

My Father's Story

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My father, Richard Thayer Chadwick, was an only child, not by choice, but by virtue of the limitations of early twentieth century medicine.

His parents were New Englanders. My grandmother, née Harriet Packard, grew up on a farm on Braintree Hill, a few miles north of Randolph, Vermont. She was one of six children. I met them all once at a family reunion in the mid-1950s when I was about ten years old. Her oldest brother was Ernest, middle brother George, and youngest brother Bill. She had an older sister Edith and a younger sister Valentine. They were a close family, and organized reunions every couple of years well into her seventh decade. The maternal line of her family bore the surname Bass, and that was my grandmother's middle name. Her brother Bill, who lived in Medfield, Massachusetts, became something of a family genealogist in his elder years, and claimed that the Bass family could be traced back to first generation after the landing of the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock. My first wife and I, when I was a graduate student at Harvard University, gathered with my great uncle Bill and his wife at his house in Medfield to watch the first men land on the moon in 1969.

My paternal grandfather, Fred Cleveland Chadwick, grew up in the town of Randolph, Vermont. He was born in 1884. Grover Cleveland was first elected President of the United States in that year, and that event was responsible for my grandfather's middle name. He had siblings, I don't know the number, but they were not close. I never met any of them. I know that my father had a cousin. I saw photos of her and seem to remember meeting her once during a short visit when I was a child. I believe she lived somewhere in New Jersey.

My grandmother, born in 1889, was about five years younger than my grandfather. They met in Vermont, married in their early twenties, and lived in Lynn, Massachusetts for a short time before moving in 1913 or 1914 to Detroit where they bought one of the first homes in a newly developing neighborhood on the city's near west side. I remember my grandmother telling me that when they first occupied their stately two-story home it was surrounded by open fields and she could see for quite a distance. Thirty-five years later when as a young child in the late 1940s I occasionally stayed with my grandparents at that house, it was just one of many similar homes lining the 1900 block of Sturtevant Street and parallel streets between Twelfth – now Rosa Parks Boulevard – and Fourteenth. There were no long views.

Shortly after moving to Detroit, my grandmother gave birth to a son, and a few years later, in 1916, to twin boys, one of whom was to be my father. My father's twin brother did not survive, but died in infancy. His older brother contracted diphtheria and succumbed to the disease at the age of seven years, leaving my father as my grandparents' only child.

My grandfather Fred worked as a men's clothing salesman, and in early twentieth-century Detroit he found lucrative employment with companies specializing in tailoring men's suits for business executives in the burgeoning automobile industry. At that time, and well into mid century, many businessmen did not buy their suits ready-made off the rack, but custom tailored by local tailoring companies. My grandfather had a big sample case in which he carried swatches of available fabrics from which his clients could choose. He would go to their homes, many in Grosse Pointe or Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills, by appointment, usually in the evenings, measure them, record specifications regarding their design preferences, then have the suits fabricated by tailors working for his employer in Detroit. Finally he would deliver the suits, fit them, and manage any necessary alterations to ensure complete satisfaction of his customers.

My grandfather's work involved driving, and he enjoyed owning and driving the cars manufactured by companies that employed his customers. During earlier years, his preference was for Hupmobiles, of which he had owned several. As a young boy, I remember him driving a light green 1949 Studebaker. Shortly before his death he purchased a green 1956 Ford V8 sedan. I remember riding with him in that car. He loved stepping hard on the gas and accelerating quickly.

My grandfather was a little man with a good sense of humor, personable, and very successful at his occupation. As a boy, I knew him as a man in his sixties, about five feet four inches tall, bald, jocular, and totally devoted to my grandmother, a teetotaler who forbade him to drink alcoholic beverages of any kind. The history of that I do not know. The beverage of choice during family visits was usually Vernor's ginger ale, a Detroit institution. My grandfather loved children. In the early 1950s I remember him bouncing my younger brother Mark on his knee and chanting, "Hi tinka tong tong! Yip yip yip!" I don't know where that came from, but my brother found it great fun and always got the giggles. By that time my grandparents had moved away from their old neighborhood in Detroit. They had a smaller two-bedroom single-story house built on a quiet dead-end section of North Lafayette Avenue in Royal Oak, a northern suburb of Detroit. They moved into that house in 1954. It was about a mile from the house at 1032 Ferris Avenue in Royal Oak that my parents had purchased in the mid 1940s where I lived the first fifteen years of my life. The new house had a screened back porch, similar to the screened porch on the old house in Detroit, that served as the preferred place for family gatherings in good weather. My grandmother would serve dinner on the porch, my parents and grandparents would sit and talk, and my grandmother would tell stories.

At some point my grandparents had owned a cottage on Torch Lake, on the northern end of Michigan's lower peninsula, near Traverse City. One of my grandmother's favorite stories had to do with the time that a bat – she called it the “batty mouse” – had taken up residence under the roof in their cottage and she chased it out with a broom. My brother and I never got tired of hearing that story. During visits, we would say to her, “Grandma, tell us the story of the batty mouse.” And she would tell it again and again. Sometime before I was born in 1944 the cottage on Torch Lake had been sold. My dad loved that lake, and on several occasions my parents rented a cottage on Torch Lake and we spent a week or two there in the summertime.

My grandmother, somewhat taller than my grandfather and always very thin, was a consummate homemaker and a good cook. Her house was always organized and immaculately clean. She did all the work herself, with no maid or helpers to assist. She also enjoyed gardening and grew tomatoes and other vegetables in her garden. To my knowledge, my grandfather's work was the sole support of the family. My grandmother never worked outside the home. Although my grandfather earned good money, they had saved very little by the time the Great Depression hit in the early 1930s. It was a hard time for them, but they made it through and kept their home. Afterwards they became dedicated savers and vowed never to find themselves in such precarious financial straights again. My grandfather also enjoyed investing in the stock market, and managed to put aside a substantial nest egg during his later life.

My paternal grandparents were Christians, raised in the Congregational Church, as was common in New England, and later became Unitarian/Universalist. Or perhaps it was that my grandmother's family had been Congregationalist and my grandfather's parents Unitarians. The Packard family reunions were always held at the Congregational church on Braintree Hill in Vermont. In any case, they prayed for the well being of their children. But the experience of losing two of them when very young made it appear to them that prayers were not answered. After that, they lost faith and left the church, never to return. My father, consequently, was raised with no overt Christian affiliations, although the historical basis was there. Nonetheless, my grandparents were very moral people, lived an exemplary life, and my father was raised in that very strict moral tradition.

Other than family times at Torch Lake, I don't know much about my father's life as a child. I do know that he learned to swim, and years later when we went to Torch Lake and also a couple of times rented a cottage on Hamlin Lake near the shores of Lake Michigan on the west side of the state, he would occasionally leave the dock and swim so far out into the lake, on his own, that I could barely see him. It must have been a mile or so, and he would float on his back, and later return to shore. As a boy, despite my dad's example, I had difficulty learning to swim. At the lakes, I preferred to paddle around in a rowboat or a canoe. My father also enjoyed canoeing, and on several occasions my parents rented one and would paddle around the lake with my brother and me between them.

When I was eight years old, my dad decided it really was time for me to learn to swim. He enrolled me in a beginning swim class at the Highland Park YMCA, which was equipped with a large indoor pool. Highland Park, a city within a city, surrounded by Detroit, was not far from the neighborhood where my grandparents' Detroit home had been located and my Dad had grown up. The swimming instruction failed, however. I learned to dog paddle, but could never complete the exercise, swimming the length of the pool, that was required to graduate from the beginning class to intermediate. As I remained in the beginning class through several sessions, the instructor began using me to demonstrate the dog paddle to new students. I eventually gave it up, and told my dad I no longer wanted to take swimming lessons. I remained a non-swimmer until my freshman year at Dondero High School in Royal Oak, where there was also a large pool and swimming was a required physical education class. For some reason, at the age of fourteen, that inspired me to learn. Perhaps it was because we had girls in our swimming classes at Dondero, and I didn't want to appear to be too much of a wimp.

The swimming classes at the YMCA had been boys only, and we swam nude. They also had swim classes for girls there. They were separate, although held in the same pool. I was very curious as to whether the girls also swam nude, but never discovered the answer to that question. The boys' swim classes at the YMCA were racially mixed. It was the first time I had ever had any contact with black boys, yet here we were all getting undressed in the locker room, walking around, swimming, and showering naked. Royal Oak, where I lived with my parents, did not have any black kids or black families. That situation extended to my first year of high school at Dondero, where in 1958 there were no black students, and to my final years of high school in Northville, Michigan, where there were no black families.

While growing up my father had also taken flying lessons and learned to fly light airplanes. I don't know if he did that before or after he learned to drive a car, but he always liked to tell me that, despite the fact that most teenagers of my generation learned to drive at age fifteen and never learned to fly, he thought learning to fly before learning to drive would be good experience.

My father attended high school at Detroit Central High School, which was located at 2425 Tuxedo Street, about eight blocks from his home, and afterwards took engineering classes at Wayne University, formerly the College of the City of Detroit, which was about three miles from home. It must have been a pretty small world. Still operated by the Detroit Board of Education at the time, Wayne was not yet a state university. He obtained his degree in electrical engineering shortly before joining the US Army Air Corps during World War II. Neither of his parents had attended college. My father's generation was the first to become college educated.

My mother was born in 1921 and lived with her parents in a big two-story home at 2002 Cortland Street, about two blocks from my father's parents' house. My mother

was also a twin, and like my father, her twin sister did not survive. I don't know at what age my mother's sister died, but for some reason I don't think it was in infancy. I think I remember seeing a photo of them when they were young girls. Not quite sure of that, though.

