



## *Introduction*

*December, 2023*

This written rendition of my memories began about 3 years ago. Organization was the biggest challenge. I began with *Part 1 Times and Places* with the first memory and proceeded sequentially chronologically. After writing a few chapters, I realized I needed to interject themes that transcended and combined numerous *Times* .

Therefore, *Part 2 Episodes and Memories* was created. Soon after that, I discovered poetry and began putting my words and thoughts in verse form, i.e. *Part 3 Poetry and Thoughts*.

I originally intended to search for the reason “why I am who I am?” I hoped to conclude that by writing Parts 1 and 2 to determine the answer. Alas, my brain is still trying to distill those conclusions. Trying to wrestle and define anything as complex as the life I have been given is either too difficult or not needed.

I still have more to write if I am able, and someone will care enough to listen.



# Acknowledgments

December, 2023

## Thank You!

**First**, for my *Soul Mate*, the past 36 and more years, *Linda*.

Without her encouragement for so many of these years to write these stories, which I insisted on telling her, this history would not exist.

She is beyond an *Angel*.



**Second**, to *Michael Burns* with his constant affirmations. His writings inspired me to wish that he could have been the father I needed.

**Third**, to *Jean Jackson*, whose tolerance during her guidance has led me to a new way of expressing my thoughts through verse.

**Fourth**, the wonderful neighbor and dear friend, *Peggy O'Connell*, who patiently and kindly edited my chapters over the past two years.

**Fifth**, a former student at the high school where, even though he was not in my algebra class, inspired me to write, as he wrote about his own life. *Mateen Diop*. [Books](#)

And, the ALIR groups of Memoirs, Poetry, Socrates Café, Mark Stokes, Hella Hennessee, Nancy Anderson, Thomas Gaines, et al, in which I have thoroughly enjoyed acceptance and space to express my thoughts. Each of you knows who you are. I love you all.

[ALIRSanAntonio.org](http://ALIRSanAntonio.org)

# *Part 1*

## *Times and Places*



## Part 1 - Times and Places

### Chapter 1 - The First (circa 1943-45)

It is dark.

The first conscious feeling of life is stirring in my new body.  
On my back, I look to my right and see something beyond.

Through the slats of my baby bed, my eyes see a curtained window.  
Through the curtains I see a pale light coming from outside.  
I do not know if I am crying or fussing. There is a faint sound of soothing talk.

Then sleep....



**Chapter 2 - The Big Hill** *(circa 1946)*

My living place changes. Father is home after three war years in Europe. I notice he is seldom happy.

Everything else changes too. No longer are the doting mother and mentally ailing grandmother (Granny) in charge. I meet blunt force consequences for my far-reaching independent behavior. I am supposed to learn that pain is to be the standard deterrent to 'not doing what I am told'. Regretfully, for everyone, this lesson does not take.

I am living in a small white house. I have a tricycle. I ride it around the sidewalks of W. 11<sup>th</sup> St., inside the yard by the house, just a block away from the Main St. hill.

One morning, just for fun, I ride toward Main St. past the hurtful Spanish Dagger plants that line the sidewalk to Main. After reaching the Main St. sidewalk, which is at the top of the steep hill and runs along the busy street, I cannot resist. I line up the trike on the sidewalk, mount the steed, and let her rip full speed all the way down the hill (about one long block)! I think I outran some of the cars!

Someone reports this to my parents. Pain is given...but what a ride!

One further memory of this location: On a Saturday, I think, Father puts on a pot of beans in the pressure cooker and we all leave to take a drive. Upon returning and opening the door into this high-ceiling room (which is the kitchen), the cooker has blown out. Beans are everywhere...ceiling, walls, furniture, and floors. The place smells like burnt frijoles. I hear some loudly shouted new words that I do not know. Father probably thinks he is still in the Army.

We move out soon after.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

### **Chapter 3 - Granny**

(Still on 11<sup>th</sup> St in Roswell. About 4-5 years old. )

The question is... Who is Mother's father? Doesn't everyone have a father? Mother's mother is Granny, but Granny does not understand the question or pays no attention to it. Granny says nothing. Mother does not answer either. Father is silent as usual.

Granny is worse. She acts different. It might be because Father is home from the war. Granny's eyes drift away when I talk to her. She does not focus. She does not know when I say anything to her. She does not answer. Granny does not recognize me. She sits all day and will not go to bed.

Father and Mother force her to go to the bathroom, to go to bed, to put clothes on, and to stay inside. Granny is large. She is hard to force. Sometimes Granny screams about strange things that I do not understand. She hurts me not, but I can no longer hug her. I miss my old Granny.

One night, I awake suddenly. There are strange noises in the house. Mother sees me up and says Father is outside getting Granny. She tells me to go back to bed. I guess something important happened.

The next morning, Mother tells me more. During the night, she says Granny ran out of the house without any clothes on. She ran down the street screaming. Father chased her and forced her back in the house. A few days later, Granny is gone. Mother says Granny is in a hospital far away.

Mother is sad. Father is silent as usual.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

### **Chapter 4 - Favorite Place** (circa 1947-48 in Roswell NM)

I am living in my favorite place with my favorite person, always loving, my paternal grandmother. I could not say, Grandmother. I named her MomMom. Father moved us here for several reasons which I did not realize at the time.

The house seems big to me. Front porch, dining room, living room with a large upright (old player type) piano, kitchen, side bedroom off the kitchen, big bedroom with a restroom at the back portion of the house. It has a basement accessible from the outside which has been built to be a storm shelter. I want to explore.

The yard seems huge to me. The sides or the lot are lined with mile-high Chinese elms. I am so impressed. I can see and smell the linseed oil plant one block away along the railroad track. I hear the trains once or twice a day. There are huge storage bins near the railroad track

I am still on a rather short leash, warned not to go over the alley south to the busy 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. I manage to go over two lots near the house and find the most inviting huge Cottonwood tree. I know that I belong here.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

### **Chapter 5 – Favorite Place with Brother** (circa 1948)

In the Spring of 1948, I am not aware of Mother being pregnant. I have a faint memory in late spring of someone mentioning that a baby will soon arrive. I do not remember Mother being larger than usual. She is large anyway.

Mother is missing for a few days. One afternoon, MomMom tells me to go outside and wait for Father and Mother to arrive. I play and wait. It is sometime in May.

Finally, they pull onto the dirt driveway. Father gets out and moves to get Mother's door. They all come around the front of the car slowly carrying a bundle of blankets and stop to let me see.

There is little Brother. He is bundled up tight I see rosy cheeks and closed eyes. He is small. He cannot even stand up, much less walk or run with me. He certainly does not meet my expectations. I want someone to play with.

Anyway, there is a lot of fussing and cooing for weeks. I sometimes wonder if they know I am still around. I learn to accept that I am not going to get the attention I am used to.

I learn to live with it. Actually, I learn to appreciate it. It means I have less supervision. I have more time to explore. They have no idea where I will go or what I will do..

But, I am *joyfully free*.





## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

### **Chapter 6 - Walnut** *(circa 1949 - located on the east side of Roswell at Atkinson & Walnut)*

We are in a new house. The place consists of 4 or 5 blocks of new houses in Roswell, east of Chahuahita, the original Mexican village. Our blocks are on the east side of the city. Most Anglo people live on the other side, west of Main St. There are vacant lots and bare ground all around our house, but houses fill in rapidly. No trees. I miss my favorite place and MomMom. No piano.

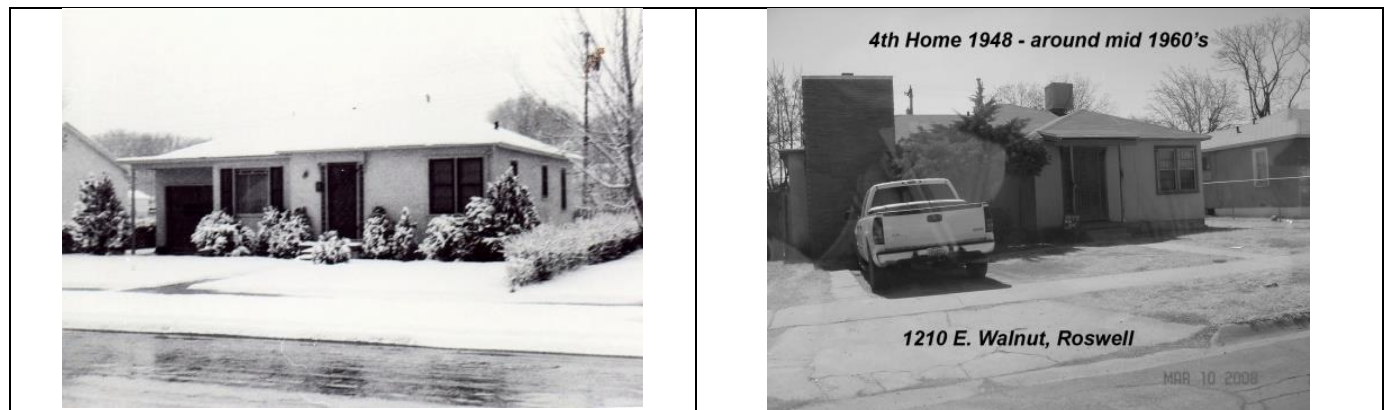
Father buys this house with his war benefits. It is a small two bedroom, one bathroom, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, one garage, a small storage room, a very small back porch. There is a gas floor furnace. I stand on it to keep warm.

Brother and I are in the back bedroom. There is a noisy evaporative cooler mounted in the window. I live here for 10 years or more. It seems to get smaller.

Father builds a big heavy kite out of wood and some kind of cloth. He is proud of it. We go out to the vacant lots to fly it. It is too heavy to fly. He is disappointed.

Father works hard over the years to add more space to this small house. He eventually adds a double garage and workroom which is accessible from the alley. He converts the house garage to a den and builds a big fireplace. I am the mortarforker for the big brick laying job at the front of the garage. Father extends the kitchen to include the back porch.

Mother uses muriatic acid to clean the new inside bricks on the fireplace. She uses an aluminum pan. The firetruck comes to ventilate the house and Mother. Exciting!



**Chapter 7 - Edgewood Elementary School** *(North Garden St. about a mile and a half from Walnut).*

Big build-up to first grade at school. I have a cigar box with crayons and pencils. I have a red big chief tablet. I wear long pants and shoes. Mother combs my hair.

Mother takes me to the school. She walks me in the classroom. I am not used to being around so many other kids, especially noisy girls. Mother approaches the teacher, introduces me. The teacher, Mrs. VonWontock, takes me to my desk and reassures me. I vaguely remember Mother saying something to the teacher..”keep an eye on me”. Although I do not like the confinement in the classroom, I stay because the teacher is nice and pretty. I see freedom out the classroom windows.

I learn the color purple on my first day. I learn the nice smell of the long hair of the girl sitting in front of me. I learn to print my name...barely. I learn that recess and lunch time playing soccer is what I want to major in.

I do not yet know the way back to Walnut and home yet. I know that MomMom lives close by. I do not run away from school. Mother is happy. She knows Father will use the belt.

I do not remember much about next three grades in school except how much I enjoy the third-grade teacher. We sing so many great songs. I also remember rebelling against the cursive writing drills of doing overlapping circles, between the lines, across the page. I throw a fit one day in class for being forced to circle within the lines. I throw my pencil hard on the floor. I did not scream any ‘cursive’ words. I was a slow learner in writing. I made a ‘D’.

I become much better at soccer during the third grade. I am the fastest and the best dribbler. Everyone wants to play on my team.

At the beginning of fourth grade, Mother tells me that there may be some ‘Negroes’ coming to the school. I sort of remember that there is a small ‘Negro’ school on the southeast side of town. It is closing. It is 1953-54. I did not know any ‘negroes’. I am very curious.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

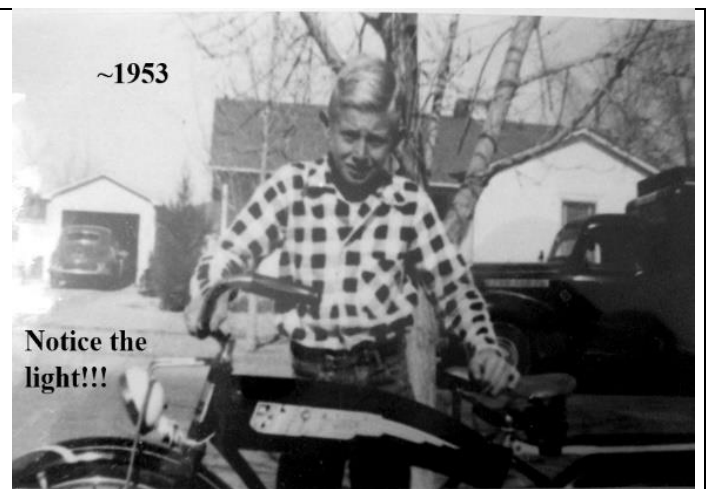
First day of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, I see one...only one. He is in my class with Ms. Raabe, who taught Father as well. At recess, I greet him and ask him if he wants to play soccer. OMG!..he is good. We become great friends along with some boys from Chahuahita. Good players!

I learn other important things at school. I learn the yo-yo, spinning wooden tops, marbles, lagging, and playing chicken with pocket knives.

I ride my bike to school in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. My hands freeze because I do not have gloves. Once at school, I learn to go into the classroom early. Inside, the hands and fingers hurt worse. I find that by opening a window a little and sticking my fingers outside in the colder temperature, the pain subsides as the fingers thaw out. The teacher seems to understand.

I love going across the street during lunchtime to the little Mom and Pop store. Kids buy sweets and little toys. The owner is nice. Twice a year, he hires a traveling Yo-Yo exhibitor to do shows in and outside the store. I am so impressed. I must have the best Duncan best yo-yo. I practice incessantly. I begin spinning wooden tops and keeping them inside the circle. I learn to knock other spinning tops out of the circle.

During 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th grade, I learn to walk to MomMom's, my favorite place. Often Mother tells me on a Friday to walk to my favorite place and spend the weekend with MomMom. Heaven!! ... (except for having to go to church)





**Chapter 8 - East Side Elementary School** *(A new (old) school – located on East 5<sup>th</sup> Street.)*

I move on to fifth grade in a very old two-story building nearby on East 5<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Miller, my math teacher in fourth grade, is there. She often will not let me go outside to play. She says I look sickly. I have numerous episodes of strep throat. It is polio scary times. I feel that Ms. Miller is stealing away my best times outside at lunch and recess. She is so skinny. I think she is the one who is sick.

When in Miller's prison, I go to the second floor, open a big window, fold and throw paper airplanes all over the playground. Sometimes, I am required to go out and pick them up.

This old school is called East Side Elementary. It is only 2 blocks from MomMom's house. I walk to my favorite place after school. I spend Friday night and Saturday night. I am required to go to church on Sunday. I hate going to this "Church of Christ". It makes no sense to me. Often, I misbehave. I am sent to the little room in the back. I sneak out often.

MomMom sometimes lets me sleep in her bed. She tells me about her past life in Oklahoma. She remembers about being so afraid of Indians coming to the house. The dust storms are terrible, she says. Tornadoes are so frightening. Straw is driven into tree trunks. She remembers the fear of being in a storm cellar. I am mesmerized. I remember every word from this loving grandmother. I memorize the inside of the back bedroom so well as I fall asleep.

MomMom has four sons. Her husband leaves her alone with the boys and runs off with a 'Floosie' to Carlsbad. The two older sons have jobs as mechanics. Father, the third son, quits high school and goes to work to support MomMom. The fourth son stays in high school. Father gets his GED after returning from war.

The sons build MomMom a small apartment and laundry building on the alley of my favorite place. It has one bedroom, a kitchen with a small table, a restroom, and a laundry room about the size of a single garage. She has two sturdy washing machines with big power ringers on top and a drainage system of concrete canals. Along one wall is a counter for folding. On the parallel wall is a hanging rack, an ironing board, a big iron press and a foot treadle sewing machine. A radio is on the counter where we listen to Tennessee Ernie Ford and the Sons of the Pioneers. I learn and love the music.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

Her patrons in Roswell bring her laundry to wash, starch, to dry, to press, to fold and to wrap in brown paper. Many are her church people

MomMom has what seems like miles of clothesline wire in the backyard. She stretches to pin the clothes on the wire. I try to carry back and forth the baskets of wet and dry clothes to her. Father and Uncles have built these clotheslines for her.

On Saturday mornings, after a great breakfast, MomMom and I walk west over the railroad tracks to Main Street. She goes into a beauty shop to get her "Go to Church" hair do. I walk down to Woolworth with about 15 to 25 cents to spend anyway I want. I spend away for about an hour. I see a guy put stuff in his pocket and watch him walk out. I return to the beauty shop to be with MomMom.

We walk towards home along Third St. We go into the small Safeway store. MomMom buys the groceries. I help her carry the paper sacks home. It seems a long way, but it is only about 2 blocks. I play the rest of the day climbing the big cottonwood tree, etching my initials many places in the bark with a spark plug. I know that it will be a big hurt if I ever fall out of that tree. I am lucky that I don't.

This is the last year East Side School was open.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

### **Chapter 9 - The Farm**

For several summers, I am allowed to go to a working farm between Hagermann and Dexter, NM. Aunt D and Uncle W welcome me for a week or two. I do not know why they are Aunt and Uncle. I think they were related to Granny or her husband.

Mother takes me; Father never comes.

I have a Daisy BB rifle. I make fishing rigs to catch perch and crawdads.

I am an excellent shot. I target the English sparrows. I spare the other birds. I also became an expert at lying in wait for field mice peeking their triangular heads out of the stacked maize piles. I put only one BB in the chamber so that there are no rolling shots in the chamber. I wait until I hear a rustle. I slowly position the rifle in that direction. I know the mouse pathways through the maize stalks. I wait until I see the tiny head. From about 10 to 15 feet away, I pop them. One week I bagged 27 field mice. Uncle W was happy. It taught me patience.

One day, Uncle W tells me to climb up the inside wall of the barn to the top rafters. There are pigeon nests up there. He tells me to take the feathered young ones and drop them down to him. I leave the little ones alone. He wants the almost-grown squabs which cannot fly. The adult pigeons are not happy and buzz me. That night, Aunt D fixes the squabs. They are delicious.

Sometimes, I help Uncle W irrigate the rows from dirt canals. We start up the big well. The water gushes out and flows down the dirt canals. Metal tubes are placed along the dirt canals bridging into the the canal. They become siphons to get the water to the rows.

When the well is shut off, I get a piece of bacon and tie it on a string. I patiently wait on the edge of the canal at the well. Eventually, a crawdad will pinch and start eating the bacon. I slowly bring him up until I can flip him out. Then the tricky task of getting hold of him. I hate getting pinched. Once I subdue the little lobster, I harvest the tail and peel it. I use it as bait in the reservoir for perch.

I am up every morning at daybreak. I sleep on the screened porch on a cot. I fall asleep exhausted at nightfall. I do not remember ever taking a bath there. Aunt fixes a lot of chicken and dumplings. This farm is the place where I feel most free.

*Part 1 - Times and Places*



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

### **Chapter 10 - Flora Vista Elementary School** *(circa 1955 – located on southeast Atkinson St.)*

I cannot see very well. Everything is blurry. Mother takes me to an eye doctor, and I get glasses for being nearsighted. I see much better now. The un-speckled students tease me for wearing them, but I make better grades.

The new school is built a few blocks away from Walnut. I walk to school. I know most of the 6<sup>th</sup> graders but it is very crowded. The teachers seem to think I am smart. That does not matter to me. I want to be outside playing ball. I get hurt playing tackle football. I do not like tackle football.

I try to high jump and land on my back along the edge of the pit. I can barely breathe but embarrassment makes me hide the hurt I feel. It takes a month or two for the pain to go away. I have difficulty breathing but I do not tell Mother.

Every day after school, I hurry home to listen to our big AM radio. Sgt Preston of the Yukon, Sky King, Lone Ranger, and Buck Rogers are some of my favorite daily serials. These stories are such a source of food for my imagination. Mother buys cans of applesauce by the case. I open and eat a can every afternoon.

This elementary school eventually is renamed Nancy Lopez Elementary who was born and raised about a block from the Walnut house. Her house was on my paper route.

I experience my first discrimination issue. I realize for years that Father hates “Mexicans”. He refers to them as “Mess-kins”. What Father thinks or says does not affect me much.

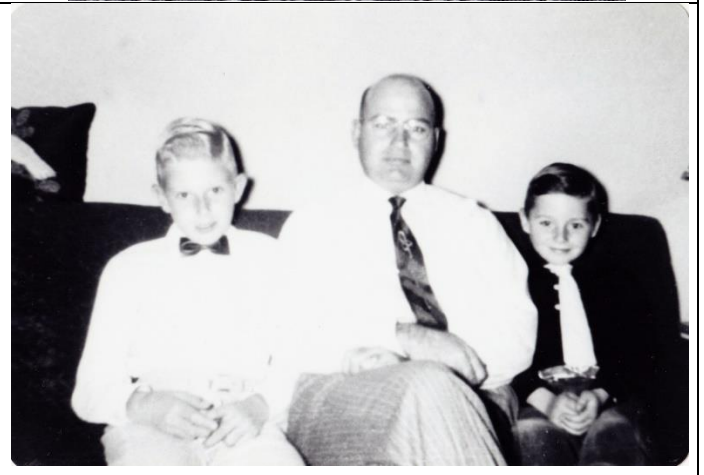
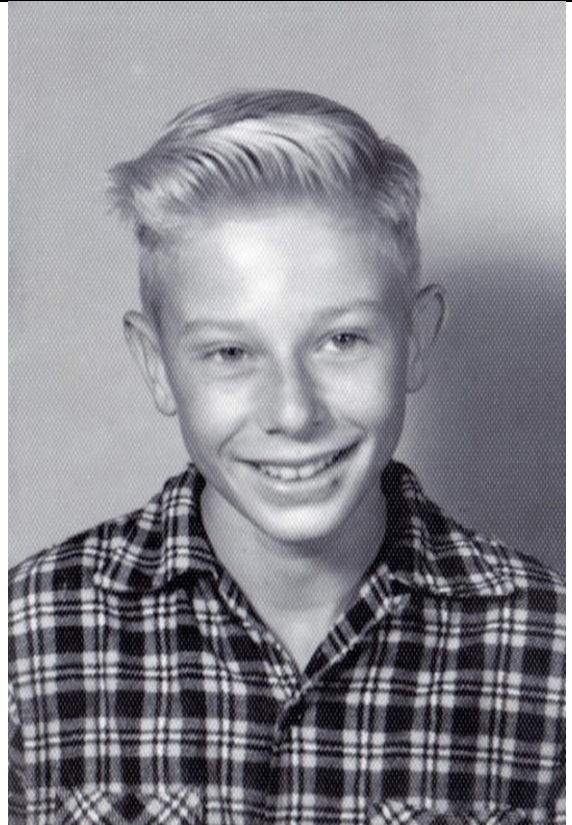
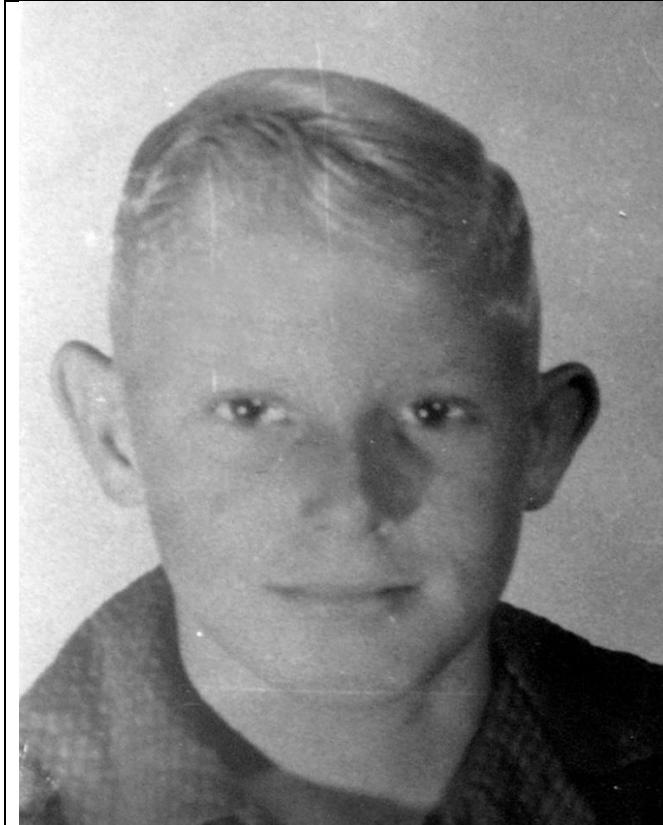
Several times while living at the Walnut place, I ride my bike through the north edge shortcut past Chahuahita Village to Hondo Park and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. I am chased and rocks are thrown at me. Generally, those times frighten me, so I stay away from that route. I still have Mexican friends at school.

I notice this beautiful girl in my class. She always smiles at me. She invites me to her birthday party in the springtime of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I tell her I will come. She lives about two blocks away in a mobile home (trailer house).

I tell Mother. A few hours later, Mother tells me I must ask permission from MomMom. I ask MomMom and she says no. “We do not mingle with Mexicans”, MomMom says. Mother forbids me to go to the party. I do not understand. I am confused and embarrassed to tell the beautiful girl.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

### **Chapter 11 - The Piano (age 9 and up)**

At my favorite place, MomMom has an old upright piano. She tells me that it used to be an old “player” piano. There is a ragged John Thompson music book for older beginners. I learn to read the notes. I find the keys on my own. It takes me a few months and some encouragement to learn to play “Long, Long Ago”. MomMom loves it. She wants me to play “Beautiful Dreamer”. It takes me a shorter time to play that one.

Mother is excited. Father seems to like the music. Mother wants me to take lessons. “Ok”, I say, not knowing what I am getting into. She takes me to a very old woman’s house south of town. Ms. C was not my ideal teacher, but I paid some attention. Brother took lessons there too.

My finger exercises reminded me of drawing cursive writing ovals. I did not like practicing finger drills. I have songs to play. The only reason I enjoy going to Ms. C’s house is that she has baby ducks running around. I talk her out of one or two to take home. I raise them in the backyard.

I am very frustrated with the constraints of practice scales and finger exercises. I know that I probably need it. I am resentful of having to go to Ms. C’s every week. I take it out on the piano. I find a book of matches and try to light one of the legs on fire. The leg was reluctant to burn. Father comes home. The belt comes out and it hurts.

I decide to play songs that I like. I find a book of Stephen Foster songs. I love the melodies. Father likes “Ole Black Joe”. I do not pay attention to lyrics. I play for the melody and harmony.

Later, in Junior and High school, I change piano teachers to a gentleman on the northwest side of Roswell. He wants me to play ‘classics’. I learn a few: [Solfeggietto](#), [Prelude in C# Minor](#), [Clair de Lune](#) and several more . In return, he agrees that I can play more popular songs: Autumn Leaves, Theme from the Apartment, Theme from Exodus, Under the Double Eagle. My recitals bring in a crowd. Teacher cries every time I play Moonlight Sonata.

I play for the high school queen coronations FFA, FHA, and other events. I attain some popularity with the west side Anglos. During this time, I have not related my East Side Walnut residency as affecting my social status.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

I begin working as a sacker at Safeway at the age of 15. I want a car. Cars cost money. Working after school and on weekends takes away time from piano practice.

Gradually, I stop playing during my college years except occasionally ripping out the double chromatic from “Autumn Leaves” just to impress. I start again in 1966 but I do not remember many of my old pieces. I start free play. Melodies form.

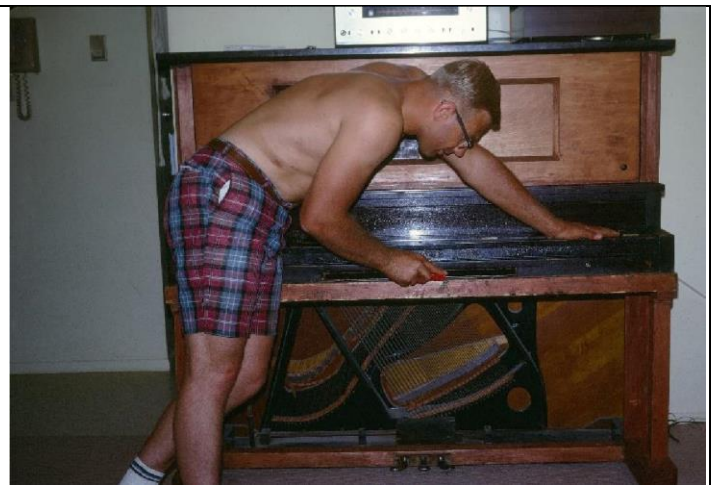
I develop a few of them and record them in 1967 on a simple cassette recorder. It satisfies my need for music.

Again, I stop playing until 1986 when, after meeting my soulmate, something turns on the need to express my feelings through the keyboard. I compose some more complicated melodies and record them in 1988.

My fingers have limits now after a bout with rheumatoid arthritis in 2017. I still sit down occasionally, and after a few minutes of tinkering, I can sometimes play the basics of a new melody. If I do not turn on the recorder on the electric piano, I will forget the new melody the next day. I feel that a home is empty without a piano.



[Don's songs 1967](#)



Don's songs 1988

[Linda](#)  
[Flighty Fun](#)



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

### **Chapter 12 - Discipline**

When Father comes home from the war, my spoiled life changes. After ignoring simple instructions, my little butt is slapped. As I grew up, my bigger butt is strapped with Father's belt. Mother never hit me.

To deal with this, I do segregated behavior: one style when Father is home and the other when I am home alone with Mother. Then Mother and Brother started ratting on me. Father imposes more punishment. I have nowhere to hide except MomMom's. I always behave there.

From age 5 through 10, the most tough times are at the dinner table on Walnut. Mother often fixes pot roast with potatoes. I love mashing the potatoes and covering them with French dressing. Then I cut up the beef or venison and mix it into an orange mush. Somehow, this meal makes me ravenously hungry.

Father is always in his training mode. He constantly watches for fast eating, chewing with mouth open, sitting up, elbows off the table, etc. Sometimes he verbally warns me. Mother warns me as well. But sometimes the food is too tempting, and I lose myself in it. Then it happens.

Father reaches out while I not watching. He blindsides me with a hard slap across the face. The force almost knocks me off the chair. Right in the middle of my favorite meal, Father invokes hate from me. I cry. He will not let me leave the table. Brother is never done this way. Mother leaves the room and cries too. I am trapped. I do not want to eat at the same table with Father for the rest of my life. This happens many times. It is hard to forgive.

Other misbehavior events like riding my bike down in the forbidden riverbed or lying about something gets a strapping from Father. As I get older the strapping subsides and he makes me sit for about 15 minutes while he stares at me. That never works either. One late afternoon in my early teens, he decides to get the belt out again. I refuse to accept the punishment. We get into a wrestling match in the middle of the dining room. Chairs go everywhere. Mother is yelling. Brother is standing away looking frightened. I manage to put Father on the floor. I stand over him. I try to explain that the belt will no longer work. I feel ashamed for dominating my own father. I apologize to him. I try to help him up.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

When on his feet, he lands a right hook on my jaw, and I go down. (*that worked*). I stay down and let the event soak in. Brother says that Father knocked me out. I eventually get up and leave the scene. He never apologizes.

I have a very good 10th-grade English teacher. Mr. W appreciates my work. I do not misbehave in his class. Except for one time. It is the morning of the final exam at 1st period. I am in class well before the bell. Mr. W comes in, drops the printed test forms in the bottom drawer of his desk, and walks out.

There are two girls studying in the class. I do not know why I do it, but I go to the desk, pick up the stack of tests and wave them at the girls. I put them right back in the drawer without reading the test questions. I return to my desk. How stupid that was.

Two days later, Mr. W takes me to the principal's office. Mr. N sits us down. I am asked if I stole the test. I say "No", but I did pick it up before I was supposed to. I told him exactly what happened. Mr. N asks Mr. W about my behavior and performance. Mr. W. stands up for me and tells Mr. N that I have an "A+" for the course. Mr. N then pronounces the punishment. I can either take the 10th-grade course again and try for an "A+" or accept a "B" for this one. Shucks, that was an easy decision.

I manage to intercept the mail from the school. I never figured out which girl told on me.

