

*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.

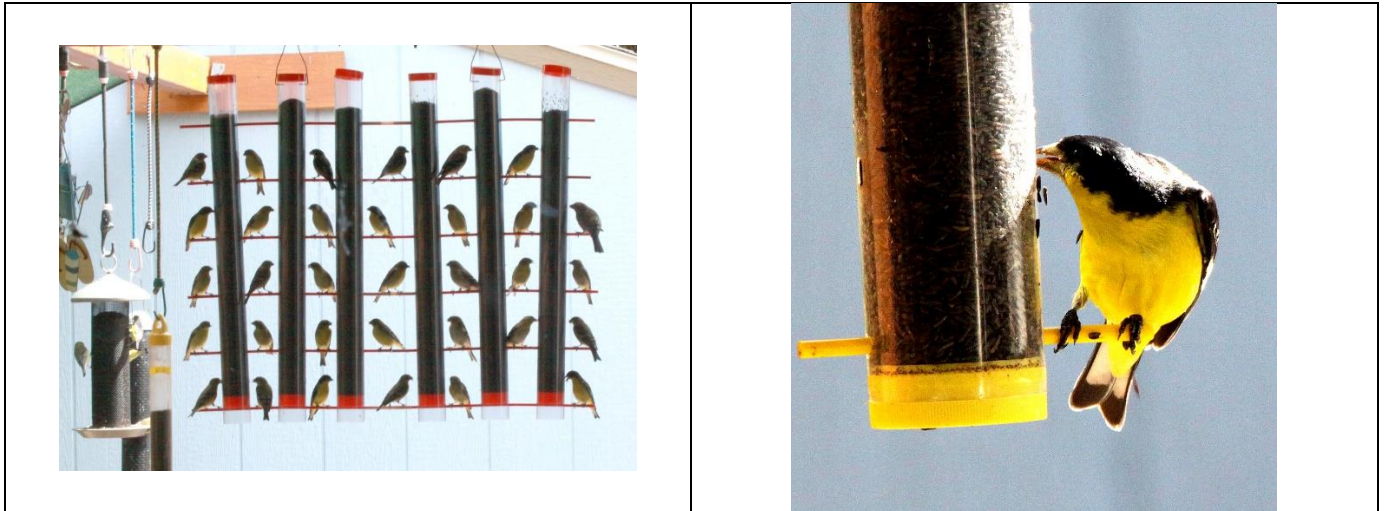
The flight patterns, the songs, the seasonal migrations, the behaviors, the food preferences, and interactions between bird species became a late-life-long study. After moving to our new home in 2009, the birds were fed well. Living on a green belt, I had plenty of opportunities to set up the breeding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



