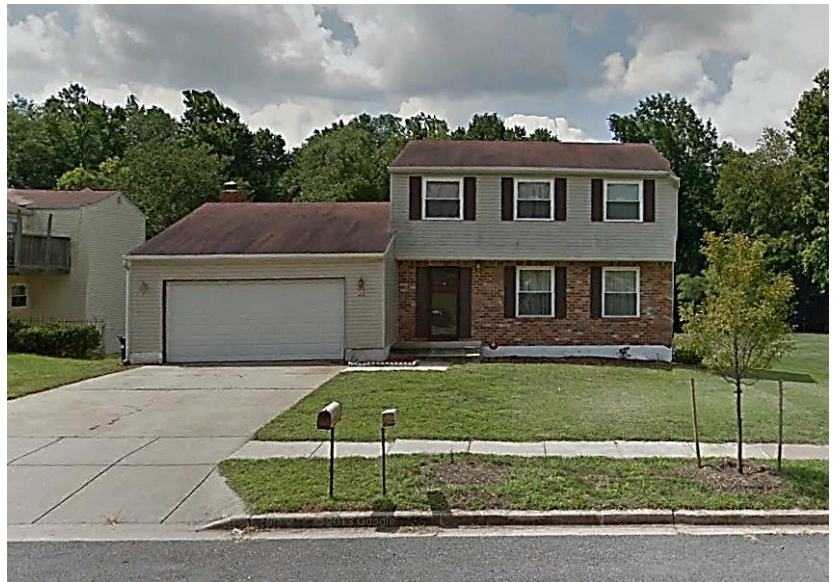


The Amazon Lodge on the Yanu Llacu River

In about 1975 the ever-inventive DEC field service guys came up with the idea of a canoe trip on the Shenandoah River in western Virginia. Great idea! I enthusiastically signed up. This trip consisted of a 2-day canoe trip down the Shenandoah with a camp halfway down. We were put in upstream, floated down to the camp, camped overnight and then continued down to our pick-up point, a total of about 30 or 40 miles of canoeing. Of course, every canoe was supplied with ample beer! It was a lot of fun largely because of the potential for disasters on the river. The river had several class 3 rapids (intermediate) that took their toll on many of the inexperienced (and buzzed) canoers. This trip subsequently became so popular that many of my CSC co-workers also signed up for it. The DEC guys weren't particular about who floated down the river with them. By this time, I was working for Bob Cecil on the contract to Goddard Space Flight Center and met Don Berman, both of whom became close friends. Don and I were canoe mates on several of these trips. He and I steered ourselves onto several rocks in those rapids, but we managed to get the boat emptied of water to continue on to the camp. Lots of fun. On one trip I remember that a couple of the DEC guys (one of them was Frank Arsenault who sold me my Datsun 240-Z) put in with about 4 cases of beer between them in their canoe. Didn't want to run out! They pushed off and as Berman and I were launching, we heard Frank yelling "steer left! Steer left! STEER LEFT!" Crunch! Seems they had gotten into a fast stream next to the bank which took them under a downed tree which had only about 6 inches' clearance from the water. The canoe was sunk and all their beer was lost. They continued on the trip (after emptying the canoe), but were bumming beers the whole way! On another canoe trip, Kathy Benefield went with me and was canoe mates with Don Berman, a pairing that didn't work out so well when Berman steered them into various rocks and over small falls, dumping them both in the water numerous times, and finally rammed her in the rear with the canoe as they were getting out of the water! First time I ever saw Kathy lose her temper!

In 1978 I had a talk with Jerre about her father, Joe Caputo. We had been married 9 years at that point and I had yet to meet him! He had divorced Jerre's mother, Ruth, in 1966 and was estranged from Jerre's family but I thought I ought to at least meet the guy. We flew to Portsmouth, New Hampshire and met him and his wife Irene. They were perfectly lovely people and were glad to see us, flattered that we would get in a plane to go see them. I considered it a duty that I had discharged, but it wasn't the onerous task I had imagined. It was time well spent.

In May of 1978 we sold the Seabrook house and had a new house constructed in a new subdivision. This was at 10215 Bald Hill Road in Mitchellville, Maryland. We bought the house for \$69K and sold it in 1987 for \$117K. It was about 1500 square feet and this was another case of bad planning, for later in 1978 we decided we had lived in the Washington DC area long enough, so we began looking for new jobs (for both of us) somewhere else. We interviewed in San Francisco and Seattle and settled on a contractor job at Boeing in Seattle for both of us. Hurriedly we rented out our brand new Mitchellville house to Gene Cyprych and moved to Seattle.



Our Mitchellville house

We drove our Datsun 200 SX across the country and arrived in Seattle in January 1979. We rented a house on Mercer Island for several months with another engineer, while we looked for a house to buy. We bought a gigantic 4300 square foot house on a hill north of Des Moines at 21030 7th Avenue South in the North Hill area of Des Moines. With 3 stories and a complete separate apartment



Our North Hill house, Des Moines WA

on the lowest floor, it was a huge house. Much more than what we needed, but it had a gorgeous view. Mt. Rainier and the city of Des Moines. The driveway, however, was so steep that in snow or ice it was impossible to drive up it, so when snow was predicted we parked our cars down the hill.

Jerre and I started work at Boeing in Building 4 of the Kent Space Center in Kent, Washington, in January, 1979. We were assigned to the Anti-Satellite Project, ASAT. This was a project to build a missile that would be launched from an F-15 to intercept and destroy earth orbiting satellites. We worked in an open bay with desks lined up as if they were in a classroom. No dividers, even. Jerre's desk was 2 desks away from mine. It was a time of maximum togetherness for us! We both worked for one of the worst managers I've ever worked for: Ken Hales. Ken was a very nervous guy who saw the world (and his employees) as either good or bad. Black or white. Nothing in the middle. All managers get



pressure from their managers, usually about schedule, but the good managers buffer that pressure to their subordinates. Make it less. The other kind actually amplify their own boss' pressure to their subordinates. This was Hales. If his manager suggested that a draft of a test plan 'would be nice' on Monday, Hales would call in everyone, even people not involved in test, to write test plans over the weekend in order to look good to his own manager. This actually happened. The 'test plan' we wrote that weekend was completely worthless and was redone correctly (by test people) months later, but it got Hales an 'attaboy' from his boss. Soon enough Ken Hales left Boeing and I then worked for one of the best managers I've ever worked for: Terry Oswald.

Jerre was involved in the development of ground support equipment while I was involved in the actual targeting of the weapon.

