Introduction

In planning the homeschool education of my son Edward, I find it useful to draw on my own life's experience. I am writing this autobiography to refresh my memory of incidents and the chronology of my own formation.

As my life has touched that of almost any reader of this obscure piece, I invite comment, correction and suggestions for additions.

My chronology is inconsistent. For example, I thought I remembered taking French from Irene Sargent in the 8th grade, followed by French I – French III from Mme. Bruninck at El Cerrito High School. However, in the 9th grade I was still at Portola, where I took Social Studies from Miss Campbell. I'm not sure what year David Baker and I went backpacking with the Explorer Scouts in the Sierras, and which years I went to the Swedenborgian Leadership Education Institute on Mount Tamalpias. I'd appreciate being corrected.

Here are links to references and additional biographical information that may interest a reader:

A chronology of my childhood, in Excel
Recollections of my time in Vietnam
My Auto-Biography, a Toastmasters speech about cars in my life.
A chronology of the vacations I took with my grown family,in Excel
An account of the end of my 25-year marriage and what I know of my estranged grown family.
Appreciation for my ex-wife's family and Mary Ann herself. She is a creature of her time and place.

My 2014 book *Edward*, about homeschooling my new family in Ukraine, is available from Amazon for a nominal $4.99. Ask and I'll send it for free.

Lastly, though I have not yet incorporated it into this document, I have written an account of my the years 2006-2017 here.

Contents of this Document

Revolutions

I am a member of the silent generation, born 1925-1945, sandwiched between the greatest generation, which fought World War II, and the baby boomers. The presidency skipped us, jumping from Bush Senior to Clinton. We observed, but were generally not the primemovers for, several revolutions which had a profound effect on America. Let me recap how peaceful and innocent the times were for a kid graduating from high school in 1960.

- Television had not arrived until I had passed my formative years. I grew up without moving wallpaper. I gagged when my little brother watched Howdy Doody. Who could waste their time with such blather? But he did – he was infected before he could recognize the disease.
- The sexual revolution had not yet come. The birth control pill would arrive a year later. We whispered about the one or two girls in high school who might "do it." Mostly, girls in my high school expected to marry and raise families. The clairon call to feminism, "The Feminine Mystique," wasn't published until 1963. We were the last (somewhat) sexually chaste generation. We were square.
- People didn't divorce much. I expected my friends would generally have two parents at home and go to church on Sundays. Unitarian for the real free thinkers, Saturday for Jews, Catechism for the Catholics.
- High school kids did not know about any drugs except alcohol. Learning to drink gave us an unacknowledged bond to our elders, in contrast to marijuana which would radically divide the generations. One small exception: the Top 40 DJs titillated us endlessly with comment on the drug habits of the beatniks across the bay in San Francisco.
- As far as we knew that top 40 music represented all of America, which was mostly Christian and white. Traditional American values were expounded and respected, mainly for want of alternative values. We read about them in Jean Paul Sartre and Henry Miller, but I didn't think I knew people who practiced them. I later found out how naïve I had been about Berkeley.
- The first signs of the civil rights revolution were in evidence, Brown vs. Board of Education and its fallout in Little Rock and elsewhere, but it had not yet affected our lives. I had gone to

integrated schools all my life. Hell, Lonnie Watkins, a black kid, gently shook me down for my lunch money, counted in pennies. Wasn't that integration?

- We generally trusted the government. We paid our taxes and supported its wars. We believed that political conventions and presidential debates were sincere and unscripted. That's what we had learned in civics class.
- We respected our teachers.

It might have been a fool's paradise, but it was indeed a paradise compared to our world of ten years later. By 1970 American society had lost its figurative virginity. Many blushing young things their actual virginity! They had illegitimate kids and STDs. Popular music celebrated drugs, and we had drug habits. We had dropped out and were begging on the streets[1]. Some of us were in Vietnam; others had invented some plausible lie for the draft board or fled to Canada. Black militants, leading mindless black mobs, had charred large swaths of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington DC and other cities I didn't know or care about. Schools were forced to use legal "due process" in matters of school discipline, which meant there wasn't much discipline any more. Murder rates soared. SAT scores plummeted. Although we youth would have militantly rejected the suggestion, it was a high price to pay for the thrills of sex and pot.

America had seen waves of revolution before. There was the industrial revolution in the latter 19th century, after which the inventions of the car, the telephone and the airplane changed life radically in the early 20th century. The Depression and the War radically expanded government and homogenized the country. Social Security was the seed for the growth of dependence on the federal government, which at this writing involves half the American population. Only a few at the time realized how wildly revolutionary it was, and could forsee the consequences.

More revolutions were to follow the 1960s. Though the information revolution started with World War II, the real computer revolution did not begin until the 1980s, when personal computers came into widespread use and email over dial-up connections became commonplace. The world really was connected, first through character-based media because the bandwidth would not yet support graphics. I was a moderately early adopter, buying an IBM PC in 1982 and starting with Compuserve over a 1200 baud modem about four years later. Kids born in this era, variously called the "Net Generation" or "Gen Y", are the vanguard of the next major societal revolution to sweep the country after the ones named above. It involved electronics: computers, cell phones, video games, and a proliferation of recorded entertainment.

All things considered, however, the revolutions of my youth - television revolution, sexual revolution, divorce revolution, drug revolution, music revolution and antiwar revolutions, which peaked with the generations which graduated from high school in the 1960s,- seem the most radical. They had a

[1] If you listen closely to Bob Dylan lyrics from this era, you find that they are as much a critique as an endorsement of drugs, sexual freedom, and dropping out. Youth of that time were certain that he was totally on their side. He was not. As a dour prophecy, "Its All Over Now, Baby Blue" seems to anticipate the world we live in today. Alas.

profound impact on the way Americans think, and ultimately, how the world thinks. The Baby Boomers really were something new. These revolutions of the 1960s built the foundations of the world into which my son Eddie will grow into manhood, and they also dramatically altered the concept of manhood itself.

Charles Murray lists four "founding virtues" of America in his book "Coming Apart[2]:" industriousness, honesty, marriage, and religiosity. The revolutions of the '60s challenged all four of these. Religious references, or at least anything presupposing belief in God, disappeared from popular music. Discussion of God was banned from schools. Teaching delivered with the expectation that women would form families, such as home economics, disappeared from the curriculum, along with the supposition implicit in courses such as typing and secretarial work that they would play a supporting role in business until they were to marry.

The first mentioned virtues, honesty and industry, have faded more slowly. As we have become a mass society we no longer depend as much on durable personal relationships in business. We increasingly do business with strangers, and increasingly depend on contracts, courts and brand names for protection against the cupidity of our fellow man. Likewise, we witness people succeeding by other than hard work. Credentials count for more, and personal references less, in our increasingly impersonal world. People attribute success to graduating from the right schools. Americans have come to see a job as an entitlement. They also believe that "equal under the law" means "equal," from which follows the conclusion that all peoples are entitled to more-or-less equal jobs and hence income.

Certain sectors of society, notably the civil service, have implemented widespread systems of racial preference under the rubric of affirmative action. This has made these workplaces generally less attractive to white people, who have to spend their professional lives always on the defensive against accusations of racism and therefore may find it easier to work in the private sector. The same is true to a lesser degree of the charge of sexism, and the presence of women in government jobs. Certain professions, such as the civil service and teaching, have been effectively given over to minorities, and have been abandonned to the notion that one's identity as a member of some disadvantaged group outweighs one's industriousness as a workplace virtue. Both the number of civil service employees and the pay they receive relative to the private sector have grown substantially. Promises of future benefits, which brought electoral benefits at no cost to the politicians who made them, mushroomed especially quickly.

As Murray writes, a sense of entitlement has displaced hard work, the dissolution of community has sapped honesty, and religion and family are viewed as archaic values, based on outdated superstitions and inimicable to the pursuit of individual happiness. The emergent concept of manhood in the United States and the Western world is not one which has brought men a lot of happiness, and is not conducive to perpetuating our culture or even our genes. Historians will undoubtedly devise some interesting labels in retrospect, but in the meantime we have to live through this epoch. I have made my own

[2] Murray, Chapter 6, "The Founding Virtues."

unusual accommodation with the age, moving to Ukraine in my mid 60s and starting a second family, and plan to prepare our son Edward to assume a similarly unique place in society. The standard niches he might have been expected to fill appear to be dead ends.

Biography – Chronological Account

Why tell my life story?

The project before me is raising a new family. In a number of languages – Spanish, Portuguese, French, German and Russian for example, the words for education and formation are one and the same. That is appropriate – you don't just educate a child, you do your best to form them as complete human beings.

Of course the model that we know best is ourselves. It is natural to look back on our own lives for models and lessons to apply to our kids. That is one of my major objectives in writing this autobiographical summary. Of course, every child is different. Their genetic endowment has a lot to do with their temperament, intellect, and perhaps interests as well. On the other hand, we know well from observing life and reading biography that parents can have a great deal to do with shaping character, and that one of our most important jobs is to form the kind of character that will seek to improve itself. For example, I want to raise children who abhor wasting time and treasure learning. It does not much matter what their temperament or talents are, if they have those character traits they will probably do pretty well.

In looking at what I did with my life, I'm looking at the slow development of my own character and how much time I wasted before I figured things out. The Germans have an expression "Too soon old and too late smart." Zu früh alt und zu spät weise. Other people seem to figure things out earlier. I'd like to give my kids a head start if I can.

Some people's lives change in a moment, with a single epiphany. Mine was gradual. The beginning of the epiphany was this. I should not be afraid, but try whatever came along, and give it my best. It came about the time I served six months active duty with the National Guard, when I was 21.

Childhood

I grew up El Cerrito, a working-class suburb nestled between Berkeley and Richmond, California. It was an idyllic childhood, with eight boys my age on the same block of 1000 sq ft tract homes. We split into two gangs based on how we did in school. I was in the gang of the five smarter kids.

Not having tons of money, we were not subjected to piano lessons, dance lessons, and all of the refining preparations for upper-middle-class life. We somehow also avoided Little League, swim leagues and

other organized activity in favor of playing by ourselves in the hills. We climbed trees, built forts, explored caves and rocks, and had a wonderful Tom Sawyer kind of life.

My dad dealt with my earliest questions. He was a scientist, a rational man. Sometimes his science confused my philosophy. He explained the birds and bees to me when I was about four, certainly too young to grasp the entire notion. Some of it did stick, however. One time during a dinner party little Graham came downstairs, quite tumescent, proudly telling his daddy and all assembled that he was ready to plant seeds.

On another occasion Dad told me that human beings need oxygen in order to turn food into energy. We burn it up. That was interesting for a moment, but then I had a horrible suffocating feeling. What happens when we use up all the oxygen? My dad told me not to worry. Plants use sunlight to turn carbon dioxide and water into food and oxygen. See – there is always more oxygen.

I was satisfied for a little while, but then I thought about it more deeply. What happens when the sun burns out? We will all die! I started to feel chills all over again. Daddy reassured me that the sun would keep on shining for another five billion years. I was somewhat mollified, but still concerned that he didn't have a contingency plan for what to do then.

My sister Stephanie got measles at the age of 7, in 1950, when we all did. In her case it turned into spinal encephalitis, a high fever ravaging her brain. It is a miracle that she lived. She needed my mother's full time attention, and her medical bills were several times the family income. A lesser man than my father might have renounced them. He shouldered this burden, as he did every burden in life. His mother came to take care of my brother and me so mother could devote herself to Steph.

Life with grandmother was a bracing experience. I came home crying one day. She thought that was unbecoming for a nine year old boy. Cocking her head like an old hen, she asked me what had happened. I said "Ricky beat me up." She gave me no sympathy at all. "You're bigger than him – you beat him up." I don't recall that I ever did, but next time Pat John (John Fitzgerald) tried to push me around I wrestled him to the ground, sat on him and pounded his head on the ground. Being a fat kid has its uses.

In junior high school we were thrown in with the rich kids from the top of the hills. Lots of their fathers were college professors, and for the first time I encountered people who were better than I was in school. Not too often – I was pretty good – and many of these kids took it more seriously than I did. Professors provide parental pressure. I didn't give the matter a great deal of thought, and went to Reed College up in Portland on a scholarship.

We lived on Gladys Avenue, a cul-de-sac heading straight up the hill. My guess is that the grade was something on the order of 15 to 17%. It was so steep that nobody could ride their bicycle straight up the hill. We had to zigzag back and forth. Going down the hill was another experience. There was a stop sign at the bottom of the hill, at Navallier Street. This was in the early days of hand brakes. Some of our bikes

still had coaster brakes. Whichever they were, they were usually not terribly effective, and you had to grasp with might and main to make sure that you stopped at the bottom of the hill, or at least slowed down enough that you didn't get clobbered by oncoming traffic.

The fact that we were on a cul-de-sac meant that there was no development for about a mile up the hill from us. There was what they now call a "green belt". Up above the green belt there were some pricey homes and a golf course. Below the green belt was where the flats, where the hoi polloi lived. And in the middle there was is delightful no man's land where we kids went roaming every afternoon after school. It was a time of amazing freedom. Our mothers left the houses unlocked – everybody's house was unlocked – and we boys came and went. Mothers in the 1990s or 2000s would have conniptions at the thought of not knowing whether children were for as long as we were out of sight and hearing. But our parents knew that we were with one another, and that we knew the hills better than any of the adults did. They trusted us take care of ourselves. I can't recall that their trust was ever misplaced. We never got into the kind of trouble that required our parents to come get us. It would've been immensely, insufferably embarrassing to have to have a parent bail you out. We were pretty self sufficient.

Among the other things we did was to build forts. There was one fort already made. I have no idea where the logs came from, but there was a stack of timbers, perhaps 8" x 8" square, laid on top of one another in the shape of a fort. How it happened is a mystery. The timbers were maybe 10 feet long, which meant that no kid our age could have lifted one, but yet there they were, stacked one on top of another like a rick, right at the east end end of Reinecker's property.

Why Mr. Reinecker would have stacked them would be anybody's guess. Reinecker was an old settler in these parts. He had been a chicken farmer, and his chicken coops were still active for perhaps the first year or two that I lived there. He had a hired man, Mr. Schmidt, whom everybody called Squeaky because of his voice, who lived in a tiny shack behind Mike Weaver's house and looked after the place. We very rarely saw Mr. Reinecker or Squeaky. We did, however, play around the empty chicken coops, crawling under them and getting them to one sort of mischief in another.

So maybe it was Reinecker who made the stack of timbers. As I recall they were stacked first inside the barbed wire fence which marked the boundary of his property, and then later maybe 30 or 40 feet outside. In any case, this fort was something that we played on. We would climb to the top of the timbers to go down inside the fort. If it had ever collapsed, we would have been crushed, but we didn't think about it and nobody else knew to worry about it.

While I'm on the subject of Mr. Reinecker, he rented his field to horse owners. They were often two or three horses in the field behind our house. We little boys were fascinated by the horses. We went in the fields to pet them. We had to reach up to touch them on the shoulder, but the horses were gentle. We did things little boys will do, which might have been dangerous. Colts have amazingly long penises, and as they are figuring out what to do with them, they let those penises hang down to almost touch the ground. It's enough to make any little boy absolutely green with envy. We would go out and stand at a somewhat safe distance and throw rocks at the colts' penises. Fortunately I don't think that our aim was

good enough to do any damage, and we never stampeded the horses towards us. The worst that ever happened would be that a horse would step on your foot, which was plenty painful.

Returning to the theme of forts, there were a lot of eucalyptus trees growing there. Blue gum eucalyptus is a native of Australia which had been brought to California in the 1800s because it was believed that the wood would make good railroad ties. That turned out not to be the case. The grain grows in a somewhat spiral form, and eucalyptus logs warp badly in the weather. Eucalyptus did serve other purposes. It makes a pretty good windbreak. Reinecker had planted a row of eucalyptus trees winding up the long road from NavallierStreet to his house. I think I can guess more or less how far it was. Each of the lots was 50 feet wide, and there were 10 houses on our side of the street, so it must've been about 500 feet from Navallier up to his house. All of the therefore, all of us with houses that backed up to his road had eucalyptus trees just behind our house. A little boy's perception is often somewhat exaggerated, but my recollection is that those trees were 60 or 70 feet high and maybe 2 ½ to 3 feet in diameter. They were quite mature trees.

Blue gum is a fast-growing tree. The leaves of the juvenile trees are different than the leaves of the adults. The young leaves are bigger, and a silvery gray, whereas the adult trees have long slender green leaves that are kind of sickle shaped. Also, the the young trees, and the saplings that sprout from a cut stump, are very flexible. They're also quite soft and can be easily sawn. We took advantage of every virtue of these trees. With regard to being supple, we would climb up on the stump that had been cut, from which saplings were growing, then we would reach of as high as we could and swing on them. And they would flex and whip just enough that we had a pretty good ride, after which and we could jump down onto the ground.

With regard to the ease with which they could be sawn, we would cut the small eucalyptus saplings to make forts. I remember one in particular which I made that has a fairly large size sapling, may be four or five inches in diameter as a beam across the top. Crosswise from that I had laid a few more sticks as roof joists, and then I laid the shaggy bark of mature blue gum eucalyptus on top of that to make a roof, and then just too perfect perfection, I added a layer of dirt. It gave it a nice solid feel. So there I was, nestled among rocks on one side, a fence on the other end, and as I recall a dry wall made of concrete slabs on the back wall of my own little nest. The thing about having a fort like that is that you can't do anything with it. Not big enough to spend any time in it, except to sit and savor your own handiwork, which I'm sure I did at length.

Other kids built their own forts. I forget what they looked like. I do remember that Pat John (John Fitzgerald) came down from the top of the hill and busted up the fort that I just described. In a proper fit of rage, I went up and busted up his fort. This was how children lived. Pat John I might have been mortal enemies for a day or so, but we needed each other and we were soon friends again for all that.

The five of us were fairly stable nucleus for most of our childhood. Other kids came and went. One kid named Harby lived at the top of the circle for a year or two. He never really got into the gang. Once I remember playing in the attic of his garage. I was leaning out the attic window on the top of the garage

when he gave me a push. I came down and landed on my forearm, with my knee right coming down on top of that arm, which broke both bones. I ran down the hill crying, with my left arm in my right hand, kind of sagging. They took me to the hospital to get it fixed, and I wore a cast for several weeks. The cast was put on somewhat sloppily, with a sharp crease in my elbow, rubbing a raw spot which resulted in a scar which is still there.

There was another kid, Jeffrey Cockrill who lived in that house when I moved in, and he moved away soon. I don't remember him very well. And later there were the notorious Cummings girls, who gave it away for free. They provided almost every boy in high school, with the exception of those of us who lived on the block, with their first sexual experience.

One of the kids came there to get his sexual thrills was named Neil. A little guy with a chip on his shoulder. We called him punk Neil. He made the mistake of picking picking on me. This was after I had established my manhood in my own mind by fighting John Fitzgerald. I couldn't let a kid who was half a head shorter than me and weighed maybe two thirds as much call me out; I would've felt like a fool. I accepted his invitation to fight.

On the dirt lot down Navallier Street from Portola junior high school I did the same thing that I had with John. I wrestled with him until I got him down and sat on him until he gave up. As I recall it was a fairly clean fight. Several people were onlookers, including his friends and mine. His friend had a Hispanic name like Johnny Corrales. Pat John gave him the sobriquet Coleopterus, the scientific name for beetles, because his hair was so slick and greasy that that's what he reminded us of. That's the sum total of my experience with fisticuffs in school.

Everybody knows that mighty oaks from little acorns grow. Less recognized is that eucalyptus trees also grow from acorns. Not exactly – that's just what we called the eucalyptus buds. Returning to the theme of eucalyptus trees, when they pruned the tree limbs, which they did quite frequently, the trees often came up with eucalyptus buds on them. So there you had a perfect redoubt. You had a eucalyptus branch lying on the ground with buds on it, a fort and ammunition all-in-one. It is something that no kid could resist. So we would wind up, one gang behind each of a couple of piles of branches, pulling the buds off and throwing them at each other. It seems perfectly harmless. Eucalyptus buds are smaller than than the acorns of an oak, and it's hard to imagine anybody getting hurt even being hit by a real acorn.

However, there is something in the adult mind, especially adults with school-granted authority, that loves to tell you not to do things. So whenever these said eucalyptus branches happened to be close to Castro elementary school, principal Buford H. Shreeve would appear, or his minions, and tell us to stop and immediately and threaten us with serious damage, which he could render via a paddle entitled the Board of Education, which had hung on his wall.

I cannot recall that any of us good boys ever experienced the Board of Education, but it was a frightening enough prospect that we generally ceased and desisted from our acorn wars when Shreeve told us to. The three bad boys on the block, Kim Stoddart, Nicky Bola, and Norris Shates, certainly did

know what the Board of Education was all about. I never asked them how painful was. Note to sticklers: Nicky and Norris were neighbors one short block down the hill, on Lawrence Street.

Returning to the theme of the hills, forts were only a minor part of it. We went up in the hills as a group, boys and girls, to play doctor. Playing doctor involved the minute examination of the human body. We were lucky enough to have, in three cases, younger sisters who would consent to the operation. I think they were as curious as we were. So we learned all about how the little parts are different on boys and girls. It was done as a group exercise there was never anything particularly inappropriate about it, and we all learned more than I suspect kids learn today in sex education.

My sister once counted 57 kids in the 21 houses on our circle. It is impossible to remember them all, but the ones who figured into our lives were, starting from the north corner of Gladys and Navaillier, Crystal Eastin in the 3rd house, Graham, with sister Stephanie and brother Duncan in the 5th house, David and Priscilla Baker in the 7th, Mike Weaver in the 8th, the Cummings girls in the 9th, Kostya in the 12th, John Fitzgerald and brother Paul in the 13th, John and Brooke Bryant in the 14th, Rick, sister Carol and brother Jerry in the 16th, Joanne and Dick McKillop in the 17th, Sandra Sitton in the 18th, Mike, Kim and Sue Stoddart in the 20th, and Kathy Koontz, cousin of David Baker, in the 21st.

Other things that we did as a group was go exploring. I mentioned that there was a golf course up at the top of the hill. The golf course ran from Arlington Road across the more or less rounded crest of the ridgeline of the first hills, and down into the relatively steep Wildcat Canyon. Wildcat Canyon was government property. They had some sort of distant early warning, or Nike base or some such military operation ever there. We never knew what. What it meant to us boys was that it was totally virgin growth. It had all of the native chaparral of the region, which includes baccharis, artemesia, poison oak, and several other species of rugged, scrubby brush they would grow to a height of between four and maybe ten feet, interspersed with California Live Oak trees which could get up to maybe 20 or 25 feet high. It was absolutely right for exploring.

One episode I remember especially well involved Denny Krentz, me and one other boy, perhaps Pat John. We went down into Wildcat Canyon, farther than we had ever been before, and got gloriously lost. Whatever trail we had found to get down, we could not find to get back up. We fought our way through the brush. That brush consisting largely of poison oak, we bloomed the most glorious shades of scarlet one can imagine the next day. Red-haired, fair Denny was particularly sensitive. My mother told me that his mother Babette told her that Danny's penis was swollen the size of a banana. I have never asked if there is any truth to this. Mothers tend to exaggerate when talking about this kind of thing. At any rate, it was a typical venture in that we were off by ourselves, unsupervised, and without any help with something had gone so wrong. This time we got ourselves out of it but had to confess what had happened.

Rick recalls another episode when such wandering brought his party within earshot of zinging sounds. This was a military area, and there was a shooting range. Moreover, they were downrange! They managed to extricate themselves without incident.

I think I remember the same shooting range from another perspective. My father had two 22 caliber rifles. One was an octagon barrel, single shot affair dating from the 1890s. The other had a magazine running under the barrel. Dad thought it was important for any boy to know how to handle a rifle, and so we went as he familiarized me. He had no special love for guns, no desire to upgrade these relics, only a sense that it is a father's duty to properly educate his son.

The other destination up in that general direction was Indian Rock. It was a stack of boulders, naturally occurring I believe, that was maybe 30 or 40 feet high. Wonderful for climbing all over, once again, probably rather dangerous if you fell off the rocks. We all had our favorite little place to hide on Indian Rock. It was a pretty good afternoon's adventure to go up there and climb around and pretend we were Indians. I don't recall that there were in the stories of actual Indians being on Indian rock. The California Indians who had once inhabited this area were a pretty tame, laid-back group of savages. There were not any stories of Indian wars or anything exciting coming from that quarter.

The Boy Scouts owned an odd property along Arlington Boulevard called Camp Herms. It was a former rock quarry which had been deeded over to the Scouts about 1930, perhaps by somebody who wanted to get a white elephant off his hands. The Scouts had built an administrative lodge close to the road entrance and a primative cabin capable of sleeping about six people just inside the quarry, which is where the staff lived. Around the perimeter of the quarry crater was a so-called nature trail, dotted with maybe a dozen huts where boys could come spend the night, and various exotic plantings such as a loquat tree and a giant sequoia.

There was a swimming pool in the bowels of the quarry. I served as a lifeguard there when I was 12 or 13, getting royally sunburned. I was also the curator of the nature lodge. It had a few fossils which had been found on the site or donated, likewise a few skins and skeletons, and whatever livestock we kids could round up. Usually lizards and interesting spiders and insects. Serving as a counsellor at Camp Herms didn't pay anything, but it got me out of the house for a few weeks in summer. Home was only an hour's walk away, and there was a phone somewhere around if anybody needed to get in touch with me.

My parents taught me an appreciation of nature. My father had majored in entomology in college, and had an insect collection which I loved to study. He encouraged me to collect insects for my own collection. I also played with live insects. Loved the locusts with multicolored wings, collected caterpillars from the wild anise and hatched them into swallowtail butterflies, picked up Jerusalem crickets, AKA potato bugs, until I got soundly bitten. Ditto water bugs, AKA "toe biters." Ditto alligator lizards. There were myriad ground squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits and deer in the woods. We saw their preditors less frequently: wildcats, foxes, and even puma. My dad made sure I knew the proper names of all the common little birds like juncos and bluejays, and the larger, though rarer ones such as the red tailed hawk.

I also had a collection of dried plants, this favored by my mother who had adored her college biology professor Howard McMinn. We had a copy of the "Manual of Flowering Plants of California" written by his colleague Willis Jepson, in the house. Mother's last job in life was editing its latest edition. I was likewise pretty good at identifying plants, though never nearly as good as either parent. I have attempted to have wildlife references everywhere I have lived. Without one, when I first lived in Kiev, I mistook a hooded crow for a raptor. I thank Dan Bryant for identifying it from a picture, and telling me why I should have known from my description of its habits alone that it wasn't a bird of prey.

The Scouts taught kids how to be self-sufficient, to live off the land. Part of my job as curator of the nature lodge was to conduct nature walks, showing Scouts the edible berries such as miner's lettuce, Oregon grape, gooseberry, blackberry, and elderberry. Rick remembers my mom promising that if we boys gathered enough of them, she would bake elderberry pies. Elderberries are plentiful in the fall, and she came through in spades.

I went in the hills by myself quite a bit. I had a few favorite places. One was not very far at all from home, a little place by the bank of the creek that ran down on the south side of our development. The creek had cut out a little cove. The red roots of willow trees stuck out, I thought quite beautifully, from the bank. Trillium, a wild sort of lily, grew at the bottom. Once again it was very beautiful. I would go there and meditate on the beauty and carve on the trees GS + JS. JS was for Jana Slezin the cutest girl in my third grade class. Ditto for the fourth fifth and sixth grade. I had a terrible crush on her, one which I never confessed, and which perhaps very few know about until this day. The only one to penetrate my secret was my father. One night while he was tucking me in, maybe in the fourth or fifth grade, he asked me why I didn't get to know Jana better. He thought she was a very cute girl and he would like to see more of her. I must've blushed crimson, but I didn't say anything.

Another favorite place was the dam that we built it a little bit further down the same creek. This was actually just about behind John Fitzgerald's house. I guess the dam was about 6 to 10 feet in length, with a pond extending back maybe 20 feet. We used to use saws, chisels, pocket knives and sandpaper to fashion little wooden boats to sail on the pond. Many were paddle wheelers powered by rubber bands. It was idyllic except when the bullies from the bottom of the hill came. I remember one time peacefully sailing my homemade wooden boat, minding my own business, when whack, a large rock hit me right on the back of the head. I turned around and Kim Stoddart started laughing out loud. Kim was a bully. There's no other word for it. I don't remember crying or being especially afraid. I just thought how much in character was. He came down and we talked a bit. No fight, but I didn't especially love him for it.

Kim, Nicky and Norris used to wreck the dam periodically, just to be mean, and we would rebuild it. Kim's older brother, Mike Stoddard, shared a streak of the psychopath but was a bit more smooth about it. One summer day he lured Mike Weaver, four years younger, into posing for a photo in Reinecker's field. He had Mike back up, back up, move over there, until he walked straight over a yellow jacket's nest and got badly stung. Yellow jackets, properly called western white faced hornets, are like ordinary wasps except that they build their nests in holes in the ground instead of trees. Mike's father Jack did all right in real estate sales. In high school, handsome, amoral Mike drove an Austin Healy Sprite his father

had bought. It was the smallest imaginable two-seater. They had two guys in, and two girls sitting half in and half out. Mike sped over a notorious bump on Cutting Boulevard, flipped the car and killed the girls. Kind of guy he was.

Kim is the boy I should have fought. Any of us should have resisted the bully. However, he was at least as big as us and had a bad reputation. Somebody might have gotten hurt. My defense was to simply tolerate him. I remember one time letting myself be led into his basement for supposed "torture," knowing that a loud scream would have brough his mother Maxine downstairs, I simply let the adventure unfold as it would. It was ultimately boring for us both. Kim had a reputation for torturing cats, committing sodomy with dogs, and having sex with Joanne, the girl up the street. I got a hint of the latter from something his mother said to him, so it may have some substance. Anyhow, Joanne was not pregnant prior to my departure for college, though from my knowledge of her it was probably simply a matter of good luck.

That there should be so many boys of the same age on the same block was extraordinary. We had few friendships with kids anywhere near us. Hearthrobs Jana and Sandy were neighbors of each other about a half mile away. Not far from them, again on Navallier Street, lived Denny Krentz, my only other close friend from grade school.

Denny, his sister Nancy and mother Babette lived in the two-car garage that father Walt had built as part of project involving a complete home. Walt was a shop teacher, a very handy man. House building is a stressful process, however, and they divorced sometime shortly after the concrete block walls went up on the full structure. There it stood, amidst piles of sand and gravel, as Walt went to live elsewhere and mom and the kids remained in a double garage, partitioned into tiny rooms.

I loved to go to Denny's house, where we played in the sand that had been brought for construction, as well as in the native dirt. We built roads, forts and other elaborate structures to the scale of GI Joe olive green rubber action figures. Denny shared my fascination with animals, and we caught insects and lizards as well. His place was absolutely crawling with blue-belly swifts, and I remember horned toads, alligator lizards and skinks as well.

There was another rock quarry down Navallier Street from Denny's house. They had blasted off half of a hill, leaving a very steep and dangerous cliff, maybe 300 feet high. High enough, at any rate, to attract at least one suicide. Somewhat less than halfway up there was a ledge. I think it had been useful in the quarrying operations, and that it followed a natural contour. One day, on my own, I ventured out along this ledge just to try it out. I looked at the path down and thought I saw how I could navigate it. I started down.

Wrong! Not too far down I lost my grip and went sliding down clear to the bottom on my stomach. It tore my shirt to shreds and left deep cuts on the underside of my arms. I washed myself up with Les Brock's garden hose – he lived right by the entrance to the quarry – and wrapped the remains of my shirt around the wounds and went home to bandage them properly. I wore long sleeves for a few

weeks after that. My parents never knew about the incident, but I have the scars on my arms to this day.

A place that was more or less my own was a chestnut tree farther up the hill from the dam, just down from the bare crest of the hill. We called the tree a horse chestnut, otherwise known as a California buckeye. For those of you from Kiev, it's the same thing that you know as a chestnut. Not a true, edible chestnut. It has large round nuts called conkers. At any rate, this chestnut tree had lovely spreading branches, and I love to climb up in a tree and lie down on the branches and dream my life away. Dreaming, of course, about the pretty girls in the class, Jana and Sandy, and wondering what I might do in the world.

Another place for similar daydreaming was right up on the crest of that hill, which was at the top of a rise from from the flat lands, perhaps of 300 or 400 feet in altitude, which provided a marvelous view of the whole San Francisco Bay. I could lie on my stomach on that hill and watch the fog pour in through the Golden Gate, engulfing the bridge, then wrapping around to Fisherman's Wharf and spilling out all of the waters of the bay. You could lie there and look down at the freeway, which was newly completed in the 1950s, and watch the little cars crawling along like ants. Of course every little boy likes guns, and you could imagine being a sniper up their shooting bang bang bang that these little ants as they moved along. And I could look down at the Castro grammar school and other landmarks and get a sense of the geography of the place. I could look across at Albany Hill, standing all by itself and the flats, and think about what you might do on top of that. Actually there was nothing there as we later found out. It is probably the landmark which gave the name to the city of El Cerrito – the little hill.