My mother, Ruth Margaret née McClellan, also attended Central High School and later received secretarial training at a business school in Detroit, developing standard secretarial skills of the time including typing and shorthand. She would have been four or five years behind my father at Central High, but my mother's older brothers Jim and Don were classmates of my father both at Central High and at Wayne University. My maternal grandfather was a mechanical engineer, with a degree from Beloit College in Ohio. My mother's parents, Margaret née Bruck and James McClellan, had moved to Detroit from Dayton, Ohio, about the same time that my dad's parents moved from New England. My maternal grandfather worked on conveyor systems for Jervis B. Webb & Company in Detroit, serving the needs of auto manufacturers. All of his three sons also became engineers after studying at Wayne. For some reason which I never understood, my mother's family was very musical. Her father had a mandolin, but I never saw him play it. My mother had moderate skill as a pianist, and her older brothers Jim and Don were violinists who both played with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Jim, actually, played the viola. I have a vague recollection that Don may have been a cellist. I remember her younger brother Calvin had a trumpet when I was a small child, but never played professionally. He also had a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, a 1936 he once told me. I think he was either in his last year of high school or early college when I saw these things. Jim became a chemical engineer. Don and Cal were mechanical engineers.

One way or another, my mother and father met and fell in love. They married in 1943. Shortly after that, my mother joined my father in New Hampshire, where he was stationed at Grenier Army Airfield in Manchester. They rented an apartment in Derry, or perhaps East Derry, New Hampshire, where I was born in 1944. My father, at some point, was transferred to RCAF Gander Air Station in Newfoundland, while my mother remained in New Hampshire. He never saw overseas service nor did he pilot airplanes in the military, but instead served in support roles. After my father was discharged from the US Army in 1945, my parents moved back to Michigan and purchased their home in Royal Oak. I was six months old at that time.

My father obtained work as an electrical engineer with Square D Company and later at Bendix Aviation where he worked on radar systems. During my childhood, his job at Bendix was located in Detroit, and most days he would commute from home in Royal Oak on electric streetcars that ran along Woodward Avenue into the city. My parents had only one car during the 1940s, until about 1954, and I remember riding with my mother to drop my dad at the streetcar line in the mornings, where we would wave goodbye as he boarded the streetcar, and pick him up when he returned from work in the evenings. One time when he had to go to the plant to do some work on a Saturday, he drove into the city in the car and took me with him.

My father supported Dwight Eisenhower when he ran for President in 1952. He brought home a bunch of "I Like Ike" buttons, and as an eight-year-old kid I wore one. Then one day during the campaign, Eisenhower came to Royal Oak. My mother took me to the center of town, and we listened to Eisenhower make a speech from the rear platform of the caboose on a train. My three-year-old brother Mark must have been with us too. I wonder if he remembers. After the speech, the big steam engine fired up and pulled the train out of town. It was very impressive, the first time I had seen a steam engine puffing and hissing with all the power to pull a train out of the station.

In the late 1950s, Bendix Aviation relocated its radar systems operations from Detroit to suburban Southfield, Michigan, and my dad's job was similarly relocated. Meanwhile, his parents had moved from Detroit to Royal Oak, and my maternal grandparents, when my grandfather retired in the late 1950s, sold their house on Cortland Street and purchased a smaller single-level home on the northwest edge of Detroit, at the corner of Wormer and Curtis, near the border with Redford, Michigan. After that, there was little reason for my parents ever to go into the central city of Detroit. Earlier, my mother had enjoyed shopping at downtown Detroit stores, especially the large JL Hudson Company department store downtown on Woodward Avenue. Also, we had made a family expedition each year to watch the Thanksgiving Day parade down Woodward Avenue in the city, which terminated with the arrival of Santa Claus at the downtown Hudson's store. For a time, my grandfather Fred had worked for Simsons, a tailoring company with a second floor office suite overlooking Woodward Avenue with large floor-to-ceiling windows, and we watched the parade from their offices. But my grandfather Fred passed away in 1957, and after JL Hudson company built a big new suburban store that anchored the Northland Shopping Mall in Southfield, closer to my parents' home in Royal Oak, there was even less reason to go into the city. The same was true, I think, for a lot of other people who had moved to the suburbs. Automobiles were becoming the preferred mode of transportation, and the streetcar line down Woodward Avenue connecting the northern suburbs including Royal Oak with the central city of Detroit ceased operation in 1956.

One of the motivations for leaving the old neighborhood in the city was that black families had begun to purchase homes and move into the area. There was a feeling that would eventually depress housing values. My grandparents did not seem to have any particular dislike for black people as individuals. In fact, my maternal grandmother, for many years, had a black maid who came to her home and helped with cleaning and other chores. But it seemed there was something scary about having blacks as neighbors, on an equal footing. As whites increasingly migrated from Detroit to the suburbs, black families bought the homes. But, like my dad's employer, Bendix Aviation, many companies also moved operations from the city of Detroit to suburban locations. Not only did employment become less convenient geographically for many still residing in Detroit, but there were no affirmative

action programs at that time and companies run by whites with a history of employing whites were reticent to hire black workers.

Thus the so-called white flight of the 1950s and early 1960s contributed to economic decline and frustration in the city of Detroit. Symptomatic of that, as in other large cities across the country, was the rioting that erupted in July, 1967. According to Wikipedia, the rioting began as a result of a police raid on an unlicensed after-hours bar at the corner of Twelfth Street and Clairmount Avenue. That location, the epicenter of five days of destructive violence, was just a few city blocks from my grandparents' former homes on Detroit's near west side. The rioting quickly spread to many other areas of the city.

About twenty-five years later, in the early 1990s, after having lived in Massachusetts for a number of years and then in California, I had occasion to drive through my grandparents' old neighborhood on Sturtevant and Cortland Streets between Rosa Parks Boulevard and Fourteenth. At least half the houses that were there when I was a child, including those where my mother and father grew up, were gone, replaced by vacant lots with grass grown high, as if the area was in the process of reverting to country. Many of the houses that remained were boarded up. Others had old junk cars in their yards. Now, after another twenty years, the situation is not much changed, as can be seen from a review of images of the area courtesy of Google Maps. To be fair, the block of Sturtevant Street where my father's parent's house was located looks a little more well-maintained. The block of Cortland Street where my mother's parents lived just two blocks away looks very run down and reminds me of some of the poorest small towns in rural areas of America.

Other than his love of swimming, my father was not an athletic person, nor did he have any interest in spectator sports like baseball and football. Consequently, in my younger childhood I had no influence encouraging me to interest in such things. During my early school years, I learned that many, in fact a majority, of boys in my classes were very interested in baseball and football, both as participants and as fans and spectators. By comparison, my lack of interest in such manly sports tended to identify me as a sissy. I had one classmate in elementary school in particular who persisted in calling me a "Percy" in reference, I think, to my lack of interest in sports. The term "Percy" seemed to be a synonym for sissy. This disturbed me greatly, but there wasn't much I could do about it. Except, on one occasion where another boy from my elementary school who was a bit of a bully attempted to terrorize me while walking home from school one day. I remember yelling at him and pursuing him to the front steps of his parents home, where I punched him in the mouth with my fist. It made me feel masculine. Apparently I had the testosterone, if not the customary outlets for expressing it. Unfortunately, one of his teeth wounded my hand and produced an infection that required a trip to the doctor and treatment with antibiotics. That incident rather cured me of violent tendencies.

In his times at home with family, my father tended to indulge in do-it-yourself projects. The house my parents had purchased in Royal Oak included a large 1-1/2-car detached garage, which provided space for tools. My father purchased a number of power tools including a table saw for woodworking, also a disk sander and a large noisy power planer. With those, when his children were young, he built toys and Christmas gifts. For me, when I was in sixth or seventh grade, he built a sort of laboratory-bench table with a cement-board top to go along with a chemistry kit he assembled and gave to me as a Christmas gift. It was not the usual toy chemistry set a parent could purchase for a child at that time. Rather, my father, presumably as leftovers from some college chemistry class, had stored in our cellar a number of bottles of chemicals like potassium iodide, copper sulfate crystals, and liquid mercury metal. He purchased a few more of those and a variety of apparatus such as beakers, flasks, a Bunsen burner, test tubes, and a ring stand from a local chemical laboratory supply house, and packaged them into a gift for me. In addition, he extended a gas line from the heater in the cellar of our house, which by that time had been converted from its original coal-burning furnace for heating to a gas burning central heater. The gas-line extension terminated at the location where the laboratory bench he had built for me was placed, with a stopcock and fitting for attaching the rubber hose to my Bunsen burner. I had shown an interest in chemistry by reading a chemistry textbook, probably college-level, that my dad had in the bookcase in our living room. Based on that limited knowledge of chemistry, I indulged in a variety of minor experiments with my new chemistry kit, some of them potentially dangerous, such as creating artificial geysers with boiling water from glass flasks transmitted through rubber tubing and distilling mercury, breathing the vapor of which could have caused real illness. I was lucky that, to my knowledge, I never suffered any serious consequences from these activities. But, looking back, it's clear to me that informed parental supervision was lacking.

I don't remember any specific projects resulting in gifts for my five-year-younger brother Mark, but when my sister Nancy, ten years younger than I, was very young, I remember my father building an elaborate two-story doll house with his woodworking tools in the garage and stocking it with miniature furniture as a Christmas gift.

