

Michael R. McGuire

**May You Have an
Interesting Wife!**

**A Story of World Travel
and of Love and Disability**



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Dedication

This book is about world travel, but also about disability—it is a dual memoir of me and my disabled wife Bonnie, our lives and our collective travels throughout the world and in the United States.

This memoir is dedicated to world travelers and those who would love to be. It is dedicated to the disabled and spouses of the disabled. Most significantly, it is dedicated to my “ever-loving”, interesting, and sometimes challenging wife Bonnie, a woman with the severe disability of paraplegia who traveled the world despite her disability. (And in Bonnie’s case, paraplegia has little to do with her being challenging.)

I coincidentally visited the Russia at the same time as a co-worker, and we both presented our travel slides at a lunch time gathering. Our slides were very different—My slides were very romantic removing obstacles from the picture such as electrical poles and wires, but his, not doing so, probably showed a much truer picture of Russia.

Be forewarned: When I write about travel in this book, the story is romantic, but when I write about disability and paraplegia, the story sometimes includes the “electrical poles and wires”. This is deliberate—I would hope the reader would not only learn about the beauty of travel but also about what life is realistically like to be a paraplegic or to be married to one.

Like many things in this world—being in love, being in war, being a surgeon, or having a child—living and traveling with a disabled person has its own very special, heightened, form of romanticism.

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1

Bonnie Chin

The first thing I noticed about Bonnie was her smile. She was in a wheelchair and had a blanket covering her. We were at a singles meeting at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in San Francisco. The large crowd that had attended the singles group broke up into smaller groups and now, afterwards, everyone was leaving for home. I had not found anyone I was interested in in my group. As we were about to leave, all I noticed was Bonnie's smile—she was not looking at anyone in particular, and certainly not at me.

Being shy, I probably would have **not** tried to get her telephone number or even have said hello, but a fellow who promised to give Bonnie a ride back to her home found another woman he was interested in. The fellow asked the crowd if anyone could take Bonnie back to her home. I happily agreed.

Bonnie, I found out, had rolled her wheelchair down 2 miles of steep hills from Pacific Heights to the church. She was used to going back up the hill, but it would have taken her three times as long.

Bonnie hopped from her wheelchair into my car's passenger seat, and I put her wheelchair in the trunk. Bonnie, I learned, was a paraplegic. She seemed to be particularly

interested in my having worked in Saudi Arabia for two years and that I had just returned from a trip to China.

When I got back to her apartment, there was a wheelchair ramp in front. "It's lucky you found an apartment house with a wheelchair ramp," I noted. "I own this apartment house," she said. "I had them put it in".

Having dated a few divorced women with young kids, I noticed that the children loved it when I got down to their level to talk to them. Doing the same, I knelt down on my knees to talk to Bonnie. I gave her a kiss. I asked Bonnie for a dinner date for the next night, and she happily accepted my invitation.

Bonnie was born in 1945 in San Francisco, the same year I was born in Oakland on the other side of the Bay. But she was born in April, while I was born in November, so for 6 months of the year I kiddingly like to say to my wife, "You're older than me". She hates that!

Both Bonnie's parents were from China. The Chins lived first in Salinas, California where Bonnie's father was a farmer like his relative, Ah Bing, a farmer horticulturist in Oregon for whom the Bing cherry was named. The Chins later moved to San Francisco where Bonnie was born.

Although Bonnie's father died when she was 5 years old and he was 46, she was much more like her father than her mother. Her father, like Bonnie, loved to make lists. He had

lists of Chinese friends throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and even in Cuba. In fact, Bonnie remembers her mother telling her that her father visited friends in Canada, Mexico and Cuba. In other words, he loved to travel as Bonnie loves to travel.

Bonnie's father celebrated life. Besides traveling all over North America, he wore one hundred dollar suits in the 1930's and 40's. He brought home all sorts of exotic food: fish that could not be found in the markets, brown and spotted eggs, and "fresh" snake and rabbit. He insisted that his wife buy veal for dinner, a kind of meat she never heard of. Like her father, Bonnie, as she grew older, liked to try exotic food.

Bonnie's mother, on the other hand, never learned English, was frugal, would rather limit her diet to Cantonese food if she had a choice, and never left the San Francisco Bay Area after arriving there from China until she was in her 60's. After her husband died, Bonnie's mother worked in a sweatshop, raising 6 children by herself, refusing to take charity. So although Bonnie's father was the adventurous one in the family, her mother was the hero of the family.

And some of the 6 children did some amazing things during their lives. Bonnie's eldest sister Lonnie, the first born, became a principal of what was the first elementary school in California, worked on numerous San Francisco and Chinatown civic projects including a commission to design San Francisco's new public library, and was honored by the California State Legislature by being voted the Woman of the Year. Her second oldest brother Roy was the first Asian American fireman in Oakland. Her youngest brother Phil, the youngest member of the family, was a general manager for the San Francisco Municipal

Transportation Agency under Mayor Willie Brown and worked in Sacramento for a number of California State senators. And Bonnie became quite a remarkable woman herself.

Again, all this was extraordinary in that their mother never learned English, worked in a sweatshop, and raised all her children on her own without financial assistance.

Bonnie's two other siblings, Frank and Minnie, were the complete opposites of each other. Frank, Bonnie's oldest brother, was the second born in the family after Lonnie. Like other Chinese, Bonnie's mother and father favored their eldest son Frank over the other children. Frank whenever possible would take advantage of this superior status. Minnie, even though older than Bonnie, was, on the other hand, sometimes treated by her parents like the youngest daughter.

Bonnie's father would sometimes bring home a box of chocolates for his family. The eldest son (Frank) would get the first choice, the second oldest son would get the next choice and so on. The eldest daughter (Lonnie) would then get to choose, and so on down to the youngest daughter (Bonnie). The only change in this male-female pecking order was when Lonnie (the first born) sometimes argued with Frank about who would get the first piece—Bonnie views this as Lonnie being an early feminist. Since no one in the family liked chocolates with syrup or cream in the middle—it was too sweet—all the chocolates would have a finger hole stuck through the chocolate shell before the girls got to choose.

Minnie was given the unfortunate name of Minnie, an entirely apt name as she was so small and often sickly. She was also on the borderline of being considered below average in intelligence. Her mother sometimes called Minnie “you dumb thing” in Chinese and on

some occasions treated her as the youngest daughter instead of the second oldest; for example, after buying 3 pieces of jade jewelry as part of a special occasion, Mama Chin gave Lonnie the best piece, Bonnie the second best and Minnie the worst.

Bonnie's mother spoke the Cantonese dialect of Chinese. She and her husband gave Chinese names to all of their children—others, mostly obstetricians, gave their children American names. This was the irony of Minnie's name—her American name "Minnie"—with her turning out so small and frail as a young girl and adult. Bonnie's Chinese name was "Cheran Lonn", meaning "Spring Orchid".

Roy's original "English" name was Hoy. This was derived from his Chinese name. Roy was teased by Mexican students, as his name meant "today" in Spanish. As a result, Roy had his first name legally changed to "Roy". In a similar way, Minnie wanted to change her first name to "Connie" but nothing came of that.

Bonnie, in turn, had a cousin who was named Bonnie so Bonnie also wanted to change her first name. She liked the "th" in names and decided to change her name to "Heather". Just at this time a family moved next door who had a daughter named Heather: Heather Fong. Bonnie decided to drop the idea of changing her name. (Heather Fong much later became the Police Chief of San Francisco.)

Frank and Roy were both Dennis the Menace's when they were small. Or was it juvenile delinquents? Or was it natural born firemen? Both would set fires on the floor in their bedroom. Roy would also throw rocks at windows of vacant buildings and regularly break the glass on red fire alarm boxes. Whenever the children heard a siren, they would think

“Is Roy at it again?” Whenever Papa Chin heard of these incidents, he would spank the boys three times each with a bamboo switch.

After Papa Chin died, Lonnie at 10 years old worked in the same sweatshop as her mother, earning additional money—defying child labor laws. At the same time, as young boys, Frank and Roy made additional money shining men’s shoes. Since Mama Chin could not afford dolls for the girls, the girls—Lonnie, Minnie and Bonnie—would treat the crawling baby Phil, the youngest of the family, like a doll, dressing him in girl’s dresses and curling his hair. He didn’t like it and was usually chased around the apartment.

In the kitchen, Mama Chin taught Bonnie how to prepare Chinese medicines and how to prepare all sorts of Chinese dishes including various kinds of dim sum. She taught Bonnie how to kill a live chicken and to remove its feathers.

Mama Chin was proud that she could feed, clothe and shelter her children without taking charity. One time relatives invited Mama Chin and her family to a Chinese New Year’s dinner. Mama Chin took all 6 children. At the gathering, she overheard someone say, “Poor lady, she needed to bring all her children so she would be able to feed them.” Mama Chin never went to an invited dinner again with her 6 children, either going alone or only bringing one or two of her children.

Bonnie as a little girl was both fair-minded and intuitive. When Bonnie saw a Laurel and Hardy movie where Oliver Hardy was distributing dollar bills between the two of them—“One for you, and two for me . . . one for you, and three for me . . .”—Bonnie intuitively knew this was not right.

At one time, the Chin family lived near the outskirts of Chinatown close to the San Francisco North Beach Broadway night clubs. When Bonnie passed by Finocchio's on her way home, a night club with female impersonators, she intuitively knew there was something very different about the "women" who worked there, but Bonnie's mother saw nothing unusual as she compared the female impersonators to characters in Chinese operas (which her mother took Bonnie to see—performances her mother loved and Bonnie hated) where men played both men's and women's parts.

Because Bonnie noticed that people took advantage of Minnie, Bonnie developed a sympathy for the underdog. In elementary school, Bonnie often befriended girls who were shunned by the other girls. One girl, Valerie, was less smart than the other girls and therefore shunned. When Rosalind, the class bully, learned that Valerie brought some cookies for lunch, Rosalind suddenly became Valerie's friend suggesting that the cookies be shared between her, Bonnie and Valerie. Bonnie told Valerie, "Your mother made these cookies for you. You should save them for yourself." Bonnie politely turned down the cookie.

Bonnie attended Chinese school on Saturdays to learn Cantonese. When she started high school she attended the most prestigious one in San Francisco, Lowell High School. Lowell is the oldest public high school west of the Mississippi. Some of the most famous alumni of Lowell were Carol Channing, the Broadway and screen actress; Stephan Breyer, a Supreme Court Justice; Alexander Calder, the inventor of the mobile; Diane Fosey, a scientist dedicated to protecting gorillas; William Hewlett of Hewlett-Packard; Pierre

Salinger, press secretary to President Kennedy; Naomi Wolf, author; Rube Goldberg, inventor of “Rube Goldberg” machines; and two Nobel prize winners.

Bonnie had a round face like many Chinese, but was thin and grew up to be quite tall for a Chinese American female at that time: 5’5”. Because she was so thin in elementary school, she was given free milk during school time. Bonnie told me that she would often excel throughout school, but being shy, she was uncomfortable receiving such praise. Later in life, Bonnie was anything but shy and one of the world’s best bargainers, a result of her many travels.

When I went to high school there were quite a few Asians in my class, but I only remember one, a Japanese American on the football team, as no other Asian made any strong effort to stand out. Bonnie told me that Asians had a public persona and private persona that were very different from each other. Boy did I learn this when I met Bonnie’s mother for the first time: Bonnie, her sister Lonnie, and mother didn’t just talk to each other, they yelled at each other. My stereotype of the quiet Asian quickly disappeared.

I think of Bonnie when I recall what a relative of mine said about one of his neighbors: “She verbalizes everything!” (Over time, I began to regard this as a good trait rather than a bad one, especially for a disabled person who needs to identify her needs and express her frustrations in order to thrive and keep her sanity.)

In high school, Bonnie and Lonnie were ushers at the San Francisco Symphony, Opera, and Ballet and other such cultural events. They saw Luciano Pavarotti make his San

Francisco operatic debut in *La Bohème*. They saw Dame Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev dance together, arguably the two greatest ballet dancers of all time.

Bonnie would have dearly loved to play any musical instrument—in particular the piano—but her mother could neither afford to buy or rent one, so Bonnie took up Chinese dancing, then later joined the Lowell High School choir, neither of which required a great outlay of money. (Mama Chin made the Chinese dance costumes for Bonnie.)

After high school, Bonnie and Lonnie both went to San Francisco State University, working at the same time. During a summer break from university in 1964, they went together to the New York World's fair that spurred their interests in world traveling. Thereafter on successive summer breaks from school they traveled to Europe.

Bonnie joined a couple of anti-Vietnam War marches (as did I), but at the same time, Roy volunteered for the US Air Force. Mama Chin was extremely proud of him, especially because Mama Chin had been in China during the Japanese occupation of China prior to World War II and appreciated soldiers who fought for their country. Being a Chinese American, Roy was sent to Tripoli in Libya rather than to Vietnam—this was a few years prior to the start of the rule of Moammer Gadhafi.

After university, Bonnie and Lonnie went into teaching. One of many reasons they went into that profession was that there was that 3 month vacation period during the year they could use for their new passion, traveling the world. Like many Chinese they believed in saving money in all ways and thus saw lots of the world on a budget, staying in the least

expensive local accommodations to save money. Thus they were very adventurous travelers!

One of Bonnie's lists was a list of countries she had visited. Bonnie wanted to visit 100 different countries in her lifetime.

As was their usual case, Bonnie and Lonnie traveled to most destinations on their own rather than in a group. In the 1970's, they traveled to Spain, Portugal and Morocco.

Most of the people in Spain live in cities—much of the land between cities appeared to be devoid of people. Bonnie found the people in Madrid, Spain's largest city, to be reserved and formal, while she found the people in Barcelona, Spain's second largest city, to be friendly and outgoing.

Their most memorable sight in Spain was the Alhambra, a palace-citadel on a hill overlooking what is now Granada, Spain. The Moors, a people of African descent who were Muslims, controlled southern Spain from the 700's to the 1400's and also lived in Morocco. In the 14th century they built the Alhambra. The palace had many arches, fountains, and a courtyard with a reflecting pond. The exteriors and outdoor hall areas had ornamental mosaics each made with many intricate ornamental reliefs. In the tradition of Islam, there were no human figures depicted in the mosaics but, as is common in Islamic mosaics, the inclusion of Arabic script. (After the palace was taken over by Christians, mosaics depicting humans were added.)

A completely different building in a different city in Spain also fascinated Lonnie and Bonnie: the Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi's "gaudy" Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, a

modernistic church with a complex of arches, embedded statues, curving surfaces, flowing lines, ornate towers, which included a crypt with Gaudi's body. Bonnie and Lonnie could not go in to see the church because it was, probably due to its complexity, not yet finished and thus not yet open—and this was at that time nearly 50 years after Gaudi's death. (It is scheduled to be completed in 2026, nearly 100 years after Gaudi's death.)

Bonnie and Lonnie took the ferry from Algeciras, Spain near the famous rock of Gibraltar to Tangier, Morocco. On the ferry, a Moroccan man pinched Bonnie; she yelled at him and slapped him in the face. People laughed.

Their most cherished memories of Morocco were the historic sites in Marrakesh and Fez. In the Marrakesh medina quarter (the old city) is Africa's largest square, Djemaa el Fna, which serves as an entrance to a large market. The most prominent occupants of the square were snake charmers with musicians and their swaying cobras and were story tellers with young children listening attentively to their every word.

Fez had an even more interesting historic site: The Medina of Fes el Bali, the largest contiguous car-free urban area in the world—it is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was founded in the 8th century AD after Arabs first entered North Africa and converted the local people to Islam. You enter an area completely surrounded by a city wall, an area so large that you are almost guaranteed to get lost. Within the medina are the oldest university in the world founded in 859 (200 years before the earliest European university), mosques, and a maze of stores, including food markets and bazaars. There is an area with leather curing and many huge vats of different colored dyes and an area where the dyed leather is dried.

On a bus in Morocco, someone cut a hole in Lonnie's pack, stealing some valuable items. In Rabat, the capital of Morocco, Bonnie and Lonnie were pushed inside a building by the police as jets flew low overhead and toward the palace—An unsuccessful coup was taking place.

On another trip, Bonnie and Lonnie visited Turkey. Bonnie and Lonnie started off in Istanbul, a city known as Constantinople before the Muslims took it over. Istanbul is located on the Bosphorus Strait that ultimately provides a connection between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea (and thus a connection between Eastern Europe and Russia, and Western Europe). At Istanbul is an estuary and harbor known as the Golden Horn.

The first thing tourists notice upon going to Istanbul are the loud prayer calls that wake up most new visitors at 5 a.m. in the morning, with the prayer calls chanting "Allahu-akbar" in Arabic over microphones from the mosques meaning "God is most great!" One of the sights almost all tourists visit in Istanbul—which Lonnie and Bonnie also visited—is the Grand Bazaar, a large indoor shopping area with everything from rugs to restaurants to Turkish delight (a soft jelly-like candy sprinkled with powdered sugar). Istanbul was the capital of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire before the Ottoman Empire was broken up and is the location of the Topkapi Palace of the then ruling sultans.

Earlier in its history, the Istanbul area was part of the Byzantine Empire and known as Byzantium. Byzantium was where the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great became the first Christian Roman Emperor. The name of the city was subsequently changed to Constantinople. Byzantine emperors built the Hagia Sophia church that was the largest cathedral in the world for a thousand years. Under the Ottoman Empire the city name

changed to Istanbul from Constantinople; the Turks turned the Hagia Sophia into a mosque and then built the Sultan Ahmed Mosque which is known as the “Blue Mosque”. The Blue Mosque was deliberately made larger than the Hagia Sophia. The Hagia Sophia eventually was restored as a Christian church and then a museum restoring the Christian mosaics, which was easy to do because they were hidden rather than removed when the Hagia Sophia was turned into a mosque.

After seeing the sights of Istanbul, Bonnie and Lonnie went to the ruins of the city of Troy immortalized by Homer and Virgil who told the tale of the Trojan Horse with the Greek army hidden inside, allowing the Greeks to enter the city. The ruins of Troy are in northern Turkey. To Bonnie and Lonnie the city of Troy seemed underwhelmingly small.

In Turkey there are many Greek and Roman ruins, including three sites Bonnie and Lonnie visited: Ephesus, Hierapolis, and the Acropolis in Pergamum. The largest of these ruins was Ephesus, one of the largest preserved ancient Greek cities in the world. Of prominence there was the Greek pillared Celsus Library. Some scholars think that the Gospel of John was written in Ephesus.

The Roman city of Hierapolis included a Greco-Roman theater and Roman baths, and a necropolis where the Romans buried their dead. Nearby was Panukkale, a white rock geological formation with spring water that fed the baths in Hierapolis.

The Acropolis in Pergamum was a city on a hill. It had a 10,000 seat theater constructed on the hillside. The asclepieion (hospital) at Pergamum was the first hospital in the world (in the 4th century AD), the first place where the snake symbol was used as a

symbol of medicine, and the place where Galen studied, a Roman physician and philosopher who influenced medicine for a thousand years. Pergamum is also known as having had a huge library of books, as parchment paper was invented in Pergamum.

In Konya, Lonnie and Bonnie saw the “Whirling Dervishes”. They performed dances where the dancers rotated in rhythm to hypnotic music, chanting poetry.

A very interesting area was Cappadocia in the Anatolia region of Turkey. Cappadocia had unusual rock formations forming huge spiked pillars, some of which were hollowed out to make houses. Bonnie thought that some of the pillars were “rather pornographic”. In the 7th century, Cappadocia was inhabited by Christians fleeing Arab prosecution; the Christians built rock-cut churches with colorful frescoes (wall paintings) of Christ within some of the rock formations, one of which Bonnie and Lonnie saw.

On another trip in 1974, Lonnie and Bonnie went on one of the very first tours of China after China opened up their country to the West after the Cultural Revolution, a tour for “Overseas Chinese”. Mao Zedong was still alive at this time. Bonnie saw Shanghai; the Grand Canal, the longest ancient canal and artificial river in the world; West Lake; Beijing, the Forbidden City, and Tiananmen Square; the Great Wall and the terra cotta warriors of Xian. Bonnie went to the tourist part of the Great Wall and went up the beautiful, less steep, side, planning to go to the other side later. Her group became tired and demanded that the group leave before Bonnie saw the steep side of the Great Wall.

The terra cotta warriors in Xian are replicas of the imperial guard of the first emperor of China, warriors and horses that are slightly larger than life size arranged in battle

formation. The warriors originally had wooden spears. Each warrior was different from each other. They were all buried along with the emperor and were being slowly unearthed. Although eventually there would be hundreds of them standing side by side, Lonnie and Bonnie only saw a few that had been unearthed at the time of their visit.

In China, Lonnie and Bonnie saw two operations done without anesthesia, one a thyroid operation. Both used acupuncture (treatment with needles) instead of anesthesia.

Lonnie and Bonnie visited a farming commune. The leaders were proud that they reused everything including human waste for fertilizer.

Bonnie and Lonnie also went to Nanjing (Nanking), a city south of Shanghai on the Yangtze River. Nanjing was largely destroyed by the Japanese during their siege prior to World War II, with 300,000 people out of their 500,000 population killed during the siege and occupation. The buildings Lonnie and Bonnie saw were therefore newer than in other cities, but were mostly functional rather than pretty. The Soviets had plans to build a dam and a bridge at Nanjing with the bridge across the Yangtze River, but there was a falling out between the Soviets and Chinese in the 1960's. Mao proclaimed that the Chinese could build their own bridge and changed the design, resulting in the first major project designed and built entirely by the Chinese Communists, with sculptures on the bridge depicting workers and farmers with tools and soldiers with weapons.

At the end of Lonnie and Bonnie's trip to China, they ended up in Hong Kong. They went to the harbor to view a tropical cyclone that was coming in to shore—which we call a "hurricane". They were quickly escorted back to their hotel by the police.

On a later trip in 1976—before Iran and Afghanistan became off-limits to American tourists, and before the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and the following rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan—Bonnie went with her childhood friend Pearl on a tour of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The tour was on a non-air conditioned bus without a restroom. When there were no towns to stop at, the bus would stop every few hours and the women would go to the left of the bus to go behind the bushes on the left, and the men would go behind the bushes on the right. The principal foods they ate all trip were kabobs, kabobs, and kabobs.

They started off in Turkey, seeing more rural areas than on Lonnie's and Bonnie's trip. They went by Mt. Ararat on their way to Iran, with its snow-capped glacier at the top.

In Iran, the first city they saw was Tehran, its capital city. Tehran was a very modern and wealthy city with the largest population in the Middle East. The city of Tehran had loads of cars and lots of smog. In the bazaar Bonnie was especially enamored with the emeralds, which were way too expensive for Bonnie's budget (although she does often save up to get expensive jewelry). In Iran at that time, few women were wearing scarves or other head coverings.

In Tehran, Bonnie saw a newspaper with a portrait of Mao Zedong. She later learned that she was correct in her assumption that Mao Zedong had died.

The tour included the town of Esfahan. During their earlier Turkey trip, Bonnie and Lonnie saw the "Blue Mosque" in Istanbul which many people consider to be the most spectacular mosque in the world—Bonnie considered the Lotfollah Mosque in Esfahan,

although much smaller, to be even more spectacular with its intricate mosaic designs in its dome. The Lotfollah mosque is in Imam Square (Meidan Emam), the second largest city square in the world, where there are two mosques (the Mosque of Sheikh Lotfollah and the Imam Mosque), a bazaar and a former palace (the Ali Qapu Palace). The bazaar had loads of gold and lapis lazuli jewelry; the carpets for sale were expensive but were of better quality than Bonnie had seen anywhere else.

The next city Bonnie and Pearl went to was Shiraz. Shiraz had many historic buildings and many gardens and fruit trees. Within the gardens were an abundance of roses of many colors. One of the prominent structures in Shiraz was the Qur'an Gate that was part of the great city wall that used to surround the city.

Near Shiraz Bonnie and Pearl saw the ruins of Persepolis (Greek for "Persian city"). Persepolis has some of the most magnificent ruins in the Middle East, some of which date back to 500 years before the birth of Christ. Almost all of the buildings were built of wood (cedars from Lebanon), and thus only the sandstone bases, pillars and walls remained. In the Apadana Palace were walls with head to toe reliefs of members of the Persian Imperial Guard and of Persian and Median soldiers. Persepolis was destroyed by Alexander the Great and never rebuilt.

During the time of Persepolis, Zoroastrianism was the main religion of Persia and remained so until Persia was conquered by the Muslims in the 11th through 13th centuries. Outside of Persepolis were grand tombs for the rulers of Persia including Cyrus the Great, with Zoroastrian symbols on the tombs. The practice of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and other religions are tolerated in Iran as long as they do not contradict Islam—there are still

Zoroastrians in Iran, and ancient and new Zoroastrian fire temples can be found in Iran. Some of the ancient fire temples could be seen by Bonnie and Pearl on hills between Esfahan and Shiraz.

Cyrus the Great, whose body was moved to the tomb outside Persepolis upon the city's founding (500 years before Christ), was the Persian who conquered Babylon and repatriated the Jews to Jerusalem. He was mentioned many times in the Old Testament.

The Silk Road went through Esfahan and Shiraz and thus between these two cities were caravanserais. A caravanserai is a place where travelers along ancient trade routes and their animals stayed overnight to protect them from thieves and where they traded for food. One caravanserai Bonnie and Pearl stopped at had an open courtyard, space for a marketplace, and rooms where humans and animals could stay.

From Iran Bonnie and Pearl went to Pakistan, which they found to be a crowded, poor and quite backward country with a lot of problems. From Peshawar in Pakistan they entered Afghanistan through the Khyber Pass and took the road to Kabul. The road through the Khyber Pass was a winding sometimes narrow semi-paved road through rocky mountain peaks and rugged terrain. The Khyber Pass is a historic route that the Mughals used for their invasion of what is now part of Pakistan and the northern part of India.

Kabul is Afghanistan's capital and its largest city with a couple of million people. It is 6,000 feet above sea level in a narrow valley between the Hindu Kush Mountains along the Kabul River.

One Afghanistan stop of the tour was Bamyán, a town of about 50,000 people north of Kabul. Bonnie arranged a taxi ride to see the Bamyán Buddhas, which were at time the largest standing Buddhas in the world. These were part of the Silk Road, which connected the Middle East with China. Later—many years after her trip, in 2001—the Bamyán Buddhas were shot at and dynamited by the Taliban. According to the Muslim fundamentalist Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, religious statues in human form were anti-Islamic and should all be destroyed, especially those used for a non-Islamic religion.

Bonnie felt that Afghanistan was like a movie set of the 12th century. Outside of the main cities was little electricity, with camels and men traveling in donkey carts rather than automobiles.

Although Afghanistan is a tribal country with differences in clothing varying according to the tribal region, the typical clothing of men was similar throughout the country. Men wore turbans with the cloth hanging down the back or simply wore kufies (prayer hats). They wore a long shirt reaching their knees or longer and sometimes a vest. Most often they had beards. Women were seldom seen in the small towns and areas along the roads. In the cities at that time most women did not have head coverings; only a third of the time did women wear burkas (a dress covering a woman from head to toe) that were most often light blue in color.

Bonnie liked to eat native food from vendors rather than the food in the hotels. Ashak was her favorite Afghan food, chive-filled dumplings topped with tomato and yogurt

sauces. In the more expensive places it contained meat. It was a welcome change from kabobs.

Bonnie's favorite Afghan city was Kandahar. The Arghandab River runs right next to the city with a background of the Chilzina Mountain. Kandahar is especially known for its pomegranates and grapes. Kandahar was particularly mystical in the morning and at dusk when the sunlight created rays through the dust in the air.

Bonnie wandered around Kandahar on her own to shop. In the stores, men sat cross-legged on platforms at Bonnie's shoulder height—when Bonnie was interested in an item she would either be invited up a stairs or pulled up by the vendor. The stores were either lit by strings of white electrical lights or (more oftenly) by hurricane-type lanterns. Bonnie wanted to buy a burka, but all of them were too short for her. She found a used clothing store that had women's dresses and bought one that was nearly her size, a burgundy Kuchi dress with a long skirt, long sleeves and a yoke collar. (The Kuchi's are Afghanistan's nomads, who greatly suffered under the Taliban, losing 40% of their population.)

Bonnie and Pearl's bus tour ended their tour in Delhi, India. In Delhi, Bonnie and Pearl each bought an Air India pass. At that time, Air India tickets were less costly when bought in India. Bonnie and Pearl had to identify all their stops within India before buying the ticket but did not have to identify any dates and times.

Delhi combines colonialism with ancient history while New Delhi, within the metropolis of Delhi, is a modern city that is the capital of India. In Delhi Bonnie saw examples of

Mughal architecture: the Red Fort; the Jama Masjid mosque; the Chandi Chowk (Moonlight Square) bazaars; and Humayun's Tomb, often seen as the forerunner of the Taj Mahal.

Outside of Delhi in Agra, Bonnie and Lonnie visited the Taj Mahal—the crowning jewel of Mughal architecture, a white marble mausoleum that was built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. The Mughals—Persian for “Mongols”—were an Islamic (Muslim) people who conquered northern India; their leaders were descendants of the Mongol leader Genghis Khan through the Timurids who conquered Central Asia.

Back in Delhi, Bonnie had an opportunity to ride an elephant, but she severely sprained her ankle the previous day, which made it impossible to do so.

Bonnie and Pearl stayed at a hotel outside of New Delhi. There happened to be a very large two-day wedding in the hotel, and the bride asked Bonnie and Pearl to attend.

The women guests, like in other Indian weddings, wore finery and large amounts of gold jewelry, but in this wedding all the bride's maids also each wore 6 large ruby or diamond rings—This was certainly a rich person's wedding Bonnie thought. The wedding was like a Bollywood movie set with continuous singing and dancing. In watching the bride and groom dance, Bonnie noticed that the bride was very beautiful and the groom was ugly—For sure, this was a **very** rich man's wedding.

Bonnie and Pearl next saw Jaipur, the “Pink City”. The pink color on buildings was used to create the impression that the buildings were built earlier during the Mughal era.

Bonnie and Pearl took a motorized rickshaw to a small shop selling beautiful handmade saris—the typical wrap-around dress of women in India—but Bonnie did not buy one as all

the saris were—like the nickname of the city—pink, a color Bonnie was not fond of wearing.

When Bonnie and Pearl ordered food in restaurants in India, the food often took quite a long time coming. Bonnie would ask the waiter what happened, and the answer almost always was the same: “It’s just coming!”

Bonnie often told me that her favorite part of her Indian trip was her next stop in Srinagar, Kashmir where she stayed in a luxurious houseboat. Being at the end of the season for houseboats, just before monsoon season, Bonnie and Pearl had the boat to themselves. The houseboat had 8 large rooms, including a spacious sitting room with colonial furniture and laced curtains, bedrooms, a bathroom and an ornate deck together with beautiful views of the lake. A houseboy would come with meals. Bonnie was sad that she didn’t have a boyfriend to share this experience with. Because of the current dispute between Pakistan and India over Kashmir, it is highly unlikely that Bonnie and I will ever be able to share this experience.

The pair next went to Amritsar. Amritsar was another movie set city. It is the spiritual and cultural center of the Sikh religion. Amritsar is home of the Golden Temple and other buildings along the sacred Pool of Immortality in which Sikhs bathe for purification. Sikhs are recognizable by their turbans. People left Bonnie and Pearl alone and allowed them to wander freely throughout the city.

Amritsar was the site of the 1919 “Amritsar Massacre” in the days of the Indian fight for independence under the leadership of Gandhi. British and Gurkha soldiers panicked at

seeing a huge crowd of unarmed demonstrators and indiscriminately shot into the crowd, killing at least 379 and wounding some 1200. This intensified the Indian drive for independence.

Bonnie and Pearl then went to Katmandu in Nepal with its Buddhist temples and view of the Himalaya Mountains. From there they overflew Mount Everest.

Varanasi is a city most associated with the Ganges River where Hindu pilgrims come to bathe and come to die. Bonnie and Pearl took a row boat at 5 a.m. in the morning to view pilgrims making incense and flower offerings at temples, then going down the steps from the temples to the Ganges to pray (with the steps to the water called “ghats”). Other ghats were used for public cremation having funeral pyres (structures made of wood for the burning of corpses).

Bonnie and Pearl then went south to Calcutta. For much of her life, Bonnie heard and read about the poor people of Calcutta. Bonnie asked a taxi driver to drive her to a slum area of Calcutta and found the people there to be surprisingly neatly dressed. She was unsure whether or not the taxi driver did indeed take her to a poor area of Calcutta.

From Calcutta they went to Bombay (now Mumbai), known as the financial capital of India. The major hotels were way too expensive for the two travelers (\$150/day in 1976), so they stayed in the most acceptable down-home place they could find, although it was also expensive (\$48/day). Upon coming back to the hotel later at night, the hotel was surrounded by people sleeping on the ground and in the halls—they had to wake people up to get to their room. The bed was a single mattress without sheets.

Some of the most interesting structures in Bombay were built by people of the Zoroastrian religion who fled Persia (now Iran) for Bombay when Persia was taken over by Muslim armies. In India, ancestors of these Zoroastrians are known as Parsis (Persians). Parsis expose their dead to vultures on large circular towers, with the vultures eating the corpses.

In the 1969, Bonnie and Lonnie went to the Soviet Union for a first time. In the United States, they applied for two tours through Intourist (the Soviet Union's government tourist agency), one tour of Moscow and vicinity (including Red Square, the Kremlin and cities around Moscow) and another of the northern Soviet Union including Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania). They had paid for the first tour, but not having received any correspondence about the second tour, they had not paid for it. When the day of the second tour came, they were told they had been dropped and could not join the tour. Instead, they substituted a very unsatisfying trip to the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi where there was a rocky beach and rich fat Russians.

Bonnie and Lonnie's second trip to the Soviet Union was to Central Asia followed by Outer Mongolia, flying from country to country. This trip was in the same year that Bonnie had gone to Pakistan and India, 1976. The Central Asia tour included the Ukraine, Azerbaijan and what Bonnie called the other (non-Pakistan) "stans": Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Throughout the Soviet Union, the food was generally not very good, but in Kiev in the Ukraine, Bonnie found the Chicken Kiev—to Bonnie's great surprise—to be "out of this

world” good, boneless chicken breasts pounded and rolled through garlic butter with herbs and then breaded and fried.

Two of the main sights in the “stans” were cities in Uzbekstan that were part of the Silk Road and were mentioned by Marco Polo in the book on his travels, Samarkand and Bukhara.

In Samarkand Bonnie and Lonnie saw the Registan. The Registan was the heart of ancient Samarkand, which included an ensemble of three madrasahs (religious universities) with two facing each other and one in the back, each with magnificent blue mosaics. Also part of the Registan was the ancient trading dome Chorsu, a product of Samarkand being on the Silk Road trading route between China and the Mediterranean. The Registan was built by the Timurids, whose leaders were related to the Mongol leader Genghis Khan, and who were the same people as the Moghuls who conquered northern India.

Parts of the city of Bukhara that Bonnie and Lonnie saw were there at the time of Marco Polo when he followed the Silk Road: the Isamil Samani mausoleum, built in the 9th century, the resting place of a Persian ruler; and the Kalyan minaret built in the 12th century, a tower used to summon Muslims to prayer.

Bonnie had a long talk with a fellow in Tajikistan. After a while Bonnie ventured to ask the question, “Are you happy that Tajikistan is part of the Soviet Union?” He did not answer—perhaps thinking she was from Red China and might be an informer. Instead he visibly rolled his eyes—from this gesture, Bonnie got a very clear answer to her question.

In Outer Mongolia Bonnie and Lonnie visited, and slept in, a yurt in the Gobi desert and drank camel milk and camel cheese (both dreadful according to Bonnie). A yurt is a round traditional dwelling of the nomads of Mongolia.

Following Mongolia, they took a bus tour around Lake Baikal in Russia. Lake Baikal is the world's oldest and deepest lake. They rode on one of the Soviet Union's first air conditioned buses, for which the government had great pride. Unfortunately, the air conditioning broke down and the windows could not be opened, so the inside of the bus was a furnace.

Bonnie was happy when the Soviet Union, including the Ukraine, Azerbaijan and the "stans", broke up into separate countries, as this increased the total number of countries on Bonnie's list. Outer Mongolia was nominally already an independent country. (Inner Mongolia was and still is a part of China.)

After their Central Asia and Mongolia tour, Lonnie and Bonnie returned to Moscow. When they tried to cash in their tour vouchers for their airline tickets home—which they tried to do a number of times at the airport—they were unable to do so. No one had encountered individuals with such vouchers. Bonnie and Lonnie then went to government offices in Moscow and were told that they would have to pay \$900 additional for each ticket to leave Moscow—this they refused to do. Lonnie did all the complaining, so after a while she turned to Bonnie and said, "Don't just stand there . . . Bitch too!"

After four straight days of complaining, they finally were given a letter signed by the Soviet Union Minister of Transportation that enabled them to fly out of Moscow without

paying for tickets, but their extra days at the Rossiya Hotel—a hotel with very loud plumbing near Red Square—had cost them a pretty penny.

Bonnie interviewed to become a Pan Am stewardess because of the travel benefits, but found out the pay was so bad it did not make the benefits worthwhile. Instead, Bonnie started working for the Post Office, a job that paid more money than teaching and very much more than the stewardess job.

Middle management in the Post Office was notoriously known for being bad, rigidly enforcing a strict set of documented rules. The term “going postal”, becoming extremely and uncontrollably angry, resulted from Postal employees in the 1980’s so disliking their managers that they murdered them.

One manager would constantly come around and notice that Bonnie, in working, did not have both her feet on the ground. The manager complained, and Bonnie smiled and happily corrected the problem, at least until she was certain that he had permanently left her area.

Quite often employees worked for the Post Office on a part-time basis until they found their “true calling” in life; as a result there were a lot of very interesting personalities who worked at the Post Office. In general, the people with talents they did not want to publicize seldom talked to anyone, but everyone talked to Bonnie as she was so curious and engaging. One fellow, Manfred, was from Argentina of German decent, telling Bonnie he believed in Aryan superiority.

Another fellow was a stunningly built gay ballet dancer, Richard. Richard told Bonnie that when a man discovered that Richard was gay, the man assumed that Richard was a wimp and started a fight. Richard picked him up and threw him down a flight of stairs.

Bonnie liked best to work in the section of the post office that received all the mail that could not be delivered because the addresses were not legible. This area had the disadvantage that it was open late into the night, but it had the wonderful advantage for Bonnie of allowing her to open up and read the mail, supposedly allowing her to find the address inside or clues on where to send the communication. Of course, it was the content of mail—often personal and sometimes pornographic—that interested Bonnie the most.

Bonnie and Lonnie toured Southeast Asia including Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore, but not Vietnam. In Cambodia they saw Angkor Wat, a huge Khmer temple complex—with numerous guardian spirits adorning its walls—built in the 12th century as a state temple and capital city. In Malaysia, a rich man gave Bonnie and Lonnie the use of his chauffeur for a day. The trip to Cambodia was after the Vietnam War but predated the Kymer Rouge takeover (and the “Killing Fields”); Bonnie and Lonnie wanted to also go to Vietnam but the US Government discouraged them from doing so, telling them it was unsafe for Americans at that time.

In between these trips that I described, Bonnie and Lonnie went to every country big and small in Western Europe and went to countries in Eastern Europe, including Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. In Hungary, the “beautiful blue Danube” of Johann Strauss was gray, not blue. (Since the time of Bonnie’s visit, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia have

broken up into more countries, further increasing the number of countries on Bonnie's list.)