In 11<sup>th</sup> grade English, I have a weak teacher, Ms. H. I do not sit still for weak teachers. I get in trouble a couple of times and Ms. H sends me to the Office. The Vice-Principal tells me if I am sent in again, I will be withdrawn from the course and sit in study hall.

I love to show off. Ms. H has a big standup placard advertising a play near the front exit door. Ms. H leaves the room. I decide to play around, go to the front of the room, and move the sign into the doorway. Then I hustle back to my desk. I do not make it. Ms. H writes a note and tells me to go to the VP.

I sit. I tell her I cannot go. She tells me again. The class is frozen in silence. What's going to happen? I say "No" and explain that it will mean that I will have to drop the course and lose the credit. I ask her to give me one more chance and she will have no more problems with me. She lets it go, thank God. The class relaxes. I received an A in the course and a few points with the girls for being a "bad boy".

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

I have a car for all 3 years of high school,. I go steady with a different girl every 3 weeks. A new girl moves to town. "S" is a 10<sup>th</sup> grader. I am an 11<sup>th</sup>. She is beautiful, has a locker near mine, and I am available. We talk. I get a date with her. We get along lovingly. I ask her if she wants to shoot a hook and let me show her the Bottomless Lakes Park east of town.

On Friday at lunch, we sneak out to my car and start out 2<sup>nd</sup> street. We stop for gasoline. We get to the Park. We 'park". I mention skinny-dipping and she seems to be game, but the water is like 50 degrees. So, we park some more and come home. Father gets a call from the gas station owner. He wants to know where I went. I tell him the truth. I went to the Lakes for a possible skinny dip with a beautiful girl. He is quiet and then says, "Well, I guess there are many ways to get an education".

You never know about this guy.

**Chapter 13 - Junior High years (age 12-14)**

Summer is over. I really enjoy Little League baseball all summer. The tryouts for the All-Star picks is disappointing. I am considered good enough to make it as first baseman and relief pitcher. I hit a good drive into the right field corner during a tryout and stretch it into a triple.

I sprain my right ankle sliding into third base. I cannot walk. It takes me almost 6 weeks to recover. I did not make the team. My friends on the team eventually made it to and won the 1956 Little League World Series! I listened on the big AM radio.

On to Junior High, grade 7, at North Junior High School on the northwest side of Roswell. It is a formidable huge three-story building made of thousands of red bricks. Each classroom has tall, wide windows, some open and some closed. There are outdoor water 'fountains' where you can sip from a water stream shooting up from a long horizontal pipe.

Rumors reach me that 7th graders should be aware that the older boys are looking for us. It is a bully scare that we will be "de-pants" and our pants run up the flagpole. It hits home for me. I am terrified most of the school year. I hide among crowds, avoid the older groups of boys, carefully choose times to use the restroom, and stay in safe places. I never see anyone get "de-pants" but it definitely affects my behavior.

I do not remember how I traveled back and forth to school. It was about 2 miles. I might have ridden my bike, but I remember thinking that might look like a little kid and make me a possible target. The big boys drove cars and Vespers. All students have a whole hour at the same time for lunch and recess. Some of the kids drive to one of the fast-food drive-ins like A&W or Tastee Freeze. Some who live close by walk home and then return. I eat a sack lunch at school. I usually stay on campus and play softball and tetherball (I was the champ with both my left and right hand).

During 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I can hit the softball on top of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the gym. I can catch high-fly balls with one hand by reaching higher than the shorter kids. With the catch, I earn the right to bat again. Whap! There it goes back on top of the gym. Somebody must go through the high window to the top of the gym to fetch the ball. I catch flack for the delay of the game. I feel proud of my abilities. Coach puts me in charge of getting and returning the equipment.

## Part 1 - Times and Places

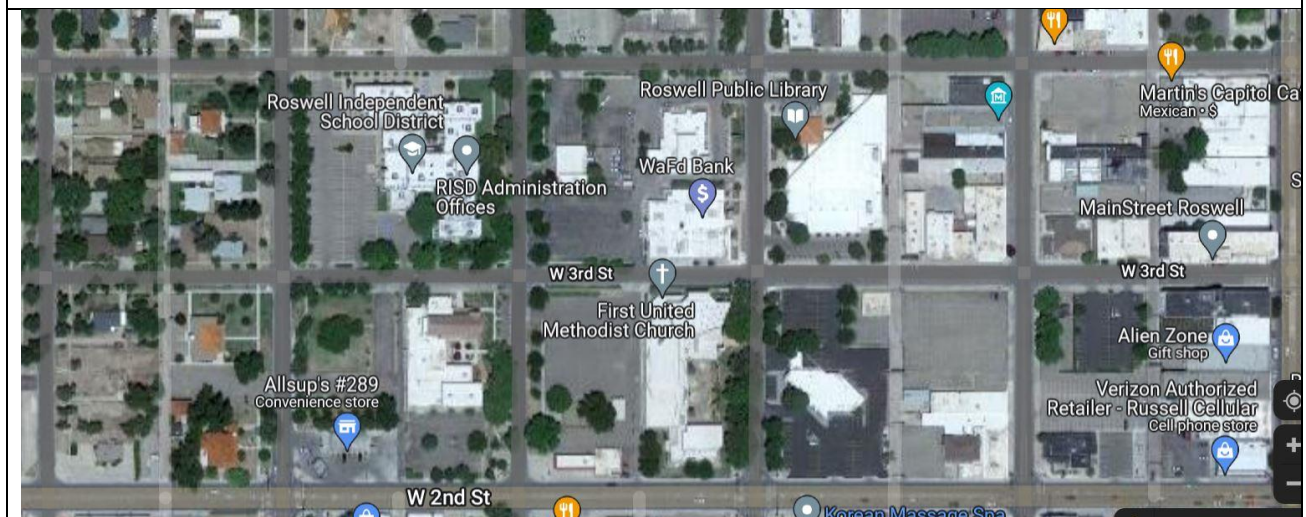
I live on the far east side. I do not know the west side neighborhood very well. Many of the west side students are not very friendly. I have just enough friends to feel liked.



*School Days 57-58*



North Junior High School, Roswell, NM - c.1930s



<http://scottymoore.net/roswell.html>

## **Chapter 14 – North Junior High Teachers**

In 7th grade, I have a wonderful English teacher, Ms. L. She is pretty and teaches me how to diagram sentences. That is fun and easy. I excel in her class. I start reading a lot of books.

I go to the Carnegie library on 3<sup>rd</sup> St. Books for the younger readers are in the basement. I spend hours there looking for outdoor stories of dogs, wolves, horses. I find my favorite author. [Rutherford G Montgomery](#). I also enjoy all the Black Stallion novels and some of Zane Gray's. I go by barbershops and read the Field and Stream stories. I am quite interested in the outdoors and wildlife.

Another teacher I remember in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade is Ms. P. the algebra I teacher. She has thin red hair. She and her sister have been teaching in the school district for decades. I do not pay much attention in class. I am interested in girls, and I notice those around me. I understand algebra. It is easy. For some reason they put me in a summer school advanced track between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. I resent going to summer school for Algebra II.

One day during 9<sup>th</sup> grade, a friend with a car invites me to go on a ride during lunch with his girlfriend and another girl. I say ok. I end up in the back seat with a girl "E" who is in my Algebra I class. We make out a bit. You know, 'smacking lips' etc. I have no idea why we did that. A few days later, I am sitting in algebra class and a 'Slam' book is rotated to me. Those books have a page for each person in the class or school. You are supposed to 'slam' with comments about each person. I write something about "E" being easy. I pass the book on to the next person.

In a few minutes, when the book reaches "E", I hear a loud 'slam' noise. E gets out of her desk, walks around the room to my desk, and forcefully slaps me in the face. Then she walks back and sits down. I flush with embarrassment, compose myself, and wonder why I ever wrote in that book. Ms. P. does nothing about the slap, but I think she grins a little when she looks down.

Alas, education has many twists and turns.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

The woodshop teacher, Mr. W., teaches 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders. I take the shop course both years because Father wants me to know woodworking. By 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I know how to run all the power tools in the shop. I master the power jointer, planer, band saw, table saw, miter saw, jig saw, and all the hand tools.

I become the shop “slave” laborer for Mr. W.

In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, I am not given time to work on my own project which is a big gun cabinet. Father orders the Honduran mahogany raw lumber and blueprints. I plane, joint and prepare my lumber for assembly when I have time. Then it sits until April. I am doing all the labor for Mr. W. on the other students’ projects. I tell Mr. W. that I need help putting my project together. He ignores me. We all know Mr. W is drunk most of the time.

I tell Father. Father is angry. He goes to the woodshop. He asks Mr. W, “What is going on?”. Mr. W says I have been goofing off. Father does not believe him. He tells Mr. W to give me help. Mr. W is angry too but follows through. From that point forward, Mr. W curses at me many times because he is having to work. It is embarrassing in front of the other students, but they know I have helped them many more times than Mr. W.

Mr. W. messes up the lumber cuts on the bottom section of the cabinet by not following the blueprints. I warn him before he cuts, but he does not listen. Then after realizing his errors, he redesigns the bottom part of the cabinet with no drawers, only doors. I tell Father. Father is really angry now.

The gun cabinet is not finished at the end of the school year. Father brings it home and finishes it himself. He curses a lot too, but not at me. I help.

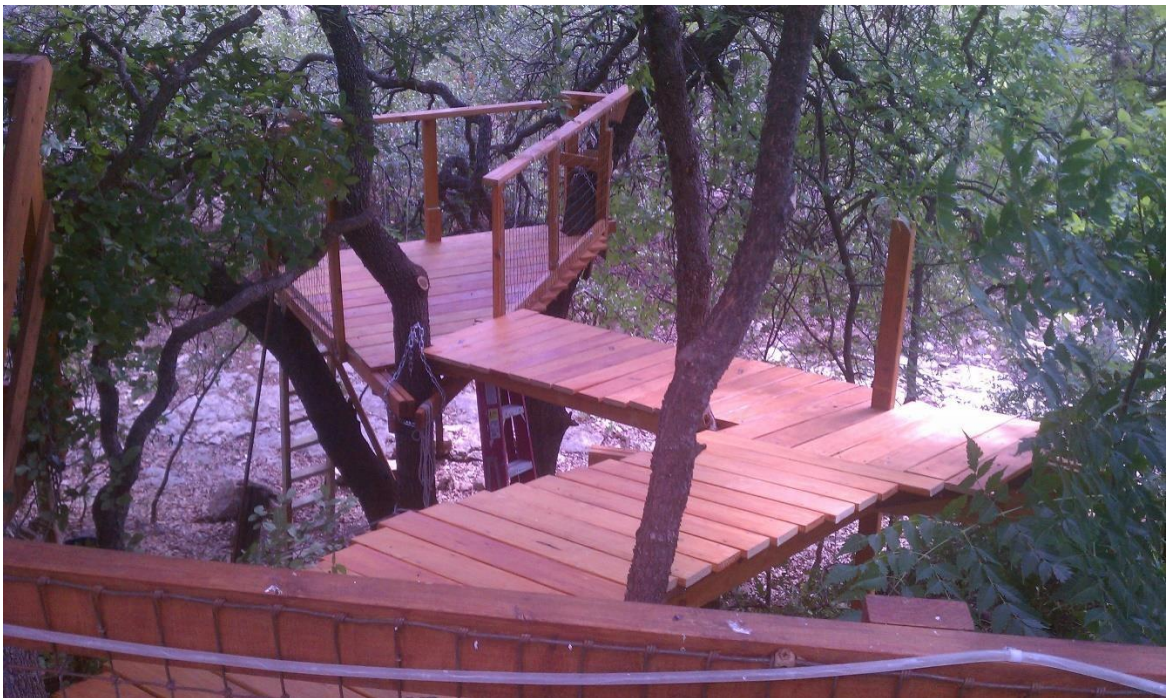
Afterwards, I learn that Mr. W. was Father’s teacher as well. The skills I learn there stay with me through life. I love working with wood. I build many things. Many years later, when Mother dies, Brother asks me if I want the gun cabinet. I reply. “Hell No”.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*



Before



After



**Chapter 15 – High School 9.5 – 12<sup>th</sup> grades**

My first acquaintance with Roswell High School is during the summer between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. I have no idea why I am put in an advanced group of math classes. I must take Algebra II in the summer to finish plane geometry, solid geometry, trig, college algebra, and calculus before graduation. I am not thrilled to lose my summer mornings.

The man who teaches all these courses throughout my 3.5 years is named Mr. B.C. He is a very smart man and a whiz at math, but he is not a very good teacher. He never inspired me to reach further.

The same group is always in the same class, year after year. I quickly notice that none of the students in this accelerated math class are from my side of town. They generally do better with Mr. B.C. I must start studying my 12th-grade year to understand the calculus. This is the first time I have ever studied. I resent it. Math is not that inspirational to me.

Most of my other high school years are somewhat of a blur. I have a great biology teacher Mr. L in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. He leads all of us to discover life. But, most of all, he let me sit at the same table with Bettye. She is not the prettiest girl in school, but she rang my interest bell. We go on a date one time. I am amazed at the smoothness of her facial skin. I did pay attention on dissecting the earthworms too. Bettye did dump me after a while, but we are friends. Mr L. went on to become Superintendent.

Other than the two incidents I mentioned previously with the two English teachers, I have no further discipline problems. I enjoy one semester of Latin. I am good with languages. I also really enjoy a semester of 'personal' typing. With my piano hands, it was fun. The skill makes me money in later years with computers. It is still a mystery to me why the 'qwerty' keyboard is still dominant.

I take physical education every year during the last period. Coach M. is a great guy and encourages me to be a leader. I enjoy the exercise and top out many of the P.E. tests. I receive the P.E. award at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

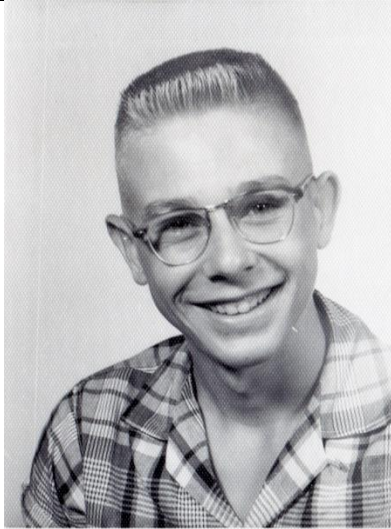
I do not participate in athletics. I get a job in 10<sup>th</sup> grade at Safeway. I do not have time to be on any of the teams. I want a car. I buy a car.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

Roswell High School is about 3 miles away from Walnut. I like to drive my car. One day, I put big stick-on colorful letters inside the back windshield. I park the car diagonally in the front lot, facing south. During one of the morning classes, I am directed out in the hall. The V.P. tells me to get the letters off the car or I will not be allowed to drive it here anymore. So, I excuse myself, drive home, razor blade the letters off, and drive back to school. I do not realize the word in bright colors would cause such a stir. What is the word?

T I T I L L A T I N G

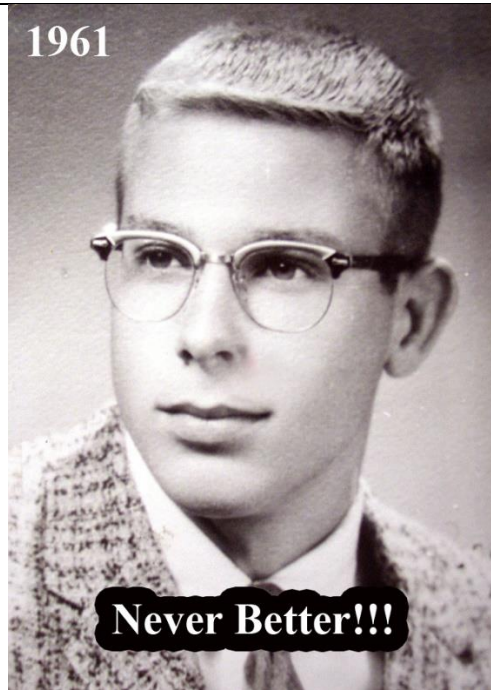
## *Part 1 - Times and Places*



*School Days 57-58*






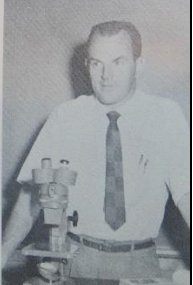


1961



**Never Better!!!**

## Part 1 - Times and Places

 <p>KENNETH MOORE B.A., M.A., Eastern New Mexico University. Physical Education, Boys' P.E., Assistant Football and Basketball Coach</p>	<p><i>Math</i></p>  <p>B. C. CARTER B.S., West Texas State; M.A., Eastern New Mexico University. Math</p>	 <p>VAN L. FRENCH B.S., U. Missouri; B.A., ENMU History FRANK JORDAN M.A., Greeley, Colorado. History</p>
 <p>GRACE SAMPLE B.A., Bethany-Peñon College; M.E., of Oklahoma. History, Government</p>	 <p>HOWARD E. WAGNER B.A., University of Iowa; M.B., Colorado State College. Physics and Algebra I <i>Speech</i> MARION ZOODSMA B.A., Dakota Wesleyan U.; M.A., U. Denver. English, Speech, Drama</p>	<p>RIVIAN LANDE B.S., Roosevelt University; Post Graduate—Conterary College. Biology ROGER L. LUGINBILL B.S., Indiana University; M.S., Indiana University; Graduate Work—Duke University; Highlands University. Biology</p> 



## **Chapter 16 – Jobs**

**Paper Route:** I remember little about how I receive money growing up. I do not remember ever having an allowance. Somehow, I have a little to spend on stuff and things. When I am big enough, I wash cars for the neighbors. I remember getting one or two dollars each.

After 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I am lucky to get the paper route around Walnut House. I have a sturdy 26" bike. The route has about 155 customers. I ride to Main Street to the Roswell Daily Record. I roll, fold, or bag each of my papers in the prep area behind the office and place them appropriately in the canvas pack on the back on the rear fender. I ride the two miles to Walnut and throw the papers at the houses Monday through Friday. It is a 5-mile route.

On Sunday, the papers are delivered to my Walnut driveway around 3:30 A.M. I must collate the advertising inserts and either roll or bag each paper. It takes over an hour to prepare to ride. Papers must be delivered by 8:00 A.M. or complaints are phoned in and I lose money. I do not enjoy Sunday mornings in the freezing winter temperatures and snowstorms.

Collecting is the worst part. I go house to house asking for the \$1.40 or so. Often, the customers say they do not have the money now. "Come back again". Sometimes, after several of those responses, I tell them, "Time's up". The Record office does not like that. I throw papers for a year and a half. It is about a 9-mile route daily, Monday through Friday. My legs are much stronger because I keep the seat in a low position to exercise my legs. I know well how to fix the chain and flat tire/bike problems.

The interesting part is that I never save any of the money. I faithfully pay my bill at the Record. I have no supervision or accounting system to determine what my profits are. I usually ride over to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to the pharmacy when I have some cash. I sit at the drug store counter and drink several old-fashioned carbonated flavored sodas. One day, Father wants an accounting. I have nothing to show. He makes me stop working the paper route. It is disruptive on Sundays, he says. Father is disappointed. I have failed at accounting, really enjoyed the sodas, and I look forward to Sundays now.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

**Safeway:** During my 1<sup>st</sup> semester in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, I land a sacker job at Safeway on Main St. and McGaffey. It is a union store. I must pay \$5/quarter to the union. I make \$0.85/hour. I work after school two/three weekdays and all day Saturday. make I can work Sundays for 1.5 times the hourly salary when slots are available. Most of the senior guys and union loyals get the Sunday time. Furr's sackers nearby only receive \$0.75/hr.

I enjoy the job. After about a year, I have a large clientele. My customers ask me to find the best watermelons, test their radio and tv tubes, and sack their groceries the way they like. "Paper or Box?" Carrying out is required. Accepting tips is not allowed. I find ways to be ready to sack at the register when a cutie pulls in.

I want to do more. I ask to check once in a while or stock the shelves, just for training. The union steward hears about it and says "No... Against rules". That does not make me happy. How else can one progress? I know the math divisions checkers must quickly calculate at the register. I remember checkers sometimes looking at me when he/she does not know how much to charge for an amount like 3 cans priced at 7 for a dollar or something similar. I tell them 43 cents or whatever it was.

I did manage to save up enough to buy a 1951 Ford 4-door with a standard stick on the column. Father might have loaned me a little on this. He does not want the bother of driving me to work and back. It is about a 2-mile trip one-way.

I never receive a raise. I sometimes volunteer to spend Saturday night locked in the store. I mop, wax, and buff the floors by daybreak. I guess the union folks do not like the hard work.

The end comes one day when the new whipper-snapper assistant store director makes a mistake. The normal procedure is: sackers stay with their customers when sacking is done and carryout is imminent. The new Asst. director is checking. He calls for a carry out. He looks at me and thinks I should drop my customer who is ready to go and run to his customer. I point to my customer. I do not go to his. I am called into the director's office. Both the new guy and the director (whom I have worked with for a long time and admire) are there. The new guy says that if I ever do that again, he will fire me on the spot. It really hurts my feelings. I look at the director for support, but none came.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

I tell Father. He can see how much it hurts and takes my side. He goes to the directors and tells them off. I was not in the room, but Father probably had some colorful language. That is the most Father has ever supported me. I appreciate it. I resign about a week later after I say goodbye to some of my customers.

**Mechanic:** I almost ruin my 1951 Ford by removing the front springs. I cut off 1.5 coils and replace the springs. I want to have a lowered front like other cool cars. No one ever mentions that an adjustment must be made in the toe-in. My wheels are splayed out at the bottom. Father says a few curse words. The car is dangerous to drive. Father takes my keys and somehow gets it to Alamogordo. He gives it to his brother, a mechanic. Father then gives me the old family car, a 1950 Nash Ambassador which looks like an upside-down, two-tone green bathtub. Amenities are that the front seats lay flat creating a double bed. The AM radio has a front speaker to rear speaker fade knob switch. The bathtub has a straight six-cylinder engine with a standard plus overdrive stick shift on the steering column. It can do 70 mph coming down the Big Hill on Main Street in 2<sup>nd</sup> gear, says the police officer. (Remembering tricycle ride)

I start taking the bus to high school. I use the car for Saturday night dates. I clean the basement of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Bank on Wednesday afternoons. The bank chief gives me \$5 each week. That is just enough for 4-5 gallons of gasoline, 2 chicken fried steak meals, and a dollar for the drive-in movie. I miss my midnight curfew often. That results in standing under Father's 10 – 15 minute scowl. **Life is good.**





## **Chapter 17 – The Chase**

This is wild. One Saturday evening, Friend P. and I are cruising Main Street. It is somewhere between 8 – 10 PM. Friend P. is driving my '51 Ford before I lowered it. He is driving because for some strange reason, I am sipping on a can of beer. I have no idea why. I do not like beer. I seldom drink anything.

We cruise south from the drive-by hangout on North Main to the drive-by on South Main by Safeway. Back and forth, north to south, south to north. We stop at the red lights and tease those beside us to peel out (leave rubber) and then race for half of a block.

Going south by the Court House, a car passes us on the right, cuts us off and bangs into my right front bumper. He does not stop. He pulls up to the next red light. I get out and run up to his driver-side window. It is an older man but not really “old”. I yell at him to stop. He looks at me and takes off quickly. I memorize his license number. Friend P. pulls up. I get in. I have no idea where the beer went. We chase for a couple of blocks.

As we cross over 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, I look to my right. I see a police car with lights on working a collision at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Richardson. We turn right on 1<sup>st</sup>, then another right on Richardson. We approach the accident and turn right again on 2<sup>nd</sup>. We pull over to the right. I get out and start walking to the patrol car. Two other cars pull in behind mine and stop.

Just as I get even with the first car on my right, the 2<sup>nd</sup> car backs up and guns it into the first car. That pushes the first car into the back of mine. The 2<sup>nd</sup> car backs up again and squeals out to the left on 2<sup>nd</sup> street going east.

Adrenaline high and not thinking defensively I react quickly. I run after the fleeing car. I am well ahead of everybody. I hear the policeman's whistle behind me. The car only goes ½ of a block. He turns into the alley between two big brick buildings. He is going too fast to make the turn. He runs into the bricks on the right and ricochets his driver's side into the other bricks. Car stops. I am there to see the 2nd crash.

I reach the right-side door immediately and open it. The passenger falls out at my feet. The driver bulls his way out the passenger door and knocks me down. He then runs north toward 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. I am hot on his trail; crowd shouting and policeman whistling behind me. He turns left on third by the Yucca Theater and crosses 3<sup>rd</sup> going west.



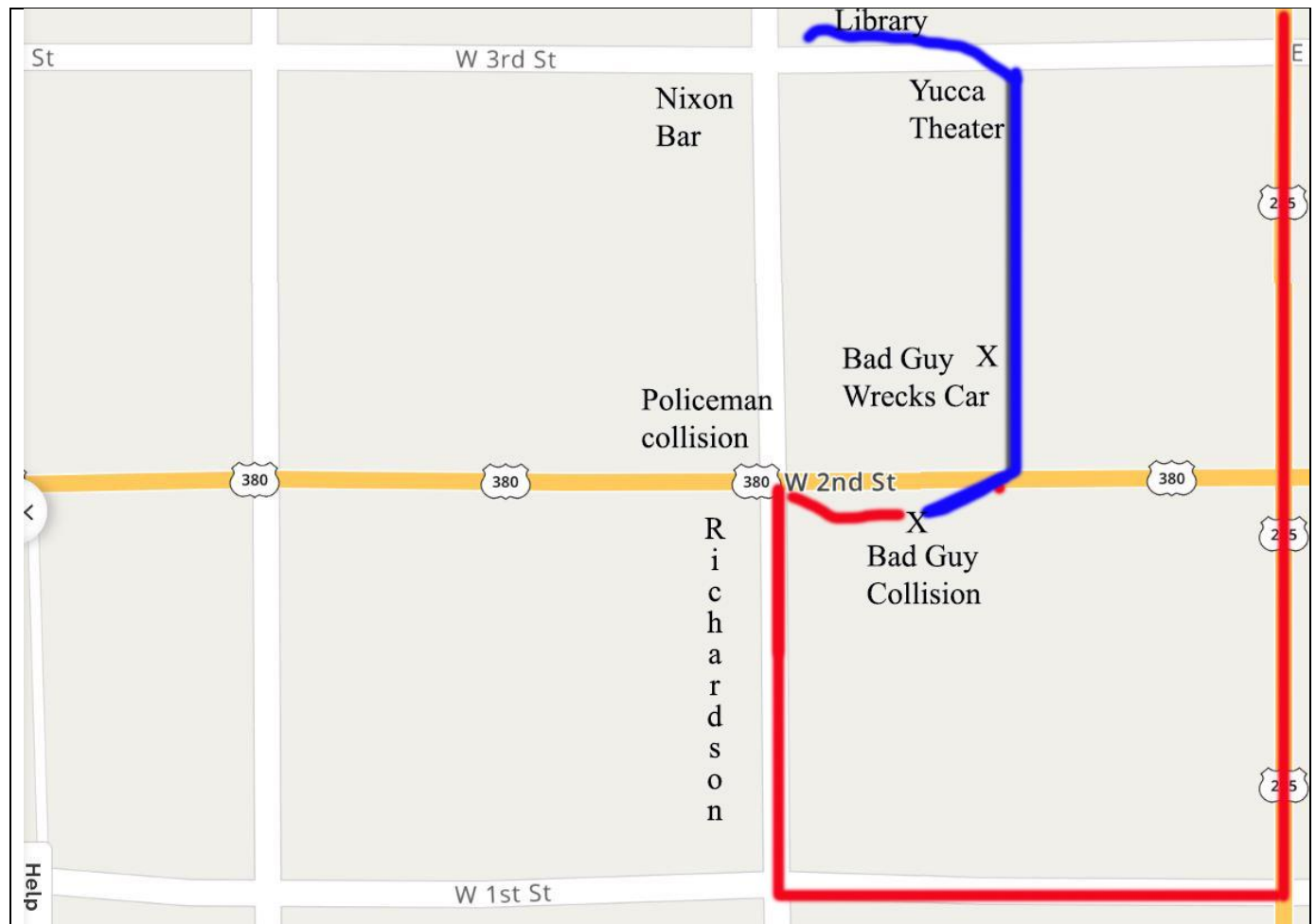
I catch up to him in front of the library at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Richardson. I shove him down from the back. He gets up and shows me his hunting knife. I back off and prepare to retreat.

He runs caddy-corner into the Nixon Hotel and through the bar. The bouncer knows something is wrong and nails him with a body flip going out the bar backdoor. I wish I had seen that.

I never tell Father. I talk to the police and eventually receive a settlement for \$50 to replace my chrome dual exhaust extensions.

I wonder at my lack of judgment in getting into a situation like this. Obviously, I am not prepared to defend myself against bad actors and lethal weapons. With my other encounters, I feel lucky to be alive.

## Part 1 - Times and Places



## **Chapter 18 – Cotton**

The summer between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, I visit my cousins in Robstown for 6 weeks. It is a long way from Roswell. I am excited to be near the ocean and fish. I am given \$20. When I arrive, I immediately buy a fishing rod, reel, and line. \$5 is all that is left.

I stay at Uncle R's, who is Father's older brother. He has ulcers and drinks all the milk in the refrigerator. He is a mechanic. He is a chain smoker. Aunt is a homemaker and plays the piano well. She does not read sheet music. She hears a song and can immediately play it with chords and embellishments. I am amazed.

In all 6 weeks, we go fishing on the jetties only one time. I am terribly sunburned. Aunt puts me in a tub of vinegar. I shed skin like a molting snake. I string my fishing line on the clothesline to wash and dry it from the saltwater use. The youngest cousin cuts the line on purpose. I tie it back together, but it creates a knot that prevents me from casting it beyond 25 feet. I am heartbroken.

At the age of 77, I called and apologized to him for all the hate I felt most of my life. He apologizes too.

At night, I learn to put the water hose in a grassy spot and let it run for a while. Then late at night, I come outside and pick up the huge nightcrawlers. I also collect beautiful butterflies from that southern region of Texas. The best one is a cloudless sulfur.



Uncle R. has a farmer friend who agrees to let my cousin and I pick cotton for a week. He provides the cotton bags. We pick all day. He gives us \$1.50 for 50 pounds including bolls. All the other pickers get \$5.00 for 100 pounds (no bolls). This is the hardest job I ever had. My back hurts all day long. The bag is so hard to drag.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

I am ready to quit from day one, but I must work through day 5 to get paid. I do not make my quota for the week. The farmer pays me \$7.50 anyway. I have no idea where the money goes.

Aunt always has food preparation chores. She brings home a bushel of this and that. We often sit in the breezeway between the house and garage stripping out string beans, peeling this and that, and shucking corn. Occasionally we churn ice cream and carve watermelons. We all work to put food on the table. It is a good life lesson, except for way too little saltwater fishing.



## **Chapter 19 – University Part 1**

During the Spring of my senior year, Mother and Father tell me there is a university about 200 miles to the West. Father, who has only his G.E.D., is the main plant engineer who planned and built the telephone system for the city of Las Cruces. New Mexico State University is the name of my University.

I need about \$600 for the 1<sup>st</sup> semester, which includes room, and board.

The Red Cross offers lifeguard training at New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell at the top of the big hill. In February and March, I take and pass the certification. I also take the Water Safety Instructor course. I can make some money teaching swimming.

With the certifications, I am hired by the City to life guard and teach at Calhoon pool. It is a big pool. I make the \$600. I make 32 saves of swimmers who get in too deep.

In the fall, Mother takes me to NMSU. I matriculate in the cafeteria. Mother takes me to the Administration building. She introduces me to a former boss of hers and I get hired. The job is working the campus PBS telephone system at nights. Every other night. 10 PM to 3 AM. Then a switch of time after a couple of months from 3 AM to 8 AM. The pay is \$0.85/hr.

NMSU is the largest campus in acreage in the US. The ratio of men to women is 8 to 1. There are far more heads of livestock on campus than women.