In the bookcase in our living room in Royal Oak, my dad also had, among other books, textbooks on physics and elementary electronics. I read those and became interested. In response to that interest, my father began buying me Heathkits, which were popular at that time. They were packages of electronic components and custom fixtures along with instructions that allowed one to assemble, by screwing together components and soldering wires, functional electronic devices – high-fidelity amplifiers and electronic test equipment like voltmeters. I built a few of those and once set up an audio system that could talk to trick-or-treaters through a jack-o-lantern on our front porch.

My dad also liked doing projects around the house in his spare time. In the cellar, he built a set of storage shelves extending along the entire front wall, and he installed plumbing and a shower head then built a cinder block enclosure in the cellar that would allow us to shower there rather than bathe in the bathtub upstairs. In the single bath of our two-bedroom home there was no shower. Showering in the cellar with concrete floors and a cinder-block stall was a little primitive. But, at least, we had a shower.

My dad also repainted the clapboard siding on our little Cape-Cod style house from its original yellow to an attractive dark grey with white trim, and he added a little portal with a scooped sheet metal roof over the small front porch – not especially functional, but it was aesthetically pleasing.

At some point the floor in the garage must have started to crack, so my dad had a new floor of about four inch thick concrete poured on top of it. The new floor extended about six feet out from the door of the garage, but he never had concrete poured to elevate the driveway or create a ramp up to the new level. So there was always after that this little four-inch bump we had to go up to put a car or a bicycle in the garage. Some time later he decided to extend the backside of the garage so that it would accommodate two cars parked one behind the other rather than just one. He framed up and enclosed new walls, supported by small concrete footings. But the floor inside was still soil, a few inches below the concrete floor in the original garage. And it stayed that way for several years, in fact until the house was sold. So despite the fact that the objective was to allow two cars in the garage, two cars could never be put in there and the added space went to waste. This was my first hint that my dad had a tendency to start projects that he would never finish.

Another project, probably when I was about ten years old: my dad built a little shelf about two feet wide along the front wall of the cellar in our house, below the shelves he had built earlier, painted it green, and installed tracks on top of little cork trackbeds for an HO-scale model railroad. He bought a couple of miniature engines and a few train cars and a transformer to power them, and we had a model railroad that ran the width of the house, about fifty feet, along the front wall of the cellar.

When I was nine years old, my father bought me my first bicycle. It was a Raleigh “English Racer” lightweight bike with three-speed rear hub. It took me quite a while to learn to ride. My dad would take me out on the sidewalk in front of our house and guide me, holding the bike upright with his hand until I had gained sufficient speed, then letting go. The first few times I wobbled and crashed. But I eventually learned to balance and became a good bicycle rider. After that, I rode that bicycle all over our neighborhood, exploring, and often on dirt paths through little woods and parks. When I was in junior high school, I had a paper route, an area about three blocks long on Ferris Avenue between Gardenia Street and Twelve Mile Road where I would deliver the Royal Oak Tribune daily paper, riding my bicycle to do so.

The first car I remember my parents having was a 1940s era dark blue two-door Plymouth coupe. It had no back seats, but just an open area connected to the trunk. They would put me back there with my blankets to ride. Eventually that car was traded in for a black Nash of similar shape, but a four-door with a back seat where I could ride. Two things I remember about that. One is the day we stopped for ice cream while out driving. I got a cone, and had trouble eating it fast enough in the car, so some ice cream dripped on the seat. My dad got very angry about that and subsequently I was forbidden to ever eat an ice cream cone in the car. I still tend to avoid ice cream cones because I can't eat them fast enough. Another was one day when I was in the back seat and my father stopped the car in our driveway and got out to open the gate, which was supported by two large posts on each side. Riding in the back seat and seeing we were home, I opened the door to get out. But before I could climb out, my dad got back in the driver's seat and began to pull the car forward through the gate toward the garage. The back-seat doors on that Nash sedan were suicide doors, meaning that they were hinged from the backside, so if they were open and the car moved forward, the wind or any object they encountered would likely rip the doors off the hinges or bend them rather than simply pushing them closed. As my dad pulled the car through the gate, the large gatepost on the right caught the door that I had opened and tore it off its hinges. Fortunately I was still safely in the back seat when the car started to move. Apparently my dad had failed to notice that I had opened the door. He was livid. I had never seen him that angry. But he had the car repaired. Although, after the door had been replaced, there was still a time when there was no trim panel on the inside. One day, riding in that car, I became fascinated by the structure of the inside of the door without the trim panel. I stuck my foot in there and got it caught. My father had to open the door and work to release my shoe from the frame of the. Again he was very angry.

Sometime around 1953 my dad traded the Nash for a Willys station wagon. It looked a bit like a Jeep, but it was a four-door with an enclosed back end. The back end had a liftgate and a tailgate that opened so it could be used to haul things. One of my dad's friends bought a property with an old barn that he decided to demolish. My dad helped tear down the barn and his friend told him he could have some of the large structural timbers. They were made of red elm wood, which my dad thought was unique. He loaded several of the timbers in the back of the Willys. They extended out several feet beyond the tailgate, so he had to put red flags on them. Also they were so heavy the back of the car sagged and the timbers were practically dragging on the roadway. But we managed to drive with the timbers to a sawmill, where my dad had them sawed into one-inch thick planks. It was the biggest saw I had ever seen, a circular saw probably about three feet in diameter. Afterward, we hauled the planks home in the back of the Willys and stored them in the garage. My dad planed the planks with his power planer, assembled several of the planks horizontally and glued them to make wide red elm panels that he planned to assemble into furniture. The work was very intricate and well done. However, the

panels then sat in the garage for several years. No furniture was ever built from them.

During that time, in the early 1950s, my dad had some good friends from work at Bendix. Occasionally, they would throw parties at their homes in Detroit, and my dad would take us there. What I remember, mostly, was that there was a lot of ethnic identification. My dad would refer to his friends as “the Swede” or “the Italian” or whatever other nationality they might be. One of them in particular I remember. He was a bit dark, swarthy. His name was Pinkus. Not sure what nationality that might have been. Maybe German. I don’t remember there being any black people at any of the gatherings. My father’s friends all knew him as Dick Chadwick. My grandmother always called him Richard.

In 1954 my parents bought a light blue Willys sedan. It had, if memory serves, a six-cylinder engine that was quite a bit more powerful than the four-cylinder engine in my father’s Willys station wagon. I also remember it as having little raised fins on the rear fenders, sort of a copy of Cadillac designs of that era. My parents drove that sedan with my brother and me to New England for my grandmother’s family reunion. It had a stick shift with an overdrive transmission. When driving through the mountains in Pennsylvania on uphill grades the transmission would drop out of overdrive and I remember feeling that it got a lot more power and accelerated up the hills.

My father about that time became infatuated with little English cars. He saw an advertisement for a used 1952 Austin A40. We went to look at it, and he bought it. In retrospect, I don’t know why. The car, dark green and only about three years old, had rusted out with multiple perforations through all the fenders. This was not atypical for cars driven in the Detroit area, a consequence of the massive amounts of corrosive salt, obtained from mines under the city, spread on the roads to melt snow and ice during the winters. I guess the price was right. He drove it for a few months, but when the engine failed, my dad went looking for another Austin A40. He found one in better condition, beige, no rust. Both of them had nice leather interiors. This one had a sliding sun roof. Meanwhile, my dad installed a block-and-tackle hooked to a wooden frame that he built in the garage strong enough for lifting the engines out of these cars. Remembering now, I think the engine in his 1952 Willys wagon had failed, and he first pulled that ending out in order to rebuild it. I think he bought the first Austin to drive while he was working on the Willys engine. Then, when he bought the second Austin, he pulled the engine out of the first to work on that. Eventually that engine was rebuilt and installed in the newer one. The four cylinder engines in all these vehicles seemed to be good for about 20,000 miles, then needed to be rebuilt. Totally inadequate by current standards. My father also did other mechanical work on his cars. I remember him replacing the brake linings once on the Willys wagon.

I must have inherited my dad's penchant for do-it-yourself mechanics. When my bicycle was a few years old, I remember completely disassembling the rear hub where the three-speed gearbox mechanism was located, then putting it back together.

In 1957, my dad purchased a brand new English Ford Anglia sedan. I remember him driving me to Whittier elementary school occasionally in that car. I don't know whatever happened to the Willys and the Austins. I guess he sold them. The little English cars that my dad liked were an oddity in Detroit at that time. People were driving ever larger "land boats" produced by the auto industry there. I remember when I was in junior high school getting rides home occasionally from my classmate John Block's mother who drove a large pink 1957 Buick V8 Roadmaster. She loved to gun the engine and take off with that thing. The suspension was very soft and it really tended to swish around, which made the ride feel much like riding in a large speedboat.

Despite his attraction to foreign-built cars, my father was not a world traveler. His world, by modern standards, was rather small, consisting almost exclusively of Michigan, New England, and the northeastern United States. His engineering work at Bendix occasionally involved travel to New Jersey. He once made a business trip or two to California, but decided he really didn't like the place. His time during World War II stationed at the air base in Gander, Newfoundland, was his only significant time spent in another country. There were a couple of trips to New England on family vacations that involved brief visits to Canada, driving through southern Ontario from Detroit to Niagara Falls en route, and I think my parents did drive to Colorado once to visit my mother's younger brother Calvin who had relocated to the Denver area with his family. Neither of my parents ever crossed an ocean or traveled to another continent. Also, despite his early experience piloting small airplanes, my father was not a fan of commercial air travel. In fact, I cannot remember any specific instance when my parents flew on a commercial airliner, although they may have done so on one trip to California in the early 1980s to visit my young family after I had moved there. Now that I think of it, my father must have flown to California on those brief business trips during the 1950s. Perhaps the commercial air travel was one reason he didn't like going there. Other than that, all travel was by automobile. What my father knew of other countries came almost exclusively from reading, and occasionally from watching programs on educational television, of which he was an early fan during the 1950s. National Geographic was one of his favorite magazines. The lack of direct travel experience did not, however, prevent my dad from expounding as an armchair expert on the life and culture of other lands. One presentation I remember distinctly involved life in the Scilly Isles off the coast of Great Britain, a fascination for which my dad had acquired from an article he read in National Geographic. In later years he became a fan of Provence, France, through the books of Peter Mayle and sent me a copy of at least one of them as recommended reading. With regard to world travel, however, my dad was a

dreamer, not a doer. Nor, to my knowledge, did he ever study or learn a bit of another language.