In 1965, Lonnie and Bonnie went to Perigueux, France to see the Lascaux cave with its 16,000 year old cave paintings of bulls, horses and reindeer only to find that the cave was sealed in 1963 to protect it from the damage caused by human breaths. They visited a near-by cave with cave paintings that was not yet closed—Lonnie and Bonnie were some of the few visitors as the latter cave was not as publicized as Perigueux. After France, they traveled all over Switzerland, with their favorite place being the Jungfrau Mountain; they had fondue, cheese or beef bourguignonne, but they never found a restaurant serving chocolate fondue.

In the late 60's in West Berlin, Bonnie and Lonnie entered a restaurant and bar where customers were astonished to see Asians and bought Bonnie and Lonnie each a small size—but by their standards a huge size—stein of beer. The buildings in West Berlin were modern, and the people were elegantly dressed. As Bonnie and Lonnie traveled through the Brandenburg Gate and beyond the Berlin Wall going into Communist East Berlin for a few hour visit, the landscape changed to colorless buildings of sterile architecture with reserved people with drab clothing and no makeup. Upon entering through the Brandenburg Gate, the guards inventoried every item, every bill and coin; and upon their exit through the same gate, did the same, matching up each new item with an East German receipt, apparently confiscating any other item.

In England, Lonnie and Bonnie went to a travel agent, and the travel agents took care of other customers who came in after them first. The travel agents thought they were from

Hong Kong. When travel agents learned that they were from the United States, they quickly served them. Obviously, there was discrimination of Asians from Hong Kong for some reason.

Besides Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore, Bonnie and Lonnie also took trips to other parts of Asia, including Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and Thailand. In Taiwan, the National Palace Museum had some of the most magnificent treasures of China, as they were taken there from mainland China by Chiang Kai-shek after the Communist takeover of China. Taiwan and Japan were rich modern industrial powers. (When a youngster at Chinese school in San Francisco, Bonnie snuck up to a meeting room up the stairs from her classroom and saw a large picture of Chiang Kai-shek, so clearly many people in San Francisco Chinatown were supporters of the Nationalist Chinese in Taiwan as opposed to the People's Republic of China and Mao Zedong.)

In Korea, white American servicemen propositioned Lonnie and Bonnie thinking they were hookers. In a middle class restaurant in Korea, mice were running around while they ate—but this was 35 years ago! In Bangkok, Thailand are traffic jams and a super colorful floating market with vendors selling produce from boats; in Thailand they rode an elephant, which kneeled down to let them on and off, and they rode water buffalos.

Because hotels in Bangkok were so very expensive, they stayed in a Catholic convent instead. This was the third convent that Bonnie and Lonnie stayed at in their many trips. On the Switzerland side of Lake Lugano, a glacial lake in the southeast of Switzerland on the border with Italy, they stayed at a convent for unwed young woman who were pregnant;

the young ladies served the guests their meals. In Florence, Italy they stayed at another convent.

In Tokyo, Japan Bonnie and Lonnie searched for a place that served Fugu, a fish that if prepared incorrectly is highly poisonous. They found a very small restaurant with just a few customers. Fugu is a puffer fish that blows itself up to be much larger if it is threatened. The owners of the restaurant showed Bonnie and Lonnie how they prepared the fish, draining all its blood. Bonnie and Lonnie were served a stew (called “Chiri Nabe”) made from the fish.

Another delicacy of the Fugu restaurant was a small little fish that swam around rapidly in its liquid in the cup given to a customer. A woman sitting next to the Bonnie and Lonnie ordered one. She swallowed the live fish, followed by a smile and soft “Ahhhhh”.

On all their trips, Lonnie took advantage of her being the first born: Whenever Lonnie was interested in just a taste of an exotic dish, she would have Bonnie buy the dish, and Lonnie would have a taste. When Lonnie and Bonnie went shopping and Bonnie found an interesting item that Lonnie also liked, Lonnie would have them flip a coin to see who got the item—the reverse never happened.

In addition to going to Morocco in Africa, Lonnie and Bonnie went to Egypt, including to Cairo (a very dirty city of over 10 million people), to the pyramids in Giza outside Cairo, and to Luxor and to Abu Simbel in the south. In the Egyptian museum in Cairo, most of the items found in Tutankhamen’s tomb were displayed. At Giza, Lonnie and Bonnie took the obligatory camel ride around the pyramids.

Luxor, in the south of Egypt, is the site of the ancient city of Thebes and of the Valley of the Kings, the cemetery of the pharaohs of ancient Egypt, including the tomb of Tutankhamen. After the pyramids were robbed of their treasures, the pharaohs wanted to be buried in a place more protected from looters so they built their tombs hidden in the desert in the Valley of the Kings.

In Luxor is Karnak the largest temple complex built by man, covering 200 acres, also having the largest religious building in the world, Hypostyle Hall. People told Bonnie and Lonnie not to visit Karnak during mid-day as it was too hot. They did anyway and were rewarded with being the only tourists there at that time of day (but maybe they just felt that way as the temple complex was so large).

Lonnie and Bonnie then went even further south to the rock temple at Abu Simbel, a temple which included four twenty foot statues of the pharaoh Ramesses the Great. They visited it before it was moved—it was moved in its entirety to higher ground to keep it from being submerged by Lake Nasser, a lake created by the Aswan Dam that was built soon after Bonnie and Lonnie visited. Lonnie and Bonnie tried to get an airline flight from the south to Alexandria but all the flights were canceled due to lack of passengers.

Because mosquitoes seem to love her, Bonnie had concerns about going to parts of Africa below the Sahara where malaria was prevalent. Too bad, as Africa today has 53 independent countries; visiting just a few of them would have quickly increased Bonnie's list of countries she visited in her lifetime to over 100. (In Moscow, Bonnie landed up in the hospital because of severe swelling from mosquito bites.)

Besides Egypt, Bonnie and Lonnie saw other parts of the Middle East: Lebanon (before the wars), Cypress and Israel. (From Lebanon they flew to Israel by way of Cypress because there was no open border between Lebanon and Israel.)

In Israel, Lonnie and Bonnie went to Jerusalem, one of Bonnie's favorite cities, a city of new and old, with layer upon layer of history, current, old and ancient: Biblical, Jewish and Christian, Roman and Byzantine, and Ottoman and Muslim. They stayed at Arab hotels, as they were less expensive, but often with buzzing mosquitoes and stand-up toilets.

Bonnie swam in the Dead Sea with its high salt content. At the time, the Dead Sea bordered Israel and Jordan (and now also the West Bank). The Dead Sea is the lowest point on earth. Like many people told her she would, Bonnie floated without exerting any physical effort, but when she dipped her face into the water, her eyes stung like crazy.

Bonnie went to Mexico on two occasions, in 1966 and 1978. In 1966, Lonnie was driving with Bonnie and Lonnie's girlfriend in the backseat and Bonnie sleeping. The car turned over. Bonnie's shoulder was dislocated and she broke 4 vertebrae. Everyone else was uninjured. Lonnie was driving to Guadalajara; they never made it.

In 1978, Bonnie, Pearl and another friend went on a tour of Mexico. The tour was scheduled to stay for a couple of days in San Cristobal de las Casas, a town near the Guatemalan border. Since Bonnie was more interested in seeing Palenque, a large area of Mayan ruins, including pyramids and an elevated palace, she recruited people to rent two cars for a convoy of cars to go to Palenque.

There were quite a number of large structures making up Palenque, including many pyramids, a pagoda-like structure, and the “palace” (a large number of buildings built on top of a base platform). Bonnie fell from the pagoda and remembers nothing until 2 days later in Mexico City, where a doctor waved two fingers in front of her eyes. (Several of the people in the rented cars were physicians and commandeered a fellow with a flatbed truck to take Bonnie to Mexico City. Helicopter service was unavailable in those days.) On Bonnie’s tour, the next scheduled stop after San Cristobal de las Casas was Guadalajara; for a second time, due to a severe injury in Mexico, Bonnie didn’t made it to Guadalajara.

Bonnie saw her story on television on the Mexican national news after she woke up. Bonnie had a severed spinal cord and was now a paraplegic. After a couple of more days in the Mexico City hospital, Bonnie was flown to San Francisco and transferred to the California Pacific Medical Center hospital. There she met many other paraplegics and quadriplegics. Bonnie talked to one fellow patient who was embarrassed about his quadriplegia—He fell from a bar stool while drunk.

(Twenty-five years after Bonnie’s injury, I visited my aunt, uncle and cousins in Victoria, British Columbia (B.C.), Canada. My cousin Pat introduced me to her college-age daughter, Sarin, a horse and buggy driver for the summer. A colleague of Sarin came by who had her arm in a sling. I asked her what happened, and she told me that a horse kicked her. “How romantic!”, I said. She asked me what I meant, and I told her that my wife became a paraplegic after falling down a Mayan pyramid—now that’s romantic! A fellow in the same rehabilitation hospital became a quadriplegic after falling off a bar stool while drunk—

that's *not* romantic. Being kicked by a horse is very romantic—it is much more romantic, say, than being injured in an auto accident.)

From the California Pacific Medical Center Bonnie eventually returned back to her home, her apartment in Pacific Heights.

Spinal cord injuries are not all alike. Bonnie has paralysis at the T5 level: She has full head, neck and shoulder movement; full use of her arms, wrists and fingers; and complete paralysis of her lower body and legs. The spinal cord consists of 31 segments with nerves going from the brain on down to each of the segments; functionality of an individual with paralysis is determined by where the break in the nerves occurs and whether it is a complete or partial break. From head to tail bone, there are 8 cervical segments (levels C1-C8), 12 thoracic segments (levels T1-T12), 5 lumbar segments (L1-L5), 5 sacral segments (S1-S5), and 1 coccygeal segment. The higher up the injury is toward the brain, the greater the dysfunction. The highest level injuries at the cervical level would have at least some loss of function (e.g., strength) of the arms or fingers, as well as loss of function of the lower body and legs; C1-C3 cervical levels would require a respirator to breathe. Paralysis patients who can play wheelchair sports such as basketball, usually have a very low level injury or only a partial break.

Through much practice and the advice of physical therapists, Bonnie relearned how to sit up in bed, how to turn in bed, how to dress herself and how to relieve herself. With a new center of gravity, she learned how to balance herself on a chair and on a wheelchair,

and how to use a wheelchair. She learned to wake up every few hours so she could turn to a different body position so she wouldn't get pressure sores (aka pressure ulcers), and in the same manner to change position (i.e., do lifts) every few hours when she was in her wheelchair. She learned to fall from her wheelchair so she won't get hurt and learned how to slide into a car herself using a sliding board. She even learned how to put her wheelchair into a car by herself and how to get off the ground back into her wheelchair after a fall, which, with her level of disability, amazed her physical therapist.

Over a number of years, people who have paralysis tend to lose muscle tone in the areas they are paralyzed. Bonnie, having T5 paralysis, got flabby at her waist; since she had involuntary spasms in her legs, she still had muscle tone there. People with very low level paralysis tend to have very thin legs.

When Bonnie was first disabled, she weighed less than 100 pounds. She stayed with her brother Phil for a while—Phil could carry her upstairs at that time. Helped by her light weight, she could, as I said earlier, pick herself off the ground to get back on her wheelchair herself, which she was told was remarkable for a T5 paraplegic. Bonnie taught herself to do wheelies in her wheelchair—she loved doing wheelies while dancing to Abba's song "Dancing Queen", doing "walking" wheelies during the total time. (As Bonnie got heavier, owing to aging and paralysis, she had trouble doing all these things, and Phil could no longer easily lift her.)

Bonnie didn't believe in electric wheelchairs, as this stopped her from exercising and hindered her traveling. Nor did she believe in electric beds that raised her from the prone position to sitting up, as she would always later slip down. Instead, she put pillows behind

her back to sit up that prevented her from slipping. Before sliding the pillows behind her she had to first sit up; she did this by pulling on her wheelchair that she kept on the side of the bed.

In 1978, before the Internet, the year Bonnie was injured, Sunday newspapers had many travel advertisements in the paper's travel section. Because Bonnie was heartbroken that she would likely never travel the world again, Bonnie refused to look at the travel ads that she previously so loved. Instead, her traveling was taking buses and other local transportation by herself to see different parts of the San Francisco Bay Area.

One time in Marin county—a rich almost totally white suburb of San Francisco just north across the Golden Gate bridge—she decided to try hitchhiking back home to San Francisco on a moderately busy road rather than taking the bus or ferry, holding up a sign saying “San Francisco”. For an hour cars passed by until a well-dressed African American fellow in a suit stopped to give her a ride.

Years after leaving the hospital, Bonnie went to a street faire in San Francisco. A fellow dressed in a nun's outfit came up to her and said “Hi Bonnie”. It was John, one of Bonnie's former nurses. He was one of the original members of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a group of queer “nuns”—gays who dress as nuns—who satirize the Catholic Church. (Other original members were Sadie, Sadie the Rabbi Lady and Sister Boom Boom. Sister Boom Boom ran for the San Francisco City Council under that name. He put down his occupation as “nun of the above”. As a result of this, a San Francisco city ordinance was passed that an applicant for city council had to use their real name on the application.)

2

Me

My birthplace was Oakland. The Oakland area is now known for the Kaiser Permanente Health Maintenance Organization, the first HMO; the Clorox® Corporation; the Oakland Raiders football team; the Oakland Athletics baseball team; and the Golden State Warriors basketball team. In the past it was the birthplace of Skippy® Peanut Butter (the first peanut butter where the oil did not separate out); Corn Nuts® (big fried kernels of corn); roller derby; and the Black Panthers, a Black liberation group that is now defunct. Roller derby is roller skating on a circular banked track where a member of one team tries to lap members of the other team, getting a point for each member of the other team they pass—roller derby was probably the first sport having both men and women on the same team (although skating separately).

Bonnie's birth city, San Francisco, and mine, Oakland, are rivals. San Francisco is considered to be a much more sophisticated city than Oakland and much richer, as San Francisco is primarily a white collar city while Oakland is a working class city. This rivalry is carried over to the fans of their football teams, with the Oakland Raiders being considered to be a blue collar, roughneck football team, having ruffian fans (not primarily true) while the San Francisco 49ers are considered to be a sophisticated team with finesse having sedate fans (also not primarily true).

San Francisco has better bridges and a better symphony orchestra, opera and ballet, which in fact are all world-renowned.

Oakland has often been maligned—for example, Gertrude Stein once said of Oakland, “There is no there there!” But there are downsides to San Francisco also: It has much higher house prices, and parking spots are very difficult to find.

When Bonnie and I would go anywhere in Oakland we would usually find a parking space in a block or so. In San Francisco, any time we went to a restaurant, we would have to drive around in circles for blocks and blocks to find a parking place anywhere near our destination. Getting frustrated, I would often sing to Bonnie a changed version of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim’s song “There’s a Place for Us”: “There’s a place for us, Somewhere a parking place for us, Peace and quiet in the open air, A parking place somewhere! . . .”

Oakland, by the way, only became a large city after many San Franciscans moved there after the 1906 earthquake.

I was born in Oakland to parents who were both born in Canada: my mother in Alberta and my father in British Columbia. My mother was a nurse and my father was a civil engineer. My parents moved to the United States from Canada on December 7, 1941, the day of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. They first lived in Spokane, Washington and then moved to the San Francisco Bay Area.

Being a paraplegic, Bonnie has a clear disability, but if I were born in a different century or different country, I would have probably had significant disabilities myself. For example, at 8 months of age, I developed German measles and almost died. My mother being a nurse kept me inside away from light—I did not appreciate the significance of this until many years later when I worked with a fellow from Nigeria named Auggie. He also had German measles as an infant, and his mother took him out in the bright sunlight; as a result, he lost all vision in both eyes. But for my mother's knowledge of German measles as a nurse, I too could have ended up totally blind.

At birth, I was dropped, which I was told was probably the reason I could not hear high pitches. As a result, I learned to speak much later than my other siblings did. I learned to speak well after my second birthday—my mother remembers that one of my earliest sentences was “Don don daughter” that only my mother could understand, meaning “I want water”, which at least was a very useful communication.

(My hearing deficit these days is not usually a problem except when there is a lot of background noise such as at a meal in a restaurant with a lot of people at the table. In such a situation, the only conversations at the table that I do not have trouble following are conversations I am having with the person either immediately to the left or right of me.)

Later in life I was involved in a severe accident that shattered my knee. If such an accident had happened a couple of decades earlier, medicine probably would not have existed that would have kept me from being a lifelong cripple.

Like me, all of my siblings wore glasses even though neither of our parents ever did. My brother and I had elongated eyeballs, and as a result had 20/700 vision or worse. Later in life, due to our elongated eyes, my brother Bob had a detached retina, and I had macular degeneration in one eye; thus each of us had partial blindness in one eye. (More precisely my form of macular degeneration was called "myopic degeneration" as it was a result of my extreme myopia.)

In high school I got contact lens. With my bad eyes, eyeglasses with large lens were like coke bottles; in addition, the highly-corrected lens made the world looked curved and small. Eyeglasses with smaller lens were somewhat better, but still distorted the world. Hard contact lens were a god-sent for me as they were small even with my 20/750 vision and did not distort the world. (Today, unlike then, eye glass lenses are thinner, lighter and less distorting.)

Clearly, without modern medicine, many more people in the world would be disabled or be in much worse medical shape than they are. We were lucky to be born at the right time. Perhaps one day there will be a cure for all spinal cord injuries, and Bonnie could walk again.

I have three siblings, an older brother, Bob, one and one half years older than me; a younger sister, Maxine, 3 years younger, and a still younger sister, Karol, 3 more years younger. Bob taught himself to read before kindergarten, and always appeared to be very advanced in school. I presented the opposite impression: In school, although I got decent

grades, I was very shy; anytime I was asked to answer a question, I responded “I don’t know”, perhaps due to my hearing problem and not wanting to reveal it. (Hearing aids in those days were huge and a source of ridicule, and my only having a hearing deficiency of high tones probably gave therapists an impression that a hearing aid will do no good.)

In Oakland, I attended Oakland Technical High School and Skyline High School. Neither was as prestigious as Lowell that my future wife attended, but some famous people did come from these schools: Clint Eastwood (the Oscar winning actor and director), Rod McKuen (the poet of the late 60’s), Huey P. Newton (a founder of the Black Panthers) and Frank Oz (the creator of Miss Piggy, The Cookie Monster, Bert and Grover, and the voice of Yoda), all from Oakland Tech before my time; and Ricky Henderson from Oakland Tech and Tom Hanks from Skyline, both way after my time.

At Oakland Tech in the early 1960’s, there were serious problems between the African Americans and Whites, and my brother told me of a friend of his who was severely beaten up. An African American fellow who I never met before pulled a knife on me, probably only selecting me due to my height. He ended up in jail and thought I had identified him. During lunch, he gave me a kidney punch and a little time later many of his buddies surrounded me, trying to provoke a fight. Fortunately, I am a pacifist, and I had known about my brother’s friend getting in the same situation and fighting back, resulting his having a ruptured spleen as a result—I told them “You leave me alone, and I’ll leave you alone; I have nothing against anybody”. The Oakland policeman I talked to as a result of the knife attack was no less racist—he told me of his time as a policeman in Chicago where he would

tie a African American up to a tree and beat him. (No wonder Oakland was the home of the Black Panthers, and Huey Newton started the Black Panthers.)

My brother had the highest IQ test score at Oakland Tech I was told. Although they probably did not know about this, two mathematics teachers made a bet. One teacher had me, her student, take a national mathematics test and the other had my brother, her student, take the same test. They bet on who would get the highest score. I doubled my brother's score on the test.

Both my brother and I took a German class together. The teacher was an ex-German opera star. Instead of using a book, we read the librettos of two operas: *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss and *Wozzeck* (a twelve-tone opera) by Alban Berg. Although I had a deep voice, the teacher always insisted that I play female parts—probably taking advantage of, if not mocking, my shyness—as there was only one female in the class. (I still remember parts of some songs from *Die Fledermaus*: Alfred, the main character trying to seduce Rosalinda, a woman he used to court but who was now married to someone else, with Alfred singing, “Täubchen, das entflattert ist, stille mein Verlangen. Täubchen, das ich oft geküßt, Laß dich wieder fangen! Täubchen, holdes Täubchen mein, komm, o komm geschwinde; sehnsuchtsvoll gedenk ich dein, holde Rosalinde!”, which is roughly interpreted as follows: “Little dove who flew away, still my longing. Little dove who I’ve often kissed, let me catch you once again. Little dove, dear little dove of mine, come, come quickly. Longingly I think of you, my gracious Rosalinda”. And Alfred praising drinking, singing to Rosalinda, “Trinke, Liebchen, trinke schnell, trinken macht die Augen hell!” which I interpret as “Drink my love, drink quickly. Drinking makes the eyes bright”.

Teaching how to seduce a married woman, glorifying alcohol, and teaching how to get your former lover drunk aren't your usual high school subjects.)

The next year after my knife attack, I was (thankfully) transferred to Skyline High School, a brand new all white high school in the Oakland hills, which was only desegregated many years later. The first year we had one African American, a fellow named Benny, who happened to be the best athlete in Oakland. The second year, his brother became the second African American in the school—his brother was one of the premiere athletes in all of Northern California. Of course, no one in Skyline High School was prejudiced against African Americans!

In high school at Skyline, I attended an off-campus honors physics class in which I did quite well with one exception: One day a week, a different instructor—who I think was a beatnik jazz musician at night on weekends—gave us a course on electronics, which, for some reason, I could not understand for the life of me. On the first exam on electronics he scrawled at the top, "Crazy, man!"

When I went to junior high school and high school, physical education (PE) was required 5 days a week for all students, as opposed to only a third of high schools in the United States these days. The exception was, at the age of 16 ½, a student could take driver's education instead.

At 16 I asked my mother for driving lessons. She took me to a large empty elementary school concrete school yard and had me drive around. This so stressed her—I do not think because of my driving—that she told me to have my father give me the driving lessons. My

father took me to the grocery market down the hill from our house and had me drive the quarter mile home, without there being any traffic. I asked for a second lesson, and he said, “No, you’re good.”

The next semester I took driver’s education at Skyline, and I was the first one to drive. I had expected that we would just drive around the school, but we went on winding roads, through residential and urban areas and onto the freeway, all within 20 minutes. I had little conception of how to control my speed in these different situations or what to do when I came near traffic. The driving instructor, seated next to me with his own set of brakes, was equally terrified continually using the brakes on my behalf, beseeching me to slow down. At least I didn’t have an accident.

The Skyline High School yearbook had categories for most popular, best couple, most shy, and biggest feet. I was severely disappointed that I didn’t win the category of most shy, but I figured that I was so shy that there weren’t enough people who knew me. I was somewhat less disappointed that I didn’t win for the biggest feet, but my large feet did go along with my height of 6’3”.

English classes in my two high schools most often involved writing rather than giving speeches. There was one exception: An English teacher at Skyline had us give two speeches. I told the English teacher I was shy and preferred not to give a speech. He of course insisted I do so anyway. The second speech was supposed to be an argument on one side of an issue—my argument was that classical music is better music than rock-n-roll music. I got a “B” on the first speech and a “D” on the second (“classical music”) speech. I

asked the teacher if someone could overcome their shyness. He said “No!” (I later proved him wrong, later in life giving a number of speeches and enjoying it!)

As a young boy, I found Sundays to be so vastly different from any other day of the week that I attributed this difference to God: that God made Sundays different for every single person in the world. But more than likely this difference for me was due to a combination of my mother having me go to Sunday school every Sunday; her always serving pancakes on Sundays; TV shows on Sundays being different; and the 49er football team only playing on Sundays—the Oakland Raiders didn’t exist in those days.

My mother grew up as a Christian fundamentalist, but became more liberal over time, becoming a Presbyterian. My father was an atheist. During my high school years, my mother insisted that I go to Sunday school. I disliked going, especially when Sunday school teachers insisted that everyone say a prayer praising “the Lord”—I hated having to avow to something I didn’t necessarily believe in, especially when the church told me at the same time that I shouldn’t lie!—I would rather have thought of Jesus as someone who was humble (which they taught), not appreciative of flaunting praise (which they also taught at the same time as his being humble). When one supposed Christian whose last name was Kennedy was asked if he would have voted for Kennedy for President and said he would never vote for a Catholic, I disliked Sunday school even more. I loved Sundays when the 49’ers football team played back East, as I had an excuse to stay home to watch TV with my father rather than to go to church, as both events occurred at the same time.

My father had two brothers: George, a Royal Canadian Air Force officer, and Carson, a University of Texas Psychology professor. My mother had 4 sisters: a missionary, a waitress, Pearl, and two other sisters who were nurses.

The most interesting sister was for me my Aunt Pearl who I didn't know existed until I was in high school. My mother didn't acknowledge her existence until later in life because she committed the "cardinal sin"—at least to my mother as a Christian fundamentalist—of getting divorced. According to my mother, Pearl was so brilliant as a student in school that she skipped two grades, and being quite small anyway, was constantly teased by bullies in her new grade for her size, mostly boys; as a result, she learned to dislike all men. Pearl did get married and had a daughter, but quickly got divorced. (Nevertheless, Pearl, for some reason, seemed to like me and even later invited me to Hawaii after she and her daughter briefly moved there—although she affirmed to me that she did indeed dislike men.)

My first airline flight was to see my Aunt Mary, Uncle George and cousins, Pat, Teresa, Jane and Peter, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Uncle George was an officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force and a Canadian representative of NORAD (the North American Aerospace Defense Command, an alliance of Canada and the United States that defended against missiles launched from the then Soviet Union); NORAD had its headquarters in the middle of a mountain in Colorado Springs to protect the NORAD officials from atomic bombs, Cheyenne Mountain.

On the flight to Colorado Springs I was reading a book by Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian*, which I unsuccessfully hid from my mother who was very unhappy I was

reading it. The author, I felt, was more “Christian” than most of the purported Christians I had met.

Thomas Jefferson edited the Bible removing the supernatural to produce the so-called “Jeffersonian Bible”. Although there is controversy about why Jefferson did this, the results turn out to be consistent with Russell’s view of Christianity—Bertrand Russell agreed with much of the philosophy of Jesus but did not accept the supernatural aspects of the Bible.

Although the Colorado Springs airline trip increased my love of traveling, I developed my initial love of traveling from my mother who took the kids on car vacations all over the West, as far north as Jasper and Banff National Parks in Alberta, Canada and as far east as Yellowstone, stopping at sights along the way. She would try to get my father to come on the trips, but fortunately for the kids he almost always refused, saying he needed to work. My father treated a car trip similar to the way others treated an airline trip: a way to get from here to there; he would seldom stop and would not take diversions, driving 14 hours a day except for about one hour for meals and restroom stops. The only car trip he would go on was an exhausting 1,200 mile trip back to where he was born in Salmon Arm, British Columbia, Canada. If my father had been the driver on my car trips, I probably would have developed an intense dislike of traveling instead of a love for it.

During my latter high school years, I remember coming home for President John Kennedy’s press conferences on TV. He was introduced by Pierre Salinger (of San Francisco Lowell High School fame)—I always thought Pierre Sallinger was French due to his name and my knowledge that he spoke fluent French. President Kennedy had a

fantastic wit. He would often start off with a question from Helen Thomas, the same reporter shunned by the second Bush president many years later, with Bush having her moved from the front row of the press room to the back for asking a pointed question.

I attended the University of California at Davis. It was a premiere agricultural school and was also known because almost every student owned a bicycle. On going to class one day, everyone had their radios on, which was extremely unusual. Upon talking to other students, I learned that President Kennedy had been shot and died.

Davis is 90 miles from Oakland. My mother wanted me to come home most weekends, which I did, taking a bus both ways. Unfortunately, there were no express buses, only a local one stopping at many small towns (Davis, Dixon, Vacaville, Vallejo, Rodeo) before it arrived at Oakland. This took many hours. My mother feeling sorry for me bought a used car with “brand new” retread tires.

My mother bought a Chevy Corvair, the car that made Ralph Nader famous with his book *Unsafe at Any Speed*. I drove home to Oakland during rush hour in the fast lane and a retread tire stripped apart. The car veered to the right toward another car, and I overcompensated by turning to the left over a curb in the middle of the freeway. The car rolled over and over and landed upside down. I had no seat belt—seat belts were not required in those days. Several people helped me out of the car. Other accidents had occurred behind me. I was uninjured, I think, having only a scratch on my elbow.

My mother came to pick me up after the accident. My mother said she asked my father to come, but he asked “Is he all right?” and she said, “Yes”. In response he said, “I don’t

need to come". I was cited for not looking at the condition of my tires before I left on a trip. The ticket was overturned when my mother testified before the judge that the tires I had were "brand new" retreads that she just bought for me, and that she bought a set of these tires for her own car and also had an immediate blowout.

While attending UC Davis, I was still very shy, not taking part in any classroom discussions. During the summer, I applied for a job in Yosemite. The personnel person wanted to put me in a back country camp because of my shyness, but I ended up at the Glacier Point Hotel. The hotel at 7200 foot elevation overlooked the fabulous Yosemite Valley with its many waterfalls, granite cliffs, and the hemispheric granite dome of Half Dome.

People who worked at the Glacier Point Hotel were a combination of Americans and Europeans. One fellow from Wales got a \$20 tip as a bell hop. Thereafter for a few weeks, every other employee working as a bell hop put on a fake European accent to try to get the same tip.

People worked 6 days with one day off a week. On one of these days off, I hiked to the hemispheric granite domed Half Dome and back to Glacier Point, 20 miles round-trip. The back face of Half Dome had two giant cables and two by fours every 10 feet that you climb to get to the top of Half Dome. When you get tired you lay back on the granite with both your feet on a two by four. When I got to the top, I had cramps in both calves and could not walk. Upon coming down, the cramps were even worse. Again, I could not walk. Fortunately, I could run and ran back 10 miles to Glacier Point.

In those pre-environmentalist days, there was a regular ritual at Glacier Point: At night, a large bonfire of red fir bark was lit atop an area of granite next to a cliff. A man 3000 feet immediately below Glacier Point at Camp Curry in Yosemite Valley would yell, "Let the fire fall!" A Glacier Point employee would then shove the embers over the cliff to produce a glowing red "waterfall" of fire that people called the "Firefall".

The next summer, I also got a job in Yosemite, but in Yosemite Valley. My mother, feeling sorry that she bought me a Corvair with retreads, brought me a motorbike in a trailer. For my first try on a motorbike, I gunned the motorbike, forgetting to take my hands off the brakes—this resulted in me doing an involuntary wheelie. A co-worker saw me and the next day told me how impressed he was with my wheelie.

At university at Davis, I met a girl, Cathy, who loved to make out for hours, as did I with her. In those days, sex in college was something that got you thrown out of school. After Cathy broke up with me, I tried making out with many other women, but there was not the zing like there was with Cathy. If Cathy had not broken up with me, I don't know what I would have done as I was not in any way interested at that time in getting married to anyone.

(Note: Forty years later I bought an alumni directory and looked up Cathy's entry. She had had 5 children and listed housewife as her only occupation—There is absolutely nothing wrong with this, but I think we would both have been miserable if we had married as I think we had very different dreams, mine being having fewer children and a wife with a career. But then again, in the 1960's, having 5 children was not that uncommon and in the 1960's almost all wives were stay-at-home mothers.)

At Davis during the next school year, I used my motorbike instead of my bicycle. One time I forgot my homework, and with my motorbike I had time to go home and pick it up. I drove on a main road home with a T intersection. A fellow drove though the T intersection turning left in my direction. I turned left trying to avoid him and slid under his car with the motorbike crushing the knee of my left leg. Motorcycle helmets were not required in those days, and I did not have one. Immediately, I had a dream that I turned on a light switch and was severely shocked throughout my body. As I lay upon the ground, I could not see, probably due to me being knocked out. I had a pain in my leg so severe I would have prayed to die. Making the pain even worse, people were holding me down, stopping me from breathing as I was pleading to get up to straighten my leg. An ambulance came and I was given a shot of morphine. The pain immediately went away. I was on crutches for 6 months. This is the accident where, if it were not for modern medicine, I would have been crippled for life.

After graduation from UC/Davis in 1967 I stayed at my parent's home in Oakland for a half year. I worked for a friend of my father, Dr. Bill Wattenberg, who started a company to build computer systems for clinical laboratories that read directly from clinic laboratory instruments. This was likely the first computer system of its kind ever built. There were very few computers in those days—this was well before the invention of the PC.

Dr. Bill Wattenberg is now a talk show host for KGO radio in San Francisco. Some people call him the “world's smartest man”. He worked with my father at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, a laboratory working on nuclear bombs. Dr. Wattenberg is a

conservative, and my father was a liberal who loved to argue—I'm sure they had doozies of discussions.

My father was telling me that while working at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory as a civil engineer, he designed a telemetry tower for some unknown location. Upon looking at a newsreel, my father saw the telemetry tower. It was used to drop the first hydrogen bomb.

I was called up for an army physical, which would have resulted in me going to the Vietnam War, but because of my knee injury, I was put in the category, “only to be called up in case of war”. That was fortunate for me as I did not believe in shooting anybody, but was not religious in any way. I guess, without my injury, I would have landed in jail, or maybe if I was very lucky, would have been classified as a conscientious objector even though I was not religious.

During my half year in Oakland, there were anti-Vietnam War demonstrations at the University of California in nearby Berkeley. The then governor of California, Ronald Reagan, got his reputation of being a tough governor by having UC police with billy clubs chase and tear gas demonstrators. (I did attend some anti-Vietnam War demonstrations—as did my future wife Bonnie—but in the more tolerant San Francisco.)

Part of Reagan's campaign for a second term as governor of California was implying to voters that University of California students went to school free and should be thankful that the State of California gave them this privilege of free schooling—Reagan told voters that UC students “did not pay tuition”. This was only technically true: The California Constitution disallowed the state from charging tuition, so students paid “fees” instead.

In 1968, I attended graduate school at UCLA taking computer-related courses. Very few universities had majors of computer science at that time, and UCLA was not one of them—but it did have computer science courses.

When I first came to UCLA, I rented in an apartment in West LA, a neighborhood right next to UCLA, but, unlike I expected, a neighborhood with very few students as it was the gay area of LA. After gays tried to pick me up a few times, I decided to move to a private apartment house dormitory for UCLA students, which included dining for the price.

The dorm was a brand new multi-story building with an expensive marble floor in the lobby, and, I understand, a Japanese innovative design that caused the building to rock back and forth during earthquakes, supposedly protecting the occupants from injury and the building from damage. Unfortunately, there was an earthquake whose resulting effect for occupants was a magnification of the effects of the earthquake and whose resulting effect on the building was a huge crack in the expensive marble lobby floor.

One of the UCLA students in the dorm was the actor Ricky Kelman who played a major role as a teen age boy in a Lucille Ball movie, *Critic's Choice*. At UCLA he had a major of theater and was planning to become a film director. Owning a number of Los Angeles Laker season tickets, he was kind enough to invite me to a Lakers-Boston Celtics playoff game.

During the game, a Boston Celtic's player, John Havlicek, ran up and down the court, scoring a huge number of points, single-handedly causing the Lakers to lose. After the game, in the Forum lobby, Havlicek was interviewed by broadcaster Chick Hern as part of

the LA radio broadcast. A number of people in the crowd yelled out death threats to Havlicek. Chick Hern had to apologize for the crowd.

Although I had a car in LA, I seldom used it, and for a week or so I just parked it a couple of blocks from the dorm. When I came back it was covered with black soot, so much so that I could not see out the windows. Since then, with the Clean Air Act of 1970, there is much less smog in LA.

During my time at UCLA, Robert F. Kennedy was campaigning for the California Primary, running against Democrats Eugene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey for president, with Kennedy and McCarthy competing for the vote of people who wanted to end the Vietnam War. I worked for Robert Kennedy in Los Angeles, handing out brochures mainly in Jewish neighborhoods, which included handing out campaign flyers in the shape of jet planes promising to sell jets to Israel. I attended a couple of rallies and even shook Robert Kennedy's hand, thinking at that very moment that he must shake so many hands that his hands must be sore by now. On election night, I was studying for tomorrow's finals at UCLA, so I had to forgo going to the Ambassador Hotel for the election night rally where Kennedy would either concede defeat or give a speech upon his victory. I turned on the TV at 12 midnight and heard Robert Kennedy's victory speech upon winning the California Primary. A few minutes later, Robert Kennedy's death was reported on TV, that he had been shot by Sirhan Sirhan, a Palestinian, in a back kitchen. The death of Robert Kennedy accentuated the significance of President Kennedy's and Martin Luther King's deaths; as all of the best known, well respected, and elegantly spoken champions of civil rights had all died by assassinations within a few years of each other.

In thinking back about this time period, I wondered about the connection of the campaign literature I passed out and Sirhan Sirhan's motivation for killing Robert Kennedy. Robert Kennedy was once criticized for tailoring his message for whom he was talking to, and when he was asked why he did this he responded, "Should I talk about color TV sets"—a luxury at that time—"in a poor neighborhood?" The campaign literature I passed out in the Jewish community was a large cutout of a fighter plane, with the literature saying that the US should support sending fighter planes to Israel. Had Sirhan Sirhan, a Palestinian, seen this exact same literature, and, if so, was this his motivation for killing Robert Kennedy?

Some people speculate that there was a good chance that if he had lived Robert Kennedy would have been the Democratic nominee for President instead of Hubert Humphrey, and that, if he was, there would not have been the huge defection of anti-war Democrats from voting in the election. If so, Robert Kennedy would probably have been President rather than Richard Nixon, and we would not have had Watergate. So that one piece of campaign literature of a fighter plane could have radically changed American history.

After attending UCLA, I returned home to Oakland to find out that my mother had terminal cancer, a condition that she had kept from me. She was in and out of psychiatric hospitals with the cancer having spread to her brain and with a Stanford experimental operation removing her adrenal glands and requiring her to self-administer the taking of cortisone via tablet, resulting in even more mental problems. Making this an even more

terrible situation, I was also forced to play referee between my father and my younger sister Karol, a daughter losing her mother together with a not too tactful adult.

After my mother's death, I started off on a vagabond tour of the country. First I went to Penn State, one of the first schools to have a major in computer science, to get my Master's degree.

Although I was not out to meet women at Penn State, I should have been. Being shy I was not good at meeting eligible women, but in thinking about my experience at Penn State, almost all men were not good at meeting eligible women either. At Penn State, many of the men in my graduate school dorm (including me) had a crush on this one cute, flirty and bubbly woman, ignoring all the other women. The situation now reminds me of an early Mad Magazine satire on males who are more attracted to women with blond hair: Mad Magazine had a spoof on the cartoon "Archie", renamed "Starchie", where the Betty and Veronica characters looked exactly the same and had the same personalities except that Betty had blond hair and Veronica had black hair. Of course, all the guys were chasing after Betty.

What I learned later in life was that, if you are a graduate student, the absolute best place to meet a mate was at graduate school, as you are much more likely to find the right mate there than you would in the outside world. (This idea, of course, is similar but different for different people, for example, if you are a devout Christian then the absolute best place to meet a mate is probably in church.)

But in any case to succeed at meeting the right person, a man must dispense with his normal instincts of just seeking sexiness or beauty . . . or blond hair! What is far, far more important in a mate is finding a person who thinks like you do. For a male graduate student, finding a woman who thinks like him is far easier in graduate school than it is in normal society, but only if that guy is open to dating more women than the ones he is immediately attracted to. Love—contrary to what most men think—is a slow process, and love makes beauty. On the other hand, a woman should be persistent in pursuing a guy she thinks she might be interested in, especially a shy one (like me)—He might see the light! I was tremendously lucky to meet Bonnie later in life.