The last of my favorite places was on the north side of our development, probably 500 feet out my back door. If you walked across Reinecker's field, the place where the horses were, you came down to the barbed wire fence that marked the end of his property. Hanging over the fence and over the small creek there was an old old willow tree. A weeping willow. It had a hollow trunk that had been charred and burned out, leaving a hole almost big enough to crawl into. It arched to a height of maybe seven or eight feet above the ground, and then split into two branches, each of which drooped back toward the ground and ran more or less horizontal for a few feet. The trunk, near the charred hole, was close enough to horizontal that a kid could jump and climb up on it, and then crawl out on the branches, lie on them, and swing on them, hang on them, and then gently drop down to the ground. Once again a great place for lollygagging and daydreaming. I considered it quite beautiful. When I painted trees in art class, this was my model.

A few hundred feet upstream from this willow tree the hill rose rather steeply up the north side of the creek. It might have been even bulldozed to make a road on top; I don't recall. What I do recall is that the grass was very slick in the fall. To understand, you have to know something about California weather patterns. The rains come in September, and wild oats grow on the hillsides to a height of three feet or more. The grass remains green all winter, and then gradually turns brown in the late spring. All summer and fall it's dry and brown. It makes a wonderful fire hazard. It also makes wonderful sledding. We would find large cardboard cartons, ideal ones being those for stoves and refrigerators. We would take

these cartons and slide down the hill on the dry grass from the top down into the creek. They can go fairly fast. It's not as safe snow sledding, because there are rocks that are not well covered by the dry grass. Nonetheless, with lots of fun, and we all did it, with no parental restrictions or fatal consequences. Rick adds that we used to sled other places as well, such as on the south side of our development by the Hillside Church, which is where he chipped a tooth on an unseen rock.

Another of our amusements goes back to the theme of war. This grass which came up green in the September timeframe could be pulled out of the ground rather easily, along with the sod that it was growing in. You could grab a handful of grass down close to the roots, pick it up, and swing it by the long blades as a weapon. We called them smoke bombs. And we would have smoke bomb fights, with everybody picking up this grass and throwing at each other. Once again, nobody could get hurt. Occasionally we would go to the effort to take the smoke bombs down to the creek and soak the turf in the water, and pack them into nice round balls. That made them a little bit more effective. We could throw the more easily and there was a little bit more weight to them so when they get they might might do some damage. You can get people nice and dirty, but it was pretty innocent fun. And we all enjoyed enjoyed smoke bomb fights.

In a similar vein we made what we call Gatling guns. We had two varieties. Both were fueled by the same kind of ammunition. This was in the 50s, when only high-end new cars had tubeless tires. Inner tubes were everywhere. For instance, every swimming pool had a stock of them for kids to use to sail around on on the water. We would cut up the inner tubes into cross sections as ammo for two kinds of guns. The simplest kind was a pistol. We would cut an L-shaped piece of wood and put a clothes pin on outside of the short leg of the L. Stretch a rubber from the long leg to the clothes pin and the gun was loaded. Point the pistol, release the clothes pin and the rubber went flying.

Our repeating rifles were cut to look like rifles, with a series of notches on top where the chamber would be. We nailed a string to the end of the barrel, running down the top of the weapon. We would stretch a rubber from the end of the barrel, covering the nail, back to the first notch, with the string at the bottom of the notch. Repeat for the second, third, or even fourth rubber and notch. Then aim the piece and pull the string. It lifted the rubbers out of the notches one by one and they went flying towards their target.

We had our smaller amusements as well. Every kid could shoot rubber bands. I still can – wrap as many as three over my index finger, held in place by my middle, ring and little fingers. Let them go and they will fly across the room to startle a cat or squish a housefly. Of course, if you want accuracy, you stretch them over a yardstick, which you can aim just like a gun.

A bit on the subject of war. You have to keep in mind for the times were like in the 1950s. Most kids' fathers had been to war. David's father was a SeaBee in the Pacific. Ricky's father Bud had been in the Navy as far as I remember. My father was an exception; he had worked as a civilian in the shipyards, always too essential in the civilian workforce building liberty ships, and always one child ahead of the draft board. These were people, families who knew what war was about. And they believed that

America was worth defending. It was a time of societal anxiety. The Cold War had started, the Rosenbergs were tried and executed for stealing the atomic bomb secrets, we watched all of the atomic testing in Nevada and in the Pacific Ocean, and we listened with great fear about the rise of the Communist Chinese. Fighting was a much more natural thing than it is to today's kids.

The times took on kind of a gloomy air. By the late 1950s as the arms race with the Soviet Union was really going seriously there were a great many people who were quite pessimistic about the outcome of the whole adventure. We knew that between ourselves and the Russians we had more than enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world, and we didn't have a vast amount of faith that somehow we would be smart enough not to do it. The rich kids in the hills had bomb shelters in their backyards. Comedians like Tom Lehrer wrote songs like "Let's Get Them Before They Get Us" and "We'll All Go Together When We Go." Neville Shute wrote a book "On The Beach" about the final survivors of a nuclear war. Herman Kahn wrote "On Thermonuclear War: Thinking the Unthinkable." It was not the most optimistic of times. Although there were pacifists, they were generally associated with world communism, and not widely trusted until the time of Vietnam, when suddenly they seem to emerge as a major force. Even during the antiwar protests of the 60s, it seemed that the protesters were not so much against war and weapons, but rather against the United States' using its weapons to make war against against the communists and other darlings of the left like Castro.

Bringing it right back down to a local level, this is also a time of the draft. Most young men wound up being familiarized with the use of weapons by the government. Of the five of us boys, I learned that David, Mike and Rick went in the Navy, and I went into the National Guard. Kim Stoddart also went into the National Guard. Denny went into the Air Force. I don't know about John Fitzgerald.

Television did not yet have its iron grip on society in the 50s. There were only a few programs we would watch religiously. Disneyland was on for an hour on Wednesday nights. There were a few Western shoot-em-ups that we would watch. Still, TV was still a machine that people turned on when there was something to watch, and off otherwise. David especially still liked radio – he tuned in regularly to the B-bar-B Riders show.

Quite often, very often indeed, we would play games. The regular games as I recall, those that would be recognized today, include board games such as Monopoly and Parcheesi. I played Scrabble with my parents. Another game that we played was called Star Reporter, which I'm sure is out of print. We also played a lot of card games. Mike Weaver's father and mother loved to play pinochle, and we often played three and four handed pinochle with them, me and Mike and his parents, or me and Mike and other kids in the neighborhood. We also played a lot of canasta, although canasta is a game that takes a long time and really depends a great deal on luck. We also played a lot of hearts, a game I preferred because it requires a higher level of skill. By the time we were juniors and seniors in high school we also played bridge. I don't recall recall that we played very well, but it is interesting in comparison with today's kids that we did it at all.

So what came of this? We were being treated as adults by the adults in our families. They enjoyed playing with us. But the thing that still impresses me most is that we were accepted as members of the family, and we found things to do other than simply passively amuse ourselves with the television. Ours may be the last generation in which this was true. I would ask as a point of reference how many children of the 60s, that is, how many baby boomers even, grew up playing games? My bet that it is that significantly fewer than those of the tail end of the silent generation. I think that society is lost in this exchange. They lost out on the social intercourse that took place between us and our parents, and they lost as well in the mental acuity that you develop playing these games.

I don't know how other kids did their homework. I always did my own, never asking for help from my parents. I think I was an exception even than that age. I also don't remember working with other kids on homework. I would see it as my own responsibility, and I did it. Occasionally I would help somebody else. I had a babysitter, Jim Kinnaman, four grades ahead of me in school but not a very good student. I can recall his babysitting me when I was in the fourth grade, to me helping him with his algebra homework.

We had quite a few written assignments, and we also had a lot of memorization. I remember vocabulary lists in English and in French. We also had to memorize lists of plants, phyla, and one thing and another in biology. The schools were not at all reluctant to ask children to memorize things. Rote memory was the way that you learn things. If you need to know a language, especially, you need to commit the vocabulary and grammar rules to memory. That is all there is to it. Fifty years later I'm studying Russian, and the process hasn't changed a bit. Kids who never learned the discipline of memorization are at a significant disadvantage.

I had my own little corner of my room, a small room which I shared with my brother, where I did my homework. It had been built as a small three bedroom house. The bedroom we shared may have been as large as 12 x 16. While half a room that size is not much space, it was still enough for a desk, and I got by on that.

My handicap as a scholar was that my penmanship was terrible. It would be diagnosed today as a lack of fine motor skills. Probably also impatience – I always wanted to write faster than my fingers would move. At any rate, my mother saw to it that I took a typing class as early as I could, in the 10th grade. I was one of very few boys in the typing class. But I was as good is any, and I wound up being able to type the requisite 60 words per minute. That changed my whole approach to written works. I was able to get papers out substantially quicker, and moreover, was able to put out a product that the teacher could read and therefore accurately grade.

I loved exploring. I have already mentioned the ways in which we boys would explore all afternoon, out in the fields and the hills. I liked to walk from an early age. We moved from Berkeley when I was seven, and I can remember even before the move walking from our house up to the Berkeley campus, probably a mile and a quarter across couple of busy streets, just to go up and play on the trees on the campus. This kind of wanderlust affected me in El Cerrito as well. I used to love walking in the evenings through

the hills, sometimes going as far once again as the Berkeley campus, at this point about six miles away. I got my homework done early and on warm spring evening I would have lots of time. I enjoyed being alone with my thoughts.

I learned to bicycle after everybody else. Other kids got bikes when they were about seven or eight. I refused even to try. I considered the physics of the bicycle, with only two wheels, and was absolutely certain that it could not stand up. You cannot balance on two wheels. It takes three. A tricycle I would trust, a bicycle I could not.

Observing the other kids successfully ride bicycles was perplexing but it didn't change my mind. It was not until my little sister rode a bike, probably just before she was sick at the age of seven, that I resolved I had to do it. I can remember straddling it at the top of the hill, letting go, and the magical feeling as the thing worked. It was so magic that I did it again and again and again. I absolutely loved the feeling of mastery. And I've had this romance with bicycles ever since. Shortly thereafter, probably the next Christmas, my parents gave me a second hand Schwinn bicycle with a three speed Sturmey Archer shift. The shifter didn't work all the time – you would be pumping up the hill with all your might in low gear, and it would slip and I would come crashing down, banging my most tender parts against the bicycle seat. Still, for all the shortcomings, I rode that bicycle to death. I rode it down to San Pablo Ave., something over a mile to the west, and rode San Pablo Ave. another mile or so down to El Cerrito Plaza, the major shopping center. It was certainly dangerous. We rode in the rain and rode without helmets, but somehow the angels were watching over us and we never got hurt. Still and all, I probably I'm sure that I walked more than I bicycled. The roads that I like to walk were up in the hills, not suitable for bicycle, and I like to walk at night, once again not very suitable for bicycle.

Rick remembers biking south down San Pablo to the Oakland City Hall and north to Tank Farm Hill in the city of San Pablo. He and Pat John both had paper routes, which they did on their bikes. Via these recollections, it is clear that they biked more than I did.

Our church had a summer camp on the Napa River. The river formed the back boundary of a large field of wheat. Growing along the banks of the river were a number of tall trees, probably poplar. It seldom rained; we slept on the ground in rows of sleeping bags out in the open. They taught us archery, braiding lanyards and other such crafts. We swam in the Napa River. Not much of a river, actually. It was about 20 feet wide and shallow enough to wade across, most of the time. But not all the time! I could not swim, and one day I ventured a little bit too far. I was in over my head, and panicked. My father happened to be there at that moment, I don't know why, and he very quickly rescued me, then taught me how to swim. I was grateful, and empowered. I loved to swim. And I still do. The summer of 2012 I made my wife nervous by taking hour-long swims in the Desno River here in Kiev.

One of the formative memories I remember from third grade was playing kickball. I kicked the ball I ran to first base and I fell down when I got there. I started to cry. A third-grader is seven or eight years old. Most seven or eight-year-old kids are beyond crying. The other kids looked at me kind of funny like; who was this new kid was crying in the third grade? I was mortified. Right then and there I resolved that I was

going to be grown-up. I wasn't gonna cry anymore. No adult was involved in this deal whatsoever. It was simply my own realization that I had to conform to what was expected of a normal kid of my age.

I had a similar experience also in the third or fourth grade. I was taking a pee in the boy's toilet. While I was standing there, I farted. I needed to expel some gas. Another kid said he was disgusted that I would expel gas as I was urinating. That opinion weighed more heavily with me than anything any adult could have said. I had learned something that was not socially acceptable. I no longer did that. I was careful to control my gas after that work. It's interesting to me that in both these instances I learned from other kids, not from any intentional teaching.

The third thing that comes to mind along the same lines is something I've learned over the course of a lifetime. How to clean up after myself. I assume that the problem that affects human beings is the same thing that affects our chimpanzee relatives. They use leaves to wipe themselves after they poop. And, I am sure that they don't do a perfect job. They do a good enough job that whatever sanitary problems exist with their system don't kill them, but it's probably still not the most comfortable or odor free regime in the world. We human beings use toilet paper. It's a considerable advance over whatever came before such as corn schucks, but is still not perfect. Rather, we can say that is not perfect to the levels that our highly evolved civilization would like to expect. We think we are better, too highly evolved, to have the stink of poop hanging around us as we walk around and transact our daily business. But nobody ever tells a kid how to avoid it.

They try to embarrass you into cleaning yourself properly in places such as the Army. If you have what they call hash marks, brown stains in your underwear in the Army, they will call attention to it in an inspection, and ridicule you. That's no fun. The question is, what do you do about it? Nobody ever tells you this. I have read a lot about personal hygiene, but everything important that I know I have figured out on my own. In short, there are a couple of kinds of poop, neither of which is ideal. You can poop in a hard little pellets, like a deer. This is very clean coming out, making the wiping process quite easy. On the other hand, the hard stool leads to problems such as hemorrhoids and anal fissures. On the other hand, if you have looser stools, the product is badly formed, and some of it remains soft in the bowel just above the anal sphincter. Wipe as much as you will, the stuff seems to leak out and stain your underwear as you go on about your daily life. My advice to my kid will be: don't be squeamish. Go in and clean it up. In the privacy of your own bathroom it is easier to clean your fingers than your underwear, and it won't itch, won't smell, and won't embarrass you further. See the value of reading this? Nobody ever told you before. I suspect that's the never-revealed secret of the European bidet.

On our block there were 21 houses along a cul-de-sac. Ours was 7309, the fifth house up and halfway up the hill. At the top of the hill was an 80 foot circle. We did a lot of were playing up there. That was where I learned how to ride the bicycle, for instance.

We played two games especially. One of them was hide and seek, which is pretty familiar to everybody. There were a lot of trees and shrubs where we could hide between the houses they work pretty well. Our favorite, however, was something called prisoner's base. It's an elaborate game, one I haven't seen

elsewhere but which is well described on Wikipedia. We put a line down the middle of the circle, half of which would had already been done by the city as I recall, and then formed two teams, one on each side. Way back within the territory of each side was a base, a prison. And here's how you play. People line up along the center line, trying to grab members of the other team. If you're successful in grabbing one and pulling him across the line, you put them in your base. And he stays in your base until some member of his team is able to run across the line, unintercepted, and tag the people in the base, at which time they are free.

The way it usually plays out is that two people will be on the line, grappling with each other, trying to pull the others across, and that both teams will gather around them, both holding their own members to keep them from going over the line. It's a tussle of strength. When one side would prevail, they could often capture two or three opponents who were hanging on with might and main. This game could go on for a long time, until every member of one team is in the other team's base.

We also played more conventional games, such as foursquare and hopscotch. The parking strips around the block were planted with iceplant, so we had a very convenient taw for hopscotch. We simply take a sprig of iceplant and use that to toss from square to square.

We played some rough-and-tumble games on our lawns. Rick recalls that we called them wiggly-squirms. We would tackle one another, wrestle each other to the ground, and attempt to keep each other from getting from one side of the lawn to the other. I'm not recall if there was ever any anger. Just a lot of kids exercising their muscles. In one of these tussles I get a deep cut in my knee, from which I still have a scar. I have no recollection how it happened. I just looked down and the blood was gushing.

David Baker and I were active in the Boy Scouts. David became an Eagle Scout. I got no farther than Star Scout, because I could not get the merit badge for physical fitness. Rather, in retrospect, I allowed myself to believe I could not. If I had put my will to the task, I am quite sure that I could have mastered the five pull-ups that they required. But I didn't have the fortitude within myself, and I didn't have encouragement or somebody forcing me to do it. At any rate I remained a Star Scout. Later, when I was well past fifty, I managed 30 pullups. It is a matter of conviction.

David's father Phil and my father Ells were the scout masters of our respective troops, which met at our respective churches. His was St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, mine was the Hillside Church, Swedenborgian denomination, whatever that is.

We were fairly active organizations. We went on overnight trips to Mount Diablo periodically, we had knot tying competitions and cookouts and such. When I graduated into Explorer Scouts we did a lot of social things, like dances.

The Scouts sponsored an event called the Soap Box Derby. Kids would construct downhill racers, originally supposedly out of a soap box, and race them downhill. There were rules about the kinds of wheels, bearings, etc. etc. you could use. We had one such race on our hill. My recollection is that the

boys were supposed to design and build the racers themselves, but just as in Little League, my sense was that the competition was more among dads than boys. This boy was truly daunted by the sophistication of the entries created by boys who could not do diddly squat in school. The thing looked rigged to me. I doubt that any adult would call the event off on questions of morality or fair play, but my guess is that our hill was too steep, and the intersection at the bottom too dangerous, for it to proceed.

In the mid-50s we became aware of civil rights. We listened with some interest to the deliberations in Brown versus Board of Education. Since we all went to integrated schools, it made sense to us that schools be integrated. We followed with interest as the Governor of Arkansas attempted to prevent integration at Little Rock High School. Along about this time of great civil unrest and great deal of uncertainty among white people, we got the notion that a scoutmaster, Mr. Jakel, had rejected a black child as a Sea Scout.

I have no idea if this was true. I do not know Mr. Jakel, and I knew nothing of the situation. I have learned enough about civil rights to know that knowledge is not the uppermost consideration in a matter like this. It is the moral outrage that one must feel. We got together and burned across on Mr. Jakel ‘s lawn.

What followed was my first encounter with the police, albeit at a rather long distance. Since David has been the instigator of this, and his father was a scoutmaster, they got to deal with the cops. It was handled in a very friendly, down home sort of manner. We were reprimanded fairly thoroughly for getting involved in things that were beyond our ken, over our heads, and making waves. And then it was forgotten. I mention this because it was an early manifestation of things that were to happen over and over during the 60s.

I do not recall having any black classmates in Castro school, though Rick remembers kissing a black girl on a dare about the fifth grade. Most significantly, he had no idea of the significance of the act until later. When I got to Portola Junior High School and El Cerrito High School we were thrown together with kids from a larger catchment area. Specifically, they drew from the Richmond housing projects west of San Pablo Ave. These temporary buildings had been put up for workers during the Second World War, and had never been torn down. Most of the tenants were black families. Some of those kids came to our schools, though most went to Richmond High. There were a not lot of them there were never any racial difficulties that I recall. The blacks were a minority and rather tended to stick to themselves.

We had a couple of black kids in our college prep classes. I remember James Spearman, a tall, good-looking and quiet and serious fellow, and Earline Watkins and Charlotte Greene, who were sunny and outgoing. I don’t remember and that they it distinguished themselves as scholars, but there certainly wasn’t any question as to whether they belong to college prep classes. Both girls were cute. I thought the same of a few Oriental girls: color certainly didn’t cloud my sense of asthetics. We grew up observing that the black kids tended to be in the slower classes, and I had the experience of finding it prudent to cough up my milk money, all of 4¢, when Lonnie asked for it, but I don’t remember any strife.

I was also pretty much unaware of ethnicity. My ancestors are mostly German. Through the magic of the Internet I know much more about them than anybody did back in the '50s. David was mostly English; he and I both had ancestors who arrived on the Mayflower. Rick Baker was mostly English, with an admixture of some Scottish and Nordic blood. I assume Mike Weaver was mostly English. John Fitzgerald was proudly Irish. At least his father was. His mother didn't say otherwise, but she kept pickled fish and other Jewish delicacies in the refrigerator, worked in the field of psychology, and was a dedicated liberal.

This lack of high racial or ethnic tension is probably the result of the fact that just about everyone in the Bay Area had moved from somewhere else—Except perhaps those in old San Francisco or the Berkeley Hills. We had Dust Bowl refugees, descendants of the Chinese coolies who had built the Transcontinenal Railway, Japanese who had been born in FDR's WW II concentration camps, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans whose parents had moved from farming to work in the war industries, and Northeasterners and Midwesterners lured by good jobs and good weather.

There were several Chinese children in my grammar school , to the best of my knowledge mostly from the Chung Mei home. It was run by Baptists for children orphaned in China in World War II. Although they spoke pretty good English, having gone through the American schools and being taken care of by Baptist missionaries, they pretty much stuck together. What I remember best about them was that they had handicrafts, especially knitting long tassles in empty spools with nails hammered into the end. I have no idea what these multicolored tails were good for. We all played marbles, spun tops. My recollection is that the Chinese kids were pretty good at our games and they also had special ones of their own.

Chinese are an intelligent and resourceful race. Just out of curiosity about five years ago I Googled the Chung Mei home to see what it happened. Not surprisingly, there was an alumni Association. I called the woman who ran it and we had a pleasant conversation for half an hour or so and what she told me that most of the children, those orphans, had graduated, integrated well into American society, married and been successful.

I don't recall knowing any Japanese until I got to junior high school. Even there they were not very many. Only one name, George Sasaki, comes to mind. This should not be surprising. The Japanese had been relocated out of California to places like Manzanar in one of the most infamous acts of the Roosevelt administration. Those who had come back to California were reclaiming a life that had been pre-much shattered by the war. Though Japanese are of course at the top of every list in terms of scholarship in the United States today, I don't recall that they were especially well represented in our college prep classes.

When I got to the University of California in the 1960s it was different. There was quite a bit of residual prejudice against the Japanese dating from the war, but also something new. I remember distain by one of my fraternity brothers for "fish head eaters." The "Yellow Peril" worked harder and were perhaps smarter than us white boys and he was scared of the competition. Today it is much more than he could

have imagined. One of my other recollections is that, sadly, as cute as the Japanese and Chinese girls were in college, their parents would generally not allow them to date Anglos. Vicky Toy, hope you found the right guy.

There were a lot of Italian-Americans in the schools I went to, but one would almost forget the hyphenation. They had been in California longer than our parents. They were mostly successful; an Italian-American had founded the Bank of America at the time of the San Francisco fire in 1906, and the Jacuzzi family was just then inventing the Jacuzzi. There were also quite a few Hispanic Americans. They were also old time settlers for the most part and well integrated. I could recognize a Spanish or Italian name when I heard one, but it was only later that I found out that the kids that I knew with names like Sousa and Mello were Portuguese extraction. To us they were just kids.

We experienced therefore great deal of diversity growing up, but we didn't call it that and we didn't make a big issue out of it. I don't even know if the Anglo Americans were a majority. I wouldn't have thought so, and I don't think it would've made a difference. What I can say is that none of the minorities, racial or otherwise, were very obstreperous.

There were gay kids as well in school. Although we talked a great deal about sex, we didn't talk much about sexual orientation. However, among the gang I was with him junior high school we used to virtually, every day, punch each other on the shoulder and say "you homo" as a gentle put-down, being quite ignorant about what it referred to. But it wasn't mean-spirited. We simply didn't know many identified homosexuals.

I was an exception in that. My mother knew a number of homosexuals and told me about it, so I talked to them whenever they came over. There was no big thing to her, and I didn't make an issue of it. One of the kids on our block, Kostya Berlandt, two years younger than us, decided sometime in high school that he was gay and he became one of the leaders of the gay movements in San Francisco in the 60s and 70s, dying of AIDS is fairly early age. Kostya was raised by his grandmother, his parents having split up. He was socially awkward. Although Mike, about Kostya's age, was in our gang, Kostya never belonged. I thought he had tried to woo my sister and had proven an inept suitor, but she tells me that he befriended her so he could try on her clothes. It wasn't a secret from her. I think we would have said about homosexuals what Lady Campbell had said in Oscar Wilde's day: "Just don't do it in the streets and scare the horses." Back in the 1950s they weren't scaring the horses, and everybody got along just fine.

I was aware of social class. My father worked for Shell Development Company. My mother was the only mom I remember who worked; she had to pay off my sister's medical bills. David's father Phil and Mike's father Ken worked for the Standard Oil refinery in Richmond. Ken Fitzgerald had contracted black lung disease working as a coal miner. He then worked for the county assessor's office. His wife Lois was involved in psychology, though I don't remember that she had a steady job. Elliott (Bud) Baker also worked for Shell Development, as a machinist. Shirley Baker probably went to work about the time the family moved away, when we were in the 8th grade. We all drove middle class cars: my family was

partial to VWs, new and German. Phil bought a new 1956 Chevy wagon, the nicest car in the neighborhood, about the same time he and his wife Betty took a family vacation to Hawaii. I think they had come into an inheritance. The Weavers had an early '50s Plymouth. The Fitzgeralds favored Nash cars, somehow identified with liberals. I don't remember what Bud and Shirley Baker drove, but Bud's hobby was restoring a 1950 MG TD, which he later sold to David Baker.

Some asides on Lois Fitzgerald. She was doing some research on for whatever degree she was pursuing, and she inveigled us neighborhood kids into her back room to serve as test subjects. This was in those dark days before regulations were in place on human subjects research. I remember her asking me questions which I now know to be quite purely part of an IQ test, things like "if I give you a bucket of water, a 2/3 cup measure, a 3/4 cup measure, and an empty bowl, how would you get exactly 1/2 cup of water into the empty bowl?" The Fitzgeralds were the first family on the block to get TV. Ken watched some famous fights, perhaps Gene Tunny. Lois watched her man Adlai Stevenson capture the 1952 nomination. I watched a circle of moving blur about 8" in diameter and wondered, why bother?

In Junior and Senior High School we were thrown in with the Cal faculty kids and those of other professionals. It didn't register with me at the time that many of the guys I hung with, such as Al Koenig, Ron Brown, Neil Friedman, and Frank Henyay, were Jewish, or even that being Jewish was such a different thing to be. We knew that Mort Sahl, Lennie Bruce and Tom Lehrer were Jewish, and we were introduced to them by guys such as the aforementioned, but I never made a strong connection. What I did notice was that these kids had more money, vacationed in Europe and talked about out-of-state colleges. They wore Pendelton shirts, a true status symbol, while I wore cheap cotton shirts. I was less than gracious in pointing out to my parents their financial shortcomings.

As I mentioned, our houses were built up quite steep slope. The way that they had built them, there was a foundation which followed the contours of the land, and then the walls went up from there. Maybe ten feet high on the downhill side, just a crawl space on the uphill side. It resulted in a large unfinished basement under the west side of each house.

My father was the first on the block to do something with this space. He envisioned making a driveway coming from the street from going into a garage underneath the house. This required that the basement be excavated. In place of the steady grade under the house, he needed to have a flat place to park, about 12 feet wide, dug out. This was a lot of pick and shovel work. His plan involve using a wheelbarrow to move the dirt into the backyard, leveling off the upper side of the lot and putting a dry wall of used concrete to hold the two-level terraced backyard together.

His main source of labor was me. I was a fat and somewhat lazy kid. I don't think that I volunteered for it, but I have a lot of respect for my father so I did what he asked. I worked most of a fairly warm summer, probably 1955, and actually managed to get the basement dug out and the backyard split into levels, laying the dry wall in between. I am sure he was satisfied, though I don't remember him expressing it it in any gushy manner. It gave me a little bit of muscle and gave me some pride in myself. After he had finished the job, pouring a floor and installing a garage door, he parked the car, by this

point a 1957 VW, under the house. He had his workshop down there as well so was really a very useful space and it had been a good idea.

My father did a couple of other projects with the house. When we first moved in he extended the back room of the house a little bit so that we had a larger, more functional kitchen with room for a freezer, dryer and washing machine. Mother called it the "view room." Later on, he extended the east side of the house north, building a large room which became my parents bedroom about 1958 or 59. He enlisted me on all of them, teaching me how to drive a nail, handle a saw, and generally be useful. He was so skillful it would have been easier without me, but he considered it important to pass on skills that had come down from his grandfather, a cabinet maker, and his father, a plasterer and general contractor. I am very glad he did. I was never nearly as good with a hammer as my father, but today I'm better than the average person I know. I do not know that my father intended to teach me character, but these exercises certainly worked in that direction. When I compare my childhood with that of my grown children, these are the kinds of elements that are missing. They will not be absent from my son Eddie's upbringing.

Sister Stephanie reminds me that after the garage was built, we children were banished from the basement for about a month before Christmas. On Christmas morning each child found a key under the tree, to a toobox set up in the basement. That was my father's nature. He wasn't long on words, telling you what he valued, but his deeds showed his love and his expectations of us.

The last, largest addition also served as my mother's office, where she pursued her business of preparing manuscripts for University of California students. Specifically, grad students in anthropology. I look back on it and I wish that I had paid better attention. She was talking to some of the leading lights in anthropology, such names as Alfred and Theodora Kroeber and Robert Murphy, and sociologists such as Erving Goffman.

I'm writing this history of our childhood down because I think he was rather extraordinary and the events of our childhood have a great deal to do with the development of our character. Let me mention in passing that the really excellent writer, Joan Didion, has done the same. She has a fairly short but very touching account for California childhood in her book "Blue Nights." Didion is about 10 years older than we are, but it hadn't changed. The chronicle of the freedoms she enjoyed tallies with mine, and I think it is this freedom which was very important to the formation of our characters.

Conversely, my grown children and their peers did not go out to explore the wonderful wilderness of the Potomac River, within an easy walk of our house. Nobody did it, and most mothers would not have allowed it. Dynamite could not blast them out of the house on weekends. They stayed in bed until noon, then fiddled with computers and television or got driven somewhere. On their own, they would walk no farther than the one kilometer to the community swimming pool, fully protected by lifeguards, etc., for supervised dive lessons and maybe some unstructured splashing around.

I get a little thrill when I get on marshrutka buses here in Kiev and I see a boy of eight or ten riding by himself, confidently going to school or going to the market to do some shopping for his parents. I see boys of that age and at the beach by themselves, and riding bicycles in groups. It's nice to be free. I want that freedom and independence for my young son.

Reed College

Many times in life I find myself doing what other people want. And usually not terribly successfully. I tend to stop, look around, and reassess the situation. In IBM my boss asked me to write some sort of an assessment of what I was going to be doing over the next couple years. I had no idea what he meant, and it never got written. I got marked down in my next periodic evaluation for that oversight. A wife will give me some tasks to do, offering me no way by which I can refuse it, something that doesn't make sense. One such thing might be taking a child who is obviously not sick to the pediatrician. Another might be going to a swim meet to watch a kid who is not interested and who is doing nothing which is beneficial in the first place, just diving off the board, because his mother wants him to. In general, my attitude shows, and it doesn't work out terribly well.

I was kind of the way with college. Everybody thought to going to college was a good idea, except me. I went along with the business because everybody else was going to college. However, I had no idea what I was doing there, why I should be there, what came next. I'm a kid with large existential questions, such as the ones I noted above that I asked my father when I was four and five years old. I found myself in college not really knowing how or why I was there, challenged to find something interesting in doing what I was doing.

The first semester at Reed was pretty interesting. I took physics, which was well taught and interesting. I took a humanities course which was likewise well thought out. The humanities course was one of the college's pride and joys. They have been teaching it kind of the same way for almost 100 years. It is well structured and very interesting, an introduction to true scholarship. The third course I took was probably mathematics. I don't remember. This mathematics was unlike any I had seen before – it was proofs and logic and stuff like that.

My second semester went somewhat downhill. It involved chemistry, which it never interested me as much, and I did not do as well. Moreover, at the same time I was getting involved in intellectual discussions on campus. I was involved in playing cards, especially poker. I have found an abandoned bicycle on campus and was bicycling around Portland. I was doing quite a bit of drinking, exploring my new social freedom.

My major when I entered the college was physics. I changed that my second year to sociology, because I enjoyed a sociology course taught by John Pock. I didn't do as well in my other courses. I forget what they were. And I was more and more involved in the discussions that went on with the rest of the people on campus.

I was rather the odd man out. The dominant culture of Reed college was this was set by the big-city Jews. Al Birholtz from Chicago, Jim Kahan from Los Angeles, Jay Rosenberg from somewhere back East, Lennie Ross, who had won the $64,000 question at the age of 12 through his expertise on the stock market. Although we talked a great deal, I do not remember the conversations as overtly political, except in a few instances. I supported Richard Nixon because my family had always been Republicans. I found that I was in a very small minority. I don't even recall that there was a great deal of enlightenment in our arguments. We listened to the Nixon - Kennedy debates on TV. I thought Nixon made good points. Everybody else lambasted, belittled, and ridiculed him. I could accept being wrong, but not if I could not see why I was wrong. It was culture, not logic.

