



By Joel Charles Snell

BITTERSWEET WANDERINGS

DAY DREAMS

Although I am 80, I tried to kill myself back in the spring of 1965. I was in a car and aimed it at a huge tree in the University section of Omaha. The tree was huge and was more rock than wood. At the last moment, I slammed on the brakes and cried for help from God.

At the time, I was in a mental hospital and was able to get a “pass” to go off the campus of the hospital. I was absolutely terrified. It did not occur to me that I could paralyze myself for life or that death meant a stretch in purgatory or something like that.

And so... I went back to the hospital and happened upon an established male nurse who encouraged me to live a more laid back hopeful life. I had been depressed since about 1957. He listened and we talked. Depression is like a very bad flu and head cold that endures for years and years. What **I did not know is that I would live to be very old, and**

my temporary psychotherapist mentioned above would commit suicide.

2ND FLOOR

I was placed on the second floor of Richard Young a psychiatric hospital. First floor is sedate. Second is hell. There were patients pounding on tables. Some were strapped to chairs. There was a lot of yelling and wailing. Two big white guys would roam the floor. Lobotomies were no longer used, but electro shock was terrible. The big guys dressed in white would jump a patient and then put them on a gurney, strap them in, and place something in the mouth of the patient.

Once the electricity started, folks' bodies began to shake. It was horrible. The outcome of the electro shock was a deletion of bad memories. If you got too many, you had brain damage. In the hospital contract, you had to sign a disclaimer so that you could not sue. Much later, the electro shock no longer hurt and the brain damage was held to a minimum.

Fortunately, I went to the first floor. That night I hit a cement wall and broke my fist. By morning, I was given help. All this was part of my stay. My parent came to visit, and I was extremely nervous. At any rate, in group therapy, I encountered Dr. G.A. "Bob" Young. The sea separated and I could begin to understand. Because I drank heavily I was not given any medicine. To get the right meds, at the right level, at the right time would take decades. My depression would last from 1957 to 1986. I feel great, but it took so long. Day after day of stinkin' thinkin was met by myself, by trying to hide my depression. Mad turned sad. I had a couple of comforts. One was to drink and the other was to sleep. The rest of the time, I could hide my sorrows.

12 STEPIN'

Basically, I would try to live one day at a time. 12 steppers know what that means. My mother had tears in her eyes when she discovered that she was pregnant with a third child. I don't blame her. She had two other children and her father to take care of. My father was gone most

of the time so she had a lot of work to do all the time. My father's corporation also expected her to be busy with activities in the Benson neighborhood, the church, and the wider city of Omaha.

She fell into bed and drank heavily for 6 weeks. After that she was very depressed for most of the pregnancy. So I was swimming in alcohol and biochemical acid. No one told her to drink or worry, but she did. It was a tragedy for her. Directly or indirectly my short term memory was compromised, ability to learn slowed down and I had a biochemical depression that blossomed in the years to come. Further, my genealogy added a flavoring to the down swing. Importantly, the household was quite tense. There were others in my past that had the blues, but generally lived out useful lives.

SURPRISE DELIVERY

My delivery was hellish. I believe that I was swimming in a blue air sky of joy. Then the delivery just exploded my acid bath. To a third party, I was a tough delivery. I was born in a north Omaha hospital about the middle of July on a very hot summer night. It was 1943. The entire medical facility was not yet air conditioned. All the forever clichés are appropriate here. I wanted to get away from the pain, and I guess that would be getting back into my mother's stomach or related area.

However, I was an easy baby and all through the years at Rose hill elementary was great. Now you know that past facts are wrapped in nostalgia, but I do know that Bob A's birthday on May 27th meant an entrance to summer. As I was too young, I did not have to go to work.

So we played in the sand of Rose Hill. The most fun was lying in the sand and looking at the blue sky and clouds.

ALMOST SUMMER/ NICK NOLTE

The neighborhood was filled with kids. Kids are the friend makers in the city. Of all the kids, there were some that were stand outs. You know Nick Nolte. Well, he lived around the corner of 56th and Corby and down the brick street catty corner to "Villa Acres." By the time Nick was in 9th grade, he appeared to be a grown man. Most of us looked up to him. I recall when we played soft ball. Nick played against the rest of us and won by a sizable margin.

Nearly everyone in the neighborhood has their own Nick Nolte story. You just heard mine. However, Nolte moved to an area called Westside and finished high school there. Although he went to Benson, he had trouble. So his parents moved to a more inviting area in upper middle class neighborhood.

KATHY AND THE SUMMER OF 66'

I recall the summer of 66' when my girl friend Kathy and I were walking down the aisles of a big box discount house and I saw a box of blonde

hair dye. Nolte and an attractive young lady sitting together, right there on the box. They made a very pretty couple.

So who knows? I dyed my hair blonde and my girl friend also had blonde hair. When 70's "RICH MAN POOR MAN" became a mini-series that most watched, I had this funny feeling. I did not know a famous person before. I believe that I have seen most of his movies since his entrance into the public arena. Nolte played the poor man.

ATLAS SHRUGGED

Terry Goodkind lived just down and across the street from where we lived. In the 50's he had red hair and his brother had long hair. That was unusual back then. His dad always had a nice looking Cadillac sitting in front of the house. Goodkind was a disciple of Ayn Rand. Her objectivism was like taking Jesus and standing him on his head. She liked hard right laissez-fair capitalism. So did Terry and he sold a ton of books of fictions paying homage to Rand. Some called her philosophy a hymn to "comodification." An individual needs to seek out others that could financially support oneself. So you look for people that you can use and exploit.

FAMILY

Now is the time to use last names. Please remember BABCOCKS. They were a large extended family that lived next to us, behind us, and down the alley. On Sunday nights around dinner time, Grandma had a bowl of soup and other food for all the family. Living next door, I would sneak over and be with the rest of the family. Everyone was there except Grandpa Babcock. He had his own room and remained alone listening

to his radio. In the eyes of the Methodist church, they were still married. However, it was not a marriage.

Babcocks now have folks who live all over the country. Originally, Grandma Babcock lived with her daughter Hazel. She was an elementary teacher for kindergarten at Benson West Elementary. Bob and Bill Barnes also lived upstairs. They were tall, thin, and handsome.

Both were good in “track.” They graduated from Rose Hill in the 8th grade. They then moved on to Benson High and later finished at Omaha University. They were Sig Eps, a rival fraternity to the one I belonged to, Pi Kappa Alpha. There were others, but those two groups were quite the competitors. Bob and Bill’s mom died when they were young and Hazel became their aunt and mother.

THE SUNDAY BUNCH

The yard around the Babcock house was filled with state of the art shrubbery, flowers, and small trees. Earl, Bessie, and Eddie lived in another part of the yard so that their neat and trim yellow house faced 58th Street and just across the street from my grandfather’s 3 story house. Grandpa Gustaf died in the early 50’s. His wife and my grandmother died in 33’ My mother dropped out of school to take care of my dying grandma. After her death, my mother lived just down the street across from Rose Hill. The family that took care of her were the Ranses. They had two daughters and a son and then my mother.

Carol Babcock another cousin and her mother lived somewhere else, but she spent summers at Grandma's house. Carol's mother was another daughter. I remember that in 8th grade, Carol was allowed to wear lipstick. Barb and her parents lived about 5 houses down the alley. So they would come up on Sunday nights. Barb often came up to visit us after dinner. She sat on a stool next to our red telephone and talked to my sister who was doing the dishes. She later in life married a dentist, whom I never met. There was another couple whose name escapes me. However, they would be in the Sunday bunch.

Many are gone. My wife and I drove over to Hazel's funeral and had the opportunity to see Carol. Eddie is now in Arizona and I don't know if the twins are alive and where they are. Many are buried together in an Omaha cemetery.

IT IS A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Kavanaughs lived on the corner, then came my parents, Babcocks and across the streets the Summers, Davidsons, Colsons, Warrens, Andresens, Goodkinds, and the Benson Presbyterian Church. Across the street was Rose Hill, The Ranses,* were catty corner and then there was a brick house on the other corner of which I knew no one. Around the corner was the Armstrongs, Heckersons, and the Browns. They were followed by the Pences and Gates. Further down the street were the Smiths. Another famous person in the neighborhood was Merrill Workhoven, he was the voice of Omaha. His logo was "My time is up, thank you for yours." One of his best friends was Johnny Carson who started in Omaha. Carson one day showed up at the Workhoven's big brown house with a new convertible. For Carson, he moved to California for his quiz game "Do You Trust Your Wife" followed by "Who

Do You Trust?" and then became the late night host of his own show. For his time, he was the late night king of comedy. Then he was followed by David Letterman and all of his tricks to break the barrier of modernism. He even took the audience to the basement of a staff member. He threw pumpkins off buildings. That was the summer of 1987.

CLARENCE THOMAS/ ST. Paul METHODIST CHURCH

About two blocks from 56th St. the Supreme Court member married a nice young lady at the church. That makes another important event or person(s) that made the national news in the years to come. It happened just a few blocks from Rose Hill.

THE ORACLE OF OMAHA

Within a number of blocks lived Warren Buffet. He also attended Rose Hill. So did my mother, sister, brother and myself. Then one day, I heard that the building was going to be torn down as it became dangerous to carry on everyday activities. I had a friend go to the school and take pictures of the inside. He was a good friend and the staff at the school was very accommodative. Buffet stayed in the area where his parents had a boutique grocery store that delivered to the very rich. We would go in there and buy a candy bar. The floor had wood shavings and they were kept fresh. Buffet's dad was our Senator in the Unicameral Legislature. Or, was his father a member of the U.S. House of Representatives? Unless I hear or read something else, Warren actually pays his income taxes. A business journalist lived with him for quite awhile and he was the same guy that the public knows.