I will now go into some detail about the ASAT missile. Those of you interested only in the narrative can skip this paragraph. The intercept missile, designated the ASM-135, boosted a payload into the orbital path of the target satellite. The payload had no explosives but merely guided itself optically into the path of the target satellite by use of a ring of solid state motors. Physical collision was the kill mechanism. The payload was called the "Miniature Homing Vehicle" (MHV) and was a cylindrical rotating projectile with 64 solid state single pulse motors mounted radially around its perimeter. It weighed only 30 pounds. Think of it as a small pony keg. The motors were of two sizes, the large ones (56 of these) for large corrections and the small ones (8 of these) for last minute fine tuning. They had to be fired in pairs (on opposite sides of the MHV) to maintain rotational payload stability. If motor #1 was fired, then motor #33 had to be fired next to maintain balance. Because of the extreme precision required of the missile launch state (it was expected to intercept a satellite which was approaching at 15,000 mph), it could not be 'launched' by the pilot. The pilot held down a 'consent switch' which gave his approval for the launch whenever the conditions were acceptable. Acceptability was determined by the missile itself. In essence, the missile launched itself! My part was not the firing of the motors but the determination of the "displacement state vector", the 3-dimensional positional and velocity change required to achieve intercept, updated every 50 milliseconds. These were fed to the motor firing logic which activated the solid state

motors, as previously described. Once the boost vehicle burned out and the MHV was still attached to the last stage, it was spun up and pointed in the expected direction of the approaching satellite. When the target satellite was acquired optically, the MHV was released and fired its motors to just “get in the way” of the target satellite. Boom!

The ASAT weapon (designed by Vought) actually intercepted and destroyed a failing NASA satellite, the Solwind P78-1, in 1985.

There is an interesting story of how the Solwind satellite was selected as the target for test. The target was supposed to be a large instrumented balloon to be launched from Wallops Island, Virginia, but through several ground handling mishaps both test target balloons were electrically damaged beyond quick repair at the launch site. There was tremendous pressure from congress to have a successful test (this was part of the ‘Star Wars’ initiative), so the Air Force identified the Solwind satellite as a target. It had been orbiting for about 8 years and was degrading fast. Experimental satellites in those days had several experiments on a “bus” that provided power, control and data transmission services. Solwind had 7 experiments, 5 of which had failed but 2 remained and were operational and downloading useful data. Unfortunately, the Air Force forgot to tell the 2 remaining experimenters that their baby had been selected as an ASAT target and so researchers at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado, were literally receiving downloaded telemetry from their experiments at the time of impact. Surprise! Needless to say, the NCAR scientists were pissed.

The ASAT was featured prominently in the Tom Clancy novel “*Red Storm Rising*”, where it took out two Russian RORSAT satellites. There were technical inaccuracies in the novel, however, where the pilot screams “my missile is homing!” while it’s still attached to the F-15, an impossibility if you understood the preceding technical description.

But that test was in our distant future in early 1979 as we adjusted to the Boeing way of doing things (slow) and the Seattle environment (wet and dark). The darkness was because it was winter and the sun rose late and set early. We would go to work in the dark and come home in the dark, and in between the days were dim. This took a lot of getting used to. Even stranger, a little over a month after we started work, on February 13th, the Hood Canal Bridge sank. I couldn’t understand how a bridge could sink until I found out it was made of concrete and floated! Floating bridges! This didn’t really affect us because we didn’t go across that bridge, but it certainly added to the gloom of that first winter in Seattle.

The very next year was the year of Mt. St. Helens. On May 18th, 1980 it erupted after months of burps and belches. Fortunately for us, the prevailing off-shore winds blew the ash across the western United States. Life near volcanoes can be dangerous! The following pictures show the progression of the eruption from first puffs to the devastating blowout:



Mount St. Helens before the eruption, taken from Mt. Rainier



Mt. St. Helens – April 1980



St Helens – After the eruption, 1981

Kids and Beyond (1981-2008)

Jerre and I both had careers and these careers postponed children up until 1981. We had been married 11 years. Jerre was 36 and I was 37 and we decided it was time for kids. That summer, the summer of 1981, we went on a 'cruise' to Alaska with both our mothers and some other good friends. Jerre was pregnant at the time.

On November 29th of 1981, Megan Eileen McQuinn was born. This was a big turning point in our lives as our focus now switched from travel and having fun (i.e. ourselves) to parenthood. Not that parenthood wasn't fun, but it entailed a whole new level of responsibility. We had to start planning for the future a little more seriously.

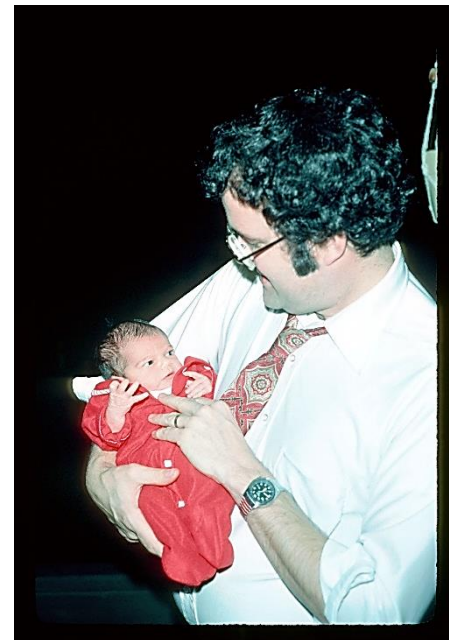
In 1982 we decided to fly back east to show off our new daughter to our friends and relatives. Eastern airlines had a special in which you could buy all-you-can-fly tickets for a fixed price, so we took advantage of that. This was before the days of e-tickets so we had about an inch-high stack of paper tickets to all our destinations. We must have visited the Atlanta airport (Eastern's hub) six times.



Mom (Laphine) on the Alaska cruise 1981



Megan and Mom flying to see relatives, 1982



Megan and Don Dec, 1981

Our last stop was Colorado Springs to see Ron and Mom. Megan was delighted to meet her cousin, Ellen. She had this 'trick' where if you smiled at her with an open mouth she would smile back.



Megan meets Cousin Ellen 1982

We went to Bridgeport, Texas to see my aunt, Lena Pearl Elliott. The picture with Megan and Lena and me is in her backyard. That little door you see to the right of my elbow is a dog door for her dog, Shorty.



Lena with Megan in Bridgeport 1982

We visited Jerre's father, Joe Caputo in Florida. By this time Irene has passed away and Joe had moved to Vero Beach, Florida. He was glad to see his new (and only) granddaughter.