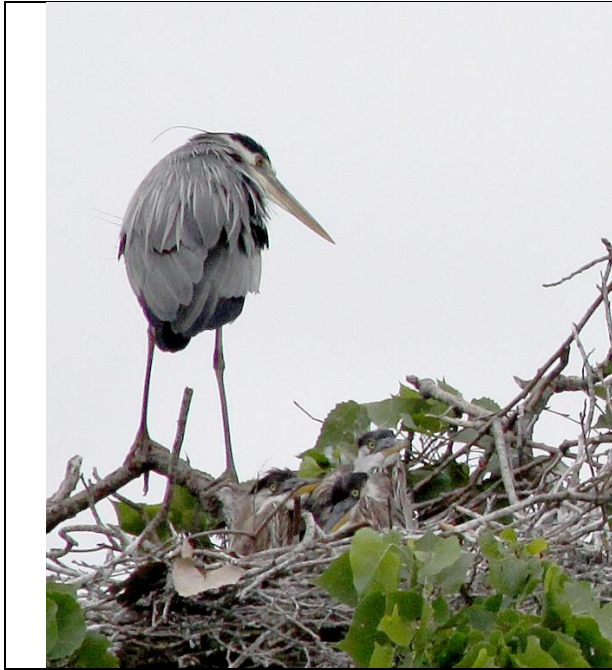
Cardinals



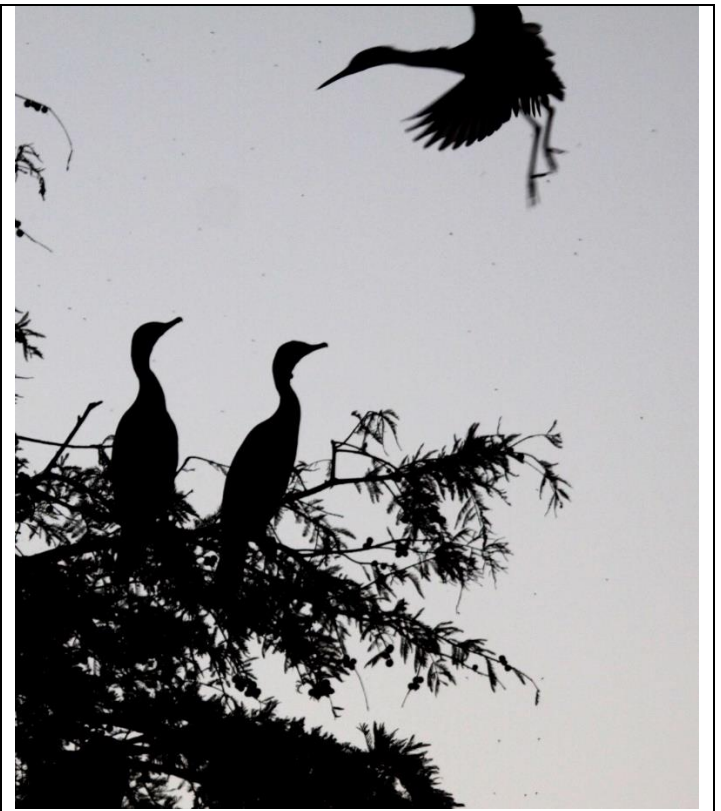
Wrens



*Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



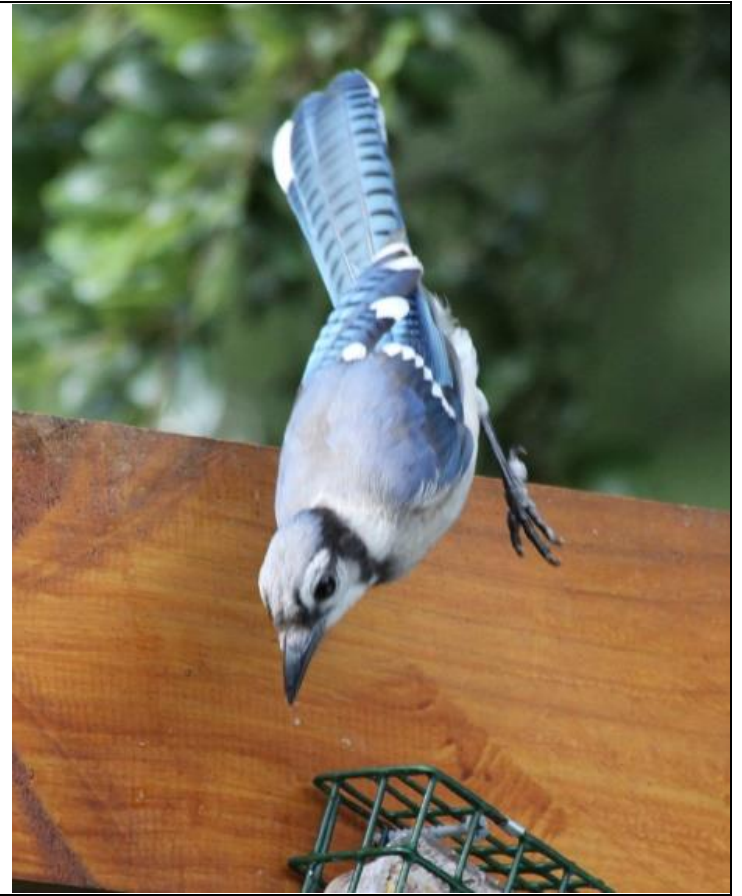
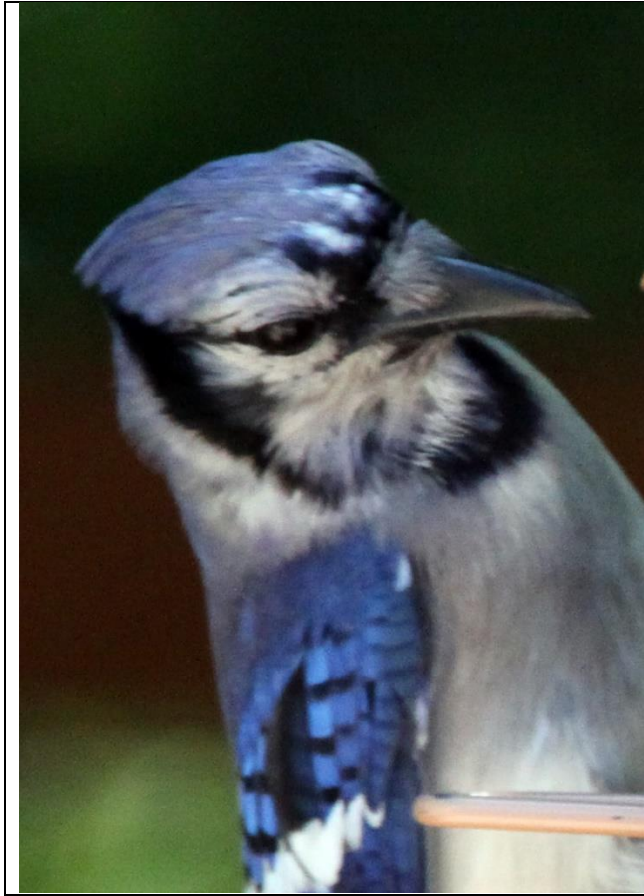
Herons



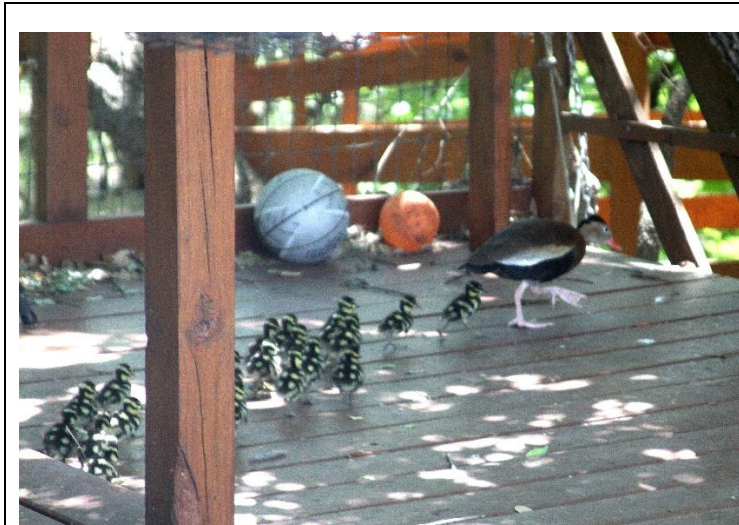
*Egrets*



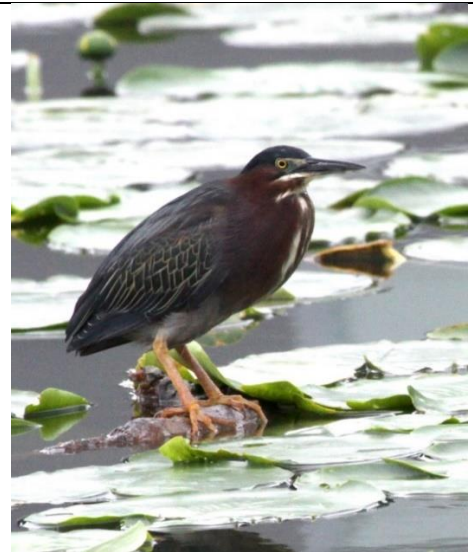
*Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