His house cost \$35,000 and he added on and rumor has it that he also had a basement under the front or backyard.

He drives a two year old car and it has a funny name. In the spring, he invites the public to a gathering. They talk about investments and hear Warren play the ukulele.

HIGH HOLIDAYS

Nearly a third of the school was Jewish. The synagogue was just a few blocks away from Rose Hill. I so dearly loved the whole group. My ties to the religion included that my father was the branch manager for 50 years for a Jewish firm that sold allied chemicals. Further, my children's first name is Jewish as is mine. My first girl friend Marilyn was Jewish. I went to Bar Mitzvahs and have a Menorah in my study. My brother Jay a Presbyterian minister died a number of years ago, but is buried in the Sand Hills, the far west of Nebraska. Over his grave, there is not a Cross, but a Star of David, a Jewish symbol. There is more, but I do know that most lived on the east side of 56th and Corby. During High Holidays the school enrollment was sparse. Although I grew up and old in Omaha, about 18 miles to the west of the city the state goes flat. It is huge. From Omaha to Scottsbluff near the border of Wyoming is further from the city than Omaha to Chicago. It is just huge. Voting districts is

divided by 3 sections. There is the city of Omaha is one and the other two are “outstate.”

DOING THE DANCE

Still it was not easy being Jewish. Brenda Katz man was bullied and beaten by a Christian fundamentalist from a church west of Benson. Brenda deserved the beating because she killed Jesus. It was her people that killed Jesus. I know the church because I was told that if I attended the “Good News “club for so many times, I would get a gold fish. Toward the end of the series, I was taken into a dark room and baptized. There was another woman in the room shaking and shouting. Perhaps, it was I am told she was doing the “St. Vitas” dance. I was terrified and in shock.

COUNTRY CLUB NEIGHBORHOOD

56th and Corby St. was the beginning of a country club that stretched from there to Blondo Street about 6 blocks away. The old field club became the home of the Gates and was about two blocks from 56th street. My first girl-boy party was a dance on the porch of the field club turned residence. All the streets were brick as well as the houses. It had street lamps that had street light bulbs with round covers. It was very leafy.

The region was a nine whole golf club that would move west. That left this in-city parcel of land to build upscale brick homes. My family lived on the edge of the development, but I was only a few houses away from “Country Club.” By 58th, the next street was blue collar. We were a lower middle class barrier.

If you want, go to 5647 Corby St. Omaha, Nebraska, 68104. First look at a tan house with a red door and take a look on the inside. Most of what you see is vastly different. When my parents lived there, the living room and dining room were elegant. Most admired the basement.

You'll see that it all fell into place. By the way over the years, the neighborhood fell on hard times and then resurrected. An old market was encouraged and the neighborhood has really improved. Rose Hill is a new building. The Kavanaugh/Snell/ and Babcock homes have new siding. So things are better.

As we drive down the street with our internet gizmo, we get to the corner and turn south toward Dodge Street. All along, you will see some really nice houses of all types, and attractive to the eye.

When I was a kid, Earl and Bessie's house did not exist. There was a sizable plot of all kinds of vegetables. Before you got to Grandma and Hazel's house, there was a tool shed, barn, and screened in cages for animals. By far, the toughest animal was "Henry." He was a male alpha rooster. When he was in the side yards, we all ran. Then one day someone killed "Henry" by breaking his neck. There were rumors, but they remained just that. There was a terrier that sat in a window of the second floor and a mean cat whose name escaped me. The rest of the cages were filled with bunnies and chickens.

GRANDMA'S HOUSE

Grandma's place was a farm house that was near a mound of roses and the entire area was finally annexed by the city of Omaha. You can see the blue house next to what was by my parent's home. Previously, the house had a gray grit siding that looked just awful. Hazel thought that it

looked good in the store and bought it. She apologized to all the neighbors, but it remained. Before that it was a white house in need of paint.

There was a nice front porch that was open surrounded by shrubs. Their house must have been about 10 feet between where we lived and there was a narrow sidewalk between the two houses. It is now blue, but you don't get to go inside. So let me help you. As you entered the front door, you could go about 10 feet to an upright piano. The entry was called the "foyer." You turned to right and go upstairs. There was the twin's room filled with two beds, Hazels bedroom over looked the side yard, and then of course Grandma's room.

THE DOOR IN THE FLOOR

The first floor as noted earlier had the stairs, and the foyer. On the left was the living room followed by the dining area and the kitchen. I was told that under one throw rug was a door to a storage area where food was kept that was preserved. There was also another set of stairs to the basement where there was a washer, clothes line, and furnace.

Grandpa's room was just off the living room and was generally closed. Imagine how many Babcocks lived in the house at one time or another. There was a patio in the back. By that time, I left the area with my wife. Someone blew up the beautiful weeping willow that was nestled next to the Rose Hill fence. When the Iowa Hawkeyes are losing in football in my mind, there is a flash of a dim empty wall in the living room of the Babcocks. The picture is gone. The weeping willow has been sectioned and removed. Further the pond that Earl worked on every year is filled with dirt. The blue grass has withered into weeds. Iowa loses the game.

And so it goes.

OLD MARKET BENSON

The city put money into fixing up the Benson area. Before we go there, let's go back to the 50's. Benson started around 52nd street. It still had the electric street car. Then the car was turned around at the rails on 56th and Maple. I rode the electric street car, but CITY LINES quickly covered the rails with cement. We then had the futuristic "radial highway." So who was CITY LINES? To avoid a "slap suit" a huge American Car corporation along with a tire company shut down the electric street car. Why? The all cement highway meant more cars with rubber tires would be sold. That meant more profit. What was good for them was good for the country.

BENSON/1955

Go to the computer and you can see it now. However, back then there was a flower store of which both Maxine and Marge Donovan worked there. Later, Maxine became my adopted mother. This was followed by the Masonic temple, a music store, and a gas station with a giant red horse at its entrance. Across the street was a wall paper store along with a barbershop. At the barbers, I would learn about women. Women had it great and they sat on a million dollar genital. There was a Brylcreem hair oil sign in the corner above a closet and room for 3 barbers. Most of the business went to Larry. He was born before his time, but finally moved from the shop into his own place. One time, a former wife came in to wait for Larry to finish up. I surmised that they would once again become intimate. He was shaking all over with excitement. I got a half decent hair cut and quickly left the store followed by the two. I recognized her from grade school.

Then there was Steve's Grill. Steve had a music box at each booth. Across the street was a hardware store with nuts and bolts placed in various drawers. Topps a female fashion store was just across from Sprague's Drug store. Sprague was the president of my mother's class.

The Hobby shop was just west followed by an Independent Grocery store. At the end was the post office. Let's leave it there. Next to Hested was the Benson Theater. On Saturday afternoon, around 1 Pm a group of little kids entered and positioned themselves in front of a big screen. Kids can be problems. Homo sapiens evolved from chimps not bonobos the peaceful hominids. The kids were chimps with a few more brains. The movie house was a zoo. The first movie ran as a series.

ROCKET MAN

The first part was a half hour series by the name of "Rocket Man." His job was to stop crime and help folks live the "American Way" and enjoy the "Great Free Enterprise." Then a movie about a western or something was that something could be a scientist who looked like Albert Einstein, He was being threatened and his daughter went to his rescue. Her efforts caused more trouble and a blonde haired, blue eyed male came to her or their rescue. We had another "feminine flub- a- dub" The girl caused more trouble than one could imagine. Once again, women came into a movie and they screwed things up. That is what I was taught.

THE ROMANCE OF JEAN AND HER LOVERS

There were many things that women could not do. So she was so happy to be saved by the blonde hair guy. I don't recall any white ethnics with

funny last names or people of color. It was all white Anglo-Saxons. The show was not as important as watching the kids. Jean was a lovely young lady that had many lovers at the show. The important thing was to try and find her and her latest lover. Generally, she sat toward the back. However, there was room for a few more seats and there you could watch her. You first heard kissing and moaning. Then buttoned snaps began to pop. After that came zipper sounds and the perfume mixed with sexual ambiance. Wow! If you could not sit behind Jean there were others, but the excitement was subdued, because you could hear some guys get slapped. Therefore Jean had quite a “back up crew of he-man little boys” craving the sights and sounds of their favorite girl. So girls were good for something.

THE HOLLOWAY BAR STUCK ON THE SCREEN

If the movie became boring, there was always the chance to throw some candy across the audience or on to the screen. Now comes a moment that still is FRESH in my mind. Someone threw a” Holloway” bar that stuck to the screen. When I say “stuck” I mean there was a solid connection between the bar, super glue, and the screen. The movie continued for another minute and then the show stopped, the lights went on. Out came a red faced movie manager who yelled who threw the candy bar? The audience of nice white little kids looked absolutely innocent remained quiet. He yelled again. Some little girls were close to tears. How could such a terrible thing happen? By the way, I never could figure out how you can do phony tears. The young ladies were amazing.