Mother takes me to a new dormitory on the hill which is about a mile and a half from the main campus. No sidewalks, several dirt path arroyos to cross, no electric appliances, tv, etc. I move into a room with a Roswell Eastside friend as a roommate. He only lasts a few weeks. I have two suitemates from New Jersey – both are huge black football players. I get another roommate who is also from the Northeast. He is 23-year-old T.G. and is back from three years in the Navy. He became my best friend. All three teach me how to dance. I help them with homework.

I learn card games in the student center. The black students usually play a strange game called bid whist. It is a suit game like Spades. I catch on quickly. They are happy to have a white boy to teach. I find another group that that plays bridge. Duplicate bridge is in my future. Call shot and 9-ball Pool is fun and I become rather good at it.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

I have no idea what I am doing in selecting courses. I do not have a concept of what an “hour” is. Father says to enroll in civil engineering. I do not know what that is either. I choose courses on paper that add up to 32 “hours”. I think that I am expected to go to class all available hours of the day, like high school.

I meet with some guy who is an assistant to go over my schedule. He gets quite a kick out of my selections. I wait for him to finish laughing. He then explains that only a few are allowed to take 18 – 21 hours. He set up my schedule for 17 hours. I tell him that I already have college algebra credit, but he makes me take it anyway. The first two years of my math classes are easy and a waste of time.

I must take ROTC for two years. Every Tuesday from 10 AM – 12 PM. We march and drill and do some war classroom stuff. On Friday afternoons for two hours, we spit and shine our spit and shine stuff. We also have an hour to break down and clean our M1 rifles. Once in a while, we go to the shooting range and fire for qualification. I am expert on the M1. In the second year, we get the much lighter M14's. I qualify expert on that one too. Once a semester we spend weeks preparing for inspection. Dress greens, shiny boots, buckles, and brass. We practice for several weeks marching, standing individually for inspection, presenting our weapons, reciting the nomenclature of the weapons, and sounding off the names of our superiors in the chain of command. I hated ROTC. The only benefit I receive for those two years was earning the status of PFC when I was forced to enlist in the US ARMY.

My sophomore and junior years, I find two more campus jobs. One is lifeguarding at the new natatorium. The other is maintaining and running the Alumni Association's addressograph machine. I have the metal plates made, keep them in order, and load the machine for mailouts. That is when zip codes show up and are required. What a mess. I earn \$1.00/hr for each of those two jobs. In June of 1963, I make \$330 from those three jobs. Divide that out.

I pay for my Fall freshman expenses; Father pays for my spring Freshman expenses of \$600. From my sophomore year on, I pay for all my expenses with my \$1/hr jobs. Although they might exist, I do not ever consider getting a student loan. Father never again offers to help after I change my major to math in my sophomore year.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

My major choice again changes to education in my junior year after finding much displeasure with differential equations. I enroll in theoretical math courses and do not like that branch any better. I enjoy literature and history. Chemistry and physics are a bother. Russian is fun. I enjoy intramural sports.

My biggest concern is my longtime girlfriend, "A." back in Roswell. We started dating when I was a high school junior. We are engaged. She is finishing her senior high school year. I am in my freshman college year. I write her all the time. Big changes happen in October of 1962, during my sophomore fall semester ....

## **Chapter 20 – University – Part 2**

During the summer between my Freshman and Sophomore year, I lifeguard and teach at the Roswell East Side Hondo pool. Most of the kids are dropped off by the parents for all-day pool care. Most are Black and Mexican. Their dark skin takes a beating in the hot sun. I bring bottles of mineral spirits laced with tinctures of iodine for color. I rub down the shoulders and back in the heat of the day. I make only 9 saves that summer. These kids are much smarter about survival than the ones in the pool on the white side of town.

After she graduates, my girl “A” and I stay at her apartment most of the 1962 summer. She is provided the living space as part of an “always on call service ” for businesses. We become engaged.

I drive my 1950 Nash bathtub to Las Cruces for my Sophomore year at the end of August. I change dorms to a closer, cheaper one near the Student Center. I work nights. I study. I write love letters. Suddenly I am the only one writing love letters. By the end of the first week in October, I call “A”. She says she wants to end the engagement. I panic! (Why?). It is a Tuesday evening.

I jump in the car and race to Roswell through the mountains on the windy, dangerous two-lane road. I make the 200 miles in about 2 hours and 50 minutes. I pull up to the apartment. “A” and I talk most of the night. She says she had an encounter with the man living in the duplex apartment next door. I convince her to continue the engagement and to marry me on Saturday. I call my parents on Wednesday morning.

Flabbergasted is an understatement. Plans are hastily made. The wedding happens Saturday at 10 AM in the same Calvinist Church I hated as a child. Perhaps that is a sign. My old Navy roommate “T.G.” is the ‘best man’.

We drive back Saturday afternoon and stay in Ruidoso Saturday night. Arriving in Las Cruces without a place to live on Sunday, we find a cheap motel. Monday morning, first thing, I go to student housing and rent a \$30 per month WWII studio barrack with a bed, a couple of chairs, and kitchen appliances. That includes pet cockroaches.

“A” gets a job right away in town at the telephone company. I catch up in my classes and keep on working the night shift at the University PBS board. I remember worrying about the Cuban missile crises. I listen every night on the AM radio. Thank God, the Russians blinked. After Bay of Pigs, I did not know if JFK had the power to pull it off.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

Things coast along for a while. We upgrade to another barrack building which is much nicer with one bedroom and is a corner unit. I start a little garden in the back. Life is good. For some reason, we do not use contraceptives.

Walking between classes is when I study. I never take notes. I walk long distances between classes. Rather than chat with others, I review in my mind what the previous lessons were. Somehow, that is enough to get me by on the tests. I doze occasionally in class. Working at night from 3 AM to 8 AM is tough. We buy a new 1963 VW Bug for \$1,601. It weighs 1,601 lbs.

The Kennedy assassination hits me hard. Classes are suspended and I watch the news coverage. I somehow developed a suspicion about LBJ. I watch the live scene when Ruby, wearing that distinctive hat, walks through the crowd toward Oswald in the basement and shoots. It was the only hat in the crowd moving. I had a feeling that hat was going to attack.

Sunday, April 5, 1964, at 11:05 AM, after one and a half years of marriage, standing in the kitchen, "A" says casually. "I want a divorce." Stunned, I did not try to fight it this time. I check into a dorm. I help her move to an apartment in town, walking distance to work. I keep the 1963 VW and payments; she gets the living room furniture and payments.

I hurt worse than at any time in my life. A deep, penetrating pain of loss that attacks every 3-4 minutes. It keeps me awake. Then I notice the time between attacks lengthens to 5-6 minutes. Deep in my gut. Two to three weeks later, the attacks are about 20-30 minutes apart. I often wonder what the cause is. Loss of "A", loss of self-confidence? I never figure that out. I do know that I am not willing to expose myself to that depth of pain again. Self-preservation takes over.

One of the ending moments was classic. After moving "A" into her new apartment on a Saturday, I find a kitten and take it to her early the next Sunday morning. Surprised, I see her keys in the front door. I open the door, and walk in with the keys and the kitten to her bedroom door. Guess who is there? Best man, best friend, "T.G." under the covers with her. I throw the keys at the wall over their heads, leave the kitten on the bed, and leave.

That event was probably a godsend. There needs to be a time when one knows to move on.

## **Chapter 21 – The University – Part 3**

Onward. Suppressing the hurt, trying to swim again in troubled sleep. It is the end of my Junior year in the Spring of 1964.

In May, the divorce day,. A campus cop gives me a ticket for speeding, 24mph in a 20mph zone.

I attend a math class and sit in the front row on the left side of a regular single-desk classroom. I have seen the young lady in math for a couple of semesters. She usually wears a long full skirt, a nice figure, not beautiful, but attractive. She is very friendly with everyone. She approaches and asks why I am looking so down. I tell her that I was just divorced this morning. She expresses sympathy and sits next to me. Her name is J.A.

I am usually quite a ‘cut-up’ in class when it is run by an assistant. Clowning is my nature. I make fun of the examples being used by some teachers by offering others, like instead of dogs and cats, let’s use alligators and bumble bees. Classmates laugh. J.A. thinks I am out of line. She is a good obedient schoolgirl.

I heal slowly, looking around at my new way of life. J.A. asks me out to a nice party. I accept. We become better friends. I contemplate. At age 21, is there life after divorce? But, I am committed to keeping both feet on the ground. J.A. is affectionate, but I am not in a hurry to expose myself to hurt again. We date more often.

J.A. is obviously quite infatuated. I am flattered. Self-confidence returns. I figure she is a good solid candidate for a safe mate. One with smarts, reasonably good looks, good money-making potential, and will probably be an excellent mother.

On July 23, 1964, I invite our friends to a late afternoon get-together in the cafeteria. I sit on one side of the long, end-to-end cafeteria tables. J.A. sits on the other. At the right moment, amongst about 15 of our mutual friends, I pull out the engagement ring and place it on the table in front of her. “What do you think?”, I ask her. She says nothing, but then jumps across the table, nearly bowling me over, and reply, “What took you so long?” I had been divorced for a whole 2 months.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

I follow her lead into the campus Wesley Methodist group and make close friends with good people. I form our intramural sports teams, and she becomes an officer, eventually President of the group. In November of 1964, we bus to Lincoln Nebraska to the Wesley Quadrennial Conference. MLK is the highlight speaker. She and I, as President and VP of our chapter, are invited to his hotel suite one night. We each shook his hand and talk for about 15 minutes. Besides, Richard Nixon, this was and still is the most important individual I have ever met in person.

We continue our studies and set an August 14, 1965, wedding date (a Saturday morning 10 AM wedding which is always my favorite time to get away quickly for the honeymoon). She is a bit worried about bringing me home to meet her family in Eunice, New Mexico. They are not thrilled that we engaged so quickly and that I was used goods. We visit the Christmas holidays in 1964. Her little brother and sister think I am cool. I show my highest level of respect for the two older siblings and parents. It also helps that I am a fisherman and bird hunter and eager to visit the Comfort Tx River property.

For most of the winter and spring of 1965, we manage to cause an early pregnancy. You know how college kids are. We visit the Comfort Texas home on High Street across from the Cypress Creek and Guadalupe River. J.A. was born in a small house on Groundhogs Day in Comfort in 1944. Her parents are solid German stock and everyone is related. I have a strange new German family. It also piques my interest in South Texas with water and trees. Southern New Mexico has dust and tumbleweeds.

J.A. continues her major in mathematics. I decide to major in education. Most of my coursework is in electives like Russian, English literature, and History. Education courses are a complete waste of time. During my Senior year '64-'65, I become active in the Wesley organization. NMSU has a week during the fall named the Inter-Religious Council week. Even though I am not very religious, I volunteer to find the speakers and publicize the event. I make posters, arrange the schedule, find the speaking spots, etc. It goes well, except practically no one shows up. Damn college kids.

I graduate in May of 1965 with a B. S. in Mathematics Education. I move off campus in June to a one-bedroom duplex near the campus. A friend stays for about 8 weeks during summer school.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

I apply for a summer school job teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade remedial math at Alameda Junior High in Las Cruces. Those ruffians eat my lunch. At the same time, I pick up an assignment at Lynn Junior High for the fall teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade math. The pay was \$5,000/year. This 7<sup>th</sup> grade math is the first of many “NEW” math schemes I have taught. This one is sets, logic, etc. I start a very popular after-school club called the “Double–O Subsets” since it was the era of James Bond movies. This is when I realize I wanted to be a school principal.

We were married and moved into the apartment in August. She was starting her senior year and was on fully funded scholarships. We are quite happy raising Siamese cats and praying mantii. We often go fishing, hiking, and camping on the Rio Grande at Caballo Dam, Elephant Butte, and the Gila Wilderness above Silver City. We play a lot of contract bridge with friends.

Both feet are on the ground. Although out of sight, “A” is never completely gone.



## **Chapter 22 – Work and More University**

1965, stepping into Lynn Junior High, wearing a skinny tie, a new sports jacket, and carrying a slick, shiny briefcase, a student commented, “Look!, Mr. Novak”. I found my assigned classroom with the help of a custodian (this was before the annoying days of in-services) and looked around. The chalkboards are all washed and dry. No chalk anywhere. Too many desks made the room very crowded. I pulled out my dot matrix printed a wide copy of my class lists, drew out my pen, and wondered what would happen next. The bell rings, disorder, and noise in the hall, and 7<sup>th</sup> graders filter in. “Where do I sit?” “Anywhere that is not taken.”, I reply. “Oh Boy!”, she says. Somehow, I make it through the day and end in good spirits. I found some chalk somewhere.

The Selective Service folks from my home county of Chaves, NM, keep me regularly updated. My status remains 1B which is equivalent to student and now teacher. It changes for a month or so to a 1C because I am a “Kennedy husband”, whatever that means. That designation was short-lived and is changed back to 1B. In the spring of ’66, I received a new card with a 1A designation. That means they do not care about me being a teacher and I am ripe for being plucked.

The Viet Nam call-up was in full swing and I was at the top of the list. Ironically, I glance at the signature on the notice and see a familiar name. It is the mother of a young lady I dated in high school. She was one of my three-week adventures whom I casually discarded. I then knew my status was not worth appealing.

Not wanting to be drafted and serve two years in Nam; Not wanting to enlist for three years and serve in Nam; Not supporting the Nam war, I looked around for a Reserve or National Guard unit. Eureka! A Military Intelligence Army Reserve unit in Las Cruces accepted me in November 1966.

I plan to get my master’s degree at NMSU. Enrolling in the summer of 1966 for 6 hours of classes in Ed Administration and continuing my classes in the fall and spring of 1966-67 turned out well. At the same time, my work assignment changed to teaching high school at Las Cruces High in the fall-spring of 1966-67. The high school teaching experience was also in my plan. While teaching Algebra I and Geometry, I attend college (6 hours) in the evenings.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

J.A. graduated in the Spring of 1966 and worked odd jobs for university professors doing research for the next year. Using Fortran, she assisted Dr Edward Thorpe in his research on his book "Beat the Dealer" which changed the game of "BlackJack" forever. She was not certified to teach in New Mexico. I do not remember what she did the year after she graduated.

In June of 1967, I quit the public school teaching job and enrolled full-time in the master's program at NMSU. Searching for jobs, I found an opening as an assistant to the National Teacher Corps program. It is a halftime position with the assignment of observing returned, degreed Peace Corps members. They are seeking teaching certification and are assigned to numerous nearby school districts in New Mexico and Texas. This fit in perfectly with J.A.'s need for the certification. I request and she receives a slot.

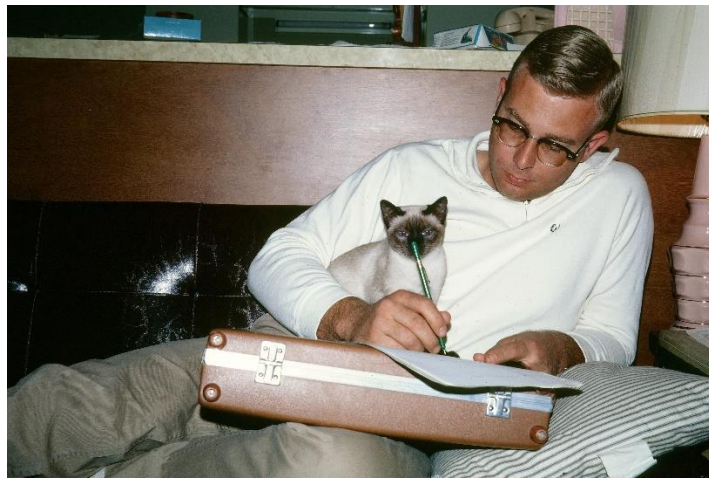
The trainee observation trips to Hatch, Las Cruces, Ysleta, and El Paso are very enjoyable. Juarez is a familiar haunt since during my freshmen year, I visited the bars and enjoyed the bar girls along with many nickel tequilas. During our Teacher Corps observation trips, the observer team would venture into Juarez and go to the best restaurants. Steaks cost about \$2.00 including sides. A beer is 25 cents. All on an expense account.

Graduation was in May/June of 1968 with an M.A. in Education Administration. Being the first in my family on both sides, including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and many cousins, to graduate from college is special. This Master's ceremony was the first time Father ever presented himself at any of the events. The only time I remember him at any of my events is a little league game where I made a miraculous catch jumping up and leaning over the roof of the first base dugout and snagging a foul ball. He was happy about that. He never attended any of the piano recitals or shows where I played. At home, Father always and only wants me to play 'Ole Black Joe'. It was easier than Rachmaninoff.

Now, movement away from the tumbleweeds, sandstorms, and old times in New Mexico happens. On to greener, wetter lands with trees. On to pursue the Ph.D. But .... duty is calling.



*Part 1 - Times and Places*





*Part 1 - Times and Places*



## **Chapter 23 – Moving and Army**

In June, 1968, we (J.A. and I) looked at a map around Comfort, Texas, and saw that Austin had a bunch of green, water, and trees. UT in Austin offered me a doctorate program in educational statistics based on test scores. Next, the problem was to find a Reserve unit. In early June, we drove to Austin. I made an appointment with a transportation unit. The captain accepted me since I could type and knew payroll.

The move had its drama. Just before the move the VW bug was replaced by a brand new VW bus. It made sense that more stuff would fit in the box. And a trailer hitch was added. A Uhaul 10ft enclosed trailer was rented and filled. Care was taken to not overload the tongue. The old upright player piano had to stay. It was no longer tune-able. Stretching the strings would break the wood holding them—sad loss.

Taking the route from Las Cruces south through El Paso and then east on IH10, it must have been a late start. We ended up climbing the steep Guadalupe Pass in the dark. The bus was straining with the trailer. Several times, stopping was necessary to cool the clutch. The burning smell was in the cockpit. Finally, the crest was there and the downhill to the flat Texas terrain was ahead. Later, in Austin, the clutch had to be replaced.

No place to stay. Searching the ads, we found a duplex near the corner of Burnet Rd and Anderson Lane, northwest side, for \$165/mo including utilities. Nice place.

The next day, the Reserve unit is the destination. The Captain says he cannot enroll me like he had previously promised. I remind him of the chance that I took to move based on his promise. Stating my previous performance of rising from PFC (E-2) to Specialist 4 (E-4) in my Las Cruces unit and my marching, leadership, and clerical (payroll) skills, he capitulated. My E-4 status was very rare in that I had never attended Basic/Advanced training. He immediately set up the assignment to complete the required 4-6 month active duty training. Leaving in late August for Ft Jackson, SC precluded the UT coursework and teaching. J.A. landed a math teaching position in southeast Austin for the fall of 1968-69.

Off to training by Greyhound with my duffle bag. Ft Jackson, across the Mississippi, dreading the loss of freedom. The loud bossing of enlisted trainers (regulars) when loading and unloading the busses was annoying. I knew their fear tactics were baseless threats. My new home was in a WWII barracks building without hot water. My uniforms are carefully packed in my duffle

Donning my starched and faded camos with obvious dark shadows of removed Spec 4 patches, shiny boots, brilliant brass, and snappy responses to commands, the drill sergeant immediately singles me out during the first formation. He walks around me looking at the uniform and snappy position at attention. He asks, "How long have you been in the army, cadet?" "Almost two years.", I reply. Then, standing directly in front of me, he yells questions in my face. Without blinking I respond loudly right back in his face.... "Yes, Drill Sergeant Grippon!" He replied, "You, Cadet Gadberry, are the Cadet Platoon Sergeant". I even received a private room in the barracks. Dern good deal.

My job was to wake and muster the platoon, do cursory inspections, and assign latrine duties to the 30-plus boys/men. Most were draftees from deep southern states like Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi. Some could barely read and none knew the King's English. My position of enforcing the rules soon made me procure a safety lock on the inside of my bunk room.

The barracks had a boiler under the floor but did not have a grate to burn wood. We went a month with cold showers and the Command did nothing to help us. Other barracks had grates. A few of my men formed a reconnaissance squad to find a grate from one of the other buildings. One day, the squad of 3 guys, stayed behind while the troops were out training in the Carolina woods. I covered for their absence in the training. They procured a grate and installed it in our building. Finally, hot water! The weather was turning colder.

Our platoon grew closer and policed themselves. Thieves and slackers met their justice. I seldom had to ask Sergeant Grippon for help. We left our latrine and bunkroom pristine for any walk-through inspections.

One morning I received a complaint from my latrine squad that a trooper from a different platoon had entered our latrine after it was cleaned. I ran up the steps to our latrine and found the guy messing up our spit-shine. He was not supposed to be there. Nobody liked the jerk. I ordered him to clean it up and leave. He talked back and became confrontational. A scuffle ensued. Pinning his arm behind him and marching him to the steps in front of the company muster, I gave him a little shove. He stumbled and rolled down the five steps. The company commander said, "Looks like Cadet Sergeant Gadberry is cleaning out his barracks." My platoon cheered.

More military to follow....

## **Chapter 24 – Army and Work**

Continuing to teach the spring semester of 1969 at Austin Reagan High, the Principal loved me. Not only did I refrain from sending my discipline problems to the office for punishment, I made them stay in class and put up with me. Other teachers who had problem students would occasionally send theirs to me. That way they did not have to send them to the office which would reflect upon their own appraisals. (Lesson learned)

The principal had a problem with students smoking between classes. Cigarettes were smushed everywhere. I proposed a solution, and he said go ahead. Forming a smoking squad out of some little gangsters, we procured three 55-gallon barrels, painted them Reagan blue, cut a hole in the top lid, and labeled them, “Throw your BUTT in the can.” The kids loved it. They thought they were getting away with a ‘bad’ word. It was very successful. Smoking was only allowed around the outside Butt Barrels and only during the longer passing times. The “Squad” helped patrol.

A more important adventure was starting a movement for higher teacher pay. The Austin TSTA Association was run by administrators back then. The AFT was just getting started by June Carp. I went to a meeting of the TSTA larger association and was called on to speak. I asked them, “What are you doing about getting teachers a raise?” Mumble, mumble, crickets, ‘what we always do’ was all I heard.

I replied, “That is not enough! Teachers are starving on this pay scale. As a group representing these teachers, you must demand a \$1,000 a year pay raise. Even that might not be enough”. (*Not by design, a labor leader is born*)

Many teachers approached me afterward and we formed a committee. Our plan: #1) Sign petitions and collect \$1 for each signature.; #2) Buy a full-page ad in the Austin Statesman newspaper demanding the \$1000 raise. We managed to collect \$600 dollars and signatures by mid-May.

At the Austin ISD Board meeting at the end of May, I signed up to speak. When called upon, I stated our demand and why. I submitted the petitions and a copy of the full-page ad from the newspaper. I told the Board that teachers cannot live on this pay scale. The Board President asked me if I knew what the Texas legislature was going to do. I replied, “No and we do not care where the money comes from. You know we need it, and it is your job to find it.” ***Loud Cheers!***

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

The Board President turned to the personnel officer and asked about me...right there in public. The personnel chief said that I was hired in January after returning from the army and that the principal gave me high marks, an excellent appraisal, I had two years of successful experience in teaching in Las Cruces and a Master's in Ed Administration.

The President asked about my contract status. The personnel chief said that my contract is in the first year of the required two-year probationary. The contract was never renewed.

Out of a job. Wondering if I should have taken on a large district school board, I started selling WorldBook Encyclopedias door to door.

J.A. never wanted to teach so she resigned in May and started working on her dream. Computer Programming. She applied at the largest shop in Austin which was the Dept of Public Safety. There were no females in the computer department. They ignored her application. After a couple of weeks, she began sitting on the back entry step of the building on Lamar Ave. and greeting the bosses, "Remember me?" Finally, they hired her just to get her off the steps, I think. She excelled and they were lucky to get her.

WorldBook did not sell well. The UT doctoral program attempt was next. That lasted about a month. The war protestors had taken over the campus. Students? Most were unrequited hippies, barefoot, smelly, sitting on the classroom floors contemplating their navels about the nature of man. I stopped going.

Bama Peanut Butter and Jelly had an ad in the paper for a traveling salesman. I was hired. Wow, a company car and a route that took me east to Shiner, south to ½ of San Antonio, and west to Johnson City. Chicken Ranch in LaGrange was on the route too.

My job: straighten up the jam shelves, try to get exposure, compensate for glass breakage, and sell/stock specials. Strange how much abuse the store managers put on salespeople. Not rewarding work. An expense account and car were new for me. Those were unknown in the public education world. Bama even flew me to Birmingham and showed me the big jelly pots mixing up all that apple juice and sugar. That job lasted about 3 months.

Next, in the Spring of 1970, I became a nightwatchman for a mobile home factory. I wore a gun (my personal .22 caliber). Working from 10 pm to 6 am, a little black-and-white TV kept me from going crazy. I watched the drama of the Apollo 13 mess on that little TV.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

Riding my 90CC Honda, which I bought for parking at UT, was always an adventure. One night in the rain, at the top of a steep hill, the traffic light changed to red on the way down. Brakes would not stop the vehicle or the passenger. Laying the bike down, all went sliding across the intersection. Shaking it off, the bike still running, I proceeded with the most dignified exit possible.

During May of 1970, at an Austin neighborhood party, I met a Norwegian. She was attractive with long blond hair and was a professor at UT. Through casual conversation, we learned of each other's involvement in the National Teacher Corps program. She was leading the project at UT and attempting to get school districts in the area to participate. She offered me a consultant job to help her persuade area superintendents to let the program in. We visited several districts.

None was as important as San Antonio ISD. We met with SAISD personnel people Victor Rodriquez and Steve Catalani. Since I had public school teaching experience, a Master's in Ed Admin, and was an administrator of the Corps program at NMSU, I convinced them that their fears of management problems were minimal. They accepted the Corps program. The blond professor was very appreciative...

On the way out, I casually asked Victor if he had any high school math teaching openings. He immediately said 'Yes'. Understanding that I would be commuting from Austin daily, he said Highlands High is near the Interstate. Pending recommendations, I would be considered for teaching there in the fall of 1970 he told me. I was so happy that Austin had not fired me nor entered any negative recommendations. Years later, after all my labor work, Victor said it was one of the biggest mistakes of his career. I am not sure that he was jesting.

I needed to return to the classroom. My one true calling. Promising never to be a troublemaker again proved to be difficult. Yet, I was so grateful!!!

## **Chapter 25 – New Job – Back with Class- At Last**

Fall, 1970. Highlands High School, on the southeast side of San Antonio near Pecan Valley, is close to IH 10 East. Easy freeway access. My 1968 VW bus looks perfect at home.

The drive from the north side of Austin is about 85 miles each way. The worst part is downtown Austin. They are building the new upper deck on IH 35. Sometimes, in the afternoon, I drive around Hwy 183 to avoid the jams downtown. It is much further. I leave Austin around 5:30 AM (sleepy time) and arrive at Highlands about 6:45 AM. The VW does not have a radio. Sunflower seeds keep me awake and the floorboard fills with salty shells. I want to install a radio but that would cost about \$60. J.A. (wife) says no. I find a portable battery AM radio that sits on the skinny dashboard. Every day I drive listening to the growing number of conservative radio jocks. Back and forth. Not missing a day and never late.

I met and befriended a 21-year-old first-year teacher named Ron Hagelman. He teaches 9th-grade history and is the most liberal person I have ever met. We have lunch in the cafeteria or brown bag in our classrooms and talk. He explained more to me about capitalism, socialism, communism, and different religions than I learned during all the years I sat on my can through classes. He was devoutly against the Viet Nam war, and all wars in general. He smoked weed off campus, never wore a tie or sport coat and the kids loved him. He loved them too, convincing them that history was thrilling to learn.

Ron thought that the library should be a learning center. He tried sending a couple of students per class to the school library with passes and assignments to research. The librarian did not like Ron. She complained to the principal who subsequently told him not to send individual students. Ron blew his stack. He went to the community and rounded up books for his library in the back of his classroom.

In May of 1971, thousands of Vietnam protestors were rounded up and put in fenced cages. Ron came to school with a black armband. He offered me one and I wore it too. The other teachers and the administration were appalled. We were black-listed. During that summer, a new principal arrived. He was a much tougher one and he transferred Ron to a very undesirable middle school campus. He brought me in for a conference and told me that if he did not need a math teacher so badly, I would have been moved as well.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

All '70-'71, my class assignments were low-level "Related and Consumer Math". I floated between classrooms. I did not send a single student to the office for punishment for the rest of my career.

In the fall and spring semesters of 1971-72, I was assigned the same low-level math courses, but I really enjoyed the consumer math. I wore a coat and tie every day. I broke up a couple of fights in the hallways. Tough, but I behaved. But, the teachers still resented me. I was not like them. Unruly students kicked out of the classes of other teachers would come to mine for sanctuary to get out of the halls. I was a "S" (*Student*) lover. I was scolded for letting them in. I answered the scolds, "Send me their assignments and they will do them in here...pretty good deal, Huh?" I was not appreciated by the grownups.

One teacher I will name "C" taught Algebra II. He was one of the worse. The kids would come by and tell me how he ridiculed them. One day in the hall, on costume day, one of the black kids dressed as an Indian. This teacher asked him if he was a "Blackfoot". The teacher confronted me one day in the lounge and verbally attacked me for listening to complaints against him. He said, "I am going to take you in front of the "ethics" committee!" I walked up to his face and said, "Bring your lawyer. You have a lot to answer for in disparaging these students." The other teachers standing nearby knew I was right. He was eventually promoted to an elementary school principal position. I ran into this man several times during the next 10 years. More is to come about the continuing saga of "C" during my teacher rights days.

The new principal never visited my classroom(s). He was never in the halls or eavesdropping outside my doors. My kids behaved. They were learning and happy. No parent complained. Teachers were starting to get friendlier toward the end of the year.

Yet, the principal gave me the worst appraisal I had ever received. I questioned "why?? He said that he could not trust my commute from Austin every day. I knew that was just an excuse to set me up for a transfer. In May of 1972, when the Guadalupe River was flooding almost over IH35 in New Braunfels, I made it on time. Even the principal said he was surprised to see me that morning. Yet, he could not trust me to be there? Never missed a day; never late. So much for being a 'good' boy.

In the middle of May 1972, I told J.A. that we needed to move to San Antonio. She says, "No." She will not quit her job at DPS and she is not going to commute. Big stand-off

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

I found her a comparable job at San Antonio College in the library computer department running the shop. Same pay. Plus, I put the dream bait on the hook under the bobber. “We can buy a house in San Antonio and be even closer to your parents in Comfort, TX.”

After she lands the SAC job, we buy a new small house in the Glen along the northeast edge of San Antonio for \$23,002. We moved from Austin and settled in the San Antonio area. We lived there for 13 years and started raising two boys, born in 1981 and 1983.

No more driving. 1972-73 begins my eventual success story in San Antonio ISD.



## **Chapter 26 – Teaching, Leading, and Fishing**

Fall, 1972-76. Back to work at Highlands High, beginning the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, I was pleasantly surprised that I had been assigned two sections of Algebra I. The other three were related math. Algebra is my favorite math genre. Mr “C” who taught most of the Algebra II sections has been promoted to a counselor position at an elementary school. (poor kids).

Also, I was elected as the ‘chief delegate’ among six other delegates to represent the 106 faculty members who joined the NEA/TSTA local San Antonio Teachers Council (SATC). I think I was elected because no one else wanted the job. American Federation of Teachers (AFT) was still trying to get a foothold. I represented faithfully at all meetings. My prestige rose in that I served the members and non-members. More joined the next year. I moved up in the SATC and was appointed head of the Teacher’s Professional Rights and Responsibilities committee. Through my encouragement, we changed the name to the Teacher’s Rights Committee. I also convinced the organization to start a Teacher Rights Legal Fund to help teachers get legal help. The fund was started from scratch with 5% of local dues each year until it reached \$5,000. I used it several times securing visits with lawyers for teachers in trouble with the administration. Many changes came about in battles for due process and fairness under the old unfair practices.

I also started helping with class sponsorship. One of my favorites, Mr. Roesler asked me to cosponsor the Class of 1973. It was fun. In 1974-75, the Class of 1976 was mostly mine with Mr. Roesler helping. The Class of 1980 was all mine. Graduations are big assignments for class sponsors. My abilities to organize and boss kids around impressed even my doubting Principal. Organizing proms is also a big deal. Raising funds, decorating school halls for homecoming and competing against the (now) four classes were all part of the assignments most teachers are too lazy to do. Becoming a rising favorite and a source of power, the principal denied me certain school-based committee assignments.