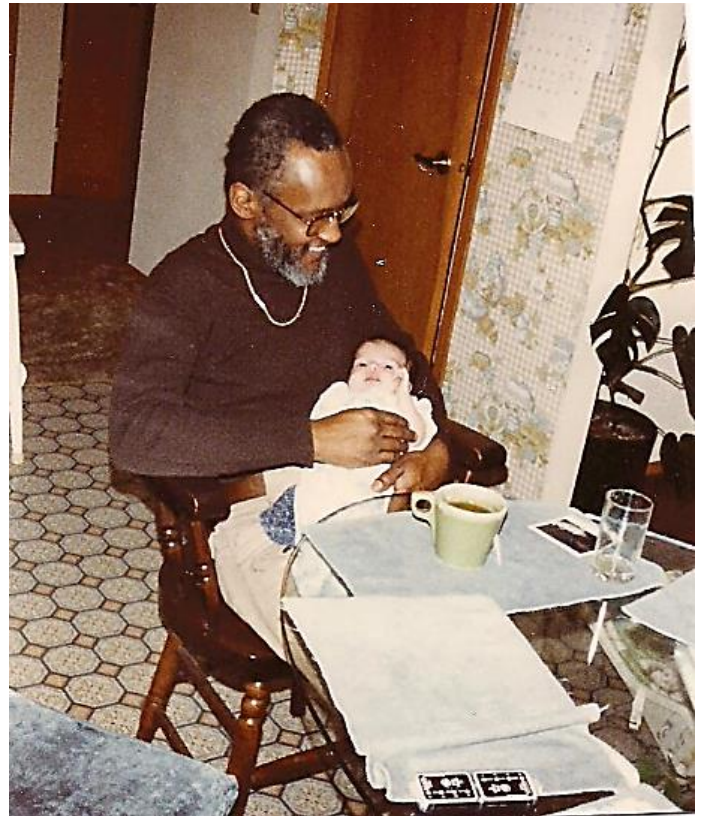
Joe Caputo with Megan 1982

In December, 1982 we flew to Colorado Springs to celebrate Christmas with Mom and Ron. Jerre's mother, Ruth, flew up from Albuquerque to enjoy the holidays with us and to see her new granddaughter.



Ruth with Megan 1982

In 1980 an engineer I knew at CSC moved to Seattle to work for Boeing. This was Laurence DeShields. Laurence had planned to buy a house but couldn't get the loan approved so he (you guessed it!) moved in with us. We rented him a room in that big house on North Hill until he could get his loan approved and move into his own place. Just a few months. Well, those 'few months' turned into 5 years! Laurence was quite a character. The accompanying picture is of him with Megan shortly after she was born. He moved out when he got married to a woman, Josie, from Tennessee that he had talked into moving to Seattle to marry him. Bad idea. Apparently Josie did not like the climate in Seattle and they had a fight about it (or something else). He called up only a few months after moving out and said "Can I move back in? She's got a gun!" We let Laurence move back in, but he later moved out permanently.



Laurence and Megan 1982

We flew in to Fort Worth to show off Megan to my Uncle Toby and Aunt Maydell and my Uncle Glen. My father's brothers.



Toby & Maydell with Megan in Haltom City, 1982



With Uncles Toby and Glen 1982



Megan with Mom (Laphine) 1982 in Colorado Springs.

On March 10th, 1984 our second daughter was born. Robin Maureen McQuinn, shown here with Jerre and her adoring older sister.



Jerre and Megan with newborn Robin 1984



Megan and her new Care Bear

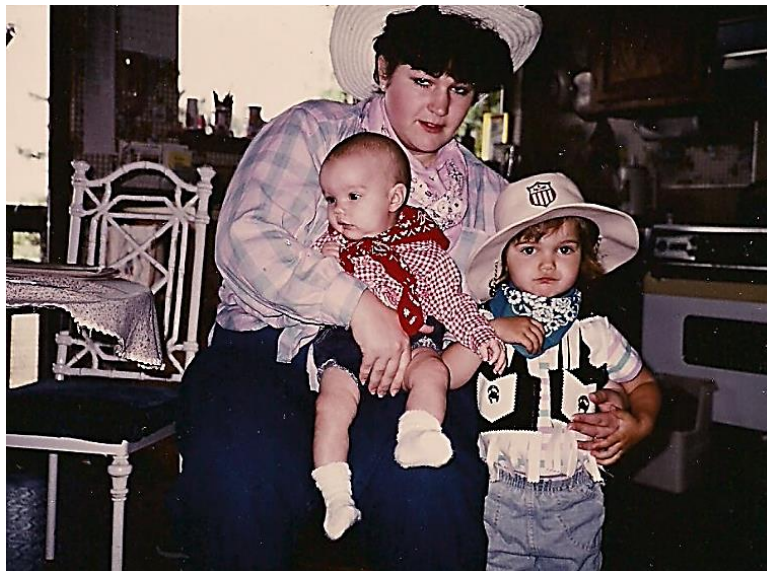


Robin at one year



Megan and her new sister 1984

We now had two kids and two careers so we decided we needed help. Before Robin was born we had been taking Megan to Kindercare for daycare while Jerre and I worked. One of the caregivers at Kindercare was a girl named Nancy Sanborn. We offered her a job as a live-in nanny for Megan and Robin and she took the job. That big house on North Hill had plenty of space, so she moved into one of the bedrooms and began taking care of the kids at home. It was an arrangement that worked well. Nancy adored the kids and made big deals of all holidays. She was our nanny for only a couple of years but those were critical years and we appreciated her help.



Nancy, our live-in nanny, with the kids 1985

My career took a major turn at about the same time Robin was born because the development phase of the ASAT project was winding down. You might think I'd just go to Boeing Human Resources (HR) and look around for a new job, but that's not the way things are done at Boeing. Only the lame and the halt go to HR for jobs in Boeing. Everyone at Boeing knows that HR is a holding pen for all the low-performing employees in the company. The people who are retired but still collecting a pay check. The lap-droolers. Sometimes Boeing wins a new contract and many new contracts have staffing requirements within a certain time limit after contract award. Those new contracts round up all the dregs in HR, but no self-respecting software engineer would go there to find a job and that's not what I did. If you have anything on the ball it's better to let all your colleagues that have moved onto other projects know that you are available and they grease the skids into their project for you, vouching for you to their management. These peer-to-peer endorsements are very valuable in Boeing. That's what I did. I found a job that fit my skills and looked really promising and interesting. There was only one problem. It was in the "Black Box", the area within the Boeing Kent Space Center where highly classified government projects are run. I took the job. Although the project was (and still is) classified, I can say certain (non-classified) things about it. It was in FORTRAN, my 'native language'. It had also been languishing because of lack of staffing while the project clock was running and so when I showed up I was immediately way behind schedule. I showed up on March 7th, 1984. Robin was born 3 days later. Two weeks later I had to make a viewfoil presentation to my management essentially entitled "Why I'm late", by Don McQuinn. I apologized profusely for my lack of performance! By the way, a 'viewfoil' was a hand prepared transparent overhead projection that preceded PowerPoint for all you readers that came of age in the 21st century. The month of March, 1984 was a busy time for me.

So, now that I was working in the "Black Box" I could no longer discuss my work with Jerre. This had been a very important part of my career. We would often discuss the challenges we faced in our careers over dinner in the evening. Heck, when we

arrived at Boeing we sat in the same open bay a few desks away from each other! Now that communication ceased. It was uncomfortable, but we both gradually got used to it. What took more getting used to was the huge building with no windows I had to work in. It came with the territory.

In 1988 my mom and Lena were living in Mom's house in Colorado Springs. Ron lived in the Springs, too, but moved up to Denver for a job. Mom and Lena were unhappy, being alone in the Springs, along with the difficulty of paying the mortgage. Jerre and I invited them to come live with us in Seattle and they immediately accepted. It seemed the only rational thing to do. We had the space and could easily accommodate both her and Lena, so we did. Plus it was nice to have some backup for kid-watching when we both wanted to get away for a little while.