HE-MAN

I learned to never cry. If I did then I was a “homosexual.” That meant that I would get beat up. The manager turned his back and tried to get the “Holloway” bar off the screen. He gently tried to remove it and then he went to all sides to get the candy and not tear the screen. This took time and each minute, boxes of popcorn were poured over someone else or a whole box was thrown into the audience. Finally, the screen ripped and the “Holloway” bar had an attachment. The rest of the show went on and some “snobs” demanded that they get their 10 cents back because the show was ruined. The hole remained on the screen.

By next Saturday, there was a new screen, but the lights were dimmed, but not turned off. You just don’t forget this. Nor, could you buy a “Holloway” bar or anything else that was sticky at the counter in the entrance. Soon, it would become the last picture show. Folks were at home watching their new television shows with rabbit ears. Jean dropped out of school as she was in a “family” way. That was so sad.

At the time, Benson Theater was hallowed out and the theater seats removed and the walls were painted white. It was a huge room that was filled with discount washers, dryers, refrigerators, stoves, and related. It was a bonanza.

BENSON OLD MARKET MOVIE THEATER

Wow! Things have improved. The Benson Theater is back and better than ever. There is so much there that I invite you to look it up at **BENSON OLD MARKET THEATER / OMAHA**. One should say more, but the scenario is all right there. “AI” my artificial intelligence friend likes it too.

ZILLOW TRIP/ USE ZILLOW TRAVEL TRIP TO SEE THE AREAS

Well, we are going down 58th street or 60th street and we are now backing to Lower Middle Class folks who live on those streets. Please remember that Earl and Bessie Babcock live on 58th. My dad owned some property on 58th and Ohio. It was next door to where my parents lived before moving to 56th and Corby. One summer a few friends and I decided to build a fort on my father's land. We would go to the back of furniture stores and get refrigerator crates and drag them to my father's open "weed" lot. We built this long thing and covered it with tar paper. It was either extremely ugly or very unattractive. The neighbors were outraged and soon my Dad had to hire some people to come and remove our wonderful addition to the area. Further, from then on, I would cut the weed grass with a push mower.

GEORGE'S LAKE

At or around Western Street and Underwood was George's Lake. If you are using Zillow, you do not see a lake. It was drained in the 50's. Across the street were beautiful brick homes that overlooked the body of water. Once the lake disappeared, many of us thought that houses would be built and that the land would have sump pumps so that the water would go elsewhere. We are now at the end of the Benson area and into the Memorial Park area.

Rumor has it and therefore I might be wrong so please support me. The developer to save a buck did not appropriate the proper technology so the new houses all flooded. Now the value of the new houses without

sump pumps and the older homes found that their financial and community attractiveness went downhill.

If you think the neighbors that got mad at my tar paper shack were mad, these folks were livid and again as a rumor the developer moved out of town. Today, things are much better and I hope that I got all the details right on this second story, but I liked the lake. Then I lived about 6 blocks from the lake and that was special. If you ask Omaha's about this little lake today most don't know a thing about it.

WEST DODGE HIGH

I had to give up my little dog and move to the middle of Nebraska to go to college. I really did not like it. I was on a floor with jocks and during finals, they played cards. My roommate was about my size but incredibly muscular. He was also a bully so I got trouble most of that fall semester. He then beat me up.

I felt incredibly better when I could go to the local public university. It was given really terrible names, but we did not feel badly. Books cost about 7 dollars and tuition was very modest. The prestige school in the city was Creighton University. However, our missions were entirely different. We never played them in sports and they also had a high school.

Most Catholics went to my school and upper middle class Roman Catholics from out of town who wanted more St. Thomas Aquinas went to Creighton. There was not that in-city rivalry. I thought that they had a nice campus in a really tough and mean neighborhood. Further, it appeared that their graduate program was larger than their undergrad population. They also had a high school. But UN-O never played

Creighton in any sport. So there was very little tension and Creighton was run by the prestigious Jesuit order.

We drank at the Quebec Lounge and they went to the Golden Buddha. Later, I discovered that my fraternity had a chapter at both schools. I was always happy to acknowledge that I went to Nebraska-Omaha or UN-O. Further, the memorial park area is one of the most prestigious areas in the city. That is where my school was located.

Additionally, the elite of Omaha have or had a mythical society where royalty prevailed. The president of my university (Milo Bail) became the King of Quivera. (No, I don't know much about that name either.) I talked to "AI" my Artificial Intelligence friend, but he did not have any information. However, the Queen was Suzanne K. Falk. It just happened that she was my girl friend in 5th grade at Rose Hill. Okay, I will let that go real soon.

THE BUILDING FOR A COMMUNITY

However, I do want to say that the Old Rose Hill had escape tubing attached to the building. If there was a fire, you pulled open a door and each student would fly down the tunnel to escape from the fire. Further, there was open iron stairs that would help. Climbing both of them was enjoyable, but the open stairs was scary, but you could see all the way down the street.

MAVERICKS

Further, recognition of Dr. Milo Bail was a boost to our school. Those at the top found the last or second to the last city owned university was moving up.

Today, UN-O has made incredible improvements and greater ties to Omaha and the capitalist sector. The campus is spread out from the main campus/memorial campus to the west. There are a number of mini- campuses and tiny buses to get people from one place to another. One year, a department was ranked # 1. It is also integrated with the Nebraska Medical School as well as Nebraska-Lincoln and Nebraska-Kearney.

From 1965 and looking back, it might as well been the 50's. We were the last of the quiet SILENT GENERATION. The big issue was over-conformity and materialism. We were "other directed" rather than "inner directed" or "tradition directed" (Reisman.) I spent from 62' to 72' there. There may have been some protesting but most of the school along with the "Boots trappers" (Non-coms working toward a degree to gain Officer Status) attended. I admired the troops for dodging bullets and I signed up, but two psychiatrists wrote a letter indicating that my mental condition might help the enemy more than our country.

However, two Professors had a fist fight over the Vietnam War. They were in my department.

THE GREATEST GENERATION

Tom Brokaw coined the term "The Greatest Generation." They endured both The Great Depression and World War Two. Indeed, they did so much. However, sandwiched between those folks and the Baby Boomers were us, The Silent Generation. My memories were along the lines of working in a cubicle, owning a little house or renting an apartment, and owning an RV to use during the summer week-ends. I really wanted to write and have a white collar job.

Then I met this blonde haired young lady and my plans went asunder. No, she did not go to Rose Hill. She did appear to have a resemblance to two sisters that I admire. Thus, my whole life changed.

SKINNER OR FREUD?

One thing that was missing in the Greatest Generation is that most other western democracies were in shambles and thus America could do so well supplying the planet. American corporations actually did pass on some of the profits to the workers. Therefore, The Greatest could tell us that we were jerks. They first believed that other countries should be like the U.S. A. and secondly they liked pop psychology. Personalities could be developed and was measured by the ability of the individual to be a “conversationalists.” They also became fans of Sigmund Freud and his jargon. Dale Carnegie in his “How to win friends and Influence People” was also given credit for one’s success. Norman Vincent Peale was their hero. However, his writings, sources, and subjects were discovered to be fake.

In academia, if you wanted to know about people you did not necessarily take a psychology course. Your choices were Freud or a fellow named B.F. Skinner. His emphasis was that your insides and insights were blank. That you put a person on a reward program (behavior modification) and you got results. One text book had a skeleton that had strings attached and thus we could make puppets of others. Or, they could make puppets of us. It was a war of interactional manipulation. One’s personal self got lost. So you smiled and watch the Greatest eats their words.

Folks didn’t fear for jobs. You joined the corporation and years later you died or retired. Then all that came crashing down with riots and the

Vietnam War. Where were the experts? JFK was assassinated. The system wasn't working. Trust for government and corporations fell. Something was missing.

BACK TO BENSON

My mother could hear the crash from about a block away. Maxine was with Joe, Betty, and Bill. They were playing miniature golf nearby. Benson was the suburbs with a real neat park and other amenities. So go to Wikipedia and look up KRUG PARK.

There was an awful crash and more people died as a roller coaster ran off its wheels and killed or maimed a number of people. Bodies were thrown into tall tree limbs and fell to the ground. It was the worst tragedy of that kind up to occur at that time. That was a July night 1930. Were they insured? Well, no but there were promises...

By the 50's, we could go to the park as it was just across from Hinky Dinky Supermarket. There was still a portion of a swimming pool and there were some extra trees. For the most part, it was a junk park with a parking lot on the east side for students of Benson High School. That is where you could see fist fights. The males watching were screaming and the women got wet. Most of the school stayed away. One of the bullies just recently died. I hope that he is in better shape now than when he was walking the planet.

THE BACK ALLEY AROUND 58TH AND MIAMI

There was a little girl and her sister who lived nearby. One day we decided to play "Dr. and Nurse." I will save you the details, but I still remember when my mother asked me about what I was doing. I know that I was near the heat register on the second floor although it was

summer. It is that vivid in my mind. The two girls said we had pocket knives and they were forced to show their privates. At the time, we did have knives, but we did not force them. In fact, I thought that it was very clever lie.

So my brother was taken in one room and whipped with the branches from the Willow tree in the back yard of Babcocks. I could hear him scream. I was terrified. Then my father was going to whip me, but customers stopped by and I had to wait for them to leave. Then my father whipped me and I was nude. I could not get near a girl for years. The girl disappeared around her 14th birthday. She became pregnant and got married or something.

By the way, my parents were doing the “normal” parent strategy. It is still used today. When my kids explored, I wanted to leave them alone. It is part of growing up.