Another thing that sticks in my mind is that I talked about the problems of welfare and supporting people who would be unable to make a contribution to society. They called me a social Darwinist. It seems that everybody else had thought these issues out, and more particularly, they had ready labels for people like me who were not of the right mindset. I'm not uncomfortable being wrong, and I'm not uncomfortable being corrected when I'm wrong. But I am very hard nosed about being steamrolled when somebody else doesn't seem to have a coherent argument but said that wants to push me over by force of personality. That seemed to be what happens quite a bit.

They had a lot of logistical support on their side. We sang Pete Seeger songs, Woodie Guthrie songs, the Communist Internationale, and all manner of tunes which represented a mindset different than mine. I looked at it as curious, and didn't see that there was a large and coherent pattern behind all this dogma to which I was exposed, and to which I found myself increasingly opposed. It represented I suppose what they called those unamerican activities which the US House of Representatives had a committee to investigate. Of course Reed College was vehemently opposed to the House Unamerican Activities Committee, McCarthy, and everything associated with them. I wasn't convinced one way or the other, but as I say, I was damned if I would be steamrolled.

Among the other things that one does in college is to learn about life and love and sex. After my sophomore year I stayed in Portland and experienced a few almost-seductions with some of the young women who were staying the summer. And that fall I lost my virginity to a strumpet – there's no other word – who was tolerant enough to put up with the fact that I was too drunk to pull it off in the evening and went home with me so we could make it in the morning. Within a month I had another girlfriend, the first serious love of my life, and by the end of the semester I had been become so involved with things other than academics that I decided to drop out. I had no clue why I was in college, and the other things I was doing were more interesting.

A college friend, Dugan Barr, died in November 2019. My reflections on his life, and the women who have played a role in both our lives, adds more color to this account of my college days.

Throughout my Reed college days I always felt quite poor. I was aware that sending me to Reed was a financial strain for my parents, despite the scholarship. After my first year I stopped living in the dormitories. Living off campus gave me more freedom, and cost less. I enjoyed doing my own cooking. I

signed up for Multnomah County Food Relief, which gave me most of my groceries at no cost. I did work to make money. I use my typing skills to prepare papers for other students. I guess I did a pretty good job. I made money playing poker. In the fall all the new kids came. They continued to lose money first semester, although by February or March all of the easy money was out of the game, and I found myself pitted against people who are better than me. I was wise enough to drop out at that point, so I remained ahead in the game. The other kids played for fun. I needed the money.

I worked in the cafeteria the first year in order to earn my food. In my second and third years I used to go into the cafeteria and beg food from people. I smoked to at this time, and I also begged cigarettes from people, and smoked butts that I found in the ashtrays. This is not a very proud experience. I can say that I was uncomfortable. I had less money than everybody else, and yet I had a more conservative philosophy than the people who seem to have money to spend. I was a fish out of water.

As I look back on these college friendships, only a couple seemed to endure. The hard leftists of my youth have not mellowed whatsoever. They are impossible to talk to anymore. They simply regard me as irredeemably, irrevocably wrong in my views and refuse to discuss issues. They consider the argument settled when they call me an anti-Semite, as if that fully explained a difference in politics.

I had a hint of that at the time. They did not want to really discuss the issues that they held so dear, but they wanted to sway me to their opinion. This purpose is transparently clear after 50 years. They have not changed an iota, and I have changed quite a bit. Their life's experience hasn't changed them much, my life's experience has mellowed me and molded me, and I feel free enough within my own skin to say so. Though I reconnected with the Reed College group at our 40th reunion, in 2004, I today have a few remaining dialogues. There is simply nothing in common, and no reason that I should continue the discussion.

I used to give $100 now and then to the Reed College annual fund. When somebody from their Major Gifts department would contact me, I would ask to speak to someone from the Minor Gifts group. I'm not even doing that anymore. I do not believe in what they are doing, and I really do not believe that they are developing open-minded young scholars. No, the educational establishment of the United States, and Reed College in particular, is perpetuating a kind of academic leftism under the rubric of open inquiry and academic freedom. I don't want to support it. I am going to homeschool my son Edward, and my prayer is that there will be an open schooling, homeschooling alternative to university education by the time he's old enough for that to be an issue.

I mentioned that I enjoyed exploring when I was in high school. This adventuresome nature continued while I was in college. I had a bicycle, an old racing-style bicycle with ram's horn handlebars, one of which was rusted off at the bend, with only one speed, which I rode all over town. I rode it over across the river to the farmers market where I bought horsemeat. It was cheap nutritious. I rode it to pick up my grocery allotment from Multnomah County Food Relief. Nobody else went with me; it was a solitary exercise. I rode the bicycle back and forth to my various houses. I can remember living in small rooms

here and there, even a basement with a bare matress for which I paid almost no rent. These experiences set me apart from everybody else who had worked established, stable living arrangements.

I was also somewhat apart from the fads that swept through the campus. Scientology was a big fad. I looked at it, listened to it, went to some other meetings, and absolutely did not get it. It struck me as a con.

People were greatly taken by some books. Stranger in a Strange Land captured everybody's imagination. I read the book and could not see what the fuss was about. Somehow it did not relate to my existence. The third source of inspiration to everybody else was the JRR Tolkien series, Lord of the Rings. I didn't see the point.

I suppose that I am outside of the loop on most things, although in high school, when everybody was reading Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged, I kind of admired John Galt. I would not get political, would not get up in arms about it, but I do remember feeling a bit of inspiration when reading Rand, Vance Packard and others. On the other hand, the stuff that people were reading in college did not inspire me at all.

Speaking of reading, I should mention my first career at the University of California. I was at Cal as a high school student from the spring of 1959 through the spring of 1960. I took total of five courses, as I recall: differential and integral calculus, two semesters of philosophy, and one semester of German. I had access to the Cal library. This I really loved. I can remember checking out books by Nietzsche, HL Mencken, and my favorite of all, Charles Darwin's Origin of the Species. I read prodigiously in my last couple of years of high school. This is a habit that has stayed with me for a lifetime. I have not reread The Origin of the Species, but I remember it better than anybody should after 50 years, especially given that it is written in prose which is relatively inaccessible to a 21st-century reader. Reed's library was just not as interesting, though I must admit I didn't leave myself as much time to spend reading.

College Dropout

Though my good grades and SAT scores got me a scholarship, I didn't know why I was in college. I did not have a plan for life. Other kids were saying that they wanted to be lawyers. I had no idea what a lawyer was. My GPA drifted asymptotically toward zero over the 2 1/2 years before I decided that I did not, at least at that moment, belong in college.

I dropped out and returned to California where I got a job with the telephone company for a couple of months. Then, for the only time in my life, a little political pull helped me out. My mother knew a guy who worked for the California Department of Highways. At his recommendation I took a civil service test and I was in, for $440/mo, a hundred better than at the phone company. It did not take the head of the survey team long to figure out I was good with arithmetic, and he made me the transit man – the guy calculating angles, telling them where to drive the stakes that defined where freeways were going to be built.

That was the beginning of my epiphany. It was pretty clear that nobody in the survey crew was even in a position to appreciate whatever genius I possessed. No way in hell was I going to be paid for what I was capable of doing. If I was going to progress, I had to take responsibility for my life.

Military

About that time I got a request to show up for a draft physical. Taking charge, I scoured the telephone book for something I knew existed because one among the "dumb kids" grade school gang had reputedly joined it, the National Guard. I finally found one unit which turned out to be Company A of the 49th signal Battalion, in Alameda. I called them up and made an appointment. A Warrant Officer McClelland played his hand pretty coolly. He gave me a preliminary exam to see if I had any talent, and I guess I satisfied him that I did. He had me signed up for seven months of active duty: basic training, Morse code school, and radio school. I had no idea what it would entail, but it was certainly less than two years. Vietnam was just a cloud on the horizon, but I didn't want to give two years of my life. I signed. In July of 1964 I took leave from the Department of Highways and went on active duty.

In basic training they take away your clothes, your hair, your freedom, and with that pretty much your entire identity. They lay the pieces of you out and put them back together in the form of a soldier. It was a remarkable process to witness. They made me the trainee platoon Sergeant – the head trainee in a group of about 120. Since they had nothing else to go on, I assume it was on the basis of my AFQT (Armed Forces Qualifying Test) score. It is the only thing like an IQ test I've ever taken for which they told me the outcome.

I was a lousy platoon Sergeant. When Jerry Fisher, a wise-ass Jewish kid in the ranks said something funny, I would laugh. You don't do that in the Army. It has no sense of humor. I got busted – was forced to swap places with Davis, one of the trainee corporals, in charge of 40 trainees. Davis was an upright 18-year-old from Standard, California (named after its gas station) who took the job more seriously. I completed basic training as the trainee corporal in Davis' place. I'm grateful for my basic training for teaching me how to use a rifle, putting me in somewhat better physical shape, and introducing me to a much broader range of humanity than I might have imagined existed. I got to know American Indians, Eskimos, Hawaiians, and a cross-section of the American black population I had never been in contact with before. It also confirmed the breadth of the anti-war feeling that existed even before the war. Another trainee corporal, Ralph Reiner, forever sang "The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind" Or, "blowin' out your end," depending on his mood. When Johnson escalated the war, it was in spite of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and other long established peaceniks.

My Morse code school was at Fort Ord, near Monterey, California, where I had done basic training. All I had to do was switch barracks, unlike most of the other graduates of the basic course who generally had to go to another army base for advanced individual training (AIT). I carried my stuff about a mile to the new barracks and was seated on my upstairs bunk when I heard a call up the stairs. "Is there a sailor up there?" There was no answer. Again, a little bit louder: "Is there a SAILOR up there?" Again no answer.

And then a third time "Is there a sailor up there. I spell. S E I B.." I got an "oh, crap" feeling and went downstairs to see what it was.

"Are you the communist?" asked this Sergeant. "No, Sergeant!" "It says here you're a communist." I answered, no, but I knew a communist. One of the kids at Reed College, Richard Healey, was the son of the secretary of the Communist Party of California. That satisfied him, and he went away.

On account of my communist connections they could not teach me Morse code. At least not immediately. They put me to work painting rocks white. When I confessed to knowing something of carpentry, they had me build a little fence out of 2x4s to separate the sergeants from the supplicant riffraff who had to come to the orderly room periodically on business. That task lasted a week, until they decided that I wasn't such a security risk that they could not teach me that dit dah represents A, and so on down to dah dah dit dit for Z.

The schools were organized in cycles. Every week they received a new cycle of graduates from basic training at bases around the country, and consequently a new cycle started up in AIT. I was one cycle behind where I was supposed to be.

The way it worked, they taught us Morse code in the morning and about the radios which were used to send Morse code in the afternoon. We had to stick with learning code until we achieved a certain level of proficiency, something like 35 words per minute. I don't recall that they had any tests about the radio part. Anyhow, I picked up Morse code fairly quickly.

About this time the Army had their own epiphany. I had signed up for just enough time in the Army to take in the three schools: basic training, Morse code school, and radio school. The fact that I had missed a week of training meant that I could not attend my radio school. They would not be able to teach me all that they intended. They immediately dispatched bushytailed young Sergeant Ferguson to remedy the situation.

Ferguson carefully explained the gravity of the situation, that I would be unable to attend radio school unless I extended my enlistment by one week. Here, please sign the papers. After three months' experience with the Army I didn't know a whole lot, but I knew that if I had the power to withhold something from them, it was a good idea to use that power to the hilt. I told him no. I had to go back to college. I was enrolled in the University California at Berkeley for the next semester. I absolutely could not afford to spend another week in the Army. It wasn't true, but he was playing a weak hand. He eventually gave up, and I was going to have to take leave of the Army after my Morse code school.

Things took one more odd bounce. They changed the teaching pattern in the second cycle after I entered Morse code school. Instead of teaching Morse code in the morning and radio in the afternoon, they taught all of the Morse code in the first five weeks, and all of the radio and the second five. Since I had mastered Morse code quickly, they moved me forward two cycles. Then, because of Christmas, they let us out early. I was home! I quickly enrolled in Berkeley to complete my bachelor's degree.

My second college career was undistinguished, except that I paid attention to my grades and took a worthwhile major, mathematics. I graduated in three semesters and had pulled together a good enough grade point average to get a Phi Beta Kappa key. I interviewed with most of the companies that showed up on campus, and accepted a job with IBM in Oakland.

I had also interviewed with Sylvania, based in Sunnyvale. They said they were really looking for people with a masters degree, would would talk to me. I didn't hear from them. A couple of months after joining IBM, they called to ask why I didn't answer their letter. What letter? In the shuffle of my hippie-inhabited rooming house the letter must have gotten lost. In my naïveté I didn't think to call them and follow up. I would have taken their offer, and been in Silicon Valley on the ground floor. Who knows? I can't complain in any case – I have had an interesting life.

IBM

At IBM they taught me how to program, and it turned out I was pretty good at it. I was in a sales office, which used guys like me, called "Systems Engineers," to make sure that the computers we sold actually did the jobs our clients needed to get done. Although in theory the customers had their own programmers, I often wound up making things work for them. I programmed computers to set type for the San Francisco area newspapers and to account for pipe production at Kaiser Steel, among other things.

In the spring of 1968 the National Guard had stepped up its drill schedule to twice a month. We were designated a Select Reserve Force, the first to go if Johnson called us up for Vietnam. About that time an offer came through IBM for a job supporting our military in Vietnam. The conversation went something like this:
"Would you like to go to Vietnam on assignment to support our military?"
"Yes."
"If we give you an overseas pay differential of 60 percent?
"Yes."
"Not so fast. How about if we also pay your way back to the United States for a vacation every year?"
"Yes, indeed."
"I don't want you to make a rash decision. How about if we give you two additional one-week R&R vacations every year? It will be all expense paid, and you can go as far away from Vietnam as Hawaii, in any direction."
"YES."
"Don't rush. Did I mention that all of your living expenses, including restaurant meals, would be paid all the while you are in Vietnam?"
"YES"
"As you make up your mind, let me mention that everything is tax-free."

"YES"

The one question IBM could not answer was whether it would get me out of the National Guard. I spent a long time reading the National Guard regulations and determined that I had a problem. As a signalman I had a critical military occupational specialty (MOS). I talked to Sergeant Gregory, the regular army guy who ran our weekends only unit on a full-time basis. He was excited that I had the chance to go to Vietnam and sympathetic to my problem with the MOS. He said "The Army ain't gonna step on its own dick. How'd you like to be a cook?" We got that one taking care of, and I left for Vietnam in November of 1968.

Some of my acquaintances in Berkeley were horrified that I was going over to participate in the war. Antiwar rallies had been a pretty regular thing on Sproul Hall Plaza since the Free Speech Movement had taken place in 1964, while I was on active duty. I listened closely to the arguments against the war. I knew that I didn't have enough experience to evaluate them, but I could be certain that this was just a bunch of kids who didn't want to serve their country in much of any way, and absolutely certainly didn't want to get shot at. Their rebellion was grounded as much in self-absorption is anything else: sex, drugs, rock 'n roll. My housemate Jack Plasky showed his grasp of the situation when he asked with big sincere eyes if I was really going over there to make computers that killed people.

This introduces a theme that has been repeated throughout my life, in this autobiographical piece. I grew up with the belief that society had done something for me, primarily keeping me safe, forming an environment in which my parents could prosper, and educating me. I in turn owed something to society. In the context under discussion it was helping the country defend itself and paying taxes. And, as you can see, I didn't have any moral compunction about choosing the most advantageous means of satisfying those demands. I also didn't deeply examine the connection between the defense of our country and fighting in Vietnam 10,000 miles away. We all knew from the newsmagazines that the Soviets had within the past few years pushed to expand their empire in Korea, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, India and Cuba. It was pretty easy to convince me that they were doing it again in Vietnam.

Vietnam

Despite the fact that I had my eyes peeled for antiaircraft fire as the plane descended out of the clouds for a landing at Tan San Nhut airport on October 23rd, 1968, Saigon turned out to be deceptively peaceful. It was not normal; it was full of military vehicles and soldiers, and the streets were flooded with Honda motorcycles bought with the money spent by the US military establishment. 500,000 Americans form a fairly visible physical presence in a country of 50 million. Our economic impact was immense – the whole Saigon economy seemed to revolve around American military spending.

I spent my first year as the only representative of the sales division outside of Saigon, in the northern city of Danang. All four services had major installations there, some of them with sizable computers. I

had a very broad portfolio, everything from sales representatives to nitty-gritty operating system programmer. Basically I was there to serve as the face of IBM. The other six American IBMers had real jobs – they kept the machines fixed. They did a good job, and they stood high in the eyes of our customers. I used my first year overseas to learn a little bit about Vietnamese culture and language. My landlord, who ran the French brewery, had seven marriageable daughters. I was invited over frequently. He, however, was the only one who spoke French and the daughters were not that tempting. I did, however, take the rusty edges off my high school French from 10 years prior.

The city of Danang was off-limits for the military – they were so many troops that they would have simply overwhelmed the town. The Marines were at Red Beach, about 10 miles west of the city, the Air Force logically enough along the airport southwest of the city, and the Navy on the peninsula between the Han river, which flowed north into Danang Bay, and the South China Sea. I lived right in the center of town. Managing my own schedule was delightful. I was able to find time to go to China Beach most afternoons, where I cemented the habit of daily exercise which has lasted me a lifetime. I would jog for a mile or two and then swim. There weren't any other foreigners where I swam, north of the Navy's R&R spot with its troublesome lifeguards. Sometimes I got drafted by the local fishermen to help them launch or beach their woven bamboo fishing boats.

It is hard to identify any other virtuous habits I developed during that year. I got to know a number of delightful women and made a few generalizations which have stood the test of time. Men and women are naturally drawn to one another. In the time-honored model, the man provides financial wherewithal and the women make themselves companionable and hope to marry and bear children. The English complaint about GIs during World War II, that they were "overpaid, oversexed, and over here" certainly applied. It was easy to make lady friends, a fact which aroused some resentment among the Vietnamese.

It would be unkind to characterize the women as simply selling their bodies. There was a lot of genuine affection. You could safely say that the knack for developing affection for an American was a useful life skill. To quote one of the English women from the above hyperlink, "food was scarce, but we supplemented our income by a little impromptu whoring with the GIs – we all did it." I include here a link to a love story in which I played a peripheral role.

It was interesting that few of the girls took any precautions. I don't understand their logic; their lives were precarious enough without the burden of babies. Sometimes they had a realistic hope that a guy might marry them, but usually not. They generally seemed to take pretty good care of the kids. In any case, it gives me satisfaction to reflect that many of those babies wound up as adoptees in the United States. It is also interesting to note the innocence of those first years of the sexual revolution, before herpes and long before AIDS, when a small dose of antibiotics could remedy any misadventure.

IBM moved me down to Saigon and assigned me to some more substantial work at USAID in late 1969. They had a staff of American contract programmers who probably cost $50,000 apiece with full logistic support. USAID reasoned that it would be cheaper and better for the country if they used local national

programmers. They charged me with developing and then leading a training program for systems analysts and programmers.

The largest part of my success was due to good luck in demographics. Working with USAID brought a draft deferment and a pretty good salary, making the job highly attractive. USAID gave a programmer's aptitude test, which is pretty much the same as the mathematical part of the SAT, ACT or GRE, to the huge number of people who answered a newspaper ad, and offered jobs to the best. We got a staff of 30, about half Chinese, half Vietnamese, half male and half female. Kids that smart were an absolute delight to teach, and within a matter of months the American contract programmers were being phased out. My partner in the effort, Bill Shugg, led the difficult conversion from the DOS to the OS operating system and trained two of the recent hires as systems programmers.

My second most interesting assignment in Saigon was developing the Vietnamese language support for IBM computers. I develop schemes for keypunch data entry of Vietnamese text with diacritical marks, the computer software to translate it for internal representation, the software to print it, and the software to do sorts and comparisons. In the process I learned quite a bit about the mechanics of language. My colleague Curt Maxwell designed the physical part, the type font and print train.

During my college career I indulged my curiosity by taking courses outside of my math - science skill set in poetry, sociology, art history and the like. I had not seriously considered developing other skills. In Vietnam I started writing. USAID needed some technical documents – user documentation telling how to use the environment we had created; programming standards, and things of that like.

IBM was a scrupulously honest company and they expected their employees to follow suit. All of us lived "on the economy" in apartments and villas that we had located on our own. We paid the rent ourselves. Also, as I mentioned above, we were entitled to take all of our meals in restaurants.

IBM insisted that we exchange money at the official rate of 128 piasters to the dollar, whereas the black market rate was between 300 and 350. This meant that IBM was reimbursing us an exorbitant amount for the rents we paid. That was well and good, but above a certain cutoff, I think it was $15,000 a year, our income was taxable. Forcing us to exchange money at the official rate, and reimbursing us in dollars pushed us into higher tax brackets.

I researched the situation and found that if IBM exchanged the dollars to piasters and gave us piasters, we could report them for income tax purposes at the market rate. This would lower our reported income and hence our tax obligation. I wrote a 15 page analysis of the situation and a proposal for changing IBM's expense reimbursement procedure. I made the case that if they reimbursed us in piasters instead of dollars it would be beneficial to the employees and it would discourage black-market transactions. I edited this piece of writing extensively with input from the local office and the Honolulu office, and it finally went to Washington where it was approved. This was another epiphany – I should describe myself as a writer as well as a technical problem solver.

I took advantage of my R&R vacations in the four years I was in Vietnam, traveling to the Philippines, Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Cambodia, Nepal, Thailand, France and Spain. It is interesting that most of us who worked in IBM's Saigon office left the company not too long thereafter. We almost all enjoyed the experience of working overseas, and felt constrained in a normal office environment. Two other factors contributed. First, we were away from the action, not generally in line for promotion into management. Second, we were able to save a fair amount of money. When I left Vietnam I had $100,000 in my brokerage account, a pretty good sum for a guy not yet 30 in 1972.

The overseas bug bit me deeply. I asked and found that IBM had two similar overseas offices, the one in Japan with which we occasionally met for all Asian conferences, and one in Frankfurt, Germany. I set my sights on the Frankfurt office. One day I booked a call at the post office in downtown Saigon and called them up, asking if they had a place for me. They accepted me, and I left Vietnam in July of 1972.

It was several months between the time I had secured the assignment in Germany and I actually left. I was seeing a rather exceptional Vietnamese woman at that time, Josée, born Nguyen Thi My Hue. Her father was a former chief justice, the son of the province chief of Bac Lieu, a rich rice-growing area in the Mekong delta. He had returned at the age of 40 after studying and practicing law in Paris, and promptly married the daughter of the biggest landowner in the province, Nguyen Thi A. They proceeded to have twelve children, of which Josée was the seventh.

Josée was a graduate of the exclusive French school where she had learned excellent English and German as well. We had met at the exclusive French club, the Circle Sportif de Saigon, and known each other for about a year.

I liked her, though I couldn't say that we had a deep love, or understood each other very well. I had an apprehension, well-founded it turned out, that the German girls would not be as interesting as the Vietnamese. And… I was 29 and it was time to get married. It was clear at the time that it was a gamble, but it seemed one worth taking.

Getting married was a rather involved process. Vietnam was a typically corrupt Oriental society. It took a middleman, one who knew whom to bribe and how much. I needed all sorts of documents, like a police clearance, translations of passports, etc. etc. We needed to post banns of marriage and so on. Our guy, a Vietnamese army major, was a bit expensive, but quick and thorough. We had a Buddhist ceremony for the family at her parents' house and a reception on the front lawn of the house of Larry Saslaw, my branch manager, on Cach Mang street.

We arrived in Honolulu for our honeymoon on July 31, 1972. There Josée received instant citizenship as the bride of an American posted overseas under the auspices of the military. We spent a week in El Cerrito, where my mother took a rather quick dislike to this lovely but insubstantial bit of fluff, and then arrived in Frankfurt on August 26. After a week or so there we moved to our final destination, Zweibrücken, the first of September. We were in a small hotel in Contwig, just east of town, when the Olympic massacre took place.

Germany

Josée and I settled into Von Behring Straße 6 in Zweibücken. It was a situation similar to Danang – I was IBM's lone representative in an outpost of an outpost. I got to know my Army client pretty well on a social basis, playing poker, running, and participating in community affairs. However, they ran their operations pretty well, leaving me not much to do. I dedicated myself to learning German. It was the most athletic period in my life. I ran every day, as much as 12 miles on the back roads. Josée and I socialized, mostly with the Vietnamese friends she made there, young wives of American soldiers and older wives of soldiers in the French garrison, as well as East Bloc refugees she met in a German immersion course she took as much to learn the culture as the language. She was truly the queen bee, better educated, better dressed, better looking and higher class than any of them, and fluent in all four operative languages: English, French, German and Vietnamese.

We vacationed in France, quite frequently. Paris was only a five-hour drive, at least for a Mercedes sports car on the relatively thinly patrolled routes national which preceded the autoroutes. We would park the car at a modest hotel just inside the Péripherique, the ring road which generally coincides with the outer stations of the metro, and take public transit everywhere. We spent a lot of time in the Vietnamese quarters, where the food and grocery shopping were both excellent.

On at least one occasion we drove to Cadaques, Spain, where I had vacationed when in Vietnam. We must have cut a rather Gatsbyesque image as we rolled through the small villages of France. I remember an old lady commenting as we rolled slowly though one, top down and Josée looking like a princess, "Il faut profiter du soleil." It is good to take advantage of the sunshine.

The honeymoon ended after just over a year. Josée fought. I could not handle it – I had never fought with a woman before. Had I paid better attention, I would have noticed that her mother and father fought all the time. It was part of her concept of marriage, and her Buddhist notion of kharma inclined her to accept it as an inalterable part of her nature. I loved her but I could not live with her. She left for Los Angeles, with the understanding that she would get a no-fault divorce and I'd pay for her college.

My premonition about German women had been accurate. The few who cared about meeting Americans did not have that much to offer. Even when I moved to Frankfurt in 1974 the pickings were slim. Though I was more than ready to start a family, I managed to have only one serious relationship, with a Hungarian woman, Livia, before returning to the United States in November of 1976. She was slim, blonde, beautiful and fluent in several lanaguages. A pleasure to be with. I might well have married her, but she pushed the subject too hard, and I backed away. My friend John Gentzler thought I had made a mistake. And I may have, as it took another thirty five years to find true love.

Frankfurt offered more interesting work due to one exceptional soldier, Major Ron Glidden. His ambition was to automate the retail level of Army supply, the Direct Support Unit. DSUs fixed military

equipment that was beyond the capability of the drivers and mechanics in the units that owned them. The DSUs used paper records to keep track of their spare parts inventories, typically carried about 1000 different kinds of item. They also handled replacement orders for the units they supported, things like spark plugs and headlights.

Keeping track of things and money had been the first business computer applications back in the 1950s. The problem at the DSU level was budgetary – they couldn't afford a computer for such a small job. A DEC PDP-8 might have done the trick, but DEC did not support customers the way IBM did. IBM offered no comparable computer.

But wait - a ray of hope! In 1973 IBM announced the 3741 data entry system. It was supposed to be just a key-to-floppy-disk device. However, they did provide 4k of memory and an Intel 4004 processor, a primative programming language, and a printer, supposedly just to help edit the data being entered. That was all I needed… something I could program, however primative. I wrote an inventory control system for the DSUs, and Glidden promoted it relentlessly throughout the Army in Europe. Observing the obstacles that confronted him, and his doggedness and taking them on, was an education. In this world you do not succeed on merit alone – it takes a lot of persuasion.

In the end, the long knives managed to kill our DSU level supply system. However, Maj. Glidden had an ace in the hole. The DSUs had a second requirement – to keep track of work orders from their customer units. They had to make sure that they got all the repairs done, more or less in the sequence received, and returned the items to the units within a reasonable timeframe. Once again the numbers were small, in this low hundreds of items being repaired at any one time. I programed the system to handle this, and while the long knives were occupied killing our supply system, Glidden snuck it through. It became an Army standard system. I think it makes a fairly good accounting of my last two years in Germany.

Though I had the right to return to San Francisco from whence I had come eight years back, IBM swore they needed me in Washington, D.C. Having nothing really to hold me to San Francisco, I assented. It was a canard. My next two years were the least productive of my career.

Washington DC

Late 1976 had not been an auspicious time to return to Washington. IBM was being regularly trounced in the federal procurement marketplace by Control Data, Sperry Unisys, Burroughs, Digital Equipment Corporation, Wang Federal Systems and other companies that seem to crop up every couple of weeks. IBM's high reliability, high service and high cost model didn't compete well in that marketplace. IBM's top brass, however, appeared not to appreciate their situation. They were as arrogant as ever. Among other things, they enthusiastically implemented affirmative action, which meant that I found myself working for a series of people other than white males, people who had less time with the company than I and, in my opinion, no obvious skills, management or technical. They left me in a cubicle to molder, moderatly well paid and severely underemployed. There was a lot of free time to catch up on other aspects of my life.

I started buying real estate. First, a house in the Glover Park neighborhood of Washington. Then a month later, a rental house in Takoma Park, Maryland, and within a year, a six-unit apartment in Takoma Park and half interest in a townhouse in Reston, Virginia. With the tax write-offs, they more or less broke even, and they were a great vehicle for growing an estate. I shared my house in Washington with three roommates, hoping that through them I could enlarge my circle of friends. I did develop friendships, but no romances came of them.

My highest priority was finding a wife. Though I tried several churches, work, and other avenues to build a network of contacts through which I might meet somebody, it didn't happen. I dated, not as much as I would have liked, and simply did not find anybody who seemed like a candidate to be Mrs. Seibert. However much we fought, I had at least loved Josée. In desperation I invited her back for an attempt at reconciliation. It fell apart after six months, costing me another $20K in the form of a house I had bought for her family. I was fortunate to avoid worse by beating off her junkyard dog feminist attorney, Nan Hunter. Josée had Americanized herself pretty quickly.

After two years marking time in IBM's Washington military sales office, I transferred to a staff job. I helped develop cost models for federal proposals, showing the cost of every piece of hardware and service at every stage in the contract, and providing a cost model over the life of a project, typically five years, discounted to present dollars. I had suggested that it was silly to do it longhand. It was a natural computer application, and we were a computer company. I was invited to automate the process.

The system was to be written in a new programming language called APL – A Programming Language – that IBM had developed for interactive use. It was hosted on machines in Los Angeles. I did the programming in Bethesda. In 1978 and 79 this was big news. I really knocked myself out to make a robust and full-featured program.

I spent the best part of a year developing this thing and got it working pretty well. My boss was an old-time manager. Managers at IBM were ex-salesman for the most part, and the better ones became sales managers. The others, the technical managers, were therefore seldom great technical people themselves. I think I can say that my manager had no clue what I was doing, but he heard feedback that it was more or less okay. When the project was over he gave me a $500 award. It was a very small recognition. And at that point I decided that I was wasting my time with IBM. I had a couple of hundred thousand dollars in my investment portfolio and a real estate portfolio of five properties. I could afford to take a risk. I went next door, from 4330 to 4350 East-West Highway in Bethesda, and talked to Booz Allen and Hamilton. They immediately made an offer of 10% more than I was making and I jumped at it. I really should have done more research, but I was ready to go.

A lot happened the last week of August, 1979. Josée took off alone for the Tahitian vacation we had planned together, planning to deal with the divorce upon her return. In my first days at Booz, Allen I met an attractive young woman named Mary Ann McCleary. And, in the vast mysterious Soviet Union, a baby girl arrived who would be baptized Oksana Oleksandrivna Badovska.

About my third week at Booz I was thrown onto a proposal effort with this same Mary Ann McCleary. I knew the computer part of the proposal cold and was by this time a fairly good writer. Mary Ann knew what Booz wanted and how to get all of the support tasks accomplished. The proposal won and I was put in charge of the project. Pretty heady stuff. A couple of surprises came out as Mary Ann and I started seeing each other. First, she had always seen me as the guy who rode a bicycle to work. She was shocked, not unpleasantly, when I showed up for a date driving a Mercedes 450SL sports car. The second surprise was that we had the same birthday.

I spent only one year with Booz, Allen. They were in the business of making money, pure and simple. Ethical issues that posed no legal liability were never even a consideration. They pulled me from the job I was heading, and competent to do so, to put me on another called SNEP, the Saudi Navy Expansion Program. The US Navy was helping the Saudis recycle petrodollars by building them a navy. It as as big of a pork barrel as one can imagine. The Saudis who oversaw the thing were few, young and naïve; the Navy guys pretty senior and appreciative of the benefits that come with managing a large budget, and the Booz, Allen managers were former Navy guys who saw an opportunity to make megabucks.