My dad was a pretty strict disciplinarian. He was especially concerned about how his children treated other people, and taught us to respect our neighbors' property and rights. My siblings and I, all separated by five years, would occasionally get rowdy, argue with one another, and even torment my mother, who was one of the sweetest people I've ever known. My father had little tolerance for that sort of behavior, and when he became aware of it there was often hell to pay. Other infractions also were likely to result in corporeal punishment, which was generously dispensed, but in a somewhat controlled fashion. Between the floor joists in our cellar, above the shelves that my dad had built along the front wall, he used to store scraps of wood left over from his woodworking projects. Most were sticks under about one inch thick and perhaps two or three feet in length. If I misbehaved in a way that my father felt required punishment, he would say to me, ominously, "Go down to the basement and pick out a stick." I knew the drill. I would go downstairs and scan through the available scraps of wood, hoping to find a lightweight piece that would do the least damage. Having chosen one, I would take it down and stand there holding it, waiting for my father. After a minute or two, he would come down the stairs, take the stick from my hand, and tell me to bend over. Then he would whack me on the butt with several strong blows. It really hurt and often raised a welt or two. But the dreaded stick spanking was enough to make me really think twice about doing anything that might displease my dad. I don't remember precisely, but I think my younger brother Mark probably experienced similar disciplinary procedures. My sister Nancy, ten years younger than I, was spared.

Occasionally my father's disciplinary practices could be rather arbitrary. When I was in elementary school, one of the popular children's programs on television was the Howdy Doody show, with Buffalo Bob, Clarabel the Clown, Indian Princess Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring, and a variety of marionette characters including Mr. Bluster, Flubadub, and Howdy himself. It was broadcast each weekday afternoon at four o'clock. My parents had purchased their first television, an old-fashioned black and white model, in about 1950. Then, in 1954 or so, they bought a Magnavox television with a larger screen and a modern glass front. There were many programs my parents liked to watch, especially those on the educational channel. But for some reason I did not understand, my father hated the Howdy Doody show, and he forbade me and my brother to watch it. Normally, however, my dad did not arrive home from work until after five PM, and my mother was more lenient and would let us watch Howdy Doody in my dad's absence. One afternoon, however, my dad surprised us by arriving home early. When he found us watching Howdy Doody, he flew into a rage. He kicked the Magnavox TV with his foot, knocking it over on the floor and breaking the large pane of glass that enclosed the front of it. Fortunately, the large vacuum picture tube did not shatter. Those tubes were known to explode if dropped and generate flying glass shards that could do a lot of damage. I think we still managed to sneak in an occasional viewing of Howdy Doody, but the TV was

never repaired. It still operated, but the missing glass front and the exposed picture tube was a reminder of what might happen if we got caught again.

On other matters, however, my father could be rather lenient. One, during the time I was in junior high school, was the issue of smoking cigarettes. My father, during the early years of my childhood, had been a smoker. Only occasionally did he smoke cigarettes. Mostly it was cigars, which he said he preferred because he did not inhale cigar smoke, therefore thought smoking cigars was safer. Teenagers of my generation seemed to have a fascination with smoking cigarettes. Before I had even tried it, my dad told me that when he was a teenager his father had told him that if he was going to smoke he should smoke at home, not hide the activity from his parents. My dad told me the same thing, but I was reticent to do it. I thought it was a trick, and if I did smoke at home I would be subject to some kind of disciplinary action or perhaps constant lectures. So, when I was in junior high school and did begin smoking, I would hide my cigarettes in the basement and only smoke there when nobody else was around to see. Mostly, I would take a cigarette with me when I walked to school and smoke it when I walked through an alley where nobody would see me. Stores were not supposed to sell cigarettes to teenagers, but many of them would, especially if you lied and said they were for your mom. The guy behind the counter would sort of wink and say OK. There was a little neighborhood store on Gardenia Street about two blocks from my parents' home in Royal Oak – my mother always called it “The Little Store” – where I could buy cigarettes. I had a friend, another boy about my age who lived in the neighborhood. His name was Harry Trotter, and he was a bit of what we called a “hood” with long hair and some tough mannerisms. Harry and I used to get a pack of cigarettes and then sit on a bench in an alcove next to the Little Store where we couldn't be seen from the street and smoke. At the beginning we usually smoked non-filter cigarettes like Lucky Strikes, Camels, or Pall Malls. Later on I graduated to filter brands like Marlboroughs, Winstons, and the mentholated Newports. My smoking habit grew during the time I was in college and graduate school. I started jogging while I was in graduate school and used to say I had to do that because it was aerobic and I thought it counteracted the effects of smoking. About the time I left graduate school and started working, the time during which my children were born, I was up to smoking about a pack per day and started trying to quit. I finally did quit successfully a few years later after changing jobs and moving to California. By the time I quit, in my late thirties, I had been smoking cigarettes, and inhaling, for about twenty years. I would have been a lot better off if my dad had told me not to do it. Peer pressure was such that I might have done it anyway, but perhaps less.

As for religious training in my immediate family, for the boys there was very little. My mother, whose mother and brothers were devout Presbyterians, attended church frequently. On a few occasions when I was very young, she took me with her to Sunday services. My father, by contrast, virtually never attended church except for special occasions like weddings and funerals. Also, there was no requirement that I or my brother attend church. When I tired of it, I simply stopped going.

Neither of us received any real religious indoctrination, and neither of us ever attended Sunday school. For my sister, however, the situation was quite different. My father seemed to feel that religious training was more important for a girl. He encouraged my sister to attend church with my mother, and she also attended Sunday school regularly throughout her childhood. The ultimate result of this, I suppose, was that during high school my sister began dating the son of the Methodist minister in town. After high school, she studied at Grand Rapids Bible College for two years before returning closer to home and entering a nursing program. Eventually, she married Jerry, the minister's son, they became Baptists, later joined a more independent fundamentalist church, and their three children were raised as devout Christians. I, on the other hand, received my first real exposure to Christianity in high school. Most of my classmates in high school were Christians and regular churchgoers. Many of them were involved in church-associated youth activities, and they would occasionally invite me to join, but I would decline. Meanwhile, I had begun reading books on philosophy that caused me to think a bit differently. In particular, I enjoyed reading books by Bertrand Russell, and one in particular, Why I Am Not a Christian, struck home and is still in my library. I began telling my classmates that I was an atheist. Their typical reaction was to not take this seriously. Many times I was told, "You can't really believe that." It became clear to me that there was a big difference, a divide, created by early indoctrination in Christianity, and I suppose also other religions, that precluded other thought and any real communication with those of us who were left free to think more freely for ourselves about life and the world around us. That divide persists until this day. Faith in a deity, miracles, prayer, and supernatural events instilled during childhood tends to supersede the alternative – understanding of nature, scientific principles, and reality in the world later in life.

The absence of indoctrination leaves one free to think and draw conclusions from experience. It's not really a dispute about truth, because there cannot be two truths diametrically opposed to each other. Christianity teaches that the most important thing is faith and belief in the tenets of Judeo-Christian faith, even those that predate modern science and understanding of the universe and the world around us. Faith, to religious fundamentalists, is more important than truth. Absent early indoctrination in Christianity or any other religion, our faith tends to rest in education, science, and observation. Assertions in contraction of what we can see or what others have observed is met with skepticism. I went on to study chemistry and biological science in college. My brother became an architect, but as far as I can tell we have similar thoughts about religion. On many occasions my sister and I have communicated about issues like the validity of evolution, the most important concept of modern biology, vs. the idea of intelligent design, and despite an exchange of published materials designed to encourage one or the other of us to change our views, that is never likely to happen. I think my brother and my sister have a similar divide, although there is probably less communication between them about such issues. My father, in his old age, frequently expressed some frustration with my sister's religious and political views. Nonetheless, we always have been

able to maintain respectful and affectionate relationships between us as siblings and family members. The difficulty for modern societies, however, is that to the extent that dealing with the complications of modern life, technologies, and the increasing mechanization of the world and dominance of human society over nature requires true understanding, parents who indoctrinate their children early in life to believe in ancient myths in contrast to understanding modern realities may be limiting the ability of the human race to cope with the consequences and challenges of its own existence.

Recently, in the interest of understanding, I decided to read the Bible and worked my way through the King James translations of the Old and New Testaments over the course of several months. My sister, having learned of this, offered to suggest some publications and sources of information that would help me understand, but I decided to rely on my own comprehension. It has been an interesting exercise, and historically enlightening, but has not changed my mind about my own beliefs. I'm now in process of reading a recent translation of the Quran, also in the interest of understanding. So far, I am amazed at how much Islam has in common with Judeo-Christian beliefs. Perhaps I will discover some differences as I read further. Above all, I am fascinated by the question of what it is about the human mind that caused people to invent religions and to pass religious memes down from generation to generation through the ages. Also, why do religious beliefs continue to exist and strongly influence so many people in spite of advances in science that explain many of the phenomena that religious mythology may have been created to explain before there was real understanding. I continually have to remind myself when reading the Bible and the Quran that describe God creating heaven and earth and day and night and controlling the phases of the moon that when these books were written people still believed the Earth was flat and had no idea that Earth was a planet circulating in an orbit around the sun, or that the moon that appeared in the sky and changed its appearance monthly was a satellite circulating around the Earth. And the hypothesis that God created life, human beings, and all the other species on earth predated our current understanding of DNA. In fact, those who wrote these stories had no concept of chemistry in general. DNA, proteins, and the way they interact in the process of life were completely unknown. So how can anyone conversant with modern science continue to believe these ancient myths?