But I must digress. Back in the spring of 1969, living on the edges of lakes around Austin, we bought a 16 ft ski boat. \$66.71 payments for 36 months. J.A. cut up my new credit card but enjoyed the boat. We went skiing often on Lake Travis and Town Lake. The first launch is worth a word here.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

Backing the boat down the ramp for the first time at the upper reaches of Town Lake, the task seemed trivial. The boat trailer was in the water, the bow pulley latch was released, and the boat would not float off. I brought the boat/trailer back up the ramp and noticed there were aft latches holding the boat to the trailer. Took them off and tried again. I noticed the rear of the boat was showing incoming water. I brought the boat out again and drained the boat. Then I saw that there was a plug opening in the bottom aft. Ok, inserted the plug. The boat was finally brought to the loading dock. It floats. The car and trailer were parked successfully.

We get in the boat, lower the outboard, and push off before starting the motor. Big mistake. Knowing the gas tank was full, I turned the key and cranked the electronic starter. Nothing. We begin drifting into a thicket of underbrush. A guy from the dock yells, "Put it in neutral. Hold in the center button on the gear shift and put the lever in the up position." Then he yells, "Push in the key, hold it in, and turn the key". Ok, I push in the key, hold it in, turn the key and the motor turns over and sputters. "Oh, now I know where the choke is." I realize. I have never driven an electronic choke before, only a manual. We had a short boat ride after that.

During summers and long weekends, we took fishing trips to Port O'Connor, spending nights in the roach motel and fishing all hours of the day and night. Except on rough days, we beached on Matagordo Peninsula after traveling a couple of miles across Matagordo Bay to the jetties. Walking the mile down the dirt airplane runway to the surf, we gathered five-gallon buckets of big seashells and lugged them back.

We ventured out through the jetties into the Gulf many times on calmer days and fished the oil rigs and around the huge granite stones, trying to catch mackerel, ling cod, tarpon, and big reds. Many big ones got away from our light bay tackle. Mostly we followed the birds in the bay and caught sea trout (weakfish), redfish, pompano, gaff top, sting rays, hardheads, sharks, croakers, Ladyfish, Jack crevalle, sunburns, and engine troubles. We fished the back shallow bays. It was an adventure to find the deeper channels and not go aground. We fished the old Coast Guard station along Caballo Pass which was destroyed by Hurricane Carla.

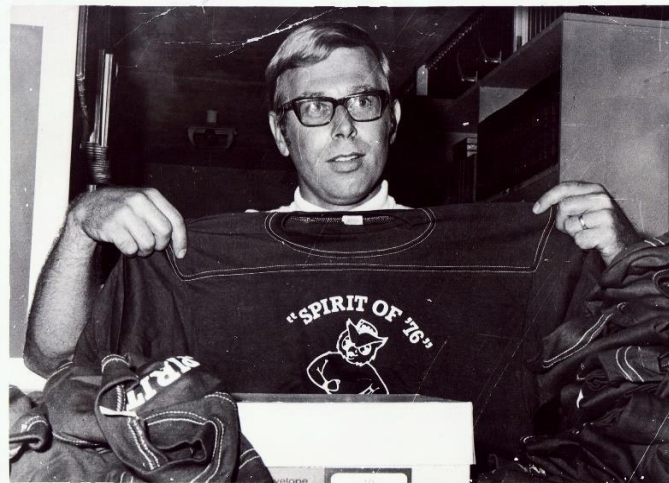
At the dock was a restaurant. The owner, Melba, served great meals of seafood and other goodies like chicken fried steak. We cleaned the catch at the cleaning tables. We would bring a few filets. Melba would cook them for us. Breakfast was to die for.



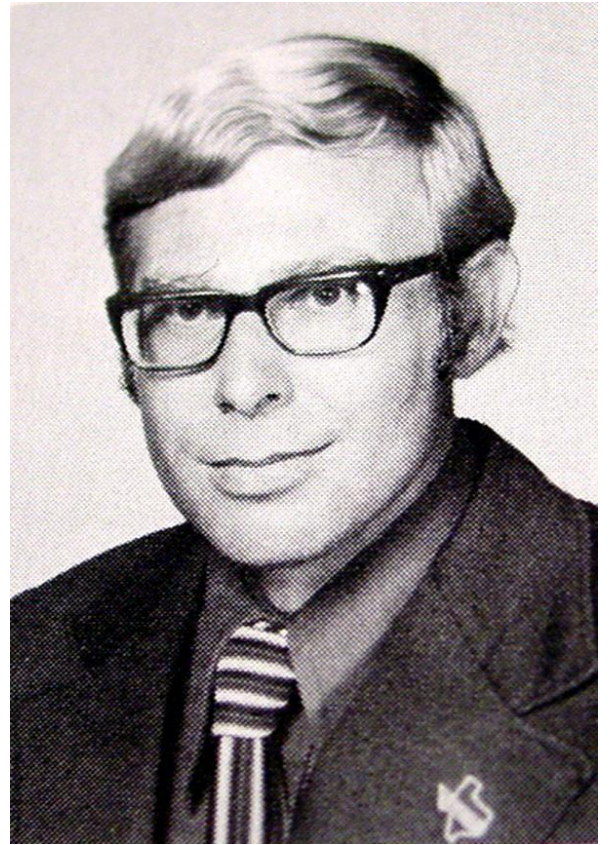
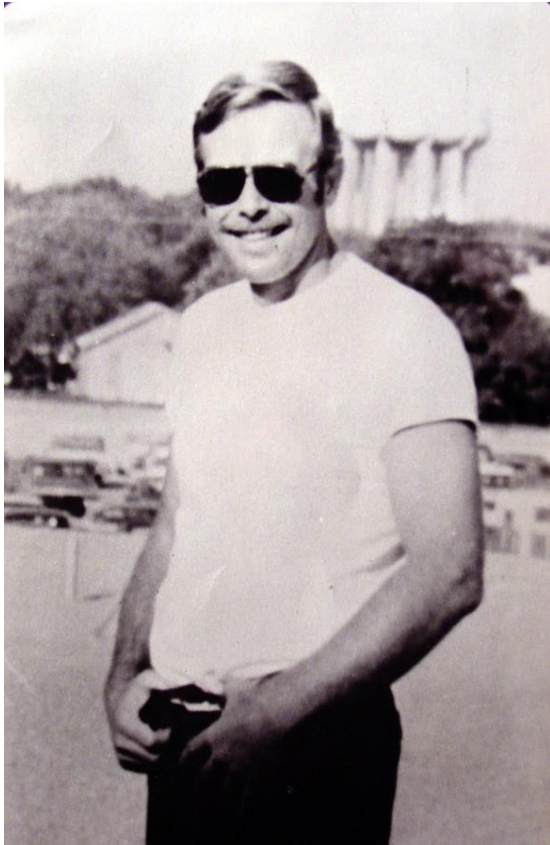
## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

That boat gave us many joys and tribulations. The trailer was not galvanized and had to be reconditioned once. Finally bought a good trailer for it.

During this period and loving my summers off from teaching, I would drive to Roswell from San Antonio. Father would hook up the travel trailer. We would drive to Santa Fe to pick up his best friend. Then, we would head to the Weminuche Valley near Pagosa Springs in southern Colorado for a few days of trout fishing. Those were fun times spent with Father, away from Mother, enjoying his friendship with his best bud. He accepted me. He was a different man then.



*Part 1 - Times and Places*



## **Chapter 27 – Teaching, Teacher Rights, and the Stork**

1976-1981 A very productive and fun period. The number of Algebra II sections assigned to me grew each year. The process of sowing the seeds was to occasionally, for one period, exchange an Algebra II class with an Algebra I teacher and encourage the Algebra I students to follow me to Algebra II. That also allowed growth in the Algebra I teachers to prepare them for teaching Algebra II. By the end of 1977, I was assigned all Algebra II and even an advanced Algebra II section. I requested the advanced class be assigned to a different, stronger math content teacher to prepare those students for the higher math courses. Besides, I liked having only one preparation.

Beginning in the fall of 1978, the reticent Principal had been re-assigned to Director of Plant Services and a Godsend principal floated in the front door. A few days before the first day of school, I walked into the main office to pick up mail and greet the staff. I saw the new Principal and walked to him. Someone introduced us. He looked me straight in the eye and said, “I have been waiting to meet you. We have a lot to talk about. I want to get some of your ideas on what needs to happen.” I answered, “WOW! Thank you, that ends a long drought!” I instantly liked this guy and was highly energized. His name was D. Frank Clark. The “D.” was for “Doctor” because the parents either wanted to name him after his deliverer or could not come up with anything else.

The next few years were a blast at Highlands High. There is nothing more refreshing than for your boss to stop and speak those four most important words, “What do you think?”

The Class of 1980, which I sponsored, was (IMHO) one of the best classes to every graduate from the school. We were organized, had many events, honors, and quite a few high achievers who were admitted to prestigious schools on scholarships. Many of us are still connected in social media.

Still the Chief SATC Delegate for Highlands, I started mentoring my replacement, offering full backup. During this time, on the teacher union side of my life, fame was growing with Teacher Rights accomplishments. At the District level, the success of my role defending teachers in conflicts with the administration was picking up organization membership. It also focused attention on me from the Superintendent. Future episodes will describe some of the changes that were made in policy and procedure even in cases that were lost.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

NEA assigned a heavy hitter from Illinois to the San Antonio Teacher Council in 1976. This person named Roberta was assigned as an adjunct advisor full-time to assist in the growth of our large NEA/TSTA organization. Remember, the AFT was making a big effort to get a foothold in the State and our District. There was a membership battle between AFT and NEA.

Roberta was very patient when needed; and aggressive when it was learning time. Under her tutelage, I became knowledgeable about school board policy and administrative procedures, particularly the grievance process. She practiced with me on what to say in the first few cases, and how to write grievances. She was always there when I needed advice or re-direction. The goals were to stay within the guidelines, insist on the due process rights of being heard, represent, show the inadequacies of the procedure when it failed, and get changes made. *Extra information here* - Roberta and her husband were also ballroom dance instructors. J.A. and I joined and became members of their exhibition round dance team for several years.

A brief description of the grievance procedure is this. Level I – the grievant meets with the Principal (no representative present), presents a written grievance and awaits a response within 10 days. Level II – If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, the grievant submits a written grievance to the Area Superintendent and asks for an interview (representative allowed). If the grievant is not satisfied, then the process goes to Level III – the same procedure. Level IV is the school board, but any Superintendent with a lick of sense does not want this laundry going to the school board. Usually, agreements are made at the lower levels.

I had several grievances go to the Superintendent. Some straight to him because he initiated the action against the teacher. Some were obviously going to be losses, but it was important to provide due process through representation/legal assistance for the teacher to make the loss decision. Along the way, it was an opportunity to change unfair parts of the procedures. I approached the Super occasionally, stated the problem, and was summarily asked to get out. Many of these conflict resolutions and the districtwide notoriety of such, influenced my future career.

Back to real life. In 1980, I stopped smoking. Early morning running. One mile, two miles, sprinting. I do not know why. Perhaps weight maintenance. I did this for about 6 months. Something changed my system. Not using any birth control since 1965, suddenly, 16 years later, J.A. started eating pretzels, not dill pickles, but craving pretzels. She was 37 and I, 38. Kinda' late for having a first baby. Life is changing and exciting.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

We were concerned about aged eggs, so we decided to have an amniocentesis. Scary procedure. Would not do it again. The results came back normal. I looked at the chromosomes. The count seemed to be the same as an alligator. We said yes to the question about knowing gender. A Boy! Name selection took a while. I won. "Aaron" for Hank Aaron/Aaron Spelling and "Lee", is my middle name. Aaron was born in July 1981. Difficult birth. High pressure from edema. Too many pretzels? The vacuum was used which temporarily misshaped his head. I greeted him and called him Yoda. So happy and proud.



Mahan



Clark



## **Chapter 28 – Promotion, Administration, and Interruption**

**1981-1991** In the fall of 1981, happily teaching Algebra II classes, proud of having a first-born son, and trying to cope with going from two incomes to one, the great principal calls me in and encourages me to change course and get into administration. I had dreams of being a campus principal for years. He tells me that the Super wants to talk to me about administering a project in the central office. Skeptically, not wanting to leave the sanctuary of my classroom, I make the appointment with the Super.

The white-haired sage, the Super, told me that the District had been offered a chance to participate in the Plato Project out of the University of Chicago. The project was to produce tests on a computer to track the progress of students in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in the fields of math, English, and History. I knew absolutely nothing about computers. I would hire two teachers to help with English and History and have a classroom in a middle school with students as guineas. Needing the money, I took the assignment in November of '81. Said goodbye to my sanctuary and started the process of setting a budget and timeline. Stationed in a big classroom at Connell Middle School, everything I saw was that I was taking valuable space that could be used for classroom learning. Nonetheless, I set it up. *(I will report more on this promotion)*

The Super retired. The Super-Elect took charge. This was the same guy who hired me in 1970 and we had many battles as he was the Super's henchman on teacher rights cases in the 70's. He did not like me. He ended the Plato project in May of 1982. I was assigned to the textbook office on Austin Street. The computer-assisted instruction (CIA) and library administration office were housed in that warehouse. I worked under Ms. Sample. My first assignment was to learn how to use machine language and hack the passwords on TRS-80 discs for CAI programs such as Oregon Trail. The hacked and duplicated discs could then be distributed to campus classrooms. I was also in charge of upgrading the old TRS Model I's and then the TRS-80 Model III with additional hardware memory. I started learning BASIC programming language and how to help with the textbook orders and distribution.

This lasted until the end of 1982. I was then assigned to the main central office complex to the Office of Evaluation under Dr. David Splitek. Dr. Dave was a few years younger than I. He was a 'Super' in training from UTSA. He was in the same class as NEISD Ricky Middleton.



## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

Dave and I hit it off well. He assigned me to program something in BASIC on the big TRS Model II with 8" floppy disks. I had no idea what I was doing. He figured that out soon enough. He then assigned me to evaluate a string of programs like Gifted & Talented, Language Efficiency Program, the program for off-campus detention learning, and the physical education testing.

I was also in charge of letting the bids for all educational computers and business microcomputers. I approved the purchases of hundreds of Apple IIe's for instruction.

Number 2 son, Travis Wayne, arrived in November 1983. Another surprise. Very easy pregnancy and delivery this time. Stubborn little boy. Did not talk...sucked thumb for years. J.A. still did not want to go back to work, but I was making enough to keep us above water.

I trained the Central Office business workers on various programs such as word processing, spreadsheets, and databases. That included TRS Superscript, VisiCalc, and Profile, and then evolved into the MSDOS programs like Palantir, WordPerfect, Word, Lotus 123, Excel, FilePro, and Access. I wrote various database programs for individual offices to collect, select, and report data. The Microcomputer world was exploding. I was in many offices helping the office workers with hardware and software. I wanted to get the computers connected.

Then my world changed. I met Linda in the cafeteria. She started walking with my buddies and me. Hypnotism for weight loss, then, something changed. Vowing to not interrupt our family lives, we started a torrid love affair in May of 1986 that was a maelstrom for 6 years. Talk of the town. Tore us both asunder. Should walk away. Could not stay away.

In 1987, I conducted a big study with IBM to take the SAISD computing in-house, away from Education Service Center Region XX. NEISD had just purchased its own mainframe. Several in the district wanted to know the advantages and costs. I recommended that to the SAISD Board. It failed, but I stood up and appealed to the Board to do something to organize our data and computing needs. I suggested forming an Office of Computer Services as an umbrella. I told them that waiting is not an option. "We are already so far behind, we may never catch up".

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

They bought it. 4 votes for and 3 against, as usual. Even the statistician, most computer literate, government working, board member voted against it. We brought the off-premises printing to the Central campus, built a computer office building around it, and established microcomputer helpers, maintenance, and instruction. We started hard-wiring the offices to share documents and data. The world of microcomputing was upon us. It was exciting to be in the vanguard. Assistant Director of the Office of Computer Services, corner office, was fun, but everyone knew that I should have been the Director.

Pressure from the affair, guilt, and the need to commit my energy somewhere drove me to talk to the Super. I decided to go back to my family. I reminded Super that he had promised 10 years earlier to put me back at Highlands should I fail or want to go. He was happy to move me out of the central office and assigned me to Highlands as an Assistant Principal in 1991.

I told Linda that I was breaking off and returning home. Linda could not handle that.

She moved out of her home. Started her divorce. The world became so confusing. My new Job was very difficult.

My life was in complete chaos.

## **Chapter 29 – New Job, Marriage, and Gang Wars**

**1991-1996** In the summer of 1991, I started my new job as Assistant Principal of Highlands High School on the SE side of San Antonio. Linda had moved out and was living on Broadway across from the La Louisiane restaurant. I moved out during the middle of August to a small apartment on the Pecan Valley golf course on Pecan Valley Drive, about 1 mile from the Highlands campus.

The new job was a big mystery. Not knowing anything about campus administration, it was on-the-job training. Assigned the textbook distribution system, the daily bulletin, the public address system announcements, programming the bell system, scheduling the class times, and discipline for one-half of each of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students, I was busy. All five administrators were new to the campus. No one knew the kids and very few knew the teachers. Chaos was abundant. I did my best. Totally exhausted every night.

I quickly found out that the campus was not the same as it was when I left 10 years earlier. The neighborhood gangs had moved in. Fights broke out early in the morning at the entrance of the school cafeteria. Bandanas, black, red, blue, and brown dangled freely from the sagging pants pockets publicly flying their colors, pledging their allegiance to their families on the streets. The strongest, most experienced A.P. was named Ken. He quickly guided me to use my power and radio to strip the rags, recognize the leaders, divide the groups, and to disrupt the lives of the troublemakers. It felt like war. Linda had warned me, but I did not listen. I had hoped Highlands was going to be my peaceful sanctuary forever.

During the next few years, Ken and I solidified our control of the student population. The teachers were very happy. A new principal moved in during the summer of 1993. He was a big guy, kind, experienced high school principal. He let me continue being the voice of the administration using the communications function. We strengthened the resource officer's presence. He appraised the probationary employees and any who were questionable.

We continued to thin out the gangs. Sometimes, we had to admit a gang member from a different school and his/her presence would cause a wave of violence among the peaceful members we had calmed down.

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

Yes, I found guns, machetes, knives, chains, nun chucks, marijuana, and a few weird homemade weapons. Most weapons were for security getting to and from school. Most weapons were discovered by information about what had happened on the streets the night before. We would meet the affected kids at the door.

Linda and I purchased a house six doors away from the school in 1992 on the South Side Lions Baseball Park. It was a great place to live for the next 17 years. Ken died in a car crash in February of 1996. It took the wind out of my sails, and I retired at the end of 1996, two days before Father died.

## **Chapter 30 – Retirement**

**1997-2005** The loss of my best friend and co-administrator Ken on February 29, 1996, hit me hard. Ken died early that morning after running his car into the corner of a house at 2:30 AM. I was the first to get a call from the hospital asking about his emergency contacts. Extremely difficult time

I found little desire or energy for running the high school without Ken. Linda found that I could retire at 28 years plus two half-years which legally sufficed for the full 30 years needed. I went to the Austin TRS building to see the person's lips move assuring me that I could retire December 31, 1996. I would be getting \$100 per day, 365 days of each year for the rest of my life. I figured I could make it on that. Holiday vacation was to begin at the end of the day on Friday, December 20, 1996. But, Father died on December 18<sup>th</sup>. I had to leave early to return to Roswell for the funeral. It was a confusing ending to my career.

In 1997, as a retiree, I continued to help with small chores around the school. I was the only one who knew how to change the bell schedules and program the new telephone system. I also tried selling supplements through a website at home. Total waste of time and money.

During the summer of 1997, I yearned to get back into the classroom. SAISD did not want to hire me for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time as a substitute. I guess I had given them enough trouble over 26 years. TRS regs would not let me keep my retirement and work full-time in public schools. I contacted the Catholic school administration. They offered me a math teaching job at Providence High School for \$24,000. The girls all dressed alike, giggled a lot, and everyone prayed. I enjoyed the peacefulness of being around kids who were not bringing their gang fights into the building for two years. Some of the parents wanted me to apply as principal, but I told them I did not have a habit.

In 1999, TRS changed the rules. I could teach mathematics (a specialty shortage) in public schools and keep my retirement money. I thought about it and applied to SAISD. Personnel sent me to interview at Mark Twain Middle School for a math assignment teaching a very special group of geometry students (I hate geometry). The principal was glad to get me. He gave me a radio to help manage the cafeteria, playground, and the school when he was absent (which seemed to be often).

## *Part 1 - Times and Places*

The next two years were very challenging for me. Of all things, I did not know how to engage unruly 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The agrarian curriculum was somewhat foreign to this long-time algebra teacher/administrator. I finally found some control during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a lonely barracks building during the school reconstruction. I received a commendation for physically breaking up a knife fight that semester.

I heard of a shakeup at Highlands High at the end of spring semester 2001. The Mark Twain principal was retiring and one of the assistant principals at Highlands was moving into the job. I also heard that he wanted to bring along his favorite math teacher with him.

I contacted the new principal at Highlands and gave her a deal she could not refuse. She was new and did not know the Highlands building. She had 4 new assistant principals who also did not know the building or the students. I had run the school for 6 years and knew everything about the building and most of the teachers. I told her I 1) only wanted to teach 9<sup>th</sup> graders, 2) I did not need a conference period, and 3) I would monitor the lunch cafeteria during all three lunches. All I needed was a radio. She loved it. I began my final 4 years teaching in 2001 through 2005 at my sanctuary high school, Highlands. I still lived one block away and rode my bike to work.

I innovated like crazy. Shower boards mounted in the chalk trays instead of using blackboards. Brightly colored markers on the shower boards. Music, computer-projected lessons on the shower boards with videos, and PowerPoints, using Photoshop to write and draw on photographs of lessons, and singing math lyrics to popular songs.

The principal nominated me for the SAISD Teacher of the Year and the Trinity prize in the spring of 2004. I won the former but lost the latter. At the recognition of the award, this gringo sang "Sixteen Tons" acapella with the lyrics changed to "sixteen jobs" in front of the SAISD School Board at west side Lanier High School right after the Mariachi band had performed.

I taught for one more year(2004-2005) and decided it would be a good time to go out on top in the spring of 2005. I resigned, bought a new boat, and went fishing for the next few years as well as building websites for organizations and businesses.



*Part 2*

*Episodes*

*And*

*Memories*

## **Birds**

Mostly birds were for hunting. Shooting bb's at sparrows, grackles, dove, quail, and pheasant was for sport and eating. It was later in life that I started appreciating the beauty and uniqueness of the individual species.

The camera became my weapon of choice. Skills in Photoshop became my goal.

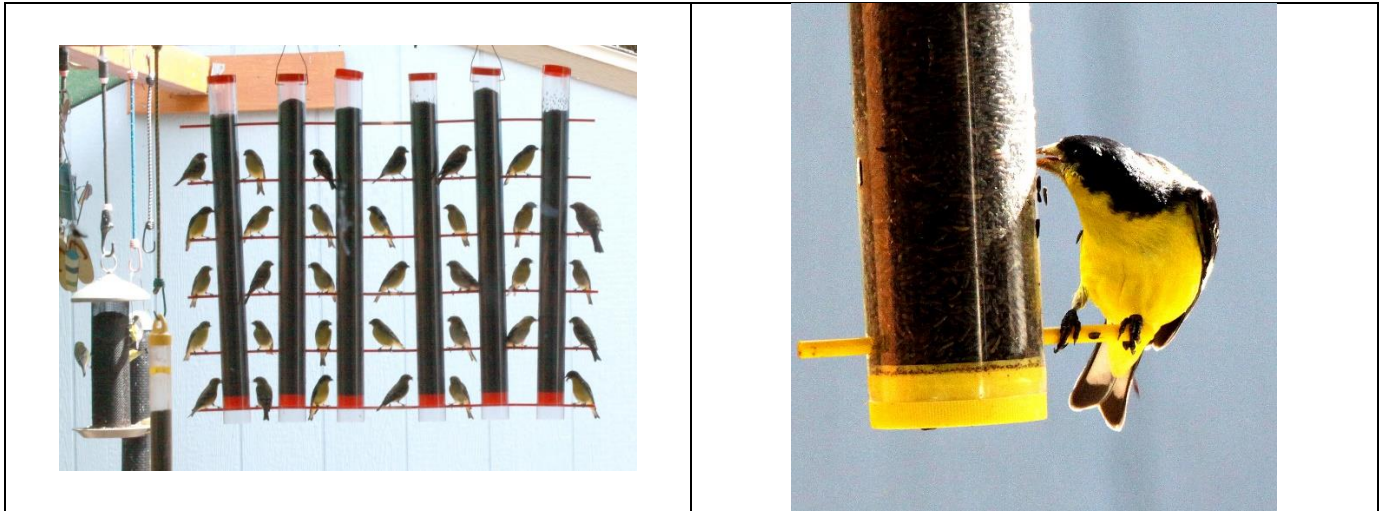
The flight patterns, the songs, the seasonal migrations, the behaviors, the food preferences, and interactions between bird species became a late-life-long study. After moving to our new home in 2009, the birds were fed well. Living on a green belt, I had plenty of opportunities to set up the breeding thatch, water availability, and feeders.

Some food attracts cardinals, titmice, chickadees, and house finches; other foods attract woodpeckers, suet bars are best. The cheap food attracts flocks of sparrows which can ruin the scene for the better birds. Safflower seeds have become very expensive, and it is a shame to waste it on sparrows even though it is not their preferred food. Lesser goldfinches and goldfinches prefer (thistle) seed (socks or tubes) and can often congregate in large numbers. Dove are ground feeders and always love the cheaper stuff. Sunflower seeds are out since it attracts all the squirrels for miles around.

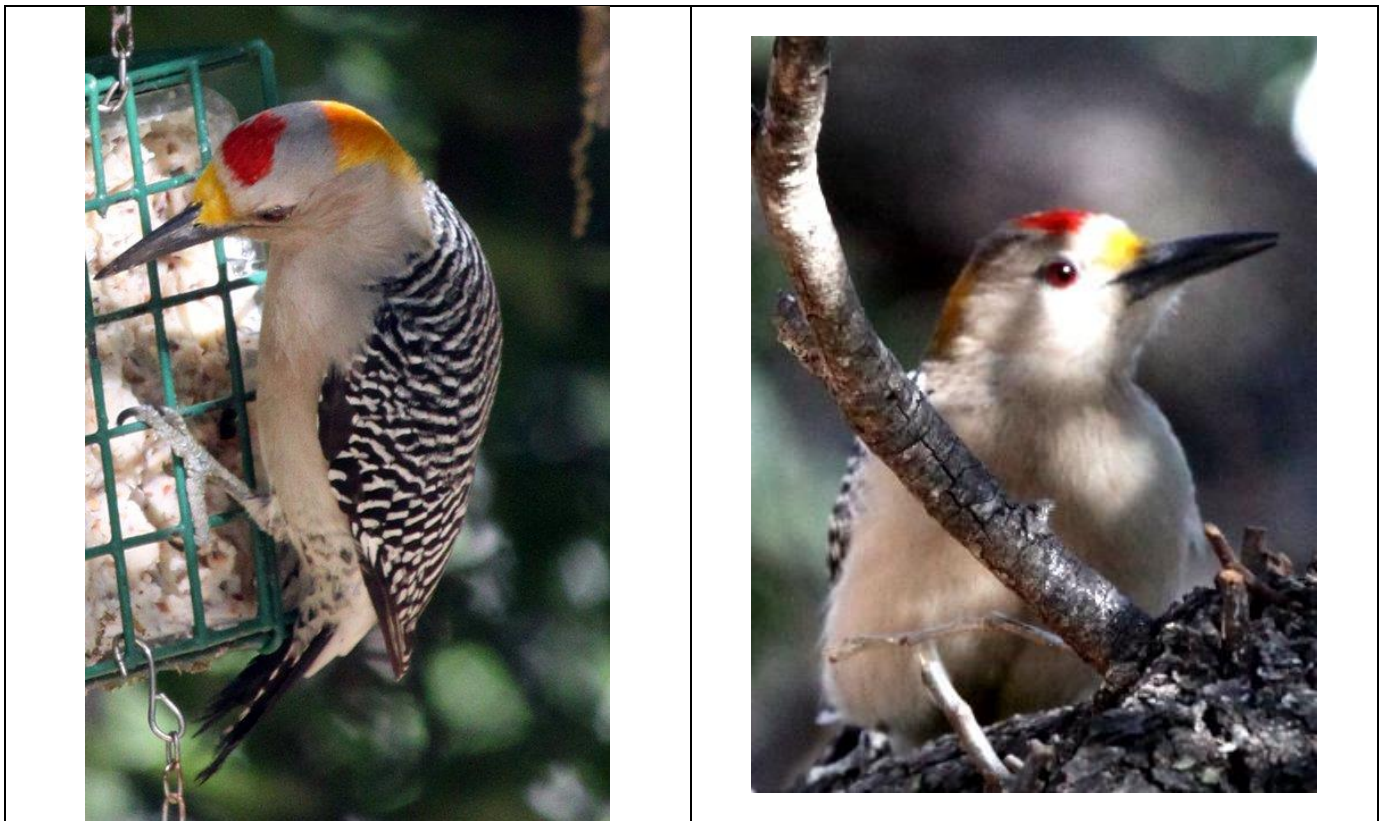
Three dove species: white wings (little pigeons), mourning (turtle), and Inca (Spanish), all of which do not need to lift their heads to swallow from the fountain. Three finch species: house finches (males with red breasts and females without, both loving safflower seeds), goldfinches and lesser goldfinches- males (black on the backs and yellow on breasts) and females with small drab yellow/brown colors, loving thistle seed. Red-bellied and golden-fronted woodpeckers attacking the suet squares. Cardinals like safflower most of all, but it is interesting that they feed on the ground so much. They are easy to video and feed their babies. And they have much better night vision. They will be the last feeders at night and the first feeders in the morning.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

Wrens are my favorites. Carolinas in the back, Bewicks in the front. I never see them on feeders, only on the ground, moving debris to unearth bugs, worms, and anything else organic. I have raised many wrens in the back and front as you will see below along with many other friends I have made.