I was never going to be a player in this game. It isn't my style. When they asked me what size computer the Saudis needed to manage their spare parts, I extrapolated from the highly relevant experience I had had in Germany and Vietnam. I suggested one that could have fit easily in a semi trailer. Wrong answer. The Navy wanted to give them IBM's biggest and best, something that would fill half a gymnasium. The difference was between tens of thousands of dollars and a few million. When one of the young Saudis asked me how we had come up with our extimate of the necessary capacity, I indiscreetly indicated that I had no clue. Wrong answer – without ever being told exactly why, I was soon pulled off the project. Way off.

They sent me to Buenos Aires to work as the junior member of a three-man team with Renault Automobiles. The other two consultants were from a totally different divison of Booz, Allen, one with long-standing contempt for the federal division. The two consultants had company-wide reputations for being just plain nasty. So much so that only his good knowledge of Spanish for this job prevented the older one, Frank Orzel, from being fired. When the project ended, he was gone. Mike McLaughlin, the other one, was an incredibly young, brash and cruel man who had mastered the Booz, Allen style and could work endless hours. They tried their psychological sadism on me, but it didn't really have much effect. They were both working on other jobs, flying in and out of Buenos Aires. Neither one had nearly the background I did in computers, and Mike didn't speak any Spanish. They needed me. The five months I spent there enabled me to bring my Spanish up to fluency. I wrote our final analysis report in Spanish, with the help of Pierre Cuillerot, the French chief of staff, who was fluent in Spanish and who had become my mentor.

A man should stay at Booz Allen Hamilton for only one reason: to become rich. They demand an incredible amount of work and expect that only legal and competitive considerations, not ethics or integrity, will serve as guides to conduct. Mentoring was a part of the culture. One day over lunch we

discussed who was whose man. I was the only one of the table without a godfather. It was a pretty good sign I was in the wrong place.

Independent Consulting

I quit Booz to become an independent consultant shortly after returning from Argentina. It was time to become fully self-sufficient. I had no consulting prospects, but I had a pretty good collection of skills, a real estate portfolio that was at least paying for itself, and a decent stock portfolio. It was time to take more risk.

At the time I left Booz I had no prospective clients and no useful contacts. I started making cold calls. When I phoned my friends still at IBM to let them know what I was up to, it turns out that they knew a few people who were doing what I was attempting, and they put me in touch. By 1981 I was a founding officer of the Washington Independent Computer Consultants Association, WICCA. Not to be confused with pagan witchcraft. The association with other independent consultants was valuable because all of us had some useful contacts, few of us did exactly the same thing, and we could team up on projects that required several people. Also, sooner rather than later, a group of brokers emerged whose speciality was matching consultants with opportunities.

I worked a number of small jobs, gaining experience and building a reputation. After our son Jack was born in April of 1982 Mary Ann stayed home. It was in the early days of the IBM PC. Hard drives had just become available. I designed a Military Inventory Control System to do the same job that Major Glidden and I had automated seven years earlier in Frankfurt. I naïvely thought that because the military needed it, and they could simply license it as needed, they would buy it.

I asked Mary Ann to help program it. Our office was in the basement of 2114 Huidekoper. We kept it there even after we moved to 2120 Huidekoper. We rented out the top two floors and kept the office and garage. Mary Ann was not exactly a willing worker. She didn't like to be in the basement and she didn't like the undefined nature of the project – writing software on spec. She wanted precise instruction.

We eventually sold a couple of licenses to the Army in Korea and the Navy in Puerto Rico. It involved both of us going to Korea and me going to Roosevelt Roads, PR. By that time I was doing quite well as an hourly-rate consultant, and had a much better appreciation of how political the procurement process is. Given Mary Ann's lack of support, the daunting obstacles selling to the military, and my succcess in pure consulting, we dropped the project.

Mary Ann went back to work for Booz, Allen about the time Naomi entered nursery school, fall of 1986. Until that point she and the babysitters, Tan and Lourdes, had pretty much taken care of the kids. I played with them and read to them, but I wasn't needed and wasn't very often asked to feed, bathe, change and amuse them. I had lots of other things to do: build a business, write my first book, act as a

leader in church and professional organizations, and look after investments and real estate, among other things. I could not foresee where this would lead, but leaving discipline and character formation up to the women appears in hindsight to have been a mistake.

Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) was my first major consulting success, about 1984. The introduction was casual – they needed somebody who could tell them about the 3741 programmable workstation, the machine I had programmed for the Army, and write a few words about IBM's midrange computers for an upcoming proposal to the Saudi Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals. As it turned out, however, the head writer for the proposal was stricken with a medical problem. I was drafted to lead that effort, and a couple more. Altogether PETROMIN released six requests for proposal (RFPs) and CSC bid on four of them, winning three.

After the victory parties for the three proposals that Computer Sciences had won, things went quiet for a while. Between the award of the contracts and the start of the work there was a several month break. Computer Sciences assembled teams to handle each of the projects. There were essentially three of them. One of them, called Tools And Methodologies ,set out methodologies, operating procedures and so on for the Saudi Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals (Petromin). The second set up a machine and operating system environment. They needed to install the IBM 370 computers that would do the job in Jeddah and Riyadh. The third project involves installing accounting software. The Computer Sciences team had taken a conservative approach, purchasing a license to the McCormack and Dodge Millennium suite of software. It was standard accounting software written in the COBOL language. They would simply implement it in Arabic, using the tools that had been procured under the tools and systems contracts.

They put a young PhD in charge of the project. He ignored the approach we had written into the proposal. I had proposed a sandwich-like approach. We would keep the McCormack and Dodge programs as close to the original as we could, using an automated approach to modify them on the front end to accept Arabic input and the back end to produce Arabic reports. The entire philosophy was that we would not touch or attempt to understand the logic of the programs. McCormack and Dodge had invested hundreds of man years in developing the logic of those programs and it was important in my mind that we leave them absolutely alone. Their detail-level documentation was scant, and reverse engineering programs to determine their logic is a very difficult, tedious task. We did not have a need, or the resources, to attempt it.

The project team ignored the proposal, and opened up the COBOL programs and had regular ordinary programmers attempt to convert them to operate in Arabic. The effort was not a success. They were several months behind schedule and about $10 million in the hole when in desperation the management team of John Harned and Reg Boudinot gave me a call. We had a council of war in which I held firm to the position that we should do it do it over, and do it the right way from the beginning. If we changed the logic of the programs in any way, the vendor would not be able to support us or Petromin, and we would be at a loss attempting to implement version changes coming from M&D.

This approach required two programs. First, on the front end, it required programs that would look at the terminal input, the the cathode-ray tube display input to the system and convert those to operate in Arabic using the special Arabic language terminals which Computer Sciences had procured under the other project. The screen support was written in a separate language, CICS, which delivered data to the COBOL programs, one record at a time, in the same format as if they had been read from a tape drive or a disk.

The second program, the one I wrote, combed through the programs looking for everyplace that produced Arabic output for the printer. It had to identify every literal (bit of fixed text) which needed to be translated into Arabic, and to ensure that even text that got moved around a few times before printing was appropriately translated. The translation itself was to be done by language experts, not programmers, using the lists of literals we pulled out of the English-language programs.

We needed two programmers, a CICS expert to convert the screens, and one to convert reports. I knew a genius programmer named George Halberg and I brought him in the project for the former, and I did the reports myself. There was considerable anxiety, and a lot of pressure, as George and I took something over a month to program our stuff. However, once we finished, they were able to convert the programs by our “sausage maker” process. We simply put the original McCormack and Dodge program in one in end and got a converted program out the other, including a list of literals that needed to be translated, and fields that would be carried in both languages. It was the automated process I had written about in the proposal. This approach worked, and we became local heroes. Expensive local heroes, however, and as always happens in the business of consulting, the measure of our success was that after a few months we were once again out of work.

I did a couple of small jobs, continuing to work through the established brokers, people who found work for independent consultants. Armand Posner referred me to Neil Grundstra for a job with Honeywell Federal systems. They were implementing a cost modeling system similar to the one that I had written for IBM in 1979. I came up with a proposal for how to do it. They wanted to implement in software within the Honeywell suite. This involved the public domain UNIX operating system and the C language, using the Oracle database. I did not have experience with any of them. In a leap of faith on their part, and a stretch on my part, I wound up leading the project. It was successful, and along the way I learned those three pieces of software quite well. It was a real eye-opener to me. I learned why IBM had faded so badly in the marketplace. IBM’s solutions, their languages, databases, and operating systems, were simply not as good as the competition. In this case, the freeware competition. UNIX, developed in a university environment (Berkeley) and under the auspices of AT&T, was a groupware project. One of the first, and still one of the most successful.

Authorship

I was intensely involved for for quite a while, working at the Honeywell facilities. I came to appreciate that the Oracle documentation was terrible. They told you very little about how to use their software, although the software itself was quite good. I saw a major need for a book. I compiled a syllabus for the

use of the people on the Honeywell team, and one of the women, Kathy Christian, said that it really should be a book I agreed with her and went to McGraw-Hill. They accepted the book, and after the project was completed I spent some time writing it. Working with Oracle Development Tools was published in 1989. It served as a good reference as I sought business.

I enjoyed writing a great deal. It was a challenge, as I was working alone, just me and my wordprocessing system. I learned quite a bit about myself and about the English language. Ultimately the book was reasonably successful. It filled a significant need. After a few years, however, Oracle had changed the software so much that my book was no longer relevant, and they had made the online help that accompanied the new system good enough that my book was no longer really needed. Moreover, Oracle Press started publishing, and they had their own book on the topic.

My first book gave me a taste for authorship. I next reflected on the difference in philosophy between developing with the Oracle software and developing with IBM software. The IBM software required a structured, hierarchical approach. There was a rule of thumb for developed by Frederick Brooks, one of the pioneers, that said that you had to take a waterfall approach. You needed to take a needed to write a functional design first, and get everybody to sign off on what the function should be. After that, you needed a detailed design – a design for each program to be written in the system. After that you would program the system. Brooks' rule of thumb was that it if you made a mistake at any level, you incurred a 10 fold increase in cost remedying that mistake downstream. Therefore it was highly important to rigorously follow the structured path as you develop software.

The real world doesn't work like that. Functional needs change frequently in the course of the development of an application. As you start writing it, you realize how to improve it. You need flexibility. The Oracle system allowed that level of flexibility. In other words, Oracle favored a system of developing on the fly, improving as you go, without spending a great deal of time on the general design. They call it rapid application development, or RAD. This required a new way of thinking for established programmers. That was the title of my second book, Managing in an Oracle Environment. It required a different set of skills, generally smaller teams, and generally less hierarchical control been developing in a traditional environment. People were able to get applications up and running quite quickly with Oracle, and then improve them over the course of time. The second book was reasonably well-received as well, by the same development community. Once again, this is been overtaken by events. This rapid application development is now old hat, and there are many new philosophies that have incorporated it in supply and fit it. So once again, that book is no longer selling many copies at all.

In the early 1990s you could see a change in direction and the programming field. More and more programming activity took place at the systems level. The programming of real end-user software like accounting, inventory control, accounts receivable, project management and so on was becoming standardized. It was being done using productivity tools called CASE – computer automated systems engineering. The idea was that you develop the requirements using a high-level schematic tools and they would automatically generate the computer code that you needed to execute it. In other words, it was a taking computer to computers to a higher level of abstraction in the design and creation of

software. This looked to me like the way things would be going, so I decided to align myself with the movement. I found a couple of experts in the Washington area who had a company. The company was a startup, rather thinly funded, but they looked to me like they knew their stuff. I made and I made an offer to join their company, giving them some financial support. This turned out to be a mistake. These were not particularly honorable people. They were happy to use my financial support. They didn't cheat me, but on the other hand they did not cut me in as a full partner in the organization and they didn't trust me. I left them, and was out on the street once again looking for work in 1994.

The other news at this time was the revolution in financial software. Almost a decade earlier I had been involved with computer sciences as we installed the McCormack and Dodge line of accounting software for this Saudi Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals. This accounting software had been written for mainframe computers, IBM 370 computers, in the COBOL language. Oracle Corporation decided to implement the same applications using their highly productive interactive tools. I was excited by this; it made a great deal of sense to me as a developer. I resolved to become an expert in the Oracle Financials software.

The quickest way to learn was to get involved in a project to use it. I went back to work as an employee, the first time in 15 years, taking a W-2 from the Mitre Corporation in Virginia. They were involved in a large-scale implementation of most of the Oracle Financial products. On that project I learned quite a bit about how the software works. I also observed problems when software is oversold. The software did not exactly fit Mitre's needs, and Mitre was not realistic about adapting their needs to the capabilities of the software. The result was a cost overrun that almost broke the Mitre Corporation. I, however, learned quite a bit from it. I formed an association with a fellow who had been working with the software quite a bit longer, a certified public accountant named Joe Costantino. The two of us went into business in 1995.

Joe found my first client, Black & Decker in Towson Maryland. I worked with them and deepened my knowledge of the system. Then we found some business with Watkins Johnson Corporation closer to home, in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Their problem was that in converting from their legacy system, which had run on a Hewlett-Packard 3000, to Oracle they were not able to convert the entire database. One of the most important parts of the database, the bills of materials, describing how their products (electronics components) were built, did not convert over to Oracle. They were between a rock and a hard place. They had Oracle software running their procurement their purchasing, their sales and accounting, but they did not have the ability to make products using the Oracle system. They still used the HP system for that. It was a very awkward stretch. They had tried several times to convert the HP bill of materials database, and each time failed.

This was kind of a replay of the problem that I had solved for Computer Sciences. They needed an innovative approach to converting in a semi automated fashion from one system to another. Oracle needed more information than HP, and it could only be added manually. I proposed that instead of converting the entire database at once, they convert one product at a time, and I developed a custom

program to convert one product at a time. The system I prompted them in a user-friendly way for the information that was missing. They were able to use the software to convert one product at a time.

Like most manufacturers, the great majority of their production was concentrated on a relative handful of products, so they were able to convert the bills of materials for these products quickly and get themselves back in business under Oracle. They had of large catalog of products that they made infrequently, mainly older products. We resolve to convert them on an as-required basis. This was the insight – that the whole job could not be done manually, and that would only work if they manually tweaked each product as it was converted. At any rate, we got it converted over to Oracle. It turned out that there were several other small jobs that needed doing. I stayed on with Watkins Johnson for a total of about two years, and was able to bring in a team of as many as five or six people working on this project. We developed a good system, had a great time, and made some money and some friendships. Two of the people I brought onto the project got married, and two others used it to become independent, and are still independent these fifteen years later. It was really one of the best experiences in my professional life. However, all things must end, and at some point the accountants, the bean counters at Watkins Johnson added up how much we were costing and decided to replace us with employees, which is the usual fate of a successful consultant.

I engaged in one more similar rescue mission with the Micros Corporation. They had similarly converted from a legacy system. They did their purchasing in their sales through the Oracle system, but they continue to do their manufacturing through the legacy system. This was what they had planned. What they had not realized was that the accounting system required that all accounting records be consolidated within one system. They were unable therefore to produce valid accounting reports. This was a major functional problem. I came in, and writing the same type of custom software bridge software, was able to write a series of programs which would import data from their legacy system and put it into Oracle so they could do financial reporting all out of the Oracle system. This worked on an interim basis until we were able to work together to get the entire manufacturing process running under Oracle.

Once again, as with Watkins Johnson, I was with Micros systems for something over a year as we got all this done. I found a few other small things that needed to be done, and made myself generally useful. In the end, however, I was out of work. At this point I had quite a bit of experience working with the Oracle financials and I approached McGraw-Hill about writing a book on the subject. They said that they already had an author, a fellow named David James in England. David, however, was busy with client work and hadn't made as great progress as he had hoped. I approached him and proposed that we work as co-authors. His expertise was in the financial area, and mine was more in the manufacturing area. It was a reasonable collaboration, and we came up with a book which is still in print as I write this, more than a decade later. Working on the book improved my knowledge of the system, especially the parts that they he knew, the accounting. That was a good education for me.

Two things came out about this time. First, my partners in the business rather resented my work on the book. They said that it was not bringing in money. The fact was that I billed more than anybody, and I

was responsible for bringing in the work on our ongoing projects. Nevertheless, the partner that I had chosen as a successor to Joe Costantino, as Joe left for the West Coast, left me out of the bonus distribution in my last year with the company. I had asked him to propose a distribution. He did more than propose it – he did his own arithmetic, computed the bonus pool, and that the distribution, leaving me with no bonus. That was an outrage. I quivered with rage. I told him that I was going to take my own bonus, which I did it out of earnings, and simply fold the company. That is what I did in 1998.

Thus once again out of work, I surveyed the situation. I didn't really need work because I had invested in Oracle and then Cisco Systems early in the 90s, and both companies have done extremely well. As you will note elsewhere in this biography, my marriage had not been doing terribly well, but my wife was quite successful in her work. She had more than adequate income. Also, my real estate investments had paid off, and had appreciated quite nicely. So among all of our activities we had more than enough income. I decided at that point that I really didn't need to work anymore. It was a logical place to stop, and that's what I did. I retired, except for writing books, and started doing things that I enjoyed.

Family Vacations

The family vacations we took in the 1980s were generally successful. We rented cottages in Rehoboth and Dewey Beaches. 14 George Street in Rehoboth was a favorite – big enough to invite all of Mary Ann's relatives. Naomi learned to bicycle, Suzy learned to love crabbing, and we all swam to varying degrees. I love to swim, the kids liked splashing in the surf, and Mary Ann liked sunbathing. Later we rented David Beers' cottage on Bay Avenue in Lewes, Delaware. The water was calm, great for young kids to swim.

Our travel was limited during the decade of the 1980s. We took the kids to Disneyland, California in spring of 1988. Mary Ann and Graham had a week's vacation in Japan as they were en route respectively to and from consulting engagements in Korea.

By the 1990s we were feeling richer. We visited my sister Stephanie in British Columbia in 1991, did a house exchange in Germany in 1992, and traveled to Colorado to visit Mary Ann's sister in 1994. Mary Ann did not like the house exchange. She left early, muttering "Nazis" or words to that effect.

We took the family to London in summer of 1996, then went to Puerto Vallerta over Christmas. The divergence in interests was clear. Suzy and I were adventuresome, going hither and yon on bicycles and kayaks as the rest of the family soaked up the sun by the pool. The pattern was repeated when we went to Costa Rica in 1997. I wandered, talked to the natives, found hidden trails and swimming places while the rest of the family enjoyed the beach in front of the hotel.

Starting in 1995 I took the kids on active vacations without Mary Ann. Jack and I went bicycling in Nova Scotia three summers 1995-97, with Naomi along on the last one. In her turn, Mary Ann took the kids to Disneyworld with the au pair and without me. In 1998 I took Jack to Nicaragua on a Habitat for Humanity project. Suzy and I went to Haiti in 2003 and Lima, Peru in 2005.

Teaching School

My decision to retire came as a surprise to my wife Mary Ann. She didn't trust the money that I had made in the stock market, which by 1998 was quite considerable, and she has this moral feeling that everybody ought to work. She didn't consider that we had more than enough money, our retirements were funded, the kids' college education was covered by a fully funded trust, and there simply wasn't any need. But seeing as I really didn't have much of a path forward after my company collapsed, other than starting over, she accepted it. I did a couple of things. First, I started substitute teaching. I have always enjoyed kids, and always enjoyed teaching. I started working as a substitute at the Edmund Burke School in Washington DC. I have always thought that I could teach just about any subject, and I found that I could. French, Spanish, English, history, mathematics, physics, chemistry to a certain level, biology… whatever it was, I could pretty much handle it. I even taught physical education and enjoyed it. The money was less than fantastic – maybe $100 a day, I don't even remember. But it was interesting and new.

Another thing that I did was to pursue the investment ideas that I had been following for the past few decades. I had started investing just after I joined IBM in 1966. I probably opened my first brokerage account in 1967. It had treated me quite well when I was in Vietnam.

I was lucky when it came to stock market investing. My father and his father had never done it; I was the first in the family. I learned later that my mother's grandfather had been a pretty successful stock investor. I didn't know anything about that, but it seemed to me a lot in the logical way to build in the state. At any rate Steve Miraglia, the fellow whom I chose in 1969, was a singularly lucky choice. It was a good time to be in the stock market, and he had pretty good sense as to what to select. In fact, he was so good that he only stayed in the business of handling clients for about eight years. He went out on his own and is now quite wealthy. But I got to be with him for those eight years, one of his first clients, and it got me off to a good start.

Along the way I've paid attention to how he chose the stocks he did, and I paid attention to stocks in the technology sector. I made several of my own investment choices. By the time the 1990s rolled around I was fairly well seasoned. In the early 1990s I made two very fortunate decisions. I invested fairly heavily and both Cisco Systems and Oracle. I don't know exactly what my return was on each of them, but if I had been invested for the entire decade it would have been something approaching 20 to 40 times. At any rate, by 1998 they had done quite well. Although I had six pieces of real estate, the stocks were doing better. And, although I had been doing quite well earning money through my company, it was much easier to make money passively through investments and actively through working. It made sense to quit.

I started to write a book on investing, attempting to anticipate the future of technology. I wrote about several trends that were emerging at that time. One of them was the oil shortage. I anticipated that conventional oil would run out and that the price of oil would grow significantly. This appeared to be the

case until about the year 2010, but it has proven to be untrue since, as it has become economical, even if environmentally disastrous, to mine tar sands and shale oil. I anticipated that the automobile would have to give way to some form of group transportation, and I tried to anticipate what the group transportation might look like. I have been proven wrong again. The automobile is much more robust than I expected, and the alternatives that I envisioned simply have not emerged. What I envisioned was something elegant: jitney transportation which would be on demand, point to point, and billed monthly. All of this is possible using computers. What I did not anticipate was how stubbornly people cling to their cars. Kiev has been an education to me. Here we have an excellent, fast public transportation system, and cars are expensive. Nevertheless, for social reasons, vast numbers of people prefer spending time stuck in traffic than rubbing elbows with the masses in the very efficient public systems. Noplace has what I envisioned would emerge even been tried.

The one thing that I wrote about that seems to have come about is Zipcar, the rental car system with a lack of intermediation. That is, there are no human beings involved. You simply reserve the car online, wave a fob over a windshield and you are able to get into the shares car in its assigned parking place. I thought that it would do better than it has. Zipcar turned out to be a bad investment. They were recently bought, on the cheap, by Avis.

At any rate I learned a lot by writing this book on technology. I'm glad that I did not publish it – the technologies that I advocated went nowhere. Fortunately, I did not invest a great deal of money in these things, being rather conservative. The technologies in which I did invest most heavily, organic light emitting diodes and voice recognition software, did adequately well. I am dictating this using voice recognition software. It would have seemed like a miracle 10 years ago. However, Nuance, the company that owns the technology, is not the gold mine that I expected. They have done well. I have made money with them through the 2000's, which is more than most investors can say, but I certainly have not gotten rich. Nevertheless, I am glad for the year I spent researching this book on investing. I learned quite a bit, and learning is one of my great pleasures in life.

The nature of my vacations changed in 1998. The previous three years I had gone to Canada bicycling with the kids. First with my son Jack when he was just 13, then Jack again and the last year Jack and Naomi. We bicycled through Prince Edward Island and the Isles de la Madeline the first year, down the down the Bay of Fundy side of of Nova Scotia the second year, and the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia the third year. That was adventure away from mother, establishing a pattern. Mary Ann did not like active vacations and this was something that I could do with the children.

Then starting in 1998 I started working with Habitat for Humanity. During the summer that year Jack and I went to Nicaragua, to the small town of Jinotega. We worked together building houses for middle-class families. The houses were small, only about 400 ft.^{2}, but perfectly adequate for that kind of the family. They had running water and electricity which was a huge step up from the usual dwelling there. We had a good time. I had the requisite building skills from a long apprenticeship with my father and work with my rentals. I was physically strong, having stayed in shape, and was able to do the hauling toting, climbing, mixing and all that sort of stuff. My son Jack contented himself with easier tasks such as

cutting and bending wire to make reinforcing steel and playing with the children. He enjoyed the children and improved his Spanish quite a bit.

I went to Jinotega again in 1999, this time traveling with Tom Harmon, a guy from my company, and then in 2000 and 2001 I went to Braga, Portugal. In 2000 I was embarrassed to be quite overweight – about 210 pounds – and handicapped by not speaking the language. Spanish didn't work. In 2001 I led a trip to Braga, having lost about 20 pounds, and having studied enough Portuguese from tapes that I spoke it reasonably well. In 2002 I was leader of a project in Juazeiro do Norte, in Brazil. The projects in Portugal were not quite as satisfying as those in Latin America. The Portuguese clients were poor women, the wives of alcoholics. Their houses were built to a European standard. The projects were quite well organized, and we volunteers were sort of superfluous. Back in Juazeiro it was another story. We could make a meaningful contribution, and we were working with intelligent, middle-class people who were getting a true benefit, a deserved benefit one might say, from the help that Habitat was giving them.

In the fall of 2002 I started to work full-time for the Field School of Washington DC as a math teacher. It was a last-minute deal. It didn't work out terribly well. I was working with a class of children who had problems in math and also discipline problems. I don't know what could have been expected, but although I did my best we didn't make great progress. Along the way I picked up two other courses, teaching a course in ecology which came off pretty well, and teaching some eighth-grade kids who had been in Spanish-speaking environments overseas. They didn't fit in the Spanish program, so we work together to do some interesting projects.

Field distinguishes itself through a work/study program they run over Winter Break. In February 2003 I traveled to Honduras as a co-chaperone for a group of a dozen kids. We were hosted by Zamorano University, close to the border with Nicaragua. We had a wonderful time. There are more birds in Honduras than any place I have ever been, even Costa Rica. Over the middle weekend we traveled to Copan, the major Mayan ruin in the country, well worth seeing. I helped build a beehive kiln, determine the sex of tilapia (only the females are fit to eat), and learned about cigar manufacturing.

At the end of the year they were quite resolute in not rehiring me. There was a battle for succession going on amongst the three senior deputies of the founding headmistress, and they did not want an old guy like me, veteran of school boards, around on the sidelines kibitzing. I resolved to find something better to do and applied to graduate school at the University of Maryland. In the fall 2003 I took the graduate record exam. I was highly pleased with results – 720 in English and 790 in math. Those were far better scores than 40 years earlier on the SATs. They admitted me to the graduate school of education. I spent one semester as a candidate for an EdD. The school vomited me up, more forceably even than the Field School had rejected me. Too old, too worldly, certainly not black enough or feminist enough, not in sympathy with their goal of social justice, and my interest in educating individual children to the best of their ability was clearly not their top priority.

They were attempting to install a certain worldview in the students, and my world experience the simply didn't fit that worldview. After one semester I changed over to the Department of Educational Statistics and Measurement, which was also in the College of Education. I had done well in my stat course the first semester. I enjoyed stat – it was a department for smart people – and I finished my course work, the same for either a Masters or PhD, within the standard two years. Moreover, I worked with the brightest star in the department, Bob Mislevy, and was the lead author on a on a paper, which was quite an honor. At the end of the day, I did not study for the comprehensives to take a Masters degree. Instead, I worked on some other projects and bided my time waiting on a divorce.

While I was in the University of Maryland I took two very exciting vacations as study aboard programs in Latin America. The first, in the summer of 2004, had me spending a month with some unassimilated Indians in the wilds of the Amazon. I was the only student past his mid-20s, and the only one who spoke Portuguese. I had the Indians to myself and I learned a fantastic amount from it. The second was January 2006 in Argentina. Once again I stood out – I was only student who was past his 20s, and the only man of among 11 students. Quite a few spoke Spanish, although mine was as good as any. I hung with the bus drivers and the male anthropologists who helped us out, while the girls stayed together with the professor. I learned a great deal from the course and got an in A in that, but I was once again the odd man out.

A couple of the women were openly hostile to me just for being me. That has been my experience with American education time and again. One of the things that did not go down go down well with the students was the fact that I am unabashedly male and did not disguise my appreciation for an attractive woman. I didn't come on to them, didn't flirt, but certainly did enjoy the pleasure of their company. Neither with the fox named Cat in the Amazon, or Devorah in Argentina did I even make an overture, but the other women among the student teams could easily have registered that there was a mutual attraction.

There was an ugly young Jewish girl named Laura on the Argentina trip who quite consciously played the role of the "cock block," making sure I was never alone with Devorah. She was extremely, openly hostile to me despite the fact that I had never did anything to offend her. That is the nature of things on campus these days. When I returned to the United States I sent an email about Devorah to one of the women that I was working with on the paper for Bob Mislevy. Something that seems harmless turned out to be not quite so. I wrote that she wore clothes that made sure that "everything that ought to jiggle, jiggled appropriately." Kathy and I had worked pretty closely and I thought I had a rapport. She ranted that it was sexist and threatened to report me to Mislevy. I was rather shocked that she would take it that way, but I did watch my words thereafter, avoided her assiduously for the rest of the project, and tolerated the delays as she took many many months to do the edit that should have taken just a couple of weeks. That is sexual politics in the academy. I'm glad to be gone.

Biography – Topical Account

There are a number of consistent themes in my life which are better addressed topically than chronologically.

Lifelong Exercise

As I recounted my childhood, I was not good at any games that the other kids played, particularly ball games such as baseball or football. In football all I could do was blocking and tackling because of my size. I grew up quicker and fatter than other kids, hitting 200 pounds at 14, but when I lost weight and other kids caught up, I wasn't much at football either.

The summer after I turned 14 I went on a backpacking trip with the Explorer Scouts in the Sierras. David Baker was along on this trip. We hiked as I recall about two weeks through some pretty rugged country, about 7000 feet of altitude. We carried most of our own food, although there were a couple burros along with us. Our backpacks ran between 30 and 40 pounds.

At the end of the trip I had lost 25 pounds. I was down to 175. I felt wonderful. Miraculously, I sustained this weight of 175 three 180 throughout high school. I didn't do any exercise. What I did was start smoking at the age of 15. It was truly a deal with the devil, but I was happy to be slender.

I had given up on making the rank of Life Scout at the age of 12 or 13 when I was so heavy. I wasn't in much better physical shape at 15, just a little bit lighter. I am amazed that people put up with me in high school. Those were simple days. I used to smoke in restaurants, cars, across the street from school, on dates, almost anyplace. I was a classic cigarette addict, smoking one or two packs a day. My parents disapproved of course, but they had no moral high ground for correcting me because they smoked themselves.

I smoked in college even when I had almost no money. I smoked by bumming cigarettes and by scavenging butts out of the ashtrays. I smoked a pipe because it was cheaper. I was a true nicotine addict. This addiction was something that I soon wanted to end. Several times in college I attempted to quit smoking. I was never successful for long. Finally, after I had dropped out of college, I was working for the California Division of Highways. I was smoking out on the grade, as we were surveying for the MacArthur Freeway and the Warren Freeway. I decided one more time to give it up, on my 21st birthday, December 19, 1963.

I didn't do much exercise in high school. I was a third-stringer on the football team as a sophomore, which made me run a little bit. In physical education class they had us do calisthenics. These included jumping jacks, some sort of halfhearted push-ups, squat thrusts and other such nonsense. I could not see that it benefitted me a whole lot except to risk blowing out my joints. I notice that people do not seem to do them very much anymore.

After high school I went to Reed College. There I participated on the six man football team, but we didn't work out much at all and we didn't take our games very seriously. What I was doing all this time that amounted to exercise was to bicycle a fair amount and walk a great deal. I have mentioned these habits elsewhere. I think that these are healthy for person of any age. Walking especially is very safe and it gets you out of doors to get your blood circulating. At Reed I walked and bicycled all over Portland. When I had dropped out, working as a surveyor, I was of course walking all over the right-of-ways, carrying a transit so as we laid out the road. It was good healthy outdoor work. I didn't do any other form of exercise.

I joined the California Army National Guard in the winter of 1963 and went to active duty in July 1964. In two weeks of basic training they taught me how to use a gun and they got me into physical shape. They had a horizontal ladder outside the mess hall and you had to go arm over arm back and forth a time or two before they would let you eat. I also had is run just about every place. By the end of eight weeks of basic training I could run a mile in eight minutes fully dressed in army clothes. This was nothing special for a young man of 21, but for me it was a high water mark. I was pretty proud of myself.

I got a motorcycle, which became my primary means of transportation. I somewhat later bought a car, a Volvo 544, and my walking and cycling became minimal. We would play Frisbee and go to the beach and things like that, but I didn't do any systematic exercise. In 1968, when I was 25, I left for Vietnam. Just before going I bought a new bestseller entitled "Aerobics" by Dr. Kenneth Cooper of the Air Force. He stressed the importance of cardiovascular exercise, including running, cycling and swimming as his big three. I started running during the two weeks I was in Hawaii en route to Vietnam. My first course was along the Ala Wai canal in Honolulu. I got to Vietnam I was stationed in Danang where I used to run along the beach. I initially ran only a mile or so at a time, but I increased my time, and I made a practice out of swimming in the warm, placid waters of the South China Sea afterwards. It wasn't a great deal, but it was my first formal exercise regime.