*BlueJays*



Whistling Ducks walking young



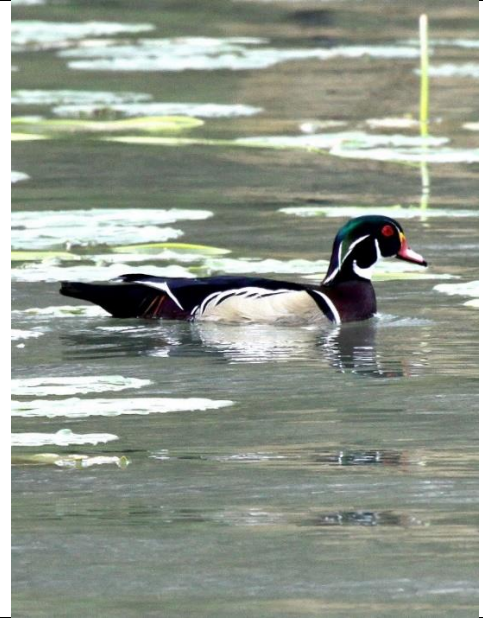
Crane's Heron



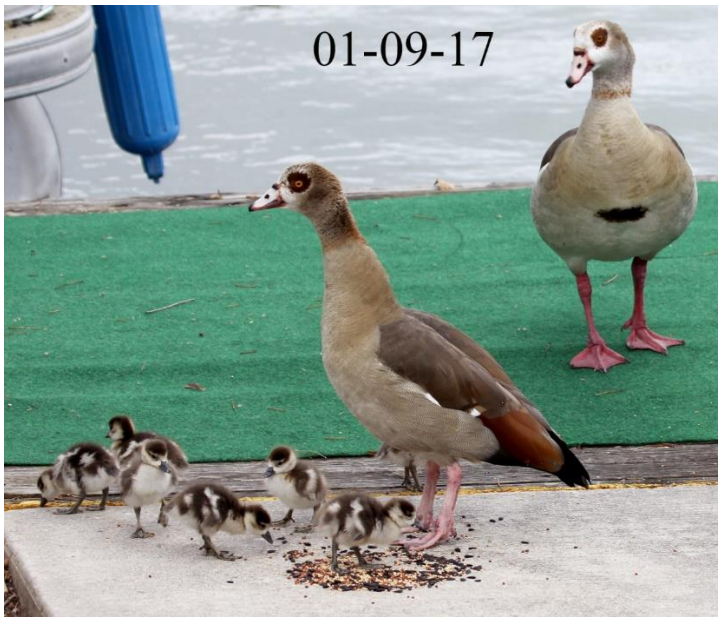
*Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



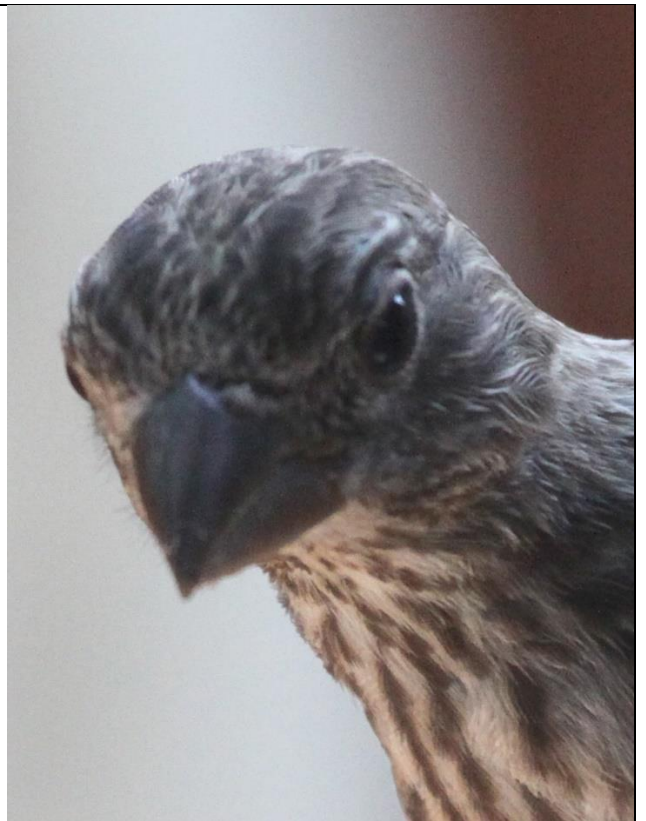
Red-Shouldered Hawk



Wood Duck



Egyptian Geese



House Finch



## **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.

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## *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*



## *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.





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.***

## **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.

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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.

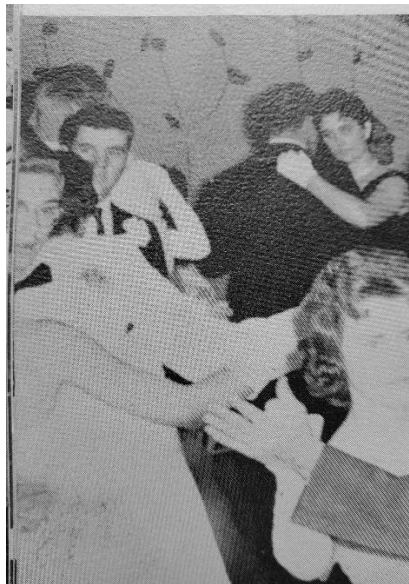
1980 Ford Granada (poor),  
1978 Chevy 2-door pickup with camper (average),  
1982 Audi Fox station wagon {really a VW},  
1957 Chevy 2-door BelAir, (dream car)  
1987 Toyota Tercel (we named the key mobile),  
and then a series of Jeeps (one was t-boned and flipped) and Nissan SUVs.

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.