In addition to being educated as an electrical engineer, my father had also learned his father's trade, presumably by observation during his youth, and as my grandfather reached retirement age in the early to mid 1950s, my dad would occasionally pick up some of his business, working one or two nights a week servicing my grandfather's long-time clients who needed to order new business suits. My dad would take my grandfather's sample cases, visit the clients' homes, measure them and take their orders, then return when the suits had been tailored to assure proper fit and manage alterations as needed. This activity carried over to my high-school years. As a boy, I had never had a men's dress suit, but sometime in my junior or senior year of high school my dad arranged to have one tailored for me by

one of my grandfather's former employers. The suit was constructed from very heavy wool fabric and, style-wise, a bit old fashioned for my age group. It was, however, the only suit I had, and I wore it for dress events for several years, including my salutatory address to my graduating class at Northville High School.

In 1957, my grandfather Chadwick became very ill and was in the hospital for a long time. My dad took me to visit him there. Eventually, he died from the illness. At the time, I didn't know what the problem was. Years later my dad told me that his father had died from liver failure, brought on by toxicity from breathing vapors from adhesives used while he was laying asphalt tiles on the cement floor of the basement of his newly purchased home in Royal Oak. I remembered that a year or so earlier my dad's mother had been very ill with some intestinal complications. She had diverticulitis and required surgery. My grandfather had been very worried and had broken into tears one night when at our house for dinner during her hospitalization. My grandmother had also suffered periodically from minor strokes that would limit her activities for a few days. She survived the surgery and eventually lived to the age of ninety-eight years. When I learned that my grandfather had died at the age of seventy-three, I remember laying in bed and crying all night. My grandmother arranged a open-casket funeral service for him at a local funeral home. He had a lot of friends who came and filed by the casket where he was laid out looking more peaceful than in life. It was a very emotional occasion.

In the early 1950's, my parents had started looking for a lot to buy on which they could build a new house. My dad wanted more land. His idea was to buy what he regarded as a "small farm." He had been reading books about Ohio farm country by an author named Louis Bromfield, and he was becoming infatuated with the idea of farming, although he didn't really have any idea how to do it. A lot of the searching was for land in the Rochester, Michigan, area, not far north of Royal Oak. At one point, they found a two-acre lot in Romeo, Michigan. They made an offer on that, but it was rejected. Finally they found a five acre lot in subdivision called Westview Estates that had been created from an 80-acre farm in Northville Township, about three miles west of the town of Northville, Michigan, on Eight Mile Road in northwestern Wayne County, about 40 miles from Detroit. A single dead-end gravel road, Westview Drive, had been built by the developer to access the approximately twenty lots, which varied in size from two to seven acres, and a spring-fed pond had been carved into the front of one of the larger lots just across the road from my parents' property. They purchased the lot in 1953 on a land contract, to be paid for in installments over a period of several years. It would be several years before my parents began construction of a house on the property. Early on during that time, however, my father purchased a two-wheel walking tractor from Montgomery Ward and equipped it with a plow at the rear and a sickle bar for mowing tall grass on the front. I remember he made a wooden ramp that allowed him to load the tractor into the back end of the 1952 Willys station wagon, and he would haul it to the Northville property where he would unload it, attach the appropriate accessory, and use it to mow grass or plow a garden plot. I don't remember what was grown in the garden,

likely nothing of much significance. My dad proved to be not much of a gardener despite his desire to own a small farm. When I became old enough, he taught me to start and run that little orange tractor, which had about a five horsepower single-cylinder engine, and I would walk behind it mowing the long grass all over that property.

My dad made drawings and hired a contractor to begin construction of the house he had designed with the intention that he would participate and complete its construction once the foundations and the shell were in place. My parents sold their house in Royal Oak, and in the summer of 1959 we moved to a rented house in Willowbrook Village area of Novi, Michigan, a few miles from the new property, where we could more conveniently supervise and participate in construction of the house. Novi at that time did not have its own high school, so I enrolled in Northville High School as a sophomore, a tenth grader, and my brother began attending grade school in Novi. My sister enrolled in a kindergarten class in Novi. We lived in that rented house for about a year, until the new house was ready for occupancy, although still unfinished.

There were conflicts from the beginning. The first masonry contractor did not properly form the footings for the cellar walls. My dad had to fire the contractor, have the footings ripped out, and hire a new contractor to do the work properly. Once past that difficulty, the footings and cinderblock basement walls were put in place and my father assumed responsibility for strengthening the walls with rebar. I remember it was autumn and getting cold, but we were walking around on top of these eight-inch wide eight-foot high cinderblock walls stuffing rebar down the holes in the blocks and mixing a liquid concrete mixture in a five-gallon drum and pouring it down the holes. I wasn't very good at balancing on the walls. My dad didn't seem to have that problem, so he did most of the pouring. One of the problems, from my standpoint however, is that he would often stop and think for quite a while about what to do next. I got bored during those times. Then he would look at me and say, "Why are you just standing there? Do something." I may have been too reticent to say, "I'm waiting for you to decide what we're doing and give instructions." But that's what I was thinking. In any case, I eventually got tired of this routine and decided to avoid helping my dad with construction work whenever possible.

Once the basement walls were reinforced, my dad had specified that rather than frame up the floors for the main level of the house with wood, the way most homes were built, he would build the floors from a commercial product called Flexicore. It consisted of self-supporting pre-cast pre-stressed concrete beams eight inches thick, sixteen inches wide, and twenty-five feet long. Each beam had two cylindrical air spaces extending their length that could be used as forced-air heating ducts, which would warm the floors as well as transport warm air to warm the airspace in the house. The Flexicore beams were delivered on a flatbed truck and lifted into place with a large crane. They weighed close to a ton each. Once in place, a two-inch thick

layer of concrete was poured on top to form a smooth floor. However, at each end a few inches were left clear of the poured floor, and my father drilled holes about three inches in diameter from the top into the cores using a rented diamond core drill. These holes provided venting for heated air to circulate to the upper level of the house. On the lower side, larger holes were cut near the center of each Flexicore beam and a plenum was installed on the lower level to conduct heated air from an oil-fired forced-air heater in the lower level of the house. Once this was all in place, a contractor framed and walled in the upper level of the house and peaked roof.

There were also some arguments with the contractor about the way the siding was applied to the outside of the house and the way the fireplaces were built, one upstairs and one downstairs. Nonetheless, it got done. There were a couple of vertical sections of plywood panels decorating the areas between windows upstairs and down, and the remaining siding was vertical tongue-and-groove planks. The next summer, 1960, with the upper structure of the house in place, we moved in. My dad suggested that I paint the exterior and he would pay me one dollar per hour for the work. I did so during that summer in order to earn some money. At the same time, my dad was not happy with the siding and said that sometime it would all have to be replaced.

My father, meanwhile, had left his job at Bendix Aviation and taken an engineering job with a little company located on Seven Mile Road in Livonia, Michigan, that built small radar scanners. The company was named Scanner Corporation of America, rather presumptuous I thought for a small company that employed at the most two or three dozen employees. My dad was responsible for testing scanners after they came out of manufacturing. He once took me to work with him, and he taught me about waveguides that were used to conduct microwave signals and showed me how he tested the scanners. Previously, while at Bendix, my dad had been offered promotions to supervisory positions on a couple of occasions. Both times he had turned them down. He said he didn't want the responsibility. He was more interested in having the freedom not to work too hard and not to be responsible for other people's performance than he was in earning a higher income.

At the end of 1958 my parents had traded my mother's 1954 Willys sedan in on a 1958 Chevrolet Nomad station wagon: A much larger car, although still with a stick shift and a six cylinder engine. As a fifteen year old teenager, even before taking a driver education course in high school, I had been watching my parents drive and believed I knew how to do it. A couple of times I convinced my mother to let me drive the Chevrolet wagon the last quarter mile or so from the main road, Eight Mile Road, down the gravel road, Westview Drive, where we lived. I was able to do it, although my mom freaked out a couple times when I stepped hard on the gas. I'm amazed that she was willing to let me drive it. She also allowed me to work on the engine, including cleaning spark plugs, re-gapping the ignition points, and adjusting the timing by turning the distributor. I really had only a rudimentary understanding of what I was doing and no prior experience. Luckily, I didn't make any irreversible

errors. In addition, I remember washing that Chevrolet with no understanding of how to properly care for the finish on an automobile. I used scouring powder to remove stains from the white paint, destroying its gloss in the process. My mom and my dad, apparently didn't care or weren't paying attention. As it developed, however, even new cars didn't last very long in the Detroit area at that time due to the massive amounts of salt used to melt ice and snow on the roads in the wintertime. The fenders on the Chevrolet wagon began rusting through from the inside when the car was only two years old. Consequently, preserving the beauty of the painted surfaces became pretty much a non-issue.