Lesser Goldfinches



Golden Fronted Woodpeckers



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



TitMice

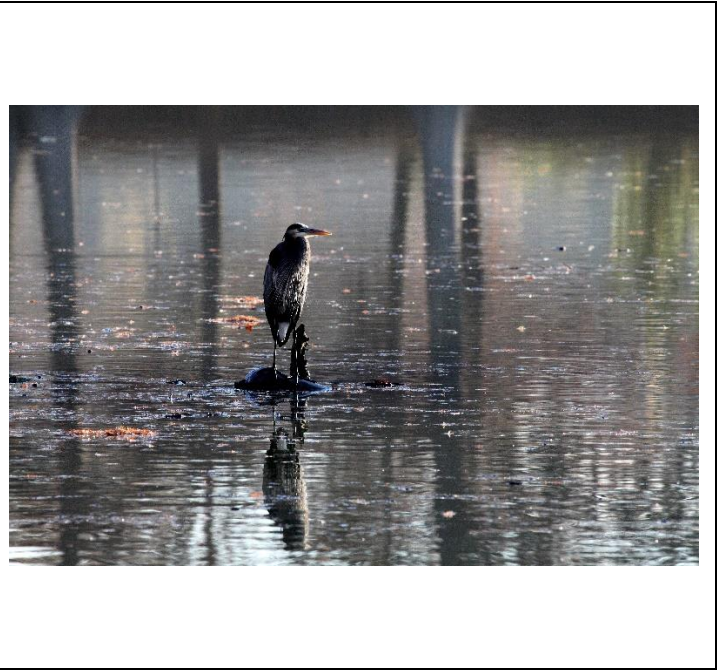
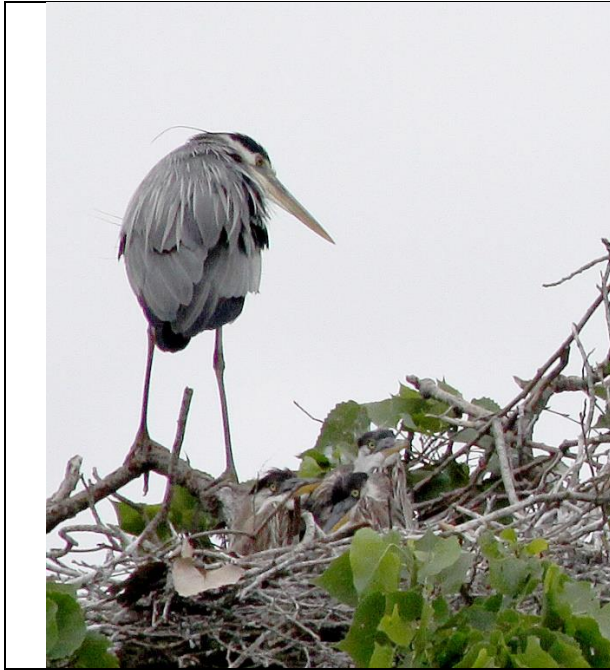


Cardinals

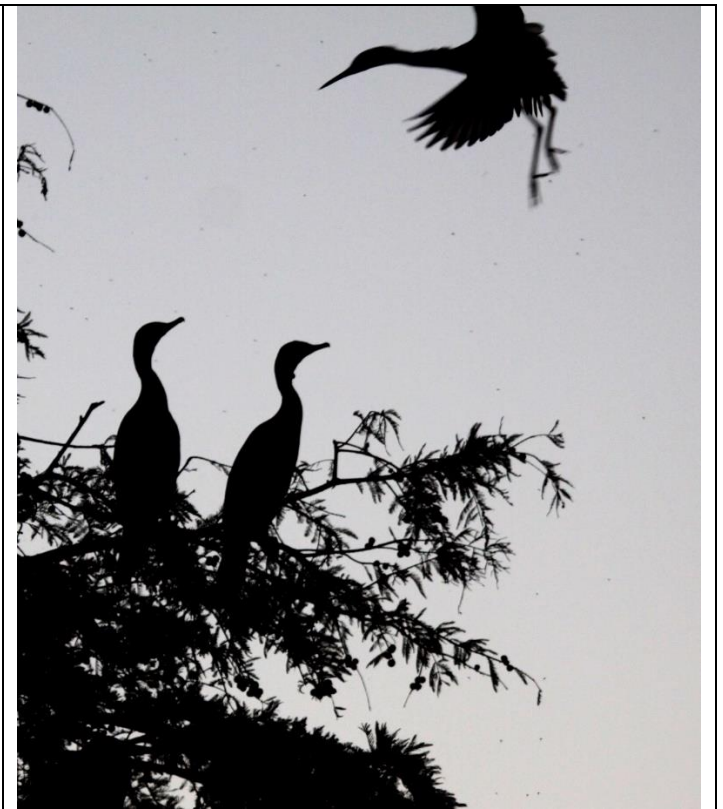


Wrens

*Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



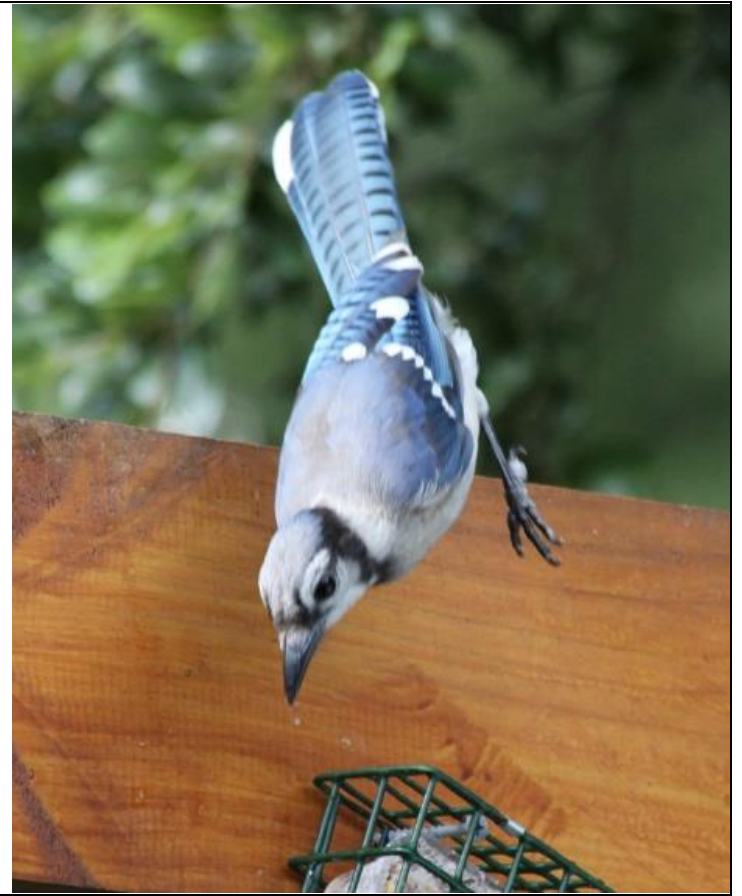
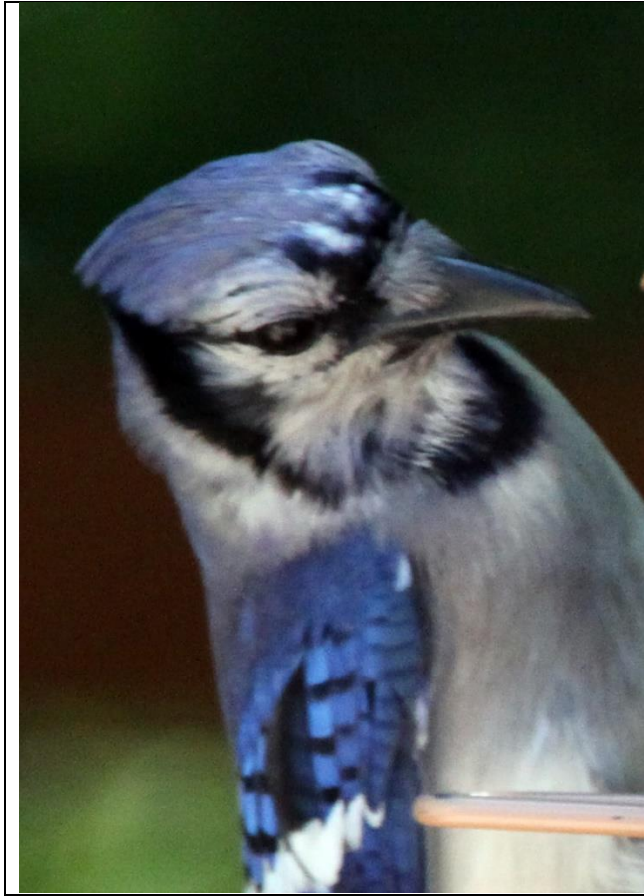
Herons



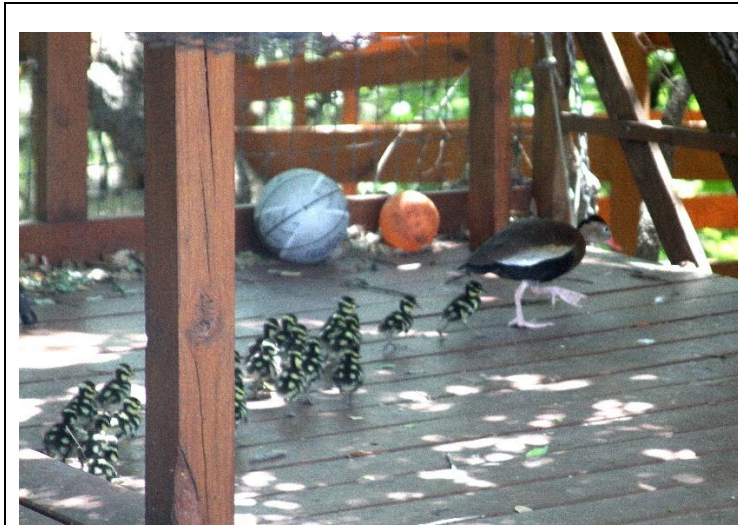
*Egrets*



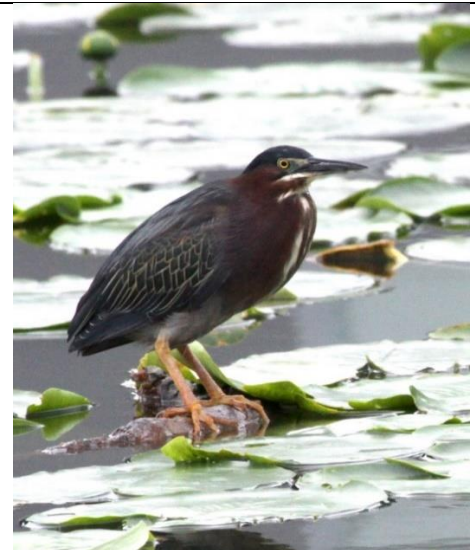
*Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



*BlueJays*



Whistling Ducks walking young



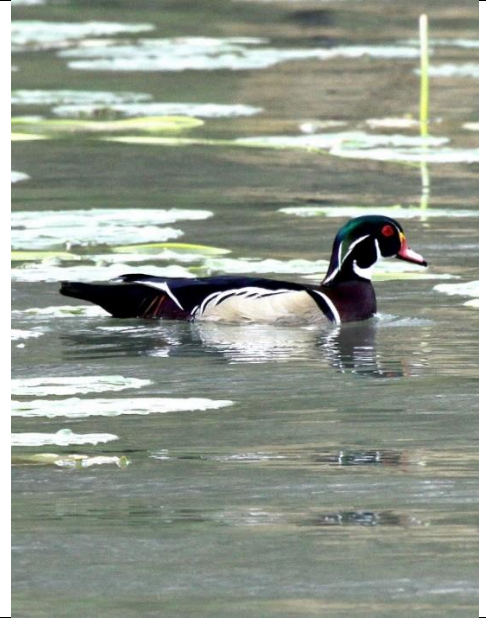
Crane's Heron



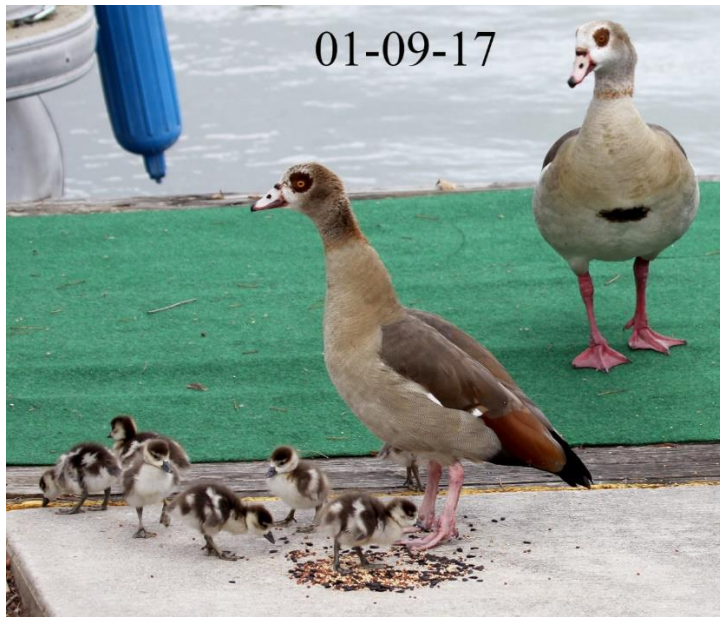
*Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



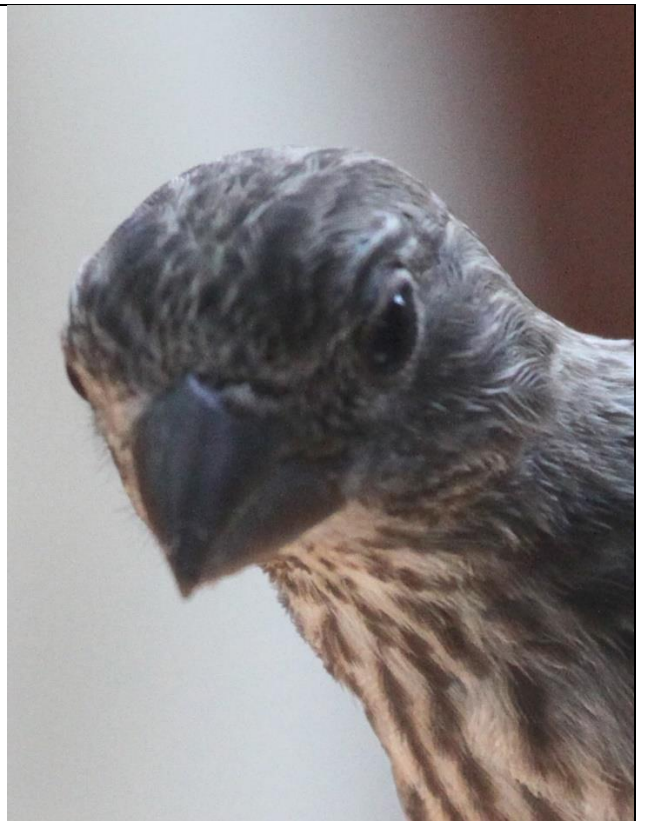
Red-Shouldered Hawk



Wood Duck



Egyptian Geese



House Finch

## **New Father**

I wondered. Living most of my life as a “Gadberry”, where did this strange name come from? It was not recognizable among my friends. It is not ethnic like Gonzalez, Thibodeaux, Smith, or Yang. Why do I have the last name of Gadberry in Southeast New Mexico? It just does not fit.

I suffered all the taunts such as Gadberries, Gooseberries, and Dingleberries. I often was relieved by the short tag “Gad”. My first name did not help much either. “Donald” became Donald Duck or singing of ‘Old McDonald Had a Farm’. Or “Donnie” was thrown out as a less than masculine term. I just wanted to be called Don. Father started with me young calling me “Sonny-Bud”. It seemed to be an attempt to be endearing but often reverted to “Piss-Ant in anger.

For most of my years of relating to the name Gadberry, I became the name. I served as a teacher, campus, and central office administrator for 40 years. My name tag still lives on my resident restroom door.



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

I studied my genealogy for several years. I traced the Gadberry (Gadbury) paternal name back to the 1300-1400's. There it stopped at an English orphanage. I traced the female side by marriage way back to the early Vikings. On the maternal side, the lineage went straight into the hillbilly hills of Tennessee. Very little was discovered there which provided any history. My maternal grandmother was insane and hospitalized in the late 1940s. I never met my maternal grandfather. I wondered if Mother was also somewhat mentally infected as well. She was an obsessive liar. Father was verbally abusive toward her.

I probably spent around \$1500 over the years on ancestry.com. The paternal side was rich with large families and lots of knowledge. In 2013, I submitted my DNA to ancestry and it came back with some cousin hits on the maternal side and origin countries (Scandinavian, Northern Europe, Germany, etc.).

Then, out of the blue, in the middle of 2020, I received a Facebook contact from a woman in Utah saying that we are very closely related as per DNA. Some of her children also contacted me through Facebook. That was a shock! I contacted Brother (Gadberry) right away. He had a genealogist friend who looked at all the DNA evidence.

The expert concluded that he was 99% sure that Brother was a half-brother and the Utah woman was a half-sister. The genealogist gave us a lineage chart (below) which showed that I am the offspring of a man called Orval Kisselburg who lived in Roswell, NM and obviously visited Mother in May. In early July 1942, Father (Gadberry) was working out of town near Lordsburg, NM laying phone lines. Evidently, Orval was laying somewhere else.

Grandmother (Mom-Mom) Gadberry made a rare trip to San Antonio to visit older sons in July 1942. Mother, evidently knowing she was pregnant, convinced Father to elope to Alamogordo, NM where there would be some secrecy. They were married in the middle of July 1942. I was born on March 3, 1943. Father and Orval both had no idea of my true origins. Only Mother knew. I think Mom-Mom was suspicious, but she liked "Kissel" too. All I knew growing up was that I did not look like my parents. Seeing images now, I do resemble Orval.

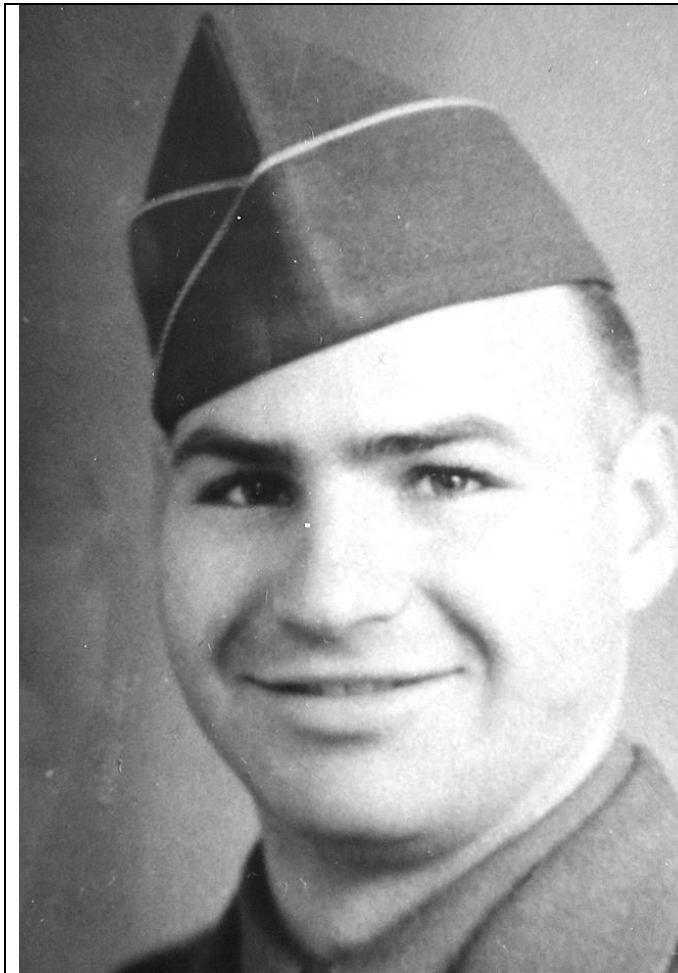


## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

It was difficult telling my two sons. They accepted my expanded family with open arms and hearts. Linda loves my new Sis. Sharon (Sis) visited San Antonio in 2021 and is a delight. We talk occasionally. I remain a Gadberry by name. I wish I could have met Orval. His parents lived in Roswell not far from me for all my years. Sharon managed to get a reprint of his autobiography/cookbook for me. I sent copies of the books to some of my “no longer” related cousins.

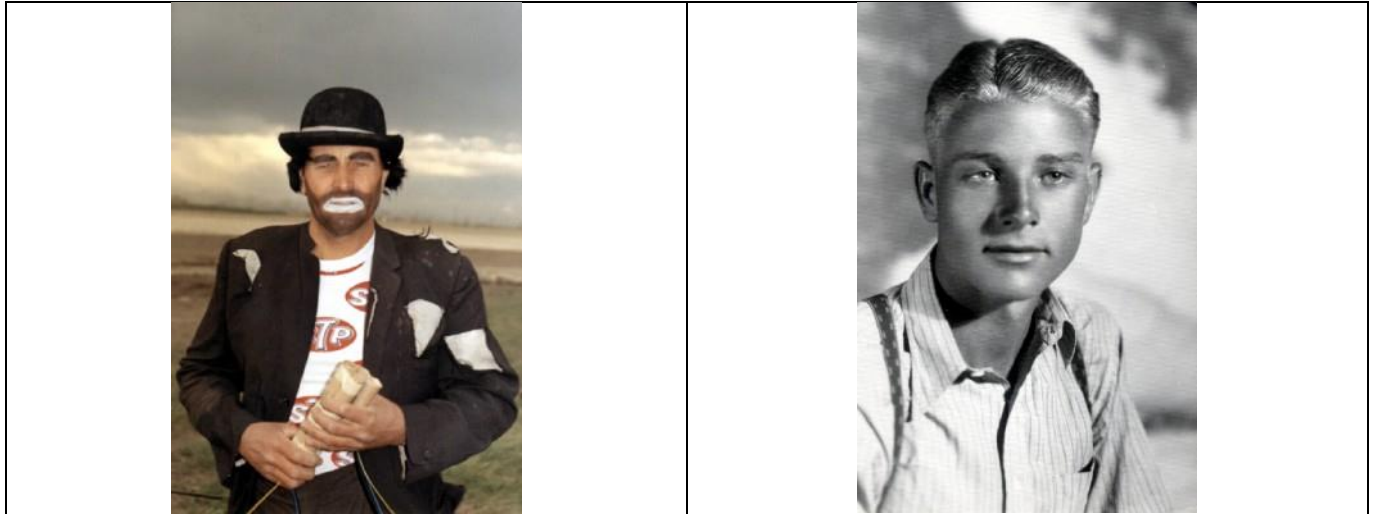
Burl Windle Gadberry enlisted in the Army on October 12, 1942, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, during World War II. He was 20 years old. That was the same day that Orval enlisted in Santa Fe. He smoked his way through two heart operations and a stroke or two.

### **Burl W Gadberry**



## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories

### Orval O.Kisselberg



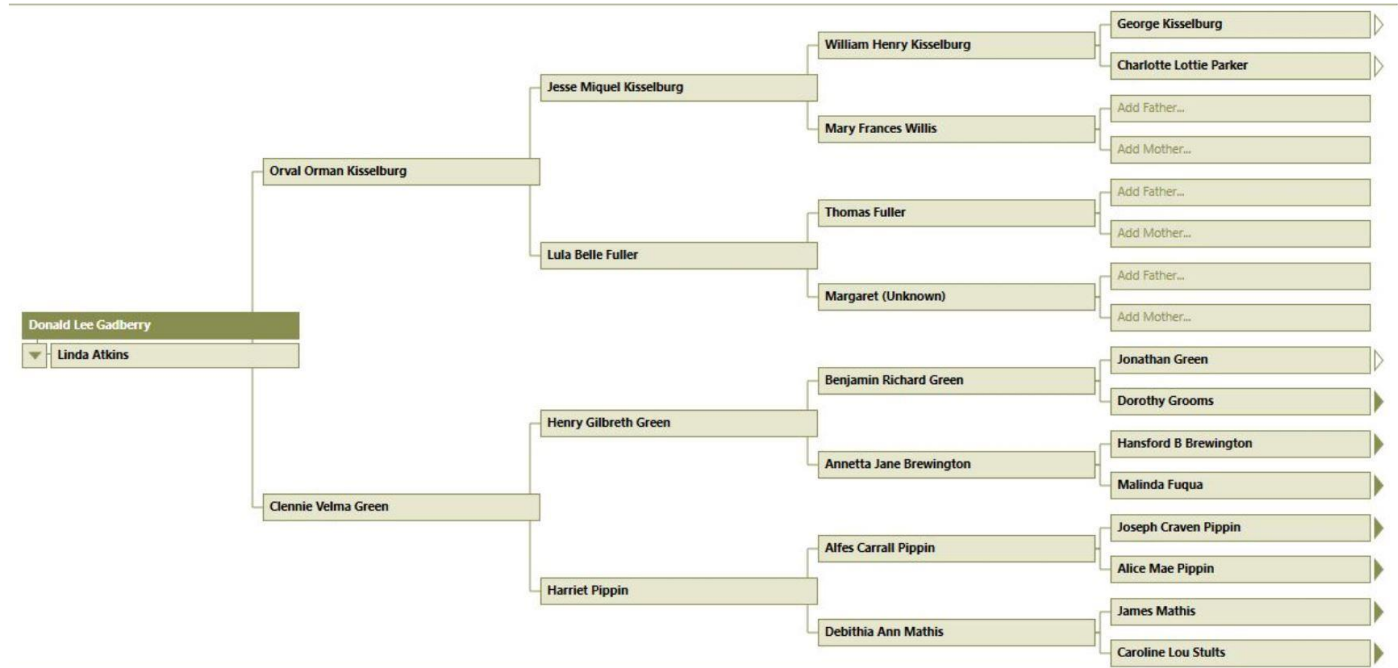
<a href="https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/saltlaketrribune/name/orval-kisselburg-obituary?id=28736719">Obituary - 2008</a> <a href="https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/saltlaketrribune/name/orval-kisselburg-obituary?id=28736719">https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/saltlaketrribune/name/orval-kisselburg-obituary?id=28736719</a>	<a href="https://www.ksl.com/article/3008737">Stunts</a> <a href="https://www.ksl.com/article/3008737">https://www.ksl.com/article/3008737</a>
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#### Orval Kisselburg aka the Daredevil Clown

Kisselburg began his daredevil career in Roswell walking the girders and swinging on cables underneath the old Pecos River Bridge. He performed stunts on the speedway and at various county fairs from 1952 until 1982. Kisselburg's various stunts included precision driving, auto jumps (as seen below), and even stunts with explosions. Over this time, Orval befriended Evel Knievel, once even performing a stunt for the injured Knievel. In 1972, Orval rescued a young man from drowning in the Jordan River in Salt Lake City, one of his proudest moments and certainly the most heroic. He was forced to retire when he contracted Lou Gehrig's Disease in 1983. He passed away in Salt Lake City in 2008. He is shown right in 1950 at the age of 28.



## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories



12-26-2013, 01:29 PM

**PNWJohn**  
Newbie  
Join Date: Dec 2013  
Age: 44  
Posts: 2  
CERTIFIED ARM MEMBER

**Re: Orval the Daredevil Clown**

Hi all,

I realize this post is several years old. Nevertheless... here goes

Orval taught my dad all his stunts. My dad and I travelled with Orval and occasionally he would fill in for Orval when he was injured and unable to complete his stunts (towards the end of his career). When Orval retired, my dad bought his stunt truck and continued the legacy. I think he may have actually toured as Orval for a short time, before renaming himself "Flywheel the daredevil clown". I was extremely young during these years, but Orval has a special place in my heart as he was always very kind to me.

I may be interested in any memorabilia as a lot of it was lost over the years. Particularly Thrill Seekers which was an episode of a tv show that they filmed together in Tenino in 1973.  
Hope to resurrect the thread and hear from some of you

12-26-2013, 01:34 PM

**PNWJohn**  
Newbie  
Join Date: Dec 2013  
Age: 44  
Posts: 2  
CERTIFIED ARM MEMBER

**Re: Orval the Daredevil Clown**

BTW, it was 3-4 sticks of dynamite. Eventually (in the 80's i think), it became my job to prep the dynamite for the show! Yes, 4th of July was a hoot at our place 😊



Roswell N. M.

May 28 1942

I registered

Boog???

?Recond

that Company

Friday, 29th

Kessel?

Dear son I just now Rec your letter  
also the money thanks a million  
Burl I Readstord you a letter with  
your Birth certificate in it May  
20, and I havnt had any Returns  
on it yet. I am sure Glad you have  
Moved arent you. Burl, Boog was  
sitting here eating dinner with  
Weldon + me Boog had just said  
Recond old Burl will come home  
tomorrow night I said I sure look  
for him as I havnt herd from  
him just then Mrs Gaston Brought  
me in this letter Boog said tell  
you to come home he said he  
would like to work for that Co  
with you. the Girls is suppose  
to Bee here tomorrow Frid 29 Wish  
you could come home. Burl I dont  
own any one But Kessel But I  
sure do Kneed Glasses Bad I have  
the head ache so much also I need  
I teeth Pulled that have been  
Bothering me a lot out side of that

# **Bill Haglund: Mason jars filled with volcanic dust**

Staff Writer  
Ames Tribune

Orval Kisselburg was a friend of mine.

He couldn't buy health insurance. There wasn't a single insurance company in America that would cover him, at least one he could afford. So, Orval developed a self-insurance plan. He'd sell things — posters, photos, T-shirts and other memorabilia — and all that extra cash went into a slush fund he called Orval's Health Insurance Policy. He used to laugh about it a lot.

You see, Orval traveled North America rolling cars, smashing through wooden walls of flame, flying through the air in a car and crashing into a couple more cars sitting on the ground and, yes, blowing himself up with dynamite.

Orval traveled around the United States and Canada in a truck built specially for him — the back of the truck was a ramp he used to launch himself into the air for his death-defying tricks — as “Orval the Daredevil Clown.” Countless Iowans were among those who thrilled at Orval's death-defying antics. He performed at virtually every Iowa race track during a 30-year career, including Boone, Webster City and Marshalltown, among the tracks in the Central Iowa area.

In his last years on the road, Orval performed despite the onset of Lou Gehrig's disease. Told he had only a few years to live, Orval surprised everyone by living late into his 80s before dying in April 2008 in his hometown of Sandy, Utah, just outside of Salt Lake City.

He made the most of his last years on the circuit. Although he was beginning to feel the effects of his deadly disease, he still climbed on the hood of a car, his helmet stick over the front as he was driven at high speed through a flaming wall of wood. And, he still did his most famous trick, the Russian Death Chair. That's what Orval called it, anyway. He'd hunker down in makeshift wooden carton with three sticks of dynamite surrounding him.

Then, as the crowd counted down “10, nine, eight ...” he'd hold two wires close together. When the count reached “zero” he'd touch the wires together and folks would experience the loudest of booms imaginable and parts of the cardboard would soar far and wide into the air. Amid a thick cloud of smoke, Orval would roll out of the inferno to the cheers of the crowd.

“Did you ever make a mistake doing that trick?” I asked Orval once. He looked at me solemnly and said, “Bill, you're only allowed one mistake with dynamite.”

That was Orval, a wide clown face painted on his face, his black and white clothes showing the signs of years on the road.

Thirty-five years ago, I saw Orval for the last time. His final swing through the Midwest came in 1981, and he was clearly showing the signs of the disease that had taken over his once svelte body. This time was different, though. He carried with him tiny Mason jars filled with a silver-gray dust and he was selling those bottles as his latest form of Orval's Health Insurance Policy. “Yup,” he said, “this jar is filled with honest-to-goodness ash from Mount St. Helens.”

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

Mount St. Helens was the volcano that erupted in Washington State 35 years ago, blanketing a number of states with ash. Some of the ash was carried as far as the Midwest, but Orval just had to go out his back door in Utah to gather the volcanic ash. He filled jar after jar and had some cheap labels made.

He carried it with him everywhere he went, selling the tiny Mason jars filled with Mount St. Helens' ash for \$1 each.

I bought one of those jars. Orval gladly pocketed the \$1 I handed over. Through the years, the jar disappeared, but I think of Orval each time I think of Mount St. Helens and the havoc wreaked that day so long ago by the dust that covered virtually everything in its wide path.

I wrote a piece on Orval after his passing. His daughter called me and thanked me afterward. I'd imagine you can still find that story out there somewhere in cyberspace.

I was honored to know Orval Kisselburg, Orval the Daredevil Clown, one of a kind.

**Bill Haglund** is a retired writer for the Boone News-Republican and Dallas County News. He can be reached at [Bhaglund13@msn.com](mailto:Bhaglund13@msn.com).

## **Teacher of the Year Spring 2004**

After retirement from campus administration in 1996, I finished the last eight years back in the classrooms. Two years were at Providence High School, then two years at Mark Twain Middle School, and the last four years as a teacher in my sanctuary where I had retired as an assistant principal at Highlands High School. I learned how to teach at Mark Twain. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders “ate my lunch” every day. Ninth graders were easy.

I was moved from Twain to Highlands after I offered the “new” principal a good deal. She and her four new Assistant Principals did not know any of the kids or the building. Here was the deal: I knew the building like the back of my hand. I knew where the kids hide and where they sneak in and out. I knew the traffic flow and where to move and not to move large groups. I only wanted to teach 9th-grade math, preferably not algebra. I lived 6 doors from the school and knew most of the parents. I did not need a conference period but I requested a 4<sup>th</sup> period conference. In return, I will handle the lunchroom during the 2-3 lunches. Just give me a radio to report problems.

She agreed. I rode my bicycle to school every day. The other APs asked my opinion often and I sometimes substituted for them when they were missing. The Principal received a good deal. I also knew how to set the bell schedules and manage the phone system.

I started setting my classroom with technology other teachers could not afford. I was drawing my TRS pension and top teacher salary as well. I worked through the 2003-4 summer wiring an audio-visual projector in the ceiling and setting up a table with an overhead projector, laptop, speakers, and graphic tablet including a wifi router in the back to draw my own connection. I constructed a math lessons website with PowerPoint, images, and documents. I used Photoshop on top of the images to show processes and solutions and the projected graphic calculator processes. Other teachers did not show any interest. Such was the timing and development of computer understanding.