## **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.



## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*

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





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## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*





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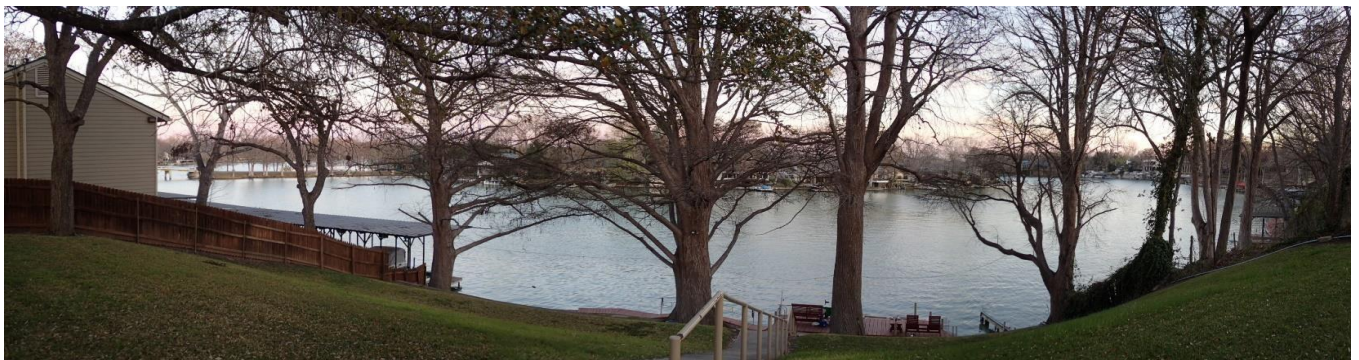
### **Fishing – 3**

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.

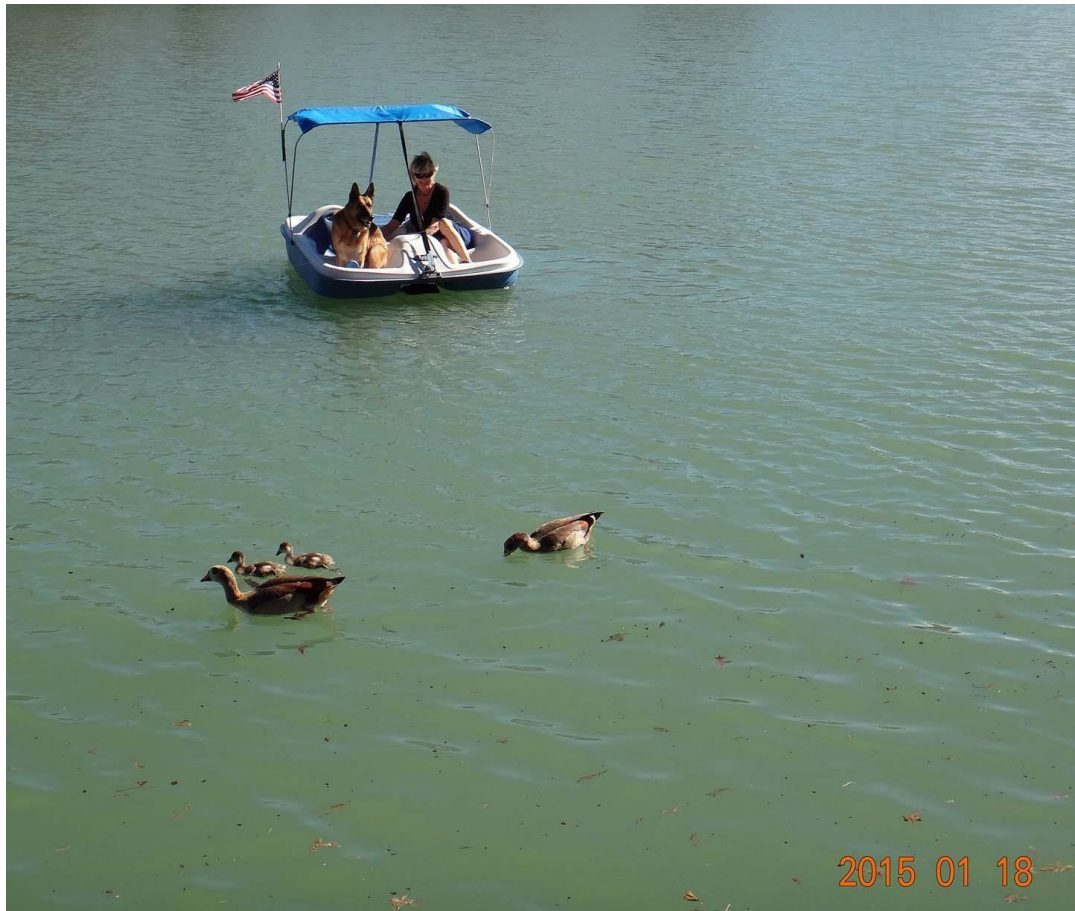
Why only winter months? The lake is a ski haven during the warmer months. It is rather shallow so the wave action and the stirred-up mud is not that interesting for a cat fisherman. Lake McQueeney has an interesting history. Treasure Island has million-dollar homes and has a reputation of being unfriendly 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*