Lena gives Robin a haircut 1989

Insight: I should mention at this point that many people (most?) value their privacy, but Jerre and I aren't in that category. We have lived communally with many other people, as you have learned in this story up until now, and so this wasn't the burden you might think it would be. I guess that dorm and that barracks conditioned me to the communal life. Jerre took right to it, too. Over the years we have had literally dozens of people move in with us for varying periods of time. It's just who we are.

After Mom sold her house in 1989 she flew to Seattle, but I went out to Colorado Springs to bring Lena back in her car. She and I embarked on a car trip for her permanent relocation to the northwest. On the way we went through Death Valley and Las Vegas as well as San Francisco and the Oregon coast. It was a wonderful trip. The accompanying picture is of Lena playing the slots in a casino in Vegas. Her hands were black from handling all those coins! After the slots we went to see Ronnie Milsap, a blind country and western singer that Lena liked a lot who was playing in the casino.



Lena playing the slots in Vegas on our trip west 1989

Jerre's mother died in 1985, and from the estate we decided that we'd like to acquire a second, vacation home. Jerre's Uncle Neil and Aunt Marge Bartle had been coming up to Camano Island since 1985 to vacation with their friends Jack and Betty Bryant who had a house on the beach on Utsalady Bay. We would go up to visit them on weekends in the beach house they rented. In 1986 Neil and I watched a football game while Jerre and Marge went out exploring. They



The Camano house, just after completion in 1987

came back and reported that a small waterfront lot down the beach was up for sale. It had it's own bulkhead and a built-in septic. We went down to look at it. At 45 feet wide by 65 feet deep it was indeed a tiny lot, but definitely buildable, if all the waivers and permits could be obtained. It was for sale for \$60K. We thought about it. We were literally in our car going back home that Sunday afternoon, within sight of the real estate office when we looked at each other and said "Well, what do you think?" We dropped in to the real estate office and made an offer. To our surprise, the owner accepted our offer! That was just the first step, however.

There were required setbacks from the bulkhead and the road that overlapped! Jerre spent 4 months going through the process of getting a building permit. She literally volunteered to hold a surveyor's rod to expedite the required permits, which finally came. Yay! We had the house built in 1987. In the picture above, you can still see construction materials on the adjacent lot which later became Karen and Nabil Absi's home. The house was built for another \$65,671.74, so we had our own waterfront house on a secluded island just south of the San Juan Islands for a whopping \$126K. It had a total of 1684 square feet in two stories and was a wonderful getaway and place to entertain friends. After we bought the house at 33 Utsalady Road, Camano Island, Uncle Neil, Aunt Marge and their daughter Jennie and her husband Curtis were regular summer visitors. Neil and Marge drove up, but Jennie and Curtis had their own airplane, a Helio Super Courier, that they flew up in every year. We would drive down to the Camano Island Airport (if you can call it that), which was 2 miles from our Camano house, to pick them up. They brought their two sons, Tyler and Trevor, with them. Those were wonderful years. Utsalady Bay isn't much for fish but it has abundant crabs. Dungeness crabs. We bought a small dinghy for



Curtis' Helio

Jennie and Curtis had their own airplane, a Helio Super Courier, that they flew up in every year. We would drive down to the Camano Island Airport (if you can call it that), which was 2 miles from our Camano house, to pick them up. They brought their two sons, Tyler and Trevor, with them. Those were wonderful years. Utsalady Bay isn't much for fish but it has abundant crabs. Dungeness crabs. We bought a small dinghy for

crabbing and learned to catch and prepare crab, and also mussels, clams, and later on oysters.

In 1989 we knew enough about the local schools to know that we wanted our kids in Marvista Elementary in Normandy Park. It was locally known as the best school in the Highline School District. To accomplish this we had to live in Normandy Park, so we looked around and found the house you see here which was only a block away from Marvista.



It was at 19439 4th Place,

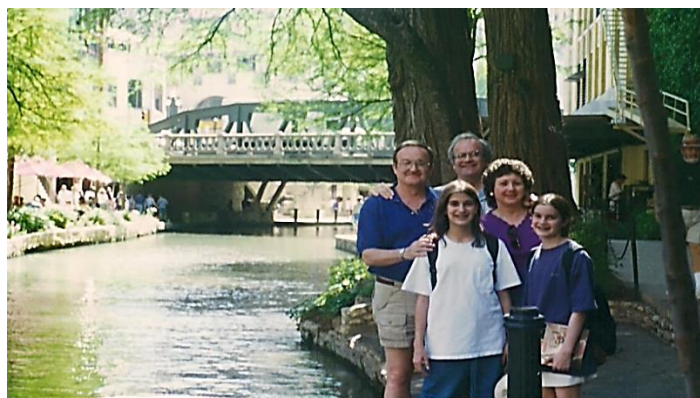
Our Normandy Park house

SW. By this time my mom had moved in with us and wasn't very mobile so we required a first floor bedroom which this house had. We moved in in the summer of 1989 and our kids started school at Marvista that following September. Time would tell that this was a great decision. Marvista was a great school with good teachers and motivated parents and we joined a solid community of friends and neighbors. This was made even easier because ALL the houses in Normandy Province were new, and all the neighbors were reaching out to be friends, unlike North Hill which was an established community that didn't welcome newcomers.

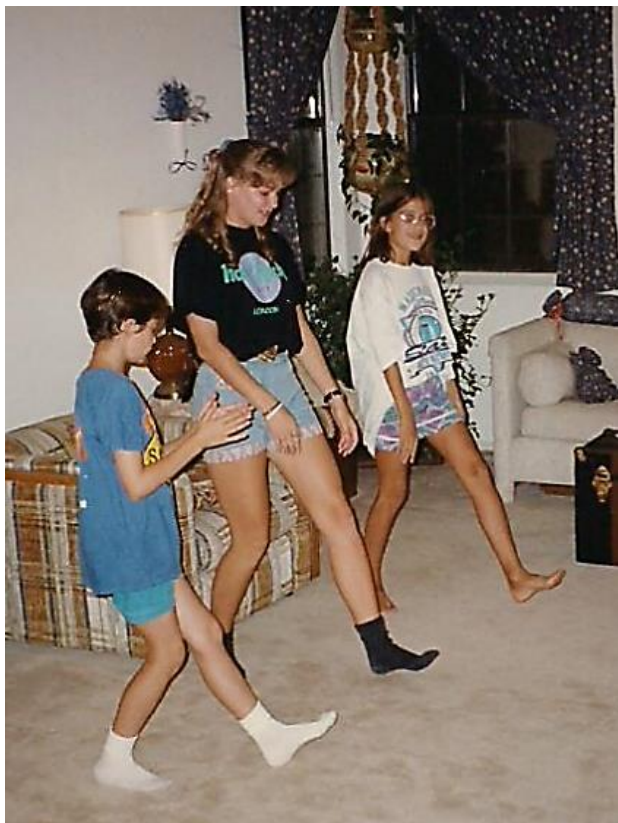


Relaxing in the back yard at Normandy Park 1992

Rose Langowski came into my brother's life in the mid-1980s. They lived in Colorado Springs initially and then after they moved to Denver they were married. We visited Ron and Rose in Denver often. The accompanying picture is of Ellen teaching Robin and Megan the Texas 2-step to Billy Ray Cyrus' *Achy Breaky Heart*. The year is 1992.