After Penn State in 1970 I got a job in the Boston area with a US Air Force think tank, MITRE. Because the people who hired me were temporarily busy on computer projects, an employee that was also newly hired, Murray Eisenberg, and I were able to spend our time on a paper for a prestigious computer science journal (Communications of the ACM)—the article was titled “Further comments on Dijkstra’s concurrent programming control problem”. It brought prestige to MITRE and was later cited in many books on computer science. Murray Eisenberg thereafter became a mathematics professor at the University of Massachusetts.

One MITRE colleague, Bob Stetson, invited me—although I was at first reluctant to go because I did not appreciate its importance—to the first formal presentation of the forerunner of the Internet, the ARPANET, a US military network. At the meeting we were told the purpose of the ARPANET network (which was a completely different than current

Internet): It was a way of connecting many computers so there would be many different paths between computers to send data from one computer to another for military communications purposes. If the Soviets blew up a city using a nuclear bomb and knocked out some computers, then all the other computers would still be able to communicate, using different paths between computers. (Many years later I talked to computer scientist who emigrated from the Soviet Union. He told me that he worked on a Soviet version of ARPANET built for the same purpose.)

At MITRE in a suburb of Boston, I worked in a fairly large windowless building that previously contained one of the earliest computers. The computer, taking up most of the building, was made of many heat-producing vacuum tubes. The lack of windows allowed the air conditioning to work better in summer. The computer was said to have as much computing power as an early PC.

To me, Boston—especially when I lived there—was a very old, un-kempt place. At that time, Boston parks, even the Boston Commons, had dirt rather than grass. Boston had a famous restaurant Durgin Park that was in a large old dilapidated colonial building, part of the Faneuil Hall complex.

Durgin Park is a restaurant that opened in 1827, though there has been a restaurant there since the colonial days. When I went there, customers sat at long tables, they served mainly prime rib, and the waitresses were known as being surly.

Next to the building containing Durgin Park was another colonial building containing a farmers' market, which was equally dilapidated. The sellers in the farmers' market would

line up their best produce in front. You would request so many pounds of the produce and they would pick the produce from the back that was of much poorer quality.

Close by was the Italian neighborhood of Boston, called the North End. When I lived in Boston, the North End looked like an old Italian town—it did have a lot of charm though.

In the old movie *Love Story* shot in Boston, there was a scene where the young woman was telling her boyfriend, “You drive like a maniac!” The boyfriend replied, “Everyone in Boston drives like a maniac”. In those days that was true.

I attended a Rod McKuen concert where he read his poems and sang his songs (never realizing that he went to my old high school, Oakland Tech), and I attended a Bette Midler concert. She said that she liked Boston but it had too much trash on the street. In those days that was true.

For the Rod McKuen concert, as on many other occasions, I did not have a date. What I did the day of the concert defied my shy personality. I stopped beautiful women getting off subway trains and asked if they would like to go with me to the Rod McKuen concert that night. One particularly attractive woman was very hesitant, mulling over what to say. I did not do what I should have done, take the next step and say, “Here’s a ticket, do what you want with it!” Maybe I would have been lucky, and she would have showed up.

I found Bostonians to be very parochial. I made an effort to ask Bostonians the question: “Did you ever consider living in another part of the country?” The answer was invariably “no”, adding “New England is the best place to live in the United States”. I would then ask them where else they had visited in the United States, and it was rare to find a

Bostonian who had visited any state outside of New England other than New York.

Bostonians also seemed to only vacation on Cape Cod and nowhere else.

One time I served tacos to a group of Bostonians. No one in the group knew what tacos were. (This was in the 1970's.) I put the taco shells, ground beef, tomatoes, onions, lettuce and taco sauce (mild, medium and hot) separately on the table. Most people used the taco shell as a cracker, put the ground beef on one area of the plate, and made a salad out of the rest of the ingredients. One fellow told me that the tomatoes were so bad that I must have got them from the farmers' market at Faneuil Hall. When I showed the group how to make tacos, one fellow told me, "Leave us alone . . . We'll eat the way we want!" Everyone except me took the mild sauce.

One day I was driving along a street in Boston, when I saw two speeding cars going the reverse direction, with one car chasing the other. The car behind drove in front of the other car and cut it off. Both guys got out of their cars. Concerned that there might be a fight, which I might be able to stop, I made a U-turn and parked behind the back car. I waited until another car came behind me. The person in the car behind got out, and we together went to talk to the two fellows. The fellow in the first car, wearing a white tee shirt that was sticking out, put his hand near his belt area where there was a bulge underneath his shirt that looked like a big hand gun. The fellow looked at us, put his hand on the bulge, and said, "You guys better get out of here!" We quickly moved back to our cars, and the guy from the second car ran back to his car and quickly drove away at high speed. The other guy entered his car and continued speeding after him. I told the fellow I

was with, “We better call the cops.” He said, “Don’t worry, I know these two people. I’ll call the cops.”

I remembered the fellow who threatened me with a knife in high school. Now there was this threat with a gun. What was similar in both cases was that my field of vision narrowed and focused entirely on the weapon. Perhaps this is a natural instinct.

While living in Boston, I went on ski trips to New Hampshire and Vermont with a Boston-based skiing group called the “Tyrolean Ski Club”. The ski club sponsored a trip in February 1971 to the real Tyrolea: Kitzbühl, Innsbruck and Salzburg Austria. In New England, the snow for skiing was always icy. In Kitzbühl where I skied low on the mountain, the snow was icy in the morning and slush in the afternoon. The inn we stayed at in Kitzbühl had magnificent meals—rumor had it that the inn was owned by Hitler’s former cook, who made all of our meals. The meals were indeed fantastic!

In Salzburg, our group visited Mozart’s birthplace, then went to lunch. One group member saw espresso on the menu and asked the waiter what it was. The waiter told us it was a strong coffee drink but assured us that Americans did not like it. Challenged by this statement, I ordered an espresso and loved it! Clearly American tastes have changed since then—this was very much the pre-Starbucks days when very few Americans had ever tasted espresso.

From Boston I continued my sojourn further west to Colorado Springs, getting another computing job. Located in Colorado Springs are the Air Force Academy and the Fort Carson Army installation.

Denver is a mile high. Colorado Springs is higher. Without doubt the most famous sight in Colorado Springs is the view of Pikes Peak. There is a road to the top that anyone can take. The top is 14,110 feet.

I worked for a company, the System Development Corporation that, like MITRE in Boston, did software and hardware development work for the Air Force. I worked on a system to track satellites and missiles in space. My office was in the middle of Cheyenne Mountain where the headquarters of NORAD was located, protected by huge steel doors that would automatically close upon an atomic attack, locking the occupants in (probably for the duration of the war?). (By coincidence, the headquarters of NORAD was the place where my Canadian Uncle George had previously worked.)

The computer systems we developed that were in Cheyenne Mountain displayed graphical pictures of the world or United States with the tracks of satellites and incoming missiles. There were similar systems later depicted in the movie *War Games*.

The System Development Corporation was a West Coast company with West Coast salaries. Since Colorado Springs had so many military bases, there were many former armed service personnel who were retired from the military and thus worked for less money than they would otherwise.

Colorado Springs did not have any major ski areas close by, but many were in driving distance in a couple of hours. Unlike Europe that I visited and New England where I previously lived, Colorado had very dry snow. In fact, I contended that the worst ski resort in Colorado was better than the best one in New England as far as skiing goes—in Colorado

you never had to ski on ice, and in winter in Colorado it is sunny all the time except when it snows, a great attribute for any ski area.

While in Colorado Springs, I worked for Gary Hart in his first campaign for the US Senate. When he was running in the primary election for Senate, I went to a reception for him. Being the only person who was not already a supporter, I got to talk to him for 20 minutes. I only remember two questions I asked him: one was about his views on gun control and the other was about whether would ever run for President—perhaps I was looking for the next Robert Kennedy. About gun control, Gary Hart said he would ban “Saturday night specials”, very cheap handguns that any criminal could afford—Unfortunately, criminals are much richer these days and can afford much more powerful weapons.

When I asked Gary Hart if he would ever run for President, he laughed and said, “I’m running for Senate!” Many years later, Gary Hart was a serious contender for the Democratic nomination for President, but he dropped out after the news media learned that he had a girlfriend even though he was married. Walter Mondale also ridiculed him for not having any new policies, asking “Where’s the Beef!”, copying a fast food commercial where an older woman makes these remarks after opening up a competitor’s hamburger having a huge bun and a tiny hamburger patty.

After the election, as a reward, I was invited to Denver with other campaign workers to meet with the actor Robert Redford, with Senator-elect Gary Hart, and with Colorado’s Governor Richard Lamm, a person who became infamous for suggesting that healthcare should be rationed.

While living in Colorado Springs, I went to Aspen quite often, to ski, to go to a music festival, to visit my cousin from Canada, and even once to go backpacking. Aspen was famous for its skiing and became even more famous when the songwriter John Denver (who wrote songs about Colorado) later moved there.

Having a penchant at that time of going places on my own, one summer I went backpacking by myself outside Aspen in the Snowmass-Maroon Bells Wilderness area. This was the only backpacking trip I would ever take in my life. I bought a backpack, a tent, a kerosene stove, a canteen, and a sleeping bag, all for this one trip—this was sort of as “silly” as someone buying skis, ski boots, and clothing to use for a single lifetime ski trip.

My backpacking trip in Aspen was a three day hike—or at least I made it so—to a 12,000 foot high mountain lake, Cathedral Lake. The first day, I started the hike from the 9,800 foot parking lot that marked the trail head. The trail went through an aspen forest then paralleled, but always stayed above, Pine Creek. The first night I slept in a small flat area overlooking the creek.

The following day, the trail reached a super steep section with many switch backs climbing to the 12,000 foot plateau where the lake was located. With my probably much too heavy backpack, I had to stop every 25 feet on the switchbacks to catch my breath. I met a group from Michigan going the other way, “Flatlanders” as we Coloradoans called them, who were having no trouble at all; however, they were going the much easier direction, downhill.

Not being able to get near water until the lake, as the trail did not cross Pine Creek, I filled my canteen full of snow I scooped up along the way, letting it melt. As I walked above the tree line there were boulders all over the place with squeaking pikas—small rabbit-like animals but with human-like ears—dashing in and out of the rocks, seemingly following me as I walked up the trail.

Upon arriving at Cathedral Lake surrounded by mountain summits, including the 14,000 foot Cathedral Peak, I set up my tent and went fishing. I got a bite, but couldn't catch anything. I didn't feel so bad when someone told me that none of the other campers was able to catch a fish from the lake either.

In the morning outside my tent was the sound of cackling birds. I looked out and there were two ptarmigans circling my small tent.

I made the much easier downhill hike back to the parking lot in one day, driving to Denver to catch a flight to Tennessee where I stayed with my brother and his family, making for the most ideal vacation, straining during the first part and totally relaxing—while I let my blisters heal—during the second part of my trip.

Another summer I went to the Aspen Music Festival. The American composer Aaron Copland was conducting his own composition, a modernist piece for orchestra, which I think was *Connotations for Orchestra*. The performance was given in a very large tent. One percussion instrument, a twisted rectangular piece of metal, was used in the performance to simulate thunder. During the performance, rain came down and at the time of simulated thunder in the piece there was actual thunder echoing it. After the concert, Copland was

surrounded by a small group of students—Copland was playfully lamenting his getting old. He was 75 at the time and seemed perfectly fine to me, but because Copland had composed his last orchestral piece 8 years earlier, some people later assumed that he had stopped composing because he had the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease starting at 70.

A few years later after visiting my aunt and uncle in Colorado Springs, the whole family, with the exclusion of Pat, moved back to their house in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

My cousin Pat, who now lives in Victoria B.C., was going to college in Colorado when I moved to Colorado Springs and shortly thereafter moved to Aspen. (Her family--my Uncle George, Aunt Mary and my other cousins—had moved from Colorado Springs back to their house in Victoria B.C many years before I moved to Colorado Springs.)

Just before I visited Pat in Aspen, I had taken a mushroom class. In the Aspen woods I found a large yellow mushroom, a type that I had just studied. I cooked it in a skillet—Pat, quite sanely, refused to eat the mushroom. I asked her why there were so few college-educated young people in Colorado Springs, and she told me they didn’t go there because the salaries were so low, which confirmed by previous conclusions about Colorado Springs.

My father visited me in Colorado Springs. He wanted to see Cripple Creek, a gold mining town near Colorado Springs. Before being a civil engineer and marrying my mom, my father was a mining engineer, having graduated from the former Montana School of Mines in Butte, Montana. In those earlier days before my birth, Cripple Creek had a reputation as a wild, bawdy, mining town. What my father saw was a near ghost town (but today with gambling being allowed there it has returned to its former glory).

(My father having been a student of the Montana School of Mines could have had, and did have, a profound effect on my life. My father told me that all students at the school took turns shoveling ashes that were mostly arsenic that remained after the burning of minerals; as a result my father could have died early or could have suffered a debilitating illness a short time later in life. Fortunately, he did not. When I was an unquestioning little kid, my mother told me my father ate his meals fast because that what he learned going to the Montana School of Mines, without telling me why that had occurred—unfortunately, I picked up this same bad habit by example from my father, often gulping down my food, despite my mother’s admonitions to not copy my father.)

In 1976 I moved from Colorado Springs to Seattle to go to music school, the Cornish School of Music where John Cage and Merce Cunningham studied, pursuing my hobby of musical composition, which was inspired by my love of the classical, jazz-inspired, music of Copland and Gershwin and by my hearing many jazz musicians in live concert, including Ella Fitzgerald at UC Davis, and Count Basie and Erroll Garner at the Broadmoor, a resort hotel, at that time isolated by itself, 6 miles outside of Colorado Springs. Count Basie and his jazz orchestra were famous for playing the piece, “April in Paris”, and then playing it “One more time!!!”, and then playing it “One more once!!!” Erroll Garner was a jazz pianist known for his grunts and pounding 10ths in his left hand, which I appreciated more than most as I had big enough hands to also play 10ths.

Prior to my first week of music school in Seattle I saw an announcement of a free piano concert on the school’s bulletin board. I went to the place of the performance, which was like a very large living room with plenty of chairs. On entering, I signed the guest register,

and felt very lucky that I found a seat right next to the grand piano. I asked the couple next to me, “Where did you hear about this?” The woman looked at me incredulously responding, “From Jane and Peter of course!” “Isn’t this a piano concert?”, I asked. “No”, she answered, “It’s a wedding reception.” The concert had been canceled. I always wondered what the bride and groom thought when they saw my name in the wedding guest register.

Unfortunately, I was a terrible performer and felt entirely out of place at the music school. I quickly joined Boeing in Seattle, the airplane manufacturer, to make money in the computer software field again—Microsoft did not exist at the time and was not yet an alternative place to work.

Seattle has what some people call the “green factor”: it is green all year long, but only because it rains a little bit almost every day. If everything is fine in one’s life this is great, but otherwise, the constant rain and overcast make life somewhat depressing.

It seldom snows in Seattle, and this is fortunate, as Seattle has quite a few steep streets such as can be found in San Francisco. I found a quick way home from Boeing that had a steep hill. Unfortunately, I took this quick way home on a rare day when it snowed. I started slipping toward a steep embankment and stopped my car. Other people also stopped—none of us could back up. We collectively talked to each other to figure out how to go down the hill without going over the embankment. We all escaped without going over the edge.

In Seattle, I listened to San Francisco Bay Area radio stations, specifically KGO radio (that I mentioned earlier). A talk show host Ronn Owens sponsored a trip to Russia which I joined. (Ronn Owens remains a talk show host on KGO.)

The trip was in early spring but there was still snow in Russia, which made for more beautiful photographs. We flew into Stockholm airport and went to the gate of our flight to Leningrad, where was an Aeroflot plane waiting, with "Aeroflot" being the national airline of the Soviet Union. At the gate was a man with a World War I type leather aviator's cap at a teletype. We got on the plane and were immediately given box lunches to eat **before** we took off. The plane took off at a very steep angle and all the empty boxes came down the aisle.

Our trip in Russia was to Leningrad, Moscow and a town called Vladimir.

In Leningrad (now called St. Petersburg) we stayed at a hotel at the end of Nevsky Prospect with a cemetery across the street, which had graves of Dostoyevsky and of Tchaikovsky and fellow composers Rimsky-Korsakov, Glinka, and Mussorgsky. Going into a department store on Nevsky Prospect, there were only three items of merchandise displayed: two floor lamps with stems leaning in opposite directions at 45 degree angles and a small refrigerator on a flat plywood platform that rocked back and forth when you opened it.

At the other end of Nevsky Prospect, on the Neva River, was the Hermitage. The Hermitage is a museum with one of the largest collections of Western European art in the world, much of it taken from Western Europe at the end of World War II. The main

building of the Hermitage was in the tsars' Winter Palace, but the museum extends to five other buildings with a total of over one thousand rooms and three million artworks.

As we entered the Winter Palace there was an exhibition of American art in the front room. There were paintings of Coca Cola bottles and Campbell's soup cans. "Is this the best art America could provide?", I thought to myself. I now realize that this was the art of Andy Warhol.

Our tour guide was a former World War II bomber pilot, and he used the term "Catch 22" a couple of times. I asked him if he read the book "Catch 22" by Joseph Heller about American bomber pilots and he said "No", and that he had only heard the term from tourists. At the end of a stay in a city in the Soviet Union, a tourist was not allowed to tip the tour guide with money but was allowed to give him a gift. I gave him a paperback copy of "Catch 22", a novel about American pilots in Europe during World War II. He quickly put it in his briefcase and didn't say anything as he swiftly left the bus, not saying a word of thank you, indicating to me that it was probably a contraband book.

The group then went on an overnight rail trip from Leningrad to Moscow, with a sleeper car that had the only bed I had in the Soviet Union that was long enough for my 6'3" height. Our luggage was taken away except for a small case and transferred to the luggage compartment of the train. Upon arriving in Moscow, I learned that my luggage had been misplaced or stolen. I guess I brought over too many gifts such as jeans, Snoopy pins and cosmetics. (Although I did not bring my jeans to sell, everywhere we went in the Soviet Union, people asked to buy jeans, at that time a symbol of Western decadence that could not be purchased in the Soviet Union at the time.)

My still camera film of Leningrad was in my stolen luggage (those were days before digital cameras). Because my future wife Bonnie missed Leningrad, and I lost my film of it, St. Petersburg (the new name of Leningrad) is one of the first places we want to go to in our old age—but Bonnie said she would refuse to go there when there is snow because she, as a paraplegic, could not take the cold. Too bad, for the snow makes for more romantic pictures.

In Moscow, I stayed at the same hotel as Bonnie did earlier, the “loud plumbing” Rossiya Hotel near Red Square. Our group toured Moscow. Our tour included the Kremlin with its many churches, its treasures, and Lenin’s small office. At Red Square, we saw the ornate St. Basil’s Cathedral, Lenin’s tomb (which we visited, seeing Lenin’s body) and GUM Department Store.

I went to GUM Department Store to buy a tripod so I could take a picture of Red Square at night. A couple boys saw me as I entered. I pointed to my camera. And they gestured “follow me”, running off. I did and landed in the camera store. I gave them some candy.

In the store you search for the item you want, get a sales slip, pay the cashier, then go back to pick up the item. The sales person took out a tripod from the back and checked it out to see if the legs and screws worked.

In the camera store, a man my age, Victor, told me he was a photographer and invited me to lunch. We met some of his friends, including a young woman who asked me if I would marry her so she could get out the country. I had a spicy lemon soup that was very good. Victor took a nighttime picture of Red Square. The tripod was supposed to have two

ends to put the camera platform on; only on one end were the holes drilled correctly. (The Soviet Union might have had good missiles and bombs, but it certainly had lousy consumer goods.)

In front of the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow, I took a picture of Ronn Owens, the San Francisco radio talk show sponsor of our trip, and his then girlfriend, Jan Black, a news anchor on KCBS at that time, a competing San Francisco radio station—they were later married. I lay on my back and shot a picture of the Bolshoi Theater Apollo with his four horses above Ronn, with Ronn wearing a Russian fur hat and his hand tucked in his coat like Napoleon, and Jan Black arm in arm.

We then went to the town of Vladimir outside of Moscow. Vladimir is a small town which was the capital in ancient Russia. It has historic buildings, especially churches that have always been in Vladimir, but also historic buildings moved to Vladimir from other parts of Russia. With the snow, especially with it covering the tops of churches, there were many fantastic pictures to take.

On our plane back to the United States from Russia, many people on the trip expressed the same feelings that I had: Russia was a fascinating country, especially with its old churches, palaces, Red Square and Kremlin, but at the same time it was a very depressing country and we were all glad to return to the United States.

Two women in their 70's who were on the trip gave me some advice: "Travel the world when you are young. It's much easier and more enjoyable to do so than when you are old like us."

After the trip, when I returned to work at Boeing in Seattle, a fellow worker and I gave slide shows of our respective trips to the Soviet Union. He showed the Soviet Union with obstacles such as telephone and electrical wires still in the picture. My slides presented a more romantic picture with obstacles removed. (Photographers, authors and filmmakers can romanticize or de-romanticize a place, for example by excluding or including things from the picture. I remember visiting Kyoto, Japan that overall looks like an old industrial city in the eastern United States; a filmmaker excluded the industrial parts of Kyoto and just presented Kyoto's old palaces, beautiful gardens and bamboo forests that are widely dispersed throughout the city, creating a completely different romantic image of Kyoto.)

A person I worked with at Boeing, Fritz, disliked working for Boeing and expressed it. I also was not that happy at Boeing, but did not express it. He was from the former Czechoslovakia and was 20 years older than me. His favorite phrase was "Too soon old, too late smart". Although Fritz loved the outdoors, he would tell me about Czechs when he grew up having a completely different view of physical exercise than Americans have: The Czechs got physical exercise by working in the fields. They thought this shortened their lives. The people that lived the longest were the rich who did not have to do physical exercise. Thus physical exercise was not considered a way to keep healthy—quite the contrary, it was a way to shorten your life.

But Fritz did love the outdoors and thus physical exercise. Fritz invited me on a number of hiking trips. We went up on a dirt trail to the top of a mountain and did

something I would never have thought of: At the top, we ran down a steep snow field, high stepping it to avoid getting our legs stuck in the snow as we ran. This was really fun.

Fritz also took several of us on a trip where we camped near the base of Carbon Glacier, a glacier that is on the slope of Mount Rainier in Mount Rainier National Park in Washington State. Carbon Glacier is a dirt-covered glacier and thus black in color, giving it its name. As you walk by it you hear it creaking. Fritz and I took our pulses after we took a fairly strenuous hike. His pulse was 55. Mine was in the 90's.

(This reminded me of stories my mother told me of when she worked as a nurse. During World War II, my mother was a nurse in Canada, and because a large number of physicians were overseas in Europe helping fight the war, many nurses essentially took over for physicians in Canada. One day a fellow came in for a medical examination, and my mother took his pulse. It was 18? My mother brought over another nurse, and the fellow was laughing. His pulse was indeed 18.

Another time a woodsman came in with his fingers in his hand. My mother had worked as a surgery nurse previously. She sewed together the cut nerves, tendons, muscle tissue, and blood vessels. A month later the fellow came back and was able to use his hand and fingers.)

From Seattle, I moved back to the San Francisco Bay Area to what is termed "the Silicon Valley", an area near San Jose south of the Bay. I again worked on a satellite tracking system for the company I worked at previous to Boeing, the Systems Development Corporation. All my recent jobs, MITRE in Boston, the System Development Corporation in

Colorado Springs, Boeing in Seattle, Washington, and now the System Development Corporation in the Silicon Valley all had one thing in common: They were all working directly or indirectly for the Air Force. They all required a secret security clearance.

My job in the Silicon Valley lasted a shorter time than my other jobs. I decided to be adventurous and move to Saudi Arabia. In all the places I lived in the United States (New England, Colorado, Washington, and California) there was skiing. In Saudi Arabia not only was there no snow, but no rain, and almost no rivers or streams.

When a fellow employee in the Silicon Valley job learned that I was going to Saudi Arabia, he told me that his sister lived in Kenya and was married to a man who worked for the United Touring Company. His brother-in-law was in charge of tourist flights within Kenya for that company. He gave me his brother-in-law's name and address for future reference.

In my going to Saudi Arabia there were several problems: I had a car and a piano, and Saudi Arabia was not a place to meet women. A woman I worked with who owned a house agreed to take my car—the car I was told by her would dissuade robbers, and another coworker could use the car on rare occasions. A girlfriend agreed to take my piano, as she said “she always wanted to learn to play the piano”. She and a couple of other women agreed to be my pen pals. (Later on after my return, the relationships that I hoped would grow did not, and the relationships I thought of as casual ones were thought to be more serious than they were.) In any case, I was off to Saudi Arabia.

3

My Life in Saudi Arabia

In January 1980, I went to work in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In those days, some people called Jeddah the Switzerland of Saudi Arabia, as Western women didn't need to wear head scarves, although they did need to cover their arms. In fact, the company I worked for illegally employed two Western women as secretaries for a while before the authorities found out—one woman wore relatively short dresses with cut off sleeves and complained because she was pinched all the time.

Jeddah is in Western Saudi Arabia on the Red Sea. It is hot and, being on the Red Sea, is also always humid. Eight months of the year it is at least 95 degrees all day and all night. When I arrived in Jeddah, it hadn't rained for two years. One day a co-worker from Sudan came to work with his sweater on, complaining about how cold it was outside—the temperature was 78 degrees! (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital situated in the center of Saudi Arabia, is both hotter and cooler than Jeddah, is not humid, and even has rain two months of the year.)

I started out living in an apartment house in a district of Jeddah where Idi Amin, the former cruel dictator of Uganda, lived. In fact, one co-worker maintained that he talked to Idi Amin in a small grocery store near our apartment house.

Nearby our apartment house was a Chinese restaurant. I couldn't understand why it didn't have fortune cookies until I learned that fortune cookies were a San Francisco concoction and not a standard part of Chinese cuisine.

In Jeddah I worked for a Saudi computer software company, Saudi Data Systems, started by three Saudis, one who got a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, one who got a Ph.D. from USC, and the other who got a Ph.D. from UCLA. I worked in the central office.

The office staff were Saudis or refugees from Muslim or other countries. The technical professionals were all foreigners, either Westerners (Americans, Europeans and Canadians) or from the Middle East (e.g., Jordan and Egypt). One Saudi on the office staff, Ragheb, was a swimmer on Saudi Arabia's ocean swimming team—he told me that ocean swimming was the only physical sport where women as a whole excelled over men). One refugee on the office staff, Alem, was a former member of the Ethiopian parliament and a devout Christian, exiled when the Communists took over Ethiopia.

The three Ph.D.'s who owned Saudi Data Systems each always wore a brilliant white thob (a long white robe) and a white ghutra (a white scarf held on the head over a skull cap by two intertwined black cords, called an igal, forming a ring), although they wore Western clothes when visiting the United States. Their clothes only differed from the average Saudi in that the average Saudi's thob was not as brilliantly white or as stiffly pressed, and the average Saudi would wear a red and white checkered ghutra instead of the white one. The office staff, including Saudis, all wore Western casual clothes.

When you asked a Saudi on the office staff to do something for you, he would always answer that he would do it, “insha’allah” meaning “God willing”. To a Saudi, the phrase had a religious significance. To a Westerner it was sometimes viewed as an excuse for not taking responsibility, as the phrase also sometimes was used to excuse delays (God was not willing), and then became the equivalent of the Asian Indian phrase “It’s just coming!”.

I was never shy when talking to someone of a different culture, perhaps because I usually found their lives to be so fascinating.

A Yemeni man, Muhammed, worked as a coffee boy in the central office—I tried to teach him English and he tried to teach me Arabic. In fact, he had a book in Arabic to learn English and read the words, and it came out English. I had a book in English to learn Arabic and read the words, and it came out Arabic. One day I totally could not understand him. I asked my co-worker Youhanna Salib, an Egyptian-Canadian, to translate and found out the following: Muhammed was going on a trip back to Yemen that was not a vacation. He had previously made a deal with his male cousin that his male cousin could marry Muhammed’s sister if Muhammed could marry his male cousin’s sister (i.e., Muhammed’s female cousin). Muhammed’s sister and male cousin were having marital problems and were on the verge of breaking up. Muhammed had to go back to Yemen to patch things up; otherwise, the whole deal was off and Muhammed would have to break up his marriage in return, divorcing his wife!

At the central office of Saudi Data Systems was a private room for Muslims to pray during prayer time, going through a ritual where one faces Mecca, beginning in the

standing position and going through several postures until one is kneeling. Few employees used the room.

Jeddah is very close to the Muslim holy city of Mecca. The main contract of Saudi Data Systems was development of software for a new Jeddah airport, which was several miles outside of town. The old Jeddah airport was right next to the city and quite small. It was inadequate because it was the landing place for pilgrims going to Mecca for the Hajj—the largest pilgrimage in the world—and there was an increasing number of pilgrims each year. The airport was also inadequate in that it was right next to the city and restricted the growth of Jeddah.

The Hajj is a Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca during the ninth month of the Islam calendar, Ramadan, that is a duty of all healthy adult Muslim men and women who are financially able to make the trip. Mecca is a sacred city for the Muslims which non-Muslims are not allowed to enter. (Actually, one time a group of us went to a Holiday Inn in Mecca. Just beyond it was a sign saying non-Muslims were disallowed from going further.)

Other than Islam (i.e., the Muslim religion), taking part in a religious service is not allowed in Saudi Arabia. There are no churches or synagogues in Saudi Arabia. And Bibles are not allowed in the country.

Saudi Data Systems gave a new employee enough money to buy a car after he had worked the company for 3 months. To buy a car, you first must apply for your driver's license. When you are getting your driver's license they need to know your blood type as this is put on your license. We were told to go to a doctor to get our blood type as at the

office issuing licenses they were said to use the same dirty needle to draw blood, which they kept in a glass of water. You are given the license then and there. Their driver's license documentation is then put in a folder that is haphazardly piled in a large closet, probably never to be seen or used again.

Being a passenger in a car in Jeddah—especially with Brits who drove very fast all the time—was terrifying. It seemed that there were no rules of the road. When I became a driver, I learned that there were indeed rules of the road, just completely different from anywhere else in the world. Saudi Arabian men almost all wore ghutras (again, a red and white checkered—or just plain white—cloth head cover with a black elliptical tube to hold it on) that disallowed the driver from seeing right or left—women were not allowed to drive. When a driver is to pull out from the curb, rather than looking for oncoming traffic, he honks his horn, and if no one honks in return he pulls out into traffic without looking, which he couldn't anyway, wearing the ghutra.

For multi-line roads, when the cars stop, the cars suddenly add a lane, for example with four cars across in three lanes. For a road with three lanes going one direction, cars often double park in either the far left lane or the far right lane. To take care of this situation if you are in the middle lane, you allow drivers on each side of you room to move over to the middle lane if you see a double-parked car in lanes on either side of you (otherwise they'll ram into you because they won't look to see if the lane is empty).

If you are in the far right lane of a multi-lane road, there is a signal to make a left turn from that lane. You make the left turn signal but with a pointed index finger bending and unbending your elbow. This signal is used when you are stopped and you have got the

attention of all the cars to your left who would nod their heads agreeing that you could make the long left turn across all the lanes.

Wives of employees, even Westerners, could not drive. They were given a taxi service with chauffeurs, which they used to either go to the Souk, the old huge downtown market, or if they lived outside the compound to go to the compound swimming pool. Other than a chauffeur with the women in the backseat or a woman with her husband, men and women were not allowed to be in the same car. One of our chauffeurs was Alem, the devout Christian and former member of the Ethiopian parliament.

The word on the street was that women in Saudi Arabia could only work as teachers in girls' schools or personnel in women's hospitals and banks. (There was a women's bank near our compound which could only be used by women, but I never ever saw anyone leave or enter the building.) Although it was clearly true that women in Saudi Arabia had a limited choice of occupations, I heard one fellow expatriate talk about a Saudi woman he met at King Faisal Hospital in Riyadh who was a computer scientist.

There were buses to downtown, including to the Souk, which I used before I was eligible to buy a car. The front third of the bus was for women and was usually empty; the back two-thirds were for men and were usually jam-packed. I saw some women in abayahs (a full body length black robe, in this case covering their heads and faces) huddled together sitting on the sidewalk to keep in the small area of shade. Modesty is the supposed reason for Saudi women wearing black robes but to wear black has the secondary effect of keeping Saudi women indoors at home on hot days (which is virtually every day in Jeddah) as black

clothing traps the heat. (The younger women in Jeddah only wore shorter black scarves that did not cover their faces.)

Jeddah seemed to me to be like a small town, although it had a population of about a million people. This was because gossip about life in the city or in Saudi Arabia quickly spread to everyone in Jeddah, including everyone in our company, Saudis and foreigners alike. Sometimes the gossip was very important: In Saudi Arabia, princes make the laws—One prince made a law that you couldn't buy a car unless you had a driver's license, while another prince made a law that you couldn't get a driver's license unless you owned a car. This almost shut down the country for a while. One fellow employee talked about a place in Jeddah he called "Chop Chop Square". They hold executions there, beheading people who had committed capital crimes. If you are there during the time of an execution, as this fellow was, you would be rounded up by the police and forced to watch the execution. And one story was that the authorities dropped wallets on the ground, and anyone who picked one up was arrested for theft; I didn't know if this was true, but one time I accidentally dropped a piece of paper on the ground, and three people immediately pointed to the paper so I could pick it up—no one picked it up for me.

In Saudi Arabia, it sometimes seems like there are as many expatriates as there are Saudis. Your nationality determines your occupation: Brits were the middle managers, Americans were the higher level managers, Filipinos were the secretaries, Pakistanis were the auto mechanics, and South Koreans were the street sweepers (really the standing army disguised as street sweepers I was told). A Saudi headed every company, and every company must be at least 51% owned by Saudis. All the workers were males.

At Saudi Data Systems, we worked five and one half days each week, with Friday off and half of Saturday off. We worked on Sundays. On Fridays, Saturdays and on many nights, employees went to the Jeddah Souk, a giant mostly indoor shopping area with small stalls where you could bargain for rugs, spices, watches, and gold jewelry, and buy food such as lamb shwarmas, lamb cut from towering logs of revolving meat that was put on pita bread with toppings of onions, tomatoes and cucumbers. Behind the Souk were old houses, many built by the Turkish, some with picturesque widows' balconies (wooden outcroppings in buildings where women could look out without being seen). Photography was forbidden in the Souk—if you pulled out your camera near the gold souk where there were a lot of Saudi women buying gaudy gold jewelry, all wearing abayahs, you would be quickly surrounded by men with machine guns.

Most of the Souk stores had TV sets in the window. When prayer time came (which was 5 times a day), all TV stations would show Hajjis circling the Kaaba, a large cubic structure that Hajjis circle when they go on pilgrimage to Mecca. Stores would then close with the owner kicking you out of the store until prayer time was over. Muslims if they wanted to pray would generally go to a nearby bank. Unlike Istanbul in Turkey, you did not hear calls to prayer over microphones from the mosques, and in the morning, people, unlike in Istanbul, were not woken up by loud prayer calls.

After buying a new camera in the Souk, I wanted to take pictures of the widows' balconies outside the Souk and some of the Souk. I succeeded in taking almost the whole roll of pictures and had just a few left. I saw an innocuous statue of a missile and took the final pictures. I was surrounded by policemen who did not speak English. They refused to

bring anyone who spoke English and did not let me go until I gave them my film. The innocuous statue happened to be right in front of the King's palace. (Fortunately in those days cameras were not digital; otherwise they probably would have taken my camera instead of just my film.)

There was a hotel in downtown Jeddah that I visited regularly to buy a cup of Turkish coffee, finally ground coffee in water that was boiled three times with the grounds allowed to settle to the bottom of the cup in which it was served. The coffee was brewed with crushed cardamom seeds. Sugar was then added. In the hotel (in 1980) I met a Brit who was staying there until he found a job in Saudi Arabia. He told me about meeting a fellow in London named Andrew Lloyd Webber in a pub, the composer of songs in the movie, *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 1971—a movie I had seen and loved. Andrew Lloyd Webber told him that he was discouraged at not having had any of his music published since the time of the movie, but just wait, he said—in a few years he will be a well-known composer.

Every Friday, four of us including Youhanna Salib, an Egyptian-Canadian, and Trevor Bluck, a Brit, went to a large German expatriate camp where we played tennis, ate outdoors, played bridge, and then watched an outdoor movie. We gave a name of a person we were supposedly visiting to the Filipino guard at the gate to the German camp—the guard always let us in.

Other than in expatriate compounds, there were no theaters in Jeddah, either for plays or movies. There were no places to find dancing or music being played; however, there was wide availability of pirated poor quality music tapes. Only men went out to restaurants (although I recently read that Jeddah restaurants now have back entrances and

areas for families). Dating was forbidden, and showing of affection between men and women—even holding hands—was strictly forbidden. But men holding hands was not all that uncommon! Television had been recently introduced in Saudi Arabia with much controversy (with the King promoting it and some of the population opposing it)—it did have Egyptian soap operas and even had professional wrestling from the United States for a while.

I bought a television set in the Souk—televisions in Saudi are European models that do not work in the United States. A Yemeni man put the set on his back tied with a couple ropes and took it to my car. I gave him a tip equivalent to about \$7, and he returned an overwhelmingly broad smile, putting his hand on his heart. (I remember this incident every time I see a singer or other musician end a performance with the same gesture.)

One time I was watching a news program on television with a Sudanese friend. On TV was a meeting of people from Muslim countries. All the men at the conference were wearing different head coverings. He said that he could tell what country a person was from by his head covering. Sure enough, he correctly identified every country before the television presentation did so.

As I said, I had not rained for two years prior to the time I came to Jeddah. It did rain once when I was in Jeddah. I was downtown and went into a small department store to shelter from the rain. In the store they were playing the song “It’s a Small World After All” over and over again, with a few other songs in between—clearly the store manager had been to Disneyland. One song in between was a Christmas carol. Once the rain stopped, I

left the department store and had to cross the street. The water in the street was half way up to my knees as the street had no drainage.

When I returned back to my apartment I learned that the apartment of the employee neighbor on the top floor had his apartment flooded with a half inch of water. The employee insisted that his landlord fix the roof, but the landlord asked him why he should do so, if it only rains in Jeddah once every two years.

Eventually, I moved from the apartment house to the company compound. It had many small buildings with two employees per building, tennis courts, and a swimming pool. There was a guard at the gate who allowed people in and kept people out. Alcohol is disallowed in public in Saudi Arabia, and anyone who is out in public acting drunk would be immediately arrested—alcohol is allowed in compounds, and almost everyone in the compound (except me) made their own wine.

There were also US embassy parties in the embassy downtown where they served alcohol. They allowed ex-service people and their guests to attend. One of my co-workers was an ex-marine and invited me to an embassy party. After leaving the party, he was singing “From the Halls of Montezuma. . .”, acting very drunk. I told him to cool it. As we left the embassy, the Saudi guard at the gate pointed his bayonet at my friend. I started laughing and told the guard, “Quit playing around!” The guard started laughing too and lowered his bayonet. My friend then asked me “Was he serious. . . Was he serious?” I didn’t know either.