I continued running when I moved down to Saigon I found that there were two tracks. Not long ones, perhaps a quarter of a kilometer, but it was enough. I would run for a mile or mile and a half at a respectable but not spectacular pace of about seven minutes per mile. In 1972, in Germany I took it more seriously. The first two years I was in Zweibrücken, a town of 40,000 about 10 km from France. I would run on along the country roads, through the farmland, for up to 4 miles a day. There was a track at the Army base where I worked, Kreuzberg Kaserne, and I would often run around that. I remember my first benchmark being 1.5 miles.

I didn't usually look for people to run with me, but there were a few regulars on that track and I got to know them. I gradually increased my distance. By the time I moved down from Zweibrücken to the Frankfurt area two years later, in 1974, I was running 4 miles a day. I got a beautiful apartment in the ritzy suburb of Bad Homburg, right on the corner of the Kurpark which attracted people to its mineral waters and casino. From my apartment I could run easily two miles our through the woods and two miles back, through some of the most gorgeous woods I had ever seen. They were immaculately kept oaks, maples that were spectacular in the fall, and lovely fir trees. It was like communing with heaven to

glide along those well-tended trails, and I did it pretty much year round for the two years that I lived there.

When I moved to Washington DC in 1976 I bought a house less than a mile from the Georgetown University campus. I used to run on their standard quarter-mile track. After a couple of years there they bulldozed that track to build a gymnasium, putting a new track on the roof. During construction, I discovered that I had been walking past perfectly serviceable track owned by a high school all the while. I figured out how to get into the Western High School track, and I used to run on that instead from about 1978 until we moved out of that neighborhood in 1989. I got to know it very well. I timed myself down to the second. My best time for 4 miles was about 26:45; for two miles, 13:26, and for one mile, 6:15. There was also a pull up bar, which got me started. I had never been able to do them in my life, after a while I could do 15 or 20.

In 1986, I was sitting on the bottom stair of the staircase in a neighbor's house with two-year-old Naomi on my lap and I stood up. I had a tremendous stabbing pain in my right knee. It didn't go away. I walked bent over for a couple days and went quite quickly to an orthopedic surgeon. They diagnosed the problem as bunged up cartilage and the used arthroscopic surgery in order to remedy it. I was awake during the procedure which involves an epidural. They went in with a little Pac-Man like device and they chipped away the cartilage that was clogging things up. It healed fairly quickly, but they told me my running was a thing of the past. There I was, in my early 40s and quite accustomed to exercise. What next?

When I got established in Washington DC I was still working for IBM. Their office was in Bethesda, about 6 miles from my home. I started riding my bicycle. I didn't have to meet clients, so appearance wasn't a big issue, and I was able to take my work clothes in a second briefcase strapped to the back of my bicycle. Biking became a regular routine. I continued after I left IBM in 1979 to join Booz Allen, whose office was precisely next-door to IBM. They also had an office down in Crystal City, somewhat further away. I rode my bicycle to each of them, and sometimes in the course of a day I would ride between the two. I was in quite good shape, feeling good about myself with all this exercise, between running and bicycling.

After I met my second wife Mary Ann in 1979 it was a couple of months before she knew I had a car. She always thought of me is that rather odd duck who bicycled everyplace. She was quite taken aback when I asked her for a date and showed up driving a Mercedes 450SL sports car.

So, I already had a built-in alternative to running, namely bicycling. By 1984 I was working as an independent consultant. In my first engagements I would drive to the clients, not wishing to look weird showing up on a bicycle. There was also a question of distance. My first long-term client in this period was Computer Sciences Corporation, which was located about 15 miles away in Herndon Virginia. Although there is a bike path that goes out there, I was not yet ready to make such a commute. However, when I switched over to working for Honeywell Federal Systems in Tysons Corner, only 12 miles, it was another story. I quickly decided that I would resume bicycling.

I had a good really good relationship with Honeywell, and I was able to take my bike out there, lock it securely against lamppost, scrub myself up in the washroom, and put in a day's work. I continued this regime as I worked for MITRE Corporation in Tysons and later Watkins Johnson out in Gaithersburg, which gave me a wonderful 17 mile commute each way about two years. The regimen came apart again when I went to work for Micros Systems in Beltsville. It wasn't that the distance was so terrible, but there was absolutely no network of roads that I thought was safe.

I started taking long solo bicycle rides sometime in my middle 50s. I would go to West Virginia for the day. Harpers Ferry West Virginia was about 50 miles from our home in Washington, so it made it nice comfortable hundred-mile round-trip. If I left just before daybreak, about four 4:30 in the morning, I could back get back noonish. I feel wonderful having all the fresh air the one can possibly imagine in my lungs and having seen some beautiful sites. The route was just a little bit hilly, enough to give a good workout, getting me down into low gear occasionally, but the roads were generally fairly fast. The longest such trip I took was to Charles Town, a round-trip of 130 miles, which almost did me in. I can remember almost walking the last couple of miles home. I was all in, but I was pretty proud of myself. These represent the high watermark of my bicycling.

I had exercise bicycles even when I lived in Washington DC. I remember it the brand, Tunturi, and the time I would spend on them, typically a half an hour at a time. Exercise bicycles are great when you cannot go out of doors. I sweat profusely when I exercise, and the bikes would rust out, one after another. A typical machine would last two or three years. However, they cost only about $100, used, and there are always lots of people who want to get rid of them after their good intentions fade. More expensive machines had more gizmos on them, all of which would break within a week or two, but they didn't make any exercise machines that would resist rust. I don't think that manufacturers counted overuse as a real risk to their product.

As time went on, after we moved to Bethesda, I got somewhat better exercise bikes which provided more consistent resistance. Sometime in the early 2000's I also got a weight machine, so I could work on my upper body. I would do the equivalent of pull-ups, push-ups, and presses to develop my chest. Working with all of these machines, and taking my periodic long bicycle trips, I stayed in pretty good shape. This put me in good stead when I left the family home in November 2006 and got an apartment in Rockville.

I brought my exercise bike to Rockville and built a pull-up bar. I continued to bicycle back and forth to my old haunts in Bethesda, and walk a mile and a half every morning to a Starbucks. My first few months in Kiev I walked everywhere – I saw the whole city, got good idea of the layout of the place. I then joined a gym and worked out seriously with their weight machines. I neglected the cardiovascular stuff for the first time in a long time, figuring that the weight machines were doing enough for me. Over that first summer, 2008, I found Hydro Park, the Soviet era amusement park which rented rowboats. I would go out for an hour or two at a time getting my exercise that way. I also went swimming at the

local beaches during the summer. This is what first brought me to Rusanovsky Sad, to which I kept returning and where Oksana and I have buit our house.

I fell down hard in the winter of 2009, slipping on some ice. I was walking very gingerly and feeling quite sore. I discontinued my gym membership and bought an exercise bicycle for my apartment. That's the substance of my wintertime exercise. In the summer of 2012, we moved to Rusanovsky Sad. We are within a comfortable walk up the river beaches. I go swimming as often as I can, probably four times a week, for usually half an hour, but sometimes as much as an hour at a time. I also bicycle everyplace. We're 5 km from the grocery store, and I bicycle to buy our groceries or do whatever other errands needed to be done. Winters. I continue to use the exercise bike more or less every day.

The last paragraph was written about 2013. At that time I would spend half an hour on the exercise bicycle cycling at 80 revolutions per minute, a total of 2400 revolutions. My sessions would end with a pool of sweat underneath the exercise bicycle. The exercise stressed my throat to the point that I got strep several times a year. I decided to stop in late 2017.

At this writing, in November 2019, I have resumed the exercise bicycle at a much more moderate pace. 600 revolutions at 60 revolutions per minute. I swam all summer, from late May to mid September, about two thirds of a mile per day in the lake near our house. I continued to walk quite a bit. Before the weather got cool I would take Zoriana with me as I take Eddie to tae kwon do, about a mile away, and walked back with Zoriana on my shoulders. With the end of daylight savings I don't trust my footing in the dark, so we leave Zoriana at home.

Girls / women

Women are a central theme in my life

Sex and romance are such a complex topic that is rare for a person to have it totally consistent view of it. Probably dangerous also – think of people who do, like Hugh Hefner and Andrea Dworkin. Still, it is relevant to spend a couple of paragraphs reminiscing about my early experiences.

With regard to romance, I'm convinced I'm a born heterosexual. I had a huge crush on Jana in the third grade. I don't think I had much notion of the mechanics of sex, but she had an incredibly cute face that I dreamed about. I would go off in the woods and carve GS+JS on trees. Portentously, she had a Slavic name and countenance. Of course, I was too shy to say anything. I don't think that she would've had a notion of romance anyhow. She grew up, by the way, to be one of the cutest girls in high school and to marry the star of the baseball team. I never dated her, but I did date her equally attractive friend Sandy in high school.

Sex education was something that took care of itself. We could see the sex lives of our pets. Dogs copulating, cats had kittens in the bottom drawer of a dresser, and nursing them until they were old enough to give away. I also remember dad drowning excess newborn kittens that the mother couldn't

nurse or we couldn't give away. We little boys and little girls headed off into the woods and played "Doctor," examining the curious differences between our bodies. This contrasts oddly with sex education today. We saw pictures of naked people in the National Geographic, and then copies of Playboy which my playmates found buried in their fathers dressers under the underwear. Four decades later, my children saw lots of porn on the Internet, but I don't think that they saw any real naked people of the opposite sex until they were quite a bit older than we had been.

My craving for pictures of naked women drove me to unbecoming behavior, some merely churlish, some illegal. As a scout I was a den leader for a bunch of Cub Scouts. We met in a garage, and on the wall hung a calendar with a pinup with bare breasts. I had a hard time keeping focused on the kids. Visiting Dan Bryant, a fellow Portola Junior High student, I thought I discovered that his father subscribed to Playboy and/or Esquire and left the magazines lying around the house. I invented pretexts for dropping in uninvited and must have made a pest out of myself. I was too young to buy these magazines. The only thing I can remember stealing in my life was a couple of girlie mags from a newsstand. Dan later explains that his dad had left the house by that time and that he, Dan, with considerable fear and trembling, had bought the magazines himself. His mother tolerated what she saw as a normal interst in a growing boy. I remember never meeting Dan's father. The story I remember is that he managed the Trader Vic's restaurant and was very busy at work. Truth could lie anywhere – this young boy's obliviousness, things Dan didn't want to tell, and things Dan didn't know. The first mentioned seems like the strongest contender.

We were socialized early into heterosexuality. They offered social dance instruction in Castro Elementary School. Boys lined up on one side of the gym, girls on the other, and boys would walk across those thirty feet to ask a girl to dance. Often the dances were mixers - square dances and the like – so we got to dance with everybody, including the heartthrobs like Jana and her best friend Sandy Hayworth. However, when we had to pick, I usually picked Julie Molzan. She was not a girl I was especially attracted to, just middling cute and someone who would always say yes. Rumors started that I had a crush on her. I didn't say anything – it would have been too embarrassing to reveal who I really did have a crush on.

We didn't talk in any informed fashion about sexual orientation. We acted on the comfortable assumption that everybody was heterosexual. My mother let on that a few of the male friends of hers who visited our house were homosexual – we hadn't heard the word gay yet – but aside from this bit of information we didn't talk about it. The boys in the eighth grade would whack each other on the shoulder with their fists and grunt derisively "you homo" without any understanding of the phenomenon. We thought it was confined to the ancient Greeks, though we whispered about Ms. Campbell the social studies teacher who lived with Ms. True the girls' dean.

Our society provided traditional milieus for boys and girls to get to know each other. There were noontime dances – sock hops - at Portola Junior High School, which I attended in the ages of 11 to 14. Sad to say, I did not dance. But most of the college prep kids also did not. There were informal and formal dances at El Cerrito High School. Our Explorer Scout troop (ages 14-17) also had dances. These

were smaller affairs, usually in somebody's house. Harold “Speed” Gustafson was one. I have no idea who invited the girls – I was never involved in the process – but it gave us an opportunity to dance slow, cheek to cheek, with a real live girl. It was wonderful.

We were at the beginning of the rock 'n roll revolution, but still sufficiently anchored in traditional popular music that the crooners delivered some wonderful songs about true love. The first popular song I remember is *Unchained Melody*, sung by Al Hibler about 1948 and then again by the Everly Brothers about 1958. Along the way we had Find a Wheel, The Hawaiian Wedding Song, That’s Amore, Pollyanna, and all of Johnny Mathis. It was a celebration of the notion of true love and marriage- the strong rumors to the effect that Mathis was gay nothwithstanding. The Ozzie and Harriet dream. It was powerful propaganda. It was a life my parents lived, and it was the kind that I wanted to live.

Our church also provided a way to get to know people of the opposite sex. The Swedenborgian church, more properly known as The Church of the New Jerusalem, had a large per capita endowment, a function of long dead donors and a membership which had declined constantly for a century. They sponsored summer programs called Leadership Education Institutes to teach teenagers the fundamentals of the religion. I have no recollection of the substance of the lectures, but I can tell you with absolute certainty that Jana was one of the attendees in the summer of 1957.

The next event I remember the church sponsoring took place at Asilomar, down near Monterey, the following summer. There was a girl named Boots Siebert, comely enough and just as ripe as I was for some more adult adventure. We fell in with each other and spent a couple of entire evenings kissing and hugging. It was pure bliss, and also pure innocence. Each of us having been properly brought up, we knew without saying the expected limits on our behavior. We were happy enough to stay within those commonly understood boundaries.

The 1950s was the decade in which two-car families became fairly widespread. My family had bought their first new car ever, a 1957 Volkswagen beetle, and a year or so later bought a second car, a 1951 Dodge. My father taught me how to drive both of them. In retrospect I have to appreciate his extreme faith in me. On the day of my 16th birthday I got my driver’s license, and that night I had a date with Nancy Wall, a charming and especially well-built girl from the nice neighborhoods at the top of the hill, and got to drive the VW.

I dated several girls in high school. Sue West more than anybody else, but also some other girls from the top of the hill like Emmy Gill and my grade school heartthrob Sandy Hayworth from down in the flats. We talked a lot and did some desultory kissing. I never got beyond that. But my friends’ stories made me feel like I was distinctly slow. In retrospect, I had lots of friends, and was probably doing better than most of them, but Denny Krentz always seemed to be a step ahead. As far as I know he was the only one of my close friends to lose his virginity before graduating. But of course, listening to his stories, he made me feel hopelessly behind the times.

It is worth talking about "girls who did it" in those cloistered, benighted times. Every now and again there was a girl who would leave school abruptly to finish the semester someplace else. I don't recall it ever happening to a girl in the college prep classes.

A transient family, the Cummings, lived in a house at the end of our cul-de-sac for about a year. They had two daughters who were very popular – Freya and Enid. They were popular for one reason. They put out. There were literally lines of cars outside their house after school. We recognized them as belonging to the bad boys from high school. They were coming to get laid.

I find this in retrospect an interesting commentary. If everybody had to come to Freya and Enid, there must not have been a lot of other action available in the high school. That was certainly our impression. We didn't call the girls prudes, because maintaining their chastity made so much common sense. No, on the other hand, if you wanted to get lucky you had to count on a girl abandoning common sense. To the best of my knowledge none of the five boys on our end of the block, the college-bound kids, paid a visit to Freya or Enid. I think we would have been mortified if anybody had found out, and we were certainly scared of the risk of social disease. Sex education was not much to talk about in our day, but we certainly had been warned of the dangers of syphilis and gonorrhea. No kid that I know would have known what to do if they had caught the clap, and they certainly would've dreaded the consequences if they went to their parents to come up with a solution.

In summary, the school started to prepare me for a heterosexual relationship, presumably marriage, starting with social dancing in the fifth grade or so. The mores of my community prevented me from entering into an intimate sexual relationship before I graduated from high school. That left eight years to get to know what girls were all about. Understanding women, of course, is more than a lifetime's undertaking. But eight years is not a bad apprenticeship. It is vastly more than kids are given today.

There are not as many organs in society like the school system, the Boy Scouts, the church and so on which take on the task of teaching boys and girls how to get along together socially. On the other hand, there is a lot of expectation from the media and advertisers that kids will "just do it." Sex education in the schools assumes that kids will "just do it." Parents have been numbed into expecting that the kids will "just do it." And the result is that kids "just do it" without having a clue how to get along with each other socially. This is not the foundation for building stable long-term relationships.

College experience with women

I arrived at Reed College in September of 1960. While the rest of the country was basking in the self-satisfied affluence and stability of the Eisenhower administration, Reed College was a hotbed of leftist activism. I doubt they were a numerical majority, but big-city Jews certainly dominated the character the place. They were incredibly political. The only way to have achieved such a degree of polarization by their tender age was to grow up in families and societies of activists.

Our ranks included Richard Healy, the son of the president of the Communist Party of the state of California. We had a number of labor organizers. To a person, they universally despised the House un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), Joseph McCarthy and Richard Nixon. They walked the streets in protests, a concept which was totally new to me. They agitated for Fair Play for Cuba, against confronting Cuba in the missile crisis. They studied Russian and pooh-poohed stories about the brutality of the Soviet Union.

The student body came up with a student T-shirt with the emblem "Communism, Atheism, and Free Love." It captured the spirit of the place. Almost half a century later the student union still sells that model. I still have mine.

Reed College in 1960 therefore represented the leading edge of the coming revolution. We already had rock 'n roll, and this crowd was well practiced in protest. Drugs and sex would not be not far behind. In fact, one of our students, Richard Pincus, was the nephew of Dr. Pincus of Syntex who invented the birth control pill which became available in 1961.

Reed College had been founded in 1911 as a religious institution, but had fairly quickly transformed itself into a highly secular place. At the time of its founding, every college assumed that it acted *in loco parentis* - in the place of parents - to supervise the activities of the children in its care. Part of that supervision included maintaining separate dormitories for young men and women, so chastity could be preserved.

The college implemented a program called "inter-visitation," the first step in breaking down this system, during my first year there. There was a prescribed three or four hour period on Saturdays and Sundays during which men were allowed and women's dorms and vice versa. I do not recall if there was some protocol about leaving doors open or any other supposed control over what went on, but in practice there was none.

The result was an environment rich with highly sexed young people in which the authorities were quite obviously abandoning any sense of responsibility for imposing restraint. The ethos of the place was definitely antiestablishment. The students rebelled against any thought of religious obligations, or broader obligations to society. They echoed the progressive line from Sweden and elsewhere in the socialist world that sex was free and natural and there to be enjoyed. It made those of us who were not having sex feel like we were cheated and deprived. Whatever it was – and what kid knows? - if society was of the opinion that we shouldn't have it, we wanted it!

A young man gets closer and closer to sex by tantalizingly small degrees. Passionate kissing, caressing through clothes, bare breasts, and intimate touching. Yet, in those days there was always some ultimate restraint on her part or mine, some atavistic respect for the boundaries that had been so long established. But eventually there would come a challenge which could not be denied.

One night in the fall of 1962 a woman whom I barely knew approached me at a dance and asked me to take her home and make love. I was shocked, but I agreed. She backed out when she found out how far away I lived. It was so close and yet so far. A couple of months later I was making out with a girl during intervisitation, fortifying my courage with a lot of beer. Little did I know how unnecessary it was – many other guys could have told me that she was a total nymphomaniac. We got started in her dorm room, only to discover that I had had too much beer to continue. Amazingly, delightfully, she agreed to the trek up the hill and we continued all night until we achieved success.

No more than a month later I found true love for the first time with a freshman woman who was more worldly than I. Sadly, the affair had to end when I dropped out of college at Christmastime. I had devoted far too much time to my temporal education, to the neglect of my academic education. I concluded that I needed to leave and sort out my own priorities before the college invited me to do so. I spent a couple of months living very uncomfortably at home, then found a job first with the Pacific Bell and then as a surveyor with the State of California. I moved out and got my own apartment and a motorcycle. In spring of 1963 I was independent.

It was at this point that I first discovered a fundamental rule of life. With women it is either feast or famine. You have none at all, or more than you can deal with. Somehow, when you have none at all, I think you are afflicted with a hangdog, hard up look that warns the woman off immediately. On the other hand, when you have a woman in your life and you're not looking, the other women become curious about what you have. They want to get to know you better. In this particular I went from knowing a large number of women at Reed to none at all when I started working in Oakland.

Establishing yourself in a new community is always a challenge. It seemed like I spent forever dating girls who had nothing really going for them except that they were female. However, after a while I met some nice ones again. I fell in love with Bonnie, whom I met through Karen, the girl next downstairs. I would have married her had she said yes, but she was headed off to Thailand in the Peace Corps, and I onto active duty with the California Army National Guard.

When I returned from active duty I enrolled at Berkeley with a new attitude toward college. I knew that you need the piece of paper they give you in order to move forward in life. I devoted myself to my studies and got straight A's my first semester, and an overall 3.87 grade point average, enough to qualify me for ΦBK when I graduated in June of 1966. Although I was a little bit old for it, I pledged a fraternity when I returned to college, Theta Chi, and made some friends there and met Chris, with whom I fell in love. She and I were to live together until she went east to become a stewardess for United and I went to Vietnam with IBM.

By 1968 I had joined every other guy in welcoming the sexual revolution. I wasn't terribly interested in marriage, and I was happy that sex was more readily available. I did not give a thought to the implications that all of this had for broader society. This was the mindset I brought with me to Vietnam.

Girls in Vietnam

The British complained back during the Great War that the GIs were "overpaid, oversexed, and over here." The Vietnamese resented us equally, for good reason. All of their young men were off at the front, and American civilians were in a wonderful position. It was a laboratory to test the proposition that all women are the same in the dark.

The language and cultural distance had a way of simplifying, almost trivializing relationships. The girls appreciated us for the fact that we had money, we had generally been brought up to treat girls nicely, we were exotic and, for those who cared about it, somewhat better endowed than the Vietnamese guys. It turns out that for most women size doesn't matter that much, and in fact it can be a handicap. They want somebody who will treat them nicely, and don't want it to hurt when they are making love.

It was interesting to see how guys reacted to an environment in which they could have as much sexual variety as they wanted. Almost everybody settled down with a steady girlfriend. Many of them are still married to those girls. I was something of the exception. It wasn't until I already had been accepted for a job in Germany, June of 1972, that I got serious about a girl. She turned out to be my first wife, Josée. I looked at her lovely young form, thought about the prospect of those cold Nordic girls, and almost on a whim asked her to get married so she could accompany me. She was only 22. Even if she knew better, it was a ticket out of the country. Because I was stationed overseas on government business she got immediate US citizenship. She did warm my nights for a year in Germany. Her problem was not a lack of passion, but too much. – she loved to fight as much as she loved to make love. I couldn't live with her, but it tore my heart out when I had to send her away. I underwrote her travel to Los Angeles to get a college education.

Women in **Germany**

My fears about the German girls were well-founded. After splitting from my first wife, Josée, I never managed during the remaining two and a half years to find a German girlfriend. Actually, I only had one significant love, a Hungarian refugee named Livia. She was beautiful, she was cultured, but she was also very intent on finding her ticket to the United States. I got spooked. Employing a little bit of relationship jujitsu, I waited until she started a fight and then refused to make up, ending it. It turns out I was while working alongside Terry, an Army officer who had often told me how beautiful she was. When I said we had broken up, upright guy that he was he asked me several times to reconfirm the fact, then he moved in and they got married and moved to Montana.

I had met Livia in the Episcopal Church. I never did learn what she was doing there – lots of girls seem to poke around churches because churchgoers are reputed to make good husbands. I had joined the church within a few months of the breakup of my first marriage. Divorce was a major failure for me. I had been raised to believe that marriage was forever. Also, for all that I could not live with her, I had loved my wife Josée. I was comfortable in churches; I had attended fairly regularly up to my mid-teens

and sporadically since then. I was comfortable with the Anglican liturgy and I felt a spiritual renewal in prayer and in society with the other communicants.

Women in **Washington DC 1976-79**

It turned out to be hard to get to meet marriageable women in Washington in the mid-70s. That should not have been the case. It was common knowledge that there were ten women to every man. However, the women I met were not what I would call prospective life partners.

It was the height of the wave of working women, liberated by feminism to pursue whatever they wanted. Most of them wanted to pursue their careers, buy houses, travel, and do just about everything except settle down in a conventional marriage and raise children. I joined young people's groups at a couple of churches – at 34 I wasn't exactly young, but I did what I could. I went to clubs, danced a bit, tried to network through the young people who shared the house I just bought, chatted up the neighbors, and eyeballed the women at IBM where I worked. I was very available – to no avail.

I'll have to concede that I was a bit picky about looks, intelligence and education. I've tried the alternatives. Plain girls tend to be self-conscious about that fact. More often than not they simply don't feel comfortable around men, probably because they haven't had good formative experiences. Girls of limited ability likewise don't like to put themselves in situations where their limitations are too visible. They retreat into corners, or boldly hold forth on inane topics they know nothing about. Either way, they are no good for "relationship" conversations.

Women themselves are picky. I had a decent but not great salary, an unimpressive job title, but had my own house and drove a Mercedes sports car. Girls I met might have wanted more, but I suspect that the greater problem was that I wasn't meeting the right girls. I did continue to attend the Episcopal Church, but I did not find a congregation that had any significant number of unmarried women. Gay guys were more the rule – I had to make it clear where I stood on that issue. I also attended a young adult group at the Presbyterian Church, where I did meet a few women who were looking. However, in the end I was mostly meeting women who were neither attractive to me nor interested in me. It made me think longingly of my ex-wife Josée, who was at least attractive. I invited her back for a reconciliation. She was as lovely as ever, but alas, also as feisty as ever. We planned a trip to Tahiti in August of 1979, but got into such a tremendous row that I called it off. She went alone, as I planned to complete our divorce.

In another manifestation of surging feminism, I noted that all of the promotions on the technical side of IBM were going to women and minorities. I finally had an interesting assignment, programming a financial modeling system, but wasn't getting any recognition for it. My boss didn't understand it or care about it. I walked across the small courtyard from IBM to Booz, Allen and asked what they did. I got a job offer, starting in mid-August.

It was a propitious time. I resolved to finally end my marriage to Josée, started a new job, and my first week on the job saw a vision of loveliness as I walked down the halls at a Booz, Allen office on Capitol Hill. Mary Ann McCleary, an elegant woman of Japanese/Irish ancestry. She actually smiled back at me. That same week, in Svetlovodsk, in the inaccessible Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, a little girl was born named Oksana.

Marriage to Mary Ann

When we were dating, Mary Ann raised reasons why a marriage might not be a good idea. She said that despite her outstanding grades in high school and college, she was really a woman of modest intelligence. She had little experience with men, just one previous lover, Louis, whom she had met in college. She broke up with me because she was not sure she wanted to commit either to marriage or a family. But, on the other hand, what were the alternatives? She called a couple of months later, we made up, and she accepted my proposal. I also didn't see alternatives. We were married in the Washington Cathedral in January of 1981.

Then followed the standard swirl of a successful family. Kids, evolving careers, private schools, summer camps, swim lessons, birthday parties, foreign vacations, the bigger house, multiple cars, and so on. There was enough activity to obscure the fact that our relationship didn't deepen. At the most basic level, Mary Ann had made a Japanese accommodation with marriage. You don't love the guy, you don't trust the guy, but you do your duty to family and society by raising kids, and you see to your personal security. It fit in quite well with the feminist manifesto: don't trust the man. Get your own job, control your own destiny, and if you can, as an afterthought, "have it all" by including a husband and family. Love had little to do with it. Once Mary Ann had the security of her own company, even the husband himself – that's me - slipped to the periphery.

Among the many ways in which our perspectives differed, I felt it was important to continue to go to church. When our son Jack was baptized in the Washington Cathedral in 1982, the priest said that we really should find a parish. I looked into it and selected St. Patrick's Church, about a mile from where we lived, though in a significantly more upscale neighborhood. That is where our two daughters were baptized. I became a regular attendee and brought the children to Sunday school in their younger years. Mary Ann attended reluctantly and less and less frequently. The children attended as long as they were studying at St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School, which was associated with the church, but after the sixth grade, with the acquiescence of their mother, they started staying home with her instead of going to church with me.

The marriage, though dead at its core, survived as long as we were raising children and taking care of Mary Ann's dying father. Mary Ann subtly excluded me from parts of her life, and the children more blatently refused to talk to me. I left. I have tried to write a factual, measured account of the marriage and divorce.

My first family

Mary Ann and my kids are a product of their time and place. The wealthy suburbs of Washington D.C. in the 1980s through 2000s. They received a certifiably good and almost totally secular education from nominally Episcopal private schools.

Mary Ann and I set up housekeeping in 1980 at 2114 Huidekoper Place, the three-bedroom townhouse which I had bought in 1977. It was fairly roomy at 1800 square feet. We added a lovely redwood deck that was shaded by the large oak trees across the alley. Her cat Mitzi moved in several months before Mary Ann herself. She had an apartment in Baltimore, where she worked on a project for the State of Maryland. A house was a better place, however, for a cat. I installed a cat door and Mitzi was in heaven.

Jonathan Ellsworth Seibert was born on April 27, 1982. Georgetown was alive with azeleas and rhododendrons as we drove to the Columbia Hospital for Women. He had been conceived on the evening that Mary Ann received a promotion to Senior Associate at Booz, Allen. She was doing well to attain that position at such a young age. We traded my 1972 Mercedes 450SL in on a new Peugeot 505, a family car.

In 1983 the owners of the house at the end of the block told us they were thinking of moving. 2120 Huidekoper Place struck me as ideal. As an end lot it had about twice as much land, with a nice lawn in the backyard, a place for kids to play. I loved the neighborhood, and being on the corner, with land, we could talk to everybody who walked by and have kids play in the yard. We bought it in a private sale and kept 2114 as a rental property.

Naomi's crib went into the small bedroom when she arrived on December 14, 1983. She and Jack, 20 months apart, became best friends and played well with the other kids in the neighborhood. Pauline and Roger Locker's daughter Emily was just about Jack's age, the second a bit younger than Naomi. Federico next door was also Jack's age. We set up a swing set and I built a fair sized platform/treehouse in the big oak that anchored the corner of the property, the intersection of two alleys. We enrolled the kids in St. Patricks' church nursery school and hired Lourdes Pajares, who spoke English and could drive, to replace Tan (Maria del Transito Cerritos), the Salvadoreña who could not. We traded Mary Ann's Toyota in on a Peugeot station wagon with an automatic transmission that Lourdes could drive.

I spend a lot of effort on the garden in that house, shoring up the falling retaining wall, beautifying the front yard with vinca and various plantings, and putting a vegetable garden in along the fence in back. Mary Ann's interests were more decorative; she bought a Japanese Plum and some lovely flowers for the front yard.

By the time our second daughter Susanna arrived on December 9, 1988, Mary Ann was already pushing strongly to move to Maryland. She touted the advantage of Montgomery County schools. I didn't care –

I wanted the kids in private school in any case. Although we had enough room by any reasonable standard – Mary Ann and I had both shared bedrooms as kids – the fact was that we could afford it. My real estate, stocks and business were all quite successful. She was doing all right as an employee of Booz Allen. She had us traipsing all over Montgomery County looking at real estate, and in a weak moment I assented to buy 5700 Mohican Place. We sold 2114 Huidekoper, which by then we owned outright, as a downpayment on the $625,000 purchase. We bought at the height of the market; the value did not rise back to that level for another fifteen years.

In my oft-expressed opinion the house was simply too big. Moreover, there was no community. In 17 years there neither of us became close to our neighbors. They were busy professionals who stayed within their air-conditioned castles when at home, and otherwise socialized with others of their kind: doctors, lawyers, diplomats and such. There were no sidewalks, and noplace to walk had there been. I was rather the exception in that I walked at all. The purchase of this house marked a turning point in the marriage. Mary Ann would not compromise in her objective to obtain and continually prettify a big, prestigeous house, and didn't care much about my concerns for a lack of community. The kids developed a few friendships in the neighborhood, but more and more had to be driven everyplace. I socialized with people from the kids' schools, church and business acquaintances, but overall neither of us socialized all that much.

Serving on the school boards, arranging play dates and driving kids to and fro I got to know the parent bodies fairly well. The parents were people who could afford to pay $20,000 per year per kid, after tax, for a private school education, and who considered their kids' education enough of a priority to do so, or had so much money that it wasn't a hardship in any case. In Washington it's a class thing – people of a certain social order simply send their kids to private school. Period.

The public schools in Montgomery County are the best in Maryland. Walt Whitman High School is the subject of "The Overachievers," a chronicle of success-obsessed students and their fight to get into the Ivy Leagues. Though some parents there didn't have the means for private school, others had a (left) liberal conviction that they wanted the egalitarian atmosphere of the public schools or that their kids were so bright it didn't matter – send them to Kaplan to cram for the SATs, and they could go anywhere they wanted.

The kids in the neighborhood, and the schools – both private and public - didn't turn out as the parents might have hoped. A majority have not even succeeded by the standard measure of their careers. Add the factors of marriage and grandchildren produced, and very few can be considered to have succeeded. I carped ineffectually about the kids' never going outside, being absorbed with TV and being rude to their parents, but I did not have any idea of how serious, and how global the problems were.