MEMORIAL DAY OF 1967

For years, we or I practiced “sexual outer course.” There are many things that one can do so that the genitals of each are far apart. So I lost my virginity late in life. However, I had a condom and we went all the way. I felt terrible. As I see it, I put her in harm’s way. Soon thereafter, I met my wife. Fortunately, the two of us met my lover from that Memorial Day and she was holding a very pretty or handsome baby. I gave a sincere compliment and she met my wife.

THE 60’S/ RUNNING ON EMPTY

What happened to the communes and “free love” of the late 60’s and early 70’s? By that time we were much older as the Silent Generation. Further, I lived in the Bible belt and the New Left (Libertarian Socialism)

just did not make sense. However, Marcuse made sense that chasing after goods and service over time turned you into a ONE DIMENSIONAL MAN. The great refusal of materialism impacted one's freedom to choose another kind of life. We read C. Wright Mills but Marx and particularly the Left of Center peaceful Revisionist was left out. We needed something more concrete to imagine and protest for like Bernstein. Emotionally, I was interested but that was it. If our country goes hard Left or Right, fascism is a best bet. If America goes fascist, super rich still may fear that they will make less profit or be financially harmed in some ways. American corporate capitalism is very efficient for what they want to do. The Left masses can be constrained by the bullet or the Bible. Nor with the New Left, could you replace it peacefully and democratically, if you did not like it?

NOT SO LONG AGO

One day as I was working on some papers in my office, a student came in and asked me about HIPPIES. What were they like? I told her all that I knew. It was as if, I was talking about some movement of so far away from the present. Look up Hippies on the internet. It's over, don't buy Utopias, but do something that might help someone else. However, you are going to get beat up one way or another by the elite at the top. That is why they are the elite. Please read Pareto and Herbert Spencer. It's called Social Darwinism, although Charles Darwin was a political moderate, the hard Right borrowed the term. They thought that society should be something like the jungle just outside your window.

At any rate, the SILENT GENERATION is now dying off. We won't be missed. The 70's moved from Left to Right over this transitional decade. By the 80's money moved out to the Cayman Island secret accounts

and income distribution moved upward to the top 1% or the 1/10 of the top 1%. Even “Al” my artificial friend agrees. When “Rose Anne and the Connors” hit the screen, the U.S.A. was now not a middle class society, but a blue collar one. The standard of living declined.

G.A. “BOB YOUNG

In the middle of my miseries and the normal neurosis of my fellow Americans, he introduced me to something that I was not getting at school. He was the “guru” of the Midwest. I was dealing with depression, nausea, and a medication that made things worse. Most of the time, I tried to wear a number of layers of clothes because I was so skinny.

Further, I enjoy being by myself. This I could not do at school so I left my old Freudian psychiatrist for a new one. He first got me on a med that would help my pyloric sphincter muscle and reduce the nausea. His psychotherapy was fantastic for me. Go read my article on him. It is in an online medical journal. “Al” found it for me. So, it is Joel Snell/ Thinking in Alternative Categories.”

GEORGE HELLING

Helling grew up in and around Northfield, Minnesota. His father had a gas station. Helling worked there and then into the military where he was a meteorologist. He even received a certificate. Later, he did advance degree work in political science and by the end of the 50’s earned a doctorate in sociology.

By the summer of 1962, I took his first class. His lectures were just short of incredible for me. He used a very readable and understandable text

book. He did that on purpose. He wanted to be able to give students something that was not only understandable, but also very interesting.

However, it was his examples or stories indicating a concept. I was on some heavy medications, but I was open eyed and incredibly interested that I could not wait for his next class. What I am saying is something most students cannot say about their professors. Word got out that if you need a class to support your major, and really want a class that you would remember years later take Helling's classes.

By fall and further down the line, his classes were packed. Even his graduate teaching assistance began to talk like him. I arranged the rest of my semesters around his courses. If I took his first class with him, he was also at my last thesis defense that he was on, before he went to his new job.

The story is not over. I stayed in touch with him for the rest of his life. After he died in 2005, I started talking with his wife. The two of them built a lodge with a large pond near where he grew up and old. His wife wanted to die to because her fear of a civil war here in the states. Covid killed her in 10 days.

By the way, he also did the scholarly things like papers, presentations, book reviews, articles and related. Look him up.

SCHOOL DAYS

After high school, I went to school from 61' to 76' (that makes 4 or 5 different schools. By then I was exhausted. We lived on powder milk and low cost loans. One son had ADHD. The individual is hyper energetic. It is involuntary, not many knew about the illness. As a baby, he got up for 22 months. Everything in our cottage was taped down or

held down with something. He was that mobile. You turned around, and he was running away to somewhere. My best strategy was to drive him on the hood of our car along a dirt road that led to a marina and docked boats.

In the middle of this, I needed to get a doctorate. I attended South Dakota State University in Brookings. There were not any accredited on-line universities at the time. So I drove over 500 miles a week to go to school. That lasted for about one semester and I was done. They were great. The faculty got me through to the end. Further, one of my class mates went to be the President of the University and another has numerous awards for developing a program so that local students could go to another country to study their criminal justice system. He also has numerous publications and awards. As this is being written, he is writing a second edition of a book on this type of teaching. He is/was an excellent professor.

In one way or another, I taught from 1966 to 2010. Since then I have been writing and publishing. Look me up. I am at joelsnell.com/

GIRLS ON THE BEACH

At most universities in my time, there was a dress code for males and another were for females. Most of the time, the young ladies wore corsets, tight skirts, breast enhancements, make- up, tight dress pants, push up bras, special eyeliner, and hair spray. Then there was panty hose, painted toes, high heels (sometimes) eye lens contacts, eye shadow and more. Numerous make up products could be used to

lighten or darken various portions of the face. Most white* girls need to wear a darker shade to get orange or tan. That meant that one had to get the right shades in the right places to increase their chances of getting a date or getting a mate.

The males were hopefully taking a bath a week. I wore any suits that matched and covered my skinny body. "Twiggy" was in the all the fashion around this time. At my 10 year reunion, the women were thinner than when they graduated. By then I was getting fuller. Okay, I was getting fatter or heavier. I was so pleased. When folks that I knew mention my weight, I was really high. Well, I may have misperceived it what they said was a compliment. *My school was "integrated", but the sororities and fraternities were segregated.

CALIFORNIA GIRLS

That I know of, most did not "jog" or use exercise equipment. However, there was always a rumor about which girls had "nose bobs." Further, if they wore jeans that had to be ironed. Many also used numerous hair products like volumizers, hair sheen, hair dyes, curls created with a hot wand. Or, they got a "permanent" that created fuller hair.

Further, they took diet pills. It was something like speed and with a special compliment of tiny food. Conversations between girls included a great deal about diets. Later, girls would starve themselves to death. Many would hide in the back of the books section of the library and fall asleep when the speed slowed down. After she woke up, she removed the saliva from her face and checked in her compact mirror if her appearance was ideal. If you wanted to have a smaller nose, you put the tan product on top and a very light color on the tip of your nose.

At one time, an incredible smart and attractive young lady wanted my notes. She had been gone from class for a day, so I dropped them off. She had a newspaper covering her face, and I thought that she did not want me to see her without her make-up. So I walked in her living room and we both sat down. She still had the Sunday edition over her face.

Quickly, I thought that I would talk about meteorology. It was a subject neither of us knew about. I made a few comments that I have no idea if they were accurate. I told her that I had a new hobby. It was the weather. However, I wanted the surprise to be merciful. So I cut it short and headed for the door. I still idealize her today. She must be 80. She is also very accomplished.

Can you imagine all this? Everyone was as phony as their makeup. Later, wearing a pair of jeans and being without a bra became the standard. Then that changed. Young women still struggle with their bodies. If you can be 90 pounds and look like you are 14 year old girl she should be happy.

HOUSE MOTHERS

Fraternities with housing generally have some type of authority that lives with them. At one time "house mothers" had their own apartment and took care of the problems, regulations, and rules of the fraternity. I believe that fraternities are best for males who want to go on in business and sales. They need a BA degree.

Unfortunately, some really bad things can happen. Please recall that we have a bunch of males all under 30. Can you trust them? I would suggest a large male of color who can intimidate members to stop killing each other. When I went through hazing, I had to get a guy

across a pond to an island and back. And so this guy is/was smart, strong, and cannot swim. Ah the wonders of it all. Worst of all, a pledge must drink some garbage, roll it around in their mouth and then turn around vomit on the face of another pledge who has his mouth open and blinders across his eyes.

I do know that something is going on. Hopefully for your fraternity, a young female can not go up to the second floor and bottle that she has does not have any date rape chemicals.

PO

Sexually repressed males watch porn. My first time, the room was dark and the males were moaning. All you could hear was the movie projector. The first reel was called "colored people." It was about as loving and affectionate as one would want. Further, it was fair. I was really aroused.

The next three reels were women being beat up, raped, humiliated and related. One was called "mother-daughter" and both generations were basically thrown around by fat guys with tattoos. I was in shock all week- end and I could only talk with my psychiatrist.

It's a "hard habit" to break.

NOVEMBER 22, 1962

No, you did not read that in a wrong way. President Kennedy would die one year later. However, after a party and a restaurant visit, 4 very attractive folks were ripped apart. Bob driving in a blue and white, 4 door Oldsmobile, ran into a train. The two males were fraternity

brothers and one of them was my “big” brother. The watches on the body stopped at or around late 2:15.