Because of the heat and lack of rain, there was no natural vegetation in Jeddah. To compensate for this lack of natural vegetation, there was a hole in the middle of every sidewalk to plant a palm tree. Trucks would go to residences and fill their water tanks with desalinized water; other trucks would pick up sewage water. The sewage water was used to water and fertilize the palm trees in the middle of the sidewalks.

But many sidewalks just contained fairly deep empty holes, awaiting the planting of the palm tree. One time I was walking with a friend, looking at him while I was talking, and I was about to fall down one of the holes. He warned me just in time.

Sometimes in Jeddah there are what I call “boomerang flies”. They apparently are attracted to water, and the only water around is sweat on your skin. You shoo them away and they immediately fly back—that’s why I call them boomerang flies.

Being from San Francisco, I was pleased and surprised to find a Swensen’s Ice Cream Parlor in Jeddah. Swensen’s started in San Francisco, and I later read that it had 300 branches worldwide. I went into the store and ordered a hot fudge sundae with chocolate chip ice cream, as I did many times in the San Francisco Bay Area. The ice cream was gray, with the chocolate chips having previously melted in with the vanilla ice cream, and the fudge was towering on top of the ice cream. I asked the maker, “Is this really hot fudge—it looks stiff and cold to me?” He told me that they don’t turn on the hot fudge machine because it is too hard to clean!

In Saudi Arabia they sell a non-alcoholic beverage they call beer, and it tastes very much like alcoholic beer. One of the popular brands in Saudi Arabia is Schlitz, a defunct American

regular beer brand, with the inscription of the bottle logo saying “The Great American Beer”. I remember drinking one of these beers while I was working and thinking, “This is the first job I’ve ever had that allowed me to drink beer while I was working”.

After Hajj is over, a number of the pilgrims stay in Jeddah and try to get jobs. The authorities go through the Souk and ask people for their identity papers to verify that they are a worker in Saudi Arabia or a citizen. If a person doesn’t have the proper identity paper, he is put in a cattle truck with other illegals and is sent to the airport for an immediate flight home.

The identity paper for a foreign worker in Saudi Arabia is a work permit called an “Iqama”. One time a group of us was walking through the Souk during the time after Hajj, and we discovered that Youhanna, the Canadian-Egyptian who easily could have been mistaken for a Hajji, forgot his Iqama. With our group was a Jordanian named Faisal who that day dressed in all white as do wealthy Saudis. He quickly led us out of the Souk. Since he was dressed as a Saudi, no one stopped us to check our Iqamas, although each policeman was eying us trying to determine what to do.

While in Saudi Arabia, Faisal, being a Muslim, went on the Hajj. On the Hajj he couldn’t figure why there were more than five prayers a day. It turns out that prayers were said for all the people who died during the Hajj. The Hajj is often during the hottest time of the year, which in Mecca could be 100 degrees Fahrenheit, which oftentimes results in Hajjis getting heat exhaustion and dying. The person on Hajj is also required to perform some rituals that are very dangerous: He must circle the Kaaba 7 times—a large cubic structure containing a sacred stone—in which case there is a chance of the Hajji being trampled to

death. He must quickly pass back and forth 7 times between two mountains, Safa and Marwa, in which case there is another chance of the Hajji being trampled to death. And there is the symbolic stoning of the devil in the valley of Mina, in which case there is a chance of the Hajji being hit by stones. (Disabled Hajjis are provided sedan chairs and workers to carry them around.)

During the month of Ramadan when Hajj occurs, Muslims are not allowed to drink coffee or smoke and cannot eat or drink during the daylight hours. A long-time expatriate told me that as a result of these deprivations during the first few weeks of Ramadan there is a rash of traffic accidents. He was right.

At Saudi Data Systems, I worked on development of an Arabic word processing system, but a major company came out with the product before we started. I then worked on proposals to automate the King Faisal Hospital in Riyadh, create a public healthcare system, create a petroleum distribution model, and implement hardware and software to run an electric utility. Upon Saudi Data Systems winning the latter project, I went to a small town 100 miles north of Jeddah called Yanbu to implement the electrical utility project.

A new town of Yanbu with an oil refinery was being created. Saudi Arabia did not want to be like other oil-rich countries that drilled for oil, but had no control over the price of oil because they did not also refine the oil.

Besides the new town of Yanbu, there also was a separate, small, though interesting, long existing old town of Yanbu. In the old town of Yanbu there were many Indian restaurants. An Indian co-worker and I frequented these restaurants, going to a different

one every day. Part of the way we judged whether the food was any good was by whether we got sick the next day or not.

One day I went into an Indian restaurant at 8 o'clock. The bread was hot, but, unlike other Indian restaurants in Yanbu, everything else was cold. I asked the proprietor why, and he said they cook at 6. I think I skipped eating the food, but I did have the bread.

My favorite restaurant though was just outside town. It was a rectangular concrete building with the lower part of the interior walls painted a light blue green, a type of building that was often found in small towns and in the less wealthy parts of Jeddah. The restaurant had delicious tasting rotisserie chicken and a multi-layered pancake-like bread made with phyllo dough called mutabbaq. Mutabbaq was cooked on a large round grill with either ground beef and chopped onions in the middle (dinner Mutabbaq) or bananas in the middle and sugar on the top (dessert Mutabbaq). I was going to take a picture of the fellow cooking the Mutabbaq, but he quickly ran away—I found out later that he was an illegal from Yemen and feared that the Saudi authorities would see the picture.

On my first trip to Yanbu I stayed at a Holiday Inn. Some of the Sri Lankan workers invited me to a dinner of lamb curry. They had me eat first. It was the hottest spiced dish I had in my life. For the first time in a long time I could barely take it (and I am used to spicy food). I thought they were playing a joke on me until a Sri Lankan I worked with confirmed that Sri Lanka indeed has very hotly spiced food.

One time I went to the Yanbu airport, and the airport terminal waiting room was filled with many Saudi men. One Western woman entered the place, and all the men stared at her, every man moving his head in unison as she walked across the airport terminal.

The old town of Yanbu (Yanbu' al Bahr) was the place where Lawrence of Arabia (T.E. Lawrence) first met Faisal, the Arab leader of a guerilla movement against the Turkish in World War I. Together, T.E. Lawrence and Faisal blew up a Turkish train that went between Damascus, Syria and Medina, Saudi Arabia. Medina, located east of Yanbu, is Saudi Arabia's second most holy city that, like Mecca, only Muslims may visit. It is the location of Muhammad's tomb surrounded by the first Islamic mosque.

T.E. Lawrence lived in Yanbu, and there is a 1916 photograph of the house where he lived—I did not know of this house when I lived in Yanbu, and from what I have gathered, the house no longer existed when I was there anyway. The photograph shows four or five old two-story Turkish houses attached at their sidewalls, the rightmost of which is Lawrence's house, seeming to include an arched door and a widow's balcony (from which the occupant of the house could see out without being seen and perhaps which allowed Lawrence to escape his enemies).

I did know at the time that T.E. Lawrence was in the area of Yanbu so I took the road east out of Yanbu to the interior of Saudi Arabia—surely the path the Lawrence and Faisal took to blow up the Turkish trains—to see what sort of terrain Lawrence and his camel had encountered. Along the whole Red Sea coast from Jeddah to Yanbu, there was mainly flat sand with small rocks and very little vegetation, only small scrubby bushes here and there—that it was sand rather than dirt was not obvious from looking at it from afar. As I

went further east on the road out of Yanbu there was a similar terrain within a valley of jagged rock mountains. The area was nothing like the large sand dunes of the *Lawrence of Arabia* movie. A number of miles down the road were rock outcroppings that when viewed more closely were clearly petrified wood. Further down the road was a large abandoned town of sandstone buildings. Still further was a very small oasis with trees.

In Saudi Arabia, alcohol and girly pictures are banned. You can subscribe to newspapers and magazines, but you'll receive them with the pictures of women cut out and sometimes with stories about Saudi Arabia cut out. I returned to Jeddah from Yanbu for Christmas and received in the mail tightly wrapped rum cookies from my brother and sister-in-law and received a girly calendar—not too racy by American standards, but very racy by Saudi standards—from a Filipino worker who smuggled it in. On my way back to Yanbu I was eating the rum cookies, and I had the girly calendar under a stack of papers in the trunk. Not paying as much attention as I should, I accidentally ran through a permanent military roadblock between the two cities, stopping about twenty feet beyond it. A soldier motioned me to drive off the road and searched through my trunk. He went half way down the stack of papers, not going down far enough for the girly calendar, and he let me go.

Upon the end of my tenure in Saudi Arabia, I returned to Jeddah for the last time. Trevor, my English friend, had bought a sailboat, and he wanted me to sail in it with him. His Iranian wife refused to go out with him on the boat. (Trevor wanted me to go on the boat to demonstrate to his wife that the boat was not as dangerous as she thought.) I asked Trevor if it was a normal sailboat—he said yes, but it turned out to be just a flat board with sails. During my early teens I almost drowned while visiting my aunt and uncle and

cousins (including my cousin Peter) in Salmon Arm, B.C., Canada, a town where my father was born (and my grandfather founded). I was on a raft in the middle of the lake when Peter took the row boat and quickly rowed away. I chased him and ran out of breath, almost drowning. I didn't want to experience that again. In no way would I go out on a sail board on my last week in Saudi Arabia.

Besides, Trevor had also just told me the story of what happened to Youhanna during a visit to the German expatriate camp while I was in Yanbu. Playing tennis, Youhanna fell and injured his wrist. He was taken to a hospital and they refused to see him until he paid for the visit—the group quickly collected the money. Upon being seen by a physician, Youhanna was told that he needed an immediate operation, but the operation could not be performed until it was paid for. The group went to the compound trying to borrow the money for the operation. Fortunately, they collected enough money. I had no trust in the Saudi “health system” on my last week in Saudi Arabia, so I decided not to participate in any dangerous activities, such as riding on a sail board.

While I was working in Saudi, I took five vacation trips and a business trip back home to the San Francisco Bay Area. (Not only do you need a visa to come to Saudi Arabia, you need to an exit visa every time you leave. For those expatriates who leave Saudi Arabia without an exit visa, the worker's company must put an ad in the paper with the worker's picture showing the caption “This person has escaped from Saudi Arabia”.)

Of the five vacation trips I took, one was to a small town in the south of Saudi Arabia, Abha, the second was to Egypt and Greece, the third was to Kenya, the fourth was back home to the Bay Area, and the fifth was to France and Switzerland.

Abha, a small town in the south of Saudi Arabia near the Yemen border, is a place where a number of the future 9/11 hijackers came from. Whereas it rained in Jeddah just two times in the two years I was there and was never below 78 degrees, it was 65 degrees in Abha and it rained when I was there. There was even a small stream nearby. I never saw natural water anywhere else in Saudi Arabia.

In Abha, I was staying in a very expensive hotel. In downtown Abha, I met an American, Mark Bonham, who was teaching English in Abha and knew Saudi Arabic—he convinced me to move to a much cheaper hotel. This was a big mistake: Babies were crying, dogs were barking outside and mosquitoes were buzzing me all night.

Together with Mark at an outdoor market in Abha, I bargained for some unusual items after Mark explained what they were by reading the Arabic packaging—one was a liquid to burn your eyes (an Indian product) so your eyes would become desensitized to dust when you were in the desert.

Two Palestinians I met in Abha invited me to lunch. They drove me a short distance away to a place with both grass and a stream with flowing water—I was astounded that this existed in Saudi Arabia. They made a fire and cooked lamb kebobs. One Palestinian told me he was from Bethlehem, a town on the West Bank where Jesus was born and the biblical David was from. He went to university in Jordan in a professional field—engineering I think. He fell in love with a woman at the university and wanted to marry her, but she would not have been allowed back into the West Bank, so he broke up the relationship, as he loved Bethlehem. He tried to get a professional job in Israel, but found out that professionals cannot get a job unless they have experience, and the only way to get

experience in Israel as a professional was by joining the Israeli Army where you could work in that profession. Thus he, being a Palestinian and not allowed to join the Israeli Army, had to leave Israel to get experience—that's why he was in Saudi Arabia.

The Palestinian fellow also told me that Palestinian boys at the age of 14 in the West Bank were sent to jail and upon release were told “see what could happen to you if you misbehave”. I was skeptical about this being true, but on a later trip I met an Israeli Palestinian on a train in Switzerland. I eventually asked him if this could be true, that 14 year old Palestinian boys were sent to jail. He quickly changed the subject, but as he walked off the train he told me he thought it could be true because his brother when visiting Europe talked to a member of the PLO (the Palestine Liberation Organization), and when his brother came back to Israel he was put in jail for 2 years.

On my second vacation from my job in Saudi Arabia, I planned to take a trip to Turkey with a stopover in Egypt, but Egypt and Turkey had a spat that stopped flights between the two countries. Reluctantly, I went to Greece. Athens was worth visiting with its Parthenon upon a hill, although the city was quite smoggy. And the Greek island of Mykonos was fantastic, surrounded by water with a diversity of magnificent blue colors, with its white block buildings on hills, some with red orange roofs, surrounding a small boat-filled bay with white sand beaches. But I missed going to my intended destination Turkey for my intended mission: to look for Turkish Hereke silk rugs, some of which I saw and adored when I was in Saudi Arabia.

My short stay in Egypt prior to going to Greece included Cairo and Giza. In Giza, a short distance outside of Cairo, are the great pyramids. Like my future wife Bonnie before me, I

took the mandatory camel ride around the pyramids. For some reason there were Egyptian soldiers with guns on the streets of Giza.

During dinner at the Giza hotel I was staying at I ordered a bottle of Egyptian wine. The wine was so bad I thought it was spoiled so I returned it and asked for another. The second bottle tasted exactly the same—that's just how Egyptian wine tastes I assumed.

Planning for my third trip away from Saudi Arabia, I remembered the recommendation of a person I formerly worked with that I visit Kenya and contact his brother-in-law, who was the head of airplane tours in Kenya for the United Touring Company to arrange some tours. After the exchange of a number of letters in which I listed places in Kenya I would like to visit, his brother-in-law arranged a set of small airplane tours and other tours. Since Kenya limits the amount of money a citizen can take out of the country, rather than to pay him directly, he wanted me to send the money to his United Kingdom bank account so he could travel abroad.

The brother-in-law was a Muslim of Middle Eastern complexion, while his wife was an African American Christian. They had a young son. He told me that his family celebrated both Christmas and Eid al-Adha, a Muslim festival of gift giving occurring during the time of Hajj.

In Kenya, I landed in Mombasa, and was picked up in a car by the United Touring Company. I couldn't believe how many people were quickly striding down the side of the road—and every one of them was of dark complexion. It was very hot when I was there, which I noticed even though I had come from Saudi Arabia.

Mombasa was also a city with many beaches populated mainly by German tourists. I was told that I had arrived in the middle of German tourist season, but that did not increase United Touring Company's business as Germans tended to stay in Mombasa and sunbathe rather than visit other parts of Kenya. But I had different plans: I intended to see other parts of Kenya, and Mombasa was my first base location for doing so.

Flying out of Mombasa, I went on safari, visiting multiple resorts via a small plane with other tourists. In Tsavo West National Park we saw a river full of hippopotamuses; and we dined at a hotel near a water hole that had bright red terrain but there was no wild life other than birds (black-faced sandgrouses), missing the more interesting sight that we were told occurs there: elephants that dusted themselves with the red soil, creating red elephants. In Amboseli National Park there were many animals in a savanna area near a river and a terrific view of Mount Kilimanjaro, a snow-capped mountain with a flat top, which could only be seen before 7 a.m. as afterwards it was almost always shrouded in clouds; fortunately, we stayed overnight, which allowed us to see the mountain early in the morning before it clouded over. Looking down from our small plane as we flew to the Masai Mara Game Park, we saw gigantic herds of animals that we were told were hundreds of thousands of wildebeests migrating between the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania and Masai Mara in Kenya.

In Masai Mara, there were luxurious tent cabins complete with shower and beds with mosquito nets. We went to a Maasai village, where I bought a typical woman's colorful necklace with multiple connected strands of beads with the bands each having a different color. We saw many animals, including a pride of lions sleeping in the daytime in grass

between bushes, lions chasing after a herd of water buffalo, and a cheetah chasing and catching a young antelope, which it chased into the water. While in an outdoor bar with a wall on small pillars, I could see under the wall the feet of an elephant. I was told that it was the camp elephant. Later, as I went back to my tent cabin, an employee stopped me. He picked up a boulder and threw it and hit the camp elephant—standing in front of me that I had not noticed at the time—on his forehead. In the first few seconds, the elephant did nothing, then roared and got out of the path.

Another trip in Kenya in the plane starting from Mombasa was to a small very old Islamic island on the east coast called Lamu, frequented by Arab traders in the distant past. After the plane ride, we took a ferry to get to the island. On the island, they were building a large wooden boat by hand. No cars were allowed on the island, and there were many small alleyways where only people and people with donkeys could roam.

In Jeddah, pictures were forbidden in the Souk. This probably stemmed from the old Islamic idea that if you produce an image of someone you will steal their soul.

On my walk through the alley ways of Lamu, I was surrounded by many young girls. I took out a bag of candy and started passing it out to them. I thought that this would be a good time for a picture, so I then took out my camera. An old woman from the balconies starting yelling, and all the girls “screamed” and ran away. I put away my camera, and all the girls came running back with smiles upon their faces. I took out my camera again, and the old woman started yelling again. I quickly put away my camera and just passed out the candy.

I then changed my base location in Kenya to Nairobi. Nairobi, with a mile high elevation, was much cooler than Mombasa.

To get to Nairobi I took an overnight train from Mombasa, which I call the “Glockenspiel train” because at that time it had a Glockenspiel used to announce its departure. A married woman invited me to have dinner with her and her two daughters, which enhanced the romance of the trip. The train was not nearly as nice as the overnight train I previously took from Leningrad to Moscow—it was less well kempt, and there was constantly clanking tracks—but at least I didn’t lose my luggage this time.

In Nairobi, I was in a cafeteria line when a beggar came up to me with tears streaming down his face. I gave him some money, but probably not enough to equal his performance. It seemed that the locals in Kenya were out to get your money—In Kenya, lots of people were telling me sob stories, or in the case of the beggar the sob without the story.

Near Nairobi, I stayed at Treetops, a hotel built in the treetops above a watering hole. (In 1952, Queen Elizabeth spent her last day as a princess here, as Treetops is where she learned of the death of her father, King George VI). At Treetops I remember seeing a bush baby, a type of very small nocturnal primate with very large eyes, who tried to eat some pie that was left out and a baboon who tried to take my tea cup when I wasn’t looking.

During my last year in Saudi Arabia, the woman who kept my piano told me that she wanted to set up a summer time trip for me through Chico State University, an art class trip with a traveling instructor. The trip would stay in England during the Prince Charles, Princess Diana wedding and would later stay in Paris for three weeks. I would meet her in

Paris. The Paris part of the trip would allow participants to stay in a dorm and get meals in the cafeteria of the school. I took her up on her offer.

When she arrived in Paris, she was totally exhausted from the England part of the trip, so I spent my first number of days exploring Paris alone by subway and walking. By the time she had rested, I had already seen many of the major sights of Paris: the Louvre (and the Mona Lisa), the Eiffel Tower, the Champs-Élysées and Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame and its gargoyles, the Seine River and the miniature Statue of Liberty, mimes at an outdoor restaurant, and the Latin Quarter.

During the Paris stay, our group took a side trip to the Loire Valley exploring the many private castles (the Loire Valley châteaux). There are over 300 châteaux, from the 10th century up to the 20th century, built by Kings, other nobility and just plain rich folks. Some were built in the middle of a river, Château de Chenonceaux built on a bridge across the river Cher, and Château d'Azay-le-Rideau on an island in the river Indre. The château of Chambord had a double spiral staircase said to have been designed by Leonardo de Vinci.

In Paris, together with our group, I got on a bus going to the Château de Versailles. I was going to pay the bus driver, but he told me that I had to go to a booth outside to buy the ticket. He quickly said, okay, you can pay me. Two, I assume, French Africans shortly thereafter came on the bus. They also wanted to pay the bus driver. The bus driver adamantly refused to take their money and demanded that they go to the outside booth. After the French Africans came back on the bus with the tickets, one of them accidentally lightly brushed up against a baby. One French man wanted to fight the guy, putting up his fists. I stepped in between them and yelled "Hey, Cool it!", but the French man stared at the

French African fellow with anger as if I wasn't even there. Outside the bus, the French man tried to provoke a fist fight with the French Africa, apparently not fearing that his other French Africans would also get in the fight.

Versailles is best known for the opulent Palace of Versailles of Marie-Antoinette and King Louis XVI during the French Revolution, especially for the palace's "Hall of Mirrors" where mirrors were a significant luxury in those days, only produced by the Venetians. The vast gardens had many sculptures and elaborate fountains, with the garden centered around a Grand Canal, where mock sea battles had occurred during the royalty days. Marie-Antoinette created an artificial rural village at Versailles. A royal hunting lodge was nearby, where the King went often to hunt game.

King Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette were guillotined at the end of the French Revolution for ignoring the people of France. But King Louis XVI did have a positive influence on America's revolution: He hated the British so much that he had France supply the United States with most of its weapons in the American Revolutionary War and had the French fight and play a major part in the decisive battle of the war at Yorktown—the cost of doing so reportedly bankrupted France and was probably one of the reasons for the French Revolution. Venetian artisans who helped the French produce the mirrors in the Hall of Mirrors faced a fate similar to that of the guillotined King and Queen: They were assassinated by agents of Venice who wanted to preserve their monopoly on mirror production.

Going into a bank in Paris to change my money, a fellow with a handkerchief over his mouth brushed by me and ran out of the bank. People in the bank had a look of horror, and

I thought to myself that this guy must have had a bad cough or something like that that so frightened the patrons. But instead, he had been a bank robber. The manager of the bank ran after him and then immediately closed the bank.

Because we had a several-week stay in Paris and I had seen most of the sights that I was interested in in Paris, I took a few days to see Switzerland, ending up in Zermatt, the location of the Matterhorn. My friend who had my piano and set up the trip did not want to join me, but then again I showed indications that I didn't want to start a romantic relationship which she thought would occur.

I took a train from Paris, stopping in Basal, a very German Swiss city. I then took a regular train and then a narrow gauge train to Zermatt. In the town of Zermatt were horse-drawn "wheeled sleighs". The restaurant in the main hotel had an all Italian wait staff—which was not surprising as Italy was only 6 miles away—but the menu was only in French, German and English and not Italian. Climbing up to get a spectacular view of the Matterhorn was like being in a *Sound of Music* or a *Heidi* movie. I returned to Paris.

While in Paris, I tried to find two items that were impossible to find in Saudi Arabia: American size 13 men's shoes and permanent press shirts. The shoes were nowhere to be found in Paris. In my washer in Saudi Arabia, the so-called Paris permanent press shirt shriveled up into a wrinkled ball.

On trips back to the United States during my Saudi stay, I met two different people: a prince from Bhutan and a former Flying Tiger who was going to lead a group to China. Bhutan is a small country in the Himalayas between India and China. The country was

going to open itself up for tourists for the first time. The prince offered me a letter to enter Bhutan, being one of the first tourists to Bhutan.

The Flying Tigers were an American volunteer group that had fighter squadrons that fought for China against the Japanese during the Japanese occupation of China prior to and during World War II. The fellow I talked to had met Choi En-lai and Mao Zedong, giving Mao a gift of American cigarettes. He later had some of his articles published in Chinese books.

I chose to go to China—I could not fathom visiting Bhutan when I had not yet seen the larger part of Asia. Since Saudi Arabia did not recognize Red China, the American embassy in Jeddah gave me a second passport, just for my trip to China.

I went to China in 1982 after I left Saudi Arabia and a few months before I met Bonnie. I stayed in the most luxurious hotels in China because of the reputation of the leader of the group as a former Flying Tiger. I went to Shanghai; the Grand Canal; West Lake; Beijing and the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and Tiananmen Square; and Xian.

In 1982 in Shanghai, there were many old multi-family dwellings, most with extended families (multiple generations of families living together). Prior to the Communist takeover of China in 1949, foreigners had favorable trading relationships with China, with many foreigners living and working in an international settlement area of Shanghai at a bend in the Huangpu River called the “Bund”—the Huangpu River is a branch of the Yangtze River. In part of the Bund that we saw were many European and American buildings built in the late 19th and early 20th century including the British Shanghai Club, the 1927 Customs

House with a Big Ben Tower built in Britain (the tallest building in Shanghai in 1982), and the former Palace Hotel (where we stayed). In 1982, the buildings of Shanghai were in a deliberate state of disrepair as the Communists were not proud of the earlier history of Shanghai in which it was occupied by foreigners. In the Huangpu River were junks and small boats. On the opposite side of the river there were no buildings of note.

In Beijing we drove to a hotel near Tiananmen Square. In Tiananmen Square and on the road to the square were thousands upon thousands of people riding bicycles, with our bus almost being the sole motorized vehicle. Tiananmen Square is the largest city square in the world. On one side of Tiananmen Square was the wall and gate entrance to the Forbidden City, a large almost kilometer square area of palaces used by past emperors, the largest surviving palace complex in the world—called the Forbidden City because before the Communists Chinese took over, citizens were not allowed to enter. At the gate, was Mao Zedong's picture. Going through the gate down the center of the Forbidden City leads you through other gates and into palaces (notably the Hall of Supreme Harmony with ramps into the palace and out, and the Hall of Preserving Harmony with its large raised throne of past emperors). Each palace had its own sloped and intricately carved roof.

In the middle of Tiananmen Square was Mao's Mausoleum. As foreigners we were escorted to the front of the line to view Mao Zedong's body.

At the Great Wall near Beijing, I decided to start on the steep side first and see the beautiful side later. My tour group, all being older people, many with problems walking, decided to leave early before I saw the beautiful side.

(According to my tour guide in Beijing, he and his wife had lived several hundred miles apart for 3 years. At the time of our tour, she had just been given approval from the Chinese government to move to Beijing to live with him.)

In Xian, I saw the terra cotta warriors, hundreds of life-size clay pottery soldiers and soldiers on horses standing side by side who were buried along with the first emperor of China. The people in Xian were particularly friendly, at that time clearly seldom seeing foreigners. As we walked, people did not appear to be noticing us, but when one Chinese started talking to us we were immediately surrounded by a huge crowd of curious people.

The group I was in had a lot of teachers, so we visited many schools while we were in China. In a high school music class there were pictures on the wall of a Chinese composer and of Beethoven. One group member, a music teacher, played a blues piece and played it quite well; by the faces of many of the students, I could tell that most of them definitely did not enjoy listening to the blues.

We visited a kindergarten whose students were all young girls. The girls sang songs both in Chinese and English. One tour member taught them the Hokey Pokey, “You put your right hand in, You put your right hand out, You put your right hand in, And you shake it all about, You do the hokey pokey and you turn yourself around, That what it's all about . . .” The girls were told how to say “Goodbye” in different languages; as I left, a young girl came up to me, smiled and said “Sayonara”—She seemed to think I was Japanese.

In places we visited other than schools, we almost always began the visit by sitting down to tea: at a weaving factory, a cloisonné cooperative, a farming commune, and a

renowned tea plantation. At the tea plantation one of our group tasted the tea and remarked, "I heard that the better the tea, the more subtle it is" to which another member of the group responded, "Well this tea must be really good then—it tastes just like hot water!"

During our tour, our Flying Tiger tour guide visited a friend of his: a woman librarian from the United States. The woman was clearly unhappy. I was thinking to myself that most people would think that living in Saudi Arabia would be much harder than living in China. With the Chinese government at that time frowning on the fraternization of Chinese with foreigners and with the large communities of expatriates in Saudi Arabia, clearly it was harder for an expatriate to live in China.

There was no news of the rest of the world while I was in China. Senator Howard Baker from Tennessee was staying at the same place as our group and told me about the 1982 Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon.

On my last day at Saudi Data Systems and the day before I would leave for home, I went to a large bank to cash my final paycheck. Prayer time came.

When prayer time comes in Saudi Arabia, most stores close and kick customers out. Most stores have television sets; on the television set during prayer time they show Hajjis circling the Kaaba. People go to the mosque to pray or pray outside. In some large banks—such as the one I was in to cash my check—the doors are closed, large prayer rugs are brought out, and people pray inside.

As I was about to cash my check, prayer time came, the bank locked everyone in the bank, and the Muslims prayed on mats on front of the cashier window that consisted of a ritual that went from standing to kneeling and putting their heads down on the floor in unison. After prayer time, even though there was almost an hour left to closing time, the bank said that the bank was now closed. I had to beg to get my check, on this my last day in Saudi Arabia, cashed (which was in the amount of several thousand dollars)—Cashing the check in the United States would probably have been impossible.

When I announced my resignation to the head of the Saudi Data Systems, the Saudi that had a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, he asked me why I was quitting. I told him I wanted to meet women and possibly get married. He said, “How about this: I’ll give you 3 months to find a wife, then you can come back to work for us again.” I told him I appreciated the offer, but I didn’t think that would work.

When I came back home to the United States from Saudi Arabia and turned on TV and radio, it seemed like everyone in the U.S. was obsessing over minor problems that could easily be avoided. Life was so much more simple in Saudi Arabia.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, each person appeared to be an island unto himself, isolated by being in a car driving on high speed roads, in an opaque building that closed him off from others, and by automation that removed human interactions. There was not the sharing of community like there was in Jeddah: In the Bay Area, unlike in Jeddah, there were not the rumors and gossip of what was happening in the city. In the Bay Area, there was not the hodgepodge of people that looked and thought completely differently from you but were all in the same boat.

If Americans traveled more, they would have a less distorted view of the world, especially of the Muslim world. As Mark Twain once wrote, “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, . . .”, and living in a country, even more so.

Slowly, I got used to living in the United States again, and the San Francisco Bay Area again felt like home. And after a while, I was no longer woke up every night freezing from the cold.

4

Bonnie, My Wife

Upon leaving Saudi Arabia and after my trip to China, I tried to get a computer programmer/software engineer job in the United States, but, for the first time in my life, I found it hard to get interviews. I blamed this on the “Reagan recession”.

My father agreed that I could stay at his house in Oakland. I moved my piano from my now former girlfriend’s place to my father’s dining room.

Bonnie—my future wife—and I met at a singles party at a Unitarian church in San Francisco. This is rather strange, as both she and I are not at all religious, although we both were raised as Presbyterians. Bonnie also had a Buddhist upbringing as a result of her mother.

At the end of the party, I saw Bonnie for the first time. She was smiling, sitting in a wheelchair. She had wheeled 2 miles from the Pacific Heights apartment she owned along with her sisters, but since going back involved going uphill, she had recruited some guy to take her back to her place in his car. After talking to her a bit, I offered to take her to her home instead. The other fellow was ecstatic as he was clearly interested in talking to another woman and had been trying to find someone else to give her a ride.

Despite being in a wheelchair, Bonnie had been a world traveler. We hit it off, as I told her I had spent the last two years in Saudi Arabia and just came back from a holiday in China.

Both of our parents were born in foreign countries, hers in China while mine were born in Canada. If that makes her a Chinese American, why doesn't that make me a Canadian American I've often wondered.

After taking Bonnie to her apartment I asked her for a date—she agreed. That Saturday, we went to San Francisco's Japan Town, my choice as it had a number of my favorite restaurants. Bonnie, knowing the place—although she was of Chinese rather than of Japanese ancestry—picked a restaurant she liked.

On the way to the restaurant, Bonnie accused me of sexism (from something I said) and I asked if she smelt gasoline (which turned out to be her perfume). From that time on, I knew that there was something special between us (or that brought us together).

Bonnie had chosen the only restaurant in Japan Town that I was unfamiliar with, and, as it turned out, the only one I didn't like: It was a cook-your-own meal deal—that Bonnie thought was very intimate and romantic and I thought was very lacking in service—but what was worse to me, although it was Japanese, there was no sushi or sashimi!

Bonnie told me that the most romantic thing I did that night, and also the night we first met, was to kneel down to talk to her at her level in her wheelchair.

Despite my affinity to Bonnie, I thought to myself that in no way did I want to get serious with a paraplegic. Instead of a second date, I invited Bonnie to another singles group. Bonnie said that she talked to an Asian Indian American woman who met a man who didn't have a job and the woman was appalled that such a fellow was at a singles party (that was me).

I talked to Bonnie for long hours on the phone. She sometimes wouldn't let me get in a word edgewise. I used to kid her that I would leave the phone with her talking, go downstairs and fix a meal, and come back. And she was still talking.

Although Bonnie and I seemed to be about the same age, Bonnie was concerned that I might be much younger than her. She told me that she was born in the Chinese year of the rooster. I went to a book store and found a book that identified that I too was born in the year of the rooster. Bonnie admitted that she was born in 1945, the same year as me.

I would invite Bonnie to dinner. I would get two TV dinners and heat them up in my father's microwave, then drive down the street to park in a quiet place, and we would eat.

My father first met Bonnie under rather embarrassing circumstances. I was carrying Bonnie in my arms down the stairs from my bedroom, and my father came in the front door. Instead of saying, "Dad, this is my friend Bonnie", what I said was "Dad, this is my friend Bonnie, she was upstairs changing her diapers."

I got a job with Kaiser Permanente, a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) in Oakland. HMOs are health organizations that charge an individual, or charge an employer for his employees, a fixed payment per individual per month for full service outpatient and

inpatient care. Depending upon the healthcare plan, there could be varying copayments for different types of services (e.g., for a medication, for an outpatient visit).

I worked on development of a regional appointment system for Kaiser Northern California that also recorded all physician time, serving as physician time card. The system eventually served over 28 different clinics and hospitals and over 3 million patients. The system was developed over a number of years with the input of users of less sophisticated systems and the input of physician managers. The databases for the regional appointment system formed a basis for all future Kaiser Northern California clinical databases. This process involved many meetings and many formal presentations, by me as the principal designer together with others. After well over 30 years, this system and databases are still being used, being a central part of a large Northern California medical call center system.

I still was shy, reluctant to talk to superiors and people I didn't know over the phone, yet I was comfortable giving presentations. Being shy, I strangely became a better writer, as I wanted my documents describing the new computer system to computer programmers and medical people to be so clear and detailed that no one had to ask me any questions.

Outside of a grocery store in Oakland, I met a fellow who was recruiting for the "Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals". I decided to look into this. I arrived at a West Oakland office for the "California Homemakers Association" and was requested to make calls to individuals to tell them about the medical organization that provided free medical care. On a Saturday, I joined a group of very poor African American women at a grocery store; we got spoiled fruits and vegetables free from the grocery store and cut the rotting parts out of them, creating bags of food to be distributed to poor people.

The leader of the California Homemakers group suggested that I attend their “university”. One night I came to West Oakland, and we all were put in a car pool. I asked where we were going and was told that that was a secret. We meandered all over the place eventually ending up at a school auditorium south of San Francisco. People were seated at tables and over the loud speaker was a voice on the telephone calling out “R, A, 25, X, Z, 333”, and so forth. I was told that this was a message from Captain something or other. Someone else told me how exciting this activity was, receiving secret messages. After a while, I demanded that the people who brought me there take me back home.

I was agitated by this event, although in reality I should perhaps have been laughing as the people I had met were best described by what a character in the movie *Wait Until Dark* said, “They had comic book minds”. I called up Bonnie to commiserate. I realized now that she, of all people I knew, was my source of comfort when things went wrong.

Later on there was a story in a free San Francisco East Bay newspaper, the “East Bay Express”. I learned that the group was more sinister than I thought. According to the newspaper, the California Homemakers Group was affiliated with a Brooklyn group that had plans to start a revolution in the United States using poor people as the soldiers. Both groups were backed by the Communist Party USA (Provisional) Order of Lenin. The FBI got wind of the attempt to start a revolution and broke into the Brooklyn offices to confiscate their paper work. So much for my secret security clearance!

Bonnie and I learned that we were alike in many ways: We were both born in the same year. Neither of us had been married or ever had children. We both loved traveling, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries. We were liberal politically,

and we both had previously participated in anti-Vietnam War marches. We were not religious, although we did both earlier belong to the Presbyterian Church. We loved classical symphonic music except the earlier works of Mozart, and we both loved ballet. By coincidence, Roy Orbison; Neil Diamond; Peter, Paul and Mary; Simon and Garfunkel; and Don McLean were five of our all-time favorite pop artists. We each had Master's degrees. We both liked to try exotic food we never had before, and we both enjoyed spicy food. We even liked drinking coffee the same way, with milk but no sugar. We both loved Alfred Hitchcock movies, and we both (independently) liked Mounds better than Almond Joy because it had dark chocolate, but both wished Mounds also had almonds!

Bonnie already enjoyed Indian food that was very spicy. I introduced Bonnie to Ethiopian and Eritrean food that is equally spicy. (Ethiopia and Eritrea are feuding, neighboring countries in Africa, but Ethiopian and Eritrean restaurants have the same cuisine.) On one street, Telegraph Avenue, which ran from downtown Oakland to the Berkeley University of California Campus, there were at one time 9 Ethiopian/Eritrean restaurants. Ethiopian/Eritrean food is spicy like Indian food but with spices that I think blend together in a more sophisticated way. Bonnie's favorite dish was Kitfo, minced raw beef marinated in mitmita (a very spicy chili powder) cooked in clarified butter infused with herbs and spices. I liked similar dishes but with cooked meat: chicken, beef or lamb. Both our dishes were served with injera, a pancake-like fermented bread which is used to wrap and eat the concoction—no utensils are used.

When Bonnie was small, Mama Chin told Bonnie that Whites had so much hair on their arms and legs because they ate their meat rare. Bonnie clearly proved this notion

completely untrue as Bonnie liked her beef and lamb as rare as possible (or in the case of Kitfo, her beef raw), whereas 'hairy old me' liked my meat well done.

Bonnie was much more adventurous than me in trying foods that didn't taste good. At a Burmese restaurant, I ordered a Darian milk shake. Darian is a stinky fruit from Asia. I was unable to swallow the foul mixture. Bonnie consumed the milk shake, but I think that was more a product of her mother, a traditional Chinese, teaching her not to waste anything. Bonnie would treat me with chocolate candy that had been in her purse for many years—it would often taste more like lipstick than chocolate because it had been in her purse so long. (It's the thought that counts after all!) Actually, Bonnie didn't use lipstick that often, and the one she had in her purse at one time was itself 5 years old. Bonnie wore a chartreuse pair of socks that she has had for 30 years—she tried to dye them a darker color but it did not take. And she had a blouse with holes in the elbows that she had had for 30 years that she used as a night shirt.

Despite some differences, Bonnie and I were alike in so many ways, and we loved each other. I asked Bonnie to marry me. She said yes.

With engagements and weddings come jewelry, namely rings. Recently, a female jeweler told me about women and jewelry: "Men do not appreciate the symbolism of jewelry to a woman. Jewelry is a measure of how important the woman is in the man's life. It's like the male penguin who presents the female penguin with a stone; if she accepts the stone, they form a bond for life. The bigger the stone, the more likely she feels cherished." Bonnie replaced my diamond engagement ring, a decent size ring that I bought in

Amsterdam, Holland before I met anyone I was interested in marrying, with her much larger carat ring that she bought in Antwerp, Belgium. (As I said, we think alike.)

My father told us we could live in his house. I appreciated the offer but the house was in no way wheelchair-accessible. There were many steps in front of the house, and the bedrooms were either upstairs or downstairs. My father worked as a civil engineer in an office downstairs in the house, but, now being a widower, spent much less of his time living in the house, as he was often with his lady friend Madge in her house in Piedmont, a rich suburb of Oakland.