Ron, Don, Megan, Rose and Robin, in San Antonio 1994



Ellen teaches Megan and Robin the Texas 2-step

We now had both Lena and Mom living with us in Normandy Park when Jerre's dad had heart surgery in 1990 and could no longer live by himself in Vero Beach, Florida. With our usual pattern of solving this kind of problem, we invited him to move up with us so we could take care of him, too. He moved up with us and his health improved, but having 3 octogenarians living in our house proved to be too much. He lived with us for a year and a half and, after his health had improved sufficiently, Jerre moved him back to Vero Beach, into an assisted living facility. I guess there are limits to togetherness.

Mom's health continued to deteriorate and finally Ron and Rose suggested that we move her to Denver into an assisted living facility near their home so that they could take care of her. So, in late 1992, we flew Mom to Colorado and she moved into the assisted living facility only a few miles from Ron and Rose's house. She lived there until her death on September 4th of 1993. We flew to Bridgeport for her burial in the Bridgeport Cemetery in the Elliott plot with her brothers, sisters and her dad. Ron gave a beautiful eulogy at her memorial service.

Remember that Jerre and I had moved to Normandy Park to get our kids into what we considered the best elementary school in the area: Marvista. In 1991 Jerre and I were recruited by Dr. Tom Tosch to help offer an advanced math class for 5th and 6th graders at Marvista in order to get the students ready to compete in a state-wide competition near the end of the school year, the Washington State Math Olympiad held

in Blaine in those years. We put together a program that instructed the kids in each of the math areas that were tested in the Olympiad. These were:

1. Number sense
2. Algebra
3. Geometry
4. Probability and Statistics
5. Measurement
6. Problem Solving

It started out as instruction for gifted students, but later evolved into a program that was appropriate to a wider range of student abilities. The kids you see in the accompanying picture were some of the 25 kids we took to Blaine for the 1992



Some of the 1992 Math Team (the girls!)

Dana Ketcham, Pete Schulz, Tom Tosch, Don McQuinn

competition. The girl on the right, Becky Sisson, now holds a doctorate. This turned out to be an idea whose time had come because once word got out about these classes we were flooded by parents wanting to include their kids in the program. We talked to the Highline School District Math and Science coordinator, Judy Backman, and then, in 1994, we began providing materials and instructional material for parents in other schools who wanted become math coaches. The Math Team program went district-wide that year with about 6 schools participating. We made up books of complete instruction materials including class notes, handouts, in-class exercises and homework (with answers) for each of the participating schools. The instructions consisted of 26 one-hour classes, meant to be a before-school activity that would stretch from September into May. Additionally, in the spring semester, we included materials for practice competitions to get the kids ready to compete in teams. You have to remember that this was before the Internet so every August we made copies of this book which was about 3 inches thick! Later, we got a website and published our materials on the Internet and they became available to teachers and students around the world. If you're interested, those materials are still out there at <http://www.avvanta.com/~math>.

I started teaching the 5th graders in 1991 and the next year Megan became a 5th grader and enrolled in the program. I started taking Megan to school for Math Team one morning a week and, because Robin would be left alone in the house, she had to tag along. Robin, a 3rd grader at the time, sat in the back of the room while I taught the 5th graders. I didn't realize it at the time, but Robin was soaking up all the materials I was presenting to the 5th graders. At some point I would ask the class to answer a problem I put on the board and was surprised to hear a small voice with the correct answer from way in the back of the room. As a 3rd grader, Robin was soaking up such subjects as algebra, geometry, statistics and probability. We had just discovered that she had a talent for math. This reminded me of when I was in the 4th grade and listened as Mrs. Yancey taught the fifth graders on the other side of the room and blurted out answers to questions she would pose to the 5th graders. .

We ran this program for about 10 years and at it's peak more than 1000 students had used it in the Highline District. We don't actively promote the program anymore but the materials are still available on the Internet and used by a wide range of students. I once got an e-mail from a college math professor in China. He had found an error in one of our answer sheets! I corrected the answer and thanked him.

In 1997 Jerre was contacted by Sue Bailey, a woman who had volunteered with her at Marvista. Her son, Scott, had a girlfriend who needed a place to stay. This was Maxine Cram who came from a broken home and tried to find places to stay in the Des Moines area so that she could attend Rainier High School in order to be on their debate team. Could we put her up for a while? She was a senior at Rainier and had already lined up grants and scholarships to attend the University of Puget Sound (UPS), a small private college in Tacoma. Of course we would take Maxine in!



Robin and Maxine at Camano

Insight: This turned out to be one of those major life-changing events for us. Maxine moved in and was immediately made welcome by both Megan and Robin. She was 2 years older than Megan so they looked up to her as a big sister. She became a member of our family. Jerre and I like to say that Maxine started acting like a daughter and we started acting like parents. It was an arrangement that worked well. Even after she moved into a dorm and started classes at UPS in the fall, she came home for holidays and weekends to be with us.

In 1995 I moved from the “Black Box” program to an unclassified program within Boeing. This was the Open System Architecture (OSA) project run by one of my old bosses in the Black Box, John Torkelson, along with Kevin Wooley, with whom we had been good friends for many years. This was a major change for me, because OSA software wasn't in FORTRAN. It was in a language called Ada. I had worked my entire 30-year career in FORTRAN applications and now had to learn a new, much more complex language. Old dogs and new tricks? Ada was a real-time language, meaning it was meant to control processes which must guarantee response within strict time constraints. Real-time responses were required on the order of milliseconds. This is because OSA was a program to control the sensors aboard a surveillance aircraft which had to be controlled and monitored continuously. This was a new type of programming for me and I trudged through the language manual to find the commands I needed. I got to a certain level of proficiency in Ada, but nothing near the command I had of FORTRAN. I could write FORTRAN code blindfolded!

After the OSA project started winding down in 2000 I went onto another R&D project to develop ground control systems. This project was in Java, another new language to me, but Java was much different than either Ada or FORTRAN. It wasn't real-time, like Ada, but was one of a new breed of languages called "*object-oriented*". It introduced a host of new concepts like "inheritance", "classes" and "objects" that were strange to me. Once again I struggled with a new language, but after about 3 months of working with it, it suddenly dawned on me what was going on. I had tried to use it in a sequential manner, like FORTRAN, but was constantly running into problems. After 3 months I understood it. I suddenly knew what an 'object' was! The experience was similar to my typing class experience in high school where I struggled with typing until it "came" to me suddenly. Object-oriented programming just came to me suddenly. Like lifting a curtain. After that, Java was an easy language to use. I didn't need the language manual sitting on my desk to program it, as I had with Ada and became quite proficient in it. I loved Java.