I began making up math term lyrics to popular songs and sang them to karaoke music in class. My principal nominated me for SAISD Teacher of the Year and the Trinity prize. I won the SAISD Teacher of the Year award in the spring of 2004. Below are some of the documents, articles, and lyrics I used.

*If one does not toot-th his own horn, it might never be toot-thed.*

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

### *From Principal*

“Don Gadberry is a life-long educator whose career has taken a circuitous route, from the classroom to supervision, to computer specialist, to administration, and back to the classroom. His mathematical mind and natural enthusiasm for new innovations made him the perfect candidate to originate and establish of the Office of Computer Services in San Antonio ISD. Always the teacher, he trained the entire administrative office in word processing and database software in the early stages of computer literacy. His proficiency in maintaining Public Education Information Management System data submissions to the state agency resulted in his being an advisor to TEA regarding PEIMS. These facts are only given to substantiate his keen intellect, attention to detail, work ethic, and dedication to SAISD. As a popular administrator at Highlands High School in the mid 90’s, he was the “teacher’s” assistant principal, an instructional leader long before the term was popular. In those six years the colleagues who taught beside him from 1970-1981 lamented that he was being “wasted” in administration. Their memory was of a man who inspired and challenged teenagers in the classroom; he still does!

To observe Don teaching is a joy; he loves his subject; he loves the kids. While his original strategies are endless, his most current has been “math Karaoke.” Using a Karaoke machine, he takes math terms, sets them to music, flashes the words on the overhead, and leads the whole class in a sing along till they know the terminology. He has even taught his 9<sup>th</sup> graders how to use graphing calculators through music! More than his clever ways to get students involved, are his tireless efforts to make students know he is personally committed to their academic success. For **every** lesson, Don has individual templates where the students process their math through writing. Although he has his Advanced Placement training and G/T certification, Don requests freshmen, the most challenging group of secondary students.

As one might infer, he is a well-loved member of the Highlands High School faculty among his peers, as well as the students. Several years ago when he was an administrator, he brought down the house at the community Faculty Follies with his jitterbug routine. Outgoing and talented, he has been a positive link between the Highlands campus and the Southside. Don lives only one block from this campus and participates in this community. An active member of the Highland Hills Neighborhood Association, he has served on that organization’s Board of Trustees as well as the Southside Lions Park Committee. In addition, he and his wife Linda have hosted Rotarian foreign exchange students who attended Highlands High School.”

February 2, 2004

## *Part 2 – Episodes and Memories*

*Dear Nomination Committee Members:*

*From Principal*

For a decade I knew Don Gadberry, a San Antonio Independent School District computer whiz, by reputation. In more recent years, I heard of his instructional and administrative expertise. One can only imagine my delight when I, a new principal, arrived at Highlands High School and immediately learned that Don wanted to return to Highlands as a freshman teacher. Since any math teacher was difficult to hire, I was thrilled to know that one of the district's best was volunteering to return to a campus where he had been a much-loved administrator.

Don has exceeded his reputation. Even though his career has spanned several decades, he approaches his classes with the high expectations of a new teacher and the wisdom of a veteran. His enthusiasm is contagious which makes him a positive force on a campus of many retirement-aged teachers. Don continues his independent professional development although there are not many new strategies he has not already incorporated into his CORE Plus classes. His real talent is creating new ways to reach his 9th-grade classes, especially those students who dislike school in general and math in particular.

On his nomination form, I gave examples of his innovative teaching style but one needs to see him in action to really appreciate this man's love of teenagers and math by the high pedagogical standards of Trinity University, I nominate Don Gadberry for the prestigious Trinity Prize for Excellence in Teaching. Sincerely yours,

Lisa Contreras



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

TO: SCREENING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

FROM: Raul E. Rodriguez , Assistant Principal , Highlands High

RE: Don L. Gadberry

DATE: February 3, 2004

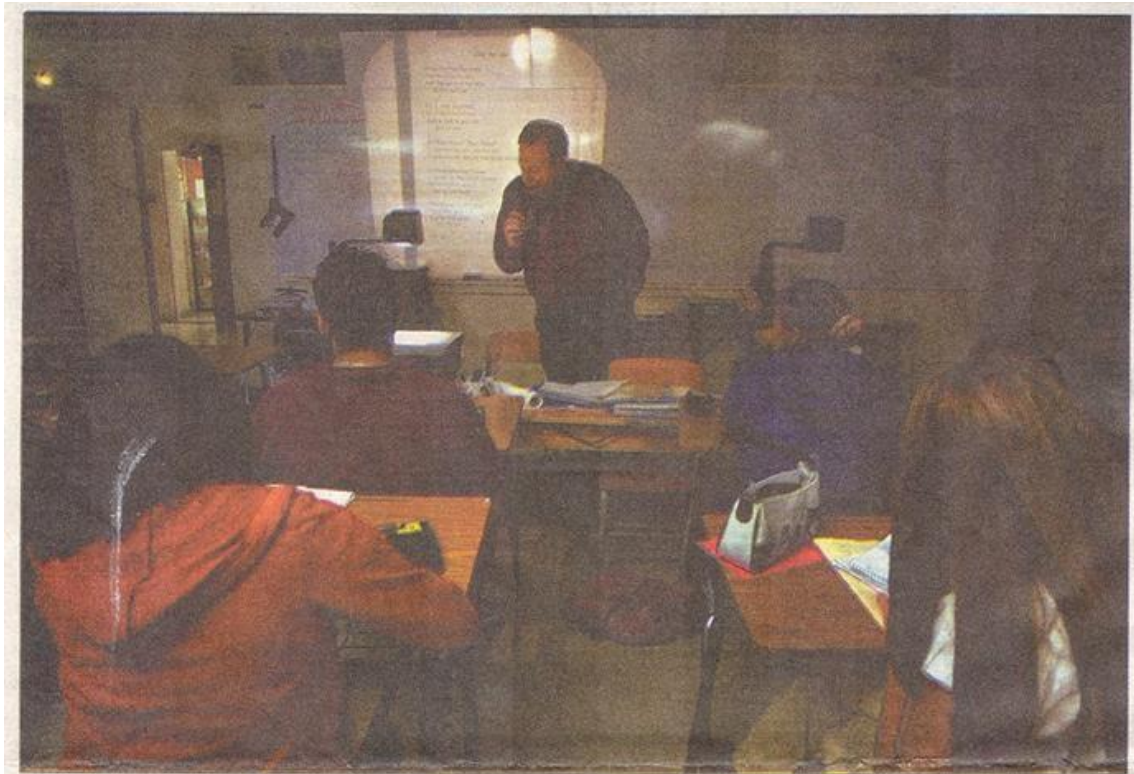
I welcome the opportunity to recommend DON L. GADBERRY as the TEACHER OF THE YEAR. Presently, Mr. Gadberry teaches five MATH CorePlus I classes and one Algebra II class during the school day. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Mr. Gadberry is our SUBSTITUTE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, DESIGNATED BELL COORDINATOR, LUNCH DUTY MONITOR and DESIGNATED WALKIE-TALKIE DISPATCHER. Furthermore, Mr. Gadberry, resides within the HIGHLANDS HIGH COMMUNITY and is a COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE.

I welcome any educator or concerned citizen to visit Mr. Gadberry's classroom. As you enter the classroom, you see UFO pictures and objects, STUDENT WORK DISPLAYS, STUDENT WORK SHELVES (PER CLASS PERIOD), STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS, MATH REFERENCE BOOKS, and DAILY MATH PROBLEMS. The classroom climate is excellent. Every student is aware of his/her grade due to Mr. GADBERRY's computerized PROGRESS REPORT. Mr. Gadberry welcomes all students regardless of their academic background. He provides students with TEKS-related problems and allows them to relate math to their personal life. All students are familiar with UPDATED CALCULATORS and are allowed the opportunity to demonstrate their learning.

Mr. Gadberry is a motivator and consistently seeks new ways to stimulate student learning. On any given day, you may enter his classroom and he will be singing a popular song as well as provide students with the MATH LYRICS. He challenges students and allows them to develop inquiry skills. Students are also familiar with the latest computer technology and they have an opportunity to utilize computer resources. Students take the initiative to solve math problems. Peer learning is also allowed in his classroom. Mr. Gadberry stresses not the correct answer but the process to ensure student learning.

Mr. Gadberry is a role model for all teachers. He welcomes every school day. Mr. Gadberry is quick to dress up in a UFO outfit demonstrates to his students that humor is important during the school day. Finally, I am aware that Mr. Gadberry is a former administrator, but his top priority is to remain in the classroom because he enjoys learning with his students.

## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories



PHOTOS BY NICOLE FRUGE/STAFF

Don Gadberry, a Highlands High School algebra teacher, writes his own lyrics to familiar tunes to make math lessons fun for his freshman class. He was named San Antonio School District's 2004 Teacher of the Year.

# Musical mathematics

High school teacher  
uses karaoke to spark  
students' interest.

By EDMUNDO CONCHAS  
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

Highlands High School math teacher Don Gadberry is warbling his way to the top.

Gadberry sings part of his math lessons to students by writing his own lyrics to familiar tunes. That creativity is one of the reasons why San Antonio School District officials recently selected him as Teacher of the Year.

"I was so happy just to get nominated," Gadberry said. "I had no thought or aspiration whatsoever of winning the district."

"I nominated him because of his passion for teaching and his talents," said Highlands Principal Lisa Contre-



A 1974 yearbook photo of Highlands High School algebra teacher Don Gadberry gives a past and present portrait in the computer room. His pupils affectionately call him the 'Gadster.'

ras. "Not only is he a veteran teacher, but he also has the desire of a new teacher."

"He's open to learning new ways to make his classes interesting. He targets those students who dislike math, and he loves to teach them and get them interested. That's a special gift."

Gadberry said it's not unusual to hear him and his class singing "Endless Pi," about pi squared, to the tune of "Endless Love" and "Calc For Me," about calculus, to the tune of "Stand By Me."

"At first, they sit wide-eyed," Gadberry said of his students. "But the truth is

that I have had very few kids not love this.

"I think that they appreciate the fact that I love music and that it is also variety for them. They like new and different things."

Gadberry said it's important for him to find new ways of reaching out to students.

A few years ago, he started incorporating karaoke songs into his math lessons, customizing the words to some well-known songs to help get the lessons across. He said he got the idea for karaoke in the classroom from a conference he attended about five years ago.

Once he started doing classroom karaoke, it just took off, he said.

For his innovations, Gadberry also was nominated for the Trinity Prize for Excellence in Teaching Award from Trinity University. The

See INNOVATIVE/3H



NEIGHBORS SOUTH/EAST

# Innovative teacher once served as a principal at Highlands

CONTINUED FROM 1H

prize was established by Trinity in 1981 to recognize public school teachers in Bexar County.

The 2004 recipient will be announced in mid-April.

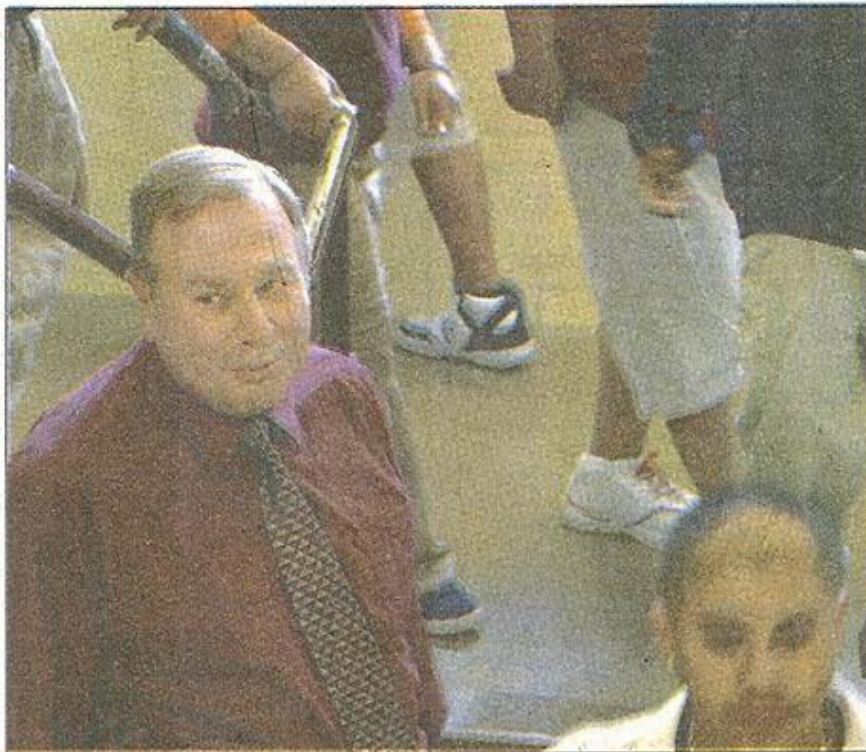
Gadberry, a native of New Mexico, said he always has had a special relationship with the Southeast Side high school.

For starters, he lives just across the street from Highlands and now is in his third stint as a member of the Highlands faculty.

He first began teaching at Highlands in 1970 and was there for 11 years as an algebra teacher.

He then left the school for 10 years and worked in the SASD central office in several positions.

In 1991, he returned to Highlands as an assistant principal and served in that capacity for five years. He left to teach math at Providence High School and Mark Twain Middle School before returning three years ago to Highlands to teach algebra again.



NICOLE FRUGÉ/STAFF

Don Gadberry, Highlands High School algebra teacher, escorts his students from the computer room. He was nominated for the Trinity Prize for Excellence in Teaching Award from Trinity University.

"I love this school and I love the community," he said. "There are great vibrations in these buildings. I know these build-

ings like the back of my hand. I feel like I was born to teach."

[econchas@express-news.net](mailto:econchas@express-news.net)

## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories



### SIXTEEN TONS

Some people go to work just to make the dough,  
A teacher goes to work so that students will know,  
good from bad, right from wrong, To build a mind that's  
sharp and a will that's strong.

You wrap sixteen jobs, all into one, Lots of  
time cost just to get it all done. Dr. O, Don't  
you call me 'cause I can't go, I owe my dough  
to the OfficeMax store.

I was born one morning when the bell didn't ring. ?  
Picked up my grade book and I started to sing. Entered six  
full classes and wrote down my goals, And the Principal  
said, Well, bless my soul!.

You roll sixteen jobs all into one,  
Stacks of paper, second to none., Special Ed. Don't  
you call me 'cause I won't go, Those A.R.D s are  
more than slow?..

I was teachin' one morning, it was nearly TAKs time.  
My kids couldn't tell, a nickel from a dime.'  
The CIC said, "Here's your sequence and scope." I just  
took a deep breath and hoped to cope.

You do sixteen jobs and get paid for one,  
Another day of gradin' and not near done, Saint Principal  
don't observe me cause it's too soon,' The copier s broke and  
tonight s a full moon. ?

I was trying one morning to read my e-mail.  
My 'puter was old and as slow as a snail.  
Word 97 playing on Windows 98,  
Last century's software just ain't that great!

You do sixteen jobs and whatta you get,  
A summer to inservice and 10 months of sweat, Dr. T  
don't you call me cause I'm not through, My kids still  
need me and I need them too.

A collage of black and white photographs featuring various individuals, likely students and faculty, in different settings. The collage includes group photos, portraits, and candid shots. A handwritten note at the bottom left reads: "To the most handsome, most successful teacher in the world Rossy Hely".



## Endless Pi

Pi, Love

You're never ending or dull; You're just irrational.  
The Circle..... Unlocks your secrets so sweet.  
Your digits don't repeat.

Mark Off...the whole circle's length around...  
Di-vide by the distance across.....  
And you'll see...No matter the circle size.  
Oh, Yes, You will constant be  
My Endless Pi.

Two Lengths....Two lengths dividing like none.  
Their quotient's never done.  
Forever, I'll seek a few digits more,  
Than ever known before.

Though Pi, Oh, Pi, You'll be exact for me.  
I'm sure, just approximate's fine.  
And someday, When memory's increased for me,  
I know I'll see more of you.  
My Endless Pi.

Bum, Bum.....

Oh PI, Oh Pi, You'll be exact for me, I'm sure,  
Just approximate's fine. And though I can see  
Just a part of you....

Three point - 1-4-1.....5-9-2-6-5-4...You'll be enough for me...  
My Pi, Oh Pi, Oh Pi...  
My Endless Pi.

[https://youtu.be/yYgFs1\\_BUV0](https://youtu.be/yYgFs1_BUV0)



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

### **Guns**

For most of my life, I was fascinated with the aura surrounding guns. As a youngster, I loved my cowboy cap gun pistols. Pretending to be Roy Rodgers, Gene Autry, or Wild Bill Hickock was much more prevalent in my young brain than learning multiplication tables. I was encouraged to hunt legally and safely.

Aim, Squeeze, Fire. Father was the teacher and not very patient.

My Daisy BB lever action rifle was the highlight of my days. Painting it several times, ending in silver metal and green stocks. It had a long magazine for BBs and a lever spring cock to load air. A BB was loaded into the chamber and then aimed at sparrows or mice or trees.

Never point at anyone with the chamber loaded. Remember, "All guns are loaded until proven otherwise." Learn the rules.

The Daisy lasted at least 10 years. With an unloaded chamber and magazine,, Brother and I would shoot puffs of air at each other and if we could feel the air, fall over dead.

Once, maybe twice, I had to hide for a while when a BB would ricochet and put a hole in a neighbor's window. That resulted in darting to safety and hiding the gun... "Who Me?", when asked. "Must have been Randy on the next block."



*From the Chapter "The Farm" in Part 1, the reader can see some of my exploits with the Daisy BB gun.*

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

Next came a single shot .22 caliber bolt action Stevens rifle for my 12<sup>th</sup> Christmas. The sight was open with a difficult method of adjusting. Finally, through a lot of target practice, I learned the distances where I needed to raise the barrel and lower the barrel to hit the target. It always tended to the left a fraction though.

Rabbit hunting on the Caprock east of Roswell was a joy with Father and Brother. Father challenged me to not mess up the body of the cotton tails sitting there thinking they were hiding. An eyeshot was needed to harvest the meat without damage. I became very proficient. Winter was the best time for cotton tails. Summertime, they sometimes had worms. Jackrabbits were a lot of fun. They would run about 100 yards away, sit, and look at us. Long-range shooting and shooting while running were skills of luck sometimes.

The gamebird world was beckoning when Father gave me a brand new 16 gauge pump action long barrel shotgun. I was about 14 at the time and we went dove, quail, and pheasant hunting. I could not hit the side of a barn. The dove remained fully feathered. The blue quail were a different story and my favorite bird to hunt. They like to stay on the ground and can outrun humans for short distances.

The coveys of quail, sometimes over a hundred birds, would start running on the flat lands of grass and mesquites. We would see them, get as close as we could in the car, and jump out quickly. When organized so we did not shoot each other, we would start chasing them. Usually, a large bunch would flush and fly away from us. Hitting a bird going away at a shorter distance is easier than hitting a 60mph dove flying left to right.

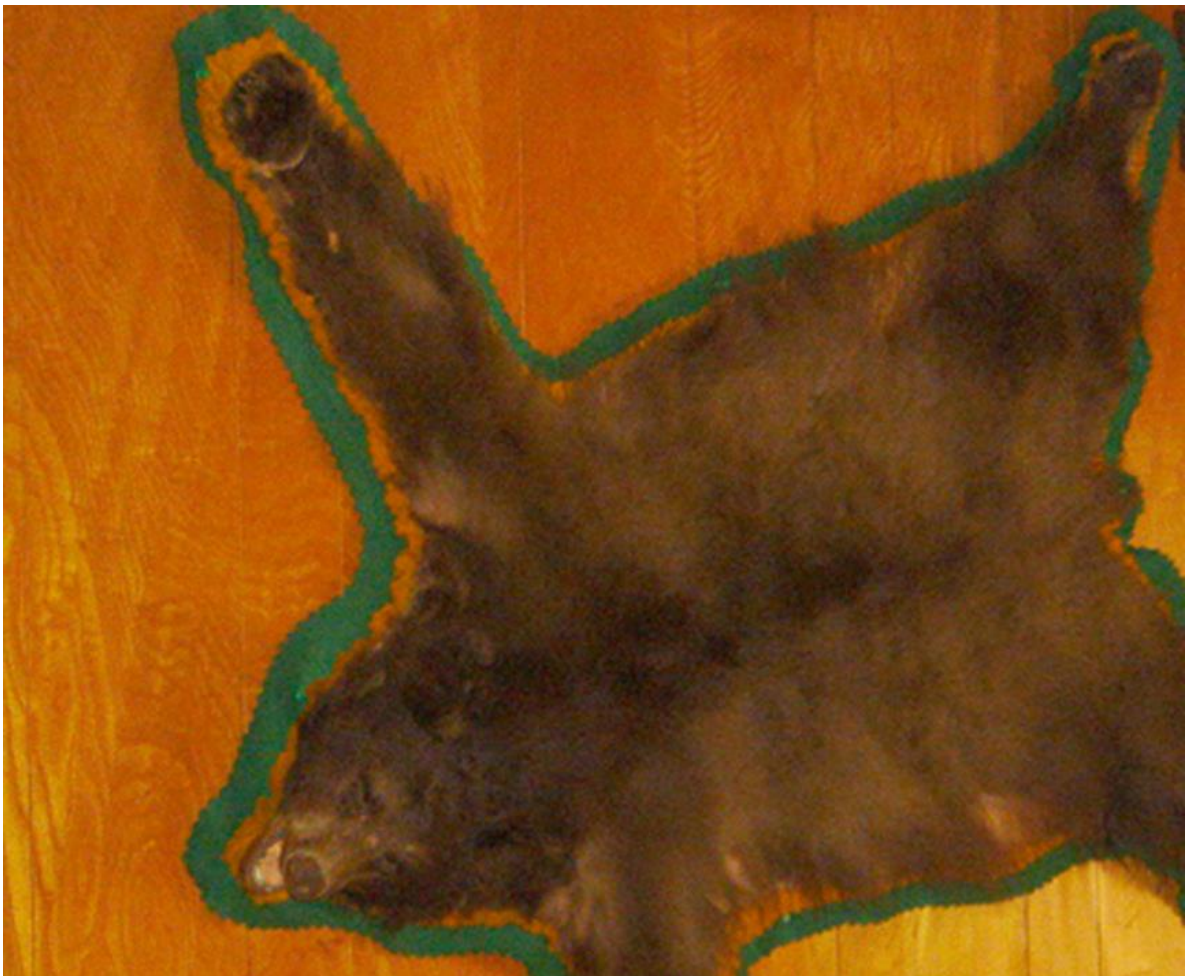
The coveys would split and each of us would pursue different groups. Split them some more and start flushing singles. We managed to get quite a few good quail meals out of these trips, very close to Roswell.

I would go hunting mule deer every winter with Father and his friends. We would camp out in the foothills of the Capitan mountains, usually on the rocky south side. Father gave me a 30-06 "30 'aught' 6" Springfield. It was a bolt action with a 4-5 round internal magazine and peep sights. I sighted it in at 200 yards because we often had to shoot long distances across a canyon. I fired at deer a few times, but I never hit any in New Mexico.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

Father and I went west of the Capitans one year on a big mountain. We were working around the mountain watching for any movement. I was above and he was lower. He fires. I cannot see him or anything moving. He loudly whispers, "Be still ... a bear is coming up toward us." Holy crap! A bear! Father fires again. A few seconds later, he yells, "I got him!"

I slid down through the brush and shale. I found them. Father was shaking with shock and excitement. A bucket list event for him. The black bear was small but indeed deceased. We field dressed it, but that bothered Father. He kept saying it was like dressing out a dog. I do not believe that we ate any of the meat, but the head and skin for a bear rug was what he wanted. We could not damage the skin, so I had to put it over my shoulders and walk it back to camp. I never wanted to go bear hunting again.



Hunting ended for me when I moved to Texas. I thought I wanted some venison, so I harvested a whitetail doe around 1970 in Comfort, TX. There was no sport in that. It was like shooting a pet.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

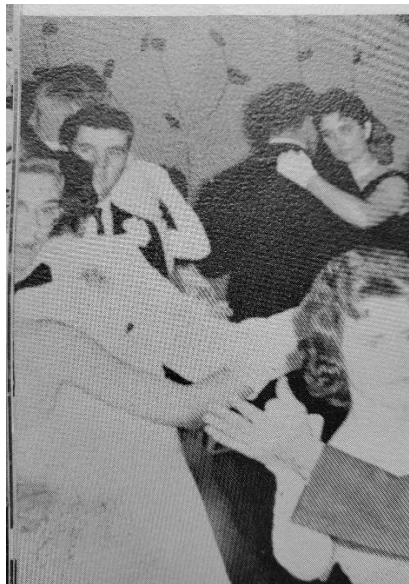
The US Army introduced me to the M-1, M-14, and the M-16. I achieved expert in all three. I inherited my father's .38 snub revolver and purchased a KelTec .32 semi for protection. I also bought an 18-inch, 20-gauge pump shotgun for protection, but I sold it recently without firing a shot. I have had a Concealed Handgun License since the mid 90's.

I believe in the ownership of guns within reason. Weapons such as those primarily to be used to kill humans as fast as can be done belong in the military not in the hands of civilians. However, I am pessimistic that the USA has the will nor the methods to control these high-powered, rapid-firing killing machines.

## **Dancin', Dancin', and more Dancin' (Part 1)**

Starting at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, my feet and knees started moving. Sock hops at the high school little theater were a blast. More formal dances required a "Dance" card, being brave enough to ask to be on one, a white sports coat, and a pink carnation. Lots of slow beats and hold as close as could be dared. Don't want to work up a sweat before the days of good antiperspirant.

The less formal dances were fun and much more active. First, of course, came the 'bug' or Lindy Hop which required leading, following, and lots of body/arm moves. Next was the 'bop'; a much more individualized movement, loose knees, slippery soles, and knowing the side slides on each foot in any direction. Spin-off dances such as the stroll, limbo, and several line dances (electric slide, boot scootin' boogie) came along as the freedom of movement on the dance floor grew.



On to New Mexico State with a fiancé left in Roswell for a year, the dancing opportunities were slim. The newest dance was the twist. It was easy to do, but adding rubber legs and different hand movements made it more of a challenge. Since there were eight males to each female on campus, the guys would do a baseball game routine on the sparsely populated dance floor. While twisting to Ray Charles, one guy would be a catcher, another a pitcher, and of course a batter. Action would be to twist all around the make-believe bases, stopping to dance to the best parts of the song, and laughing a lot while entertaining the crowd.

At one of these campus dances in late November of 1961, everyone noticed the visiting beautiful girl in a tight red dress walk in the door. The front left side of the dress was slit way up the thigh. All the guys were afraid to approach her. One thing I learned very early is to watch the females standing around and pick one who moves to the beat. That girl wants to dance, and the chances of rejection are much lower.

This red dress girl started keeping the beat to Dion's "Wanderer" which has a slower, sexier twist rhythm. I walked in front of her, standing about 10 feet away and started slowly moving to the beat. She watched for a few seconds. I beckoned her to join me. She walked slowly out with a sway that had jaws dropping. Dancing, we synched so well. Twisting back and forth, circling with eyes on each other. After a minute or so, she slowly raised her dress edge and opened the slit much higher. The crowd cheered. That encouraged her.

I felt a hand on my shoulder and was directed to stop. Similarly, another person stopped the red dress. The music stopped. The crowd booed. We were led outside and told to go home. She took off quickly. That was ok. I was engaged and not looking for a girlfriend. But the episode really showed me the power of a dance.



I was in a dorm with a roommate and two suitemates sharing the restroom. The two suitemates were big, bruising, black football players from New Jersey. I helped them with classwork. They taught me how to dance, East Coast style. I learned to “slop”, moonwalk, shimmy, wobble, watusi, pony, swim, and various other moves. I loved it and became a pretty good dancer even with straight hair. I was often asked if I had only white blood in my past.

When I married in the fall of 1962, my mate did not share the dancing fun as much as I hoped. Dancing took a back seat to work three \$1/hour jobs and schoolwork. But I was just getting started.

## **Dancing - Part 2**

After quite a while, devoting much of my energy to teaching and teacher union activities, Roberta (a teacher union leader) asked me to join her “Round Dance” group. My mate, J.A. agreed and we began ballroom-style dancing in the late 70’s-80’s. Round dancing is an activity that occurs between square dance “tips”. It consists of couples dancing to a called routine of two dances. Most of the dances are two-steps, waltzes, foxtrots, rhumbas, cha-cha’s, pasa dobles, and other ballroom routines.

J.A. and I joined a group of round dancers. I was never a square dancer and never tried. But the ballroom routines were fun. We had costumes, men in long-sleeved western, bolo ties, and women in full petticoats for our exhibition and club routines. J.A. was good at this and I enjoyed it as well. Occasionally, I would cut loose in a solo routine to a good beat, but the instructors frowned on that. I behaved.

I taught the Highlands German Club several polka dance routines and they performed in many places. Early mornings in my classroom became a practice dance floor for several future ballroom-dancing couples. All the musical routines were from round dance.

In 1980, J.A. started craving pretzels and danced with a baby bump for a few months. Aaron was born in July 1981 and had a good rhythm at birth. Later, more pretzels and another dancing boy entered in November 1983. We slowly exited the round dance world in 1985. After our marriage, Linda and I started bar hopping and became pretty good at solos and couple dancing. We loved the modern beats and genre. I could still cut loose with a good “Billy Jean” routine. It was hard to keep me off the dance poles. I once broke a bone in my left foot by jumping off a stage and slamming my boots hard on the floor. The routine was to “Macho Man” with my toolbelt and suspenders.

Linda and I became a fixture at NIOSA. For years, we were featured in the Kens5 promo for NIOSA. We always danced behind the Little Church of Villita to the great tunes of the River City Band. We made many friends who would come to watch us every year. One year, there was a good band on the Arneson stage playing for a big crowd. The band leader came across the bridge and walked in front of us. She was singing a good beat song. I stood up, walked to the edge of the seats, and stood there until she threw a signal to move a little. I cut loose, she stood back and the crowd loved it. I motioned for Linda to join me and we did a chase routine. I then led the crowd in a wave. What a night! Then my knees gave out and neuropathy seeped in. Balance left me. The inability to dance has been a huge loss. The walker is not a very sexy partner.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



[Round Dance video](#)



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



*Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*





## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



## **Fishing – 1**

My introduction to 'fishing' came when I was about 6 years old. Father liked to fish in the White Mountains in south-central New Mexico north of Ruidoso. Bonito Lake and Nogal Reservoir were always stocked with rainbow trout by the opening of the season on May 1. The mountains were always freezing that time of the year. Most of my time was spent around the campfire on the lake's edge.

I remember my first big fish, an ugly, scaley bottom-feeding, orange carp. It was huge. It took me quite a while to drag it up the sloping bank of Nogal Lake. It made a lasting impression. Catching the stocked, small trout was not a fishing goal for me. I wanted something bigger.

During my college days, I would fish the Rio Grande below Caballo dam for catfish. Several times, the catch was good for small cats. On the 60-mile trips home during the summer, the corn ears beckoned me to stop and strip a few cobs next to the road when ripe. Also, the big irrigation ditches near the Rio Grande offered some fun 'jig' fishing. Looping on a big treble (like grappling) hook and dragging it through the deeper ponds of water, I could jerk into nice sized shad which fought like crazy. The game warden caught me doing this without a fishing license and even though shad was not a game fish, he gave me a ticket. I was escorted to the local J.P. and he wanted \$60 to release me. I did not have \$60 to my name. Called Father and he said, "I hope you learned a lesson". He offered no money. Called Mother who figured out how to pay the fine.

After moving to Austin in 1968, the Travis Lake Dam, Mansfield, caught my attention. It is well known to harbor some large catfish. So many hours, I sat on that low water bridge and only caught one of about 5 pounds. I tried sneaking through the hole in the dam fence and throwing bait into the fast current. Nothing happened. I turned to bass on the new Lake Decker and did pretty well, but I wanted something bigger.