My first car was purchased shortly after I qualified for my driving license in the fall of 1960. My father took me shopping at used car lots on Livernois Avenue in Detroit. We saw a very nice 1948 Hudson that I liked for \$195. But I had only saved about \$100 from my newspaper routes and the painting of the house, and my father was not inclined to lend me the extra hundred, so we continued looking. Eventually we found a black 1954 Studebaker sedan for \$95. It was a bit of a wreck compared to the Hudson. The body was very rusty, and one front fender had come completely loose at the back end, so was flapping in the wind. But it was all I could afford, so I bought it. I couldn't believe that my dad forced me to buy that junker instead of the Hudson, which had no rust and was in good shape. I guess that was some sort of a lesson. The small six-cylinder engine in the Studebaker leaked and burned oil. Unbeknownst to me, the safety catch on the hood covering the engine was also damaged and non-functional. After I had owned the car for few months, I apparently had not fastened the hood securely and was driving on Eight Mile Road from the town of Northville toward home when the wind caught the hood and lifted it up and back over the windshield blinding me to the road ahead. I managed to slow down and pull to the shoulder of the road right next to the parking yard at Zayti's, a locally owned trucking company at the corner of Beck Road about a mile from my house. The hood was bent back over the roof of the car and the sheet metal was torn near the hinges. Somehow I managed to pull it down and fasten it so that I could see to drive home, but the only solution was to remove the damaged hood and drive the car with the engine exposed to the elements. I didn't have money to purchase a replacement hood or get the damaged one repaired.

In any case, that car remained my main mode of transportation, and I drove it to school and back, and also to various haunts where teenagers would hang out around town, notably the A&W root beer stand where friends would frequently congregate.

I do not remember my parents' home as being a particularly affectionate place. My father was respectful to my mother and demanded that I and my siblings be so also. We children felt that we were wanted and loved. But there was never, to my remembrance, any kissing or hugging, nor did anyone say to anyone else, "I love you." As a result, within the family, there was a certain awkwardness with regard to affection. Expressions of affection did not come easy, and the concept made us nervous. It was not for lack of wanting. In fact, we found ourselves very capable of

feeling and expressing affection for others, just not within the family. We were perhaps more affectionate, or at least seeking of affection, outside the family unit by virtue of its lack within. As for sex, I think my siblings and I all figured my parents must have done it at least three times, since there were three of us. That's all we knew. My dad's awkwardness with that area was evident to me when it came time for what is often called "the talk" when I was about thirteen years of age. We did not have the talk. Instead, my dad gave me a book about it and told me to read it and if I had any questions afterward we could discuss it. I didn't have any questions.

During my junior year of high school, I met a girl who had recently moved with her family back to Northville from Argentina. Her father was a Ford Motor Company executive who had been managing a truck plant there. Christine showed up one day in the middle of the school year in my English class, and we continually exchanged glances from across the room. Finally, I got up my courage and asked her out on a date. We dated for two or three months and planned to attend the all-school prom that year in the spring of 1961. Chris had worked in Argentina as a dance instructor. Other than having learned to waltz in grade school many years before, I had no idea how to dance. Nobody else in my family ever danced. I never once saw my father dance. In anticipation of the prom, Chris gave me dance lessons in the recreation room in the cellar of her parents' home. It was a comfortable furnished room with a fireplace, quite romantic, and between sessions of dance instruction we snuggled on the couch and kissed. For the prom, we double dated with another couple, and Christine's father checked out a powder blue 1961 Mercury convertible from the executive carpool at Ford Motor for me to drive to the prom. It was a great evening. After the prom we went to the Hillside Inn in nearby Plymouth, Michigan, for a late dinner.

Chris and I continued to date for a while, but my father had imposed a strict curfew that required me to be home by midnight every evening. I missed the curfew a couple of times, and my father responded by grounding me and confiscating my car. That resulted in an argument during which we actually exchanged blows, and my dad pushed me down the staircase in our house. I was so angry that I gave up on dating Chris any more. I don't think I ever explained to her what the problem was. I was just too embarrassed by the loss of my car. She soon afterward started dating an older guy, a year or two ahead of us in school, and we went our separate ways.

Meanwhile, I vowed that no way was I going back to riding the school bus to school. I started walking the three miles from home to school, down Eight Mile Road, and back home in the afternoons. I did this in mid-winter when, on a couple of occasions, it was so cold that by the time I got home my fingers were blue and I was risking frostbite. I don't think my parents ever really understood how pissed off I was about the whole situation, especially losing access to the car I had paid for. Occasionally, however, my mother would allow me to borrow her car to drive for dates or school activities. I was a little crazy driving the Chevy Nomad wagon, however. On a couple of occasions I remember racing home up Eight Mile Road at over eighty miles per

hour at night, very dangerous on a two-lane road with a forty mile-per-hour speed limit. Looking back, I'm lucky to have survived. The problem was that, being angry and feeling lack of respect for and no understanding from one's father tends to make a teenager lack respect for all authority, perhaps even contrary to good sense.

I had, for a time, and after school job at Lapham's, a primarily men's clothing store on Main Street in the center of Northville. Unfortunately, I was too shy at the time to effectively perform duties in the store that involved interaction with customers. In fact, although I was a pretty smart kid academically, I could never master the operation of the cash register. Consequently, I spent most of my time in the basement of the store managing inventory. My tenure was, consequently, short lived. Then, toward the middle of my senior year at Northville High, I found an after-school job washing glassware for a laboratory at Northville State Hospital. So that I could travel to the job and home, my father relented somewhat and agreed to allow me to drive my car on a restricted basis. I was only allowed to drive it to school, to my job, and home.

When I graduated from Northville High School in June, 1962, I was the salutatorian, so made a speech at the graduation ceremony. This was difficult for me because throughout high school I had a fear of speaking in front of even small groups of classmates. Here I was required to speak to the entire graduating class including parents and friends, but I survived the experience. My speech was not the typical optimistic graduation speech, but instead rather pessimistic. Perhaps I was reacting to years of fear related to the cold war and more recently the increasing involvement of the US in Vietnam, which foreshadowed the possibility of another war. Also, perhaps my parents' financial situation, which was precarious compared to other families in the upper-middle-class town of Northville, largely as a result of my dad's lack of enthusiasm for and ambition in his employment as an engineer, was a factor.

Meanwhile, I had decided to attend University of Michigan the next fall. I had been awarded a Regents Scholarship that would pay my tuition of \$280 per year, but with no allowance for living expenses. My parents offered no support, so I decided I would live at home, commute to school, and continue working at the part-time job washing laboratory glassware. I needed a better car for commuting the eighteen miles to Ann Arbor, Michigan, on a daily basis, so my dad and I again went shopping for used cars. We found a slightly rusty 1958 Volvo 444 sedan priced at \$450. My dad offered to pay the \$50 down payment, and I borrowed the remaining \$400 from a credit union. That \$50 was my dad's sole financial contribution to my college education. Many other students in my graduating class at Northville, an upper middle class community, had parents who were able to pay all their expenses to live away and attend school at more distant residential colleges. I was not so lucky.

Although I did well in school, I had a feeling that I really received no encouragement or interest from my parents. My decision to go on to college was my own, but much

in line with expectations in Northville, a tight-knit upper-middle-class town. As it developed, during the first trimester at University of Michigan, I became dissatisfied with the academic situation and the difficulties of commuting to a university where virtually the entire student body was resident on campus. I withdrew after eight weeks and transferred to Wayne State University in Detroit, an institution that was more accommodating for commuting students. I moved from washing glassware part time to a full-time position as a biochemical technician in the research lab where I had been working, and attended night classes for the first two years. After owning it for about a year, I began to worry that the 1958 Volvo I had purchased was likely to develop mechanical problems. Since I was now working full time and could afford it, I went to the Ford dealer in nearby Livonia and purchased a brand new 1963 Ford Falcon with a V8 engine, and I sold the Volvo. I liked driving the V8 because it was fast, but the Falcon turned out to be a poorly built car. The steering linkages connecting the front wheels to the steering gear had flexible rubber bushings that allowed the wheels to wobble slightly independently when they should have been always pointed the same direction. This caused the front tires to cup on the edges and wear out in just a couple thousand miles. The Ford dealer claimed the problem was defective tires. But the new tires also had the problem. Then I discovered the rubber bushing had apparently been a makeshift solution to a defect in the steering linkage in earlier Falcons that occasionally caused the cast-iron idler arm to break, sending the car out of control. I got so angry about it that I went to Falvey Motors in Berkeley, a well-known foreign car dealer in the Detroit area, and traded the Falcon, which was only about a year old, for a red 1960 MGA roadster. The MGA was a bit worse for wear, with a battered canvas top, but I drove it for about two years, then bought a new 1965 Volkswagen beetle.

The laboratory where I was employed had moved from Northville State Hospital to the Lafayette Clinic in downtown Detroit, much closer to Wayne State, and I was able to take day classes and make up the time by working late in the evenings and on weekends. I managed to complete my undergraduate education at Wayne State in five years by going to school year round, taking a three-course class load during the three normal academic quarters and making up the extra courses required during the summer quarters. I graduated number one in my December, 1967, graduating class with a bachelor of science degree in chemistry.

I had continued living at home with my parents until my last year at Wayne. During that time my dad had continued to impose a midnight curfew, except that it was voluntary. The condition was that if I did not come home by midnight, I had to pay room and board to live in my parents home. I eventually decided it was worth the money to have freedom, so routine paid the monthly price.