In November 2002 we had a unique experience that involved Jerre's uncle, Ward Bartle, and my aunt, Lena Elliott. Ward was having knee problems and Lena was having hip problems, so we invited Ward to come up from his home in Santa Monica and let us take care of him while a doctor at Swedish hospital put in an artificial knee. Lena saw the same doctor and scheduled a hip replacment. As it turned out, their surgeries were scheduled on the same day by the same doctor! Lena's was in the morning ("do mine first!", she said) and Ward's was in the afternoon. Lena had a much easier recovery, getting up and walking the next morning. Ward progressed OK, but was in a lot of pain for a couple of weeks. Both operations were successful. We learned that a knee is a far more complex joint than a hip. One byproduct of the therapy that Lena undertook as a result of this surgery was that she loved to get in the water and exercise. This was brand new to Lena, at age 83, because she had grown up in West Texas without any swimming pools whatsoever. She was very afraid of water. The very next year, when we sold our Normandy Park house and bought the condo in Issaquah, Jerre got her enrolled into the Issaquah pool for regular exercise lessons. She made many good friends in that program. She also was featured in the local newspaper a couple of times as being one of the oldest patrons of the pool. Lena even took swimming lessons and was very proud of her accomplishments, and her 15 minutes of fame in the local news.

My work on the R&D (Research and Development) programs in Java extended for about 3 years until 2003 when, again, funding dried up for R&D within Boeing, as it often did. As usual, I started looking around for a new project, but the only project available was called Wedgetail, an airborne early warning and control aircraft, based on the Boeing 737. It was being developed for the Australian Air Force. It was in Ada, a language I was OK with (but didn't enjoy) and, more importantly, was way behind schedule! Go figure! Shades of 1984 all over again! I was told that working evenings and weekends would be required until the project was back on schedule. It was at this point that I stepped back and did a serious reevaluation. In 2003 I was 59 years old. I had done my share of nights and weekends during my career but just didn't have it in me to do another one. Especially in a language that wasn't my favorite. I decided to retire. I was eligible for my Boeing pension at 59, so I retired. I would have to find something else to do with the rest of my life.

As I was waiting to retire I got a call from Maureen Houser, Gail's wife. As you remember, Gail was my roommate for much of my Air Force career. He and Maureen now lived in Colorado and she told me that Gail had terminal cancer. I was devastated to hear this news. Gail and I had been the closest of friends in the Air Force. We were about the same age and now his life was coming to an end. Maureen said they were having a party. A get-together of all of Gail's friends to reminisce about old times in Greeley, Colorado. Could I come? Of course I could come! I flew to Colorado and met a lot of Gail's friends I had never met before. People he had known in Houston and in Las Cruces. We did have something in common, however. We had all worked with Ray Brock. Brock was a lieutenant in the Air Force with us and had worked with Gail in Las Cruces. To say that Brock was a strange guy would be an understatement. When it was my turn to speak I told everyone about the steak-stealing and various incidents with Brock. They all understood. It was a wonderful party and Gail enjoyed it very much. He died two weeks later. I miss Gail very much.



Gail Houser, his mother and me on a visit to DC in the 70s

And so, I retired and started working on the house in Normandy Park. At that time Jerre was commuting from Normandy Park to Redmond as she had a job at Microsoft, about 50 miles daily. It didn't make much sense to live in Normandy Park and commute all the way over to Redmond each day while I just commuted downstairs to my computer room. The kids were in college and it was just Jerre and me there, so we decided to move closer to Jerre's work. Before looking for a new place to live, I embarked on a 6-month program to fix up the Normandy Park house for sale. I had a garage to clean out and carpets to replace and a whole host of other fix-ups. I had made a list of 124 things I needed to do and was working away on the list at my own pace. But I made the mistake of showing the list to Robin that summer. From that point on, Robin was demanding progress! Why isn't this done? I was working off the items OK but now I had a task master!

There is an interesting story about the sale of the Normandy Park house I would like to relate. With Robin's "nagging", I had finally gotten all the repairs and clean-outs done. It was time to put the house on the market. We contacted a realtor and the house was put on the market in August of 2003. Cousins Jennifer and Curtis Hopkins were up at Camano for their yearly vacation, so the house went on the market on a Wednesday and we drove up Friday to enjoy the weekend with them. That Friday evening I got a call from the realtor. We had an offer, but it was for \$20K less than our asking price. Could we come in to make a counter offer? We had been relaxing, having a few beers and didn't want to get in the car for the 65 mile trip back to Seattle, so we told the realtor we would come in the next day. I continued to relax with my beer. That next morning, a

Saturday, we got another call from the realtor. We had another offer. A full price offer with no contingencies! We took that offer. That is how I made \$20K by drinking beer!

After we accepted the offer it was time to find a place to live closer to Microsoft. After a couple of weeks of searching we found a condo in Issaquah that fit our needs exactly. This is the condo we currently live in at 120 Newport Way in Issaquah. I needed a running route right outside our front door, which this condo had. And there was a downstairs bedroom for Lena so she didn't have to climb any stairs. And it was close to downtown Issaquah with two trailheads available within a mile, so it suited our needs perfectly.



Our Issaquah Condo Complex

Megan graduated from Rainier High in 1999 and enrolled at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. I'll never forget the weekend we flew Megan down to Arizona to get into her dorm. It was over 114 degrees in late August and we ran from building to building to avoid the heat.



Robin at her graduation from UBC in 2006

Two years later Robin graduated and enrolled at McGill University in Montreal. She had graduated with full International Baccalaureate honors at Mt. Rainier HS, one of only 12 students to do so. Robin had blossomed into a true outdoors person by this time. For several years in high school she had a job at a kayak store. She learned about kayaks and saved up to buy her own kayak. Immediately after the graduation ceremony, she flew up to the Yukon for a 2-week outdoor training course that she had saved money for herself. We later flew with Robin to Montreal to get into her classes for the fall. One of the reasons she chose McGill was because one of her best friends, Carrie Sisson was also enrolled there. McGill, however, did not suit Robin so well. Montreal winters are cold and most people stay indoors for the entirety of it. That didn't fit well with Robin's need to get outdoors, so she transferred in her sophomore year to the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, BC. One of the benefits of transferring to UBC was that many of the college credits she had earned in her IB program in high school transferred to UBC, so she automatically had an extra 9 credit hours! She was contemplating a geological engineering degree, but Jerre found out that would take 5 years, or maybe 6. Jerre found out that UBC had something called a 'combined major' where you could combine any two subjects they offered. We went up to Vancouver one weekend and

had a discussion with her about this and she decided to do the combined thing in Geology and Computer Science. That is what she graduated with a degree in in 2006.

Megan spent the entire senior year of her university in England, studying at the London School of Economics. She had a great time and graduated in 2004 with her degree in economics. She also had a lot of fun seeing London and traveling the continent with one of her London girlfriends.

Maxine graduated from UPS in 2001 with a degree in International Political Economy. From there she enrolled at Colorado University in Boulder graduate school with the intent to pursue a PhD in economics. After two tries, Maxine switched to law and earned her JD in 2008.