The car-train crash occurred at the edge of the city. Hunters found parts of the body scattered over a fairly large area. City authorities gathered the parts, autopsied them, and sent them to their respective mortuaries.

I found out about it the next morning. That night, I headed for a large castle like house. As I was passing, I could see a fraternity brother sitting in his car all alone with his head in his hands. Sorrow and fear were mixed together in my mind. I finally saw Jerry as he was in an open casket covered by a scrim. That is netting that blocks the one that is dead much of the details blurred together. His face was molded together and a wig covered his head.

Jerry was absolutely handsome. One night the two of us stopped by my parents’ home where my mother had invited a gathering of women for some event. Most were middle age. When Jerry stepped in the place, all the women went absolutely quiet. I followed and could see their reactions. We were brief, I got what I wanted and we left.

There were days of stories and pictures of these folks. Many had short and good stories about them. For 4 students, there was considerable coverage.

5 years later, I ran into a brother. I asked how the family was doing and he said nothing had changed. In Jerry’s room nothing had been moved. It was as if Jerry went to the university and would return later that day. As this is being written, both parents are gone, another young brother, and Jerry were also dead.

NOVEMBER 22, 1963

Indeed, President Kennedy was one of the most popular presidents among all of them. Critics are quick to point out, that he made mistakes, sins and did not get a lot of legislation completed. Okay. The ghost of Kennedy brought forth numerous legislation. A number of presidents used his name before they talked about what they wanted. There are more statues around the world that have JFK images than any other president. And, so it goes.

I recall sitting in the “Ouampi” room at the Pi Kap table at Omaha University, perhaps 10 feet away from a huge television. It was on the CBS station and a flurry (neurotransmitters) cross-crossed the huge room. I saw in real time Walter Cronkite look over his right shoulder and indicate that the President John F. Kennedy died at 1 PM Central Standard Time, November 22nd, 1963. I watched the television for awhile and gathered a couple friends who were girls and we drove around the city. All the stations had “dirges” and sorrowful music as their offering.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

In the summer of 63, I was introduced to the Beach Boys by a fraternity brother. I loved the harmony. By 64’ they had 4 albums in the HOT 100. By 65’ a girl friend kept bringing me another album. I was overjoyed. However, she was between boyfriends and she dropped me and went back to her old boy friend. I think that it was like “friends” with benefits. When she called to tell me it was over, I promised to avoid her and not to stalk her or bother her. I saw her a few times after that, but it was over.

I wasn't over the Beach Boys. Some Rock group ranked the band as the #1 AMERICAN band. They have 100 million units in sales and 39 TOP 40 HITS. That is more than any other American band. 80 songs have charted all over the world. They have performed 5,500 concerts in 60 years. Two albums PET SOUNDS and SMILE are top critical and award winning albums. 95% of the population recognized their name.

Okay. I also love the Beatles and have a nice collection. On the other hand my former girl friend has passed. I really hope that her old boy friend loved her right up to the end. As I write, most of my friends are now in their graves. The Silent Generation is leaving as we came in. When the Boomers die, there should be an incredible explosion and the mortuaries will be packed with bodies that have arrived on this side, stayed for a while, and then left making big time history.

NOT WOODSTOCK

Here is the rub. The Boomers came into this world; they were usually an additional child from the usual two-some. Everywhere that I went construction and building were being prepared for the sweaty masses. I still remember a very dedicated Science teacher trying to scream over the crews who were creating or forming more cement stuff just outside the window of the first floor. Further, the window had to be open because we did not have air conditioning. I accidentally said "a alcohol burner" and she screamed that it was AN alcohol burner. I wanted to be somewhere else.. Additionally, there was dust and dirt everywhere that came through the windows. The BOOMERS were just down the hall and they were creeps. Creeps amongst others make history. When you got home, you met the GREATEST generation. They were smug and all

knowing. That is why you may have never have heard of the SILENT GENERATION.

RUBICON

The teachers were the GREATEST and the upcoming students were the BOOMERS. Sex Ed was a joke. It seemed to me about my junior year numerous females dropped out of school. Remember the little girl that I told you about who played "Doctor and Nurse" with me? That was early in the book. I really got hit and whipped. She became a mom when she was 14. I so often think about her. What is the standard answer? Well, she is dead and left behind a 50 or 60 year old or something. How about those kids at the Benson Theater who threw Holloway bars at the screen? Dead. So many who listened to the music at Steve's Grill? Dead. I have had 4 Near Deaths. Maybe the 5th one I'll be Dead Dead. To make matters worse, I grew my hair long and taught BOOMERS. I heard a lot of Boomer music and enjoyed it. When AMERICAN GRAFFITI (movie) made it big, the Beach Boys were destigmatized and became popular again.

DANA DAYS

A friend got me a real job at a college about 20 miles north of Omaha. Dana was one of the two Danish schools in the United States. In its prime, Dana look like a rendition of a movie in which the back drop would be a small campus in which all kinds of things occurred.

I recall my first encounter with a professor who was particularly rude. I had just finished my master's degree and was feeling relieved. He asked me about my background and I mentioned my new masters. He just

said or muttered something and that was it. Within a year, I was working on a doctorate.

In those days, they did not have an accredited only school, so I would travel over 500 miles round trip to get there. Dana was special. I was able to try all kinds of teaching strategies and we had an interim term where we could visit various places.

It was tough to teach all these young females. They were at the peak of their life and very pleasant, but the main thing was that I could keep things interesting. I would listen to their problems and used various counseling strategies to help them. I always had a name and number of a certified psychiatrist for medications and related.

One night, we had singer-song writer for entertainment. The students were in their low point of the semester and he did a really fine job. He nearly caused the roof to blow off the auditorium.

Most of my friends and my wife's relative lived just 20 miles away. On weekends, we would pack on Friday night and spend Saturday and a good part of Sunday right back in Omaha. In Blair where Dana was located, I always wanted to watch what I said. The town was small but growing because of its location near the larger city. There was a just thing that I could do in the city that was not outrageous, but still I would be suspect in Blair.

During Vietnam, a student was stabbed by a citizen of the town.

MOM and DAD

My parents were a handsome couple and they could well serve as a middle class folks. My dad did lose some money on investing in Oil wells

that never gushed. He also owned a duplex, house, and a Laundromat. My job was to keep it clean and my Uncle Bill fixed the machines. Finally, my father sold it and the last time that I saw it, it had become a church. Imagine an old building with a really crummy basement sometimes filled puddles of water and then above it was a 30 by 20 church chapel.

That was it. However, there is a story there. Prostitutes that were in the low point of their life would wash and dry their clothes there. If they could find a trick, they took them across the street to a really tough bar. In the back of the bar in the alley they could do their work. In a short period of time I could go there and then later be among brick mansions on my way home. My parents lived just beyond the brick streets. I love the house but I wished that I could live among those beautiful homes in Country Club area.

On December 10, 1967, I and another grad student went door to door to these homes and passed out a flyer to vote for an increase of funds for Omaha University. I had driven by these places thousands of times. Yet, I never was able to go to the door and place a piece of paper on their door knob. The more houses that I did the more manic that I got. The flyer that I put on the house gave me permission to see so much of those houses. I was going into a beautiful but forbidden area of a social psychological and geographical area of my life. I was so high until I started drinking a beer at Louis Bar. The booze calmed the mania.

Louis bar was a mainstay of the neighborhood. He lived among the brick houses and drove a great big gray Packard back to his home. His blue collar bar was next to his super market. It was huge and always had the lowest prices. Further during good weather he had a vegetable

stand outside the bar. I recall going into the bar and seeing this one lady sitting on a stool drinking and smoking. Years later, I stopped in and there she was at the same stool doing the same thing. To me it was sad, but I never talked to her or the bartender .

Louis super and bar covered a huge storage area filled with groceries. There he would supply the place and buy in huge quantities. After he died the family took it over and a number of elderly that lived by went to Louis. Then a new corporate chain that made the whole area filled with cement, car wash, gas, and a small junk food place. You have seen hundreds of them.

GRANDMA'S HOUSE

My Grandma Annie lived around 30 and Meredith Street in North Omaha. Annie was my most favorite of all the Snell family. Her home was really middle class for its time. Today, there is a post office and parking. In my childhood, she would take us in on Sunday afternoons.

We rode over to her house in a swept back blue Oldsmobile. Dad would drive as Mom did not know how to drive until she was about 40 years old. I loved my grandma. She was an all white Swede who came over on the boat. She took care of my father and his brother Bill along with a niece.

My mother's father and all white did the same thing. He had numerous brothers and sisters and he was a twin. Grandma was doing well when her husband died of lead in his nasal area... Although the death certificate said that he passed by a nervous breakdown.it was wrong. His name was George and he had a printing business. Often when he

was creating a new document he used “hot type.” That meant that he inhaled lead steam all day long. It killed him.

My grandma did not have a lot, so she took in borders. They all lived on the second floor. The first had a vestibule in which grandma would sleep. The living room was tiny, but the dining room was huge. So was the kitchen. There was also a pantry and back door. The front had a big porch.

Second floor had the twins in the master bedroom and there was also a big closet filled with special items of hers. It also had a wood smell to it. The back had a bathroom, a bedroom and the “painter man’s” room. Grandma worried about him because he usually drank heavily and would make terrible sounds. One summer, Grandma’s master bedroom became empty so she slept there and invited me to sleep on the other side.