Experiences with race throughout my life

Relationships with people of other races has been a consideration in my life since my earliest years. The status of white men in the United States and Western Europe has changed quite radically over my lifetime. In my youth we were considered to be the authors of Western civilization. Now we are regarded as rapacious plunderers, patriarchs, and the authors of every evil abroad in the world.

Government policy has disadvantaged whites in several ways. Affirmative action favors selected minorities over whites in jobs and other benefits. Immigration changes have flooded the unskilled job market with minorities who are more docile – will tolerate more than white workers, and the professional market with immigrants who will accept less money in return for that coveted green card. School busing has disrupted previously white neighborhoods, causing massive white flight.

I observed all of this from a privileged position. I had enough income, and was born early enough that it mostly came after my time. My grown family, described at length elsewhere in this document, absorbed the antiwhite zeitgeist, which offers a partial explanation of why we are estranged. I have summarized my observations in this long aside.

My history in education

School Boards

My son Jack entered St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School in 1985. The church was always happy to have parishioners enrolled in the school; Episcopalians were the minority in an Episcopal school, and it was important to bolster their presence as possible. Although there were no strict guidelines on the matter, they attempted to maintain a substantial number of Episcopalians on the board of trustees. It was natural to name me to the board so long as I was willing, and I accepted.

I served altogether for 10 years on school boards, six at St. Patrick's elementary school and four at St. Andrews, a secondary school. Other members of the board were typically quite wealthy people. My contribution was the Episcopal presence, knowledge of business operations, and knowledge of computers and education. I was appointed school treasurer on both boards. I worked closely with the business managers and bookkeepers preparing budgets and presenting financial results.

I generally got along well with the teachers, especially my children's teachers, because I took an interest in their subjects. My daughter Naomi became a chemist largely because of the outstanding instruction she got from Irene Walsh. On the other hand, the administrations did not want trustees meddling in the operation of the school. I did not have the clout or the personality to force anything on them, but I did make suggestions in a number of areas, almost all of which were roundly ignored. Specifically:

- The whole language method of teaching English was just plain wrong. My children did not learn how to spell phonetically, and none of them became very strong readers or writers.

- Letting kids use calculators in arithmetic class, and not stressing the importance of learning their "math facts" – memorizing times tables – I predicted would seriously handicap them. Despite being pooh-poohed, it turned out I was right about my own children, and this is true of all the children I have tutored.
- Kids should use computers as tools, not as an end in themselves. The programming instruction they got was simpleminded, and they did not learn how to use everyday software such as Microsoft Word very effectively. Nobody learned Excel whatsoever.
- Physical education should apply to every child, on the Latin principle of “mens sana in corpore sano,” a healthy mind in a healthy body, and the importance of forming lifelong health habits. Instead, the schools stressed competitive sports and let the fat boys do next to nothing in the way of physical exercise.
- Most classroom innovations are simply misdirected. Making posters, constructing bridges, making PowerPoint presentations, filling in crosswords, drawing cartoons, videotaping presentations, manipulating countable objects and group projects occupy a tremendous amount of time without teaching the children very much. Textbooks are festooned with cartoon characters and little boxes, rather like Internet pop-ups. They have a negative effect; they teach the children not to respect the educational process. Kids very quickly recognize busywork for what it is. Actually, some subjects can be delivered well by computer if it is done right. The problem is as much the educators’ refusal to expect much of the students as anything else.

Even we trustees were never admitted to the inner secrets of the admissions committee. As a treasurer I budgeted the targeted amounts for scholarship aid, averaging 10 percent of tuitions at this time, in the 1990s. That meant that our published budget was 10 percent above the income we actually realized. The fictitious income was offset by fictitious expense of paying for scholarships, mostly in the name of diversity.

Diversity in Washington DC meant primarily black students. We on the board were never privy to the academic qualifications of the diversity admissions, and the school studiously avoided keeping any performance statistics by race. I have no idea what their grades were, or whether those grades were honestly awarded. Anecdotally, I do not recall any of our diversity admissions being recognized for outstanding academic performance. As a substitute teacher in other Washington area private schools, I got to see the classroom behavior of the diversity admissions. They were more disruptive, and contributed less academically, but diversity did not greatly impede the overall academic program. I was disappointed in the academic rigor of the various schools’ programs, but I don't think the lack of rigor is primarily attributable to their admissions policies.

Discussion of the wisdom of diversity was taboo on our school boards. It is hard, of course, to state unstated assumptions, but if I were to articulate them I would say the policy assumed:

1. Black underperformance was a function of systematic past discrimination
2. We had a role as a private religious school to set a moral example for the community

3. Therefore, we were committed to admitting minority students to overcome past inequalities, and
4. We would accept minority students with lower qualifications than whites.

Our policy was in accord with the national Episcopal Church, and dovetailed quite well with that of the other private schools in the Washington area.

The issue of divestiture from South Africa was a proxy for diversity in our school. The national Episcopal Church took a strong stand in favor of liquidating all investments in the apartheid regime of South Africa. At the time we voted implementing the policy for St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School I attempted to raise questions. Specifically, I knew that American companies such as IBM and General Motors had corporate policies to encourage black education and black advancement in their companies. In addition to the fact that it was sticking our nose in other people's business, I thought that divestiture might be counterproductive. Nobody else even wanted to discuss the issue. Rather than be the skunk at a garden party, I rather quickly shut up. This experience encouraged me to remain shut up on any question concerning diversity of our student body and scholarship money to support same. Right-thinking people simply do not ask questions about these issues, especially in Washington DC.

As a parent

Parents were invited to be actively involved in our kids' elementary school, but in a carefully circumscribed way. They could help the children with art projects, Halloween parades, Christmas pageants, field trips, reading out loud, musical exercises and the like. Parents supplemented the teachers in carrying out exercises designed by the teachers. It worked pretty well; there were no big pedagogical issues at stake, and they gave the "ladies who lunch" something productive to do with their time and the closer involvement with their children, which they relished. There was an occasional father whose work afforded the time to be involved, and they were welcomed on an equal basis.

The private schools make a serious effort to involve the parents in their children's education, within well prescribed parameters. The parents go to back-to-school night and learn what the curriculum involves. The parents are invited to talk about the student's academic progress and what to do about it. Our son was diagnosed with some learning issues which the school psychiatrist helped us to address through a speech therapist and an occupational therapist. These seem in retrospect to have been quite useful interventions. Their subsequent encouragement of shrinks and pills, on the other hand, were counterproductive. Didn't work, made our son feel different, and provided him with an excuse for not applying himself.

In the long run, however, the educators are most comfortable when the parents stay within their expected roles. They express interest, show up at sporting events, fill the auditorium for drama productions, and pay the bills. The educators are not interested in parents' opinion about the educational process itself – that is their realm, and they don't want to be challenged on their own turf.

Not all children are equal in a private school. Everybody knows whose parents sit on the school board, and especially whose parents are the big money, potential and actual donors. The favored children are less likely to be disciplined severely for infractions such as drinking or marijuana use, and less likely to be graded strictly. In one school these kids were characterized as carrying a "golden ID card" that would get them out of their problems. My kids were not in this class. We were not that rich, and it is not my nature to throw my weight around. In the final analysis, the kids understood the ecosystem in which they had to thrive. They had to embrace diversity, overlook differences in performance, and expect somewhat unequal application of the rules. These are not bad lessons for life, and none of my children suffered much in learning them.

Private schools, like private universities, are quite heavily dependent on charity to balance their budgets. Universities such as Harvard get a great deal of money from their alumni. Private schools are not so fortunate; the bulk of their money comes from current parents. The school administration is always performing a balancing act, with parental pressure on one side, teachers' demands on the other, and the integrity of the institution in the middle. Being a headmaster is a supremely political position. It is increasingly well-paid, like university presidencies, often four times as much as the teachers make.

Education School

My experience as a parent was consistent with my experience as a board member. I enrolled in the University of Maryland Graduate School of Education in 2004. I remained in the ed school for one semester before transferring to statistics.

There is a presumption that teachers and administrators have some special, privileged knowledge about what they are doing. This is of course a grand conceit. We do not know any more about the process of education than the ancients. Whereas any sick person would certainly sooner be cured by any recent graduate of Johns Hopkins medical school then Hippocrates, the father of medicine, I doubt there is a person alive who would rather be taught by the average public school teacher than by Aristotle.

The schools of education are now a little bit over 100 years old. The theory was that education was a science, a set of techniques which could be taught. This has proven not to be true. The schools of education spend very little time actually attempting to teach people how to teach. They dwell instead on equity, social justice, school administration and other unrelated matters. Teachers learn how to teach the same way they always did – trial by fire when they are finally put together with real live students.

The experts don't know. Historians of education, the Brookings Institute's Diane Ravitch writing in "Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reform" and John Taylor Gatto's "Underground History of American Education"concur on one thing. American education has been beset by fads from the beginning. The educators cannot agree on the most fundamental things, starting with the very objectives of education. Should we be preparing all children for college, or should we accept that some will enter the workforce

with only a high school education? There is a similar lack of agreement on the content of education. Foreign language? Music?

School administrators want to do it their own way. They do not want your advice. They are also rather defensive. Teaching is not the high status job that it used to be, and teachers are certainly much less well off than the average parent a private school. It is difficult for teachers to stand up to parents, impossible unless they have firm backing from the administration. The strength of administration backing determines the integrity of the grading system and the level of classroom discipline a teacher can maintain. The assumption of a private school is that academics will be more rigorous and deportment better enforced because the headmaster can refuse to admit, or expel, students who do not measure up. The financial reality may be that the administration will tolerate undesirable students because of the income that they bring, especially if their parents can make charitable contributions on top of the tuition they pay.

Although the foregoing may seem like a digression, learning these lessons occupied quite a few years of my adulthood. Observing how the schools shaped the life outcomes of my first family certainly shaped my plans for educating my second family.

Investing

Some people are born with the will to power. Others are born with what my friend Dugan Barr's father called the "acquisitive instinct." I'm definitely not one of the former. Every time I have been thrust into authority, I have been quite quick and willing to pass the responsibility on to somebody else. However, I am to some degree one of the latter. My family nickname was "moneybags." If I got a total of $20 for Christmas, chances are I would still have that money at Easter. I liked the potential to buy things more than any particular thing in itself. I was an avid Monopoly player as a youth, successful to the point that other kids refused to play with me. I had a knack for coming up with winning trades.

Investment was in our history but not my immediate family. My mother's mother's father had done quite well in the stock market, coolly deciding in 1929 that the show was about over and selling out. My mother's father the doctor quietly invested his excess in real estate throughout the Depression. Neither died tremendously rich, but they were comfortable. My parents' life was different. My father came of age during the depression and worked first with FDR's makework CCC's – the Civilian Conservation Corps – and then for a dog food company, presumably for a dog's wages. He came into his own during the war, working night and day as a sheetmetal man installing galleys, latrines, and morgues on liberty ships, which enabled him to buy a house at a fairly young age. At that time, however, he was married, attending Berkeley at the same time to get his bachelors, and then in his 30s was whacked with huge medical bills from my sister. These setbacks had kept him from ever really getting ahead of the game of life.

It it is safe to say that I did not have a model for investing. Ours was a very middle-class neighborhood in which nobody I knew invested, not even to the point of having vacation houses, and my family was

certainly not in a position to do it. I had, however, learned along the way that that's what some people did and I was interested in it.

When I went to work for IBM in 1966 I lived fairly frugally. I made a good salary, bought an economical car – Volkswagen – and lived in a not terribly expensive apartment. Times were good. I had it a few extra dollars every month, and I looked for a place to put them.

Providentially, a fellow who had joined IBM in a year after I did, Steve Miraglia, became bored with IBM. He decided to follow his first love, stock market investing. He and I had talked about it quite a bit while he was still at IBM. I became one of his first clients when he became a broker.

I have never known a broker to have such a magic touch. When IBM asked me to go overseas in 1968 I suddenly earned quite a bit of money – I was able to invest just about my entire base salary, which would have been $10,000 or $12,000 a year. That was a lot of money in 1968. I wrapped my father into the business. He managed my affairs, and seeing how well Steve did, opened his own account. When I returned from Vietnam after four years I had $100,000. That was a lot of money in 1972. I continued working with Steve for the four years I was in Germany, 1972 to 76. This was not quite as good a run for stock market, but we still did quite all right. When I returned to the United States in 1976 I was financially secure. I immediately bought a rental house, and then a house for myself to live in, and within another few months two more rental houses. The down payments were relatively small, the interest rate sustainable, and the properties almost paid for themselves after taking the taking into consideration the tax advantages of rental property ownership.

At the time I married Mary Ann McCleary my estate was probably about $300,000, including four pieces of property and my brokerage account. This was in 1981, when property was appreciating quickly due to inflation.

I went into business for myself in 1980, after leaving Booz Allen. I felt comfortable enough that I left without having any prospects for work, or any real knowledge of what it would be like to be a freelance consultant. I simply wanted to be independent. I started knocking on doors, and for three or four months didn't have much work. However, within a year I had some fairly steady business, and in it within a year and a half I was ahead of the game.

One of the things one of the first things I did was to set up a pension fund. I looked for and found an actuary who could help me with this. A guy named Joe Bolcar. We set up a defined benefit pension plan, with the most pessimistic possible expectations. We said that I would retire at age 55, the earliest allowable, at full salary, the maximum possible, and we minimized the expected rate of return on my investments. Setting all these parameters as we did, we were able to establish a system whereby I put one dollar into the pension fund for every dollar I took as income. Thus my tax-deferred savings grew rapidly.

The plan was that if we needed money to live on, I could withdraw it from my after-tax brokerage account. As things turned out, Mary Ann and I made enough money that we were able to live quite comfortably without having to draw on my savings. With contributions of $20,000 or more per year my pension fund grew appreciably. In 1989 we moved to the large house in Bethesda. We used we did a three-way swap, selling an investment property that we had in Washington, converting our residence in Washington into a rental, and moving into the new house. Because the residence was owned outright, we were wound up taking on a new mortgage but there wasn't any cash involved in the transaction, or at least not much. So we increased our base. We did it at the height of the housing market, unfortunately, but some things cannot be planned. My wife was really champing at the bit to get a bigger house, and although I didn't want it, and never liked the house, I had to concede that since we had the money there wasn't any good reason not to move to a larger house.

This was in 1989. Mary Ann started her company, Capital Trade, in 1992. I insisted that, after having talked so long about her desire to be her own boss, she make the leap. Just about the only other thing I insisted on was that she and her partners immediately set up their own pension plan. They didn't fund it as richly, or invest as well as me, but they still did OK.

Throughout the decade of the 1990s I invested in a good many technology companies, chief among them being Oracle and Cisco Systems. I had the advantage of working with Cisco products, seeing where the Internet was going, and likewise of working with Oracle products and watching how their market was expanding. By the turn of the millennium we had more dollars between us than we do even today. I was feeling quite wealthy. As I recount elsewhere, when my business partner screwed me in 1998, I simply retired.

In 1998 and 99 I wrote a book on investing, putting forth a number of ideas that seemed good at the time but haven't really gone anyplace. In the decade of the 2000's my investments have more or less marked time. This is a better result than many investors, but certainly not what I would have hoped.

I unwound our real estate holdings around the year 2000. They tie you down, whereas financial assets can be managed from anyplace. I wanted to be positioned to retire overseas. I thus missed out on the big run-up in real estate prices fuelled by irrational government policy. I played the crisis of 2007 better than that of 2000, however, and despite the turmoil and a period of inflexibility caused by the divorce came through relatively intact.

As I go into the second decade of the millennium, living entirely on Social Security and my pension, I am invested quite conservatively, primarily real estate and precious metal ETFs. I anticipate that the United States financial system is likely to collapse within a couple of years, and I want to have a minimum amount of assets still in the United States where they can be nationalized or whatever, a minimum dependence on Social Security, and a maximum of after-tax money money overseas where we will be able to survive, living as frugally as the situation demands.

Physical health and vices

When I was young I was a fat kid. My mother already took several kinds of pills, and she me subjected to a basal metabolism test when I was somewhere around ten, confirming for herself that I was afflicted by the same thing that she was convinced afflicted her, a thyroid deficiency. She had me taking a whopping five grains of thyroid every day. She also got met my eyesight tested and was convinced that my eyes were so bad that I needed glasses. I grew up with a sense that I had been imperfectly formed.

Vision

Glasses were always a problem. I didn't like them and was always breaking them. We had a lot of photographs of me with glasses with one of the bows gone, or was an adhesive tape holding them together in the middle for the frames broken. But I wore glasses from the time I was 12 until I was in college, or so I seem to recall. I lost them and didn't bother to get new ones.

I lived without glasses until I worked at Honeywell in about 1988, which would've been the age 45, when I suddenly found my arms getting short, at which point I got contacts. I lived with contacts until after I was divorced

Contacts are not a cure for presbyopia, the natural loss of the flexibility in the lens of the eye due to aging. I started to wear reading glasses in my 50s. They were convenient for reading and I could look over the tops for distance vision. This gave me a little bit of the aspect of an old codger. This didn't bother me until I divorced, when vanity took the upper hand.

I had heard about monovision, having a different focal length in each eye. I experimented by getting a contact lens on my left eye so that I could read with the left and see at a distance with the right. The system worked just fine. After a year I decided to take the plunge and I got LASIK surgery on the left eye, so that the focus of my left eye is now fixed at about 12 inches from my face, whereas my right eye focuses at infinity. This works for just about everything except a computer monitor, which is usually in the middle distance of about 16 to 20 inches. I still use glasses for computer work. Overall, the system works fine and I would recommend it to anybody.

Those who know me are familiar with my odd reading glasses. I buy over-the-counter reading glasses with a prescription suitable to allow me to read with my distance-vision right eye. I then simply use pliers to knock out the left lens, giving both eyes the same focus. It looks odd, and for some reason well explained by optics but not understood by me, the corrected vision in my right eye makes for a somewhat larger image than the uncorrected right eye.

Medications

With regards pills, I observed my parents' medicine cabinets as they get older became cluttered with more and more pills. I myself didn't want to succumb to that sort of a regime. When doctors have prescribed pills for me, I've generally ignored them.

At the age of 65 in the course of an annual physical they discovered that I had heart arrhythmia. Up until that point my resting heart rate had always been a rock-solid 60 due to my exercise regime. However they found an irregular beat. All the doctors wanted to do something. They wanted to put me on blood thinner and other types of pills to prevent blood clots, in the improbable case that the during one of these the episodes of arrhythmia the blood should stop in my heart long enough to clot. I went along with good grace and got the pills just to read the drug company literature inside the boxes, but I don't take them. I am suspicious of the medical establishment, and have a concern that the unknown side effects of such a medication taken over the long term are probably worse than the heart risk.

When doctors prescribe something like this it is usually a one-size-fits-all sort of application. If a patient has a condition A then use treatment B. Double-blind clinical tests are hard enough to set up simply controling for the single variable, people diagnosed with the condition who take the treatment and those who don't. It does not take into consideration nuances such as the severity of the situation, the subject's overall health, their exercise regime, or anything else. I know as well that the doctors are practicing typical CYA medicine, rationalizing that once they have discovered a diagnosable situation it is better to do something than nothing. I respond with the logic given by Nicholas Nassim Talib in "Antifragile." Don't do anything unless the need is unarguable and the benefit is clear.

That's my situation today, at 71, with no pills in my medicine cabinet except aspirin, which I take once every couple of months for a headache. I feel pretty good.

Aches and pains

At 71 I have the same skeletal complaints that everybody does. My knee joints sometimes hurt a bit, probably a residue of the running that I did up until 25 years ago. My back hurts. Whose doesn't? I find that since I stopped lifting weights about three years ago it doesn't hurt as much. The only real strain it gets is working on the exercise bicycle and carrying my son Edward around. He weighs 25 pounds, and I carry him under one arm, cradled around his waist, or on my shoulders for fairly long distances. So far no harm.

I don't strain my back is much as I used to. The last time I really put it out of whack was about 2004 when I moved all the heavy furniture out of our bedroom so my wife could install her prized wooden floors. I overexerted myself, and walked like a hunchback for a couple of weeks, even using a cane. I let that be a warning to myself, and haven't done that kind of heavy lifting since.

The only other health problem that I felt with any regularity was heartburn. This came from drinking too much beer. I stopped for about three months and it went away. I started drinking beer again, perhaps a

liter a day, and it is not a major annoyance. I'm ready to give it up again when the pain outweighs the pleasure, but for now I'm enjoying it.

Alcohol

Which thought brings me to drinking. My father's side of the family has a long history with drinking. As I mention elsewhere, my father's brother became an alcoholic and committed suicide at the age of 48. My father drank all of his life, in his last years going through the better part of a fifth of Jim Beam every day. The amazing thing is that he never appeared drunk and he never had any problems with driving. He never got into arguments are fights. He could simply absorb his liquor. About all I remember is a tendency to go to sleep. He succumbed at 87 not to drink, nor to the emphysema caused by a lifetime's smoking, but a medical error. They punctured his gut during a colonoscopy, and he was too weak to recover.

My father's father had likewise been a boozer. He died at the age of 69 from a combination of drinking and smoking. That was 1954 – I don't remember much more about it. My father's mother was also kind of a lush. Though it bothered my mother, I never saw any harm in it. She hung in until the age of 87, at which point she had a fall in the bathtub and broke her hip. She decided that she had lived a full life and simply refused to recover, slipping away peacefully. She had always advocated that we should "slip her a banana peel" when the time was right. She made the decision on her own.

Going back yet another generation, our father's grandfather was known for drinking something called moose's milk, a combination of bourbon and buttermilk. My bet is it was fairly rich on the bourbon. He gave the family another legacy, that of eating bread that was spread so thick with butter that he could embed cloves of garlic in it. Actually, I find that Germans and Ukrainians do this to this day, but it's something you don't often encounter in the United States.

I drank quite consistently, between one and two litres of beer a day, until August 2017, just before Zoriana was born. Like my father and his father before him, it did not cause me any social difficulties. I did, however, develop heartburn - acid reflux disease. I quit cold turkey, without any difficulty.

Smoking

My most important note on health concerns smoking. I started smoking at about the age of 15 because it was cool. It seemed that the neat kids in high school smoked. Note that these were not the college prep kids, who are generally smart enough not to. Both my parents worked fairly heavily, and most of theirs did not.

I can remember as a kid being seriously curious about smoking. It seemed like an unnatural act. Animals didn't smoke, and it didn't seem to serve any natural human need. Yet, so many of the adults did it, it

was widely advertised and accepted our society. It seemed to me to be one of those things like the power of speech and upright locomotion that separated men from the lower animals. My fascination was such that I had to try it.

I started smoking by filching a couple of packs of my mother's mentholated Salem cigarettes and walking around the neighborhood at night practicing. Smoking is a hard practice to acquire. They taste vile and they make you cough. It takes a real man to start smoking. I fancied myself a real man and I worked at it until I mastered it.

Once I got good at it I gave up the menthol cigarettes and switched to something even more manly, Camels. They were unfiltered and they had a much better taste as far as I was concerned due to their advertised "rich blend of Turkish and domestic tobaccos." The most powerful advertising image at that time was the cowboy shilling for Philip Morris' Marlboros, but those were filter cigarettes and I thought that filters were for sissies.

At any rate, I became pretty good at smoking. There are a lot of things smokers can do. You can French inhale. That means taking a mouthful of smoke, and then letting it slowly come out of your mouth as you inhale through your nostrils. You can blow smoke rings. With the pipe you can gesture and look intellectual. Smoking always gives your hands something to do when you're talking, so there's never an awkward question of how do you pose as you are talking to somebody new and trying to make a good impression. There are some skills of the smoker develops. You learn how to light a match in a high wind, cupping your hands through flame doesn't go out. You learn how to carry kitchen matches in the watch pocket of your Levis, take them out and strike them on the bottom of your pants and light a cigarette. I learned that I could put out a cigarette butt by mashing it with my bare feet. I learned that I could put one out by dropping it into the cellophane of the pack and quickly sealing off the oxygen before it burned through the cellophane. Oh, the skills I acquired!

I was smoking by the second half of my junior year of high school, when I started attending classes at Cal Berkeley. I would ride to Cal on the back of Jim McCoullough's motor scooter. The moment we were away from the school I would light up. I don't recall that smoking was allowed in class, but on campus it was routine. The high school itself had made a truce with smokers. Since it was legal for kids of 18 to smoke, and some students were of age, they set up a smoking zone across the street from the school. They never policed it to ensure that we were of age. Local storeowners would sell me cigarettes. I prided myself that I looked as mature as 18, and one time attempted a mature conversation with the owner. He was perfectly aware what was what, and shooed me out of his store before I got him in trouble.

I began to regret the decision to smoke shortly after I got to college. It was expensive. I could offset the expense by learning how to roll my own cigarettes – another essential life skill, especially after marijuana came into fashion. I could smoke a pipe, where the tobacco was cheap. Still, the cost was a bit of a burden on a starving student. I was in college on a scholarship and received my spending money from my parents. I felt their sacrifice intensely and I wanted to minimize the burden on them. I

therefore asked for less money that I would have needed to maintain a standard of living on a par with my fellow students.

Soon I noticed other drawbacks with smoking. My hands were perpetually yellow. My teeth were yellow. My clothes smelled. When I finally had a car, I found that the windows of the car were perpetually covered with the yellow film. It was ugly.

People hated it, not as strongly in that benighted era, but they did find that smoking was unbecoming. I don't remember any girl ever refusing to kiss me because I smoked, but I think this may be simply due to a faulty memory. Since I have quit smoking, I find that the experience of kissing a girl whose smokes is pretty disgusting. Either there were some strong stomachs among the women, or I was being refused and too dense to recognize it.

I tried to quit several times in college. Like Twain said, it's very easy to quit smoking. He had done it dozens of times.

I finally quit for good, cold turkey, on my 21st birthday. I remember very clearly going to The Monkey Inn, smoking up until midnight, putting the last one out and saying that was it. I was working for the California Division of Highways at the time. I went through a rather difficult couple of weeks. My body was so infused with oxygen that I was like in a perpetual daze. I had nothing to do with my hands. My mouth really craved something to do, so I sucked on tart Sour Lime candies until my tongue was raw. I didn't sleep very well. But I quit, and I resolved never to take another drag on a cigarette. That was half a century ago, and I have not.

Mental health

I think I've always been kind of a realist about life and death, and especially about suicide. Shortly after we were married I scandalized Mary Ann by suggesting that we plant a hemlock on our property. This indicated two things. First, that I intended to stay in that house for a long time. Three floors, 1800 ft.², struck me as ideal for raising a family of three. Secondly, it's was an expression of my intention to be in charge of my life whatever happened. There was even a group called the Hemlock Society which proposed that people have be in control for their own end-of-life decisions rather than giving them over to the medical profession. I thoroughly agreed with that.

My thoughts have always been out of step with the mental health profession. I think that suicide can be a very rational decision, and sometimes encounter people to whom I would wish the proposition would appeal. If I don't see any purpose in their existence, why should they? My uncle thoroughly screwed up his life with alcohol. Got a divorce and lived on the streets. He might have joined AA, given up the drink, and lived a different life. I'm sure he thought about it and decided it wasn't worth it. He committed suicide when I was about 22. It made sense to me – why burden society with his presence?

As my marriage went on, and the children were both less and less appreciative of their father and needed me less, I became more and more preoccupied with thoughts of suicide. It seemed to me that my life was pretty empty. We were not headed toward grandchildren or a happy life as senior citizens. Since I believe grandchildren is what life is about, I had fantasies of suicide with increasing frequency. I did what most Americans do in such a situation, look for a psychiatrist. Actually, I heard a radio advertisement that they were looking for volunteers for clinical trials of a drug, something in the Prozac and Zoloft family, which would be compensated with a small emolument and include talking to a shrink, and I signed up.

Of course there is a big placebo effect in any such test. It was double blind, so neither I nor the doctor knew whether I was getting anything active. But I felt better. I asked that Dr. DuPont for a prescription for Prozac. I thought it made a difference. I continued for about five years, until I came to Ukraine. During that time I met about twice a year with Dr. DuPont, who like any trained therapist listened to my accounts of how I was doing without offering too much of an opinion.

Somehow, being in a foreign country, doing new things, meeting new and attractive women changed my whole outlook. I quit taking the pills after a couple of months. Just as I started writing this, thinking about my life in the process of writing this autobiography, it occurred to me that I haven't had any thoughts of suicide for a long time. Might it be because my life has meaning? A young wife who depends on me, and a delightful child?

There won't be any hemlock tree here in Kiev. My family will need me for however many years God gives me. Oksana loves me and shows her love, and I love her. Eddie has the full time attention of two people who are devoted to him. There aren't any shrinks to speak of here anyhow. Another reason to like the place.

As an afterthought, I would advise people not to experiment with Prozac. Though it seems to me to be the most benign of drugs, with far less measurable physiological effect than, say, a cup of tea, people look at you funny if they know you are trying it. Given the pervasiveness and intrusiveness of snoops in our society, I would advise anybody interested in trying to buy it on the black market, where it can't be traced, and try it on the sly. The upside of not being branded as mentally ill far outweighs any potential downside of a lack of oversight by people who supposedly know what they are doing.

Foreign Language

I've learned six languages well enough to read and write and carry on a conversation, and Vietnamese well enough to get along with a mother-in-law. Granting myself a few rounding errors, that's seven, one per decade. I've learned each of them in a different set of circumstances and a different manner. I think this makes me something of an expert on language acquisition. In addition, I find the topic academically interesting and I have taken courses in language acquisition in grad school and read quite a bit by authors such as Noam Chomsky, Steven Pinker, Philip Lieberman and others on the language process.

I learned English as a child. That's first decade. My mother was an English and botany major in college and she was a real stickler for the language. She spoke quite precisely, was very articulate, and encouraged us children to be the same. I certainly did my best to be like her, and I was proud of her and her large vocabulary and I wanted to emulate her. Rather interesting that despite all that, the vocabulary that I acquired from her, though useful, did not seem to include the words which the college board favored on the SATs when I went to college. In the fall of my senior year I got what I considered to be a fairly mediocre score, 650, on the language part of the SAT. It colored my thinking about my talents. In college I eventually majored in mathematics, a subject which I noted that the time required no laboratories and no writing. In my early 20s I didn't write the language very much.

As I write above in my history of my career, when I was in Vietnam in my late 20s I discovered that I really like to explain things. I like writing. That led to my writing several books, during the course of which I improved my English substantially. When I took the graduate record exams (GRES), in 2003, 44 years after the SATs, I scored 70 points higher on a tougher exam.

I learned French in high school. The initial attraction was pretty direct. Irene Sargent was a beautiful woman. She had the most elegant mannerisms the most delightful figure – she made all the boys daydream. And I did fairly well in conversational French. I think that was in the eighth grade, I'm not sure. Thereafter I took French in the ninth, 10th, and 11th grades as I recall. There is a conflict here. I'm quite sure that I took French three, and I'm quite sure that I took three years with Miss Bruninck as a teacher, but I didn't start high school until 10th grade.

Whatever the case, Mme. Bruninck was very serious in her mission. She wanted us to be able to speak French. She was absolutely unremitting in her assignment of vocabulary lists for us to memorize, giving us vocabulary quizzes, asking us to conjugate verbs, or rather, memorize the various conjugations, and learned the structure of the language. The objective was very simply that we should speak French.
I note elsewhere, as I write about education, that by the time my children went to school and by the time I was a substitute teacher the objective was no longer to get high school students to speak the language, but to "prepare them to learn it when they got to college." In other words, kick the can down the road. That is the approach that is used in almost every school subject, I am afraid. When, if ever, will kids really learn?

I took my last year of French as a high school junior. It was not until ten years later that I finally got out of the country. Vietnam had been a French colony, and some of the older people there spoke French. In particular, my landlord. I shook the cobwebs off my knowledge of the language and discovered, to my delight, that I could do a pretty serviceable job. After a year of sporadic conversations with him I was reasonably fluent again. I used French off and on down in Saigon, as I joined the two French clubs down there, the Club Nautique and the Cercle Sportif. It was there that I met my first wife, Josée, who had gone through the French schools and spoke the language like a native. So that's my French got up to speed. It's still pretty good. When Oksana and I vacationed in France a couple of years ago it didn't take me more than a few minutes before I was fully engaged as if I had been speaking at all my life.

I picked up enough Vietnamese to get around town by taxi, order meals, and humor the girls in Saigon. It did not seem worth the effort to go all out. My friend Sandy Liles devoted himself to Chinese and eventually marrying his teacher. He made a better accounting of his free time in Vietnam than I did. I did, however, have the opportunity to program the Vietnamese language support for IBM computers, which familiarized me with the structure of the language even though I could not speak it.

I first studied German at the University of California when I was there as a high school student. I did not do well. I studied it again at Reed College and again didn't do too well. However, when I arrived in Germany in 1972, secure now in my French, I gave it another shot. The third time was a charm. I had everything going for me. I took University of Maryland extension classes in the evenings, taught by a Herr Müller, who had a real gift for teaching. Even though I didn't speak it whatsoever at work, I could speak it in the city of Zweibrücken and within two years I was quite fluent.