Maxine's graduation. JD, 2008

In February 2006, Jerre's uncle Ward was getting more feeble. We finally talked him into coming up to live in an assisted living home near us in Issaquah. This didn't last long, however, because only 3 months after he had moved up he passed away. He was buried in the National Cemetery in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The accompanying picture is of a solemn ceremony that Robin performed a little later which entailed sprinkling Bushmill's Irish Whisky (his favorite drink) over his grave. I'm sure Ward appreciated it.



Robin performing a solemn ceremony at Ward's grave in Santa Fe

In 2008 we decided to do a major remodel of the Camano house. We put in a big patio on the south side (the side shown in the picture) along with an arbor and a table for cooking crabs. Inside we remodeled the kitchen and opened up the downstairs by removing a wall. This increased the living space without really increasing the house footprint. This project started with the discovery of some dry rot on one of the windows on the south side. Since we had to fix the rot, why not upgrade the windows and the siding?



Camano house after the 2008 remodel

After that, we started looking at the rest of the house and before we knew it, we had done the remodel you see in the accompanying picture. We put in a new granite kitchen counter and opened up the interior space, making a larger house with the same footprint!

I'm going to end this narrative with the events of 2008 for now. I may later revisit it for updates, but I believe I've captured the major events of my life with some degree of accuracy and detail. Thanks for your interest.

Appendix

Relatives

The following table presents my best knowledge of my relatives and their information.

Name	Dates	Relation	Comments
McQuinn, Vesta Laphine	b. Apr 21, 1915 d. Sep 4, 1993	Mother	
McQuinn, Roswell Guy	b. Oct 26, 1910 d. Oct 30, 1987	Uncle	"Toby", Dad's brother
McQuinn, Maydell Dollar	b. Jul 18, 1904 d. Jun 22, 1987	Aunt	Toby's wife
McQuinn, Vernon Terrell	b. 1913 d. 1970	Uncle	Dad's brother, the family drunk
McQuinn, Marshall Don	b. Apr 8, 1912 d. Oct 29, 1978	Father	"Mac"
McQuinn, Londy Deolus	b. May 16, 1878 d. Oct 19, 1962	Grandfather	"Daddaw"
McQuinn, Lula Howard	b. Feb. 20, 1887 d. Jan 1985	Grandmother	"Mammaw", Deolus' wife
McQuinn, Marcus Wayne	b. Jul 19, 1942 d. Jul 15, 1979	Cousin	Glenn's son
McQuinn, James Theophy	b. Jul 30, 1880 d. May 30, 1932		"Peck", Deolus' brother
McQuinn, Glenn Rose	b. Aug 3, 1916 d. Jul 27, 2002	Uncle	Dad's youngest brother
McQuinn, George Lucretia.	b. Aug 8, 1849 d. Jul 6, 1938	Great grandfather	Deolus' father
McQuinn, Freda	b. 1916 d. 1997	Aunt	Terrell's wife
Elliott, Claud Lee	b. Mar 15, 1883 d. Aug 11, 1964	Grandfather	"Pappaw", Mom's dad
Elliott, Lora Reed	b. 1879 d. 1929	Grandmother	Claud's wife
Elliott, Clifford Hubert	b. Aug 27, 1904 d. Dec 22, 1984	Uncle	Mom's brother
Elliott, Francis May	b. Jan 16, 1911 d. Feb 9, 1911	Aunt	Died in infancy
Elliott, Jesse Madison Sr.	b. Apr 19, 1892 d. Dec 5, 1956	Great Uncle	Claud's brother, the "joker" of the family
Elliott, Lela Ruth	b. Jul 10, 1919 d. Jul 10, 1919	Aunt	Lena's twin, died at birth
Elliott, Oleta May	b. Jan 31, 1917 d. Nov 9, 1921	Aunt	Died in childhood
Elliott, Lena Pearl	b. Jul 10, 1919 d. Nov 28, 2013	Aunt	Lived with us for 25 years.

Timeline and places

The following table summarizes my location and times I was there.

Dates	Primary Location	Main activities
July 1944 – August 1965	Dallas, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growing up• Going to school
Sept 1965 – January 1969	Albuquerque, NM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service at Kirtland AFB
Feb 1969-December 1978	New Carrollton, MD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working at Goddard SFC• Early marriage• World travel
January 1979- August 1988	Des Moines, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working at Boeing• Birth of daughters (Megan & Robin)
Sept 1988 – Sept 2003	Normandy Park, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working at Boeing• Raising daughters• Caring for aging relatives
October 2003 – present	Issaquah, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retirement• World travel

Unused Stories

These are stories I chose not to include in the main narrative because they served no specific purpose or made any new points. They are, however, interesting stories.

The Ride with Jimmy Hicks

In 1961 Jimmy Hicks, the son of the dairy farmer next door, got a 1958 Chevrolet Impala with a 348 cubic inch V-8 engine and 2 4-barrel carburetors. It was quite a machine. I was awed by it and thrilled when Jimmy invited me to go on a test drive in it. I should have known better. Jimmy was not known for his good sense and he proved it on this drive. We took off down County Line Road and turned onto Highway 183 toward Irving, passing cars at close to 100 mph. Highway 183 was a 2-lane divided highway. Two lanes in each direction. Highway 183 is now called the Airport Freeway. Everything was OK until we turned around as we were entering Irving and headed back. Jimmy opened it up. I was terrified. He pumped it up to 150 mph and was having trouble keeping it in one lane of the highway. A '58 Chevy is not very aerodynamic. We topped a mild rise in the road, or at least at a reasonable speed it would have been a mild rise, but at 150 the Chevy left the ground. We passed a state trooper on the side of the road in the air! He was giving someone a ticket when we 'flew' past him. The trooper dropped his ticket book and made for his cruiser as we made it over the next rise and slowed

down, finally. Even Jimmy was scared at this point. This brought us back to County Line Road, so Jimmy turned onto County Line and parked behind a commercial building at the intersection of County Line and 183 and shut the engine off. A few minutes later the trooper came flying by with his lights flashing and siren screaming. He flew right by us. We had put so much distance between us and the trooper that he hadn't seen us turn off onto County Line, so we escaped. Whew! I don't think I ever rode in Jimmy's car again!