Using my Saudi savings and Bonnie's many years of savings, we decided to buy our own house. Together Bonnie and I saw about 40 houses before we bought our house. Although we had definite requirements for a house, including the house being wheelchair accessible, we saw many other houses to get an idea of the cost of houses in a neighborhood. This meant I not only had to get Bonnie inside the house, I oftentimes needed to carry Bonnie upstairs.

We made low-ball offers on two houses in Oakland that we could not afford but that we loved, one a luxurious European style house Bonnie termed as "Lincolnshire", and a one story house architected by a famous architect, Julia Morgan, with a beautiful backyard with many trees. Fortunately, neither offer was accepted, as both irreplaceable houses were later burned down in the Oakland 1991 firestorm.

We also looked for houses in a ritzy town in the middle of Oakland called Piedmont, the same town that my father's lady friend lived in. And surprisingly, there was one house in

our price range. However, it turned out that the house was so inexpensive because it was sliding down the hill—it was retrofitted with an engineering structure in its basement that anchored the house onto bedrock at the highest level of the structure. I talked to my father about the house, and he said that he was the civil engineer that created the design of the (ingenious) structure that anchored the house.

We eventually made an offer on a house in another East Bay city, and it was accepted. The house was one story and could be made completely wheelchair accessible. It had a large backyard surrounded by tall pine trees, it had privacy, it had a master bedroom that was sunny during the day and dark during the early morning, and it had an area for a wheelchair accessible patio that would have sun during most of the day. We had my father check out the house and found it structurally sound and well-built.

Bonnie had plans to have our wedding on our first day that we moved into our house. After sending out our wedding invitations, we looked thoroughly at the previous deeds for the house and discovered that the acreage did not match that told to us by the seller. We found out that the road to our house, a private road shared by all our neighbors, was also included in the acreage. Even though we had sent out all our wedding invitations, Bonnie insisted that we renegotiate the price we paid for the house. Fortunately, she was successful, and we paid a lower price and closed the deal days before our wedding.

Our wedding took place as scheduled in the house. Many things went wrong at the wedding. (One thing I learned is that if anything goes wrong at a wedding, then the groom will hear about it for the rest of his life.) The woman making Bonnie's wedding dress by hand—a seamstress friend of hers—could not finish it on time; therefore, Bonnie had to

improvise, using pieces of her existing wardrobe. I had to buy a slip for Bonnie on our wedding day. Bonnie bought long stem roses for the ceremony—a neighbor cut them up making hand-held bouquets. But the worst thing that happened was of my own doing: I wanted to express how adventurous Bonnie was and used as an example her going to a soul food place and eating chitterlings, a soul food dish made from (not too well cleaned) pigs intestines—our ceremony was probably the only one in history where a wedding vow talked about chitterlings.

According to Bonnie, Mama Chin with her traditional Chinese background could not understand why any man would want to marry a disabled woman. Eventually, Mama Chin, being a Buddhist, came up with the Buddhist explanation that Bonnie had probably done a great deed for me in a previous life, and I was now repaying her in this life.

Bonnie told me about her trip to China and I told her about mine. We compared our trips, and, with the exception of her visiting Nanjing, it appeared we visited all the same places. One difference was that I had visited Mao's Mausoleum at Tiananmen Square—Mao was still alive when Bonnie was there. Both of us did not see Guilin—Bonnie wants us to see the mountains of Guilin someday, the model for many mystical Chinese paintings of mountains surrounded by water. Bonnie and I saw opposite sides of the tourist part of the Great Wall on our separate trips. Bonnie went to the beautiful less steep side, planning to go to the other side later. Her group became tired and demanded that the group leave before Bonnie saw the steep side. I decided to start on the steep side first and see the beautiful side later. My tour group, likewise, all being older people (and all older than me), also decided to leave early before I saw the beautiful side.

The terra cotta warriors, replicas of the imperial guard of the first emperor of China, were slowly being unearthed in Xian. There were many more soldiers and horses unearthed when I saw them than when Bonnie did 5 years earlier.

At the time of both of our visits, Shanghai and Beijing were not as modern as they are now. All hotels gave us thermos bottles with hot water, as I assume, they didn't think the tap water was fit to drink and thus they boiled it—Likewise, Bonnie, and many Chinese Americans I know, ask for plain hot water when they go to restaurants in the States. (Many times when Bonnie orders plain hot water in a restaurant, the server comes back with the interjection, "You must be Chinese!") Bonnie also almost always orders soup when going out to a restaurant.

After getting married, we needed a new car that would get good gas mileage and would accommodate a person of my height, Bonnie and her wheelchair, and occasionally another person in the back seat. It was the start of a new model year. Bonnie learned bargaining during her many trips overseas. Bonnie scanned the San Francisco and East Bay newspapers for the limited number of cars that are sold at loss leader prices (actually, the factory gives the dealer money to sell the cars at a lower price), and we found one in the East Bay. These cars were used for advertising purposes to lure in customers. The cars do not have the accessories that an average buyer would want—for example a radio—so there was an incentive for the customer to buy a different car with the needed accessories at a higher price. A person I worked with, Norm, was told of our search and found an even lower loss leader price in the South (San Francisco) Bay. We quickly went to the car dealer

and offered to buy one of the loss leader cars. Bonnie bargained with the salesman to get an even lower price. After an hour of bargaining she finally succeeded, getting twenty dollars off the price. I asked Bonnie why she went to all that trouble for an hour just to get twenty dollars off, and she said that she wanted to be the person in the Bay Area who bought that model car at the lowest price.

I knew Bonnie would eventually prevail in the bargaining over the price of the car. My nickname for her was “Columbo”, the TV detective that solved murder cases by constantly asking the murder suspect questions until Columbo finally found a clue that proved the suspect was indeed the murderer. But I called Bonnie “Columbo” because she was more like the Mad Magazine take-off of Columbo, “Clodumbo”—a detective who hounds a suspect, taking a bath in the suspect’s bath tub, cooking eggs in his kitchen, taking over his brain surgery, while asking him question after question. The suspect eventually confesses. As the suspect is being dragged away by the police. he says, “I didn’t really do it, but I’ll do anything to get Clodumbo out of my life!” One thing Bonnie has is persistence.

My first incident with Bonnie’s “Clodumbness” was when Bonnie and I went to an outdoor arts and crafts fair. Bonnie found a jeweler whom she asked question after question—Bonnie told me she did so to determine if the jeweler really “knew her stuff”—She didn’t. Although the jeweler had no customers or potential customers at the time, the jeweler was visibly getting more and more aggravated after each question, perhaps feeling that Bonnie was scaring off her “real” customers.

As a paraplegic, Bonnie got into and out of cars and into and out of bed by using a sliding board, a wooden smooth board that she would put over her wheelchair wheel after

taking off the wheelchair's armrest. The sliding board could be used if the destination and starting locations were about the same height or if the destination height was lower than the starting height. Thus Bonnie could slide out of our bed into her wheelchair as the bed was higher, but I had to carry her from her wheelchair into bed. Bonnie could slide onto the passenger seat of our new car from her wheelchair as the wheelchair was higher, but I had to lift and carry her out of our new car.

My technique for lifting Bonnie out of our new (small) car was to put the wheelchair in back of the passenger door facing the car, bend my knees, lift her from the car passenger seat with my right arm under her legs and my left arm around her back with her holding onto my neck, and then pivoting clockwise a little releasing my left arm so her weight was now around my neck so I could hold on to a handle on the top inside of the car door lifting her up and out of the car, and then slowly continuing to pivot around clockwise, taking little steps, until I could put her on her wheelchair. (I later discovered that lifting Bonnie out of a larger car with a higher up passenger seat was infinitely easier, as I did not have to lift her up at the same time as I took her out of the car; I could simply turn counterclockwise to put her immediately on her wheelchair.) The former exercise eventually put a tremendous strain on my bad knee.

With the reverse process of Bonnie getting in the car with Bonnie using her sliding board from her wheelchair, I would fold up the wheelchair and put it either in the trunk or in the hatchback of the car; hatchbacks were easier so we always bought and tried to rent cars with hatchbacks. What Bonnie and I also noticed was that the front doors of cars having only two doors were almost always larger than the front doors of cars having four

doors, the former making it much easier for me to get Bonnie out of the car, so we bought and tried to rent cars with two instead of four doors. Also, we always tried to get cars with a handle above the passenger door on the inside so it would be much easier for me to get her out of the car—I unfortunately never learned that having the larger car would have made the handle unnecessary and whole 360 degree turnabout unnecessary.

(I told you I was going to write about what it is like to be a paraplegic or the spouse of a paraplegic. Sorry for the rigmarole—Perhaps it would have been easier to describe how to hit a baseball!)

Not only in buying cars, but in all commercial transactions, Bonnie tried to get the best possible price. I don't know if Bonnie's thriftiness came from her growing up poor, being female, being Chinese American, or simply being human, but like the Scotch, Chinese Americans prided in, but also sometimes make fun of, their thriftiness. There are quite a number of websites that are along the lines of "You know you are Chinese if such and such is true", undoubtedly all written by Chinese Americans. I noticed that Bonnie had many of these same characteristics. For example, you know you are Chinese if "you are always late"; "your folks never speak under 10 decibels at family gatherings"; "you save grocery bags, tin foil, and tin containers"; "you have a collection of miniature shampoo bottles that you take every time you stay in a hotel"; "you cut your own hair, or have someone in your family do it"; "you would drive around the block 10 times rather than pay for parking"; "you have an assortment of condiments and utensils from fast food take outs stuffed in a drawer"; "you prefer your shrimp with the heads and legs still attached—it means they're fresh"; "you unwrap Christmas gifts very carefully, so you can reuse the wrapping (and

especially those bows) next year” and more generally, “you can’t bear to throw away things”. And again, waitresses and waiters will tell you if a customer orders hot water with her meals, like Bonnie does, you know she’s Chinese.

Bonnie asked me to go with her to the funeral of the mother of a Chinese American high school friend that Bonnie didn’t know all that well. As we exited our parked car, I told Bonnie a semi-morbid joke that Bonnie thought was really funny, and she laughed loudly—probably partially a nervous laugh due to the occasion—but Bonnie told me to stop telling jokes as Bonnie thought it won’t be polite to be laughing when she entered the funeral parlor. As we entered, there was a woman crying, very loudly wailing away. I asked Bonnie if the woman crying was a relative of the woman who died. Bonnie said, “Probably not . . . I think she was hired by the family to cry. It is a Chinese tradition for funerals.” The woman wailing was much louder than the crier I met in the cafeteria in Kenya, but the Kenya man’s tears were far more copious. “Crying . . . What a Profession!!”

Many newly married couples before they have children get a pet, usually a dog: what I view as a “baby substitute”. Bonnie decided to get a rabbit. Our first rabbit was small and very hyper. Bonnie put a leash around the neck of the rabbit and took it outside. The rabbit, having a very small neck, immediately escaped and could not be found.

We got a second rabbit that the owner suggested would be good pet. Its nose was dripping but the owner said that was normal. The next day we found the rabbit dead in its cage.

We returned to the place where we got the rabbit and complained that we got a sick rabbit. The owner gave us another rabbit. This one lasted a long time. The rabbit seemed to like leaves of any sort, so Bonnie suggested that we give it one of our vines. Instead of biting off the leaves, our rabbit kept swallowing the vine until it choked to death.

We then got our favorite rabbit, a rabbit we named "Sasha Lop". A lop is a rabbit with floppy ears. For us, Sasha Lop lived quite a long time. We decided to give Sasha Lop more room to run around, so we created a fence of chicken wire and put the cage, open, next to it. Sasha Lop jumped on top of the cage and escaped. A neighbor caught our bunny in his yard eating grapes. We then put the cage in the center of the enclosure, quite a distance from the chicken wire fence. I watched and Sasha Lop climbed onto the cage and jumped toward the fence—he didn't make it far enough to get over the fence. He tried again. Then he tried again. And finally after many tries he made it over the fence. I never knew rabbits were so smart! I decided to just put Sacha Lop in the cage and not let him constantly run around free as before.

One night Kaiser wanted me to work over night. In coming home I forgot to feed Sasha Lop, and I forgot to give him water. And the night was particularly cold. I went out to feed Sasha Lop the next day and found him dead. Bonnie had me read a eulogy that she wrote, and we buried Sasha Lob in our backyard.

With our experiences with our "baby substitute" rabbits, we decided for our sake that it was better if we didn't have kids!

(Note that was *not* the real reason we did not have children, neither was the reason Bonnie's paraplegia. Like other couples, Bonnie and I made love and had normal sexual relations, but for reasons independent of her paraplegia, we decided not to have kids.)

One thing we learned about rabbits was that rabbits prefer sweets over cabbage and carrots. Although we provided our bunnies with a nutritious diet almost all the time, we tried an experiment: We gave our rabbits a choice of cabbage or carrots as opposed to grapes, candy, ice cream or cookies. They always chose the sweets—so much for Peter Rabbit loving cabbage and Bugs Bunny loving carrots over everything else.

A while after our last rabbit, Bonnie and I went to a grocery store. I found her in the pet food aisle, and she was holding a can of dog food and a can of cat food. I asked her, "Are you planning to get a dog and a cat?" She said, "No. I always wanted to try dog food and cat food to see how they taste. If I tried them, would you?" I reluctantly answered, "Well, okay".

One day, Bonnie was smiling and gave me some food she had cooked. I ate it and said, "This stuff is awful!" Bonnie answered, "Do you know you forgot my birthday?" I asked her, "What is this stuff?" She answered, "Its dog food . . . I don't quite understand, you liked it the other day—I tried it and it wasn't so bad." Ever since, I have not forgotten Bonnie's birthday.

I told this dog food story to a friend who talked to Bonnie over the phone a number of times and knew me very well, and he said to me, "I think you would be bored if you were married to anyone else."

5

Our South American Honeymoon

We decided to go to South America for our honeymoon. Bonnie is a fantastic travel agent, using 800 numbers to gather travel information rather than using the Internet, something I, as a shy person, would never do. She'd call up one number and ask for other 800 numbers. Bonnie arranged our honeymoon so that we would go to all the places I wanted to see and would add other places suggested by knowledgeable people she talked to on the phone. Because she was now a paraplegic, Bonnie decided that we would have to stay in more luxurious hotels than she did on her previous (pre-injury) trips, and she arranged to have people meet us at our various locations to help out with the wheelchair.

My father's lady friend, Madge, had been quite a world traveler herself, even having travelled to South America. She told us tales about Bogotá, Columbia, that people going there better not wear jewelry as thieves there had been known to rip the jewelry off people's ears or fingers. We therefore decided to avoid Columbia on our South American trip.

Bonnie told me that the last stop in our South American trip was to be Iguazu Falls. I would have one chance to get rid of her (at Iguazu Falls). If I didn't, I would have to keep her for life.

The first place we flew to was Quito, Ecuador, the capital city of Ecuador located in the Andes Mountains at 9000 feet. Just outside of Quito was the Otavalo Indian Market, which on our visit on a Saturday was composed of both a regular market selling food and merchandise and a nearby livestock market.

In the regular market, the Indian women wore skirts and long shawls, some with short rimmed hats and some with babies on their backs. While Bonnie shopped and bargained, I went around taking pictures. There were stalls with food and spices, clothes, blankets and dolls, with the dolls made primarily for tourists. One stall had a cutting board with an axe and meat on it cut in every which way—clearly there were not our concepts of particular cuts of meat. Bonnie asked me why there were three women following after me—I looked back at one woman, and the woman gave me a wry smile.

I also went to the nearby livestock market with locals bargaining for roosters, donkeys, pigs, and cows over the pandemonium of crows, oinks, moos and hee-haws. One male donkey got a little excited by a female donkey, and the sellers had to keep them apart.

From Quito, we flew to Lima, the capital of Peru, and arrived there at night to take a plane the next morning to Cuzco, Peru. Lima seemed old, dark and dirty, but it may have only seemed that way because we were there late at night.

In Cuzco in Peru, we stayed at a hotel near the Cathedral of Cuzco in the center of town. Cuzco is a city at about 11,000 feet and was the historic capital of the Inca empire. In the cathedral that was built by Indians was a painting showing an Indian version of the Last Supper: Christ and his disciples were having guinea pig as the main course with a glass of

Chicha, a fermented beverage made from corn. The cathedral's high altar was carved in cedar wood and gilded with gold. Upon leaving the cathedral, there was a huge demonstration in front in the Plaza de Armas—we didn't know why they were demonstrating.

Sacsayhuamán is an Inca walled complex near Cuzco. I carried Bonnie around the area in my arms with her hanging onto my neck to look at the Inca stonework. There were interlocking limestone stones, with nothing used to cement the stones together, with the fit so precise that there was virtually no space between the stones. There is a mystery about the original structures as much of the stonework was used by the Spaniards who conquered the Incas to build churches in Cuzco, including the Cathedral of Cuzco.

That night we went to a Peruvian flute band concert featuring a deep throated pan flute (with multiple tubes), other flutes (each single tubes), a charango (a guitar type instrument) and drums. Their selection of pieces included the Peruvian song “El Cóndor Pasa” made famous by Simon and Garfunkel.

The next day we took a train to Machu Picchu. Machu Picchu was a fortress city of the Incas. The tour guide on our train to Machu Picchu sounded exactly like Peter Lorre—maybe he saw too many Peter Lorre movies. We were quietly laughing—no one else seemed to notice his Peter Lorre version of English.

From the train station below Machu Picchu, we took a bus up the mountain, making many switchbacks. At the top Bonnie went to the cafeteria at the Machu Picchu Sanctuary Lodge—which Bonnie told me partially overlooked the ruins—while I went to the entrance

to the ruins a short distance away. Going inside the ruins area I tried to see if there were parts that were wheelchair accessible or to find an area where Bonnie in a wheelchair could see the site—I was unable to do so. After circling the site looking up at it from below, I entered the site with its many buildings and took pictures from many angles.

The many stone buildings at Machu Picchu were nestled high atop a mountain, built upon terraces, and saddled between pointed rock mountain peaks. Below was the Urubana Valley. Machu Picchu was built in the 15th century and discovered virtually intact in 1911, completely hidden by the jungle, by an American, Hiram Bingham.

As I left, some people waved to me. They were at a place right at the entrance to the site where people could sit down and look directly into the ruins—I could have carried Bonnie up to that viewing area! This was my biggest regret of the trip.

I met Bonnie outside the cafeteria and told her I found a place where she could see the site. She refused for some reason, but our bus was about to leave anyway.

We got in the bus. A boy waved to us as we left. We drove down one switchback, and the same boy waved at us again. At every switchback we saw the same boy. At the bottom of the mountain the boy requested money from each of the bus passengers.

We got back to Cuzco late. The next day early in the morning we were to have a long train ride toward La Paz, Bolivia, stopping first at Puno in Peru, 180 miles from Cuzco, a trip entirely on the Peru Alto Plano, a highland plain averaging about 10,000 feet in altitude.

We got on the train and waited for 3 hours for it to leave. We didn't have time to buy any food for the trip. During the 5 hour trip one meal was scheduled, a small chicken dinner.

We were on the wrong side of the train so I wasn't happy with the pictures I could take out of our train window, so I went between cars. On either side was a window at waist level. I did deep knee bends for hours taking pictures.

The Alto Plano had the Andes Mountains on both sides. Indians with herds of llamas and alpacas could often be seen. When the train made stops at small towns, the local Indians would come to the train, selling their wares, most often hand-made souvenirs, but unfortunately no food.

In reading about our final stop in our guidebook, Puno, Peru, I learned that it was known for thieves. Puno was a city at 13,000 feet. When we arrived at Puno, we were met by 3 young men. I felt sorry for the guys as they were so small, so I carried my own luggage. One guy pushed Bonnie in her wheelchair. We ran through town—I assume because of the thieves—arriving at our hotel after several minutes.

We had booked a room on the first floor of the hotel, but were assigned to a third floor room. There being no elevator, I took Bonnie in her wheelchair up the stairs. We were given coca tea, a tea containing measurable amounts of cocaine that is supposed to help with altitude sickness. Bonnie and I made love.

After a while, I began to feel dizzy and simply awful. I went down to the lobby to get some oxygen—I had read that every major hotel in the Peruvian Andes had oxygen—but

they had none. I told the proprietor that I had to go to a hospital as I was about to pass out. There was a taxi outside. Fortunately, I had taken my Spanish phrase book and found the Spanish word for “hospital”.

The taxi took me to a gate of the hospital. As I went inside the gate, I saw a small building 100 yards away with no lights on. I pounded on the door and, after what seemed like a long, long time, medical personnel let me in and had me lie down on a table. The nurse took my blood pressure, and I was motioning that I needed an oxygen mask. The nurse just smiled. I was eventually given a hospital room and given oxygen. Quickly, I felt better. Another fellow was in the adjacent bed. With my Spanish phrase book I learned that he had stomach problems.

The doctor the next day told me in sol, the Peruvian money, how much the stay was. I said that I didn't have any Peruvian money, only dollars, and he quoted a much higher amount in US dollars: \$5.

The next day Bonnie and I went to a Puno market. At the Puno market, like at every other Peruvian Andes market we went to, they were selling typical Peruvian colorful knitted woolen hats with each having intricate straight line designs and ear flaps and knit tassels to hold them on. We did not buy any because such hats can even be bought in the United States, but there was something else that we had not seen by us before: a rotisserie with guinea pig. Guinea pig cost so much we only got half of one. Bonnie wanted it “undercooked”, like she prefers for chicken, beef, pork, and lamb, so why not guinea pig.

Bonnie loved the guinea pig: She said that it tasted like undercooked chicken. I didn't like it, but perhaps I would if it was not undercooked.

(Bonnie undercooks almost all meat. She undercooks chicken—sometimes with red blood in the bones—and definitely undercooks turkey. She says it results in much moister meat. She has to cook chicken and turkey again for me to eat it. One Thanksgiving we *did* have overcooked turkey: I put the turkey in a combination convection/microwave oven for an hour, forgetting to turn to convection—the result was turkey jerky.)

From Puno we met our prearranged tour guide and took a hydrofoil across Lake Titicaca. Lake Titicaca is the highest navigable lake in the world. We landed at the small town of Copacabana, Bolivia on the shore of the lake. The Rio de Janerio Copacabana beach was named after this Bolivian city. Copacabana's 400 year old cathedral houses the shrine of the Indian Virgin, the Black Madonna—people come to have their disabilities cured—unfortunately, it didn't succeed with Bonnie. Perhaps she did not have enough faith!

We then visited the floating islands of the Uros Indians, with the islands themselves being made of tortora reeds by the Indians. The Uros Indians also made some of their boats and houses out of these reeds. The Uros are primarily fishermen and weavers.

Our hydrofoil then landed in Huatajata, and we took a bus from there to La Paz.

We arrived at our hotel in La Paz at night. La Paz is the highest capital city in the world at 12,000 feet. La Paz is in a bowl. We were on the higher levels of the bowl. The window of our room was completely glass from the floor to the ceiling and from one side to the other, and we could see the lights of the city down below.

I then developed extreme anxiety, probably caused either by my oxygen deprivation or the cocaine in the coca tea I drank the night before in Puno. Upon going to bed, I developed an urge to jump out the huge completely glass window even though it was closed—I do have a fear of heights and have the feeling that I want to jump every time I am high up and not in an enclosure. I closed the curtains, causing me to have the more manageable fear of claustrophobia.

I never ever dream in color. But every time I put my head on the pillow I had a nightmare in brilliant colors. Every 5 minutes I would wake up from the nightmare and then fall back asleep and have another nightmare, and an awful, but very colorful, nightmare it was.

The next day Bonnie wanted to go bargaining for Bolivian blankets in La Paz. We followed our guidebook to a place where it was said that blankets were sold. Bonnie told me that I should push her wheelchair instead of her rolling herself as the city was so dirty and she did not want to dirty her hands rolling the wheelchair by herself. From the hotel I went down into the bottom of the bowl then up the other side of the bowl where a number of Bolivian Indian women with their bowler hats, multi-layer skirts and shawls were selling blankets and shawls. (Bonnie told me that when bargaining for anything—as she was about to do—there should be trial bargaining first where you establish a narrow range of acceptable prices.)

I was bothered by standing on the steep hilly street with no flat area other than where Bonnie and the sellers were located. Bonnie finally bought 4 blankets, after what seemed to me like an interminably long period of time.

The next day with our personal tour guide and his vehicle—the tour guide who earlier accompanied us on the Lake Titicaca hydrofoil—we explored the temperate La Paz and then drove down a steep road to a much lower elevation, which brought us to a hot and humid tropical jungle. There we saw cacao plants in their natural environment and a warehouse containing cacao beans, which are later fermented to make cocoa and then used to make chocolate.

Early in the morning the next day, we went to the La Paz airport that is higher than La Paz at 13,000 feet. At security in the airport, a woman insisted that Bonnie get out of her wheelchair and stand. Being a paraplegic, this was impossible. The security woman consulted a colleague and finally let Bonnie go to the gate. We were off to Santiago, Chile.

We were met at the Santiago airport by a driver who took us to our hotel in the middle of Santiago in early evening. The next morning, we went downtown and found a place selling a type of pizza with toppings on what looked like American white bread.

We went to San Cristobal Hill, and while Bonnie stayed at the bottom, I took the many stairs to the top of the hill. At the top were churches, monuments and a view of Santiago. Even though the hill was a major site in our guidebook there were no people there, which I found very curious.

In an advertisement on our plane trip from La Paz to Santiago, I found the name and address of a restaurant serving what we thought was food native to Chile and was said to be open for lunch and dinner. The restaurant was on a street that began close to our hotel.

Call the restaurant "Las Rejas Restaurant". After lunch there, we intended to go to the Metropolitan Cathedral.

We went to the street we knew the restaurant was on, and I asked someone in Spanish using my Spanish phrase book, "¿A cuántas cuadras está el restaurant Las Rejas?", which I thought meant, "How many blocks to the Las Rejas Restaurant?". The fellow answered, "A tres cuadras", meaning "three blocks". We went 4 blocks and the restaurant was not there. I stopped a second fellow and asked him the same question, and he also answered "A tres cuadras". We went another 4 blocks and the restaurant again was not there.

Bonnie said that I should ask another passer-by. I told Bonnie that if that person answered, "tres cuadras", I would crack up. I asked the fellow, "¿A cuántas cuadras está el restaurant Las Rejas?", and he answered "A tres cuadras". I fell to the ground laughing, thinking that I must be saying something wrong in Spanish to keep getting the same answer. The fellow looked at me quizzically, and *in English* said, "Two blocks?" I then really broke up laughing and was unable to explain to him why I was laughing so much. Bonnie said nothing. We went 3 blocks and there the restaurant was, but closed. It was the middle of the week, just after 12 noon, and the restaurant was closed!

We went to the next street and started walking back toward our hotel. Some people stopped us and somehow conveyed to us that there was a nationwide strike that day, and the police would have a curfew in a little over an hour and would shoot people remaining outside on sight during the curfew.

I told Bonnie that we should quickly go back to the hotel, but Bonnie insisted that we had lots of time to see the Metropolitan Cathedral. We went to the cathedral and made our way back to the hotel. At the front of the hotel was our driver of the previous day arm in arm with a young lady. He came up to Bonnie and told her that he was really bad off as he didn't have enough time to go back home to see his wife.

We went to our room, and later went to a very large restaurant in the hotel basement. The place was full. People were frolicking—it was a loud, even joyful, party type atmosphere. I asked someone if they had nationwide strikes like this very often. He said, “No, we haven't had one for two or three months!”

During the night we heard shouting but no shooting. In the morning, our driver took us to the airport. There were burnt tires in a lot of intersections. From Santiago, we took a flight to Puerto Montt, Chile.

Puerto Montt was a small fishing village on the Pacific coast of Chile. We went to the coast where there were a number of fish markets, but with no one buying. We went into a place that we thought was a restaurant and asked for a menu. They didn't have one, but they asked us what kind of fish we would like. We told him, he told us a price, and he went out to the fish markets, bought the fish and made our meal. The meal was excellent.

The reason we came to Puerto Montt was that it was the start of a trip through the Chile lake district to Argentina. We took buses and boat rides. Because of our previous cross-Peru trip without food, we bought bread and made peanut butter sandwiches with peanut butter we had brought with us from home that we remembered we put in our luggage. A

boy came on our bus begging—Bonnie gave him a peanut butter sandwich that he refused. (Bonnie said the boy wasn't that poor if he didn't want our food.) On the trip there were many snow-capped peaks, lakes, waterfalls and forested areas. The trip ended with a lake crossing from Chile to Bariloche, Argentina, where there was an Alpine village with chalets. The lake looked to me a lot like Lake Tahoe in California in winter time. It was clearly ski season: In one lodge we went into early the next morning, there was a large wooden flat platform with many young people with ski boots sleeping on it.

We then took a plane from Bariloche to Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina. Buenos Aires was known as the Paris of South America, but the buildings were so old and dilapidated that it was hard for me to think that it was anything like Paris. We took a city site-seeing tour and saw Teatro Colón, a famous opera house; Nueve de Julio Avenue, the widest avenue in the world; and Casa Rosada, the Argentine "White House" containing the offices of the President of Argentina. At night we went to a place where older professionals were dancing uninspired tangos.

Walking in downtown Buenos Aires, we saw a place with a variety of beef—a mixed grill (*parrillada mixta*)—cooking in the window on a charcoal fire. The '*parrillada mixta*' is composed of various cuts of steak, lamb, pork, sausages, sweetbreads, and internal organs. All the cuts were very tough—nothing like the tender aged beef in the United States.

From Buenos Aires we flew to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In Rio, Belo Horizonte and Brasilia we had the same woman tour guide and driver. Bonnie wanted to go to the favelas, the poor areas of the city, but the tour guide resisted this. Neither Bonnie or I wanted to spend

time on the Copacabana beach but wanted to see it from the car. We went through a tunnel in which Bonnie said she could barely breathe.

Brazilian Portuguese to me is the most erotic language I've ever heard, even more so than French. When speaking, Brazilian women seemed to speak in a whisper, almost as if they were making love.

In Brazil, we had many stops but I remember little things such as fresh young coconut with a little hole cut in it so the milk could be sucked through a straw. The coconut was afterwards cut open with a machete so the meat could be eaten. Excellent! Bonnie and I also both liked the coconut ice cream bars.

One day the tour guide and her driver had a day off, and we took a taxi to the Tijuca Forest, a mountainous hand-planted rainforest in Rio. It's the world's largest urban forest with hundreds of species of plants and wildlife. From there we went up a stairs with over 200 steps to the Christ the Redeemer statue—to my relief, our taxi driver insisted on pulling Bonnie up the many steps. The views of the city, Atlantic Ocean, harbors, lagoons, and Sugarloaf Mountain were magnificent with the Christ the Redeemer statue in the foreground! (Upon returning to the cab, I offered the taxi driver a big tip, but he refused—Bonnie was very impressed.)

With our woman tour guide and her driver returning, from Rio we drove to Belo Horizonte and then Brasilia (the capital of Brazil). I included Belo Horizonte in our trip because of I read of the legend of a sculptor referred to as Aleijadinho (Portuguese for "little cripple") who lived in the 18th century. He had lost his fingers and toes and the use

of his lower legs, yet he sculpted many statues on front of churches in the Belo Horizonte area, including majestic statues of the “Twelve Prophets”. We went to see a number of these statues. Belo Horizonte was also a center of gemstone mining, and Bonnie stopped to see the gem shops.

Brasilia was a newly created city in the interior of Brazil that was built to become the capital of Brazil. It was said that, at that time, government workers made so little money that they all had to have second jobs.

From Brasilia we flew many miles to Manaus, a city also in the interior of Brazil but on the Amazon River. The city was created during the rubber boom and was known for its opera house that was built when the rubber barons were hoping to change Manaus into a European style city. When we were there Manaus was extremely hot (in the middle 90’s) and humid; I was having a harder time taking the hot humid weather than Bonnie (but then again I was pushing her).

We took a boat tour to an island to view part of the Amazon rainforest. Bonnie was taken in and out of the boat by a number of men working with the tour. In the jungle we saw dense green vegetation on the ground including ferns and tall trees forming a canopy above. I remember a line of ants each carrying leaves much larger than they were.

The Amazon rainforest is being quickly depleted because it is being burned down so the land can be used for agriculture. After taking a geology class, I now understand the dire environmental consequences of the burning of the Amazon jungle. In the geology class, I learned about some of the different types of soils in the world. One type of soil occurs in

tropical rainforests like the Amazon where it is both very hot and very humid with rain over 100 inches a year; with the lushness of the rainforest it appears that the land would be good for agriculture, but it is absolutely not.

Soil type depends upon climate, especially rainfall. Rain water comes from above and ground water from below, with the rain water being acidic and the ground water containing calcium. It is the calcium in the ground water that makes the soil productive for agriculture, in particular for grasses, and it is the acid from the rain water that makes the soil productive for trees. Plant roots grow both in plant material, both alive and decayed, on top of the soil and in the soil below. In the Eastern United States, where it rains from 20-50 inches a year, the soil is acidic and is good for trees; in order to be used for agriculture or grass, agriculture lime (calcium) must be added to the soil, as the rain water overwhelms the ground water that contains the calcium. In most of the Western United States where it rains 10-20 inches, the soil is great for agriculture and because the rain and ground water are balanced, no extra calcium needs to be added to the soil for it to be used for agriculture. In the arid parts of the West and places like Saudi Arabia, where it rains less than 10 inches, there may be little water and possibly nothing more than soluble salts as soil; as a result, few if any plants grow in such soil.

In the Amazon tropical rainforest where it rains over 100 inches a year, clay in the soil is replaced by oxides of aluminum, silicon and iron, which does not support vegetation. The roots of plants in the Amazon do not go into the soil, but only into the plant material—alive and decayed—at the top of the soil. As a result, all the plant roots in the Amazon are very shallow, but because of the abundance of plant life, the organic material at the top of

the soil is relatively thick. The Amazon can be used for agriculture if the rainforest is burned down, but once the burned plant material that feeds the agricultural plants for a year or two is depleted, the land becomes barren and can no longer support agriculture nor can it regenerate into a new rainforest. The farmer then must move on to another area—he must burn down more and more tropical rain forest to continue his agriculture, destroying that part of the rainforest forever. The Amazon rainforest, in this way, is quickly disappearing. Clearing the rainforest increases global warming, as the rainforest removes significant amounts of CO₂, the major greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere.

Returning from the rainforest to Manaus on the boat, we saw the meeting of two rivers, the Rio Negro (a dark colored river) and the Amazon River. The confluence was very clear because of the different colors of the rivers.

From Manaus, we flew to Salvador de Bahia on the Atlantic coast of Brazil. Salvador de Bahia was the colonial capital of Brazil and a former slave port. The Portuguese imported millions of black slaves from Africa—many more than came to the United States—to work on their sugar cane plantations, resulting in tremendous wealth for the white Portuguese. Unlike in the United States, slaves were often worked to death as they could easily be replaced by other slaves.

The city of Salvador de Bahia has two parts: a “Cidade Alto” (upper city) and a “Cidade Baixa” (lower city). We stayed in a hotel in the lower city but spent most of our time in the upper city in the colonial historic center of Salvador de Bahia built when Bahia was wealthy. The upper city is reached by the Elevador Lacerda, a vertical pedestrian elevator.

Bonnie and I love spicy food, both Indian food and Ethiopian food (e.g., Kitfo). We had a spicy black bean dish in a restaurant in the upper city that was even spicier and hotter than these two cuisines, although not nearly as hot as the Sri Lankan cuisine I had in Saudi Arabia.

In the upper city, we saw the Church of São Francisco. Money from the sugar cane plantations was used to create the extravagant baroque interior of the Church of São Francisco with its cherubs and angels. The interior used almost a ton (800 kg) of gold leafing.

I pushed Bonnie on her wheelchair, and we were stopped by a policeman who told us we should watch out for thieves. A little time later, we were followed by three young men while we were on a hill. Somewhat afraid of these young men after the warning by the policeman, I pushed Bonnie quickly down the hill and Bonnie yelled, “Michael!!!!” On top of the hill one of the men then yelled down, “Michael!!!” We were not accosted.

We went to a market in a square where a fellow was trying to sell us a young monkey and then went to a museum behind the market. In the museum, a French-accented woman acted as a docent conducting a tour through the museum. At the end of the tour she told us we owed her ten dollars. We refused, telling her we never asked her to guide us through the museum.

From Salvador de Bahia we went to our final tourist destination: Iguazu Falls. This was the place where Bonnie said I would have my final chance to “get rid of her” (supposedly by pushing her into the falls?—and there was a lot of falls to push her into.)

Three countries meet at Iguacu Falls, Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, and the falls are in all three countries. We were in Brazil. There are two miles of falls and approximately 300 individual interconnected cataracts making up the falls. When we were there the water in the falls was reddish.

Iguacu Falls are the widest falls in the world—it is higher than Niagara and is twice as wide. A couple of people compared Iguacu Falls to Niagara Falls: Eleanor Roosevelt, upon seeing Iguacu Falls, said, “Poor Niagara”. A Chicago Sun-Times reporter once wrote, “Next to Iguacu Falls, Niagara is a leaky faucet.” I discovered that when I returned to the United States and used the latter quote, it made some people very mad.

Bonnie and I flew back to Rio, again going through the tunnel where Bonnie could hardly breathe. Before leaving for home, we went to a store that sold gemstones and natural amethyst rocks. Bonnie found a suitcase shaped rock with amethyst crystals inside and bargained for it for a very good price. The store keeper wrapped it up to look like a cardboard suitcase and put thick rope around it to produce a handle on top, just like a suitcase.

On our airline trip back to the Bay Area from Rio, I carried around the 50 pound amethyst acting as if it wasn't heavy, carrying it on the plane and putting it beneath the seat in front of me. Seeing that Bonnie was disabled, the stewardess got a seat with more leg room for us, and we exchanged seats with another couple. While I carried Bonnie to the new seat, the stewardess tried to pick up the amethyst package and couldn't move it. She asked me, “What do you have in there, a rock?!” Without answering I picked up the package and pretended it was light, moving it to our new seat.

6

Minnie and the South Seas

Minnie was one of Bonnie's two sisters. She was born after Lonnie but before Bonnie.

Minnie was small and often sickly. Her intelligence was somewhat below normal, but not so much that it stopped her from getting a job as an IRS clerk. She loved being pampered but was often taken advantage of.

Mama Chin didn't speak English so she only gave Minnie a Chinese name. An obstetrician picked Minnie's American name that unfortunately fit Minnie's stature.

Because of Minnie's size, no one could really tell her age. Bonnie and I took Minnie on one trip throughout the East Coast of the United States. In Hersey, Pennsylvania at the chocolate factory, Minnie was acting up. A mother told us that she understood what we were going through (as parents!) as she had her own kids. In Canberra, Australia we had to pay to go up to the top of a tall tower. We told them that Minnie was Bonnie's mother and got the senior rate.

Years before Bonnie's paraplegic injury, Minnie came to Bonnie and said, "I met a man. He wants to talk to Mom, I think about marrying me." "What does he do?" "I don't know.

He's from China, visiting his relatives." "How many dates did you go on?" "Three," Minnie answered. "I think he likes the color of your passport," Bonnie responded.