Before moving down to Frankfurt for my last two years in Germany, I was comfortable enough with the language to place an ad in the Frankfurter Allegemine newspaper looking for an apartment. This worked extremely well. I got the opportunity to take over the last two years of a five-year lease that a Danish businessman had signed with Albrecht von Meister, the scion of the IG Farben Company. Albrecht and I got along quite well, though his English was flawless and that was language of our conversation. While I was in Frankfurt I became the principal negotiator among the Americans for other Americans wanting to buy cars, rent houses, and do other business on the economy. I was pretty pleased with myself.

During my time in Zweibrücken, the first two years, I had run out of German courses to take. I took Spanish, from the same Herr Müller. He was pretty good – also spoke Arabic, by the way. I used the Spanish occasionally on assignment down in Rota, Spain. My Spanish was serviceable but not great by the time I left Germany in 1976.

I didn't have any overseas exposure while I was working for IBM in Bethesda 1976 through 79. When I went to work for Booz Allen I worked with the Saudi navy expansion program, dealing with Saudi Arabians all of whom spoke English. After an excess of candor got me quietly moved from the Saudi project, they gave me one in Buenos Aires work for Renault automobiles. My ticket was my knowledge of French. While I was in Buenos Aires from March through September 1980 I worked hard to bring my Spanish up to speed, and left being quite fluent. I count that as my fifth decade language. I continued to use Spanish after I went into independent consulting, with a couple of assignments for the Panamanian phone company. I used Spanish again on our vacations, in Nicaragua with Habitat for Humanity in 1998 and 1999, and dealing with casual labor at home in Bethesda.

During the 90s I studied a bit of Arabic while working on projects for the Saudi Navy and the Saudi Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals. I worked with computer presentation of the Arabic language, but never learned how to speak it. The same is true of Japanese. My wife Mary Ann, whose mother was Japanese, wanted to study it. We attended two night school sessions, but never learned enough to speak. I barely got by when we traveled to Japan in 1986; she didn't try.

In 2000 I went to Portugal to Braga, Portugal on a Habitat assignment. I thought that my knowledge of Spanish would get would see me through. It did not. The following year, 2001, I signed up to be the team leader in Braga. I spent several months listening to Portuguese tapes in the car, and by the time I went back to Braga in 2001 I was pretty conversant with the language, comfortable taking the leadership position, and dealing with the local contractors. Of course, we had a coordinator, Angela, who was perfectly bilingual and could help me out when I got in trouble, and the supervisors knew their job much better than I could. I used Portuguese again in 2002 when I led a habitat trip down to Juazeiro do Norte, Brazil. Again in 2004, it helped immensely during an anthropology study-abroad trip, a month with the Kayapo Indians in the Brazilian Amazon. I haven't used Portuguese since, so it has certainly atrophied, though find I can still read the Portuguese books on my shelves.

Lastly, I resolved to learn Russian in 2007 after I had separated and decided to check out Ukraine. I started with the Pimsleur course on CDs, which is quite complete, and their full three levels of 12 CDs each before I arrived in Kiev. Russian is the most difficult language I have studied, and despite my background with the Pimsleur tapes I found myself barely beyond the beginning level when I touched down here. I took courses throughout the last three months of 2007 and the first three or four months of 2008, with decreasing frequency. I spent my time out on the economy speaking with the local people.

Although I didn't have a vast amount of vocabulary, I was to the point where I could make myself understood. And that has been how I have learned. Trial and error, and immersion in society. Now, after seven years, I have reasonably good vocabulary although every day I'm confronted by words that I don't know. I have an intellectual understanding of the case structure of the language and of the conjugations, although for given words I cannot generally decline the cases or conjugate the verb very successfully. What I have is enough knowledge to make myself understood, which is really the most important thing in the language. I did the negotiations with the builders on our project without a terrible amount of difficulty. I always seem to make myself understood, though it is clear to all that I am far from a native speaker.

I can make out what the newspapers are saying and read fairy tales to my son, although there are always surprising number of words which I don't know, both new words and ones I have encountered before and am mad at myself for not remembering. Russian is a rich language, with a broad vocabulary, and it is simply a lot of work to learn it. I'm doing adequately, and I'm sure that by the time Eddie starts to learn it I will accelerate my own pace as I attempt to keep up with them.

So that's the chronology of the languages that I've learned. I find that with each of them a very important step is to be able to read books in the language. A second important step is when you get to the point that you can use a native language dictionary. I still have my Larousse Usual Spanish dictionary and my Wahrig German dictionary. These are extremely valuable if I get beyond the depths of a bilingual dictionary. I'm surprised that there does not even seem to be a definitive Russian dictionary. The Oxford English-Russian dictionary is as useful to me as all three Russian ones that I have.

As far as learning techniques, I think that the most efficient way to learn has been through structured academic courses. The French in high school, and the German and the Spanish courses in Germany were well organized, and well-focused. They gave me the preparation I needed. I was able to learn Portuguese through tapes mainly because the vocabulary is so similar to Spanish. All I had to learn was the pronunciation and a hundred or so common words, and tapes are good at teaching you that.

I would not recommend the approach I have taken to Russian. Learning by trial and error is not terribly efficient. I need to stop being so lazy and reapply myself in an academic way now that I have the basics behind me.

I want my son Eddie to grow up trilingual in English, Russian, and Ukrainian. I expect that the bulk of his reading will be in English, second being Russian. Ukrainian is simply not that important as a literary language. There are not that many masterpieces written in Ukrainian, and not that many publications he should read. In particular, you there is not much in the way of science, business, or publications of global interest written in Ukrainian. He should, nevertheless, be able to find his way around town, read the street signs, and understand how to read the Ukrainian forms which are endemic to a very comprehensive bureaucracy. In other words, he needs to know how to speak, read and write Ukrainian fairly well.

So that sums up my experience with languages over the course of a lifetime. I plan to learn Ukrainian with him, an eighth language for an eighth decade. It looks like a good task in retirement. Similar enough to Russian, and a language I will have no desire to write.

Reading and self-education

I enjoyed reading from an early age. The first books I can remember are Little Golden Books, the Little Engine That Could and The Saggy Baggy Elephant. I also remember books with a bit more substance, books which I received out of my parent's estate ten years ago but I can't put my hands on today. One of those was True Animal Stories, which included an account of monkeys getting loose from the National Institutes of Health and going down Connecticut Avenue in Washington DC. That was interesting to me because that's where I lived at the time I got the book back.

My parents enjoyed reading to me and I enjoyed reading on my own. The first substantive book that I remember was entitled something like The Child's Guide to the Animal Kingdom. I wish that I could get my hands on a copy today. It was a fairly thick book, well over an inch. That is more than one would normally give to an elementary school kid. It had a fairly good description, complete with some scientific names, of all the phyla in the animal kingdom, as it was known then. This gave me my introduction to protozoans, sponges, jellyfish, worms and insects and other arthropods, and the major subphyla of the chordates, which would be fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. It was a Linnaean taxonomy, and a pretty good one. I read that book backwards and forward. I loved it. I'm quite sure it was a gift from my parents. Nobody else would have known that it would delight me so much.

I remember enjoying history books as well. David Baker's family had the Capt. Horatio Hornblower series, and some EM Forster books. As I recall, David and I exchanged those. David had a book by Carleton S Coon on the origin of the races. I remember comments theory that the different races of mankind had separated long ago in evolution. This theory was discarded perhaps 30 or 40 years ago. It is interesting to me that it was a topic worthy of job discussion by my family and his, and that whether the science of that age was right or wrong, we were interested enough to look into it.

People gave me the fictional classics such as Treasure Island, Robinson Crusoe, 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, the Swiss family Robinson and others and I enjoyed them. I had not yet developed my appetite for, or perhaps didn't have much access to nonfiction. Since then nonfiction has been my favorite.

I don't recall that the schools assigned interesting reading. However, when in my junior year of high school I started attending classes at Cal, at which time I started going to the UC Berkeley library. There I found books by HL Mencken, Nietzsche, and especially Charles Darwin. I have heard about the Origin of the Species. It was a precocious, perhaps audacious thing for me to do, but I checked it out and read it. And I loved it. I think that established a pattern of learning independently of the schools. At the same time I was taking those courses at Cal, and doing indifferently – B and C work – I was busy educating myself with what I knew to be classics, books that I really enjoyed reading. The HL Mencken included his autobiographical series of "Days Books," *Happy Days*, *Heathen Days*, and *Newspaper Days*.

In high school there were some fad books that everybody read. They included Ayn Rand's classics, *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead*. They also included Neville Shute's *On The Beach*. And there were some books that my parents loved that I enjoyed also such as *Archie and Mehitabel*. My parents had some World War II books on their shelves, *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo* and Bill Malden's book, *Up Front*. I must've read those a dozen times apiece.

In college everybody was reading the same books and patting each other on the back for having such good taste in literature. Those books were primarily *Stranger in a Strange Land* and, for a smaller group, the J.R.R. Tolkien Hobbit series. I didn't find either of them terribly appealing. I tried to read *Stranger in a Strange Land* and to grok what was going on. But I didn't. It seemed to me to be pretty pointless. They were also terribly interested in Scientology, which struck me as a crock rather than a grok. I can say that I was not on the same wavelength as my classmates.

In high school I also read *The True Believer*, by Eric Hoffer. The fifties offer a few other classic political books: *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* comes to mind. We also, of course, read the Kinsey books if we could get our hands on them, and the forbidden books by Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn*. We would we read Lawrence Durrell a little bit, though I found him boring, and DH Lawrence, likewise. What is interesting is that I read these books because my friends were reading them, and they were not assigned reading from the school. The Henry Miller books of course would have been frowned on. It was a literate age. I was around smart kids who liked to read.

We also read the existentialists, Camus' *The Stranger* and works by Jean Paul Sartre. I think I read *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir at that time. Though I was more inclined to read than most of my classmates, I would not have read any of these books if others had not proposed them.

Another book that made quite a splash a decade earlier was that Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* about blacks in America. In this age I took it at face value, though I later learned that Myrdal was too had an agenda; it is naïve to imagine that a person would not.

Another shocking author of the time Caryl Chessman, the convicted California murderer who was eventually executed. He wrote four books while in prison, making him a cause célebe. I remember being unmoved by Chessman's efforts to get himself free. A couple of decades later Norman Mailer championed another such prison author, Jack Abbott, and got him sprung only to have him stab a waiter to death six weeks later.

My parents loved to read. My mother was a great fan of Agatha Christie, Ellery Queen and other such mystery writers. She also read some popular nonfiction. She read *The Three Faces of Eve*, a book about schizophrenia. Mother had done some work for an association for schizophrenics and we three children spent a few weeks at a summer camp for schizophrenic children as a payment for one of her pieces of work.

I remember reading Dorothy Parker's poetry, and Anita Loos' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. I think that these were books that my parents favored, and I like them too. They also had some books by James Thurber, such as "Years with Ross." My parents didn't buy a vast number of books, but over the years they had collected a few dozen books, and I think I read most of them.

The high school library didn't have anything very interesting and it. This is the reason that going to Cal Berkeley was so broadening. That library I remember to this day. It was a several story tall edifice with an immense card catalog in the main hall. In it you could find almost anything that your heart might desire. You would write down on a slip of paper what book you wanted, take it to the desk, and they would proofread your request and put it into a pneumatic tube whisking it to the appropriate floor, where it could be picked from the stacks and brought down for you to pick up in ten minutes or so. I made the Dean's list in the first semester of my second career at Cal, which gave me stack privileges. It was pure heaven.

I don't remember that I had done any serious reading outside of class during my years at Reed. I already mentioned that I didn't find the books which other people read terribly compelling. There was a great deal of reserve reading in the library related to our coursework. In Humanities 11 and 21 we read the Greek classics, manorial documents from the Middle Ages, and a lot of other obscure, original material. Writing our weekly papers was an extremely useful exercise, although I have to confess that I found many of the topic areas to be fairly dull. It helped in two ways. The practice in writing was undoubtedly valuable, and it became clear that I was not cut out to be a career academic. I am pleased to note that the college retains its emphasis on writing. Though in strong disagreement with what the young minds

are encouraged to think about the subject matter they are given, that is, with their politics, one must grant that the rigorous exercise of writing has to be good for anybody.

My parents subscribed to news magazines, mostly Time, which I read cover to cover when I was in high school. They also subscribed to The Oakland Tribune and the San Francisco Chronicle. I developed the habit of reading those as well. I was well abreast of current events.

One of the classes that I enjoyed most was Walt Travis' (d 2010) lecture civics in the 11th grade. I remember doing some homework it required me to research Time Magazine pieces going back many many years. Here again, since I had the access to the University of California library, I was able to go back and read magazines from the 30s were whatever the topic was. I remember reading Arthur Krock's 1940 analysis of the impending war. I loved having my hands on those musty old magazines and imagining what the era in which they were published had been like. I felt that it touching those magazines I was touching history. I did well in Travis' class.

At Reed I didn't read the Oregonian and I didn't listen to the news. I was a little bit out of touch, although we certainly did follow the televised debates during the 1960 presidential campaign. Not watching TV, I was not terribly well-informed, and I don't think my classmates were either. Still, it was an uncomfortable position to be uninformed as a holder of a distinctly minority views.

My parents were not political. They were generally conservative, voting for Eisenhower, but they didn't like Nixon. Mother hated Ronald Reagan for his cuts to the California University system starting when he was elected governor in 1966. Myself, as I knew the student radicals more intimately, I rather admired him for his tough stand against them. My mother looked at it differently, seeing only the cuts to the budget which supported her. This was the point where academia went overboard, and the craven leadership of almost all academic institutions caved in to the radicals. Only a few, such as Sam Hayakawa at San Francisco State, showed much courage, or would even defend academic freedom. David Gelernter chronicles the whole sorry mess in "America Lite."

I dropped out of Reed in December 1962 and worked first for Pacific Bell in San Francisco, then for the California Division of Highways. As soon as I had the wherewithal I got my own apartment in Oakland. Somewhere along the line I subscribe to the San Francisco Chronicle and a newsmagazine.

Our public school libraries were weak, though the El Cerrito Public Library was somewhat better. I don't have any recollection of using the Berkeley, Oakland or San Francisco Public Libraries. So when I got back to the University of California in 1965, I was delighted to be reconnected with this rich source of books and research materials.

I don't have any recollection of doing serious reading after joining IBM in 1966. I probably read half dozen books a year, but I don't remember what they were. The same was true in Vietnam. Books occasionally and found their way over there. One in particular I remember was my roommate Bill Shugg's book on the Manhattan Project. I was hungry to read whatever I could get, but there was simply

not that much available. We all read and loved the James Clavell and James Michener books about our part of the world.

I subscribed to the San Francisco Chronicle by APO mail, newspapers coming about one week late, but I read them and in chronological order and was delighted to keep up with what was going on in the United States. I shared them with the office, but few were interested, and I don't remember that we had much in the way of political discussions during these Johnson/Nixon years. I also read a newsmagazine, perhaps Time, and in response to interesting reviews I would occasionally ask my parents to send books.

Tom Wolfe came on the scene in the '60s, and I read everything he wrote: Th*e Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Bab*y, *The Pump House Gang*, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*, *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers*, and *The Right Stuff*. He looked with a rather jaundiced eye at the changes that had been wrought by the cultural revolution of the '60s, and I found that I agree with him. Barbara Tuchman wrote a series of histories that were intriguing: *A Distant Mirror, The Guns of August* and *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*. I loved Hunter S. Thompson's and Ted Sorenson's writing on politics.

There were several great novelists, John Updike, Kurt Vonnegut, Norman Mailer, Joseph Heller, James Michener, Carlos Castaneda, Mario Vargas Llosa, Ken Kesey, Truman Capote, John Fowles, Saul Bellow, Günter Grass, John Irving and Philip Roth among them. Though I read them with interest, most of it didn't relate very closely to my life. It underscored in my mind the gulf between east coast, Jewish culture and my own, and the deep mark which Jews made on American culture and thought.

I followed Watergate from afar, and despite being in Germany wasn't even too curious about the Olympic massacre in Munich. In my German classes I read some German classics by Thomas Mann and Stefan Zweig. I later subscribed to the Frankfurter Allegemeine newspaper, to learn what was happening in their part of the world and also to improve my knowledge of the language. Somewhere along the line I read *Sociobiology, The Selfish Gene* and other books on the new directions in biology. I also read rebuttals such as *The Mismeasure of Man* and *Not in our Genes*, without being sufficiently attuned to the argument to appreciate how strongly opposed these authors' views were. Lack of context is a problem of the autodidact. I make a note to myself – in homeschooling my son, I will want to ensure that he encounters people with well-formed and diverse opinions on the topics he reads about.

I was severely underemployed in my last three years with IBM, 1977-79 in Washington. I was a steady patron of the DC public library, and borrowed extensively from the library of my friend Mary Ann Gentzler. She had some very eclectic stuff, on Velikovsky, Gurdjieff and Rasputin, also some works by her neighbor Herman Wouk. Georgetown University wanted to be a good neighbor to its host city, so they gave neighbors who asked a library card. The book I remember most clearly from is *A Historia do Escravão*. It is a beautiful 425 page history of world slavery, mentioning the United States only twice. It put things into a wonderful perspective for me. I find now, via the Internet, that it is a $100 classic on the used book market.

Also from the Georgetown library was Arthur Jensen's magnum opus, the capstone of his lifetime's work on human intelligence, *The g Factor*. Although he was the most famous psychometrician in the world, following the publication of *The Bell Curve* in 1994 the topic of intelligence was too hot to handle. His longtime publisher dropped him, and he shopped around until he found Praeger, a small house willing to take him on.

I thought the Georgetown, a major university, should have a copy. Yes, they had one copy. It was not in the main library, but on a two-hour reserve in a small satellite library. I was appalled that a major intellect such as Arthur Jensen would be treated so shabbily by the establishment. I read the book in several two-hour sittings. Later, when Amazon became available, I spent $80 yourself to buy my own copy, which I still have.

What the book says about intelligence is only what we had always thought taken to be common sense up through the 60s, but which common sense has been eclipsed by political correctness to such a point that Jensen himself was demonized and "marginalized," as Stephen Pinker bravely recounts in *The Blank Slate*. This is my argument with the academic establishment. They bow very readily to political correctness, allowing themselves to be Mao Maoed by whichever group comes along and shuts them down. Once again, I recommend David Gelernter's *America Lite* for a pretty good account as to how this happened.

In Washington DC I subscribed to the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, Investor's Business Daily, The Economist, and The Washington Times. Not all at once, usually two or three newspapers at a time. I have to admit that reading these newspapers was a little bit of an addiction, in the sense that the information content wasn't worth the time that it took to read them. I simply did not derive benefit from the Investors Business Daily or the Wall Street Journal in proportion to the time I devoted to reading. If I had been a different kind of investor they might've been more used to make. I also subscribed to U.S. News & World Report and later to The Economist. All this reading took a fair amount of time. I don't recall that it did me vast amount of good, although I did remain quite well informed.

Along the way I continued reading at an accelerating pace. I was an early customer of Amazon. In 2000 I decided to write reviews for my own reference of what I wrote of what I had read. A good discipline would be to write them for Amazon. As of today I have 174 reviews on Amazon USA, three on Amazon Deutschland. The discipline of writing the reviews keeps the work fresh in my mind, forces me to read more attentively, and brings me into email contact with some very sharp people.

I read works in many categories. In the fields of biology, genetics, evolution and sociobiology, I have read most of the works of Stephen Pinker, EO Wilson, Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett. I like to read forbidden books in the realm of intelligence, such as *The g Factor*, mentioned above. These include authors such as Richard Lynn and Philippe Rushton. I have read a lot of American Indian history, American history, Ukrainian history, European history, world history. I am attracted to biography.

I read many books on technology, especially the effect of technology on people. Last year I read a handful of books on psychology, especially human self-deception. The titles that stick in my mind are The Folly of Fools and Thinking Fast and Slow. The latter has become kind of a touchstone – everybody refers to it. I've also read quite a few books on economics and the cycle of financial crises that we seem to be going through. I am amazed as I write this that so much has been written, and yet the American Congress has remains so oblivious to the cyclical nature of financial crises and the inevitability of their being bitten by the next one, given the political impossibility of balancing our budget. So I'm sure that people like Bernanke know better. I wonder whether our President does.

I have tried to read in foreign languages as I mastered each language in turn. Several important books have been published in German in the last few years; I have reviews on Amazon for three of them. I read and reviewed the best history of Argentina before I went down there in 2006 on an anthropology trip. The only important books I have read in French are the recent best-seller *La France Orange Mécanique* and a two decade old one the title of which translates to *What if Africa Refuses to Develop?* written by Cameroonian woman. I wrote a review with no place to post it; just now I find that Amazon USA carries it and have posted my review. Ditto the Portuguese book on slavery I mentioned above. That leaves only Russian. I read things in Russian all the time, like fairytales from my son. The Cyrillic alphabet remains a tough stumbling block. Reading remains painfully slow. Even after seven years my brain still confuses look-alikes were letters such as H and N, C and S, and P and R. It's an exercise in which I just have to keep plugging ahead. Oksana just gave me a book of Russian fairytales which I am delighted to read to Eddie. Fairytales have a surprisingly rich vocabulary, and the Russians don't pull any punches. Nothing seems simplified for the sake of their children; I am sure I will slog through it, but it won't be easy. I'm equally sure that I won't soon review it on Amazon because they generally don't deal with Russian books.

Kindle has had a major impact on my reading. Although they deliver physical books here, it is relatively slow. Moreover, Eddie rearranges, strips the covers and breaks my books just about every day, meaning it's impossible to find things. Books which come on the computer they can't get lost. My Kindle just went bad, a problem with which Amazon appears thoroughly familiar, with white crosshatch lines obliterating the screen. Amazon support for people overseas is really poor, so I'm following the suggestion of Ukrainian friend and buying one on the local economy.

Amazon has let me down in another way. When I wrote a review of *Die Kalte Sonne*, a book on climate change written by some Germans who got disgusted with the highly politicized and politically correct nature of their environmental movement, Amazon not only deleted it from their German site, but for good measure retroactively deleted one I had written on *Deutschland Schafft Sich Ab*, also politically incorrect, about how the Germans are doing themselves in by not having babies, and pretending that immigrants have the talent to fill the gap when 50 years' experience that it will never happen.

I wrote Jeff Bezos, who wrote back that he would fix it. It stayed fixed for about a week until they deleted the review of *Die Kalte Sonne* for a second time. I'm leaving it be. The third book I wanted, *Die Geheime Goldpolitik*, about how the US Federal Reserve and the New York bullion banks manipulate the

price of gold to make the dollar look good, could not even be delivered to Ukraine. The Kindle version was only available in the German-speaking countries. Disgusted, I bought an eBook copy from the publishers themselves, though I can't read it on Kindle. I'm a little miffed by these shortsighted policies of Amazon's, but I continue to do business with them.

Overall I am extremely happy that they exist. I like the format of their web site, and I like their prices. Life is a balance, and the balance in this case still tilts towards Amazon, although it is sad to see that they are getting tangled in their own bureaucracy. Such things have signaled the stagnation of IBM, Microsoft, AOL and other innovative companies. Hope I'm wrong.

Religion

Religion and church attendance had been woven through my life since childhood. I don't think of my experiences vastly more complicated than other peoples, except inasmuch as I've given it more thought. Every religious believer is faced with contradictions within the faith. My attitude is, "so what?" So is every politician forced to believe contradictions, and forced to lie upon occasion. Anybody on an American campus with an IQ north of a mushroom has to maintain inconsistent beliefs in order to be consistent with the demands of political correctness. Even physicists, those most exacting of scientists, live with both wave and particle theories of light. They ignore the seeming contradictions because both theories have great explanatory power; they apply them situationally.

There is not much religious consistency among my immediate ancestors. My father would duck the issue, telling you that he was an agnostic. Nonetheless, he was active in church. My mother didn't discuss it. She had rebelled against her father the Presbyterian, but in the last decade of her life attended church with some regularity and read the Bible. I expect that my father's father was like the son, religion playing no role in his life. My father's mother called herself a Christian Scientist, though I don't know of her ever attending services. My mother's father was a staunch Presbyterian, a pillar of his church. By all appearances, his wife merely went along.

My parents got me baptized at the Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, and they took me periodically to Sunday school where I must have learned the typical Bible stories about the tower of Babel, Samson and Delilah, the Garden of Eden and so on. I remember only the rather severe exterior of the building, not at all what the place was like inside. That chapter of my religious formation ended when we moved to El Cerrito in 1950.

They built a new church up from the creek on the south side of our development about 1953. My father was curious about the construction, and my mother felt some kind of an obligation to give her children some Christian formation. We joined the church, this time attending as an entire family. I expect my father kept his views to himself. He was a useful fellow, and found himself heading various committees over the years. He was especially involved in the church summer camp on the Napa River. I remember

that my mother negotiated a deal for a Jacuzzi pump – Jacuzzi being her employer – and my father supervised the well drilling and installation.

I went to Sunday school and learn the same Bible stories all over again. They must've seen some promise in me as a young church leader, because at the age of 13 or 14 I was in the pulpit delivering sermons. In retrospect this makes no sense. I didn't have any training, and didn't know a whole lot. They also had me teaching Sunday school classes, which I rather enjoyed.

One of the attractions of church was that both Denny Krentz and Jana Slezin attended, although not with vast regularity. Jana was also identified as a future leader, so she attended what they called Leadership Education Institute about our 14th summer on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais. I remember that summer well. Peggy Lee had just released "Fever," and I had it. Fever, that is, for Jana. The next summer they sent me to Urbana, Ohio, for the same thing. I do not remember anything that happened, only who was not there. One of the great assets of the church is that they had acquired a large endowment the century or so previously, when Swedenborg's thinking had been much in fashion. The believers had dwindled much faster than the endowment, which meant that they had a lot of money to spend on things like this.

I had some disappointments as well. I attempted to sing in the choir, but my voice had changed and nobody took it on themselves to teach me how to use this new instrument. Rather, I became convinced that I simply could not sing. The head of the bass section, Basil Cherniak, had a marvelous deep voice but no desire to bring me along as an understudy. I sensed he didn't want me there.

The authors who I read in high school, named above, certainly would have led me away from religious belief and even religious practice. Though I do not recall exactly, I expect I had grown lukewarm about the enterprise before I went away to college at the age of 17. I certainly would not have been to church while attending Reed, the epicenter of "communism, atheism, and free love." I am equally sure I did not when I returned to California to complete my education, and there were not any churches in Vietnam. There were certainly churches in Zweibrücken, Germany, but I did not attend.

The collapse of my first marriage, sometime before I left Zweibrücken, shook me deeply. I had loved Josée. I felt that there was a spiritual dimension missing in my life, and I started attending an Anglican church after I moved to Frankfurt. There were other attractions; it was at this church that I met Livia, my only serious love during the remaining couple of years in Germany. I was content to attend, but I didn't take any active role. I also attended the Catholic Church close to where I lived in Bad Homburg. My house was next door to an old folks' home, and one of the old codgers, Herr Gerecht, would give me conversation in German and appreciated my accompanying him to church, which I did on quite a few occasions.

I continued to attend the Anglican Church when I returned to Washington. They had services in the beautiful Bethlehem Chapel beneath the Washington Cathedral. It was not a parish church, which meant that they put no demands on me but I could go, listen to and participate in the music, go through a now

familiar liturgy, and be on my way. I also attended St. Alban's, a parish church located on the cathedral grounds. I never met any young women while attending these two. Quite the contrary, odd old men started to befriend me in ways that became uncomfortable.

Meanwhile, attempting to make some connections that might lead to marriage, at the recommendation of an IBM friend I started attending the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Bethesda. They had at a youth group with a liberal enough view to embrace a youth of 35. There were several blushing young things, or not that young actually, but would have liked to get married. Unfortunately, though I dated a couple, they were not exactly what I was looking for.

About this time, certainly outside of anything to do with the church, I met Mary Ann McCleary, who became my second wife. We were married in the Bethlehem Chapel and had our son Jack baptized there 16 months later. The priest recommended that we find a parish church and suggested a few that we might check out, one of which was St. Patrick's. It was in a toney part of town, not far from our house as the crow flies but on the other side of Glover Archibold Park, which separated our rather humble development of row houses from the elegant detached houses of the Foxhall neighborhood. We joined the parish in 1982, just as my consulting business was taking off.

By 1985, when my son Jack was old enough for nursery school, we enrolled him in the day school there. His sister Naomi enrolled a year later. I was a regular parishioner at St. Patrick's until I left for Kiev in 2007. Mary Ann was at best a Christmas and Easter sort of Christian, but she did attend more regularly as long as the children were in Sunday school. She did not have much enthusiasm for their participation in Sunday school, and one by one they dropped out somewhat short of their teenage years.

By 1992 I was deeply involved in the church. I served on the board of the associated day school and was involved in several church ministries, including its outreach to the black communities Washington and serving as a chalicist giving communion. James Steen, our priest, had in the course of the time I had been there gotten divorced, come out of the closet, and engaged in homosexual affairs with a couple of members of the congregation including the choirmaster. The assistant director and day school chaplain, Stephen Davenport, had gotten divorced and engaged in affairs with teachers. Moreover, an action that affected me, he had refinanced his house, half owned by the day school, and kept all of the proceeds, leaving the day school with a negative equity. His friend James Steen had run interference for the operation, cajoling the lay leadership in both bodies into approving the deal without understanding it.

As the Treasurer of the day school I should have demanded some action, but I did not sense I had enough political strength to make anything happen, so I bided my time. Meanwhile, Steen got himself into more difficulties. He arrogantly demanded more salary than we could afford at a time when membership was not growing at all. His rather flagrant homosexual affairs were an embarrassment, and his gossip about parishioners violated his priestly obligation to respect confidences. Many members of the congregation, including a handful of gays, openly opposed to him. Nonetheless, he had the strong support of many old friends.

The church's news organ was called the Limerick, mailed biweekly to the whole parish. Steen used it for his propaganda. John Nicholson, who had been at the church was longer than I, recruited me to lend my computer skills in putting out a competing newsletter called the Laity Limerick, documenting Steen's various lies and peccadilloes. We started it in November 1992, and kept going until the parish vestry elections in March. We won a slim majority of the vestry on a slate committed to getting rid of Steen. Despite his caterwauling that we were acting out of homophobia, we did manage to get rid of him, though the lawyers we tasked with the matter chose, in typical Washington fashion, to do so by stuffing money in his mouth. It was a settlement we couldn't afford, but we got rid of him.

The headmaster of the school, Rob Peterson, had done nothing wrong except to put too much trust in these rogue clergymen. However, the clerics had compromised him on other issues than this, and a hard charging new chair of the Board of Trustees, Jeff Stewart, had to ask him to leave. Once Peterson and Steen were gone we were able to get rid of Davenport as well. That job was likewise expensive because Davenport simply didn't have any money. We had to write off the loss as well as give him some severance.

This was the most political experience I have been involved in in my life. Steen and Davenport fought back with lies, ugly threats, and all manner of activity unbecoming to men of the cloth. I am glad to have prevailed, but if you ask me where God lay in all this, I would certainly have no answer.

After this point I continued to attend Saint Patrick's Church, serving on the vestry as we selected a new Rector, Betty McWhorter. After rotating off the vestry I continued serving in various church ministries.

About 2002 my daughter Susanna had convinced us to get singing lessons for her. With the insouciance of a girl used to getting what she asks for, she blew the lessons off. I said that I would be glad to take over. I wanted to learn how to sing. My wife Mary Ann had been very ungracious about telling me that I could not sing; please simply shut up and don't try. She herself was an adequate singer, and I guess I embarrassed her.

Taking lessons, I realized that singing is much like anything else in life. If you work at it, you can do it. I mentioned at church that I was taking lessons, and Adele Lynch, the choir mistress, asked me if I would join them. I demurred, saying that really wasn't very good. She said she needed men, and she would teach me herself. I accepted, and it was one of the happiest things I have done in my life. I enjoyed the people in the choir, I greatly enjoyed singing, and I had the feeling of triumph to match that of balancing on a two wheeler.

Let me jump ahead to Kiev. I was one of the stronger voices in the congregation of Christ Church Kiev before it folded as the expatriate population shrank inexorably over the years. Also while here, I have looked up the lyrics of all of the old favorites I remembered from the 40s, 50s, and 60s, and learned to sing them. Oksana and I love to sing together, and she asks me to sing lullabies to put young Eddie to sleep. His favorite is the Bing Crosby Irish lullaby, Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral.

Oksana and I will be raising Eddie as a Christian. We will teach him the Bible stories and the 10 Commandments, and hold him to a Christian standard of morality. None of this requires adherence to any strict dogma. I have no trouble being a Christian without taking the Christian holy book as more than a mere historical document. To me the important questions are the purpose of life and how we should live on a day to day basis.