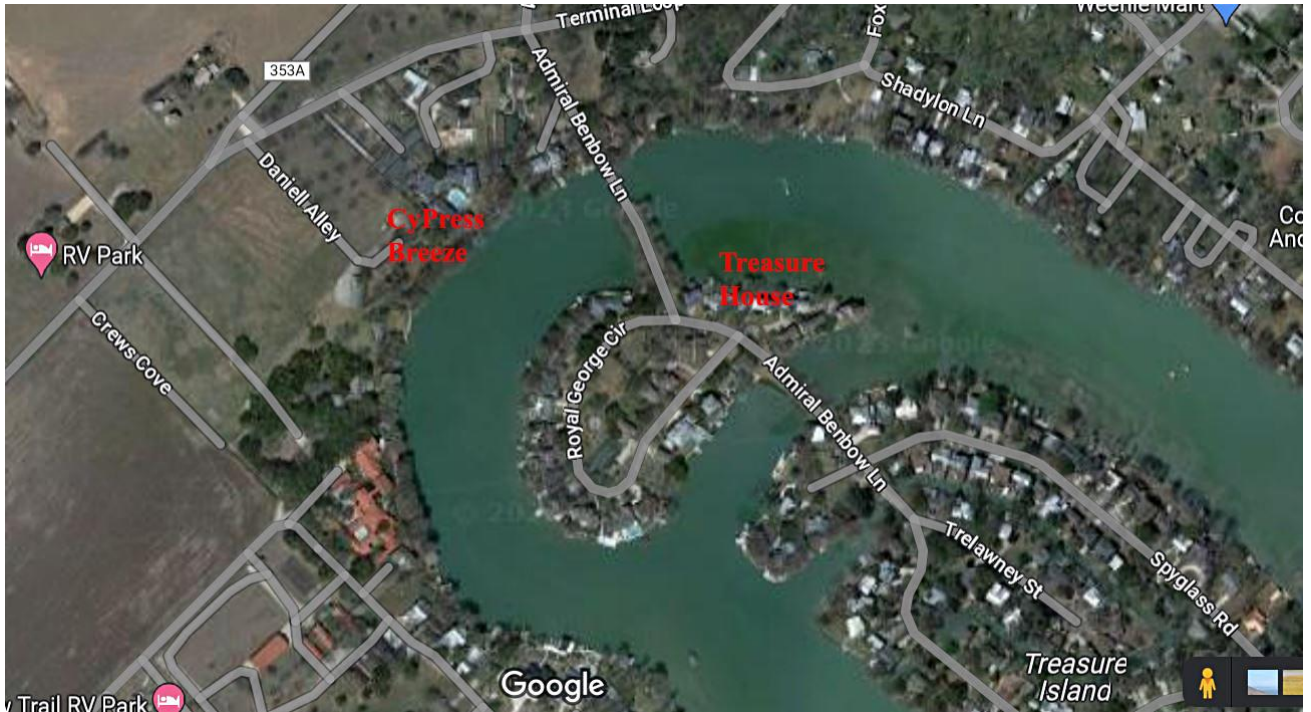


## *Part 2 - Episodes and Memories*



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.



## *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.

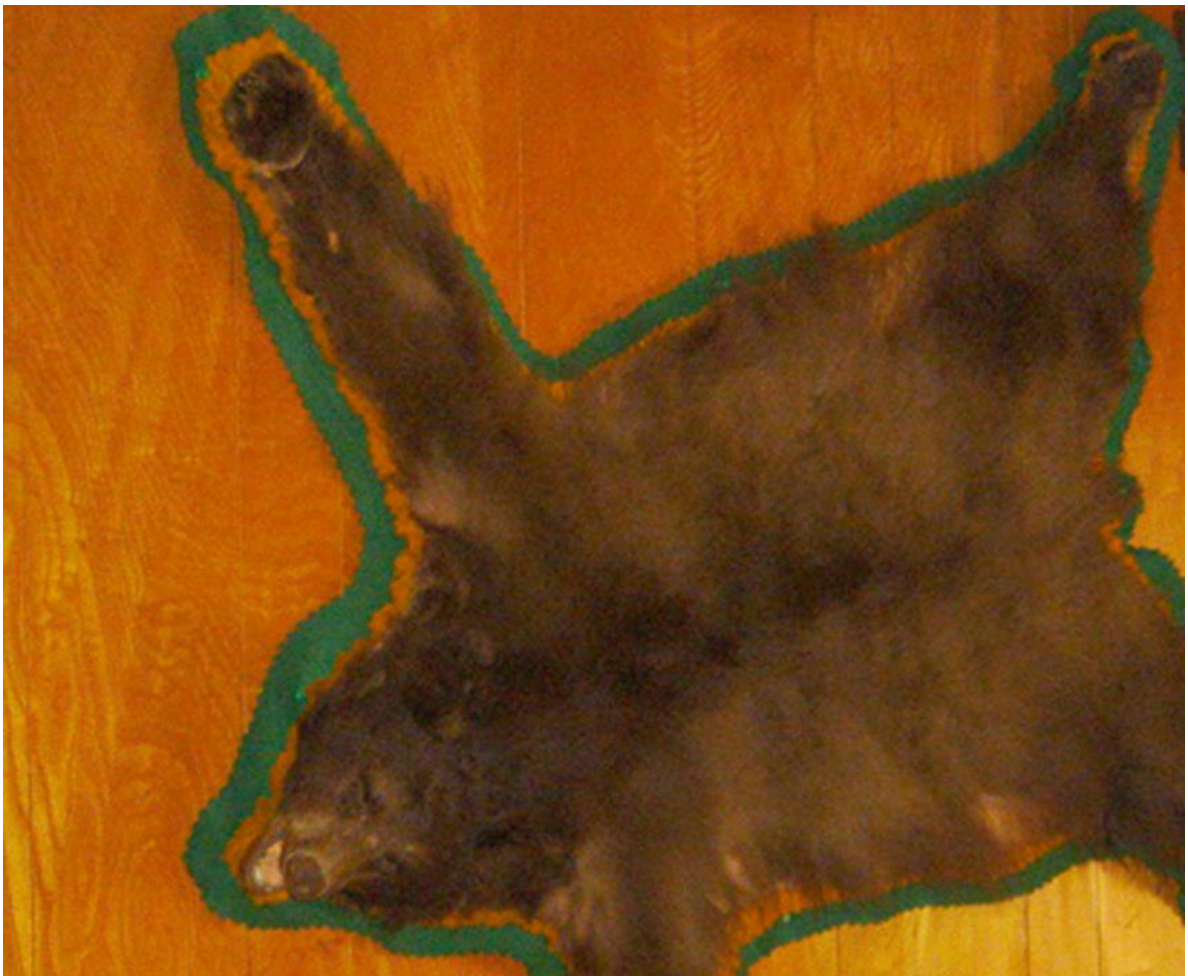
The coveys would split and each of us would pursue different groups. Split them some more and start flushing singles. We managed to get quite a few good quail meals out of these trips, very close to Roswell.