The man met with Mama Chin (as was the tradition in China to meet with your potential wife's parents to get approval before marriage), and they had a frank conversation. "You don't have a job, and you don't live here? How are you going to support my daughter? . . . Don't talk to me again until you are a resident of the United States and have a job!" The fellow never saw Minnie again.

A while later, after 6 dates, Minnie's boyfriend likewise wanted to meet with Mama Chin. In this case, the fellow was a Chinese American and, like Minnie, worked for the IRS. He was just a little smarter than Minnie, but he did drive a car. Mama Chin and the fellow's parents met for dinner, and they agreed that neither of the two had that much to offer to others, so why not let them marry. The couple agreed upon a marriage date, October 10th, a number of months later.

Bonnie was looking to buy some income property. To many Asians, investing in the right property is almost as important as marrying the right person.

Minnie came to see Bonnie and told her about breaking up with her boyfriend. After a number of arguments the marriage was off. Bonnie told Minnie that their mother lived a perfectly happy life without a man. "It's not worth getting married unless you find someone who enjoys the same things you do and is your best friend", Bonnie told Minnie. "For me, I want to marry someone who is my equal, a feminist who respects women and would not try to boss me around like all my brothers, who often yell 'Shut Up!' to me."

“How about this,” Bonnie added, “I’m looking for an apartment house that I can rent out. We can buy it together and you would have a place to live. Then you wouldn’t need to have a man to take care of you.” Minnie was not any less heartbroken but agreed.

Lonnie heard about Bonnie and Minnie looking to jointly buy an apartment building, and Lonnie insisted that she also be a partner in the deal. Bonnie continued her search for properties and found an apartment building in the Pacific Heights of San Francisco that the three sisters jointly purchased. To try to make Minnie less unhappy, Bonnie scheduled the closing of the sale on October 10th, Minnie’s would-have-been marriage date.

Minnie especially liked it when Bonnie and I invited her to go with us on cruises. She went to all the cruise parties especially the first one where passengers meet the captain. I enjoyed having her there to be a companion to Bonnie.

Bonnie hated the days of the cruise where there weren’t stops in foreign countries. I loved them because I used these “at sea” times to work on a technical book, *Automating the Patient Medical Record: Steps Toward a Universal Patient Record* that at one time was available free on the Internet and is now a purchasable book. I became interested in this area after Kaiser Permanente’s many failed attempts at automating their medical records. By the time I was to offer my ideas, Kaiser already made a choice of an electronic medical record system they would buy and were not interested in my ideas which advocated creating a system that interfaced with electronic medical record systems of other medical

organizations where the patient was seen for care, creating a complete medical record for the patient.

In 1986, Bonnie scheduled a tour for her and me that included the countries of Russia, Poland, the Ukraine, and Belarus. It also included the city of St. Petersburg in Russia as well as the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), all places that Bonnie had scheduled to see on her first Soviet Union trip many years ago, but did not because the Soviet Union messed things up. Two weeks before our new trip was to begin, the tour was canceled as a result of explosions in the core of a nuclear reactor in the Ukraine at Chernobyl, the worst nuclear accident in history, causing widespread environmental contamination. Bonnie quickly scheduled a substitute trip for us to Tahiti, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, and the Cook Islands.

For a second time for Bonnie, a tour that included St. Petersburg and the Baltics was canceled!

Since this substitute trip was much easier than the European trip, we both agreed that it would be appropriate to invite Minnie along. For the first time, Minnie joined us on a foreign trip that was not a cruise.

In Tahiti and Tahiti's main city Papeete, Bonnie and I wanted to see the life of the local people rather than the resorts, as Tahiti is in reality a developing country. We went through Papeete to see the local produce markets of meats, seafood, fresh vegetables and tropical fruits. We visited a series of small stores selling handicrafts, including cotton pareus (wraparound sarongs), quilts, and other items.

When I'm with Bonnie when she shops, I may have to push Bonnie in her wheelchair over a step or two to get into a store, push her through any narrow aisles in the store, wait until Bonnie is through shopping, and take her out to go to the next store, repeating the process many times. When I'm with Bonnie leaving a store with the front door needing to be pushed to be opened, I pull Bonnie backward in her wheelchair and open the door with my back—Bonnie calls this “butting out”.

We went through quite a number of stores, with Minnie following behind. I would often look back and there Minnie was, but often having trouble keeping up with us. After a few of these stores we noticed that Minnie was nowhere to be seen. Fortunately, the stores were all along the same street. I went back several stores and found Minnie. She didn't seem to realize that we had lost her.

In Fiji, we found a country that had a native Fiji population and an Asian Indian population, with almost an equal number of each group. There was clear animosity between the two groups. We went to an Indian restaurant and were hoping to find spicy Indian food, but to no avail.

Minnie was not very adventurous and always bought Cantonese Chinese food when available. We found a place in Fiji with Chinese food in an expensive hotel. Minnie ordered wonton soup, and they brought a large bowl of soup but with one wonton (a Chinese dumpling filled with meat). (In the United States, you get soup with many wontons.) Minnie complained, and they brought a new bowl of soup with two wontons! Minnie was not amused.

We then flew from Fiji to Christchurch, New Zealand, a town near the southern tip of the south island of New Zealand, a town later where there were a number of large earthquakes devastating the town. New Zealand is a country with ten times as many sheep as people. New Zealand is also a country with fantastic scenery.

In Christchurch, one of the tires of Bonnie's wheelchair blew a tube. We took it to a bicycle shop where they recommended we replace the tubed tires with solid rubber tires that did not require any air. Bonnie had never heard of such tires. The bicycle shop fellow kiddingly said he couldn't believe that New Zealand's technology was so much more advanced than that in the United States, New Zealand having solid tires and the United States not having them.

In Christchurch we rented a car. Cars in New Zealand (and Australia) drive on the left side of the road with the driver on the right and passenger on the left. This was little problem for me in New Zealand, as traffic was very light and our route did not involve many turns from the main road—the hardest part of such a car for me was lifting Bonnie in reverse fashion in and out of the left side of a car rather than the right.

When Minnie is in a car in motion, she automatically falls asleep and unfortunately misses much of the scenery. On the other hand, Bonnie never falls asleep on trips—she wants to see everything.

From Christchurch, we drove down to the southern tip of New Zealand through Dunedin. In the ensuing weeks, we drove from the bottom to the top of the two islands

making up New Zealand, the South Island and then the North Island, taking a ferry in between.

We quickly discovered that virtually every New Zealand restaurant dinner meal included either a huge bowl of vegetables or a large salad. Minnie and I always took the vegetables. Bonnie always took the salad. The dessert in virtually every restaurant was Pavlova, a concoction mostly of whipped cream with some fruit (named after the Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova).

At one restaurant, the owner saw that his restaurant was having a slow night and sent many of his workers home, later to learn it wasn't a slow night after all. In the United States, I understand, if a worker shows up for his shift, he is paid for the entire shift, but apparently this is not the case in New Zealand; he is only paid for the time before he is sent home.

One reason for Bonnie and me to visit New Zealand was to see the New Zealand fjords. On going to visit the fjords we went through a tunnel and thereafter the road had an increasingly thick layer of snow. A police car stopped us and told us we could go no further. Thus we never got to the area of New Zealand with its fjords, called "Fjordland", which I thought would be one of the highlights of our trip.

Throughout New Zealand's South Island we not only saw many sheep farms but also many deer farms, raising venison to sell to the rest of the world.

We drove up to Mount Cook Village in Westland Tai Poutini National Park, a park adjacent to the Mount Cook/Aoraki National Park containing Mount Cook. Since we were

making a whirlwind tour of New Zealand, and Bonnie cannot go on hikes and Minnie dislikes hikes, we hoped to get a good view of Mount Cook from the car without hiking. Driving out of the village, we found a road with not only a fantastic view of Mount Cook above us but with a picturesque continuation of the down slope of land below us. I got out of the car and I took a short hike.

We later traveled a great distance to get to the west coast side of the two parks. We discovered that there were helicopter rides to the top of Fox Glacier, a glacier on part of Mount Cook. I got out of the helicopter to walk on the glacier. The helicopter pilot suggested that we lift Bonnie in her wheelchair and put her on the glacier. We did so and then walked away to create a surrealistic sight of a woman in a wheelchair all alone on a glacier.

We continued driving on the west coast of the South Island. There were very unusual rock formations at Punakaiki called the Pancake Rocks. The Pancake Rocks are chimney shaped rocks each made up of distinctive layers of limestone stacked like pancakes, with each layer of limestone separated by small fossilized marine animals. The current shapes of the rocks were produced by erosion being sculpted by the water and wind.

We eventually arrived in Picton, one terminus of a ferry crossing the Cook Strait to go to Wellington on the North Island. We ordered a pizza before our trip on the ferry. It was a large pizza without any cheese and mounds of toppings distantly spaced from each other. We then thought that New Zealanders probably knew nothing about pizzas in other parts of the world, but we later discovered many Pizza Hut restaurants on the North Island.

In Wellington on the North Island, we were intrigued by a restaurant in the telephone book which served Mexican food but was also an ice cream parlor. I asked the owner how he came up with this idea. He told me that he loved the food when he traveled to Mexico and decided to add a Mexican food menu to the ice cream menu at the ice cream parlor he owned. (Such disparate combinations of cuisines are unthinkable in the States.)

From Wellington we drove a great distance on a long, fairly straight highway up to Rotorua. On this road, what caught my eye were many signs for turn-offs to ski areas, although the immediately surrounding land seemed rather flat. In the old days when I skied a lot, I would have loved to see what skiing was like in New Zealand.

We arrived in Rotorua, a volcanic area with many thermals and a cultural center to learn about the Maoris, the native Polynesian people of New Zealand. Rotorua is where a third of the Maori people in New Zealand live. The thermal area includes geysers, mud pots, sulfurous fumaroles, cauldrons and hot springs, although these were less impressive than those found in Yellowstone National Park in the States.

In the basement of our motel there was a room with a large swimming type pool of water from the hot springs. I showed Bonnie the pool but she could not go into it because her paraplegia involved her body not being able to adjust to extreme hot or cold temperatures—her going into the pool could have resulted in her death. There were no other motel patrons taking advantage of the pool, so it was all mine. Minnie always is not adventurous and did not come down to pool—how could two sisters be so different? Being in the hot spring mineral pool was extremely relaxing.

When we left Rotorua, we saw a Maori fast food restaurant that had fried mutton bird and fried chicken—mutton bird is type of bird that only Maoris are allowed to catch and sell. Bonnie loved what to me was the foul tasting mutton bird. Minnie and I went back to the restaurant for the fried chicken, but being cooked in the same oil, the chicken tasted just like the awful mutton bird.

What was to be the highlight of the trip for me was the Glowworm Cave in Waitomo. When we tried to get tickets to enter the cave, the proprietors told us that people in wheelchairs were not allowed. After Bonnie argued with them for quite a while, they went overboard for us giving us two fellows to carry Bonnie in her wheelchair through the cave. At most, I thought that I might have one helper, and I would have to help carry her around, but these two fellows carried her around without any help from me.

In the cave was a small lake. People got on boats and were told to lie back to look up at the ceiling. The lights were turned off, and we saw many glowworms on the ceiling that looked like constellations of stars.

We then went to Auckland.

Going from place to place in New Zealand, we stayed each night in a motel except for one night. That day was the Queen's birthday, and every motel we went to was booked up that day. The night of the Queen's birthday we had to sleep in our car.

From Auckland we flew to Brisbane, Australia. Upon arriving at Brisbane, our first sight was the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary where I took pictures of Bonnie and Minnie hugging koalas. In driving through Brisbane to get to the sanctuary we found it very easy to get lost,

as streets are not in a grid pattern as they are in the States, and a continuous street we went on to the sanctuary changed its name many times. My theory was that the roads, as in some places in Europe, were originally created by cows wandering around.

From Brisbane, we went to Gold Coast, a city on the Pacific coast famous for its surfing beaches. We went to a seafood restaurant, and it was extremely expensive. I ordered a Giant Crab which was the hugest crab we had ever seen. It was at least 5 pounds. Unfortunately, I didn't take a picture of it—as a result we ordered the same crab in Sydney, but it was not nearly as large, or as fresh.

In Gold Coast, we saw a vendor on the street selling cooked round lobster-like creatures which the vendor called “bugs”. Each bug cost one Australian dollar. Bonnie liked the taste of the bug we shared so much that I bought a few more for her to eat. Now that was a bargain, a lobster for about the price of a U.S. dollar.

We then drove down to Sydney. We saw the very scenic Sydney Harbor. We joined a tour through the Sydney Opera House at Bennelong Point on Sydney Harbor. The Sydney Opera House is an, if not “the”, iconic symbol of Australia. The opera house looks like tall ships each with all their sails up. In the opera house, an orchestra was rehearsing—the main auditorium was much smaller than we expected. We then crossed the Sydney Harbor Bridge to Luna Park, an amusement park known for its 30 foot smiling face.

We visited a fancy department store downtown that had very few customers, mostly very well dressed young women who probably couldn't really afford to shop there. A Woolworth's away from downtown, on the other hand, had many customers and sold

household items such as pots and pans, often of mediocre quality. We gathered that Australians were probably not as wealthy as Americans.

We followed the main highway out of Sydney that had a posted speed limit equal to a freeway in the United States, but which also had many wall-to-wall businesses on each side, making the driving pretty scary. We were on our way by car to Canberra, Australia's capital city.

We took a city tour of Canberra, complete with tour guide. The tour guide giving his talk used the phrase from "A to Z", pronouncing the Z as "zee" instead of "zed". I asked him why he said "zee" rather than the Australian "zed", and he said that he heard it when his son was watching the American version of Sesame Street on TV.

Australia seemed to be trying to copy the United States with the results being different. As in the United States, it had Monday Night Football, but the sport was Aussie football called "footy" instead of American football. It had all the similar named morning programs (e.g., "Good Morning Australia" vs. "Good Morning America").

Minnie and I took the elevator up to the top of a very tall tower in Canberra that had a great overall view of the city. Posing as Bonnie's mother, Minnie took the elevator for the senior fare. Bonnie did not come along, wanting to save money.

We then drove down to Melbourne, an English-style city which seemed older than the other cities we visited in Australia. In Melbourne, I took the wrong direction quite often and even drove briefly on the wrong side of the road a few times, fortunately without any accidents occurring. In making a U-turn, I sang a song that I made up to the tune of "Louie,

Louie”: “Uee, ueee, hey, hey, we gotta turn around. Hey, hey, hey, aye aye aye . . .” Minnie even started waking up to join in singing along. Later Minnie told Bonnie that she thought I was much funnier than she thought, but also somewhat nastier—Minnie disliked anyone bickering, which was sometimes the case with me and Bonnie on the trip.

All in all, Minnie could not tolerate discord. That’s why Minnie probably broke up with her fiancé. A marriage—at least a healthy one—cannot exist long without discord.

Outside of Melbourne we went to a sheep station. In the shearing shed we saw a competitive sheep shearer quickly remove the fleece of a sheep in one piece using manual hand clippers and then even more quickly with electrical shearing clippers. Bonnie was chosen—probably because of her disability—to take one of the fleece home.

Upon many of our stops for lunch in Australia, we usually had pasties, a filled pastry often containing beef, potato and onion. We stopped at one deli to get a pasty, and they were serving what the overhead menu listed as curry sandwiches. Intrigued, we ordered one. What it turned out to be was a piece of bread with rice on top sprinkled with curry powder. It reminded me of sandwiches that one of my relatives gave me every time I visited her in the English-style city of Victoria, British Columbia in Canada: a sandwich made only of buttered bread, lettuce and tomato, which my relative called a “lettuce sandwich”. It also reminded me of the watercress sandwiches and cucumber sandwiches served at British tea time. It seemed that people in Britain and British Commonwealth countries like sandwiches without fillings.

Driving out of Melbourne, we saw a wild-west like attraction where they made menthol candies and medicine from eucalyptus trees. There and at other places we stopped at, we could view kangaroos and wallabies (like kangaroos only smaller) prance around in the wild, hopping away at an enormous speed.

Having seen the TV mini-series called *All the Rivers Run*, the story of the paddle steamers and their captains and crew on the Murray River, I wanted to visit the Murray River. When we were on the Murray River at Echuca, there was little water in the river, but there were several old paddle steamers disabled in the water.

From Echuca, we drove through Horsham to the Grampians National Park. On the way we discovered that there was another Queen's Birthday. Again all motel rooms were booked. We asked someone if the New Zealand Queen's Birthday and the Australian Queen's birthday were for the same queen, and he said 'yes'. Why then were they on different days?

Driving on the Queen's birthday, our car hit a bird, and it died on the hood of our car, staying there as we drove. I started singing a song I just created: "It's a lucky bird that dies on the Queen's birthday. For sure he goes to heaven from here. O', it's a lucky bird that dies on the Queen's birthday. There's just too many Queen's birthdays this year".

We didn't see much of the Grampians because we spent much of our time on this Queen's birthday looking for a place to stay, and then—after we finally gave up—looking for a place to park so we could sleep in the car overnight.

We arrived back in Melbourne to fly to the Cook Islands, our last stop on our trip. The Cook Islands figured that they needed an international airport to get tourists, so they created one on their main island, Rarotunga. We drove around the complete island in less than half a day. Rarotunga is completely surrounded by a lagoon with beautiful turquoise color water inside the lagoon. Rarotunga had one radio station that had no news, no talking, and a continuous program of Hawaiian music. If you wanted to escape the rest of the world—say, write a book—Rarotunga was the place to be. (The international airport was brand new at the time of our visit, so perhaps today, Rarotunga may not be a place to escape the rest of the world.)

We went to the Rarotunga Hotel for our dinners where there were dances and a fellow missing one of his front teeth who was able to open a coconut only with his (remaining) teeth. In the gift shop of the hotel, two female store clerks were trying to sell us a carved wooden fertility god with a large dangling penis—they said that the carving had previously been banned by the missionaries, but was brought back by the native people because it was a large part of their traditions.

We flew back to the Bay Area via Hawaii. We gave Minnie the option of stopping over in Hawaii, but she was too weary to do so. This was okay with Bonnie and me as we had seen many of the sights in the Hawaiian Islands on a previous trip:

- on the island of Oahu, Waikiki Beach in Honolulu and the Polynesian Cultural Center (and, for me and other males, the Tahitian dances at the center)

- on the island of Kauai, Waimea Canyon which we saw via helicopter, the Fern Grotto via boat, and, for me, the Na Pali Coast by foot, hiking, while Bonnie stayed on the beach
- on the island of Maui, the Iao Needle, the top of the Haleakala Volcano (now extinct) at sunrise (and its silversword plants), and the long narrow road to Hana
- and on the big island of Hawaii, the red and yellow lava fountain of the Kilauea volcano, Hilo's protea gardens, the Waipi'o Valley tsunami area, and Kailua-Kona.

(We unfortunately missed Pearl Harbor, the main site of the Japanese bombing of Hawaii on December 7, 1941 and its memorial of the sunken battleship, the U. S. S. Arizona. Pearl Harbor should have been a sentimental place for me to visit, as—independent of the horrible things that happened there—the date of the bombing was the date that my parents came from Canada to live in the United States.)

When Bonnie and I visited Hawaii on our previous trip, we both found the Hawaiian Islands to be a paradise except for the tourist areas: Waikiki Beach with its many high rise hotels; Kailua-Kona and its tourist trap; and the condo areas of Maui. I was especially disappointed because in 1965, when I visited Hawaii on an earlier date (visiting my Aunt Pearl), Waikiki beach had no high rise hotels at all, and Kailua-Kona was a sleepy picturesque village with little more than a church (the Mokuaukaia Church), a palace (Hulihe'e Palace) and a hotel (with a fabulous Lu'au). As they say, "You never go home again!", ..

but from Hawaii we were going home again. As Bonnie, Minnie and I were flying home from Hawaii, I again began reminiscing about my trip to see my Aunt Pearl in Hawaii in 1965, telling Minnie and Bonnie the story as we flew home. My Aunt Pearl and cousin Lorraine had just moved to Hawaii. Pearl was working as a waitress.

Pearl's apartment had no air conditioning, and it was hot and humid, but Pearl left the glass sliding doors of the apartment open and the wind cooled things off, making my sleeping very comfortable.

The first few days I was there Pearl was working, but eventually she got two days off in the middle of the week. Pearl had brought her convertible to Hawaii—At first it was not clear why only she had a convertible as a convertible seemed ideal for the hot weather in Hawaii.

In the 1960's in the United States, even in Hawaii, gas was inexpensive, and all stations had attendants. In fact gas was so plentiful they gave people a free glass when they filled up their car. Pearl did exactly this, filled up her car and got the free glass.

We drove up to the hills above Honolulu, and there was a tremendous 5 minute downpour of rain. I got out of the car to put up the manual car top and could not make it budge.

Pearl drove back down to a service station and asked for a fill up again (to get the free glass). The attendant and I spent about 10 minutes trying unsuccessfully to put up the top of the convertible, finally giving up. The attendant came back and found the gas that was

dispensed cost 24 cents. Pearl asked for the glass, and the attendant just stared at her without giving her the glass.

The next day we started driving around the island of Oahu, and Pearl suddenly stopped by the side of the road next to the pineapple fields. I asked her why we were stopping. She asked Lorraine and me to take a box out of the trunk and start picking pineapples.

(Compared to Pearl, my wife Bonnie was a spendthrift!)

Bonnie, Minnie and I were now home again. Bonnie and I, of course, found our Australia-South Sea islands trip to be far easier than our South America trip as everyone in the countries we visited spoke English, there was no high altitude, and the trip was largely by car rather than the myriad of types of transportation we took in South America.

And Minnie spent most of her time asleep in the back seat of the car anyway. Sometimes during our marriage I wish Bonnie was so quiet . . . , but maybe not—What was much worse for me was the occasional silent treatment from Bonnie . . . then I knew I was **really** in trouble!

7

Mama Chin, a Woman of Two Cultures

Mama Chin, Bonnie's mother, was a woman of two cultures, but always more the Chinese culture than the American culture, even after having lived most of her life in the United States.

Mama Chin was born in 1905 in Toison, China, a small village near Canton (Guandong). Mama Chin's parents, living in China in a farming village, were by Chinese standards quite wealthy, even having a number of servants, with their wealth probably partially a result of both Mama Chin's grandfather and great grandfather having been members of the scholar-elite (i.e., honored civil servants both passing difficult civil service exams in Beijing) and partially a result of her father having lived and worked in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada before Mama Chin was born.

When Mama Chin reached 16 years of age, her parents felt it was time for her to marry. Mama Chin's parents looked for a suitable mate for her, finding a fellow who was ambitious, intelligent, respectful and gregarious, although he was from a somewhat poorer family, but Mama Chin's father realized that there were more important qualities than wealth. The couple's horoscopes, taking into account their birthdates and times of birth, indicated that they would be a compatible couple, and they got married. Mama Chin was

given one servant, as giving her more, her family felt, would be ostentatious. The couple had three children in China, none of whom survived.

Papa Chin then decided to move to the United States but without his wife, with the intent of returning like Mama Chin's father did. He first came to San Francisco, then Los Angeles, then New York City, then Cuba, then Puerto Rico, and then came back to San Francisco.

Because the Japanese were slowly taking over China, moving further and further south, Mama Chin's father arranged to have Mama Chin move to Hong Kong to live with one of her relatives to escape the Japanese, telling her to write letters to her husband to encourage him to bring her to the United States.

Mama Chin came to the United States in 1939, four years before the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed—the Chinese Exclusion Act limited entry of Chinese into the United States. Papa Chin applied for his wife's entry as her relative sponsor. He was interrogated to ask him questions about his village in China: his living quarters, his relatives, and his neighbors. Armed with 5 pages of notes on these questions and answers given to her by her husband, Mama Chin was quickly allowed into the United States, proudly only being detained for a month. Unlike most Chinese immigrants, Mama Chin entered the U.S. and was detained in Seattle, rather than on Angel Island, an Ellis Island like compound in San Francisco Bay for Chinese immigrants.

Papa Chin and Mama Chin were probably assisted in their emigration from China to the United States both by Mama Chin's father's friends in North America and by Papa Chin

being a relative of the farmer horticulturist Ah Bing who in Oregon first bred the Bing cherry. Ah Bing's actual name was Bing Chin, and Papa Chin was his second cousin. Unlike Mama Chin, Papa Chin had a good command of the English language, and Bonnie once heard him talk about Bing Chin: "I never knew the son of a gun was so smart!"

One of the first things Mama Chin saw upon coming to the United States was the Golden Gate Exposition on Treasure Island, an artificial island built in the middle of San Francisco Bay for the exposition that, with the adjacent existing Yerba Buena Island, connected the two parts of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. The Golden Gate Exposition celebrated the completion of both the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge. At the exposition were constant colorful light shows and demonstrations by RCA and Westinghouse of the television set, quite a novelty in those days. The Exposition greatly impressed Mama Chin, surely giving her a false (but wonderful) impression of the United States.

By American standards, Mama Chin, Bonnie's mother, was a fantastic success. Despite her husband dying at age 46, her never learning English and her working at a sweatshop, Mama Chin raised 6 children by herself. She refused to go on welfare. At least three of her children had very extraordinarily distinguished careers: One was the first Asian fireman in Oakland, another was a school principal and got an award from the California State Legislature as a distinguished citizen of California, and another became a general manager for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency that controls all the public

transportation services localized to San Francisco. Mama Chin even managed to eventually own her own apartment house.

But by Mama Chin's old world Chinese Confucian values, when she reached her 60's she felt that she was a complete failure: **She did not have a Chinese grandson to carry on her name.** And she had the added guilt that neither of Mama Chin's parents lived long enough to see their grandchildren.

Mama Chin had lived a life like she was still in China: She revered her eldest son (Frank) above all her other children, and she dutifully visited her husband's grave, burning incense, leaving food, and burning hell money to appease the gods, both Confucian values. She insisted that her children get a good education. She primarily ate Cantonese Chinese food, as did Minnie who lived with her. She often played Mahjong and cards with her Chinese lady friends. She couldn't understand why any man (me) would marry a disabled woman (Bonnie) as this was unthinkable in old world China. She didn't waste anything. For her sick children, or sometimes just for health maintenance, she would make a concoction to drink made of chicken, pork, pigeon or frog with Chinese herbs, rice wine and water boiled for 2 hours in a double-boiler, throwing out the meat. And up to her age of 60 she seldom left the place where she lived—in this case the San Francisco Bay Area—after coming from China.

Mama Chin did eventually leave the Bay Area twice, both times when Bonnie was still able-bodied. She took a bus tour of the Western United States that Bonnie arranged, and she went back to China to visit her relatives in Toison.

On the Western United States bus tour, Mama Chin went with Bonnie, Lonnie and Minnie. Bonnie scheduled a series of Greyhound bus trips through the Northwest—Oregon and Washington—and to a number of national parks, going to Glacier National Park in Montana, and Yellowstone and Grand Tetons National Parks in Wyoming. Mama Chin claimed that she saw the Russian ship that brought her from China to Seattle in one of the museums she went to in the Northwest. (Lonnie and Bonnie extended the tour through Utah National Parks including the Bryce Canyon National Park and the Grand Canyon National Park, while Mama Chin and Minnie took a bus back home.)

In China while visiting relatives, Mama Chin in her 60's told Bonnie that it was about time for her (Mama Chin) to die. There was nothing more to look forward to in life. She did not have a Chinese grandson to carry on her name. She did have a granddaughter through her son Roy (the fireman), but that wasn't good enough—besides her granddaughter was half Filipino.

Mama Chin had great hopes for Frank, especially because he was her eldest son, who had a sweet Chinese girlfriend, Katie. Mama Chin wanted so much for Frank to marry Katie and have a "Chinese" grandson.

When Mama Chin was living in China it was allowable for men to have multiple wives. Women were never to divorce. If you married a man you married him forever, just like if you bought something and it broke, you fixed it, you did not buy a new one.

Katie was divorced, but when Mama Chin's children noted this fact, Mama Chin responded, "Well things are different in the United States than they are in China." Katie

also wore more revealing clothes than Mama Chin would have liked, but Mama Chin overlooked this also.

Mama Chin pleaded with Frank to marry Katie. After 8 years of dating with no proposal, Katie left. Shortly thereafter, Mama Chin was saddened to learn that Katie had married another man. Three years later, word came back to Mama Chin that Katie had a son. Mama Chin was heartbroken. “That baby could have been my grandson,” she told Bonnie.

Mama Chin was very active and vigorous until a year before her death at 93 in 1998. She went on the bus to do her shopping, often bringing back 2 or 3 bags of groceries at a time. Even though her husband died when he was 46, she wanted to be buried next to him in a grave that Mama Chin bought for him and herself in a Chinese cemetery in Colma when her husband died—she later had the grave moved to a more desirable location in the cemetery, with better feng shui. (San Franciscans when they died and were buried were almost all buried in the city limits of Colma. The city of San Francisco had made it illegal for anyone to be buried in San Francisco, so a town south of San Francisco, Colma, was chosen as the burial place for San Franciscans.)

Mama Chin spent the last year of her life in a Chinese nursing home and skilled nursing facility. During the final months of her life, she was severely drugged. In one cognizant moment she said, “You call this living?”

Mama Chin died, and Bonnie started a tradition of writing eulogies, first for Bonnie’s mother and next for Roy, her brother. Bonnie’s memorial service eulogies each followed a

similar pattern, telling how the person who died had an influence on each of their family members, and then telling a funny or unusual story about the person who died. Bonnie also wrote eulogies for the scattering of ashes. Since I did not record Mama Chin's eulogy, let me tell you about Roy and one of Roy's eulogies.

Roy was Bonnie's brother who was the first Asian fireman in Oakland. He had an adoring daughter, Christine. When Bonnie learned that Roy was dying from colon cancer, she called him on the phone. Roy told her not to feel sorry for him, as he had done everything he wanted in life, including being a fireman and having a wonderful daughter. (This was in contradiction to Mama Chin who felt she did not have a fulfilling life because she did not have a Chinese grandson who could carry on her name.)

Although Bonnie wrote the eulogies for her family members who died, she could not present them as she would start to cry. Instead I presented all of her eulogies. Bonnie was a far better and more flowery writer than me. Bonnie wrote a eulogy for Roy's memorial service and another one for the scattering of his ashes. The eulogy for the scattering of Roy's ashes was the following, with family and friends taking a boat from Sausalito to scatter his ashes outside the San Francisco Bay:

"Roy believed life was a circle that comes in cycles: with age, awakenings, interactions and awareness; with people and the environment; and with the ebb and flow of inner emotions, intellectual thoughts, and unique experiences. See it, do it, feel it, enjoy it, or curse it! However short or long a life may be, it inevitably comes to an end. Dust to dust. One is but a miniscule part of the cosmos, of the wide open terrestrial universe.

Today, all of us who love Roy will witness not only the spreading of his ashes, but we can also take to heart, the spirit of his being. Roy's goodwill, fair-mindedness, independent can-do-it-myself efforts, and deep devotion to those people and experiences he loved, will linger on. So from today we can imagine how free his body and spirit may travel among the deepest of waters, the thickest of forests, and the highest of clouds. Roy, have a fantastic journey!"

8

A Different List

Because Bonnie began to realize that it was unlikely she would be able to visit 100 countries in her lifetime—she had only reached slightly over two-thirds of her goal—she set out on a less challenging goal: to visit 50 states. As a result, she started a different list in addition to her list of countries, a list of states she had visited.

Bonnie scheduled a round-trip airline flight for her and me on Southwest Airlines between Oakland and Burbank. I couldn't figure out why because, in the past, we always drove down to Los Angeles so we had transportation to see all the sights. Unbeknownst to me, Southwest Airlines had just started this route between Oakland and Burbank and had a promotion where if you bought the Oakland-Burbank round-trip flight, they would give you round-trip tickets to any other airport that Southwest went to in the United States. As a result of our Oakland/Burbank air flight, we got two round-trip tickets to Chicago Midway—this was, at the time, Southwest Airline's furthest away airport from us.

At Burbank airport we rented a car, going to Long Beach among other places in the LA area. In Long Beach was the Queen Mary and the Spruce Goose. The Queen Mary was a super luxury transatlantic steam ship converted into a hotel and was permanently

anchored in Long Beach Harbor. The Spruce Goose, then located next to the Queen Mary, was a huge wooden plane built and flown once by the eccentric millionaire Howard Hughes, which Hughes called the “Flying Boat”—the Spruce Goose has since been moved to a museum in Oregon.

We took our airline trip to Chicago a while later. At Chicago Midway we rented a car for a month with unlimited mileage. We then did an environmentally incorrect thing: We drove the car 10,000 miles within a month.

We arranged our whole trip by looking through AAA (American Automobile Association) tour guides. We saw the city of Chicago and tried true Chicago deep dish pizza at the famous Uno restaurant—the crust tasted a lot like (sweet) pie crust to me. Although Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History had the stuff of every boy’s dreams—a complete skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus Rex dinosaur and a World War II German U-boat (submarine)—Bonnie enjoyed the museum as much as me, in particular the dinosaur and American Indian finery.

On this auto trip, we traveled to every place Abraham Lincoln worked and lived except for Washington D.C.: Lincoln’s birthplace in Hodgenville, Kentucky; Lincoln’s boyhood home in Gentryville, Indiana; and Lincoln’s home and work places in New Salem and nearby Springfield, Illinois.

We saw some of buildings that were architected by Frank Lloyd Wright, including his home in Oak Park, Illinois; Taliesin, the home of the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture in Spring Green, Wisconsin; and The Dana-Thomas House in Springfield,

Illinois, said to be one of the best-preserved of his “Prairie period” dwellings. The latter building was one of the few non-rundown buildings in an area of dilapidated, otherwise beautiful, mansions in Springfield, Illinois, with the whole city of Springfield being rather run-down with the exceptions of the state capital and Abraham Lincoln’s former law office that he shared with his partner, William Herndon that were both well-kept and extremely worth-while places to visit.

We saw the true Indianapolis—it was filled with police cars with their lights on all over the city—I previously thought of Indianapolis as a modern rich white collar city, mainly because of well-respected Indianapolis Colts football team and their modern stadium. We did find Indianapolis’ one and only Ethiopian restaurant—maybe the Midwest’s one and only such restaurant.

We traveled to Kentucky and saw the first Colonel Sanders restaurant. We thought that the Colonel’s chicken was much better in the Bay Area.

We went to Andrew Jackson’s magnificent mansion near Nashville, Tennessee, the Hermitage. We saw Andrew Jackson’s dress uniform on a headless mannequin; by earlier 1800’s standards he was very tall and by current standards he was extremely thin. Behind the mansion were the slaves’ quarters.

One sign at the Hermitage tells a short story about Alfred Jackson, one of Andrew Jackson’s slaves. Alfred was talking to a white, Roeliff Brinkerhoff, “You white folks have easy times, don’t you?” to which Brinkerhoff replied that Alfred had a pleasant master and

a pleasant home with wife and children and “freedom had its burdens as well as slavery”. Alfred responded, “How would you like to be a slave?”

In Tennessee, we discovered the Cracker Barrel restaurant for the first time, and we visited Graceland, Elvis’ home where Bonnie fell down a few stairs without being injured and was given a couple of Elvis’ albums to make up for the fall (and avoid any lawsuits)—Bonnie should have asked for more! We went through Arkansas where there seemed to be road kill everywhere on the roads.

We arrived in St. Louis early on a Sunday morning. It was a beautiful blue sky day but a minor disaster of a day for Bonnie and me. After touring St. Louis, we took a boat ride up the Mississippi River past Busch Stadium, near the St. Louis Gateway Arch, with our trip ending at the arch. When we got off, we were planning to take the Arch elevator to the top of the arch, but we also wanted to see the Budweiser Brewery, hoping to return to the Arch to get a view from the top of the Arch at sunset. The Budweiser Brewery was closed as it was Sunday. We then returned to the Gateway Arch at 5 p.m.—the elevator to the top had just closed.

Afterwards, I saw a long line at a store, so I stopped. They were serving frozen custard, which I never had before. Because of the strange name I purchased a type of frozen custard they called a “Concrete”, called that because if you stick a spoon in it it is not supposed to fall out if you turn it upside down. And I shared it with Bonnie.

We compared pork rib barbeques in Ashville, North Carolina; Nashville and Memphis, Tennessee; and St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri. In Kansas City we had Kansas City-

style barbecue wrapped in newspaper. Ashville was Bonnie's favorite barbeque, while mine was Memphis. In the South we discovered fast food alligator—it indeed tasted like the proverbial chicken.

To Bonnie and me, food is an important part of the enjoyment of life. In fact, Bonnie once told me, “The worst part of dying is you don't get to eat any more”. We especially like to try foods we have not tried before (not to say we are unaware of the need to have a balanced diet and to avoid possibly tainted food).

We certainly didn't learn this love of different types of food from our mothers. Mama Chin—and also Minnie—did not often eat food other than Cantonese food and otherwise would not eat anything other than bland food. And my mother once told me that one should “eat to live”, not “live to eat”—I always thought she got that backwards. Food is an important part of the enjoyment of life.

Before we went on our 10,000 mile car trip, I jokingly told my colleagues at work that we were going to tornado alley during tornado season (May). We went through Oklahoma including Oklahoma City—a week later part of Oklahoma City was leveled by a tornado. We then received tornado warnings almost everywhere we went in Kansas and Nebraska.

In Nebraska, we went to the University of Nebraska State Museum, the home of “Archie”, the largest woolly mammoth skeleton in the United States, and we went to the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer (with buggies, early automobiles, farm equipment, etc.) which showed what life was like in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

century. The Stuhr Museum also has the house where the actor Henry Fonda was born (moved from Grand Island, Nebraska), which was furnished in the style of those times.

Although my mother was born in Canada, she was of German ancestry, and the first language she learned was German. One thing I loved of hers that I associated with her German ancestry was her tart rhubarb pie. We thus visited the German American communities, the Amana colonies in Iowa and several Amish locations, not only to learn about Americans of German descent, but also to try to find good rhubarb pie.

We went to the Black Hills in South Dakota. I saw Jewel and Wind Caves while Bonnie took a day off in a motel. Bonnie and I both saw Mt. Rushmore.

A lesser known monument to Mt. Rushmore was near-by, the Crazy Horse Memorial. Like Mt. Rushmore, the memorial is a rock carving on a mountain. A sculpture in a building below the monument shows the final intended results of the rock carving: Crazy Horse on his horse. The sculptor, Korczak Ziolkowski, knew that the Crazy Horse rock carving on the mountain could not be completed in his lifetime, so he relied upon his family and future generations of his family to complete it. The face of Crazy Horse had been completed. The face itself was said to be as large as the entire sculpture on Mt. Rushmore, but only a very small part of the entire Crazy Horse intended statue. The family solicits donations to complete the project.

In Custer, a town nearby to Mt. Rushmore, we drove past a small restaurant with a sign saying they had rhubarb pie—no other type of pie was advertised. I asked the proprietor,

“Is your rhubarb pie sweet or tart?” as I liked very tart pie. He said, “My pie is not too sweet and not too tart. . . It’s just right!” I bought a whole pie, and (for me) he was right.

Of all the sights on the trip, Bonnie was most impressed with the Badlands National Park with its huge expanse of magnificent rock formations—butes, pinnacles and spires—combined with the largest area of protected grass lands in the United States, and bison, prairie dogs and mountain goats. To her, the Badlands were the “good lands”.

In Iowa, we went to the Amana colony and had a German dinner. In Minnesota, we feasted on Walleye fish and wild rice. In Wisconsin, for my sake, we saw the Green Bay Packers National Football League stadium, and we later feasted on Wisconsin cheeses.