The only logically consistent meaning of life I can find is to have children and perpetuate both my seed and my culture. That is the definition of success in a purely Darwinian, evolutionary world, and it coincides pretty much exactly with the teachings of the church. Moreover, raising children seems to me to be the only fully satisfying activity that one can undertake in life. Everything else is merely support: financial support, community support, spiritual support for this single critical task in both community and individual life.

When it comes to individual morality, I think that we need to be acquainted with all of the writings and wisdom we receive from our elders and from the Bible. At the same time, we have to recognize that either God gave us judgment, or we evolved it, but in any case the difficult questions in life can never be resolved by simply resorting to received knowledge. There are two sides, two arguments in almost every case, and we have to make judgments. Given the need to make judgments, we will certainly judge wrongly from time to time. We will be wrong with the best of intentions, and sometimes our intentions will not be the best. That is why we need to pray. Whether or not there is a God listening to our prayer, we need to vocalize our thoughts, and in particular, I need to express what's on my mind in a prayerful way in the presence of my wife. It keeps me focused on the important things.

It is going to be difficult to teach my son such a loose catechism, but the alternative, a dogma, would be a brittle thing that would not hold up to serious questioning. Teaching judgment and character will be the biggest challenge in homeschooling him.

Evolution, Liberalism, Universalism and Christianity

The Liberals the Enlightenment believed that the purpose of life was the fulfillment of every person's potential, their inner yearnings. Enlightenment era documents talk about happiness. The Preamble to our Constitution enshrines "the pursuit of happiness." Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism sought "The greatest happiness for the greatest number." " The ultimate purpose of creation," wrote Herbert Spencer, "is to provide the greatest amount of happiness."

Enlightenment philosophers took it as a given that men harbored great aspirations which they had been unable to realize due to their ignorance, poverty, and servitude. The goal of the liberal project was to provide them the individual liberty – political and economic – necessary to realize their happiness. Twentieth Century political liberalism dedicated itself to satisfying these conditions: provide every individual with their "fair share," that they might realize their potential.

Some went beyond happiness, or attempted to define it as self-fulfillment. Aristotle wrote "Now with us reason and intelligence are the end of Nature." Kant wrote that our purpose was broader than happiness: "the evolution of all the germs God has implanted in man's nature." However, even substituting fufillment for happiness, it comes down to the individual. The greatest good is framed in terms of what individual citizens deem to be good. The health of society is seen as no more than the collective happiness of its individual members.

Liberalism bleeds into universalism, today titled the “New World Order” or NWO. Simply stated, the premises are these. (1) Conflict, especially war, is antithetical to the the pursuit of individual happiness. (2) A prime, and generally successful function of government is to prevent conflicts within the realm. From this follows that (3) The world needs a global government, to maintain a universal peace under which individuals will be free to realize themselves fully.

Christianity takes a different view of the purpose of life. Christ preached that the goal of life was salvation, and that would be achieved by submission to God’s will, through kindness, service and even subservience to others. St. Augustine preached that our life on earth is only a prelude, and if the purpose of life is fulfilled only if one loves God above all, working to establish a “City of God” here on earth. Its emphasis is on the individual, but on the soul rather than the flesh. St. Paul wrote of the “mortification of the flesh,” passive and even active denial of the interests of the human body and its natural desires as the path to salvation.

Christianity resembles liberalism in that its focus is on the individual. People go to heaven individually, not corporately. The role of family and society is to support the individual aspirant in his search for individual salvation. The Christian sacraments of marriage, baptism and confirmation are designed to create succeeding generations of believers. When Thomas Malthus wrote derisively that the purpose of Islam was “procreation of worshippers” he might as well have been speaking for his coreligionists, especially Catholics. Christianity also resembles liberalism in the matter of governance. The church has striven constantly, albeit unsuccessfully, since its infancy to centralize its power and unify its dogma. The idea is that world peace will be realized when all believers believe the same thing, and believe it truly and wholeheartedly.

Evolution comes without creeds, dogmas and ethics. It simply is. Our challenge is to understand how it worked to bring about the world as we experience it, how it continues to work among human populations, and the ways in which we would be prudent to modify our behaviors, to nullify the more pernicious effects of evolution, or our beliefs, to take into account the realities of evolution.

Evolution takes place among breeding populations. Altruism, mutual support and education are desirable traits within a group. People are naturally benevolent to their kin, because their tribe is a vehicle to perpetuate their own genes, and members of the tribe offer protection to their person. Conversely, tribes and nations compete with one another. Throughout evolutionary history the natural propensity of every group to increase in numbers led to intertribal frictions and wars. The weaker were shoved aside to starve, exterminated, or subjugated. Conflict, eschewed by Christians and liberals alike,

has always been an essential mechanism of evolution. As Darwin wrote, it is "survival of the fittest," which generally consigns the weaker to a miserable end. Christians and liberals are repelled by the notion that some must fail, and try to prevent it.

Both liberalism and Christianity seek to deny evolution. Sir Charles Sherrington summed it up in an epigram: "Nature represents in the case of man a revulsion of the product against the process." Sir Arthur Keith[3] explains that "Here product stands for modern or evolved man; the process for the means used by Nature in his creation." In my words, men now see themselves as more refined than the process of evolution which put us here. He quotes (though I cannot find the original) Lord Acton:

> All thought of Nature's ancient evolutionary purpose has been dismissed from the civilized mind. May there not be a nemesis awaiting us? The late Lord Acton was apparently of this opinion. Overindividualization he regarded as equivalent to decadence. "The individual triumphs at the expense of the community ... the national self-conscious individual is the triumph ofcivilization; he maybe the symptom ofcivilization disease."[4]

I hold with Keith and Acton. If mankind is to improve itself, and my seed is to be included in future generations, people of European descent will have to back away from the rampant individualism of our age and once again recognize family and larger organizations such as tribe and nation. Other peoples of the world, not so civilized or introspective, are doing so. If we forfeit the future of our own kind, we would appear to be giving up the best hope for a superior breed of man. Superior by what measure, one might ask? To me it is not relative. I can easily say: intellect, altruism and creativity, the legacies of our own civilization.

When we are confronted with evidence to the effect that evolution leads to differences among peoples which are not in accord with our liberal beliefs, we deny evolution. Like Wily E. Coyote churning his legs over the abyss after he has run off a cliff, we find ourselves denying a vast number of facts that seem irrefutable to me. Topping the list, a percentage of our population just don't have the God-given wit to manage technical jobs, mortgages, or even supporting themselves. Moreover, the systematic distribution of these people indicates that it is undeniably the product of evolution. These are peoples which were being left behind by evolution until a benevolent liberalism stepped in to save them. Now they multiply. A corollary is that, with the governments papering over their deficiencies via a number of entitlement schemes, the US and most of Europe are going broke. When their resources give out, one might project that "survival of the fittest" could come back with a vengeance.

We now have more leisure than at any former time in world history. Yet, the arts, invention literature everything seems rather stagnant and puerile. People are simply not using the newfound free time productively. Instead, vast numbers waste it with electronic entertainments and chemically-induced distractions from reality. The liberal premise that, given the chance, people will aspire to improve

[3] "Evolution and Ethics, 1943, available online as a PDF
[4] Evoluton and Ethics, page 81

themselves simply has not been borne out. Most people led more meaningful lives as laborers, farmers, tradesmen, perhaps even as serfs and slaves. Times of scarcity produced Leanardo, Beethovan, and Michelangelo. What has our abundance produced to compare?

There is a saying that if you want something done, give it to a busy man. It may be that in prior ages, when people had many demands on them, among them raising families, they cherished their free time and make good use of it by being creative. There is also a question of the quality of people. We have been in a dysgenic mode of evolution for the past century or more. The underskilled, underintelligent underclass, supported by government, has outreproduced the more productive members of society. Although people refuse to accept the measurements of this phenomenon, they are certainly present. Look at the NLSY (National Longitudinal Survey of Youth) as an example, or SAT scores in the United States over time.

Therefore, looking for purpose of life, the liberal ideals, brought forward from Aristotle's time, doesn't seem to have led to greater mental productivity.

One thing that has come of rampant liberalism and rampant individualism over the past half century, is such a focus on the self that families are no longer being created. Feminism, homosexuality,and casual, uncommitted sex have flourished as society has become focused exclusively on the individual, ignoring the core evolutionary units of family and tribe.

In a world threatened with overpopulation, this is not altogether bad thing. It is as if the society is committing suicide, or shrinking its numbers. Western society is behaving just like John P Calhoun's rats in his wryly named "Universe 25" utopia. Overfed, overprotected and quickly overpopulated in their utopia, they turned to hypersexuality, homosexuality, meterosexuality in those he named the "beautiful ones", and meaningless violence resulted in unsuccessful mating and in abandonment of litters. His rat colonies hit a population peak, then shrank – not back to a sustainable number, but to zero! In every case they had simply forgotten how to be rats, and they died out. Our rising generations have likewise forgotten how to be people. Their sex lives are generally a mess. Without guidance from society, or adequate models within society, our youth have a hard time forming stable families and raising children.

Every country with an average IQ above 96 (Argentina) is having children at a rate below reproduction. [5] Moreover, fertility rates are dropping in most of the rest of the world. Liberalism has done its work! It has blunted the effects of evolution, our native drive to increase our numbers. The race is now between our increasing appetites for material things, produced from materials wrested from the earth, and our decreasing numbers. Even in this there are some encouraging signs. Consumers' objects of desire are increasingly small and technical: wristwatches, iGadgets, video games, scarves and handbags. Our cars are smaller, and since we are all wired together via the Internet, more and more people "cocoon" themselves. We don't take as many trips to shop, to work, or to see movies.

[5] Fertility rates from the CIA Worldbook; intelligence from "IQ and the Wealth of Nations," Lynn and Vanhanen

What does this mean for Edward? The mainstream society around him is seems to be bent on exterminating itself, failing to reproduce itself. I want grandchildren and great grandchildren! Therefore, what we want for Edward will be something quite in contrast with those around him. We want Edwards to be a normal child in the old sense of normal, which means an oddball and the new sense. We want him to stand out, to have a purpose in life, and to have a stable and productive marriage. This means it he cannot identify with mainstream American society, which is clearly headed in the opposite direction.

What can we do? I have chosen another society, Ukraine, which seems to be more or less going the right direction. For the moment most young women aspire to family and children, and feminists and gays are still pretty quiet. However, even within this community, we need to find an appropriate group of peers among which he will encounter the values that we want to impart to him. We need to situate him with families which value education, kids who respect their peers, and want children. Religious people look like the best bet. While we are sure to have arguments over doctrine and dogma given my beliefs in the historicism rather than the literal accuracy the sacred texts, and evolution with regard to how man arrived here and is doing here, I believe that Christians have a better handle on how to treat their fellows, than any other group. We'll enroll Eddie in that tribe. I'll make the necessary adjustments so I don't embarrass him, and at the same time help him make the adjustments necessary to reconcile church teachings with the real world.

On intellectual bullies, a lead-in to my political views

I have written that I encountered physical bullying as a child. Some of it I tolerated and some of it I resisted by fighting back. I was not a particularly brave kid; I only fought back against kids that I was pretty sure I could beat. In other words, I didn't risk physical injury.

When I got to Reed College I encountered some very dedicated leftists. In some cases they proudly called themselves "Red Diaper Babies." Many were people who had been steeped in political issues from an early age. I was willing to tackle issues that were relatively new to me, or that I didn't have any doctrinaire position on such as civil rights, fair taxation, international relations, in particular relations with the communist world, with an open mind, looking for intellectual dialogue. What I encountered were fixed positions, slogans, and party lines, anything but open minds on the opposite side. This was true at Reed, where the kids were pretty smart. It was also the case when I dropped out of Reed and went down to Berkeley and started to talk to the sloganeers on Sproul Hall Plaza, who were at that point protesting Vietnam.

I concluded from what I had read in the news in the newspapers and news magazines that these kids didn't have any more of a clue what was going on in Vietnam than I did. I resented their air of absolute certainty, whereas I was quite honest with myself that I knew little about the situation. Recent evidence coming from the former Soviet Union is strong that Senators Joe McCarthy and McCarran were onto something: there was a worldwide communist conspiracy in the '60s. I also let say in the same breath

think that conservatives went overboard, exaggerating the threat for political purposes. What else is new?

Whatever the story, I found myself a distinct minority being intellectually bullied and called names. It was that it frustrated me that we could not have an open and honest discussion. I note that that continued 50 years later. I dropped out of the Reed college class of '64 Facebook group because they picked on me in the same way. If they didn't agree with me they called me an anti-Semite. Here is the post that provoked the ultimate name-calling. How it could be construed as anti-Semitic I don't know, but two of them managed:

> Lastly, I venture to formulate a statement of the a prioris. "It is my belief that the purpose of life is to perpetuate our seed and culture which sets me apart from most of my generation. This belief that the interests of seed and culture, ie, my family and my society, supercede that of me as an individual is at odds with most of the manifestations of individualism, setting the individual above society, which dominate modern thinking." My question: how would you refine this statement?

I had long ago learned to recognize an ad hominem argument when I saw one. I called them on it, and simply dropped out of the group. If they haven't learned by the age of seventy to deal civilly with people who disagree with them, there isn't much hope.

Which calls to mind a joke. What you call somebody who hates blacks, Chinese, Jews, homosexuals, and women? Answer: an anti-Semite. The Jews of my college days, and pretty much ever since, strike me as extraordinarily thin-skinned for a group that has been so successful. Pretend as they might to be advocates of universal justice and fairness, I see very little interest in a fair shake for the straight WASP male. In fact, you don't have to look too deeply into popular Jewish authors, above, to see an ill-disguised contempt for whitebread Christians. I'm not bitter about it, but the hypocrisy is not lost on me, and I am cautious.

One of the things that I did pick up at Reed, which persists, is an enduring respect for the intelligence of the Jewish people. This was a time when we are near us had read Leon Uris' Exodus and Mila 18. Israel had been triumphant in establishing its independence and building its defenses against a hostile Arab world. At this point they had general world sympathy, and works of art such as Fiddler on the Roof and the stories of the kibbutzim which were so widely told made everybody, me included, feel proud and little bit Jewish.

It was not totally unstudied. One of the books I read in high school, *What Makes Sammy Run?* is about driven, unprincipled Jewish ambition. I didn't make an association between the book and the Jews that I knew, but the stereotypical aggression fit a few in high school, more than a few in college, some being rather obviously without scruples as well as aggressive.

The long and short of it is that I came away with increased admiration for the Jewish people, but remained unpersuaded by the liberal positions which most of them took. This is been a theme in my reading. There are many positions taken in society, many politically correct, or mainstream opinions, which are simply wrong, if not in the whole, at least wrong in part. A lot of it is driven by ideology. When a scientist such as Stephen Jay Gould, famous as he was, came up against a conflict between

Marxism and science, the former won. Long after the fact, I find I agree with E. O. Wilson's harsh assessment that his Harvard colleague was a phony, a poseur. At a minimum, Gould and his colleagues Lewontin and Rose treated people whose science disagreed with his politics, Wilson, Jensen, Dawkins and others among them, with an unbecoming lack of civility.

I had reservations during the civil rights movement about the claims that the white men were universally evil in the matter of slavery, and that slavery was a totally black and white situation. I knew that white Americans had been at the forefront of the abolition movement and had fought to liberate the slaves, so we couldn't have been all bad. I have many Union soldiers, and no slave-owners, in my ancestry.

My own observations in school seemed to bear out the common sense notion that black people were not intellectually equivalent to the whites. There were other minorities that had started out with nothing, in California certainly the Japanese and Chinese among them, and had ended up at least on a par with the whites. Why not the blacks? I did not know about William of Occam, but I certainly applied Occam's razor that the simplest explanation was put the most likely. Maybe they weren't on average as intellectually talented. That of course had been the received knowledge through the '50s; certainly it was believed by Lincoln, Mencken, and the leaders of US and English eugenics movements who were still remembered in my childhood, though their beliefs became absolutely unfashionable at the time of civil rights. I wanted to read to find out what scientists thought on the matter. It was even accepted by Black leaders such as Booker T. Washington. Had there been new research findings, or was it simply a change in the winds of politics?

The same kind of thinking applied to homosexuality. When I was a kid in San Francisco and Berkeley we of course knew homosexuals. However, their number, and the noise that they make in society, has increased exponentially during my lifetime. I have been curious why. I read about it.

The feminists came along and making a lot of claims about the patriarchy in the way men had held them down. They claimed that there were no innate differences between men and women. I thought that was a curious proposition, certainly not consistent with what I had observed in life. I read a lot to try to figure out what the substance there was to the argument.

My Reed acquaintances advocated socialism, and even Soviet communism. I questioned with the premise that people were sufficiently unselfish as to willingly share their surplus with others. So I read about governments and about history. I came to the conclusion that the communists probably had it wrong, and that one way or another error would be proven. As I write this my most recent reading includes a book called Reinventing Collapse, comparing the flaws in the structure of the Soviet Union, the flawed assumptions which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the author's assertion that those same false assumptions are going to cause the collapse of the United States within a few of years of this writing, 2012.

My typical antagonist derisively puts down fundamentalist Christians because they do not believe in evolution. On the other hand, anybody who believes that evolution is an ongoing process, which might explain differences among the races, including differences in intellect, is put down as a racist. With glorious inconsistency, they attribute 100% of the differences in test measures and real-life performance among the races to environmental factors, but 100% of the differences in sexuality to inherited traits. The rigidity with which they adhere to the party line would make Stalin proud.

I don't mind that people disagree with me. I would like to have discussions about these issues on a rational basis. However, I find that usually when I disagree with somebody on such an issue, they treat me as if I'm not only wrong, but morally deficient for even daring to think what I think. This really raises my hackles. I find it to be cowardly, morally reprehensible for somebody to simply refuse to discuss an issue. And yet that is the state of America today.

As a case in point, when I was University of Maryland I wrote two papers on the education of Indians. The first was about the Kayapo Indians, with whom I spent a month in 2004. I observed what was going on the reservation, and then did quite a bit of research on the Internet and in the University of Maryland library, feeling quite proud of myself that I was able to research in Portuguese and come up with original sources and translate them. I then repeated the project for North American Indians and found more or less the same thing. The substance is this. The tribal leaders do not want their people to be educated in the white man's ways, because if they leave the reservation, the chiefs will lose their power. The Indians themselves are quite ambivalent about the Western world and Western individuality. They don't like competition, and they don't like wage labor.

These traits have been observed of the Indians in every encounter since the time of Columbus. The result is a conundrum for Indian education. If we leave them to their own devices they remain uneducated and dirt poor. If we try to educate them, we have no choice but to educate those using materials from the mainstream society, and deracinate them. I concluded this, and my conclusion was violently politically incorrect. Political correctness says that the whole problem is due to the white man, and the solution is to pour more money into it. I was graded poorly. Judge for yourself; the papers are on my web site. The bullying is pervasive: today I encountered this chilling story about diversity madness on campus in taking a break from my editing.

Other topics include global warming, genetically modified foods, species extinction, the use of religion when there's no other guide to how to behave in life. There are the intractable issues of abortion and gun control, with irrational opinions on both sides masquerading as reason. There's the unreasoning belief in the power of the federal government to make things right, especially, as I write, a belief in their ability to sustain a financial system that by any rational measure is beyond fixing. Nobody has proposed a way that we can balance our budget, and nobody has proposed any way that we can continue to exist without a balanced budget, running the kind of deficits we're running today. And yet, hope persists.

If you raise these issues people simply dismiss you as a crank and don't want to talk to you. They put their heads in the sand. Most gullible are generation Y, who are absolutely being robbed to pay for my

Social Security, will get nothing out of the system, and yet have a blind adoration for the government which is impoverishing them, making them unable either to raise a family or to sustain their retirement. I'll grant that there may be arguments on the other side of these issues, but I never encounter argument, simply blind faith, ad hominem attacks and name calling. This level of irrationally on the part of supposedly intelligent people just baffles me. Is one reason that I'm happy to be out of the United States.

More than a century ago Herbert Spencer said that the result of protecting fools from the results of their folly was to populate the world with fools. It is a sour stomached, pessimistic observation. It also appears to be true.

We talk today about that this genetic factor in the welfare state. The people who are at the bottom of our society, who are protected from failure by government programs, seem to have more children than the more successful ones whose industry and intelligence supports the whole enterprise. Those ample offspring have the same deficit of natural ability as their parents – it is demonstrably hereditary. It is a system that cannot persist forever. It appears about ready to collapse of its own weight, for the same reasons and in perhaps the same fashion as the Soviet Union. However, if I say so I am branded as a right-winger, without further discussion. I will prepare my son to live in a post collapse world. Am I a kook or a prophet? If a kook, he will be able to use the education in whatever world he encounters. Nothing lost. If a prophet, he'll be one of the few who is prepared for the situation.

Our society is growing more complex. Nobody argues this. It means that we have increasingly difficult trade-offs with regard to personal freedoms. If we allow people to make their own decisions about setting interest rates and mortgages, as happened after financial deregulation, they make stupid decisions and commit to mortgages that they cannot support. The government actually encouraged this folly, especially cruelly among minorities, in the years leading up to the 2008 financial crisis. On the other hand, our principle of freedom demands that we allow people to make their own free choices; we believe in principle that the government should not restrict them. We have the same problem with regard to the insane. We de-institutionalized them maybe 30 or 40 years ago. Now we have crazy people running around, occasionally getting their hands on assault weapons and shooting scores of people. It's an infringement on their freedom of we lock them up, but it's a burden on society if we let them run free. It's also a burden on them – they can't take care of themselves, they become homeless and turn to drugs and alcohol. These questions are difficult to resolve, and there are always two sides. For persons to stridently argue that there is only one way to seeing an issue is simply ignorant. But there is a lot of ignorance afoot in the world.

People refuse to believe in the existence of a God, and certainly the divinity of Jesus Christ, but they accept without any examination such propositions as the theory of Gaia and astrology. They accept that and the extinction of an endangered species such as the spotted owl or the snail darter as an unqualified evil. They cannot see, they refuse to see, that life and politics involve trade-offs. In some cases, the trade-off probably should favor human beings over snail darters. I'm not going to be dogmatic

on that point – being dogmatic is not the way to resolve these issues. They should be the subject of rational discussion rather than name calling.

I am constantly appalled by the level of irrationality in the discussions over genetically modified foods. To me that's a pretty simple issue. We have an entire two continents, North and South America, where GMOs have been used for two or three decades with no ill effect. We have a control, the continents of Europe and Africa, where they have not. It should be should not be difficult for scientists to examine comparable populations from these two vast areas and see if GM foods have caused any damage. No, GM opponents refuse even to attempt a discussion.

Global warming is too big of an issue for anybody to get their arms around. I agree with the consensus that greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, probably contribute to global warming. I've read about the mechanics of the process and it makes sense. The offsetting factors, such as increased cloud cover, would not appear to balance the equation. I have posted Amazon reviews of more than a half dozen books on global warming.

What the strident Kyoto advocates will not admit is that (1) we don't know for sure, (2) the IPCC, a UN agency, certainly has a political agenda, (3) there are many factors which are unknown, and many more such as sunspots that have been left out of the models, (4) global warming may not be an unmitigated disaster, and (5) even the most enthusiastic Kyoto supporters, European nations such as Germany, have not complied with their commitments, and readily scuttled them when another brand of phobia emerged in the wake of Fukashima. It is certainly too complex an issue to be resolved by shouting and name calling, but that is what we have. It seems to generally start with an aggressive, irrational position on the left, followed by a stonewalling reaction from the expected reactionaries. Neither is useful. Voices of reason, such as David Victor writing his encyclopedic book "Global Warming Gridlock," are never heard above the noise.

It's the same with our radiation. We have never been able, as a species, to think rationally about the dangers of radiation. I live about 60 miles from Chernobyl. Chernobyl was the worst was the site of the worst nuclear disaster of the nuclear age. What happened? 50 people died at the site, and even the UN puts the outside estimate of excess deaths due to cancer in the neighborhood of 5,000. By comparison, 20,000 people die annually mining coal in China alone. It would seem that we could have a rational discussion about nuclear, especially in as much as it does not put any carbon dioxide into the environment. No, we cannot have that rational discussion. Even with advocate such as Stewart Brand, whose environmental critic credentials are unimpeachable, you simply cannot get people to think about this alternative. And if you come out with a statement saying that nuclear power might not be such a bad option, you immediately get slapped with labels. You are a right-winger, destroying the environment, yada yada. There is no rational discussion.

This is my summary of the state of mankind, that there is no rational discussion. I find it curious that although the people of the left loudly brand the right as irrational, by my measure the left is usually first on the scene and most strident about their stances on their issues. Conservatives seem invariably to be

caught flatfooted, with a "what next?" sort of feeling, after which they slowly collect themselves, and true to their label, come up with a reactionary reaction. Even if the liberals have a point, their manner is so sneeringly condescending, in-your-face and off-putting that conservatives are loath to admit it. Thomas Sowell calls it moral preening. Most seem more intent on burnishing their liberal credentials than actually solving problems. I have attempted to compile my contrarian views in a single document, entitled a "Catalog of Curmudgeonly Views."

I changed my mind occasionally. I was originally persuaded by the arguments Colin Powell presented to the United Nations among others, that going into Iraq might be a good idea. I was disturbed by the fact that people I respected such as Gen. Shinseki and Gen. Schwarzkopf didn't appear to be on board and that Powell seemed lukewarm. My belief was that George Bush's position could not get an honest hearing because the Democrats had so charged the atmosphere after the Florida hanging chad affair with the 2000 election that they were out to discredit him by any means that they could. Therefore, I did not believe that the Democrats were impartially exercising their role as the loyal opposition. We could have used some loyal opposition, and I have swung to the belief that we had no business going into Iraq in the first place. I regret I was wrong.

I have changed my mind on the legality of Israel's war of liberation in 1948. Reading Norman Finkelstein and other people's accounts of the ethnic cleansing that the Jews performed in order to get the Arabs out of the land that subsequently became Israel, I am reasonably persuaded that they used the same tactics that had been used against them by the Germans. I'm disappointed in myself to be taken in for so long about this. So I have changed my mind with regard to the founding of the Israeli state. On the other hand, I continue to find the Palestinians to be intractable and irrational actors, and still do not still find them sympathetic in any way. The United States should simply stay out of the Middle East. We should let these two forces to fight each other, and not involve us.

Another opinion that has changed quite a bit concerns individual liberties. I used to have kind of a German belief that "If you have done nothing wrong you have nothing to fear." I fear that this is no longer the case. The number of instances of government overreaching, violating our civil liberties and carelessly destroying lives, have become rather disquieting. I'm glad to live in a country that, while it has no qualms whatsoever about invading personal liberties, doesn't really have the means or the motive to do so. Being suspicious of government, wherever you live, certainly seems to be a good policy. Keep the government out of our lives to the extent possible. Whatever government, whatever country.

It looks like the Western experiment with liberal democracy is past its best days. Francis Fukuyama was wrong – we did not experience the end of history. Only a plateau. The problem with democracy was stated back in the time of the Greeks, and best phrased by Franklin as "Democracy has to be more than two wolves and a sheep deciding what they have for dinner." When the clients of the government outnumber the productive members of society, the thing is bound to collapse. Romney impoliticly but correctly noted that is what we're seeing today.

People have warned against this imbalance throughout history. The framers of the Constitution set up a federal system with only stakeholders, that is, white landowners, entitled to vote. However the nature of human affairs is to continue to expand the franchise. As I write this the Atty. Gen. of the United States is proposing to not only to enfranchise everybody, but to make everybody vote. This was exactly the tool that Juan Peron used in Argentina to secure a permanent socialist majority back in the 1950s. It has not turned out so well for Argentina, and I don't think that the prognosis is very good for the United States.

This is not my problem. I am gone, and I am going to die before all this plays out in any case. I am writing a book for my son Edward, in which I address these topics. My advice will be that security does not lie in membership in any nation or people. Edward is going to have to see himself as an independent individual, a citizen of the world, and the flexible and suspicious of whomever is in power wherever he goes.

My ancestry: parents' story, and what I have pieced together from the Internet

I am attaching some documents here that relate to family history. I asked my father to get his story on paper while he remembered it, and he did. Although he writes about my mother doing the same, I do not recall ever seeing the document.

My mother's father Josiah Scott Brown was the last of eight children on a farm in Illinois. His father, and namesake, had been born in 1824, and died before he was born, in 1875. My grandfather was therefore raised pretty much by his elder siblings. He was a promising child, and somehow the family managed to send both him and an older sister to medical school. You can read about the family, mainly names and dates, in the history provided by a link below.

Josiah Scott Brown did his internship in Chicago, I believe, and Monroe, Michigan. Somewhere along the line he met Henrietta Munde and they married.

Henrietta Munde, born in 1881, was raised in New York City with her sister Eleanor. They were adventuresome kids. It was a rather prosperous family, living in a large single-family house somewhere north of the middle of Manhattan. One of the family stories is about the two sisters riding by themselves downtown on the horse-drawn trams, totally self-assured, and known to the tram drivers. Her father, Charles Augustus Munde, was the son of an immigrant of some prominence by the same name. Before leaving Leipzig he had developed the "water cure" for all the details you and had written at least one book about it. I found that book in the Library of Congress and read it.

Henrietta was more worldly than J. Scott Brown. She liked the finer things, like cut crystal glassware. He was fond of his Presbyterian Church. The crystal wine glasses were passed off as sherbet cups – don't know if he knew the difference.

He had a large house on Sixth Street in Long Beach, and a huge Packard car, but was otherwise not given to ostentation. He worked as an orthopedic surgeon, not retiring until he was eighty. Henrietta never drove. My mother got her driver's license at the age of 14 so that she could serve as chauffeur. Though my grandmother is attractive enough in the photo I have of her when my mother was about 12, for all the years that I knew her she was quite overweight. She may have eaten out of pure boredom – she and J. Scott did not have a close marriage.

The family moved to Santa Barbara about 1960 to be near their daughter Mary, who cared for them in later life. Henrietta died in 1966 and J. Scott in 1968. He spent his last two years living with my parents in El Cerrito, where I saw him occasionally. His mind wasn't that sharp, and he told his history the way he would have liked it to have been: he had gotten his medical degree from Yale, where he had been on the football team. My mother never did much like him, but she did her Christian duty in making his final years comfortable.

My parents met in high school in Long Beach California. Neither of them had any other serious romances in their lives. My mother spoke of a boy, "Peach Blossom" who asked her out at one time, and my father spoke of another girl who tried it one time to seduce him, without success. My mother's father did not approve of my parents' match. My father's family were tradesmen, whereas he was a doctor. He was an early advocate of careers for women; his two older daughters were professionals, one never marrying, the other doing so only at age 65.

When my mother graduated from high school, two years after my father, they packed her off to John Brown University in Arkansas. I gather that the place was rather fundamentalist Christian. The academics weren't all that great, and the social environment was claustrophobic. Mother complained loudly enough and long enough to get relieved. They then sent her to Mills College in California, from which she graduated in 1939.

My father's written recollections cover his career during this period. In any case, they got married on June 16th, 1939, just after mother graduated from Mills. There are some wedding photos among the family heirlooms, some of which I have posted on my website. The scandal of the wedding was that father wore brown shoes with a blue suit. Mother's father had the photos retouched to make them black.

My parents remained in the San Francisco Bay area after getting married. Father started working at the Moore Drydocks in Oakland sometime early in the war. I have no idea how he learned sheet-metal work, but he was an amazingly handy fellow and I'm sure that when the opportunity came he taught himself very quickly. One of my fondest recollections of my father is our tour of the American West in 1999 after mother had died. He told me that sheet-metal work was the thing he had enjoyed most in life. He had a singular genius both for envisioning how a flat piece of metal should be cut to come together into the appropriate three-dimensional product, and for executing the moves that it took to get the solder to

make it happen.He was proud of what he did in the realm of chemistry, but I don't recall him ever speaking as glowingly about that.

My mother went to work as a secretary for the Naval headquarters in Oakland, California, Admiral Nimitz's operation. She was a fast and accurate typist and a smart woman, who knew how to make an office work.

I was conceived about four months after the United States entered the war. Dad was working night and day to crank out liberty ships. There was a lot of sheet-metal work, especially in the galleys, latrines, and morgues.

If I recall the stories correctly, my parents lived in a rental on Milvia the street in Berkeley when they met. They moved for whatever reason and Carlton Street in Berkeley, which is where they lived when I was born. During the war, with a good income, they moved to a nice house on Monta Vista Street in Piedmont. That is where my sister and I believe my brother were born. Actually, we were all born in Alta Bates hospital, Dr. William Marsh attending. And that brings us up to the beginning of my own biography.

Here are the links to materials on my web site:
My father's oral history of his own life http://www.grahamseibert.com/ells_seibert_oral_history.pdf
Stories of my mother's mother's family. http://www.grahamseibert.com/henrietta_munde_family.pdf
The genealogy of my mother's family, back to the Mayflower and before
http://www.grahamseibert.com/brown_family_tree.pdf
The genealogy of my father's family, back to the Saarland about 1500
http://www.grahamseibert.com/seibert_family_tree.pdf