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.

## **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**



## **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.

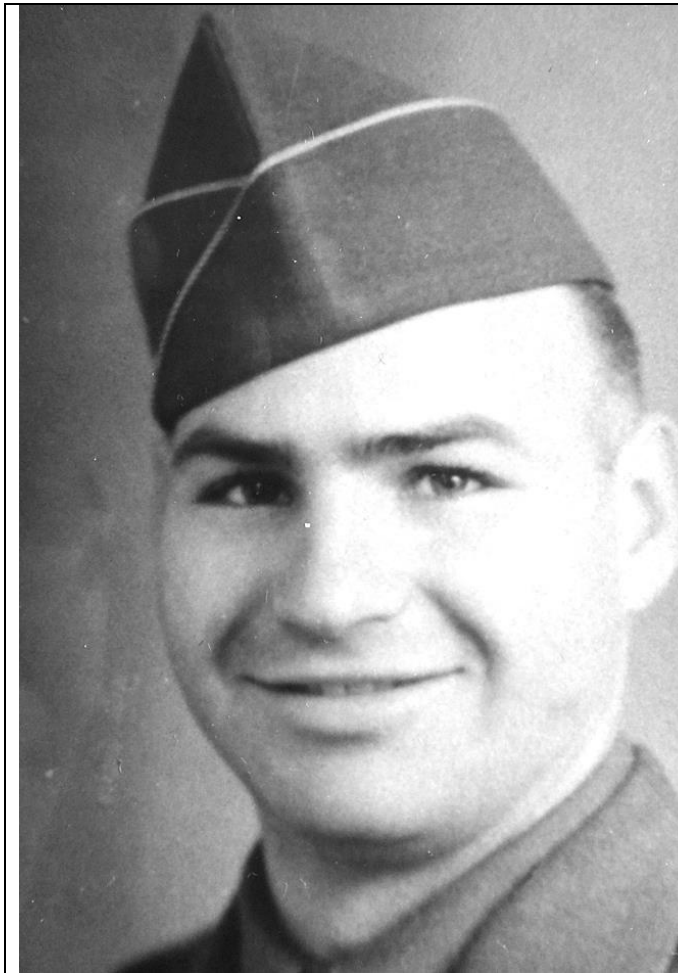
Grandmother (Mom-Mom) Gadberry made a rare trip to San Antonio to visit older sons in July 1942. Mother, evidently knowing she was pregnant, convinced Father to elope to Alamogordo, NM where there would be some secrecy. They were married in the middle of July 1942. I was born on March 3, 1943. Father 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.