We returned to Chicago and flew back from Chicago Midway to the Bay Area. The same woman who rented us a car checked us in at the car rental place, fortunately for us not looking at the odometer indicating that we had traveled 10,000 miles. We were glad that we had rented the car for a month with unlimited mileage.

Bonnie, Minnie and I later took another trip to knock off some additional states. We flew to Detroit, rented a car, and started a car trip of the northeastern states and the states of Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina and eastern Canada. Highlights of the trip were visiting many restaurants serving soft-shelled crab in season, seeing Boston (in my case, again), and seeing Niagara Falls.

Soft-shelled crabs are crabs that have shed their outer shells to grow and are most often eaten breaded and fried. The inner shell of the crab is soft making the crab taste slightly crunchy. Soft-shelled crabs, previously frozen, are found in many Chinese restaurants, but I never found them—a different species—to be as good as the East Coast crabs, most of which are blue crabs from the Chesapeake Bay, the Chesapeake Bay lying between the states of Maryland and Virginia. The season for East Coast soft-shelled blue crab is from May to July. We had soft-shelled blue crab on the East Coast from Virginia up to Connecticut.

Boston had significantly improved since I lived there: The Durgin Park Restaurant was no longer in a slum; Boston drivers no longer drove like maniacs; parks such as Boston Commons had lovely green grass instead of dirt; the city was no longer strewn with garbage on its streets; and the North End was an area with high-class Italian restaurants instead of being a knock off of a seedy city street in early 20th century Italy.

A new tourist market place enclosed Durgin Park; otherwise, it looked the same as before, with steep stairs, but also now with an elevator to it. People still sat at long tables and the primary food was still prime rib. I had always told Bonnie how nasty the Durgin Park waitresses were, but our waitress was sweet. Bonnie didn't believe my stories until a customer at the same table said, "I like my waitresses mean!" My favorite dish at Durkin Park was coffee Jell-O.

We visited two different sites that capture United States colonial and French Canadian history: Williamsburg in Virginia and Quebec City in Quebec, Canada on the Saint

Lawrence River. Both took existing very run-down historic buildings and renovated them, returning them to what they were like at the time of the American colonies.

From Quebec City we went to Montreal and then drove to Toronto, arriving there at 3 a.m. in the morning. Bonnie insisted that it was too late to start a stay at a motel and insisted we drive on to Niagara Falls.

Niagara Falls consists of two major sections, Horseshoe Falls on the Canadian side and American Falls on the United States side separated by Goat Island. The title of "Horseshoe" was an appropriate name for the curved falls on the Canadian side. Horseshoe Falls is the more magnificent of the two falls, but the United States side had a more impressive viewing point beneath the falls. The viewing point required that Bonnie, Minnie and I put on raincoats.

I had visited Niagara Falls previously. When I was there, the Canadian side had a magnificent hotel and a quaint village of high-class shops while the American side was a bit seedy. When Bonnie, Minnie and I visited, the American side was still seedy, and the Canadian side had become seedy. Canadian side high-class village stores that were there on my first trip had been replaced by seedy souvenir shops.

For the millennium, Bonnie arranged a millennium cruise, first spending Christmas in Washington, D.C. to see the White House at Christmas. Our plane landed in Baltimore, and we rented a car to go to Washington, D.C. Prior to the trip, Bonnie arranged tours of the State Department and the White House through our congressman George Miller. At the

entrance to the State Department is an area showing the flags of every country in the world; we spent many minutes to count the flags, and a security guard became suspicious of us and asked what we were doing and shooed us away (We had reached a count of 122 flags as I remember at that point—the Internet says there are 195 countries in the world). We saw Secretary of State Madeline Albright's office, and Bonnie mistakenly made an entry in Madeline Albright's official visitor's log.

The White House had Christmas decorations in the entrance room including a Christmas tree and gingerbread house. Bonnie and I were escorted up the President's private elevator to see the upper rooms of the White House, as Bonnie was unable to go up the stairs as the other visitors were required to do. (Bonnie and I recognized this small elevator in a recent photograph shown in a TV documentary of Obama's photographer; President Obama was shown in the elevator with the same elevator operator.)

Other highlights of our trip to Washington, D.C. were visits to the many museums of the Smithsonian, to the former Bank of the United States, and to the Holocaust Museum.

We then drove back to the Baltimore airport dropping off our rental car, taking a flight to Miami and picking up another car. We saw the very rich in Palm Beach and the very poor in West Palm Beach a few miles away: We went to a rich hotel in Palm Beach and in West Palm Beach to a Caribbean neighborhood with restaurants selling jerk chicken. We went to the Little Havana district of Miami to have Cuban food and Cuban coffee. We then went to the Miami port to our Carnival line cruise ship.

Our cruise was to Mexico; Costa Rica; the Panama Canal; Cartagena, Columbia; the Netherland Antilles; and Jamaica. And we celebrated the millennium at sea.

In Mexico we went to see a small Mayan pyramid. This was the first Mayan structure I had seen and the first Bonnie had seen since her accident. It did not bring back bad memories for her as she did not ever have any recollection of her fall. The tour bus had a very high passenger compartment and long narrow and steep entrance steps that made it extremely difficult for me to carry Bonnie up the steps. Another disabled woman who could hesitatingly walk up the steps on her own took even longer to get on the bus than we did.

In Costa Rica on the Pacific coast, we went to a rainforest boating slowly on a river. The highlight was seeing sloths with their very long legs hanging upside down from the trees, moving very slowly. We also went to a banana plantation and a historic old fort. One woman on the tour bus complained that she wanted to go shopping rather than see the fort.

The highlight of the trip was the Panama Canal. From the Atlantic Ocean we went through Miraflores Locks, Pedro Miguel Lock, and Gaillard Cut (a man-made valley filled with water that cuts through the continental divide) to Gatun Lake, and then made the return trip to the Atlantic Ocean. Locks are gated sections of a canal where the water level can be adjusted up or down to move a ship to a higher or lower water level. Connected with the locks are towing locomotives to pull ships within the locks. We were told that the width of many ships when built—including ours—was sized to just fit within inches of the sides of the Panama Canal locks.

After leaving the Panama Canal, we went on a small boat from our cruise ship to a small coral island in the San Blas Archipelago on the Atlantic Ocean side of Panama. On the island was a Kuna Indian village jam-packed with small one-story houses made of branches, twigs and mats. The women, some with gold rings in their noses, were selling intricately sewn bright red tapestries called molas, the larger ones of which they used as clothing and head coverings.

Cartagena in Columbia was a high-rise, modern city with a colonial walled city and a massive fortress built in the 17th century. It was also an easy way for Bonnie to say she saw Columbia, which we missed because of the fear of theft in Columbia that my father's lady friend Madge earlier had instilled in us by telling us that thieves in Columbia, in particular in the capital city of Bogata, were known to yank jewelry right off women's fingers or ears. Bonnie and I were disappointed that the cruise's only sightseeing tour spent most of its time in a tourist market selling trinkets rather than in the city seeing ordinary people or seeing the colonial city and fort—this is a downside to cruise traveling, the limited number of tours cruise ships provide.

On the trip back to Miami, after stopping at the Netherland Antilles and Jamaica, half the ship got the flu including Bonnie. I could not understand this, as Bonnie did get a flu shot, but fortunately she also convinced me to get one at the same time—the first time I had a flu shot in years. I did not get the flu.

Upon returning to Miami, we rented a car and toured southern Florida for a while until Bonnie insisted she needed to take a break and recover from the flu. We were at Key West, and I stopped to buy some conch, a shellfish that I once had in a Chinese restaurant and

simply hated as it was dreadful tasting and chewy as leather. But fresh conch was wonderfully tasty and not chewy.

The motel we stayed at was in Homestead, the home of the Homestead-Miami Speedway. The motel had a moderate rate that went up to an atrocious rate when there were car races. I took a look the race track and its overall size was huge, seating 65,000.

Bonnie clearly had the flu and was also bleeding because she had cleaned herself too vigorously in a particular spot. At the motel while I was bringing in the luggage, Bonnie fell from her wheelchair; I picked her up. I stayed at the motel with her for a day until she insisted I see the Miami area by myself. I went to Biscayne National Park near Homestead and saw a manatee (a large sea mammal with front flippers and a flattened tail) swim past me in a canal. I went to the Everglades and went on a walkway surrounded by the swamp.

I found the location of the start of a swamp boat ride through the Everglades that I hoped Bonnie and I could take when she got better; on the way there, I found a produce market with exotic fruit milkshakes including jackfruit, passion fruit, papaya and mango—trying a number of different types, my favorite was a less exotic key lime milkshake. A “swamp boat” is also called an “airboat” or a “fanboat” is consists of a flat-bottomed boat with a large airplane like propeller that pushes it along, with the boat being able to work in shallow water areas like the Everglades swamps.

Seemingly somewhat recovered—but not recovered enough to take the swamp boat ride—Bonnie flew with me back to Baltimore, and we rented a car to see West Virginia, a state we had missed during our previous trips, and to thereafter return to Baltimore to take

a flight home, using the second part of our round-trip tickets between Oakland and Baltimore. As we drove toward West Virginia, in Virginia Bonnie became increasingly sick—she said she was okay, but when she not only refused to eat honey-baked Virginia ham, but also soup I got for her (her favorite food), I knew she was sick. I tried to convince her to stop at emergency departments of hospitals we passed in Virginia, but she refused.

In Charleston, West Virginia, we took a couple of days off in a motel for Bonnie to physically recover. Getting behind schedule, we quickly drove back to Baltimore for our flight home.

Our plane trip had a change of planes in Detroit. Because Bonnie looked so sick, we were fortunately thrown off the plane and sent to a nearby hospital, where we stayed for 2 weeks. Our luggage went back to the Bay Area without us.

The doctors in Detroit discovered that Bonnie had a case of double pneumonia. The hospital allowed me to stay in vacant patient rooms free of charge. We did not have my luggage and thus I did not have any clothes for cold weather—fortunately, at first it was not that cold.

Every day I bought a new clothes item: gloves, a ski hat, a warmer jacket. Bonnie's Asian Indian doctor gave me a University of Michigan sweat shirt. I snuck in White Castle hamburgers and Taco Bell tacos to Bonnie, but she was too sick to eat them. I went back to the airport every now and then to work on getting back our luggage—The hospital was in walking distance to the airport.

The Detroit Auto Show was on, but I did not have the ambition to take a bus downtown until a week later. All of a sudden there was a warning on TV that people should stay inside as it was going to become bitterly cold. Not having the proper clothing, I dared not go to the show.

For me Detroit was a relaxing vacation, as I had my computer to amuse me (that I also had on board ship). Bonnie was bored by the TV programs—they had PBS, educational TV, but only had British comedies and cooking shows, not the political and scientific ones!

They finally found our luggage, Bonnie recovered, and we continued our flight home. Upon returning home, Bonnie found out about a March 2000 cruise on the Pacific Princess of the West Africa coast. The cruise, we thought, was expensive, but very reasonable for the number of ports (the Cape Verde Islands; Dakar, Senegal; Tema, Ghana; and Lome, Togo), more than other West African cruise we had seen. We wish we had gone on it instead of the millennium cruise. The next year the price of the same cruise was doubled.

I eventually quit my job at Kaiser, retiring. Starting a year before my retirement I was having bouts of anxiety. At night when I put my head on the pillow, I would immediately pounce up fearfully. I went to a sofa chair to sit until I was so tired that I could go back to bed and sleep. As a result, I had to come into work late—fortunately I had flexible hours and could come in later. My anxiety attacks also extended to dentist visits; whereas dentist visits over all my previous years were not looked forward to by me, they were all tolerable, but now I would tell the dentist of my extreme fear and would leave the office before the

procedure started. I do not know whether these anxiety attacks were due to my job situation or my life as a caregiver for Bonnie, or were just something that at random occurred—probably the latter.

Before I did retire, as a result of my Internet book, *Automation of the Patient Medical Record: Steps Toward a Universal Patient Record*, I was invited to give a talk in Shanghai, China. I went there alone with Bonnie staying home. I had visited Shanghai 20 years earlier, and coming back to Shanghai, I found dramatic differences: There were now many very tall high rise buildings on the other side of the Huangpu River from the Bund, and there were neon lights all over Shanghai. When I told a person in the group that the eight story Big Ben Customs House building in the Bund that we passed was the tallest building in Shanghai when I was last here, he responded, “When were you here—in 1900?”

The American leader of our group took us on a shopping trip. He gave us a tour, then let us wander and told us to all meet later at the Shanghai Starbucks. Having brought a GPS (which surprisingly worked!), I felt free to wander. There were modern buildings all over the place, but upon going into alleys that led behind the new buildings, I once again found the multi-family dwellings that I had seen on my earlier trip to Shanghai. Beyond the modern buildings was a small grocery store where I bought 10 folding scissors that Bonnie requested I buy for her—Bonnie loves the folding sisters made in China that a woman can put in her purse.

Later I went shopping in the more expensive shopping area—an area lit up with Las Vegas style neon lights on most nights—buying fresh water black pearls that Bonnie

requested I buy. The neon lights were shut off but shut off when it became too smoggy so the polluting coal power plants could be shut down.

As presenters at the conference, we were given accommodations and a breakfast in the morning including coffee. The coffee was fantastically good. However, when I ordered coffee at lunch, it cost more than the price of the lunch entree.

As presenters, we were also given a going away dinner. At the dinner we had some exotic items, including crickets and scorpions--they were very crunchy and very good.

On some days Bonnie needed to spend the day in bed, in which case we lived an unusual life as Bonnie still wanted to do the cooking. On a table beside our bed she had a heater and burner. At the foot of the bed we had a portable oven and behind it a TV set with a video tape and later DVD player to watch movies I got from the county library, sometimes 10 a week when she had to stay in bed. In the next room was a microwave. The kitchen and the refrigerator were at the other end of the house. Bonnie cooked or directed the cooking of all our meals from bed. She would tell me what food to get from the kitchen refrigerator and what spices to get, almost always remembering what food she had me shop for. She would fix the food and either use her burner to cook it or tell me how long to microwave an item or what temperature to use to cook an item in the oven.

Bonnie would mix and match food. One time I had corned beef and cabbage with Ethiopian injera. One time I told her, "I'm not sure what this is, but it tastes pretty good."

She refused to tell me what was in it, but my comfort was either I had bought the food in a grocery store myself, or it came from a restaurant, so I knew it wasn't dog food.

Bonnie encouraged me to grow a beard—she thought it made me look distinguished and professorial. Bonnie was the one who cut my hair, moustache and beard, using scissors.

The most important thing disabled people lose is the feeling of independence: that they can control their own lives. A wise caregiver can help restore some of this feeling of independence. One way I gave Bonnie control was to always allow her to identify what food and other items to buy. Bonnie loved shopping but after a while had a hard time doing so, so she had me do the shopping, but I always based it upon her shopping list. I hope she got some vicarious pleasure from this.

At first I hated shopping. Going to some stores like Walgreens was particularly hard as all the specials were scattered randomly throughout the store, and I could never find a store clerk to tell me where everything was. After I learned the layout of stores (as men hate to ask for directions in stores also), shopping wasn't so bad. Besides, shopping wasn't so bad compared to the other care activities my wife wanted me to do.

In early summer 2003, just after I retired, Bonnie scheduled a trip to Alaska. We drove from the Bay Area to Vancouver, B.C. where we got on a cruise ship that went to Alaska, had a long period on our own in Alaska (traveling by bus, train and airline), and then returned on the cruise ship back to B. C. We wanted to take Minnie, but her brother Phil insisted that

she was too sick to travel, having developed type II diabetes, losing her eyesight and having a hard time walking.

On the way to Vancouver, Bonnie stayed in a motel in Olympia, Washington, while I went back to Mount Rainier National Park to hike up the Carbon Glacier, reliving my previous life experience, hiking up the black glacier as I had when I lived in Seattle. On the earlier trip, our party went a considerable distance above the terminus of the glacier. On this trip, hiking alone, I just made it to the foot of the glacier, but the hike seemed to me to be 5 times as long as the earlier one—I was too exhausted to walk by the glacier and again hear if the glacier was still creaking like before. Upon my return from the hike, Bonnie and I toured Seattle, including Pike Place Market, a large public market overlooking Elliot Bay in Seattle that is a popular tourist attraction, containing fishmongers, coffeehouses, restaurants, and unusual family-owned shops.

On our cruise from Vancouver, we went up the British Columbia coast to what is called the “Inland Passage” in Alaska. The Inland Passage is a coastal area of fjords, channels and other waterways on the southeast coast of Alaska which is part of a narrow strip of land bordered by Canada. On the upper part of the strip is Glacier Bay. Sailing the Inland Passage, we visited Ketchikan, Skagway and Glacier Bay. In Ketchikan, I pushed Bonnie along the road 2 miles to the Saxman Village (of the Saxman Indians) where there was a large collection of totem poles with carvers carving new ones—they hand craft totem poles for anyone in the world wanting one, designing according to the buyer’s specifications.

At Skagway we took the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway, a narrow gauge railroad with a steam locomotive linking the port of Skagway with Whitehorse in the Canadian

Yukon. It was a product of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897. Prospectors used to follow an extremely steep trail up a mountain from Skagway over a pass to Whitehorse on foot, having to traverse the trail many times to bring in the necessary supplies for gold prospecting. The railway made it far easier to get to the gold fields, although by the time the railroad was finished, the gold was depleted.

Back on our cruise ship, we traveled north. The captain woke us up early in the morning when we were in Glacier Bay to view the Margerie Glacier.

We then proceeded out of the Inland Passage through the Gulf of Alaska to the city of Seward. Along the way, I looked at a TV set onboard and noticed that I could not read the text on the TV screen with my left eye. This to me was very scary!

From Seward we took a bus to Anchorage. The road, as in much of Alaska had snow-capped mountains on each side, although it was summer. On the way, we saw many eagles and a mountain goat close up.

In Anchorage at 11 p.m. it was still light out. The McDonald's drive-through was open but the main store was closed. Not having a car we went up to the drive-in window for our dinner, and fortunately they served us.

The next day, I quickly scheduled an appointment with an ophthalmologist to find out why I could no longer read with my left eye. He told me I had macular degeneration in my left eye, but could do nothing, so he (properly) recommended to do no treatment.

We then spent a day at the Portage Glacier on the Kenai Peninsula. We boarded a boat on one end of Portage Lake boating to the other end where the Portage Glacier was located. From the boat, we saw the glacier calving which was consistent with someone saying that the glacier is rapidly retreating. Some parts of the glacier had a stunning majestic blue color.

In Anchorage, we attended a colorful slide show on the Aurora Borealis, also called the “Northern Lights”. Auroras are streaks or flares of light across the night sky, sometimes of many colors, caused by the magnetic fields of the earth and energized particles from the sun. Different gases in the atmosphere result in different colors.

In an Anchorage museum, I saw native Inuit paintings—and it’s the Inuits, not the Eskimos. In one of them was a large number of Inuit people. I saw one figure of a young woman looking out a door who looked exactly like Bonnie.

We had reindeer for dinner. We were told that there is no difference in species between caribou and reindeer. The word “caribou” is used when the species is found in the wild.

From Anchorage we flew to Fairbanks. We were met by a couple of women who owned a hotel where we stayed overnight. The next morning we took a train to Denali National Park, the site of Mt. McKinley, the highest mountain in North America.

In Denali, we went on a wild game tour via bus. It was very disappointing, as there was a vast expanse of land on each side of the bus, and the animals we saw, mostly bears, were

very far away. Bonnie and I thought that the Seward to Anchorage highway was a much better place to see wildlife up close.

From Denali we took a magnificent train back to Anchorage. Learning that Bonnie was disabled, the conductor told us that disabled people could stay in the dining car (while others could only be there during meal time). He had the train stopped so Bonnie could be moved to the dining car. The sunlight and openness of the dining car, the views of rivers and mountains, especially Mt. McKinley, created an atmosphere of pleasure and contentment that we won't ever forget.

The Arctic Circle is a latitude above which people experience 24 hours of sunshine during the total day in summertime (called the "midnight sun") and experience 24 hours of total darkness in the wintertime (called the "polar night"). Because it was a time of year where the Arctic Circle experienced sunlight during the whole day, we flew in a small plane from Anchorage to Kotzebue in the Arctic Circle to experience the full day of sunlight. As we landed, we noticed the terrain had a strangeness, looking more like we were on the moon than on the earth as it was so barren.

We arrived at Kotzebue at 11 p.m. and were escorted to a dining hall in a hotel. Of course the meal was salmon (which I was told that natives refused to order because salmon was so plentiful, but that all tourists loved because they never tasted salmon so fresh). As we sat in the dining room eating, we could look out to Kotzebue Sound and mystically view icebergs floating by. Bonnie then registered us into the hotel while I argued with a native about whether Inuits could comfortably live in places where there wasn't cold weather. Having experienced being very cold at first going back to the Bay Area from hot Saudi

Arabia, I thought that anyone's body could adjust to different weather, while the Inuit fellow argued the other side.

Kotzebue that day was in the middle of a super heat wave—it was in the 60's. (During our entire Alaska trip, we had sun and little rain even within the Inland Passage—I was told that this was extremely unusual.)

Bonnie and I walked outside at midnight. It looked closer to noon. One fellow was using a loud sander to sand his boat—I didn't know if doing so was impolite or not, doing so at midnight. We learned that all the houses, because of the permafrost, were on stilts with the stilts refrigerated so they didn't sink.

Our hotel room had thick opaque curtains to pull across the windows. These considerably darkened the room, and we had no problem sleeping.

The next day we went to a demonstration of native arts and crafts. A number of people including me held a blanket that we rhythmically moved up and down, allowing the person on the blanket to go up into the air.

We then flew in another small plane to Nome. Nome, unlike Kotzebue, was not in the Arctic Circle, but was close to it. Nome is known for two things, gold and being the end point of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. At the end of the race in downtown Nome is the "burled arch" with the phrase "END OF IDITAROD DOG RACE" carved on it.

The Iditarod dates from the winter of 1925 when Nome was hit by a diphtheria epidemic, and diphtheria serum was transported by train from Anchorage to Nenana, and

from there via dog sled to Nome. The Iditarod Dog Race is 1150 miles long from Anchorage to Nome, recreating this event.

Bonnie and I took a bus tour of Nome. The bus driver and I carried Bonnie in her wheelchair to a beach area where we saw a dog sled, with the dogs pulling the sled at high speed across the sand. Bonnie took my picture as a musher. Bonnie and I went gold panning—the tour guide criticized my technique—Bonnie found flakes of gold while I found none.

We next went to a beach where gold sluicing was being done. The tour guide told Bonnie and me that we didn't really need to take the wheelchair with us. This was a big mistake. The tour guide and I together lifted Bonnie hand in hand under her and put her on the sand. After the demonstration, the tour guide and I again lifted Bonnie. We were struggling and barely made it to a bus. As we were lifting Bonnie on the bus, the tour guide said, "This is not our bus!" We struggled to take Bonnie to our bus. Later on the tour, I requested that we stop so I could take a picture—I told the passengers, "Don't worry, I'm not taking my wife Bonnie". The people laughed.

(When I was a young boy in the 1950's, I hated reading books, but I loved reading the backs of cereal boxes while I ate cold cereal in the morning before going to school. I was particularly interested in the special offers on the cereal boxes where you would send in a box top to receive, what I considered to be then, a valuable gift. I sent in for a Captain Midnight secret decoder ring and a Sergeant Preston of the Yukon deed for one square inch of Alaskan soil that I was convinced surely contained gold, as the soil, I thought at the time, **was** from Alaska. I was particularly happy, when a short time later after receiving the

deed, I learned from the back of another cereal box that I could send in the deed together with 50 cents to actually get the one square inch of Alaska land—I received the soil in a small canvas type bag. Being more cynical as I grew older, I began to believe that the soil, then lost some place in my father’s house, would not have contained gold, but as I looked at the Nome beach on which Bonnie and I sat with gold sluicing occurring, I thought to myself, “If this is the place where they picked up that one square inch of Alaska land, perhaps it did indeed contain a few specks of gold.” I also wished I had saved that Captain Midnight secret decoder ring so I could have brought it to the Oakland Communist group where they were decoding secret messages.)

After Nome, we flew back to Anchorage, took the highway back to Seward to our cruise ship and sailed back to Vancouver.

(During the writing of this book, I learned that the hospital in Kotzebue had to be moved because of the melting of the underlying permafrost. As a result of global warming, permafrost in many areas of Alaska is melting, making it impossible to have buildings in these areas.)

We picked up our car at the ship terminal in Vancouver and stayed in Vancouver for a day. We then took a ferry to Victoria. In these two places we visited my cousins, and my Aunt Mary and Uncle George.

Uncle George showed me color slides of Hanoi, North Vietnam. In 1954 he had been a member of what was named the “International Control Commission” (ICC) as one of the

representatives of Canada. In being part of the ICC, Uncle George was an early player in a very tragic part of history—the long, painful American history in Vietnam: The French fought and lost the French Indochina War that started after World War II in their attempt to recolonize Vietnam; after the French lost the war, Vietnam was temporarily split up into two countries to be reunited after elections. The ICC was formed to oversee the election, an election between Ho Chi Minh, the popular North Vietnamese leader, and a candidate from the south of Vietnam. When the Americans determined that Ho Chi Minh would easily win, they stopped the election and began American's long involvement in Vietnam. (Several Canadian members of the ICC were assumed to be spies and were murdered by the North Vietnamese; obviously Uncle George escaped this fate.)

I had many other discussions with George but one particularly spurred my interest, my uncle telling me how much he disliked the large plump California strawberries that I so loved and how they weren't as good as British Columbian strawberries.

After the visit, Bonnie suggested that we take the long way home, to travel through Glacier National Park and then journey way down to Bryce Canyon National Park that she remembered from her trip with her sisters and mother a long time ago. I had not seen either of these parks. We started off our trip driving along the Canadian border with the United States, driving through British Columbia and then Alberta. We stopped at a produce stand selling strawberries—B.C. strawberries tasted like strawberry jam to me. I'll take California strawberries any day!

We spent the night at a motel in Alberta where the woman proprietor had the same accent as the Frances McDormand character in the movie *Fargo*. Bonnie fell from her

wheelchair onto the floor in our motel room. For the first time I could not lift her off the floor alone and had to ask the help of a muscular stranger I saw outside.

We crossed the border at Watertown Lakes National Park in Canada to go to the adjoining Glacier National Park in Montana. Bonnie especially wanted to revisit the Many Glacier Hotel that she, her mother and her sisters had stayed at many years earlier. The sisters rented a boat there to go to the middle of Swiftcurrent Lake, with Minnie and Lonnie being scared back to shore by the bumpy waves.

On the road to Many Glacier Hotel we saw one of Glacier National Park's historic Red Buses. They were built by the White Motor Company between 1936 and 1939. These buses were also there when Bonnie, her sisters and mother visited.

The Many Glacier Hotel could be reached from one entrance to the park. The other more southern entrance—the Saint Mary entrance—was the start of a very much longer road that went by fantastically beautiful mountains and lakes. In a few weeks after we visited, there was a fire near the North Fork River, an area very close to the Saint Mary entrance road.

After Glacier Nation Park, we drove down to Yellowstone National Park. Our first sights were Inspiration Point and Artist's Point overlooking the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, a magnificent canyon with waterfalls. We saw the upper and lower falls within the canyon.

We drove to Yellowstone Lake and rented a cabin to stay in overnight. Upon trying to sleep (like earlier at home), I had a panic attack and could not sleep all night, pacing back

and forth. I blamed this on the altitude of 8000 feet rather than on my previous anxiety attacks returning.

(Recently I read that under Yellowstone National Park, including Yellowstone Lake, is a huge hotspot—containing hot, molten mantle rock underground, extremely near the surface covering a 25- by 37- mile area that has caused the land to rise in recent years. The rising of the land is supposedly a precursor to an explosion. If it exploded, it would result in a super volcano, a thousand times more powerful than Mount St. Helen's 1980 eruption.)

After our night in the cabin at Yellowstone Lake, we drove to the Old Faithful Geysers area seeing Old Faithful Lodge and all the geysers there. The area is called Upper Geysers Basin and includes paint pots, hot springs and a dozen geysers. The most famous geyser is, of course, Old Faithful, which erupts on average every 75 minutes, reaching a height of 170 feet; there is a sign at the lodge saying when it will next erupt. Nearby is Giantess Geyser that erupts for four hours twice a year. Riverside Geyser sends an arching spray of water over Firehole River. The tallest Geyser though is in Norris Geysers Basin: Steamboat Geyser that reaches a height of 380 feet. Three areas of the world have most of the world's geysers: Yellowstone, New Zealand, and Iceland—I haven't been to Iceland, but I can tell you that the geysers in Rotorua, New Zealand do not compare to those in Yellowstone.

From Yellowstone National Park we drove through the Grand Tetons National Park—a magnificent park itself with a lake and high mountains rising from a flat plain. From there we drove to Jackson, Wyoming (a resort type city like Aspen, Colorado), and from Jackson we drove to the Terry Bison Ranch near Cheyenne, Wyoming that was on the Colorado

border. At the Senator's restaurant at the ranch Bonnie and I shared barbecued bison ribs and bison rib-eye steak, both tender and delicious.

We visited Denver and then to my old haunt, Colorado Springs. Colorado Springs had grown tremendously since I lived there. Its population had more than doubled, and it was impossible for me to identify the locations of many of the places I used to know. Pike's Peak still dominated the place, but even the Broadmoor Hotel had changed, once being isolated out of town, now surrounded by a large community of houses.

Shortly after leaving Colorado Springs—because it was the end of June—I remembered the wonderful 4th of July festivities in Colorado Springs when I lived there many years before. The concerts then were held by a lake a block away from where I used to work. The Colorado Springs Symphony presented a concert always ending with Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* with cannon artillery from Fort Carson being fired off on the other side of the lake. This piece was followed by fireworks and group dancing. The event was spectacular but still with a small town atmosphere. I wondered, with Colorado Springs' vastly increased population, if 4th of July concerts were still held at the lake, and, if so, if the concerts could possibly be as wonderful.

We drove past many 14,000 feet or higher mountains to Aspen, Colorado. Just before Aspen was Independence Pass at over 12,000 feet that had a fantastic view of the zigzag road below. On the north side of Independence Pass was a large tundra pool where we saw a mother duck and 5 ducklings, which swam toward the snow-covered mountains in the background to make a fantastically beautiful picture. Aspen, like Colorado Springs, had also

grown since my last visit and had as a result lost much of its previous charm. (Aspen used to be a place for ski bums; now it was a place with multi-million dollar houses.)

From Colorado we drove through Utah, trying to hit every national park we could, but we were especially interested in Bryce Canyon National Park that Bonnie and Lonnie had seen 30 years earlier, and I had not seen. Bonnie had told me many times that Bryce was her favorite national park. Bryce had a landscape of eroded thin limestone pinnacles with alternating bands of orange, red, gray and white called “hoodoos”.

It was extremely hot outside—in the high 90’s. The car was parked near a campground. For some reason—probably the upcoming 4th of July holiday—there was a parade in the park. Bonnie watched the parade in our air-conditioned, shaded car, while I took a long hike to see the hoodoos up close. When I got back, I took Bonnie out to see an overview the pinnacles. Unfortunately, I forgot to take water with me during my hike and was extremely hot and dehydrated when I got back. We stopped at a store where I bought juice bars. I ate juice bar after juice bar to get rehydrated and cool off.

We drove to the south rim of the Grand Canyon in central Arizona. The Grand Canyon, a chasm of about 5,000 feet deep, 277 miles long, and up to 18 miles across, is one of the most magnificent sights in the world. At the bottom of the canyon is the Colorado River. The only negative thing to say is that, no matter which direction you look, it is all equally magnificent, so it is hard to pick out one view that is the most distinctive one.

On Bonnie and Lonnie’s previous trip to the Grand Canyon, they went to the other rim of the Grand Canyon, the north rim. Bonnie sat with her legs hanging down the cliff, not

thinking anything of it. A woman above yelled, horrified, "Look at that woman below, she's sitting on the cliff!"

(Since we came back from our trip, Bonnie learned that the Hualapai Indians put up a massive glass-bottomed skywalk extending 70 feet over the rim of the Grand Canyon, which she assumed was wheelchair accessible. Bonnie was considering returning to the Grand Canyon to see this view, but was turned off by the restriction that you could only spend 15 minutes on the skywalk. I thought of the skywalk as a desecration of a National Park, although it was just outside the park boundary on an Indian reservation.)

From the Grand Canyon, we drove through Arizona and on July 4th landed in Las Vegas. I went to a casino where they serve a foot-long one-half pound hot dog for 99 cents and bought one for each of us. Having seen the previous year's fireworks in Las Vegas on TV, Bonnie and I were very disappointed in the fireworks shows we saw. We spent the remainder of the night sleeping in our car in a casino parking lot.

From Las Vegas we drove the remaining distance to our home in one long day.

On another shorter trip through the western states, we were in southern Oregon, returning home to the Bay Area. Although Bonnie and I have each individually faced death-threatening experiences (including her falling down a Mayan pyramid and me being involved in a roll over car crash and a motorbike accident), we did experience one such experience together. We were on a non-divided highway with two lanes in each direction. I was in the far right hand lane going about 55 mph, and a pick-up truck came over the hill going about 70 mph driving in the wrong direction on the lane next to us, coming over the

hill so fast that all I could do was make sure I drove straight ahead in my line so as to not turn any part of my car into the truck. The pick-up truck's mirror hit our car's mirror and broke it, shattering our left hand window into a thousand pieces, making a sound like a loud gun shot. In shock, I parked on the shoulder of the road, and an Oregon state employee in a tow truck came by. He told me that we were lucky, with the combined speed of over 120 mph, if the car had so much as nicked ours, I would have been dead. It is said that a cat has 9 lives. By such measurements, Bonnie and I have used up a combined 7 lives, and have one each left.

Bonnie wanted me to see some of the countries she had liked the best that I had not yet visited. She didn't want to go with me because she had a rule that she would not repeat a trip—she would rather save the money and use it later to go to a new place. Bonnie's favorite places included the Alhambra Palace in Spain; the historic sites in Morocco of Marrakesh and Fez; the country of Turkey; and her favorite of all, the country of India. Consequently, I went on two different tours—separated in time from each other—while Bonnie stayed at home, one to Turkey and another to Spain, Portugal and Morocco, visiting many of the same sites that Bonnie previously saw. India for me was for a future occasion.

While I am at home, Bonnie often cooks meals on a burner at bedside rather than the stove in the kitchen—on the two trips she had a pile of food, honey pots and other necessities. Being a private person, Bonnie didn't want help or any visitors, although Bonnie did have a telephone for emergencies. She also didn't answer any telephone calls from me while I was touring Turkey, so I feared she might be injured—I had a friend,

Kuruvilla visit to see if she was okay, but instead he called the police to enter the house. Bonnie was okay, but was mad at me when I got back home.

The two tours I took were vastly different from each other in how adventurous the tour members were. In Turkey, I was with a single woman, somewhat younger than me, and the former head of the Associated Press and his wife. During free days together we spent a large amount of time on foot seeing everything we could. For example in Istanbul on free days, we saw as many sights as we could that were not part of our tour, including the Grand Bazaar; all the Topkapi Palace museums; the Basilica Cistern, a subterranean room to store water built with Roman pillars holding up the ceiling, some with a Medusa head for some reason placed upside down; and exotica, such as a very atmospheric hubbly bubbly parlor (which are also found in Saudi Arabia), a place where men, and in this place some foreign women, smoked water pipes (aka hookahs) and watched soccer on TV. In another city we took long walks through narrow alleys to the seashore. We took a walk-on ferry to what we thought was a Greek island, but turned out to be an island still in Turkey.

(The former head of the Associated Press had retired but began work with a Japanese newspaper in New York City. I gathered from him that it was the custom for Japanese that if you go on a long vacation that you buy inexpensive presents for all your work colleagues, so his wife was shopping for what they jokingly termed “kitsch” during the whole trip. One important thing was to not buy any item that favored one colleague over another.)

After leaving Istanbul, our tour stopped at a fruit stand where I bought pistachios and fresh dates. In California we only get dried dates—fresh dates taste much better. Trying to break open the pistachios with my teeth, I cracked a molar tooth. After coming home, I

found out that Bonnie cracked a molar tooth on the very same day, a “sympathetic coincidence” I called it.

On my tour to Turkey, I saw everything Bonnie did on her trip, but with an additional 3 sights: an underground city in Cappadocia; the ruins of the earliest people in Cappadocia, the Hittites; and the Agzikarahan Caravanserai outside Konya.

In Cappadocia I saw an underground city that housed up to 20,000 people before the time of Christ, complete with streams of water and an underground winery. The underground city was used by residents to hide from invaders. The underground city had a heavy round rock door at its single entrance with holes in the door for spears to keep the invaders out. Fortunately, our tour had only a few people, and there were no other groups, as the passageways to the underground city were not made for a large number of people all at once.

Cappadocia, where the underground city was, was originally inhabited by the Hittites (who were there at the time of the ancient Egyptians starting in 1400 BC). I saw the ruins of a Hittite temple structure and city walls built by the Hittites. Within the ruins of the temple was a large cube-like green nephrite rock (a form of jade) a meter in height and width, a gift of the Egyptians who at that time considered the Hittites to be their equals. The Hittite city walls were made with rocks fitted together in a very similar manner to the fine stonework of the Incas that Bonnie and I had seen in Sacsayhuamán in Peru, again without anything to cement them together. The Hittites were mentioned many times in the Old Testament; the Hittites used the same rather complex covenant structure used by the Sinai Covenant (the Ten Commandments covenant between God and the Hebrews) with the

Hittites using them at an earlier time for covenants between their rulers and lesser powers (e.g., the Hittite Suzerainty-Vassal treaties).

A caravanserai, as stated previously, is a place where travelers along ancient trade routes and their animals stayed overnight to protect them from thieves and where they traded for food. The Agzikarahan Caravanserai outside Konya had an enclosed courtyard for the summer, and an enclosed large room for the winter. Unlike the caravanserai that Bonnie and Pearl saw in Iran, the interior of the large room of the Agzikarahan Caravanserai looked like the interior of a gothic cathedral with their arched ceilings—our history major tour guide told us that caravanserais like it with such ceilings were the model for the gothic cathedrals in Europe.

Unlike the bus that Bonnie and Pearl traveled on through Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, my bus had a restroom, in fact a fantastic restroom with a tinted window where the person in the restroom could see out without being seen by the people outside the bus—at least that was what I was told by our tour guide, so I trusted that to be true. This became a bit surrealistic in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. I was in the restroom, and the bus was going down a straight street of many miles without stop lights or crosswalks. People were jaywalking—really “jayrunning”—all along the route, with the jaywalkers and vehicles successfully playing dodge ball with each other. The pedestrians did not appear to see me (going to the john) as they were crossing the street, but perhaps if they did, they would have been run over. Unlike other cities in Turkey, none of the women were wearing head coverings—this went along with the concept that government in Turkey should be secular.

I spent Thanksgiving in Turkey. The tour guide arranged a special meal for us: roast beef. He didn't know anything about Americans eating turkey at Thanksgiving, so Turkey was clearly not named for the bird (but I understand that the bird was mistakenly named for the country, the original turkey really coming from Africa by way of Turkey, so Europeans named it turkey).

My second trip—a trip to Spain, Portugal and Morocco—started off in Madrid, went to Toledo, Granada, and then Algeciras, Spain near Gibraltar to take the ferry to Morocco, and then came back to Spain, going to Lisbon in Portugal, to Salamanca in Spain, and then back to Madrid.