I recall asking an embarrassing question. Why didn’t she go to church? She said that she would but that she had a bad experience. Her mother tried to kill her with a knife. She chased Annie all over the yard. She would yell at her and tried to take a swipe at her. The police stopped by and put her in a paddy wagon. She was placed in a big house just outside of Omaha. There she would get up in the morning and drink water all day long. Why? The water would cleanse her innards and crazy toxins would be removed by the water. There are some today, that you sit in water with some chemical element and helps your disposition

After she got “well” she came home and became a Born Again Christian. My grandma began to hear sermons all day long. Zealotry was the name and she would give a sermon on the front porch and give

away much of her belongings. She talked Bible all the time. When she died my grandma would pray and then go on with her life. The Omaha Bee or the Omaha World Herald ran a story about Annie's mom. It was something like that the Poor would grieve for the loss of Annie's mom. My father would get dressed up and go to the Unitarian church. If he sang in the service, he would get one dollar. Unitarians were really nice people and took a liking to my dad. However, they used a lot of big words some of this would go over my Dad's head.

His father was laid on the dining room table mumbling of things that never were. Grandma was in the kitchen cooking medicines and medical type food for my Grandpa George. He then died and Grandma would go out to Forest Lawn cemetery to visit his grave on Sunday afternoons. She could take the trolley and be able to walk to the family plot.

One Friday night, it was March of 1949, Grandma Annie died. I was in complete shock. I cried and cried, and Dode a neighbor held me as I shook a fist at a picture of Jesus. Why did he take Grandma? Dode tried to explain that it was not something bad that Jesus had done. Rather, death was a way of life. Later in life, I was told my grandmother went to the medical doctor the day before. He told her that she was in great shape. The next afternoon, she was walking upstairs and on the third step she crumbled over and died immediately. 50 years later, I came home early and sat in silence looking at my grandma's picture.

GRANDMA DODE

When we lived on 58th street, there was a lady that lived with her mother that was nearby. She had acromagly. That is a disease strongly impacted by the putitary gland misfiring. It affects nearly all parts of the body and learning for them is difficult. One's appearance has a squarish, boxy look.

After Grandma Annie died, Grandma Dode took over. The only time we would return to Annie's house was to repair and refurbish from the previous tennant . So I was able to return to see the house and all the memories. I really did a bad job on one wall, but Uncle Bill fixed it. So we repainted with clay based paint. It was new to us and a lot less sloppy than oil based. I remember the basement. There was a cement floor but part of the last layer before the first floor had some other material just like the Babcock house.

In those days, Dode would call us on a 40 call line. That meant if she called less than 40 calls a month, she would get a discount. So, she rang 2 times over to our house. We knew that it was her and we would call her. When Dode went into an elder care, she really looked forward to watching LAWERENCE WELK. I recall how I would walk down the hall and hear his music from room to room. I wondered what people would like after their time in the world outside the "home."

Folks some things don't change. Welk is still on. I saw the end of the big band with Glenn Miller and Les Elgart. Welk is not that. I would also take her on Christmas Eve around the city where we could see the city lights on people's houses.

My wife and I drove over to her funeral held in the eldercare. I tore a bit of ribbon from her body to save her memories. That was it. All of that generation has gone. What has changed is that old folks now wear

jeans. By then, the Right had beaten the Left and us now a few presidents that are Center Left. However, the Silent Generation did not do much and inequality continued to change to a greater degree. THE SILENT GENERATION DID NOT MARCH ON. WE DIED OFF.

JUDY AND JAY

Both my sister and brother were popular in school for my parents, Judy was the best. She had their values and she was a talent including National Honor Society.

Jay graduated from a prestigious seminary and served in Vietnam. The worst part of his job was finding dead bodies in the surrounding parks where my family lived. People often kill themselves in parks. He adopted a Black Asian child and she now lives in the east.

SPENCER'S PARTY

Spencer's birthday and mine were a day apart. So that meant that we might celebrate together. Imagine Spencer's mom did not know how to drive a car like my mother. So she marched 10 little boys from 60th and Ames to the Benson Theater. This movie house was the same one where kids would throw Holloway bars at each other or the screen. It was about a mile from Spencer's house. We first gathered at his house and it was so pretty. It was about 15 feet above the road. Then she marched down 60th and onto the movie.

The show should have been very interesting as it was called AFRICAN ADVENTURES. Unfortunately, part of the movie had lots of young girls without bras. Please recall not all cultures are the same and some dressed differently. So here are the little boys that are in heat. They

have erections for a couple of hours. That can be painful and it was not the show that Spencer's mother wanted us to see.

So she marched back to Spencer's house, opened presents, we ate cake and I still vividly remember that birthday party. As this is being written Spencer was part Anglo & Spanish. He also was a devout Lutheran.

He died a few months ago. Another SILENT GENERATION passes on.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

Over the Christmas season we went to Albuquerque to celebrate the holidays. Over the back fence of my sister's was a national park with the Sandia Mountains. My wife and I went to the edge of the mountain. As Jennifer was pregnant, she climbed a small portion. I climbed to the top of the first level. Looked over the area and headed back. Wow! The sloop was not that hard and not that high. However, I am a cautious fellow so the little trek was still something that I plan never to do again.

Actually if you want to say you climbed a mountain and have all the details, I will sell it to you for 1,000 dollars. I would prefer cash rather than a check. There were also luminarios which were little sacks with sand in them and an I lit candle to light the path for visitors to see the lighting on the houses. That's Albuquerque!

A ROOM WITHOUT A CEILING

On another visit to my sister's house, I discovered that we were going to a friend's house into a gated community with houses placed in many directions filled with woods. I went past one room that looked like a Craftsman. I could see into the room because the door was all glass.

I am still looking when up close I could see that the material for the furniture was composed of material that one would have on their patio. However, you could not see that right away. What a house?

So finally, I looked up. There was a sky, a real sky. The lighting was built into the house so there was not an electrical problem. So? The house had a ceiling that with the touch of a button it rolled out of the wall and over the ceiling. It was attractive and yet it tough enough to withhold rain and/ or snow.

Our house is nearly at the top of the city. During Balloon day or something like that the balloons would only be a few hundred feet above us. In the back of mind, there is a corner where I could put a turret and be able to see all along the Cedar River. That change would be in the same league as the hidden ceiling.

ALLEYS

In my neighborhood in Omaha ,we had alleys. They were rough roads that garbage trucks drove down to pick up the residue. HOWEVER, there was this one alley of the many that had a cement surface. Can you imagine? At one end of the alley was very high and steep and the other was one story down. So we got our wagons out and put on football helmets to rush down the alley. We had races. The major goal was to finish first and run the other guy of the road into a cement wall.

The football helmet helped, but I did break my arm. On second thought maybe I broke it at the play ground? That was so long ago. My mother took a picture of my brother and me. He had surgery on his ears and I had a cast for my broken arm. We called that adventure.

SHANNON/ MAMA'S CRYING AGAIN

My Aunt Helen used to send us letters that indicated our names PLUS the word ANIMALS. We have had so many that I thought that I would share some with you. Losing a cat or dog is like losing a PET-KID. There are pet cemeteries, and seminarians and related. We have had so many. We live in the top of a city with wild life all around us.

My first introduction to pet animals was Peppy and Penny. They were in the kitchen of Grandma Dode. We chose Peppy and spent years with the dog. We loved the cocker spaniel. However, Cesar Milan was not around those days. Brian Wilson's mother said that dogs can "read" your moods and later the Beach Boys got a huge hit with GOOD VIBRATIONS.

Recently, those vibrations can be detected. They are called "neurotransmitters" and evolved from social neuroscience. So you may feel that there is something about another person but you don't get it from their appearance, their non-verbal's or voice. It is those neurotransmitters. For awhile, Kyrlian photography was supposed to pick up those vibes, but it turned out that the vibes were something else.

Peppy knew how to manipulate us. He really did some damage to our house. There were 4 of us crying as we were going to the vet's to put Peppy asleep. He was so very sick and he was shaking. I really had a hard cry. As a ten year old, boys were not supposed to cry. I remember the relief that I had after the sorrow.

SKIPPY

A daschund came next. Of course we made the same mistakes and he got away with everything. His favorite activity was to masturbate in the

midst of a number of folks who were trying to carry on conversation. Skippy would sit on the bed as I was studying. I had to give him up when I went away to college for one semester. My big problem at the college was that I could not study. Nor did I share the rural background of my fellow students. Later, a professor hit on me so I wanted to go to what was then called Omaha University. I went to visit Skippy with his new owner and he paid very little attention to me.

CARS

I have many dog stories, but I want to mix this up. Some of my cars were that of the family. We had 5 cars of which some worked a lot better than others. I had a dog of a car with a 1949 Chevrolet fastback. (Do you notice how I got dogs and cars together?) At any rate, the next was a Brown car that was 1948 English Ford Anglia. Its top speed was 60 miles an hour. So it was a in- town car. We had it repainted 1957 Mercury blue and Spinners hubcaps on it. Later, I sold it to a person who said he would keep it. He didn't do that. It ended in car shows because somebody put it a huge engine in the car, but it still had the same color blue Sir Paul McCartney used one in GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET. Or, it was something like that.

Talking about dogs, I had a 1949 Packard that did a bunch of tricks. Most of the time, it was a repair shop. They don't make Packard's any more. But they do make MG'S and I had a 1956 red convertible. I was able to put a tape recorder in it and as well as an ice chest.