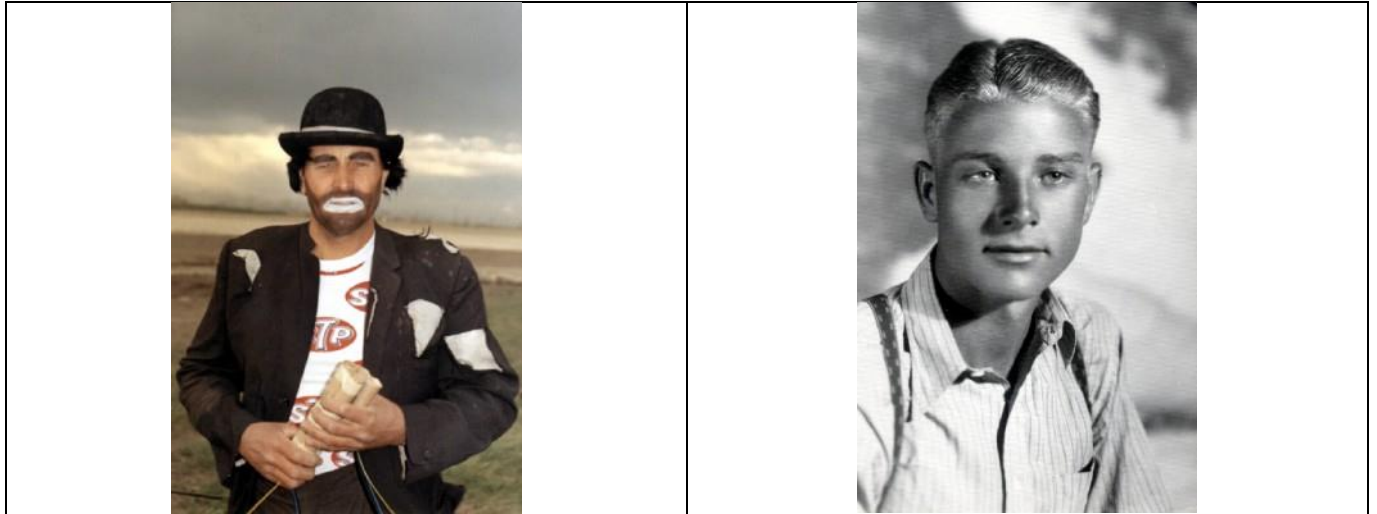
### **Burl W Gadberry**





## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories

### Orval O.Kisselberg



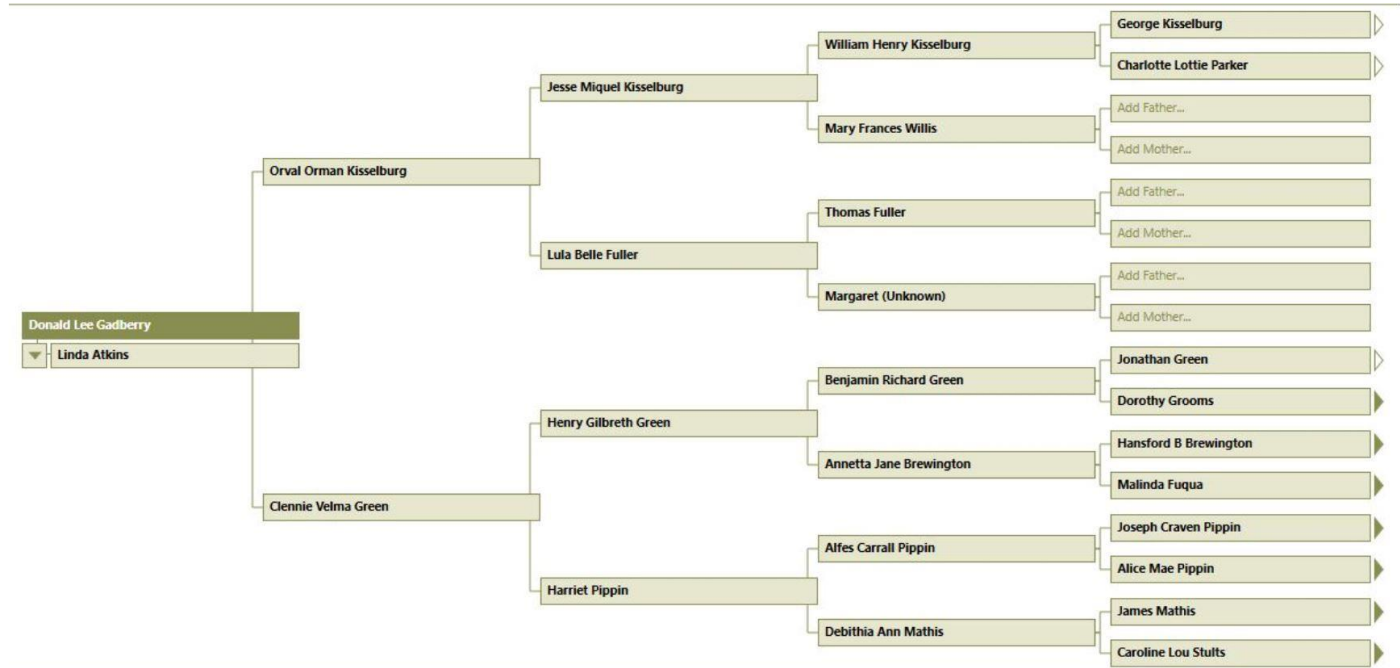
<a href="https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/saltlaketrribune/name/orval-kisselburg-obituary?id=28736719">Obituary - 2008</a> <a href="https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/saltlaketrribune/name/orval-kisselburg-obituary?id=28736719">https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/saltlaketrribune/name/orval-kisselburg-obituary?id=28736719</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 #8

**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 #9

**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

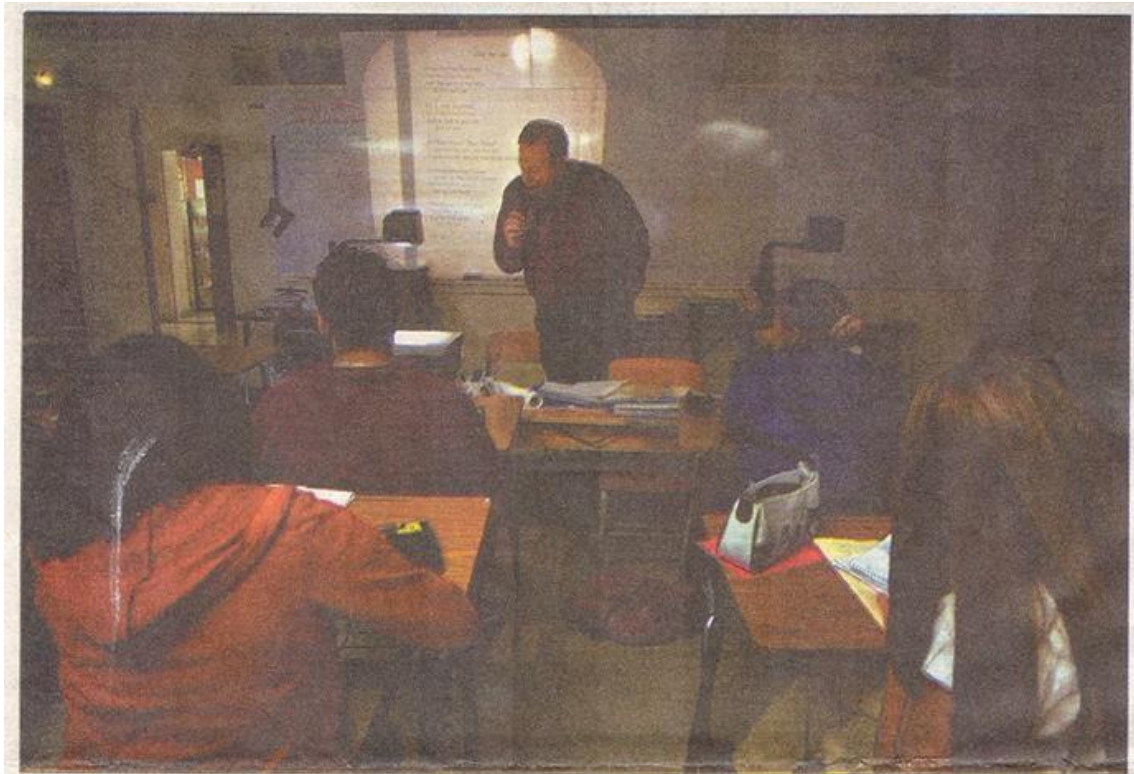
I welcome the opportunity to recommend DON L. GADBERRY as the TEACHER OF THE YEAR. Presently, Mr. Gadberry teaches five MATH CorePlus I classes and one Algebra II class during the school day. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Mr. Gadberry is our SUBSTITUTE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, DESIGNATED 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.