Meanwhile, after dating several people during that time, I met a woman I liked, and during my junior year of college we decided to get married. She was a student living on campus at University of Michigan, and her father, a Ford Motor Company executive designer who was paying for her college education, was supportive but

insisted that we wait to marry until she had graduated. My father, on the other hand, was opposed to the idea of my getting married. He said at age twenty-two I was too young. But he eventually realized he couldn't prevent it. He was one of the few people who cried during the ceremony at Timothy Lutheran Church in Livonia, Michigan, where my fiancée had previously been president of the Luther League. Once married, we rented an apartment in suburban Dearborn Heights, closer to Detroit than Northville. I still had one year to go before obtaining my bachelor's degree from Wayne State. It was during that year, Summer of 1967, that the riots occurred in Detroit. We could stand on the little porch of our apartment and see smoke rising from the city. There was about a two-week period when I couldn't go into the city for work or school. When I finally ventured back, driving down Grand River Avenue, many burned out stores were visible.

After graduation I quit my job at the Lafayette Clinic and went off to graduate school at Harvard where I obtained a US Health Service grant that paid my tuition and a stipend of \$2800 per year for living expenses. My wife was working as a high school English teacher, which in Massachusetts at that time paid about \$5200 per year. Between the two of us, with no children yet, we managed to survive. At first, the 1965 VW beetle sedan as our only car. After a year or so I traded it in on a new 1967 VW beetle, and we drove that from Massachusetts to Michigan and back for holiday visits to family. In Michigan, we usually stayed with my wife's parents, visiting my family for a few hours during the holiday events. Having left home and moved to Massachusetts drew me away from my parents, and my awareness of what was going on at home with them and my siblings became minimal.

My first year or two at Harvard made me appreciate the limitations of the education I had received in public schools and at Wayne State University in Michigan. With few exceptions, most of the instruction I had received was direct from textbooks and pretty rote. There was knowledge, but not a lot of insight into how that knowledge had been obtained. The indoctrination, I suppose, was similar in principle to the indoctrination many of my fellow students at Northville High School had received by attending Sunday school and church activities early in life. They thought they had real knowledge, but because I had not had those influences I was forced to ask questions, read books in the hope of developing some understanding, and eventually came to my own conclusions based on what I had read. As a result, I think I had a better idea of where ideas had arisen and the reasons they might be credible, or not. Throughout high school and my undergraduate education at Wayne State University, I had no problems learning the course materials and doing well on tests and exams, which involved mostly regurgitation of what had been taught, but I found myself constantly asking, especially regarding scientific matters, "How do we know these things?" I received good grades and rewards for being a top student in chemistry each year, but the entire process rang hollow to me because it was based mainly on replaying information, although no doubt scientifically valid, for the origins of which I had no true scientific understanding. At Wayne, some courses had laboratory sessions in poorly ventilated laboratories that exposed students to

carcinogens. I remember coming home sick from one Saturday eight-hour organic lab, headachy and vomiting for two days. Other required laboratory sessions I just skipped because I found them boring. There were no apparent consequences. Some laboratory sessions could be dangerous in other ways. A female classmate suffered significant damage from a thermite reaction, part of an inorganic chemistry lab demonstration, that exploded in her face. A senior research project was required of all chemistry majors. Mine was to try to crystallize several nylon polymers. Some structures resembling crystals were obtained, visible microscopically, but no attempt was made to confirm crystallization by other methods. A written report of the experiments was minimal. In my mind, it was a pretty insignificant endeavor, but adequate to qualify me as the top chemistry graduate in my class. In general, although I had some very personable professors, I felt their dedication to excellence and the true development of their students' capabilities was only moderate. Perhaps it was a reflection of the limitations of their own educations and experiences. There had been some outstanding faculty members in chemistry at Wayne State, including Carl Djerassi, inventor of "the pill", but they had, for the most part, moved to other institutions as a result of their successes – Djerassi, notably, to Stanford.

Having arrived at Harvard for graduate school, I began developing a more advanced understanding of biochemistry and molecular biology, but the teaching methods were much different. As opposed to relying on textbooks, much of the instruction was based on lectures by top scientists who were involved in advancing understanding in their fields by doing research, or at least supervising such research by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, in their laboratories and who communicated regularly with other scientists who were pre-eminent in their fields. Instead of simply stating facts and referring to textbooks, they discussed original experiments and perforated their lectures with references to original research articles in scientific journals, many of which were classics in developing understanding of the science. Students were required to spend a significant amount of time in the libraries reading the articles, which described the experiments that led to the current understanding of biochemical and genetic processes. In doing so, we actually came to understand how the information was derived, why it was valid, and also those areas that were less well defined and more controversial. It was a revelation to me, a complete change in the educational process with which, at first, I was very ill at ease. I had little experience with research libraries, and even less reading original articles in scientific journals describing fundamental research. The fact that I did not understand how to use these resources made me very self-conscious and nervous about using the resources, and the many late hours sitting in libraries reading seemed a bit spooky. My reaction to the new educational paradigms was a bit neurotic. I remember telling my wife I was afraid of the libraries. I know she thought I was nuts. I had the distinct impression that fellow students who had attended first-rate institutions such as Stanford, Wisconsin, and UC Berkeley as undergraduates were much more comfortable with the processes and types of communication involved, therefore had an advantage over someone

who had managed to arrive at Harvard after being educated at average universities with less prestigious faculties.

About the time I graduated from high school, my dad had again changed jobs, going to work for a division of Lear Siegler Corporation in Ann Arbor that specialized in laser systems. A few years later, once my brother and sister were old enough to look after themselves, my mother went back to work as a secretary. She got a job as assistant to the director at the Hawthorne Clinic, a mental health institution serving children and teenagers that was located near Northville. My father left his job at Lear Siegler and began working as a country newspaper delivery man, getting up every day about two hours after midnight to pick up his supply of the Detroit News and driving around in his pickup truck to deliver the papers to about 500 rural customers in the Northville area. It couldn't have paid much. My mother worked for the Hawthorne Clinic, a Michigan State Mental Health Department facility, for twenty years and qualified for a pension. She essentially became the support of the family once my brother and sister became independent. Despite that, she also remained the primary housekeeper, doing the shopping, preparation of meals, and housecleaning.

Leaving his career as an electrical engineer no doubt reflected a long-standing dissatisfaction with working in corporate environments. Once before, while working for Bendix Aviation during the mid 1950s, my father had flirted with the idea of leaving that job and moving to a less technical occupation. At that time, his fascination was with the idea of becoming a milkman and delivering milk to people's homes each day. At one point he took a week off from Bendix and spent that time traveling around in Royal Oak with the Twin Pines Dairy deliveryman who serviced our neighborhood. At the end of the week, however, he apparently decided delivering milk wasn't the job for him, and he returned to Bendix. Nonetheless, even though offered promotions to supervisory positions in engineering on a couple of occasions, he turned them down. Although it would have meant earning more money, for some reason that I never understood my father did not want the responsibility of supervising other people.

When my brother was in high school and got his driving license, he and my dad went shopping. My dad helped him buy an old rusty Morris Minor, a classic small English sedan. Before he could drive it, however, they decided to fix the rust, which had perforated the floorboards. My dad built a large wood frame that surrounded the vehicle and supported it. They then inverted the car on the frame, and with the help of some rollers, moved it, still upside down, into the garage at the house. They then proceeded to patch the rusty holes with fiberglass, paint the bottom side with rust-preventive paint, then set it back upright on its tires. This was typical of some of the wacky schemes my dad would come up with over the years. My brother ended up with a pretty nice first car to drive as a result of this procedure.

My brother Mark graduated from Northville High School in 1967 with a B average. My dad, for some reason, was of the opinion that didn't qualify him for college. He was not an A student like his older brother. He convinced my brother to study instead to become an automobile mechanic. My brother enrolled in a course at Schoolcraft College, a two-year junior college located close to Northville. After a few months of instruction in auto mechanics, however, Mark became disillusioned. He told me the instructors lacked understanding of all but big American cars. When he would ask questions about smaller foreign vehicles they were not interested and had no answers. My brother had become interested in sports car racing and was still driving the Morris Minor, so he found this less than helpful. But he had also enrolled in a drafting class and discovered that he liked to draw. After two years at Schoolcraft, my brother found a summer job as a draftsman working for an architectural firm in the Detroit area. He then enrolled in the School of Architecture and Design at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The earnings from his summer employment enabled him to pay his tuition and expenses of living on campus. Three years later he graduated with a masters degree in architecture and design. He has worked as an architect ever since.

While my brother was in school, my dad attempted to recruit him to assist with construction projects at home. Despite his training in architecture, my brother also became frustrated by my dad's wacky ideas and eventually moved on.

By the time I moved to attend graduate school at Harvard, my parents had occupied their newly constructed house on Westview Drive for about eight years. Nonetheless, the house was still unfinished. The interior walls had been painted, but the floors were still bare concrete with no permanent coverings or tile. The channels along the front and rear walls where the holes had been bored into the supporting Flexicor beams for warm air from the forced-air heating system to enter the upstairs space were still open. No finishing vents had been installed to bring them up to floor level. On the outside, where cinderblock retaining walls had been built to shore up the hillside, my dad had poured concrete buttresses behind the walls to strengthen them and prevent them from cracking, but for a long time afterward the walls had not been backfilled with soil nor had the tops of the blocks been capped. The lower level of the house which contained one bedroom, which my brother and I had shared, a full bathroom, a garage large enough for two cars end to end, and three other rooms that my dad used for storage and woodworking equipment, had not been finished. The floors downstairs were all bare concrete and the cinderblock walls were unpainted. The shop and storage rooms, one of which had a fireplace and was intended as a family room, were dusty and dirty, mostly covered with sawdust, and the family's two cats tended to use those areas to relieve themselves. Nobody bothered to clean up the cat poop. It was a smelly mess.