The Railroad Crossing

One Saturday evening we were riding around in a friend's car with nothing particular to do. This was approximately 1960. We had gotten some beer and were tooling along a lonely road in the Trinity River bottom when Jerry Westbrook, who was in the back seat with me, says "Hey, there's a zero-g hill coming up". A 'zero-g hill', by the way, is a significant hill on a road where a car can leave the pavement briefly, experiencing weightlessness, much like Jimmy Hicks' car in the previous story. Lots of fun. The driver, a guy I had met only recently and whose name I don't recall (I think he worked with Jerry) asked what the speed for the hill was. He was asking for the speed at which a mild period of zero gravity could be achieved. "60" Jerry said. Well, like a lot of things teenagers do, Jerry had exaggerated. The optimum zero-g speed was more like 30. The hill was an elevated railroad crossing. Elevated to get the train out of the river bottom. Well, I was talking to Jerry, sipping my beer, not paying much attention, when I looked up to see the railroad crossing approaching and the driver, believing Jerry, was doing 60! Before we could say anything the crossing was upon us and the car was launched into the air. It began to rotate forward, to pitch-pole. We hadn't had time to do or say anything as the car continued to rotate in the air forward. It came down on the other side of the crossing and the first thing that hit the road was the car bumper which gouged a big hunk out of the road. The front bounced up in the air as the back came down hard and we did a couple of crashing front-and-back bounces before the car finally came to a stop. We got out, trembling. The car had come close to rolling forward onto its top! Another of the many things I'll never do again!

Camping in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains

In the summer of 1968 Bill Shaffer and I, along with another guy in the barracks, Carlos Gallegos, decided to hike the Sangre de Cristo Mountains one weekend. Carlos could not get off early from work, so we set out Friday after work to take the hike to Lake Katherine, below Santa Fe Baldy, and camp there Friday and Saturday. We drove to Cowles on NM 16 and from there to the Winsor Creek Trailhead. This was a good 3 hours from the barracks, so when we got to the trailhead it was already dusk. We shouldered our packs and started up the trail as dark descended. Bill had a flashlight which he had turned off to save the batteries. We walked on the trail for about a mile, trying to find a place to camp for the night when suddenly we realized we were walking on sticks instead of the trail. Bill turned his flashlight on to reveal the fact that the trail had taken a right turn and we had walked directly out onto a beaver dam on Winsor Creek! We backed off the beaver dam and realized we better make camp and soon! We found a clearing a few hundred yards up the trail and made camp for the night.

The next morning, we resumed our hike and that afternoon found ourselves at the edge of beautiful Lake Katherine at 11,700 feet altitude, just under Santa Fe Baldy.

It was a strenuous hike but well worth it for the breathtaking views. We made camp near a small stream that fed Lake Katherine and began making dinner. Now, here's where it got interesting, because Bill, the seasoned outdoorsman, had brought freeze dried packets of food while Carlos and I, not so seasoned, had brought cans of beans, hot dogs and even beer! Bill chided us for the folly of bringing so much excess weight on such a strenuous hike (we gained 3300 feet from the trailhead) as he put a pan of water on the fire to cook his meal. Carlos and I punched holes in our cans of beans and threw them in the fire as we opened our beer and relaxed, enjoying the view. I'd like to think we offered Bill a can of beer, but I can't remember. Pretty soon the water was boiling in Bill's pot. The water level was down because of the boiling, so Bill went down to the stream to get more water to replenish the pot. He put his packet of food in the water and let it boil for another 30 minutes, replenishing the water level at least 2 more times as Carlos and I cooked hot dogs over the fire and opened our cans of beans after they began to blurr. Finally, Bill took his packet out of the boiling water and opened it. The contents (beef stroganoff, I think) were just as raw as when he put them in! Disgusted, Bill stuck his finger in the boiling water. It wasn't so hot that he had to remove his finger! Bill finally ate his raw (but warm) stroganoff while Carlos and I enjoyed a hot dog, beans and beer as the sun dropped below the ridge of Baldy.

Later that evening, after the sun had completely set and the stars had come out, the shimmer of Lake Katherine in the evening light was awesome. Before we bagged it for the night, Bill got out his binoculars and scanned the perimeter of Lake Katherine. There, about a mile away on the opposite shore, was a small campfire. Our neighbors. "*Just like the Caravan East on Saturday night!*" Bill exclaimed. For you readers not familiar with Albuquerque, the Caravan East was (and still is) a big nightclub on Central Avenue with a huge dance floor that attracts large numbers of people on the weekends. Bill was (and still is) averse to large groups of people, but this was the first time I realized that 2 camps a mile apart was a 'large group'.

The Lake Katherine camping trip was one of the most memorable I have ever taken. Thanks, Bill!

Golf at St. Andrews

In 1995 we took a vacation in the British Isles to include England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland. It was a wonderful trip and we arrived in St. Andrews, Scotland one afternoon after touring Edinburgh. After touring the town for a while Jerre suggested that I go to the very famous St. Andrews Royal and Ancient golf course and see if I could play it the next day. I was skeptical that anyone could just waltz in to the most famous golf course in the world and get a tee time. Besides, I didn't have my clubs.

Anyway, at Jerre's prodding, I went to the clubhouse, which was 3 blocks from our hotel, and went to the desk and asked if I could book a tee-time. "Do you have a foursome?" "Uh, no, I'm by myself". "We don't book singles", the lady said. With that, I turned to leave. "But they do take singles for no-shows at the starter's tent in the morning". "Really? How early do I have to show up to guarantee play?" "Use your imagination", the lady said. Still convinced that this was an exercise in futility, I rented a bag of clubs and joined Jerre, Robin and Megan for dinner.

Over dinner that evening I used my imagination, as the lady in the clubhouse had suggested, and decided that I would be at the starter's tent at 4 am. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and I didn't want to miss it. I got up the next morning, shouldered my rented bag of clubs and set off for the course. This was not a night with a full moon

and it was extremely dark as I approached the starter's tent, but as I did I could see that I wasn't the first person there! There was another crazy American who wanted to play the course as badly as I did. We sat there for a full hour before anyone else showed up. Two guys showed up at around 5. They introduced themselves as a Brit and a Scot. "So both you guys are going to play?" "Oh, no", the Scot said. "I'm just here to keep my friend company". "Well, another first!" I said. "Last week I met an Irishman who doesn't drink and today I meet a Scot who doesn't play golf". "Dead was he?" the Scot said about the Irishman. You see, the Irish and the Scots both think of each other as luses, and they may both be right.

Well, the sun slowly came up and they began launching foursomes at 7:30. Good fortune came our way and at 8 am an entire foursome failed to show and we 2 Americans, the Brit and another guy all went off as a foursome. The Brit and my American 'buddy' both had hired caddies and it soon became clear why one would do so. Many tee boxes are blind to the fairways so you had to know which direction to shoot your ball. I was too cheap to hire a caddy, so when the other American would get advice from his caddy, I would listen in. "Hit it over the leftmost boosh", he would say. Ah, over the leftmost bush. Got it.

St. Andrews is a strange course for an American. There are no trees. There are 18 holes, but only 11 greens! Seven of the greens accommodate 2 holes each. One on the outgoing 9, the other on the incoming 9. These were, in general, large peanut shaped greens. It was possible to be 100 yards away from the hole but still on the green! Also, it has a type of sand trap ('pot bunker') that we don't have in the States. Basically it's a hole with sand in the bottom with a ladder to get into and out of!

It was a wonderful experience and allowed me to say that I've played the most famous golf course in the world. For the record, I shot a 95 and was proud of it. I was able to stay out of those deep pot bunkers which helped my score. I got a double-bogey on number 17, the Road Hole and was fairly proud of that, too.