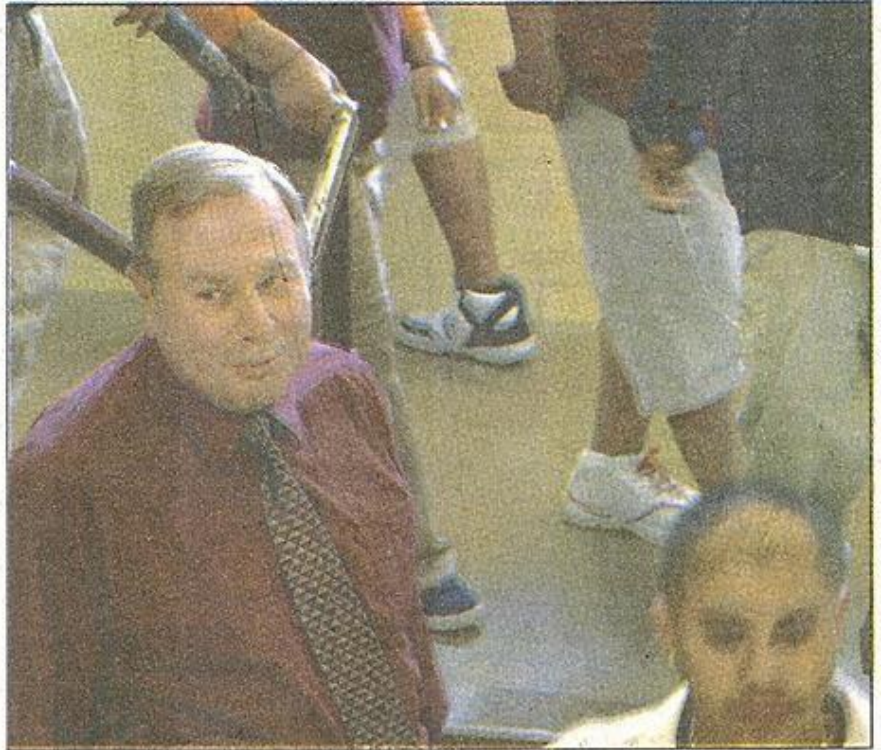
Gadberry, a native of New Mexico, said he always has had a special relationship with the Southeast Side high school.

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."

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## 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?..

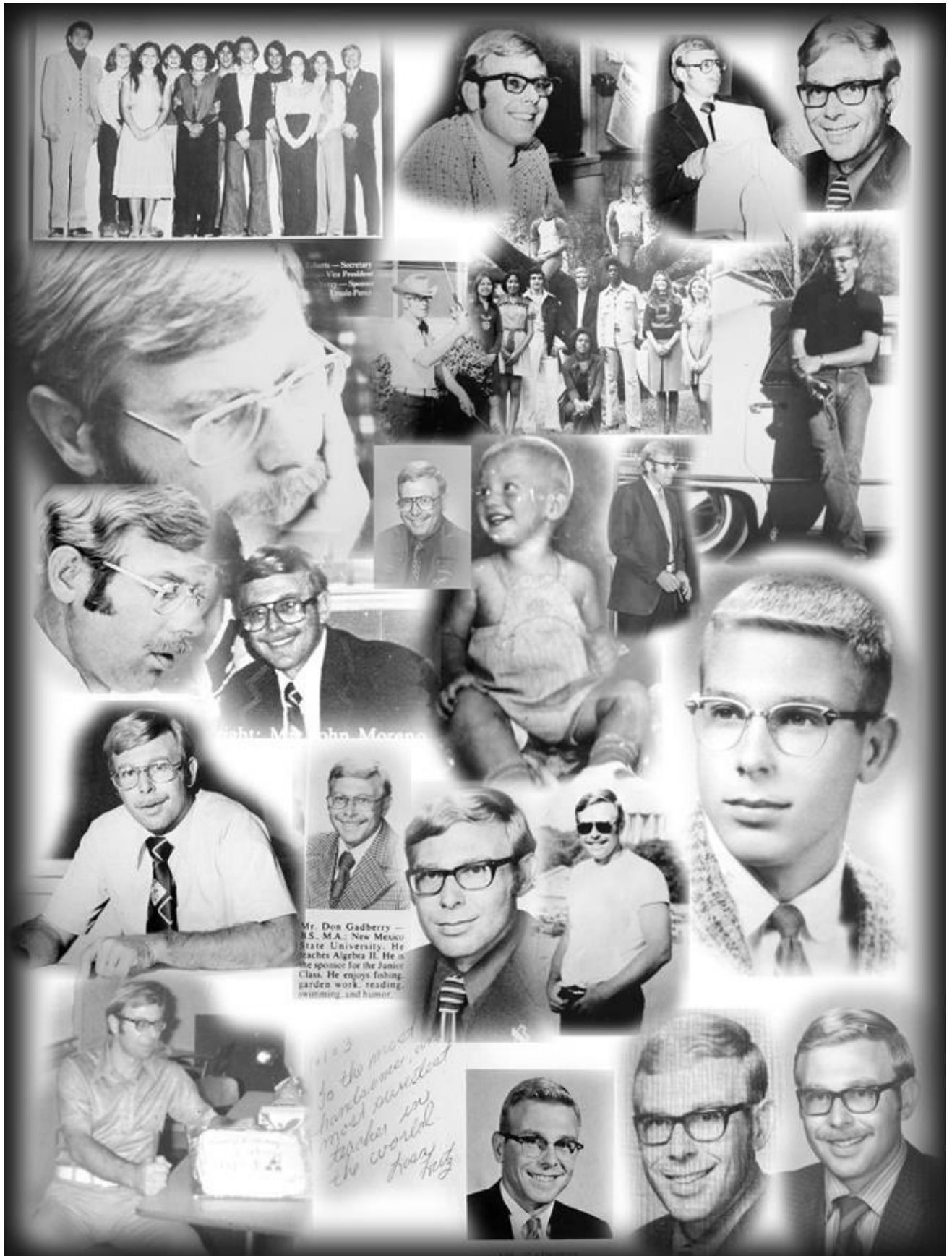
I was teachin' one morning, it was nearly TAKs time.  
My kids couldn't tell, a nickel from a dime.'  
The CIC said, "Here's your sequence and scope." I just  
took a deep breath and hoped to cope.

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.

## Part 2 - Episodes and Memories



## 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)