My most remembered things in Spain and Portugal included the Prado, the National Museum in Madrid with its El Greco, Goya and Velazquez paintings, and the Reina Sofia art museum with its Picasso paintings, especially the cubist *Guernica* painting painted in response to the 1937 Franco bombing of the Spanish Basque city of Guernica with the help of the Nazis during the Spanish Civil War. It included Toledo, a medieval city on a high hill with narrow, steep and winding streets, surrounded by a river, with a climate hot in the afternoon and very cold in the morning when I was there. It included Granada's Alhambra palace and fortress built by the Moors with its Islamic architecture and fountain. It included Portugal with its cork trees and Lisbon where I entered a cathedral in the hills where the choir was singing in the alcoves, creating a mystical experience for me, hearing a wonderful sound but not knowing where it came from. Outside of Lisbon was Fatima, an interesting but for me a less mystical place than the cathedral where Catholic pilgrims

came to light candles in the shapes of ailing body parts to cure their ailments, a place where three shepherd children had seen a visage of Mary, the mother of Jesus. My Spain-Portugal sojourn included Salamanca, the most magnificent college town in the world, being a medieval town yet having a luxurious area of coffee and other shops where students could get pastries and coffee while they study. And it included my memory of having the best paella I ever had in my life, a saffron-flavored dish containing shrimp, sometimes lobster or other seafood, chicken, Spanish chorizo sausage, rice and vegetable. The paella was served as part of the going away dinner that was part of the trip—it was so good I asked for seconds. (However, I was not as impressed with the tapas in Madrid, which are hors d'oeuvres sold at bars.)

Unlike on my Turkey trip, on my Spain, Morocco and Portugal trip, none of the tour members were adventurous, some of whom even wished that the tour did not go to Morocco and none of whom wished to go back to the more exotic sites in Morocco after the day tours of these places ended.

I visited all the same cities in Morocco as Bonnie did on her trip, without any occurrences of palace coups like Bonnie and Lonnie experienced. In visiting the more exotic sites of Morocco such as Marrakesh, Fez, and Casablanca, our group spent little time actually seeing the sites, in a couple cases spending a large part of the time at carpet stores. I went back to sites alone when I could and opted out of seeing the carpet stores, visiting the sites further on my own while the others stayed in the store drinking tea. No other tour members followed my lead. I missed not having the adventurous tour members of my

Turkey trip or having my adventurous wife Bonnie there. (I recently learned that tour guides typically get a take of all carpet sales, which to me explains everything.)

One misconception of visitors to Morocco is that there actually was a Rick's Café as in the movie *Casablanca*. In Casablanca is the Ancient Medina, a shopping area that is the closest thing to the Casbah in the movie *Casablanca*; however, Rick's Café is a fictional place made up by the movie (although I heard that an America recently recreated a Rick's Café in Casablanca).

(The reader should note that the exotic sites of Morocco—the cities of Marrakesh, Fez, and Casablanca—that Bonnie and Lonnie also visited and so loved are described in Chapter one of this book.)

I went on another, though domestic, trip without Bonnie. One Christmas I was invited to New York City by a Dutch friend who I worked with in Saudi Arabia, Andre. I accepted. He and a number of other Dutch citizens were working in the United States for a year and a half in the computer software field. Before I met Bonnie, I vacationed in Holland two times, the second time staying with Andre and his wife.

As a result of my collective visits—this trip to New York and my visits to the Netherlands—I had to dispel many of my childhood myths about Europeans (or at least about the Dutch):

Myth #1: Most Europeans would love to move to the United States if only they could afford to do so.

Myth #2: All Europeans dream of visiting the United States.

Myth #3: Europeans are not as prejudiced as Americans.

Myth #4: BMW is a prestige European motor car.

In New York City, I discussed the first myth with a Dutch woman. She told me that she only knew of two Dutch people who ever moved to the United States—and they were married to each other. She considered them to be very adventurous. Very few Dutch would want to move into a completely different culture such as the United States, she told me.

Just before working in Saudi Arabia, I vacationed in Amsterdam and bought the diamond ring I later gave to Bonnie, a ring I bought before I met Bonnie. On the second trip to Holland, I dated the young woman who sold me the diamond ring—after corresponding with her by mail--and asked her if many Dutch would like to live in the United States. She told me that she never ever even considered visiting the United States, not to speak of living there. So much for the Dutch wanting to move to, or to even visit, the United States.

On the same visit to Holland, I stayed with Andre and his wife Agatha. Agatha was of Indonesian ancestry. Andre told me that, because of Agatha's ancestry, Andre's brother refused to attend their wedding. So much for the Dutch, some of the supposedly most liberal people in Europe, not being prejudiced.

When I arrived at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam upon my visit with Andre and his wife, I rented a car. I asked for the most economical, least expensive, car. They gave me a BMW. So much for the BMW being *the* prestige car of European. (By the way, I drove from the western to the eastern border of the Netherlands and from the southern to the northern border of the Netherlands, all in one day. The Netherlands is a very small country, but the Dutch still seem to enjoy living there.)

Minnie, my wife's sister, died of type II diabetes. At the memorial service, I read the eulogy that Bonnie wrote and Lonnie's sister gave a eulogy.

When Bonnie's sister, Lonnie, gave her eulogy for Minnie, she stated that she, Bonnie and Minnie went out in the middle of a lake in Glacier National Park in a boat, and that with the increasing waves on the lake, Minnie insisted they all return to shore. As a result, Minnie had saved their lives!—Bonnie said that this was a nice story, but it was a bunch of baloney. (Certainly, if there was a boat house on a lake named "Swiftcurrent Lake", there was no danger to people being in a boat when the water is a little choppy.)

Bonnie and I took a another trip to Las Vegas, where I presented a paper on an idea for combining electronic medical record information for a patient from various healthcare organizations to produce a single medical record for the patient. The paper, "Incorporating an EPR system with a Universal Patient Record" was ultimately published in the Springer

Journal of Medical Systems in August 2006 (where EPR stands for “Electronic Patient Record”).

Bonnie and I saw Celine Dion at Caesar’s Palace, visited some expensive restaurants, and gambled our usual five dollars at nickel poker slot machines. We eventually got bored with Las Vegas and went to nearby Red Rock Canyon. There we found a circuitous path around a garden at a hotel near Red Rock Canyon.

Bonnie said, “Let’s play a game. Pretend you’re blind. You close your eyes and I’ll direct you.” “Left . . . No, not that far left . . . Right . . .” With my increasingly poor eyesight, would I in the future have to rely upon Bonnie to get around, where previously she depended so much on me?

Because of my continuing anxiety attacks, I would often get too little sleep and would get sleepy while driving. To keep my driving safe, I would go to a parking lot somewhere and take a snooze before continuing to drive. The importance of such snoozes is explained by what happened to me and Bonnie one day. Bonnie and I took a trip up to Placerville, California in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The car that Bonnie had bargained for had gone 199,993 miles, and we wanted to drive a few more miles to Pollock Pines to celebrate going 200,000 miles. Because of the special occasion, for once, I didn’t heed my body and take my normal snooze. A few miles after Placerville, I fell asleep and drove over a steep embankment. Bonnie broke some ribs, but I was uninjured. (Perhaps Bonnie and I have more than 9 lives after all.) Our car was totaled, and we did not make it to 200,000 miles. (Fortunately, Bonnie quickly recovered from her rib injuries, and a doctor prescribed an antidepressant that got rid of my panic attacks and thus my inability to sleep at night, and

even my resulting fear of visiting dentists went away—Since then I quit taking antidepressants.)

By the way, Bonnie said she experienced exactly the same feeling I did on this and my earlier auto accident, my roll-over on the freeway: Everything suddenly occurs in slow motion.

In the process of visiting states rather than countries, Bonnie had seen quite a few states. The states not yet on Bonnie's list were North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas.

9

Traveling Closer to Home

Because of new physical problems both for Bonnie and me—most of which we think are temporary or resolvable—traveling was becoming more and more difficult, and we limited our travels even further: to places close to home rather than to other states.

Being a paraplegic made it difficult for Bonnie to be a member of any guided tours requiring multiple days. Bonnie always had problems controlling certain bodily functions such as her bowel movements and thus would need to watch what she ate and sometimes would have to take a day off during her trips. She also sometimes developed a high fever from urinary infections (which she tried to avoid by drinking lots of water)—she avoided taking antibiotics on a regular basis as she felt that that would negate their effects when she really needed them.

Even without these maladies occurring, Bonnie and I still might have problems. Guided tours, which usually have fixed schedules, sometimes had stops where it was not possible to get around in a wheelchair in the time allotted, even with my help.

Bonnie was increasingly having other physical problems. Bonnie was developing osteoporosis—when she fell, she often would break a bone which required bed rest for months until the bone healed. (Because of her family history, the osteoporosis was

probably caused by her genetics—her mother had the disease—rather than by her paraplegia, but the paraplegia and consequential lack of stress on her joints probably aggravated her condition.) At the same time, even if Bonnie did not break a bone, I was having a more and more difficult time picking Bonnie up when she fell from her wheelchair. Her falling problems, however, was resolvable with strapping her to the wheelchair and both us being more careful.

But the most debilitating ailment of all was the eventual development of a pressure sore—an injury to the skin or underlying tissue due to putting constant pressure there. The pressure sore kept her in bed until it healed. As stated earlier, a paraplegic, or the frail elderly if confined to bed or a wheelchair, must turn herself (or be turned by a nurse) every few hours to a different body position so she wouldn't get a pressure sore (aka pressure ulcer). People without disability automatically do this turning subconsciously, but people who are paralyzed and some of the weak frail elderly do not subconsciously turn.

I was having increasing physical problems myself. The macular degeneration in my left eye progressed somewhat before it stabilized. My left knee, which was severely injured in a motorbike accident many years ago, was increasingly becoming arthritic. I was also developing sciatica, numbness or pain, in my right (“good”) leg—was this due to me favoring my right leg, lifting Bonnie wrong, a previous injury, or what?

Surely, **all** people as they get older will develop more medical problems, and paraplegics likely will have even more. Despite this, many seniors consider this time in their life to be the best.

Bonnie and I live in the San Francisco Bay Area. Other than housing being very expensive and the traffic sometimes being horrendous, the Bay Area is a wonderful place to live. It has some of the best weather in the world, it has some very interesting sights nearby, and it is very cosmopolitan, having quite a diversity of people of different races and social attitudes.

Where I worked, Oakland, is also had a great diversity of people. The city is about equal portions of African Americans, Asian Americans (mainly Chinese Americans), Whites and Latinos. At Kaiser Permanente, where I worked as a computer professional, there were about an equal portion of Asians and Whites and about half as many people from India. In my department for some reason, there were a large number of people from Russia.

(Note that in the Bay Area Chinese American community, "Asian" is the term used for Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans—the white term of "oriental" is frowned upon and other Asian communities, such as people from India, are not included.)

The Bay Area has about 7 million people. The inner Bay Area gets fog in the morning in summer time; therefore, where it can get very hot in the rest of California (90-100 degrees Fahrenheit), it would be quite mild in the inner Bay Area (65-80 degrees), and even when it becomes hot in the daytime, it cools off at night. The three major cities in the Bay Area are San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose. It also never snows in the Bay Area during winter, but there are ski areas within 120 miles in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

For the city of San Francisco, it is very fortunate that they never get snow, as much of San Francisco has very steep hills. If there was snow, driving would be impossible.

Virtually everyone in the San Francisco Bay Area has a car. (The exception is San Francisco where public transportation is excellent and parking places are very hard to find, even in residential areas.)

There are 8 major bridges crossing the Bay, all charging a toll—none of the highways charge a toll (as they often do back East). The most famous bridges are the Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. The latter bridge is in two parts, a San Francisco side and an Oakland side, with the bridges on each side being very different and with the Oakland side being rebuilt due to part of it falling down during the last major earthquake. The rebuilt bridge to be completed in 2014 will withstand much larger earthquakes than the last one as well as no longer be the total ugly cousin of the San Francisco side of the bridge.

The Bay Area has two of the most prestigious universities in the United States and the world, the University of California at Berkeley and Stanford.

The Bay Area is known to be politically liberal, almost always supporting Democratic candidates. At the time of the writing of this book, two women from the Bay Area and Democrats, Senators Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein, are the two California United States senators.

Housing is very expensive. Despite this, probably about 60% of the people own their own house, most often with a surrounding yard.

The city on the southern part of the Bay Area is San Jose. It is the center of what is termed the "Silicon Valley", a place where there are many Internet and computer electronics industries. The new area of research in the Bay Area is biotechnology with much of it centered in or near San Francisco. (The State of California allocated 3 billion dollars for embryonic stem cell research, which has enabled biotechnology to blossom even more in the San Francisco area.)

The Silicon Valley started the idea that you could remain in the technical field as an engineer or computer scientist and still advance in your company without becoming a manager. CEOs being born in China, India or other countries—who are most commonly technically oriented—are not uncommon in the Silicon Valley.

Although, the Bay Area is politically liberal, California as a whole has a checkered history as far as discrimination is concerned. During World War II on the West Coast, people of Japanese descent were sent to internment camps (Eleanor Roosevelt convinced her husband, President Franklin Roosevelt, that Japanese ancestry people in Hawaii were loyal to America and thus stopped the internment of Japanese in Hawaii). And prior to 1943 there was the Chinese Exclusion Act, limiting Chinese and then Asian immigration to the United States.

Many Chinese emigrated from China to California from the time of the California Gold Rush to the 1880's. The Chinese provided labor during the Gold Rush in the 1850's and provided most of the labor for the western part of the Transcontinental Railroad in the

1860's (but Chinese laborers were excluded from pictures showing the last spike being driven in Promontory Summit, Utah). After gold started running out, Chinese laborers would band together to mine gold at a much cheaper cost than the non-Chinese, making gold mining still profitable, which made whites envious. In San Rafael in the San Francisco Bay, 500 Chinese got together to develop a shrimp-fishing village, with 90% of the shrimp dried and sent to China, which also made whites envious.

In the 1880's the Chinese were blamed for depressed wage levels and were driven from the mines and other places, such as the shrimp-fishing village, and settled in enclaves in cities, principally San Francisco, where they worked mainly as laundry, seamstress and restaurant workers, three professions that were not closed to the Chinese. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 froze Chinese immigration in place.

The history of the Chinese in British Columbia in Canada almost completely parallels that of the history of Chinese in California: Chinese first came to British Columbia because of the British Columbia gold rushes. The Chinese then came to British Columbia to work on building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. From 1923 to 1947 was a period of exclusion where nearly all Chinese immigration to Canada was stopped.

(My grandfather on my father's side who lived in Salmon Arm, British Columbia, was a farmer. I saw a diary he wrote. It listed by name everyone who ever worked for him on his farm with the exception of Chinese laborers. For Chinese workers as opposed to White workers, he substituted the word "Chinaman" for their name, e.g., "a Chinaman fixed a fence ..." compared to "John Smith fixed a fence ...")

In 1915, a fire broke out in Walnut Grove, a city in the Sacramento Delta near the Bay Area, in its China Town. The Chinese, most of whom worked on development of delta levees or in orchards, decided to create a town of their own called Locke. Locke still exists today, although only 10 of its 80 people are Chinese Americans. A historic Chinese American building, the Tong Building, is being rebuilt in Isleton, a town near Locke also in the Sacramento Delta.

From 1910 to 1940, Angel Island in San Francisco was the principal location where Chinese immigrants or those returning from China came before being allowed into the United States. Each immigrant had to have a citizen sponsor who was a relative who would be interrogated to learn about the relative's home, village and family. The immigrant was later interrogated to see if the immigrant could answer the same questions. Because immigrants came who were not actual relatives, the terms "paper son" and "paper daughter" were later used by the Chinese who made it into the United States. About 30% of immigrants were sent back to China. But what made these restrictions on Chinese immigration even more harsh was that wives of the Chinese in America were not allowed entry—this brings up the question of how Mama Chin made it to America—wives left behind in China were referred to as “grass widows” or “living widows”.

In San Francisco Chinatown from its very beginning, there were far more men than women. Because of this, Chinese women immigrants were smuggled into San Francisco, many to serve as prostitutes. Miss Donaldina Cameron started Cameron House, a residence to save these women immigrants. Cameron House today is a Presbyterian Chinatown-based organization to serve individuals and immigrant families.

Bonnie and her family had a number of links to this Chinese history of San Francisco and the United States. Firstly, Mama Chin came to the United States and was detained and interrogated before being let in; however, rather than coming through Angel Island (the Chinese immigrant version of Ellis Island), Mama Chin was interrogated and detained in Seattle. Mama Chin worked as a seamstress in San Francisco Chinatown, and like many other immigrants to San Francisco belonged to a family association, people having the same family name (in her case, “Chin”). Bonnie, Lonnie, and Minnie all attended Cameron House meetings when they were younger—of course, it was simply a religious social club at that time, as it is today, not then a place for recovered prostitutes. Only in 1948 did it become legal for Chinese Americans to marry Whites in California; otherwise, Bonnie could not have married me—the Rev. Harry Chuck, the director of Cameron House, presided at Bonnie and my wedding. During Bonnie’s lifetime, Asian Americans—including the Chin family—were restricted to buying housing only on certain streets in San Francisco in and near Chinatown; only after 1952, when a Chinese American Sing Sheng unsuccessfully tried to buy a house in the then all-white city of South San Francisco did housing segregation of Chinese Americans stop in the Bay Area—this incident during the Cold War became a nationwide embarrassment for Americans, causing this Chinese American housing discrimination to end.

In the 1950’s as a way to promote Chinatown in San Francisco, the San Francisco Chinese New Year Parade was started—a parade that does not occur at the time of our New Year but occurs later during the Chinese New Year. The San Francisco Chinese New Year Parade is now the largest such parade outside of Asia. While in elementary school, Bonnie participated in the parade four times. Twice she carried a lantern in the parade. Once she

was part of the entourage on a float with the Statue of Liberty. A fourth time she was a drummer in the parade, playing the snare drum. (Bonnie also regularly participated in the “The Double 10 Day Parade”, which celebrates a national day for the Nationalist Chinese, who now occupy Taiwan.)

Bonnie told me about terms used by many Chinese Americans: FOB’s, ABC’s, ABJ’s, bananas, eggs and Oreos. FOB stands for “fresh off the boat” meaning immigrants who have arrived from a foreign country who have not yet assimilated into the American culture, either not speaking English or not exhibiting the behavior of Americans; Asian FOBs are usually politically conservative and would rather get a tax cut of any amount than any social services. ABC stands for “American Born Chinese” and ABJ for “American Born Japanese”; these are (usually second-generation) Asians born in America who have some affinity to their Chinese or Japanese culture. A banana is someone who is “yellow on the outside and white on the inside”, in other words, an Asian who has become highly assimilated into the white culture. An egg is the opposite of a banana, a white who has a strong affinity to the Asian culture. An Oreo is someone who is “black on the outside and white on the inside”, an African American who has a strong affinity to the white culture rather than to the African American culture.

According to Bonnie, one characteristic of many Chinese in America is that they don’t often help out disabled people. Many, especially FOB’s, just stare at Bonnie as she rolls by in her wheelchair. I don’t know if staring is an Asian characteristic, but I was talking to a woman from Japan who was 5’7” —rather tall for a Japanese woman—and she told me that people in Japan stare at her because of her height.

Like for the Chinese and Japanese, there was—not surprisingly—also discrimination against African Americans in the Bay Area. There was a huge migration of African Americans from the South during and after World War II, in particular to Richmond to build ships. Many African Americans were drafted into the Army and thus came to the Bay Area that way also.

During World War II in San Francisco, the only place African Americans were allowed to live was the Fillmore district. The reason for this was that the Fillmore previously was a district where people of Japanese ancestry lived, and during the war there were many empty houses as a result of the US Government sending people of Japanese ancestry to concentration camps, confiscating their businesses and houses. Upon the arrival of African Americans, many jazz clubs sprung up in the Fillmore, with the district later nicknamed the “Harlem of the West”; the most famous artist who started there was Etta James who is best known for her theme song, “At Last!”, with a lyric she wrote. (Beyoncé is now known for singing “At Last!” after portraying Etta James in a movie.)

According to the book, *Slavery by Another Name: Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*, by Douglas A Blackmon, before World War II, life in the South was intolerable for African Americans, not only because of segregation and a caste system with Jim Crow laws and lynchings—including African Americans not being able to vote, having separate inferior schools and being disallowed from attending the major universities and colleges—but because of a system which essentially perpetuated slavery up to the start of World War II: African Americans were arrested for petty charges such as vagrancy (not having a job), were charged room and board for their stay in jail that they

often could not pay (if even for a few days), and thus were given a sentence of a year. The prisoners were sold to corporations who put them in chain gangs, in essence again becoming slaves. The corporation did pay off their fines over a period of a year. And until World War II it was difficult for African Americans to leave the South because they could not afford to move or because of their incarcerations.

African Americans did not escape this discrimination after they came to the Bay Area. Most white veterans became part of the middle class through the GI bill, but this was not the case for African Americans: The GI bill that passed after World War II provided mortgages for ex-military and as a result greatly increased the number of people in the middle class, but it did little to help African Americans as there was rampant discrimination after the war with the restriction of African Americans from buying houses in the suburbs, the wealthier parts of cities and even some less wealthy areas (e.g., East Oakland and San Leandro, where there were restrictive covenants to not sell real estate to African Americans). In combination with these housing restrictions, redlining—denying services to poor areas of a city—and reverse redlining—charging more for services in poor areas (such as providing check cashing stores instead of banks)—compounded the problems for African Americans living in these already less desirable areas of the Bay Area.

Bonnie and I have traveled through many cities in California in our car. In every new city Bonnie visited, in or outside the Bay Area, she asked me to drive by city hall, and she insisted on stopping in shopping areas, seldom getting out of the car herself and not

shopping herself, but having me do so if she wanted to buy something. A prime item was new and different food or new barbeque places.

When traveling, Bonnie had to make a special effort to feel comfortable. Because of Bonnie's injury, she had the feeling of a different center of gravity than she actually had. To compensate for this difference, Bonnie had me put spacers on the top of her wheelchair seat back to lean it back. When Bonnie traveled in the car, she wanted the top of the seat to be leaning far back. Doing these things made Bonnie much more comfortable.

Eventually, Bonnie put her feet on the dash and kept them there while we were driving. This was far more comfortable for her than being in bed. So we would often take day trips that turned into two day trips with her staying in the car during this time, most of the time with her feet still on the dash.

For her urine, Bonnie wore a leg bag under her slacks. She would periodically ask me to stop at the side of the road for a "splash", to let her empty the bag.

Places near the Bay Area we would often visit on one day or two day trips were Apple Hill; Isleton; the Audubon Canyon Ranch; Point Reyes National Seashore; the Wine Country; the Avenue of the Giants (groves of coastal redwoods); Mt. Lassen; Lake Tahoe and Reno; Ashland in Oregon; Yosemite; and Carmel and Monterey.

Every November or December, we went to a place just outside of Placerville, called Apple Hill. Placerville is in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. At Apple Hill are many apple farms, growing a great variety of different types of apples. Farms served home-

made apple cider and a variety of apple deserts (pies, dumplings, donuts, apple strudel, etc.) One served apple wine.

We often visited Isleton, not because of the historic Chinese Tong Building mentioned earlier, but because of its reputation for crayfish. Even Louisiana buys crayfish from Isleton! A restaurant in town serves a meal of about 50 crayfish in hot pepper sauce or a meal of prime rib. As I fastidiously crack open each of the many small crayfish, Bonnie eats the prime rib. From Isleton apparently a lot of people go fishing as there is a bait shop in town, “The Master Baiter”.

We sometimes go to the Audubon Ranch across the Golden Gate Bridge, a mile north of the city of Stinson Beach off Highway 1. It is on the Pacific coast just across from the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve. At the Audubon Ranch is a 2.6 mile trail open from March to Mid-July having at various times treetop rookeries for great egrets, great blue herons, and snowy egrets. While I go hiking there, Bonnie stays in the car parked off Highway 1 overlooking Bolinas Lagoon looking at the water birds and ocean scenery. When Bonnie cannot participate in an activity, such as the Audubon Canyon hike—when she has to stay in the car—what I do is take my digital camera and present a slide show for her on my computer that night.

Further north from Audubon Ranch is Point Reyes National Seashore, a peninsula with many ocean beaches, a trail to a lighthouse, whale watching and hikes. It includes Drake’s Bay, where Sir Francis Drake is said to have sailed. Nearby is an oyster farm. We usually buy raw oysters in jars that are put on ice, share a snack of the oysters, and I take a hike to a beach or the lighthouse while Bonnie looks at the view from our car. North of Point Reyes

is the town of Bodega Bay where Alfred Hitchcock filmed his movie *The Birds*—the Potter schoolhouse in that movie still exists in the town of Bodega a short distance away.

Because Bonnie is not a wine drinker—but even more so because wineries now charge for tastings—Bonnie and I seldom go to the Wine Country, an area inland from the ocean, north of San Francisco. One Christmas, Bonnie and I went to the world-renowned French Laundry Restaurant in the Wine Country, having both their main menu and an even more expensive truffle menu. This cost a mint and after a while, all the dishes tasted the same, largely because most had a base of butter.

The Avenue of the Giants is a 31 mile stretch of road paralleling Highway 101 (the Redwood Highway) with 50,000 acres of redwoods nearby, again near the Pacific Coast but in the far north of California. The Rockefeller Forest is one grove of very tall coastal redwoods—some of the tallest trees in the world—and is wheelchair accessible. It is located south of the town of Scotia, California.

Besides being some of the tallest trees, the coastal redwoods are also some of the oldest, one of which is over 2,000 years old. But the coastal redwoods are not even the oldest trees in California. The oldest single living organisms in the world are the bristlecone pines, slow-growing gnarled almost-dead-looking trees, found at the end of the road Bonnie and I once took from Bishop, California to the White Mountains. One of these bristlecone pines—deliberately unidentified—is close to 5,000 years old. Bishop is east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Death Valley in southern California.

Mt. Lassen Volcanic National Park is the closest National Park to us, northeast of Sacramento. In summer, the road goes by beautiful mountains and thermal areas, including hissing fumaroles and boiling mud pots. In the winter and early spring, the road is covered with snow and closed, but the road then makes for one of the world's most scenic cross country skiing trails, which I skied once.

We would go to Lake Tahoe for the views, and go to the gambling places in South Lake Tahoe and Reno for the cheap buffets. Downhill skiing is great in winter, but Bonnie and I no longer can downhill ski. I may someday just stop to see a ski resort to see how things have changed since I last went skiing—I understand that many skiers now wear helmets, especially after the death of Natasha Richardson from a head injury during skiing. (In my many years of skiing, I never saw anyone, other than ski racers, wear a helmet.)

In summer in Ashland, Oregon in southern Oregon is a Shakespeare festival with not only Shakespeare plays but also plays of all sorts, from ancient to modern, performed by professionals.

Yosemite is a national park in the Sierras and central California. It is a place we don't visit often because it is a total day's drive away partly on steep winding roads, but it is a place that always fascinates us. The granite cliffs, waterfalls, Half Dome Mountain, the Ahwahnee Hotel and its dining room, and Glacier Point are the highlights for us. Glacier Point, the place where I used to work, is located above the valley with one of the world's most spectacular views, especially the view of Nevada and Vernal Falls below Half Dome. Badger Pass is an easy downhill ski area. Cross-country skiing from Badger Pass to Glacier Point is something I always wanted to do, but never did.

When I worked at Glacier Point, they used to push burning red fir bark over a granite cliff at night to produce the famous “Firefall” looking like a red waterfall to all the many people in the Yosemite Valley down below. Since the time I worked at Glacier Point, the Firefall was dispensed with, being considered environmentally destructive, and a short time later, the Glacier Point Hotel, where I had stayed during that one summer, burned down, not to be rebuilt.

One of our haunts was the Monterey peninsula, just south of the Bay Area on the coast. Carmel by the Sea, a small town south of Monterey, is an English-like town with fantastic restaurants and shops. Monterey is a much larger city with a fabulous aquarium, fishing piers selling seafood, and good seafood restaurants. South of Carmel is a coastline of high scenic cliffs, the Big Sur area.

Three years after Minnie’s funeral, family members spread Minnie’s ashes in the Pacific Ocean at a location south of Carmel and north of the town of Big Sur. I read Bonnie’s eulogy for the spreading of Minnie’s ashes:

“My thoughts, of my very, very dear sister Minnie come to heart and mind again: Minnie, may your kindness, genteel soul, living spirit and wonderfulness, flow and touch all the beings in nature, in air, sea and land. My love travels with you near and far.

Cheran Lonn”

10

Life After Travel?

Eventually, a pressure sore forced Bonnie to stay in bed. I think the pressure sore resulted from our two day trips where she stayed in the car, remaining in one position with her feet on the dash.

Continuing on as before, Bonnie cooked from bed or directed me in cooking. Next to her she had a burner. At the foot of the bed was an oven, and in the next room was a microwave. At the other end of the house were the refrigerator and spice racks. Bonnie followed a routine to prepare meals: She would tell me to get some food from the refrigerator and items from a spice rack. A little time later she would ask for more items. She would prepare the meal, either using the burner by her bed, asking me to cook the item in the microwave (located in the next room) a certain number of minutes, or asking me to put the food in the oven and set it to a certain temperature.

After a time, the problem with this routine was that I would often have to bend down to get something from the refrigerator or the spice rack, and this would cause me excruciating pain both due to my bad left knee, which had been crushed in the motor bike accident that occurred when I was at UC Davis, and sciatica in my right leg. For example, Bonnie asked me to get ground beef and broccoli from the refrigerator and a variety of spices she named from the spice rack. After bending I would come back with the items. Bonnie would then

ask me to get some other items. Walking back to the kitchen, all I could think of was the extreme pain. When I got to the kitchen, I had to recall the additional items—often I would forget half the items because of the pain. In my bending down to get the additional items, my right knee and left leg became even more painful. I brought back the items, and Bonnie told me what I forgot. Eventually, the pain became so bad, that I told Bonnie I could not get any more of the items. She insisted, and sometimes, after repeatedly telling her of my pain and her ignoring my admonitions, I would say, “Shut up!—I can’t take it anymore!” Each time I said that, she told me I owed her a 500-word written apology, which I felt she owed me instead. Telling her to shut up did however often make her so mad that she didn’t ask me to get her any more stuff. Perhaps this book can make up for the many 500-word apologies (she thinks) I owe her.

Bonnie was having increasing problems herself besides the pressure sore. As stated earlier, Bonnie could not control when she had a bowel movement, which, when it occurred, required her to clean up for a day as well as watch what she ate. And she would have urinary infections that often caused her to have a high fever.

Bonnie’s pressure sore and other ailments, and my knee, made it difficult for us to travel at all.

As I write, Bonnie is recovering from a pressure sore on her buttocks and waiting for it to heal. Upon her stay in the hospital and rehabilitation facility while awaiting her pressure sore to heal, she decided to have operations to correct the problem with controlling her bowel movements (a colostomy) and the problem with her urinary infections (a suprapubic), which should remove some impediments to her traveling. She had these two

procedures during the same operation. These operations were also said to have a beneficial effect of keeping wetness and infection away from the pressure sore.

Note again that pressure sores are of particular concern to those with paralysis. The chance of a paraplegic getting a pressure sore over his or her lifetime is said to be at least 35%.

After her operation (a colostomy and suprapubic), Bonnie didn't quickly wake up. (I think the anesthesiologist gave too heavy a dose of medication.) As a result of not waking up quickly, the medical personnel stuck a tube down her throat to control her breathing by machine and put her on sedation. I was very worried.

Once Bonnie asked me which animal I would want to be if I had a choice, and I facetiously said a "cockroach" because cockroaches have been said to be able to live through even a nuclear war. I always thought of the word "crab" when I thought of Bonnie, as she loved to eat crab, and I sometimes thought of her as being rather crabby.

I visited Bonnie the next day after her operation, but I didn't want to wake her up as I knew that she would hate to know she had a tube down her throat. The following day I telephoned Bonnie's nurse, and the nurse told me that in order to take the tube out, they had to first stop the sedation, and they were doing so at the time of my call. I asked the nurse to ask Bonnie if she wanted me to visit her. The nurse went to ask Bonnie my question but Bonnie didn't answer and furiously gestured that she wanted the tube out of her throat. The nurse told me that Bonnie was getting quite crabby (like a lot of patients

when they are taken off sedation in this situation). I told the nurse, “Crabby huh? . . . Gee, she’s back to normal”.

(Actually, Bonnie always had the premonition that if she died, she would come back as a hummingbird. Perhaps I’m too rational for such premonitions—but I certainly would not want to come back as a cockroach.)

Because of the tube that had been down her throat, for 5 days in the hospital Bonnie’s voice was in a whisper. I told her, “You can only whisper? . . . I like this!”

After her operation and hospital stay, Bonnie went to a rehabilitation facility, both to recover from her operation and to further allow her pressure sore to heal.

After I learned what the two procedures were (the colostomy and suprapubic), I used to kid Bonnie: “Men have 2 holes down there. Women have 3. How many do you have? . . . 5 now?”

Taking advantage of Bonnie being away and my not having to care for her, I scheduled to have a total knee replacement to get rid of my sometimes extreme pain in my motorbike injured left knee, which I would have had earlier except that it would have stopped me from caring for Bonnie (e.g., lifting her out of bed or into the car).

Also during this time that Bonnie was in the rehabilitation facility, I finished my second book on medical computing, *A Preliminary Design for a Universal Patient Medial Record: Re-engineering Health Care*.

After my knee replacement operation I stayed in the hospital for three days and then had my friend Kuruvilla drive me home. I had such extreme pain and bad side effects from the pain medication the first week I was at home, I thought of Mama Chin's statement during her final stay in the nursing home: "You call this living?" Fortunately, my knee improved little by little every week. Now I am fully recovered with normal use and no pain, and the sciatica in my other leg miraculously went away.

I have macular degeneration in my left eye but have full peripheral vision, and I have good corrected vision in my right eye. I can still drive, but in California I am required to get a medical eye exam and schedule an on-the-road driving test every two years—what a drag!

Bonnie and I are hopeful that we can shortly travel the world together again. That's the reason Bonnie got her colostomy and her suprapubic. And that's one of the reasons I got my knee replacement.

There is a Chinese saying, "May you have an interesting life!" Some say that the Chinese consider this to be a curse. Americans would consider it to be a blessing. For this book, I have changed the saying to "May you have an interesting wife!" Having a paraplegic wife can be both a joy and a hardship. The hardship is overcome by patience, a sense of humor, and perseverance as well as a great deal of love.

Bonnie is now home. So far her only lists have been shopping lists. But, for starters, with her pressure sores almost completely healed, she is digging out her list of states. And also, although she may not make her 100 countries, Bonnie has read about a foreign cruise

that included the Baltic countries of Estonia and Latvia, and the city of St. Petersburg (previously called Leningrad).

The Baltics and St. Petersburg were places that Bonnie missed seeing twice, once due to the cancellation of her northern Soviet Union tour in 1969 and a second time due to our cancellation of our Europe tour in 1986 resulting from the Chernobyl nuclear plant explosion. Finally, Bonnie would get to see the Baltics and St. Petersburg.

But before seeing further states or finally fulfilling Bonnie's dream of seeing St. Petersburg and the Baltics, I was thinking of a much shorter trip. "Perhaps we could start off our traveling again by going to an easier location: the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California". Bonnie always wanted to see the Rose Bowl Parade with its many floats made from real roses. But after thinking about the idea for a while, I remembered the huge crowds and the impossibility of someone in a wheelchair seeing anything at all at the sidelines of such a large parade.

Personally, I wanted to go to the other Pasadena parade, the Doo Dah Parade, a parade where the crowds might be a little more sparse. The Doo Dah Parade had a completely different character than the Rose Bowl Parade—one year, it included the following groups: the Electric Squirrels, Martinis in the Morning, Howdy Krishna, Flying Baby Street Racing and Stroller Cross, Men of Leisure, LA Derby Dolls, BBQ & Hibachi Marching Grill Team, Doo Dah Random Dancers, Horses on Astroturf, and The Disco Drill Team.

When I first heard about the Doo Dah Parade with its business man drill team with each man in a suit carrying a brief case, I dreamed of my own group: little old ladies, each in a

wheelchair, knitting identical sweaters in unison, each pushed along by her husband to form a wheelchair drill team. There would be an accompanying marching band and a drum major yelling out instructions to the ladies—I guess on a megaphone—to synchronize their knitting, “Knit 1, purl 1, pass stitch over, . . .” Fortunately, Bonnie and I have “the same” sense of humor—we each laugh at each other’s jokes, which isn’t necessarily the same as having “a” sense of humor. But we did disagreed about the Doo Da Parade, and she vetoed it, especially when she discovered that the Rose Bowl Parade keeps its floats stationary, available for public view for 3 days after the parade.

In India and many Muslim countries, it is common that parents choose the marriage mate for their children, as what happened for Mama Chin. This seems nonsensical to Westerners, but—in my old age—just thinking about how Western men (or women) pick their spouses, the Western approach seems to me to be just as nonsensical.

Being a typical Westerner, I wanted a woman who was good-looking, but with the consideration that almost every time I see a mother and daughter, the daughter seems to be far better looking to me, it is clear that looks are fleeting. I wanted a woman I got along with, but on every date, my date was on her best behavior; how would I know if we really were compatible from our behaviors on dates? “Chemistry” is nature’s way to keeping a couple together just long enough to produce and care for a single child; that chemistry usually dies off after at most a few years, so that’s not a good way to pick a mate.

I have now come to the conclusion that what is necessary in a mate—and unlike many other things is enduring—is sharing the same values and interests. Recently, I watched a movie on DVD with Bonnie that I also saw in 1976: *Max Havelaar*. The movie was about a

just person, Max Havelaar, appointed as a governor in Java (Indonesia) during the Dutch colonial days because of his blood relationship to another Dutch official. He finds that the locals are being exploited both by the Dutch and corrupt local rulers, with many of the locals reaching the point of starvation. Max Havelaar thought that he was appointed to clean up the situation, but when he tries, he is removed from his office. Bonnie, as I was, was deeply moved by the motion picture.

In 1976, I took a date to the same picture, not knowing anything about the movie. When I saw the movie, I immediately thought that it was one of the best films I had ever seen (and I still do)—this is why I wanted Bonnie to see it. My date in 1976, to the contrary, told me at the time that she thought that it was the worst movie she had ever seen. She was a missionary, and the film had a final scene showing the Dutch in church singing about “saving the godless heathens”, so likely that was the reason she abhorred the film. Today I realize that I would have been totally miserable if I had married anyone who was not also greatly moved by that movie—It would have been very clear that we did not share the same interests and values.

By the way, a recent reviewer of the movie stated that the movie was “ruthlessly suppressed” in the United States. My guess was there were many others, besides my former girlfriend, who considered it—simply by that one final scene—to be an attack on Christianity. (Bonnie and I both did not at all view it that way.)

Now that I know what to look for in a mate, it is clear—as it has always been to me—that with Bonnie, I made the right choice. We not only share the same interests (including traveling) but the same values and the same sense of humor (well, most of the time).

Bonnie and other people living with spinal cord injuries are heroes, persons who have to have great courage to just emotionally survive. And Bonnie is my personal hero, someone I greatly admire for her courage.

Dare she ever schedule another trip to Guadalajara?