Perhaps, my biggest thrill was a 1966 Mustang convertible. It was red and the story was that I was at my parent's house sitting on the couch. My father came in and said, "how would like a new car?" I stumbled

and fumbled, but finally came out on the affirmative. It was a beautiful car and my father was so happy because he could get a good deal on it.

Now I had a pretty car. It was a convertible. I just got dumped by a really neat girl and then I found another that was like her. She was smart and pretty. Fortunately, she said she did not want any kids so I had a shot at a doctorate. You have to really check out a future partner. When they come from a religious organization that has lots of kids, run. Each child requires about 300, dollars and adds to the second shift after work. Unlike the past, kids worked hard all day on a farm or in factory. So by the time they come home they are exhausted and easy to live with. I wanted a blue collar or lower middle class female because I wanted to have some money in the bank.

Love conquers all. Well, no that does not generally happen. The house was a mess and I felt that she would not be a big spender. Her mother thought that I was too skinny and her father had a wave of nausea across his face when he saw me.

BLACKSTONE

The residential hotel and after World War 2 featured stars of stage and screen. You could get a drink in the "Cottonwood Room." However the main dining room was just that. After dinner, I paid and we headed toward the parking lot. I had 2 Miller High Lifes beers in me and was feeling good. As we were walking toward the car, she asked me to get married. I mumbled something and 10 steps later realized that she had proposed. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. She remembers that I asked her to get married. We had known each other for 10 days. So 55 years later, I still think that I was right. Unfortunately, she differs.

I had little savings and I had yet earned my master's degree. Her wedding dress cost nineteen dollars. My mother bought her a wedding ring. We had a short wedding in the Nebraska Chapel of St. Cecil's. Bombs were going off around the city. Senator Robert F. Kennedy was being buried this day. We went to a third rate motel about 20 miles away. It had a swimming pool and a place to lie on the beach.

By Monday, we were both back at work. She worked at a Big Box Discount house and I worked on my thesis. Later in the summer, I successfully defended my work and we moved to Blair. Nebraska.

To take a break from my work on thesis, I would take a short swim and then hang my trunks on a railing just outside our door. Can you imagine Jennifer's feelings when she had been work all day and saw my swim trunks just hanging there?

By fall, she was going to Omaha University and I was teaching at Dana College. The pay was low and I had to get a doctorate. Let's get back to cars and dogs.

SCRUFFY AND SNOOPY

We got two cats and they were just the opposite. Scruffy was adventuresome and Snoopy was cautious. Scruffy jumped off the second floor balcony of our apartment and disappeared into the woods. Snoopy stayed with us for years.

In fact, we moved a number of times and Snoopy stayed right there.

THREE DOG NIGHT

Well we had three dogs and three cars. The dogs were better than the cars. MAXWELL was a gentle cocker spaniel plus other things. We had

him from being a puppy to death. He lived in a lot of places and was known to lick the faces of the cats. I am not sure that they wanted to be licked, but they did their duty. As time went on, we were able to get a fence around the back yard and Max was very happy. We also had a porch built on the back. We added a Cathedral ceiling so we had room for all of us sitting on patio chairs and a related table.

Then one night Max disappeared. He died at the top of the stairs. Our oldest son found him and wrapped him in something and took him to the nearby woods. We don't know where, because our son wanted us to be at peace.

We found a book about dogs. Not much said about Jack Russell terriers. Later we saw another book that indicated that this breed was the absolute WORST dog to have in a house. His name was WILSON. From bottom to top of the house, he did damage. He ripped off wallpaper, chewed on shoes, tore into a couch and did just about everything one would not want in a dog.

As time went on, he became very sick. We took him to the vet and they had a special room for the ending of a Pet-Kid. It was half chapel and half hospital. He was surrounded by medical people and loved ones. Taped to the bottom of his right paw were two tubes. One was an injection of tranquilizers and the other a no return sleep chemical.

I was head to head and face to face with him. With the tranquilizer, his eyes lit up. There was a special glow about him. With the second, his eyes went straight up into his brain. Dead. I gave a long guttural cry. We were all crying even the Vet who has seen many of these. Like other bereaved, we briefly talked about seeing him again like where or when.

We were ushered out the back door. It was a cloudy day and chilly. We headed for home.

Surely, we should be relieved. Nope. Wilson knew all the tricks to be a lovable dog. Of course I don't know, but his behavior modification was built step by step.

BENSON

Within 6 weeks, we had another dog. We were getting older and this guy was strong and smart. Somebody dumped him on the highway. This time, we were ready. We had a pet trainer, a number of visitors with expertise on dogs, and as a last resort, an animal psychic.

Over the years, carpeting was replaced by wood. Many people were doing this to maintain themselves among the ranks of social class. Our motives were entirely different. We wanted a material that could not be chewed, permit urine stains, as well as other maladies. By the fifth year, we could no longer handle him and gave back to the shelter. We wanted him to be put to sleep. Well, no they thought that we just could not handle him which was true, but they thought that given the right setting he had about another 5 years to go. Within weeks, we got a call. Benson was dead.

3 DOGS

KIDS! It was time to sell the Mustang for a Pinto. The price was attractive and it sold more cars than any of the competition. There were some rumors, but we jumped. SO PINTO # 1 was ours. It also had some problems, but we needed another car that could get me from Omaha to Brookings, South Dakota. It was at least a 500 mile round trip. I still remember how I was afraid the thing would fall apart.

However, I dropped out of the program after the first semester. PINTO #2 was a dog, but it got me through as well as my next job as writer-researcher for a government agency and a university. That was the next semester.

PINTO#3 was strictly our fault. It got us through some really tough times. All the Pintos had head bolt heaters that kept the engines warm and not one of them blew up if it was hit by someone else. We then learned a very important lesson. I had turned my cheek on the Ford because Henry Ford screwed my grandfather by making a “knock off” of something to do with the starter on a car. My grandfather sued him but lost to some traveling lawyers who lawyered on behalf of Henry. By that time, I also learned by that Henry was a good friend of Adolph Hitler We then happened on to TOYOTA. We have been driving them ever since.

APRIL 8, 1978

It was on a Saturday and I was taking care of the boys at the cabin. I got a phone call from the Dean of the school. “When are you going to finish your PhD? I said that I both worked and went to school since 1961. Further, I was making eleven thousand dollars a year. I don’t remember the health plan but it was wanting. Well then he said, that’s that. He hung up. Once before the president said that I had tenure. So what does this mean? I looked in a national education periodical and saw a school that was not faraway and had a big lake. Wow.

I answered the ad and had to do a dog and pony for the job. 75 people applied and I was second. The third person was my stat. teacher at Brookings. The first person took a job at a university nearby and so I got the job. I think the Dean was pleased. However, I discovered that the

folks at the school really liked me. So the Dean got hit with a bathtub full of awful. He hustled over and asked if I would like to change my mind. I said no. That was it.

Now it would take 20 years to get over failing my doctorate. What was the trade? My salary doubled. My health plan was the greatest. No one was bothered that I was a member of the Catholic Church or the Unitarian church. I did not have to worry about getting a doctorate. So now what do I do to show that in fact I did have doctoral hours in my work? The easy one was ABD. That meant that I finished course work, comps, orals dissertation, and related. So an ABD would be a lie. At the time, there were not any accredited PhDs. So now it was spinning my head to finish with some acronym that said a Masters with hours beyond. I finally got down to two. One was PhD Studies 1971-76 or MA, Masters Equivalent. The latter meant that I had 30 or 40 doctoral hours. Further, my old school closed. It took them years to find a buyer. I did the right thing.

CATS ON A HOT TIN ROOF

SNOOPY stayed with us for a long time. Once he was scratched by CRUISER. He yelled and then had to lick CRUISER. The bully tried to corner WENDY one of the best creatures on the earth .He not only brushed against you, but he would put his paw on your nose. Finally, I cornered CRUISER and threw him across the front yard... GROVER had babies at the cottage. SNOOPY stayed away. Finally, at the house on Alma Drive, he stretched out in the basement and died. Snoopy was so fine.

OSCAR AND ERNIE WERE A PAIR. OSCAR stayed in the back yard, but ERNIE would chase rabbits until he fell over with exhaustion. He would also fall asleep in the street. ANNIE AND ELLIE WERE two sisters and ELLIE soon ran off. ANNIE stayed in the basement all of her life. She would hide in various places and come up to get breakfast and make friends with WILSON. It did not work out. WILSON would have nothing to do with her and so she headed back to the basement. That bottom floor smelled of urine so we had the carpet tore up and put ANNIE to sleep. BENSON was tough to live with. He would ask to go outside and when he was out there, he looked around, came back in. After he was back in the urinated on something nice.

Then we had to let BENSON go and ALI ran off. SCOUT came to our house and stayed in one of the heated houses for raccoons, possums, and related. I swear both the inside of the house and outside remained clean and stayed clean. We had one DOE with a broken leg and she stayed around for a while. WILD TURKEY would come in the front yard. If we were in the car, they would come over and pick at the window. They were about five feet tall. SCOUT is the best cat that we have had. He likes to sleep in the bowl of the sink. That is unless you beg him to sleep at the bottom of the bed.