On a whim, I bought a boat, new, ski, solid bow, 16ft. \$67.12/month for 3 years. Wife, J.A., was not pleased that I had not consulted her. But she was happier when we started using it skiing on the lakes and went fishing on the coast. Port O'Conner was the most fun.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

1978. The family would charter a deep-sea trip every summer. Their goal, especially the Father of J.A. liked to catch king mackerel and cobia (ling cod). On one trip out of Port Aransas, he and the family went out about 50 miles and brought back two or three kings which weighed a total of about 25 pounds. The cost was about \$500. I did not like the ocean trips because of motion sickness. In my boat, the motion did not affect me. I took my boat along with my nephew out in the gulf to the whistler buoy. Swells were very low...hot on August 3<sup>rd</sup> day, with practically no breeze.

I put out a big rig with a long steel leader and triple hook baited with a needle nose gar. The weight and bait bounced up and down off the bottom with the swells for about 10 minutes. Then, something took the bait and immediately peeled off the line. I made certain the drag was loose enough for him to take the line easily. Let him run, start the motor to chase, point the boat, and keep up with him. He finally stopped. Tightened the drag. Set the hook three times. He takes off on his second run. This time about half as far. Settle back and let the drag and rod tire him out. He sounds. Must keep the line away from the prop. He starts circling the boat. The reel gains line back, and he is tiring.

Round and round we go. He surfaces and we can see the large head with lots of teeth. Securely hooked. Each roundabout, the reel recovers about 2 feet. Now, close enough to gaff, what to do? Do I lift him and his teeth in the small area around our feet in the boat? Don't think so. Plan B: Drag him back by the tail to keep him cool in the 100+ degree sun. First, he needs to be dispatched to grab the tail, so the most merciful way is to shoot him. Getting out my trusty .22 caliber pistol, I do a few headshots as he circles. He passes away. We lassoed the tail and dragged him back to the dock. Weighing in at 46 pounds, he made a lot of meals for the family.





## **Fishing – 2**

2005 – 2011. After walking out of the classroom in May 2005, I bought another boat. This time, a fishing boat. Sixteen-foot Tracker with a fishing platform bow, off-center steering, and enough depth in the midship to not fall out. A live well, a fish tank with running water, and a bilge pump riding on a deep-V chassis complete a great package.

The local lakes near the house on the southeast side of San Antonio are the destination: Calaveras Lake, Braunig Lake, and the one down IH37 at Three Rivers named Choke Canyon. Trips become frequent. Two to three times per week is easy if the weather permits.

I explore the lakes and baits for the best locations and smelly catfish lures. The skills improve and the creel is often full of the limit of 25 whisker fish. The cleaning table is the social area where like-minded, slimy hands skin or filet the meaty sides of the channel catfish.

Friendships are made. Information is shared through the internet forum “Texas Fishing” promoting organizing. I was known as the lead “Cally Catman”. Over the next 5 years, the gang of Cally Catmen grew and held an annual spring Saturday morning tourney and fish fry. Lots of deep-fried breaded filets are shared. One-half of the sum of the \$10 entrance fee is awarded to the heaviest 5 fish stringer. Great friends are made, fishing tips are shared, and bonds that last for many years are still there.





## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

Both lakes are southern refuges for white pelicans and cormorants from December through March. Huge groups of these fish-eating fowl seek the warm waters created by the electricity-generating power plants. Seeing these flocks take off in unison is spectacular.

One instance to recall is a lone white pelican near the shore who should not be there. He is struggling to leave. I approach and see that he is caught in a trotline with a hook in his chest and a line wrapped around his bill and feet.

Big birds can put up a fight. I make sure that I have my tools ready.

Knife, pliers, and scissors are close at hand. As I come closer, I grab the trot line and slowly pull the boat toward the panicking bird. When I reach him, he beats me with his wings. I wrap my arm around his wings and body. The leader of the hook has somehow gone through his bill and hooked through his chest skin. I can see the barb coming out the other side. I cut the lead cord, pull it through his bill, and snip it off at the top of the hook.

The bird settles down a little. Taking the barbed end of the hook with pliers, I remove it by reverse-pulling it through the chest skin. Now to cut a line around his feet. That releases him to wing-beat me some more. His bill was free to peck me too. Ducking my face and eyes down from his attacks, I feel the hammering on my cap. The lines are finally loose. Wrapping him up again and holding his bill, I released him away from the trot line. He immediately begins paddling away. Throttling up, I follow him for about 300 yards when he joins his flock and becomes airborne. Quite an adventure.



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



Choke Canyon Reservoir is 60 miles south of San Antonio on the Nueces River. It is the primary water source for Corpus Christi. The lake is abundantly full of submerged trees, alligators, and many species of water birds. It is also a better source for blue catfish, alligator gar, and very hot temperatures in the summer. Although I brought home fewer fish from Choke, I often manage to keep a bunch of blues in the live well and drop them off in Braunig Lake on the way home for propagation.





## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories





## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories





## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*





## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories



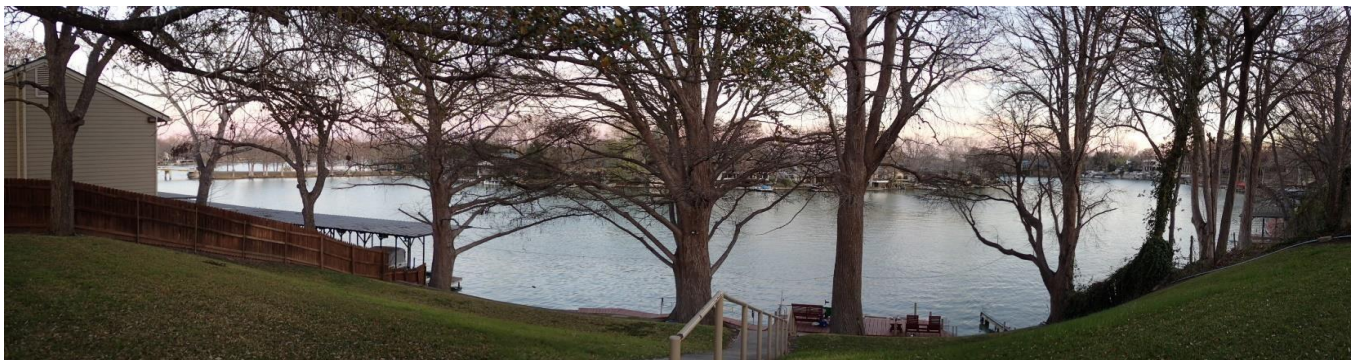
### **Fishing – 3**

2013-2017 Sold the boat after moving to north-central San Antonio. The southside lakes were too far away for day trips. I knew that the Guadalupe River had dams between New Braunfels and Seguin, including Lake McQueeney. I found a VRBO on the lake and talked the owner into a February month-long lease. It was on the high side of the lake and required 37 steps up and down to reach the water. That was a challenge with my new titanium left knee joint. There was a beautiful dock on the water with about 8 ft of water underneath. I immediately set up a fishing structure that would hold rods and prevent a wet misstep.

Part of the dock was slanted and sometimes slick. Pi, our German shepherd, managed to fall in a couple of times and I thought we might lose her. But each time we were able to guide her under the dock with a flashlight to the shallower side of the dock. We stayed at this location “Cypress Breeze” across from Treasure Island Feb – 2013, 4 months Oct 2013-Jan, 2014, and Oct 2015 – Dec 2015. My boys bought me a used pontoon boat and it was perfect for the area. Huge cypress trees lined the waterfront.

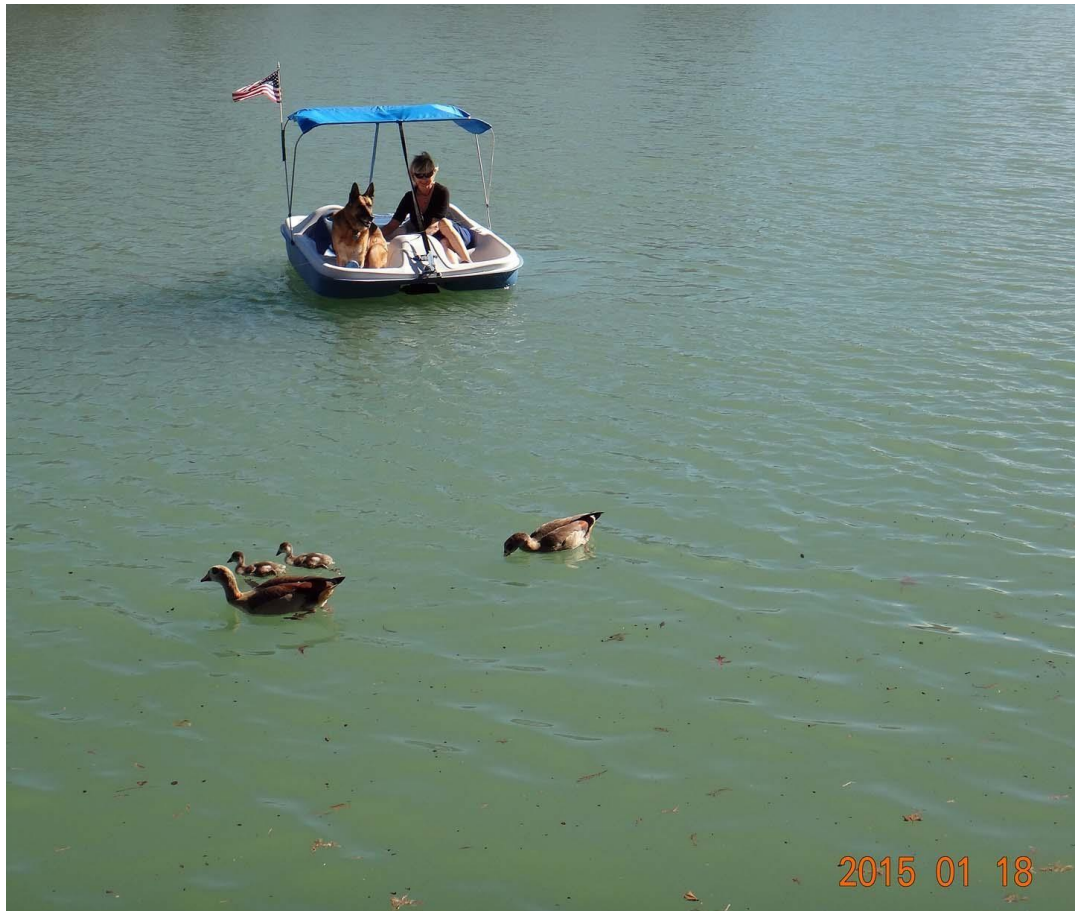
Why only winter months? The lake is a ski haven during the warmer months. It is rather shallow so the wave action and the stirred-up mud is not that interesting for a cat fisherman. Lake McQueeney has an interesting history. Treasure Island has million-dollar homes and has a reputation of being unfriendly to people of color. It has no access for boaters except at the Ski Lodge where one must purchase a membership of \$2K to use the boat ramp. The Lake has flooded many times, soaking some of those Treasure Island homes. All-in-all, with a wonderful landlord, this was a photographer’s delight.

Casting a net for bait shad, trapping bait perch with cages, running remote boat craft, catch-photograph-release, lakeside yoga, hawks mating. There were so many memories of these few months here.





## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*





## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*





## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



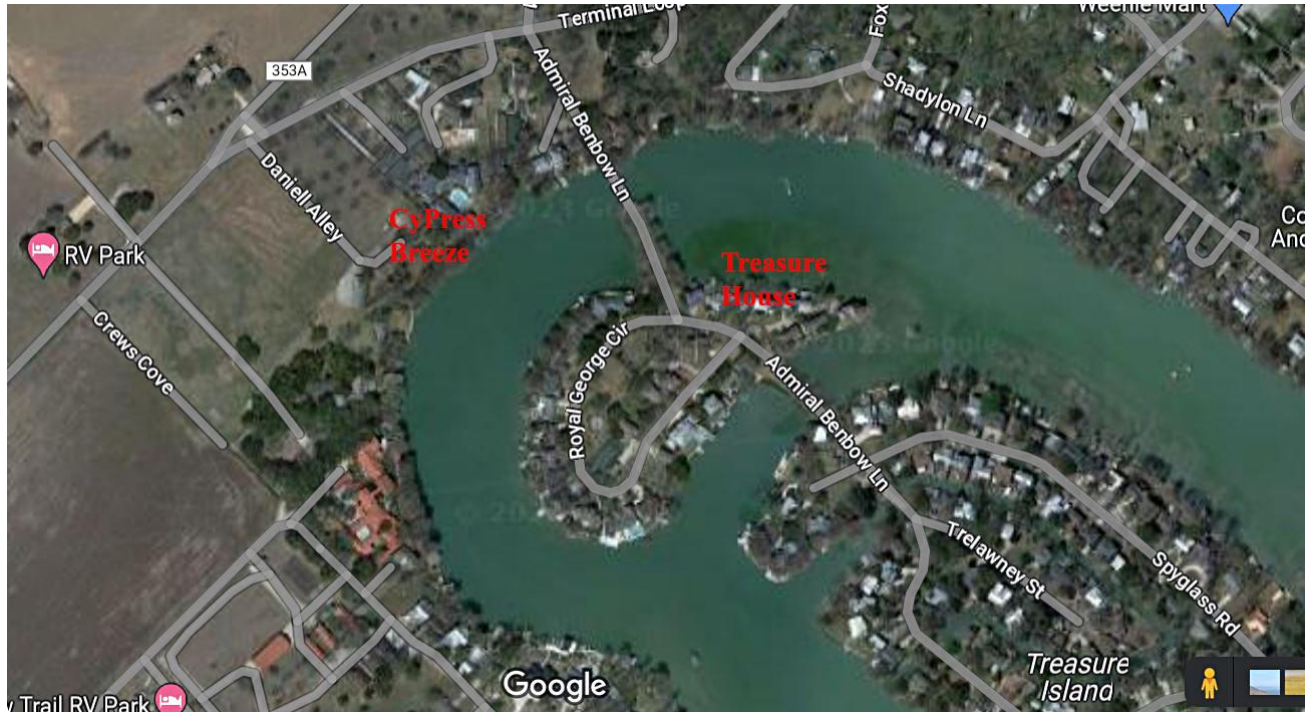


## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



Gizzard Shad bait

## Fishing – 4



2016-2017 We found another Lake McQueeney rental across from Cypress Breeze on Treasure Island. It was available for a longer lease. We negotiated for a 14-month stay. Jan, 2016 – Feb, 2017. This house was at lake level. Three bedrooms, a big screen porch, and no steps to the dock. A very short walk through the screen doors, down the walkway to the dock, and step onto the pontoon boat. Heaven!

The kitchen was modern with the freezer and washing/dryer adjoining. We rearranged the furniture and set it up the way we wanted. Linda immediately went into her high-gear maintenance mode and started refurbishing the vinyl on the big chairs, painting the wood dock chairs, and repainting walls that needed it. During the year, we had the trees trimmed, the refrigerator and washing machine fixed, the bedroom chandelier replaced and did numerous maintenance fix-its on the furniture and property. The owners were always worried we were doing too much to their personal property, but they received a great deal from our efforts.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

The dock had 4 Adirondacks, a round metal table with 4 chairs, and a weathered propane grill. I refurbished the grill, and we had many great meals from Granzine's meat markets on Hwy 90 and in New Braunfels. We loved grilling chicken hindquarters and/or Angus ribeye's doused with garlic salt and onion powder. We raised, caught, cleaned, and cooked channel catfish from the water at our dock.

From 2014 to 2017, we caught and released over 6,000lb of fish. I have the Excel spreadsheets for daily proof. I eventually tired of the bucket list dream and came back home in San Antonio.

One interesting story: During the 1<sup>st</sup> week of our new abode, the boat was tied up to the shallow water dock...fairly tight lines. On Wednesday, we heard via the water waves that the lake was going to be lowered for inspection on Friday. Thursday night, Linda woke me up during the night and said that the lake was lowered and our boat was on the mud. I stumbled out and saw the tight lines putting pressure on the tie-down cleats. Grabbed a knife and sliced the lines to save the boat and dock cleats. Went back to bed. We took some pictures on Friday morning. We understood that the lake will be refilled on Sunday. Around 4 AM on Saturday, Linda woke me up again. She said, "Our boat is gone!." I arose ...put on some shoes, gathered the flashlight, and proceeded out the back to the dock. Indeed, the boat was gone. The lake had been refilled earlier than it should have been.

I felt the direction of the wind (coming from the south) and walked north along the bank. About 100-200 yards north, I found the boat 50 ft offshore, grounded near the egret cypress in shallow water. I brought ample rope. Linda traversed the mud to the boat, returned with the rope end, and tied it to a shore tree so it could not go any further. The water rose more during the day. My first mate waded out to the boat and carefully backed it into deeper water.

Lessons learned: Never depend on the GRBA for timely information and always have a rope tying the boat to land even if there is no water under it.



## **The Last Wedding**

They found each other as lovers and friends later in life.

Both were married long-term to others, both had children to raise.

After six long years, they finally decided to find a way to be together.

Each found the way painful, yet hopeful for future fulfillment.

The divorces finally completed; the date set in early November,

after the required number of waiting days had passed,

The old open-air Pavilion in downtown San Antonio was chosen.

It all started thereby each making the other aware of the entangling interest.

The Justice of the Peace selected, time was set for 5:30 on Saturday.

Invited: his two boys 11 and 9, her two daughters 20 and 16, a few sisters,

his brother, a few close friends and his Best Man Ken.

She wears a white/black dress; He wears a white sweater with black trousers.

At 5:00, he takes the boys to the base of the Tower.

They take pictures with a new cheap camera. He leaves them with Brother.

Back at the Pavilion., the Judge arrives, the check is passed,

the daughters wander off to explore around 20 minutes later.

The time sneaks by 5:30. Judge is ready to start. At 5:35, his phone rings.

Brother says the Park Police have his sons and are bringing them to the wedding.

The police car arrives at the base of the Pavilion.

His boys, decked out in long pants and white shirts, pile out and run up.

Police explained that the youngest had been accosted and the camera taken.

His oldest son chased the robber into the Projects across Durango Avenue.

Into the dangerous neighborhood. A good Samaritan stopped him.

“White boy, you do not belong here”. Son returned. Brother had alerted cops.

The ceremony proceeded with boys present; daughters missed most of it. Afterward, all were invited to the top of the Tower for the reception.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

In the spinning 700 ft high restaurant, everyone ordered what they desired.  
Spumante flowed while each pointing out the landmarks far below.

Saying “Goodnight” to some and most going their separate ways,  
sons stayed with newlyweds in their new house, and several others as well.  
They were so happy, so pleased to have found a path to be together,  
Overjoyed with the presence and blessing of those they loved.

So much effort, so many disappointments, so many forces  
worked against them, so much energy swimming upstream,  
so much time could have been spent differently,  
so many unintended hurts to those they never wanted to suffer.

What level of love, attraction, strong undeniable force  
compelling closeness, could endure and survive it?  
They knew they persevered, and they knew the depth of the commitment.  
Now 30 years after the wedding, they remain in awe of each other.

**Today is**

**November 7, 2022,**

**married since November 7, 1992**



## **Cars**

Circa 1947: Traveling west in Roswell, NM, in the backseat floorboard, I remember hearing parents talking about the alien spacecraft crash nearby. Vaguely curious, but the talk from grownups made it seem unlikely. The car had a split windshield and was dark colored.

Circa 1950: A long new Nash Ambassador arrived in the driveway of Walnut St home. It had four doors, two-tone green paint, six straight cylinder block, and a four-on-the-post gear shift with overdrive. The interior was massive. Front seats could be laid back on supports that were extracted beneath the back seats. A full double bed was created. There were four radio speakers, two in the front and two in the back. The AM radio had a fade knob to spread the sound to both front and back. That was new technology! The transmission would drop into overdrive at each forward gear level. Rev it up in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>, let up on the accelerator and the gears would fall into the next high level. In later years, I tried explaining to the officer that I could do 70mph in 2<sup>nd</sup> gear.

The family drove this upside-down bathtub across Death Valley at night to get to Anaheim in 1954 to visit relatives and Disneyland. We used a 'hang on the window' swamp tube with water to stay cooler inside.

In high school, circa 1960-61, I was given the Nash in exchange for another. The Nash provided a great vehicle for fun trips to the drive-ins. Finally in 1963, after many trips to Las Cruces from Roswell, the pin on the crankshaft broke and I sold it. The next day, the guy who bought it drove it back to me, and told me there was a little screw that allowed the removal of the crankshaft, and he had replaced the pin. Oh Well.

Circa 1959-60: I saved and bought a 1951 Ford 4-door with a straight eight and three-on-the-post transmission. I used it for transportation to work and dating for about a year and a half. For some dumb reason, my friends and I decided it would look cool to drop it in the front. We cut off the front springs about a coil and a half.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

Yes, it was lower in the front, but we had no idea that the tie-rods and steering equipment needed to be adjusted as well. The wheels on the front were 'splayed', narrow at the top and wider at the bottom. It wobbled like crazy and was dangerous to drive. Father was not impressed. He took it away from me, gave me the Nash, and very carefully drove the Ford to Alamogordo to his brother's garage to get rid of it. Glad he made it through the Ruidoso/Mescalero reservation mountains. Lesson learned.

Circa 1963-65: Living in married student housing in WWII barracks and after selling the Nash, I bought a brand new, 1963 VW beetle for \$1,601. It weighed 1,601 lbs. It was great to have a new car. I managed to pay for it with wages received from the three part-time \$1.00 per hour campus jobs. The trips to fish at Caballo Lake Dam on the Rio Grande were inexpensive during the summer of '63. The divorce happened in 1964. The car payments were too much. I traded my equity for a 1954 Chevrolet. That car was hardly driven. I stayed on campus most of the time and started dating my next wife who had a 1954 Ford on campus. The Chevrolet was sold and I hitched rides with J.A., my fiancé.

Circa 1965-66: J.A.'s little brother came to college, and he received the Ford. We married and bought a 1958 two-door BelAir Chevy Impala. What a tank! The first thing to fail was the power steering. I went to the parts yard, stripped off a manual steering box, and replaced the power box. That made it drivable although a little more muscle was needed.

Circa 1967. Tiring of the tank with the heavy steering, I bought another brand new 1967 VW beetle. Wife was not happy because I had not talked to her about it. I thought guys bought cars...not gals.

Circa 1968: After receiving the MA degree, plans were made to move from Las Cruces to some place wetter and to work on a Ph.D. (Austin). I traded in the bug for a VW van. Hitching up a 10 ft trailer, we started out through El Paso, up the Guadalupe pass, and barely made it to Austin before the clutch burned out. The van lasted until about Jan 1969 when it was 'creamed', back and front, at an intersection in NW Austin. Time for another Beetle. Again, the wife was not consulted and was not happy.



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

Circa 1972: A real sports car. 1972 pumpkin-colored, Chevelle SS 2-door hardtop. Good looking car, but the 350 cu-in engine would not stay in tune. We drove it to Washington State and pushed it to 110 mph in Montana. J.A. driving it at night in 1974 from the San Antonio College class where she taught computer system language (JCL), and was hit from behind by a semi on IH 35. She saw an accident ahead and an approaching, jack-knifing semi-trailer behind at the top of the hill. She pulled over quickly and ran down the embankment before the crash. Her only complaint was, "There was no port-a-potty".

After that, a menage of vehicles, some good and some poor, entered my life.

1980 Ford Granada (poor),  
1978 Chevy 2-door pickup with camper (average),  
1982 Audi Fox station wagon {really a VW},  
1957 Chevy 2-door BelAir, (dream car)  
1987 Toyota Tercel (we named the key mobile),  
and then a series of Jeeps (one was t-boned and flipped) and Nissan SUVs.

Now I have an EV... an electric golf cart, and three walkers; one for the front yard, one for the back yard, and one in-house walker to get to the bathroom.

## **To All the Bugs I've Loved Before**

All of us know them. From the tiny to the large ones. We encounter them all the time, even if we do not see them. From flyers to crawlers to diggers, they are all around us, invading our space, our skins, and our fears.

Bugs have six legs, spiders have eight, pedes and pills have many more. Who remembers playing with the dinosaur-age pill bugs ('roly-polies')? Watching them roll up was amazing for young eyes.

Crawlers are often the worst. The ever-present, perennial cockroach is the most prolific invader. The multibillion-dollar industry of sprays, traps, and swatters, are the effects of this six-legged, sometimes flying pest. Other insect crawlers do not spread half the fear. Ants can come close because of their numbers and stings.

As a boy, I always had a magnifying glass close by. In the empty dirt lots in Roswell, the big, flat red ant beds were ever-present. Long lines of large red ants carry bounty back to the nest and encounter the outgoing marching workers, rubbing antennae for communication. These lines offer a prime hunting ground for the magnifying glass.

Focusing the small, white-hot bead of light from the sun through the glass and holding it on an ant for a few seconds, sets the ant's body of formaldehyde on fire. All that I destroyed did not make a dent in the population. The horned toads I placed near the marching lines feasted unabashedly.

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*





## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

Crawlers are tiny to large. Think about chiggers, jiggers (sand fleas), ticks, fleas, earwigs, and bedbugs. I remember covering my legs with sulfur powder when cleaning out the weeds along the fence lines in Comfort TX. I seldom had ticks or fleas but neglecting the chemical covering was chigger misery.

Bigger arachnid crawlers include scorpions, tarantulas, and other spiders. Having encountered the red hourglass lovingly called a widow and the brown recluse spider, I have never suffered their venom. A goal I never dared fulfilling was to hold a hairy monster tarantula.







## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

The most frightening experience of my young life was coming face to face with a vinegarroon while looking under a sofa. There, staring at me, was the most ferocious creature I had ever seen!



It still is not comforting to know that they are harmless.

Another activity of fun with bugs was flying the big colorful June beetles. These creatures loved the figs ripening on the bush. After capturing the beetle munching on a juicy fig, I tied the end of a strong thread to a hind leg and threw it up in the air to fly like a tethered helicopter around in circles.



The green June beetle on a fig leaf.

Photo by J. R. Baker

## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

I managed to avoid scorpion stings until about the age of 35. The water meter cylinder needed cleaning. Without using gloves, I reached and gathered a bunch of leaves and debris. I felt a sharp sting. I saw the small scorpion and wondered if I would survive. Remembering that ice is the first pain reliever, I packed a few cubes on the sting. It took a few minutes for the pain to go away. The thought of finding the stinging, ugly arachnids in bedding, shoes, cups, etc. has imprinted fear in many brains, including mine when I moved to Texas. Searching with a blacklight flashlight for the glowing exoskeleton is a fun hunting game.



Centipedes, millipedes, and silverfish are many-footed creatures we all know. Centipedes can hurt and are very scary looking; millipedes not so. Silverfish in bookshelves can devour volumes.



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



And lastly, how can we miss the flying pests? The wasps, dirt dobbers, bees, gnats, and dastardly disease-carrying mosquitoes that buzz, sting, and bite all around us. We attempt to kill them in all kinds of ways; physically swatting, stamping, beating them to death, or poisoning ourselves with sprays, liquids, and roach tablets. When it comes to what she wants us to endure,

***‘Mutha’ Nature is not our friend.***



*Part 3*

*Poetry  
and  
Thoughts*

## **Chez**

In a small southwestern town, not at all prestigious,  
folks were mostly middle class and sometimes religious.  
There lived an interesting man, a bit of a loner,  
staying in a small room above the diner, downtown on a major corner.

Across from the Court House were numerous stores,  
A five-and-dime, a theater, a barber shop, a newspaper office, and several more.  
Churches were plentiful, all Christian, Anglo, and Hispanic residents.  
Everyone knew their place depending on their sentiments.

Some say the man was a veteran drawing his support from a military pension.  
The work he did was sweeping sidewalks, barely worth a mention.  
He walked straight, with a normal gait, unbowed, taller than most, and slim.  
He spoke quietly, and respectfully, but not to make friends.

He was called Chez, only Chez. No one seemed to know much about him.  
He had been there for years, most ignored him. He did not show much vigor or vim.  
The police greeted him with respect, as one who belongs.  
Vendors welcomed him with kindness, one who does no wrong.

There was a small public park on the Court House grounds.  
Concrete brown-bagging picnic tables, and sitting benches, are better than most towns.  
Several concrete checker/chess tables were lined with opposing seats.  
This park was the town's pride, a refuge to find peace.

Usually, Chez was in the park playing chess and keeping the park clean.  
Sometimes, a small group would gather to watch him play, skills so keen.  
Rapid castling, gambits, lightning checks, and en passants, moving on the fly.  
Sometimes he would lose. One wondered. To preserve the esteem of the other guy?

Children loved to observe his quiet, almost wordless chess insights.  
He helped set the kids' tournaments on Saturday mornings, all reaching for new heights.  
The parents were delighted and praised him for being there. "Super-Chess Chez"  
They could shop without worry and take advantage of his chess daycare.

### *Part 3 - Poetry and Thoughts*

One summer day, sitting, watching the shoppers across from the park.  
Rick and Saul, two young boys, entered the five and dime, an easy mark.  
Eventually, they exited and met at the theater nearby.  
Chez observed them empty their pockets, and share items. Say goodbye.

After observing this behavior on three different days, Chez acted.  
He met the boys at the theater and took ahold of their collars during the transaction.  
The boys were surprised. Chez told them not to run  
Rick and Saul felt the need to flee, but escape chances, there were none.

Chez walked the boys, grasping their collars, and moving back the way they came.  
He quietly told the boys you are going to return the items and feel some shame.  
Entering the store quietly, Chez found the manager. He ran his plan.  
The boys returned the items. Chez asked the manager that for each young man

not to call the police, call the boys' parents, and  
ban the boys from entering the store until they are men.  
The manager agreed. The deal was done. Forgiveness had been earned.  
The pain and embarrassment of being a thief had been learned.

Chez went back to his park. Rick and Saul found their way back to chess.  
Accepted, they played again and stayed close to Chez.  
It does take a village. Who will have the greatest effect?  
With kind intervention, with calm firmness, no lives must be wrecked.

## **The Dangerous Narcissist**

TV shows are full of bobbing heads and talkers  
pessimists and squawkers  
chatterers and detractors  
I am wanting to be savants, but only actors.

Chasing a story too entertaining to ignore  
a brat billionaire spoiled to the core  
a name-calling bully many adore  
a cult leader in this tug-of-war.

A phenomenon we freely created  
politicians castrated  
democracy rotated  
citizens frustrated.

The power of dictatorship growing  
antithetical, mind-blowing  
supporters crowing, unknowing  
freedom forgoing.

This sandbox self-centered rich child seeking adorations  
unearned devotions  
dangerous emotions  
only knowing self-promotion.

Democracy must turn away  
scrap going astray  
take a different roadway  
especially on his birthday.

Take a different path  
Don't look back.



## **A Way to Live**

Sometimes something goes awry. A mistake is made. Some things cannot be undone. Worrying, fretting, something needing repairs which are beyond repair. .

The soul is being controlled by the world of "If Only".  
Often blaming others, "If Only you had not done that." "If Only ...".



Is "If Only" solving the problem? Is it living in the present?  
Does living in the "If Only" world make one happy or solve anything?

There is another way. Learning from mistakes but moving on.  
Shaking it off and looking ahead. Accepting the present and stepping forward.

Introducing "Next Time". A way to correct and grow forward.  
Knowing that growth is full of failures, taking a chance that it will not happen again.

Hope springs eternal and it begins with shunning "If Only".  
Restart by devoting to a lifetime of "Next Times".

## G-L-O-R-I-A

G-L-O-R-I-A-!  Glooor-i-A   
"Hello, Gadberry"

That was our greeting at each Zoom meeting.  
Endearing and respectful. Cheery and delightful.

Her late husband and I taught high school together for 11 years.  
Joe was a compassionate and caring teacher, appreciated by his peers.

Growing to know her was a joy. Elementary education her employ.  
Impeccable word sounds in Spanish. In English, the accent would vanish.

Poetry was her art. She enjoyed humor, did her part.  
Her mind, more than sharp, her desire to learn everything, just a start.

Her perfect sonnet, one part of a successful marriage would make.  
Written with Joe one evening on Woodlawn Lake.