BULLIES

His name was Lee and he liked to hit us and scare us. He looked the part and loved the role. Then one day Lee had to face some real trouble. David Brown came across the street from Rose Hill and started pushing Lee around. Lee kept backing up saying he did not want to fight. Now, that is what they do. David hit him, punched him, slapped

him, and knocked him to the ground. Lee then got up and got knocked down again. In the mean time, the rest of us cheered. Lee finally and sheepishly headed for home.

Our state now encourages teachers to carry guns. What do you think the parents of a bully had his foot shot “feel?” Further, what do you think that the other students would feel if they knew a bully was a threat that a teacher had a gun to back them off? Now I am just thinking out loud. It will happen someday and it could be worse. I think the best idea is a “bully school.” Plainly, the other students could just help the teacher.

LITTLE BOXES NOT THE SAME

THE CABIN is the house that I miss the most. It looked over to the Iowa side of the Missouri. We added two rooms with shutters so you could make it big inside or keep it small. Outside one room was a pretty screened in porch. For such a little place, we had 4 bedrooms, living room and dining area. It was painted brown. We put in a new bathroom. In the back was a six foot fence with a gazebo and a little play house. Both Grover and Snoopy lived there. Roughly there were ten other cottages that were about 15 feet higher. Below were a restaurant and a boat mooring? Our oldest son likes to ride on the car when we were traveling 3 to 5 miles an hour. There was an incredible amount of trees with wetlands to the north. Leaving there was so tough, but that will be discussed later. In between, a huge flood mixed with the river destroyed all the cabins and the marina. So the owner tore out all the cottages and the marina/restaurant. He then established a Recreational Vehicle park with a marina below of which all the doors could be opened so the entertainment would not be

destroyed. There was a very strong kitchen/refrigerator/storage area that looked like a strong tank. It was also waterproof.

We were so close to the woods that most thought that it ended one half blocks before it did. We had to call ahead to see if the roads were open so that we could get to town.

One time a fleet of cars were parked at what appeared to be the end of the road. To my left, there were 7 guys standing around and one girl laying in a passive submissive position with her skirt up and legs open for the first entry. Jennifer saw it and so we told the boys to look in the opposite area where there was an imaginary deer that was running from hunters.

When we got to the cottage, we called the police and that was all we knew. I believe that many cars turned around and headed for town. If we hit bottom, we also got by heaven's gate. Our oldest swallowed a nickel. He was in a back room and started crying, Fortunately, I grabbed him from the back and did the Hem liker motion and out came the nickel. His face was blue, but he was alive.

ALMA DRIVE.

This was a house that I had nightmares about. Roughly a hundred of them were built in the city. We could afford the house and kept it for ten years. It was a dog. (You have heard that word before.) It was white so we had it painted red. Next we had black shutters attached along with a complimentary awning. In the back, we had a screened in porch with a fence that surrounded the back yard. We had an attachment at the end of the drive and there we could place tools and related.

Over the years, we had a non-loading wall removed with a catty corner mirror that was totally clear and filled a wall that went from floor to ceiling. Then we ran a wooded fence right into the mirror. At the other end of the hall, we did the same thing. So no matter which way you looked you “felt” space.

We also had an opening from the roof. We also closed the doors to the boy’s rooms which were usually a mess. So no where you looked you saw space. We turned down the thermostat so that one felt cooler and wanted more heat.

That created a “feeling” of space. The television was located at the only open wall and we bought downside furniture.

The basement had a small office for my wife. There was a play area for the boys. The back room was a den and on the other side there was non-conforming bedroom with closet. As you headed down stairs, there was an open room for storage and a washer and dryer.

By spring, the entire basement was flooded. We noticed on the mortgage that many folks had lived there. So we cleaned up and rather put it on the market, we had a sump pump put it. The house was really that important. Further, there was a great big green belt around the house. Importantly, all the green surrounding the house was now filled and there were more trees up the street. The kids loved to play in the creek which was not far from our house.

Once Jennifer got a promotion, we put the house up for sale. It sold in one afternoon.

TREES

Almost three years ago about half of the trees were killed by a DURECHO. That means that it is a tornado, but the wind does not twirl, rather it goes in straight broad brushes. It kills trees and branches. So, the city used a number of strategies and this spring the trees are coming back. Dead trees were sectioned and drug to MT. TRASHMORE. There is another mountain that we can have in our city. Trees are wonderful and make a nice canopy for the city. Further, a lot of improvements are being completed so that we should be in good shape in a few years.

PEONY PARK

Wikipedia does a wonderful job describing Nebraska's Disneyland. It had a huge pool, park, outside terrace, band shell and later roller coasters. They had at least 2 or 3 water slides. I got just three stories or so to tell you about the place. My first starts with an attractive young lady who had a one piece on. She lay on a big bath towel and carried a beauty box filled with curlers, combs, mirrors, make up and a transistor radio. I still remember the song played on the radio. It was Les Paul and Mary Ford singing one of their favorite tunes. The guitar playing was incredible. It was the first song that I heard in that had layered guitar work and overdubbed singing. It was magic. Now you thought that I was going to talk about the young lady. When she saw me, she had a wave of nausea roll over her face. Now you have heard this one before with my father-in laws first impression of me. I pretended not to notice.

When I got back with my friends, I took an anti-depressant. The second is really heavy. I was in the ballroom with a very attractive lady. We were dancing to Eddie Haddad and his big band. There came a lull in song and I kissed her. She first slapped me in the face and then kicked

me in my genital. Her name was Connie and that was it. Years ago, we met again on Face book. As soon as she heard my voice, she shut me down.

This is the best story. Our oldest son wanted to ride in a little car of cars that went around and around. Tears ran down his face and he was laughing. This is the guy that swallowed the nickel. At any rate, it finally was time to go. This is one of the wonderful stories. We left and genuinely said good bye to Peony Park until next year.

We thought erroneously that he would really be happy to make the big jump back to that round and round cars. He slumped behind the wheel and he went through the motions. Then he gave us that look like we never saw again. So what's new?

SOCIAL MEDIA

My parent's home had two stories and a non-functional attic. That means that if you miss a board, you went through the ceiling into the second floor. As you know, I am not too handy. However, this time things worked out. We did not have air conditioning, but my father had a large fan placed just above the hallway of the second floor. On a hot day, there were the awnings, a fan that could also act as a foot rest, and a huge fan in the ataxic. Up there, I bet you can find a used Schlitz beer can. At any rate, I got a ladder and put television antennae behind the fan.

So now things are hopping and the attic is filled with fan, beer can, and a large television antennae. An electric chord went from antennae to television set on the second floor. With the TV set, you had 10 or 12 channels to choose from. At first Omaha had two channels. They were

Channel 2 which was WOW-TV. Channel 3 which were KMTV, and later KETV, channel 9. Or, CBS, NBC, and then ABC. So the rest of the channels were all from what was faraway distances. There two were from Sioux City, and one from Council Bluffs (PBS.) The rest of the channels were full with places like Des Moines. Fort Dodge, and related, If you go to 5647 Corby Street, Omaha, Nebraska, you will can see the hallway and the first room off the hall. In my parent's day, all the walls were filled with pictures of the family in various stages of life. There also was a phone booth arrangement at the end of the hall. A phone was stuck on a shelf and there was room below the shelf filled with wires of some kind.

TOYS

The only thing that I can say about the end of things is the toys that my brother and I played with did not connect with the world. Further, we had an electric train. Otherwise, there were yo-yos, slinky, and related. One can say that I was lucky to have some toys. Soon thereafter, I got a guitar and that wrapped things up. However, I haven't touched the instrument in 30 years.

My brother and I did play MONOPOLY. Now that is sad because I cheated. I can't remember the rules, but I broke them. I took big risks and lost a lot but I had a strategy to get it all back. Now does that sound familiar? In the 70's my wife and I were at my parent's place and Vice-President Nixon was paying homage to IKE. Besides getting out of the toy train, I walked along 56th St looking at the houses that were brick and big. That was 50 years ago or so. I drove by them, but as a kid I walked by them. So that is how this ends. I am right back where I started. The neighborhood that we live in has brick, but it is different.

MARCH 1, 2024

Buddy was the smallest male cat that we had. He spent most days hiding and then he would come out and stay with my wife all night. One time he got on top of a neighbor's roof so I had to get him off. At any rate, we found him in the bushes besides the woods. Buddy appeared to be hit by a car. His face was smashed together and rigor mortis had set in. I started to dig a grave and I was fumbling and crying. A neighbor, Mark Miller came over and helped me bury Buddy. What hit the most was the life was quick and cheap for Buddy. How about us? God have mercy on your soul and mine. I need to make some phone calls. What should I say?

*Rances had Dots, Marge, and my mother after her mother died. They also had John. John was "diagnosed" as a homosexual. He was given some money and told to move faraway and not be seen again.

**If there was anybody to symbolize the Silent Generation (1928-1945), it was Holden Caulfield in J.D. Salinger's *Catcher In the Rye* (1951). This lost member was a troubled soul. If you know the book, complexity and anomie seem to be everywhere that he searched. He appeared alienated, saw a phony artificial society The Boomers brought in their questioning of the Greatest generation that preceded the Boomers. The Silents were squeezed in to a forgotten group. Generations have followed and their appears an ongoing search for a more structured yet a just society.

The Greatest generation was still great, but having most of the world's competitors in ruins also helped. In the end, Holden is still stumbling and perhaps many folks feel the same way. Perhaps, Holden is the logo

for the Silent Generation. We surely need someone to help us not get lost in history.

So the end is not the end.

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