*Do you remember not that long ago  
the lighthouse in the middle of the lake  
the many ducklings swimming to and fro  
their leader a strong, dark, and handsome drake  
a cloudless sky revealed a light blue dome  
the verdant grass that covered as a rug  
was Nature's way of pulling us back home  
where family can share a lot of hugs  
but think of clouds as Wordsworth painted them  
with words instead of oil paints and brush  
describing them as flowers on a stem  
bringing everyone to a verbal hush  
do you remember that long, long embrace  
and all the kisses placed upon your face?*

So, "G-L-O-R-I-A-!, ... til next time we meet, I await to hear "...Hello, Gadberry"

## **Mallows**

soil is warming  
under spring sunlight  
new growth, fresh start

young green leaves  
shooting up where old ones grew  
strength from the past

the first stalk with  
a bud appears wrapped tight  
pink and swelling

eager to show glory  
a bud joined by others  
blazing wide wings

each bud opens up  
into five touching petals  
only for one day

displays huge like plates  
and as small as coins  
pollens everywhere

perennial blooms  
are hibiscus every year  
grandest anywhere



## A Christmas Photo



### *A Christmas celebration of family*

*Visiting children near Christmas Day,  
staring at this photograph, I am taken away.  
Feeling the parent's embraces, the looks on their faces,  
the cuddling of the young ones, knowing safety in their places,  
The image capturing the strong bond they are sharing.  
showing the growing garden, the nourishing of constant caring.  
Mothers eyes flooding the daughter with adoration.  
Father's arms holding all in formation.  
Each young one looking for what is to come.  
Each parent grateful for what they have done.  
For all the efforts and tribulations in raising these two,  
the love they are creating will carry them through.*



## **He Has my Back**

As one ages, it becomes more difficult to have the strength to change places. One worries that when new people move in close, they will bring problems.

As the house next door sold, I wondered who the new tenants would be. Watching daily, I finally see a heavily bearded thin man standing in front.

Not very young, not very old, somewhat medium, not particularly bold. I greeted him from my driveway and he approached right away.

Introductions made, and we proceeded to have a brief talk about his moving plans. I felt comfortable that we have an owner family and not flipper renters.

As time progressed, the move was made, and he came over to talk. Sitting comfortably in my driveway, I assumed a dominant role.

Knowing the neighborhood and history, I explained to him about my needs. He listened quietly, not interrupting, understanding my expressed need for privacy.

I had heard that they moved to be near their Church.

The only way I would ever move for religion would be to get away from it.

I told him of my aversion, fighting the force-feeding of the Calvinists. I told him I could never accept the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth.

He sat quietly, listening to unsolicited blabber from a stranger.

I finally realized that everything being said was about me, by me.

I finally slowed down. I felt selfish for not asking him about him.

He made a simple statement that he cannot imagine living without his Faith.

What amazed me was that there was no selling his belief, no preaching. Over time, it dawned on me that he simply accepted me for who am I.

This kind Jesus-looking man simply wanted my friendship, to help me with chores. To offer his shoulder to use as a prop and to help my teetering balance.

Seldom in life will one find another like him. Quiet, kind, accepting, unconditional love. He genuinely walks the walk of the One he believes in. It is a powerful way to live.

## **My Zoo Friend**



It was springtime, a few years ago.

My big double-up lensed camera loaded.

I sidled close to the big bird pen, looked down,  
and this dude took a curious liking to me.

He held the stare for quite some time.

His head tilted every once in a while.

No sound was made, no wings flapped.

I dared not flinch, the pose was frozen.

Click, Click, Click! It was captured.

The image was perfect. It still is.

We were mesmerized by each other.

I wonder if he knew what I saw.

## **Veto**

Texas government is full of strange bedfellows.

The Executive branch blusters, overshadows,  
and expects the House to perform kowtows.

The race to be more conservative is always needed,  
even to the degree of making reason impeded.

The governor's use of the veto has become quite heated.

Veto and signings, blocking and agreeing,  
denying mail-in ballots to the un-seeing  
no local rules for outside workers for water or peeing.

Cutting off funding for the legislative bunch  
because they walked out and went to lunch.

Veto extortion seems to be the rabbit punch.

Infighting has begun with the dictators clashing.

Lt Guv and Guv, their words bashing.

An interesting summer, simply smashing.

## **I am Viktor**



I am Viktor.

My message is divine.

The world is becoming evil.

If we do not align.

Under siege by progressives,  
we must fight back.

Illegal non-white immigrants, same-sex unions,  
American Democrats. Give them no slack!

My country is the Lone Star State in Europe.

I am an old-fashioned freedom fighter.

The corporate industrial news is fake.

Under Christ, we must make our bond tight.

The family is under attack!

Children must be protected from gender ideology.

A woman is the mother, and a man is the father.

Leave our kids along with your twisted biology.



The global ruling class has no future.

But I have a future in store.

All who doubt me can go to hell.

Texas and Trump have warmly given me an open door.

Thank you to CPAC

for the support and standing ovations.

Salutations to my Christian Nationalist comrades,  
and friends of dominionist nations.

I love my true believers in the US Congress,  
Boepert, Cruz, Jordan, Rick Scott, MT. Greene,  
Biggs, Ronnie Jackson, Gaetz and many others,  
whether they are fakes or genuine, or just wannabee seen.



## **Klaus Stortebeker 1360 – 1401**

A giant of a pirate helping the Swedes fight off the Danes,  
working with the Victual Brothers, stealing ships, and avoiding the chains.  
A band of Robin Hoods, pirates with a heart,  
stealing from the rich, giving to the poor a la carte.

Such a leader Klaus became, what a male!  
sometimes single gulping a container of 4 liters of ale.  
His band set up a stronghold; Too strong to be defeated,  
but he and his 73 buddy pirates were captured; someone cheated.

In Hamburg, tried and convicted, after offering bribes,  
the outcome was dire and contained deadly vibes.  
All were to be executed, beheaded, for sure.  
for that punishment, there is no cure.

Klaus, always the brave one, offers himself headfirst.  
Take me but spare my comrades that I walk past after I am dispersed.  
The judge agrees and Klaus' head is dispatched.  
Rising up and walking along the line of his men with head not attached.

Passing one, two, three, they shouted with glee,  
Four, Five, Six, they were happy to agree.  
Seven, Eight, Nine, Looking fine,  
Ten, Eleven, Twelve men passed; a good sign.

Setting out for another, the executioner tripped the headless Klaus.  
He stayed down succumbing in the courthouse.  
The Court reneged and beheaded all 73 of his pirates.  
Klaus has a statue in Hamburg probably surrounded by their spirits.

Later archives claim that he lived, paying taxes in 1418.  
Alas, who knows from what truths myths can glean?

## **Tick, Tick, Tick**

When does the ticking begin? At conception? At the first beat of the heart?  
At birth? At the first cry?

Regardless, the clock is there, right from the start.

Time is blessed, Time is cruel. It keeps ticking; deducting for being lazy,  
marking moments of growth, deceiving about the amount left.

Posing the most confounding question, driving us crazy.

We rationalize. Our highly developed cerebrum requires a solution.  
We gather into spiritual groups; Supporting others for what has never been seen.

Searching, searching for a believable resolution.

Growth slows. Parts wear out. Tasks are harder. Illnesses increase.  
We know the clock will stop; we wonder but never know how, or when.

At the end, the last tick, will everything we are cease?

Slowly, losing former abilities. Dancing. Piano playing. Making love,  
The losses depress the will to live. Is there a choice when to stop the clock?

Is it immoral, unkind, hurtful, and blasphemous to give the ticking clock a shove?

Where is the choice? Who winds the clock? Tick one, tick two, tick three.  
Why is it not me? Who has the most invested? I should choose when it ends

Sedated, pain-free, sleeping deeply. This is what it should be.

### *Part 3 - Poetry and Thoughts*

Who can help with the passage? Doctors say no. The Oath! Who else knows how?  
Maybe self-induced? Not ideal. Might be painful. Not a fetching thought.

Kind vets euthanize pets. They know the way we want as well. Why not thou?

At the last, some desperately accept faith, never seeing the facts.  
Is it reassuring, that lives are but a lease on borrowed time? A finite number of ticks.

Then, the soul disperses. Where? Physical decay, falling through the cracks.

The clock is about to stop. Best probable hope. We realize who shared this expedition.  
Those who miss us. Those we love. Hoping, remembering, our very best ticks.

Still puzzled, we depart, ending our voyage of growth and attrition.



## **Tribes**

Why do we tribe?

Is that a lower-level activity and term to which we subscribe?

As homo sapiens, should we not raise our designation to describe  
our collectiveness, our togetherness our groups in which we imbibe?

Our higher cerebration

compels us to seek a more respectful station.

After all, the differences between us and a dalmatian  
must be a thousand times more than a mutation.

Some tribes try to find answers to the unknown.

Some tribes for protection, affection, and not being alone.

Some tribes for self-import and to be well-known.

Some tribes for sustenance and safety of being near your own.

“Birds of a feather” we have all heard before.

divisions occur, splits cause an uproar.

Tribal wars make us act like dinosaurs.

Ownership of territories pit tribes on tribes, forevermore.

Do we have to be tribal? Is there another way?

Probably not. There are so many of us today.

Even if one tries to be on a different walkway

You will end up ‘tribing’ anyway.

## **The Mighty Nash Ambassador**

The upside-down bathtub on the driveway itches to rev its six straight inline pistons.  
The accommodating hole welcomes the key and awaits the clockwise turn with anticipation.

The family steed basks every day in the weather, forest green on top,  
light green on the bottom. Seats fold down to a double bed,  
a radio knob turns speaker sounds front to rear.

A three-speed transmission with overdrive, column mounted, contains so many  
ways to choose the motion.

Rev it up in second gear, let off the foot feet, it drops into a higher gear  
and can surpass seventy.

The boat beckons, urge builds, key turns, left foot squashes the clutch, right  
taps the gas pedal. Gasoline squirts into the carburetor,

Six cylinders roar alive, first gear stands ready,  
clutch pops, engages!

Wheels propel forward, no rubber squeals, no tires spin, no fishtail slides,  
only moves are those toward places safely known

A disappointed teen, testosterone *interruptus*,  
a fantasy for a moment,

*but, drive-in movies are fun.*



## **Nuremberg**

A Bavarian culture, long before the Fuhrer,  
produced a brilliant artist named Albrecht Durer.

He was an original, not afraid of taking other turns,  
sometimes choosing art in Italian terms.

He probably enjoyed the thin, tiny bratwurst,  
nine centimeters or less, tendon-less pork, bacon. That works!

Flavored with marjoram, wrapped in sheepskin,  
three brats with kraut, mustard, and two slices of bread to keep it in.

He might have chased the taste with a Lebkuchen made with ginger and honey,  
or sated his sweet tooth with a molasses gingerbread yummy.

He did not visit the Christmas celebration in the town square.  
He did not know of the Christ Girl with her flowing dress, sleeves, and long hair.

What would he think of the horrors told at the 1946 trials?  
The inhumanity of man upon man, dead souls which stretched for miles.

Fame sometimes gives light to those who are evil.  
Often, we forget the heroes from times medieval.

Hermann Göring, Wilhelm Keitel, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, et.al,  
None of them can compare to Albrecht Durer; none of them can stand so tall.



## **Marathon**

Think, wonder, consider  
decide, plan, internalize.

Prepare, diet, strengthen  
set the goal, see the vision

Hit the track, measure the strides  
lengthen the time, run harder

Sprint further, endure soreness  
time the miles, increase the endurance

Start the race, maintain the pace  
concentrate on mission, ignore competition

Check on plan, look forward  
know the hill, go up...up...up

Look to finish, gauge remaining  
run, race, sprint

Muscles burn, exhaust lungs  
hurt, bend, catch breath

Realize goal, finish in glory, slap backs  
hug, walk it off, cool, rejoice

## **The Barrier Island**

A beautiful day. Light breeze. Low swells roll up.  
Light white tops. Beached waves creep up. Depositing life.  
Salty water slipping back. Little shellfish burrowing in the wet sand.  
Sand crabs scurrying to their holes. Gulf water is quite warm.

Gulls fishing. Schools of bait running the cuts. Pelicans diving.  
Kids sand castling. Saucers and balls flying.  
Adults on towels. Sleeping, reading, dreaming.  
Sun starts down. Time to go. Breeze is picking up. Could be a blow.

Back to the beach house standing tall in the middle of the island.  
Gulf on the South. Big Bay on the North.  
Everyone follows the path. Straight to the concrete stilts.  
Bottom level for storage. Up the stairs. The big living room.

Bunkrooms on the corners. Kitchen on the north wall.  
Viewing windows on the South. Large wraparound porch.  
Parts of porch are screened. 'Derned' mosquitoes.  
Might blow. Put up the storm windows. Get ready to hunker down.

Bed by 10. Blowing harder. Electricity fails at 11.  
Look out South. Surf is approaching the house.  
Everybody awake. Midnight. Water creeping up stilts. Flooding stairs. Open attic  
ladder. Kids up first. Take a flashlight.

The water reaches the big room. Crashing waves hit the South wall.  
Everybody up. Attic too small. Wind and waves a constant roar.  
Suddenly, eerie quiet. Wind and waves subside. Clouds disperse.  
Lightning storms surround. 2, 3, 5, 10 minutes. Is it safe?

### *Part 3 - Poetry and Thoughts*

Then it hits. Big Bay is filled with water. Blown in from the South.  
The eye passes. North wind now pushing bay water back to the Gulf.  
The wall of water crashes into the North side. Overtops the roof.  
House disintegrates. Washes out over the beach. A demolished raft.

Storm passes. The house is gone. No survivors. Drowned bodies were found.  
Barrier island is clean once more.

The Gulf waters are a bit cooler.

Stilts remain.

Pelicans diving.

Gulls scavenging.

Dunes rebuilding.

Storm soon forgotten.

New beach dreamers arrive.

Plant taller stilts!

## **This Too Shall Pass**

For all the tribulations, challenges, and joys of teaching youngsters,  
often pacing with the slower learners,

putting up with the interrupters,

one element of time silently grows upon us; slips in as if being cast,  
when we realize that these will soon leave us, grow, and move on.

“This too shall pass”.

Year after year, it becomes part of our expectation;  
A hope that next year’s class will be better; this year’s class,

“Please leave at vacation!”

Insidiously, a teacher’s life adapts to the constant, temporal engagements;  
here today, gone tomorrow,

always more replacements.

This can tend to change commitments as something not to count on,  
Traditional commitments, marriage, family friendships under stress,

better gone?

Easier to leave, easy to replace? A teacher’s way of life is scheduled to embrace.  
What happens when the job ends, constantly changing relationships,

trying to keep pace?

Will we find what we need? Will the peace and quiet suffice?  
Will we be happy if lonely? What will this stigma change?

What is the price?

What is the loss?



## **Sumo, the Gentle Giant**

"I want a big dog!"

"I want the big jowls and slobbery lips."

"One which will roll over and let me scratch his belly."

"Do you know how big his piles will be?"

"Will you pick them up before they are stepped on?"

"Can you afford all those big meals?"

"Listen carefully"

"He needs special care."

"His legs will not support his weight for at least a year."

Alas, we found Sumo, an English blond Mastiff.

All fourteen pounds of him at eight weeks old.

He had many siblings, sort of a breeding ranch setting.

We brought him home, all \$1200 of him.

Immediately we had to protect his bod from Pi, our shepherd.

First thing inside, he dumped on the floor.

He was timid.

Strange for such a big guy.

One shake of a finger, he would cringe and hide.

He knew when he was being loved

He relished it.

Rolling on the grass, eating the watermelon rinds and beef knuckles.

Should one ever want a 210-pound giant like this?

Realize the possible frequencies and odors of flatulating he brings.

All joys come with a price!

## **Once my Place**

The light from a dying sun is foggy; the low light never changes.

The air is clean to the lungs. There are blinking stars at all hours.

Never is day different from night even for the young

Sleep is necessary for re-energizing; It must be artificially timed.

No trees, no bushes, no grass.

All-terrain underfoot is made of spongy small balls filled with gas.

Water runs clean from sources unseen.

Cities and villages contain habitats for families.

Living spaces consist of opaque walls, a separation of function.

All roofs and ceilings are transparent to let in available light.

Sleeping spaces are very small; No home electricity at all.

The food room is for eating and storage; Filled with covered bins, chairs, and a table.

Inside the bins are color-coded, various-shaped food dispensers.

Tubes contain liquid-based nutrients; Elliptical containers are full of cereal-like porridge.

The colors of the containers tell the flavors. My favorite was the blue tube.

All meals have been produced in laboratories during the past century.

There is not enough sunlight to grow what is needed.

Energy is easily saved; Movement is effortless. Gravity is very light.

It is easy to kick and throw objects out of sight

Life reluctantly adjusts to environmental challenges.

Unknowingly, deceptively giving up what was.

Using energy in “making do” without the will or unity to combat the changes.

Too late! ... and desperation prevails.

### *Part 3 – Poetry and Thoughts*

Plans are made to leave.

We must find another world.

We must survive.

Families are chosen.

Flights are scheduled.

We are put on first.

We want to stay alive!

In the *New Place, Somewhere Out in Space.*

Excitement, hope, adventure we face.

Distant suns in sight, unfurled.

Straight up into faraway worlds.

leaving *Once my Place*

### *Part 3 – Poetry and Thoughts*

Mikey

A son I did not father. Bonded in the same way. Sometimes more.

Always there for the other. Never competing and meeting the other's needs.

Proximity was seldom close these last few years. But it was not needed.

We came from different worlds. Education, economic, social circles.

Something fused us together. Something natural. Meant to be.

Your life was full of strife, your needs often deep.

Depression would hit you hard. I could tell when it happened.

We would meet and just sit. You wanted to explain but could not.

I would beam my strength into you with silence and understanding.

Now as we meet. I am here, you are somewhere else.

So awkward. I should have left first. You cannot let me help you now.

I guess I knew this day would come, but it is so hard to process.

I need to say these words. Life is a sequence of if-onlys and next-times.

if-only's are the setbacks, mistakes hurts caused, and failures one wants to correct.

Dwelling on those, regretting too long, absorbing energy and taking one down.

Forgiving the if-only's and embracing the next times are the key to happiness.

I have tried to practice this. Today, now, it is impossible.

I have forever lost the chance to tell you.... "next time".

## *The Quest*

*Nod was hatched in a nest in the Land of Evol.*

*He grew up unscratched and raised by caring parents.*

*He became a fine young swallow and sought a mate.*

*His way was to follow, taught to raise families, be quiet, and fly straight.*

*His home was near the beautiful mountain of Adnıl.*

*The continuous sight beckoned relentlessly*

*With promises of youth, new love, and dreams unrequited.*

*Was he seeking the truth? Was he being invited?*

*Alas, for years, he was too far away to fly to the image.*

*But one day, the mysticism of the mountain was too strong.*

*Risk it all? Leave the safety of the family? Wing away on his own?*

*Does he have the strength for the flight? What will he be alone?*

*Nod flew straight at the mountain. He felt strong.*

*He flew at a fast rate, sure and true.*

*Crash! Nod fell to the ground, bruised and disheveled.*

*What happened? He leveled, looked up, and saw Adnıl still beckoning him.*



### *Part 3 - Poetry and Thoughts*

*He took off again and flew again directly at the mountain image.*

*Nod knew he was flying at it correctly.*

*Crash! Again. Time after time, he tried to reach the mountain.*

*Time after time, he hit the barrier and fell, exhausted,  
disheartened.*

*Little did he know, the image he was pursuing was a reflection.*

*The sight he saw was a section, a projection from a picture  
window.*

*Nod returned tired and spent.*

*His quest never completed; he came home defeated.*

*As he quietly lived and passed away, Nod knew deep in his heart  
That he had tried his best; Better to have lost than not tried at all.  
Forever apart, until the end, the thought of that thrill.*

*Nod always held hope for reaching Adnil.*



## **Warm Places**

Where should we go?

Canada was too cold.

Vegas? Reno again?

NOLA? Love the music. Love the food.

Time for a change?

Mexico? What part?

West coast? Prone to crime and colder Pacific water.

Maybe the Yucatan?

So touristy, almost cosmopolitan.

Alas, to the internet.

Search for warm waters.

Atlantic? Caribbean?

Bahamas? Puerto Rico? Virgin Islands?

Any others?

What's this one?

Saint Martin, Sint Maarten

Eastern edge of the Caribbean

Western edge of the Atlantic

Half Dutch, half French

Thirty-seven beaches.

Let's find a place to stay.

Looks like many available on the Dutch side.

CupeCoy Beach looks interesting.

Ocean Club looks like the place.

An efficiency for one week.

pool, cantina, beachfront

Perfect!

### *Part 3 - Poetry and Thoughts*

Early summer

Fewer tourists from the north.

Flights confirmed, early June, all in a day

Nighttime arrival. Only one road circling the island.

Go west through Mullet Bay.

Stop at the one-armed gate.

The guard brings an envelope with a key.

Small unit, lower floor, kitchenette, air-conditioner, restroom, shower.

Open the large patio door, see the light reflecting on pool, hear the music.

Quickly, put on fresh clothes

Smell better

Walk the small path through the waving banana leaves

Walk up the steps to the open air cantina and bar

A few tourists and regulars are laughing and greet us warmly.

Drinks all around, rum abounds

Music on demand

Dancing, meet people from everywhere

We are at the right place.

Planning anxiously to see the Cupecoy beach below in the morning  
and for the scheduled boat ride to circle the Island.

Laughingly inebriated, leave, fall into the pool

Clothes and all

Drip to the room

Strip, dry, and collapse onto the king-sized bed

A fabulous ending of a long airplane day.

So much to do, drive the island in our rented Toyota

Thirty-seven beaches, some clothing optional, so little time.

# *Part 3 - Poetry and Thoughts*

<http://donlinda.net>

2003 – 2016

13 trips



## **The Aviary Sounds**

The quiet prelude

early morning, each step, more sounds  
an owl *hoots*, duck *quacks*  
wing rustling, taking flight

Woodpecker *thumping, tapping*

rooster *doodle do's* while hens *clucking*  
blackbelly ducks *whistling* from the trees  
starlings *grackling*

A cardinal chirps *birdie-birdie*

hawk is hunting, dips and *shreaks*  
mockingbird singing whatever it hears  
dove pairs *cooing, calling*

Crows and ravens *cawing*

turkey *gobbles*, fluffs the feathers  
overhead V's of geese *honking*  
tiny chickadee staccatos its *dee-dee*

Titmouse calls *peter-peter*

robins in spring with their *cheer-e-up*  
goldfinch beckons with many *tee-hee's*  
Wrens tweet at least in threes

Listening to the life noises

friends with feathers  
joyful, embracing  
*hushing, quietening*, all the others



**What does it see?**

look in it    look at it    does it look back?    what does it see?  
is there something behind it?    what?    reflect?    is that really me?  
do I look like that?    surely not    too big    unkempt    wrinkles everywhere  
in big windows    create a show    one we know    please, put it not    on air  
lives are defined    a second at a time    without control    the silver backed devil  
showing the unwanted    seeing doubles    revealing disheveled  
the clicking age clock    no reverse    always portraying    getting clearer  
now the end    whoever decides    please do not bury me    anywhere near...  
a damn mirror

## I don't 'Get' it!

Indicative		
<u>present</u> ⓘ	<u>simple past</u> ⓘ	<u>future</u>
I get	got	will get
you get	got	will get
he, she, it gets	got	will get
we get	got	will get
you get	got	will get
they get	got	will get

*indicative form above, the verb is somewhat excusable,  
although the past tense requires tolerating the guttural.*

Perfect tenses ⓘ		
<u>present perfect</u>	<u>past perfect</u> ⓘ	<u>future perfect</u>
I have gotten	had gotten	will have gotten
you have gotten	had gotten	will have gotten
he, she, it has gotten	had gotten	will have gotten
we have gotten	had gotten	will have gotten
you have gotten	had gotten	will have gotten
they have gotten	had gotten	will have gotten

*This tense is far from being 'perfect-ed'  
when 'gotten' trods on the choices preferred to be selected.*

Continuous (progressive) and emphatic tenses			
<u>present continuous</u>	<u>past continuous</u>	<u>present emphatic</u>	<u>past emphatic</u>
I am getting	was getting	do get	did get
you are getting	were getting	do get	did get
he, she, it is getting	was getting	does get	did get
we are getting	were getting	do get	did get
you are getting	were getting	do get	did get
they are getting	were getting	do get	did get

*The tense above avoids the less offensive utterances  
by using the forms of 'get' and 'getting' occurrences.*

## Part 3 - Poetry and Thoughts

### Compound continuous (progressive) tenses

<u>present perfect</u>	<u>past perfect</u>	<u>future</u>	<u>future perfect</u>
I have been <b>get</b> ting	had been <b>get</b> ting	will be <b>get</b> ting	will have been <b>get</b> ting
you have been <b>get</b> ting	had been <b>get</b> ting	will be <b>get</b> ting	will have been <b>get</b> ting
he, she, it has been <b>get</b> ting	had been <b>get</b> ting	will be <b>get</b> ting	will have been <b>get</b> ting
we have been <b>get</b> ting	had been <b>get</b> ting	will be <b>get</b> ting	will have been <b>get</b> ting
you have been <b>get</b> ting	had been <b>get</b> ting	will be <b>get</b> ting	will have been <b>get</b> ting
they have been <b>get</b> ting	had been <b>get</b> ting	will be <b>get</b> ting	will have been <b>get</b> ting

*Why justify with 'be' and 'been'?*

*'have' or 'had' alone is not a mortal sin.*

*Other words can suffice.*

*'Receiving', 'acquiring', 'obtaining' would be nice.*

### Conditional ⓘ

<u>present</u>	<u>perfect</u> ⓘ	<u>present continuous</u>	<u>perfect continuous</u>
I would get	would have <b>gotten</b>	would be <b>get</b> ting	would have been <b>get</b> ting
you would get	would have <b>gotten</b>	would be <b>get</b> ting	would have been <b>get</b> ting
he, she, it would get	would have <b>gotten</b>	would be <b>get</b> ting	would have been <b>get</b> ting
we would get	would have <b>gotten</b>	would be <b>get</b> ting	would have been <b>get</b> ting
you would get	would have <b>gotten</b>	would be <b>get</b> ting	would have been <b>get</b> ting
they would get	would have <b>gotten</b>	would be <b>get</b> ting	would have been <b>get</b> ting

*This the worst tense delivers pain!*

*Like what fingernails on the slate does to the brain.*

*'would have' alone would do.*

*Drop the 'gotten' and be through.*

**I would've gotten  
you would've gotten, etc**

*Imperfect with contractions*

And even worse

**I would've not gotten  
you would've not gotten, etc**

imperfect with negatives and contractions

*Most tenses can be polluted with negatives plus contractions.*

*'I hadn't gotten' sounds like such a melodious action.*

*Got and gotten has gotten our sounds in the gutter.*

*Help save our language!!! We have better ways to mutter.*

## **Scene on the River Pier**

Dog days, warm nights, sitting on the pier's edge  
light on water, slightly moving, drifting  
Reveals the life cycle over, over.  
Hunted, hunters, under, above, floating.

Turtles, sunfish, and catfish, very hungry.  
White moths flying toward the warmth of light,  
dropping on the surface for the hunter  
waiting, underwater for a fresh meal.

With the newly added daughter-in-law,  
we are spying on the feeding cycle,  
Right at our feet, so quiet, so real.

Feelings of this shared closeness between  
us and the pier will be with me always.  
Life should always consist of times like this.





## **PHI $\phi$**

FEE

PHI

FO, FUM (2)

Ratios (3)

Each and every one (5)

Next divided by previous (8)

approach the limitless irrational quantity (13)

of PHI or  $\sim 1.618033988749891 \dots$  (21)

Such a unique number in nature, spirals, botany, art, approaching the golden ratio, take the reciprocal, it subtracts 1. (34)

## **3020**

*There once was a house in Morning Glen  
which was always vacant, not like 'now and again'.  
Fifteen years at least, with trash that reeked in a spoiled bin  
and rats ran wild as if in their playpen.*

*The holes in the roof went unrepaired,  
visions of stars were unimpaired.  
All efforts of fixing were spared.  
Enter at your risk if you dared.*

*For years, the neighbors tried,  
pursued the owner to abide.  
C'mon City, County, condemn the place, sell it. Look inside!  
For years, all but one put the problem aside.*

*This neighbor would not let things be.  
She harassed everyone relentlessly.  
Finally, because sense of neighborhood pride,  
she discovered an angel with vision who bought it wide-eyed.*

*The angel stripped it clean.  
New roof, ceilings, floors, walls, windows, and beams  
Modernized it with an eye for keen and pristine.*

**Thank you, Mela!!!!  
Our 3020 Queen.**

## **My Representative**

The closest elected representative to me, local, community  
The one I call for compliance, for traffic, for change and opportunities.

Always seems to be a straight-shooting son-of-a-gun  
Always voting no, anything progressive is something to shun.

Always supporting the ones with weapons, the ones in blue  
Always backing law and order, lock 'em up! If we only knew

On a dark Sunday evening, after having "a really good time"  
Inebriated beyond belief, swerving drunkenly committing his own crime.

Drifting into a food drive-thru lane, offering his wallet and keys(?)  
Asking for the manager, then fleeing in a breeze

Making a wide right turn, crashing hood to hood with a stopped car  
He drives away, swerving, "What stop sign", pulls in his driveway, door ajar

Car still running against dented garage, back hatch opens, things thrown out  
Stumbles around back, falls, cut on head, smells of alcohol without a doubt.

Witness follows, alerts police, policeman arrives and finds the soused lout.  
Representative denies driving, "Don't remember my route"

Uses six credit cards trying to open patio door. Officer not impressed.  
He denies medical service yet spends a day in hospital. No alcohol test?

Arrest warrant issued for misdemeanor crime. Turns himself in. \$1000 bond.  
Refuses to resign. Thinks it will go away. Everyone waiting for him to respond!"

DWI warrant coming. City Council to vote to censure, demand him to quit.  
Recall petition is growing. "Out! Out! Out!" "Now!" "Git!" Lickety-split.

Trust is gone.

Election in May.

Appoint another!

Don't waste a day

## **Did I Really Leave?**

Are you sure?

I see you. I am not obscure.

I am all around you. I surround you.

I am here. You feel me too.

As time passes, you will remember

All the times from January to December

The things I touched, the things I said,

You know that I am with you as you move ahead.

So, seek out new ones, spread your love,

Your blessed gift comes from above.

Your gift that captures everyone.

Your gift and strength cannot be undone.

As you move forward, know that I am present.

It is ok to remember me. That should be pleasant.

My love can never leave you. It will never be less.

Your love must grow. It must continue to bless.

## **The State of Now**

Drawn, pulled, sucked in, trapped in a bubble

Duped, persuaded, willfully surrounded by echoes

Downward forces guide thoughts and opinions

Generalizations grow, abounded, mostly unfounded

Gyrations twisting truth beyond reality

Gestating fake facts to absurdity

Social media hiding faces, posting comments

Snide remarks, bullying, name-calling

Snarky shaming hiding the cowards

Two or more tribes are created, each deeply divided

True to the cause, each demonizes all the others

Tis' easy to see why many are disgusted. Why bother?

What can be done to unpolarize this wound?

Will it continue unabated by those who know better?

When does this plague end?

Reconcile, Recover, or stay divided and tolerate?

Recognize differences that hopefully change?

Respect others until opinions rearrange?



## **Privacy, Privacy, wherefore art though?**

All around us

CCTV

ADT

Cameras in every tree

Snooping

Recording

Hiding

Invading

From satellites far above

drones buzzing nearby

doorbells glaring in your face

Where is the grace?

Images lasting

being shared

without permission

without a care

Does privacy still exist?

should it?

are we less without it?

is having it a right?

“If you ain’t guilty,

what are you trying to hide?”

There oughta be a law

to have as much privacy as my Pa

## **Visions**

Surely, we all have them.

It takes a while to bring them forward.

small bits of subconscious memories,

pictures of places you have been,

hanging around in the cellars of your mind.

Can you stop occasionally?

when your conscious brain takes a breath?

Can you capture these visions from your past?

Can you bring them forward,

one at a time?

These jewels might be pictures, images,

of where you were in your young lives.

Perhaps they are of a backyard,

a side yard, a fence in the alleyway

you used to jump to get home.

A place forever stamped in your mind.

Look for these hidden thoughts and memories.

Realize them for what they are

Bring them forward, label them,

and look for more.