About the time we moved into that house in 1960 my dad had decided we needed a dog. He found a purebred English setter puppy and brought him home. We named him Freckles. Up to that time our family pets had consisted of two cats, one of which,

Mittens, had been my first pet and moved with us from Royal Oak. Freckles, however, did not have a good life. He was not well trained and could not be trusted off leash. If he got loose, he would run away, and we would have to chase after him to bring him home. My dad was very concerned that the dog not be permitted to run on our neighbors' property. So for virtually all his life, Freckles was kept restrained on a leash in the dark garage in the basement of the new house. As kids, my siblings and I had no prior experience with dogs. My dad's parents had at least one dog when he was young, a Boston terrier. I had seen photographs of that dog with my dad when he was a boy. However, it apparently never occurred to my dad that he should train his children in how to properly care for Freckles. Consequently, Freckles virtually never got walked on a leash, and got very little exercise. Dog poop often accumulated on the garage floor and got cleaned up only every few days. The garage environment was also dusty and dirty. Freckles eventually died of heart failure. It was about a year after I got married and left home. Freckles was only eight years old at the time of his death.

After moving into the house in Northville, my dad bought an old used Ford tractor with a sidebar hay mower. As a teenager, I used to love driving that tractor around the five-acre property keeping the wild grass mowed to a height of a few inches. It was my chance to operate a motor driven vehicle even before I got my driving license. Eventually, my dad built a little detached barn structure behind the hill where the house stood. Like the addition to the garage in Royal Oak, instead of conventional footings, my dad built the walls on top of individual pilings, and the bottoms of the walls were, for some reason, about a foot off the ground with open gaps beneath. Then, also like the garage addition, he never poured a concrete floor inside the barn, but simply parked the Ford tractor on the grassy dirt floor along with other items placed there for storage. My brother may also have enjoyed driving that tractor and mowing the grass, but once both of us had left home the tractor sat in the barn for years, unused, and the grass grew tall. Except, my mother bought a small rotary power mower that she used to trim the grass on the hill around the house to approximate a groomed lawn, although it was still wild grass and weeds.

In the early 1960s, my father became fascinated with German cars. I remember him looking seriously at a used Mercedes sedan at one time, but eventually deciding not to buy it. Instead, he bought used a little front-wheel-drive DKW sedan with a three-cylinder two-stroke engine. DKW stood for "Das Klein Wunder" and the engine put out quite a bit of power, but you had to mix oil with the gasoline for lubrication. A short time after that, my dad also purchased a used 1960 Auto Union 1000 sports coupe. It was basically a sporty version of the DKW with a slightly larger engine, still three-cylinder and two-stroke. If I remember correctly, it had a separate tank for lubricating oil and an automated mixer, so it was no longer necessary to manually add oil when filling the fuel tank at the gas station. Style-wise, the Auto Union looked a bit like a 1957 Ford Thunderbird, with large round tail lights and diagonal fins extending from the rear fenders. It was also front-wheel-drive, like the DKW, with a steering-column-mounted stick shift, and a unique free-wheeling clutch that would

cut the engine free to idle when the car was decelerating or going downhill, a feature designed to save gas, but which inevitably produced more stress and wear on the brakes. My dad let me drive the Auto Union on a couple of dates when I was in college. The Auto Union was the precursor of today's Audi vehicles. The name Audi is a diminutive of Auto Union.

Similarly to what had happened in the mid 1950s with the Austins, a few months after purchasing the first Auto Union 1000, my father found a second one for sale. The body was in better condition, but the engine had some problems. If I remember correctly, he removed the engine from the new one and replaced it with the engine from the first one, then rolled the older one into the barn for storage alongside the tractor. He then disassembled the extra engine and had a machine shop bore the cylinders in anticipation of rebuilding it to have as a spare. But that's as far as it went. The bare engine block and the parts necessary to rebuild the engine sat untouched in the garage in front of the newer Auto Union. Eventually my dad bought another car to drive, and the second auto union along with the spare engine parts was moved and took up residence in the barn with the other abandoned vehicles. Years later, my dad found someone who was interested in Auto Union vehicles, and sold both cars along with the parts.

After a couple of years in the new house, the septic field began to misbehave. It had been installed in a flat plateau at the front of the five-acre property that had been created by having a bulldozer remove part of the hill at the corner of the driveway adjacent to the road, Westview Drive. Why my father had decided to put the septic field in this location, clearly visible to the public, rather than a more obscure location farther back on the property, I haven't a clue. When the original septic field failed to flow adequately, my dad built a new one at a higher elevation right over the first. This he did by having sand and gravel trucked in to raise the level of the ground about two feet and provide a more porous substrate for drainage than the original clay-based soil. The level of the new field was higher than the outlet of the septic tank, which had been set at a level to allow flow from the downstairs bathroom in the house. So my dad built, out of poured concrete, a large two-level distribution tank with an access port and an electric sump pump to raise the sewage running out of the septic tank to the higher level. This was intended to work automatically, but for some reason I never understood, the sump pump malfunctioned, or perhaps the problem was that even the new septic field did not flow well enough. For whatever reason, as long as he owned that house the operation of the septic system became a manual procedure. Every couple of days, even in the dead of winter, when the lower tank had filled with sewage, my dad would go out, open the access port, climb inside, and lower the sump pump into the tanks. He would then watch until he felt enough of the sewage had been raised to the upper reservoir, at which time he would again raise the pump and turn it off. It was an unpleasant, stinky procedure. But this went on for years, with no better solution.

Aside from the prominent septic field, there were other oddities about the property. The house had been located atop a hill at the front of the property, near the road. Before construction began, however, my dad had hired a bulldozer to come and flatten the top of the hill in addition to carving out the niche for the septic field and the driveway, which led to a garage door in the basement level of the north side of the hill where that level of the house was exposed. The extra soil was pushed to the backside of the hill and was terraced rather than gently sloped downward. Some time after the house was in place, my dad decided the front of the hill, which dropped abruptly to the drainage ditch along the road. Also needed terracing. He hired another dozer to come and do that, pushing more dirt around. After all the carving and terracing, however, no landscaping was ever done. The surface was left to the bare rocky soil virtually devoid of topsoil, and weeds and wild grass were permitted to grow. Also, the driveway that had been carved out was never built up with a firm gravel base and invariably became a rutted mud-hole during spring and other rainy times. There were a couple of running springs farther back on the property that my dad dug out with a shovel. The water was fresh and clean, although frequented by frogs, and you could lay down on the grass next to either spring and get a drink of water. At the rear of the property, adjacent to woodland that was part of the grounds of the Maybury Sanitorium, a former tuberculosis-treatment facility that eventually became Maybury State Park, there was a marshy area that my dad had visions of dredging to create a pond. That never happened. But the lot on which the developers had dredged a large pond across the road from our house was for a long time vacant, and when that pond froze over in wintertime it was great fun for skating. Meanwhile several neighbors who had bought similar lots in the Westview Estates subdivision had also, in most cases, built their own homes, completed them, and had the properties landscaped with lawns, trees, and shrubs that became increasingly attractive as they grew through the years. Although my parents occupied their house in Westview Estates for over thirty-five years, their property was never landscaped and must have been regarded by the neighbors as an eyesore.

Politically, I remember my father as being quite conservative. He had liked Eisenhower when he was President, seemed to have only moderate interest in politics during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, but he was supportive of the Vietnam War and Nixon, despite the fact that his two sons were worried about the draft and being sent to fight during the time they were trying to complete their college educations. I managed to avoid the draft after several appeals by virtue of the research work I was doing as a graduate student at Harvard, which was deemed to be "cancer related" by my state Selective Service appeals board in Michigan. In case that failed, I had prepared a conscientious-objector application as a backup. My father told me that he thought the Vietnam war was a good thing because it would allow the US military to test new weapons systems for which they had no battlefield experience, in order to determine if they actually worked and to perfect them. When I mentioned my potential conscientious-objector appeal, he told me that wasn't a good idea. I asked why, and he said, "If you do that, you'll never be able to get a

security clearance.” That had no importance for me, but apparently had been necessary for my dad’s employment up to that time. To my mind, it was more important to avoid getting shot at in a war I considered unjust and with which I did not agree. My father, on the other hand, appeared to regard military service as a good educational experience, and perhaps hadn’t very seriously considered the consequences of his sons possibly getting sent to battle if not as lucky as he himself had been during the second world war when he had not gone overseas but had served domestically in support roles. Also, he had a different perception of the need for the war. Among college students and faculty of my era, the Vietnam war had become almost universally opposed as wrong and unnecessary. Far from its alleged justification as a benchmark in the ongoing fight against encroaching world communism, it was seen as an attempt to suppress a legitimate nationalistic movement and illegitimately preserve a moribund colonial hegemony over that small country that had been wisely and diplomatically abandoned by the French, and because the American position had virtually no support among the Vietnamese populace, unwinnable. The Kennedy administration had judiciously opted for a very limited role, despite ongoing urging by the Diem regime including the widely publicized visit to America of Madame Nhu. Increasingly under Johnson and later Nixon, however, the whole thing had escalated in crazy fashion, and it appeared the American military, stubbornly, with no chance of real victory, was just hell-bent on destroying the place.

During my college years, when I decided to grow a beard, my dad was very negative about that. He would frequently berate the concept and indicate that he thought it unsanitary. Food would get caught in it, he said. At the time, during increasing protests against the Vietnam War, beards and long hair were equated with “hippies” – radical, counterculture people who believed in peace and love and were against war. Apparently, growing a beard made me one of those. In fact, I did have a lot in common with the hippies, although I didn’t think I was one. Along with the antiwar movement came folk singers like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez with protest songs. I was a fan of both rock and folk music. My father did not like either. Basically, he considered the popular vocal music to be noise. His dislike extended to jazz and most other popular music. His preference was always for classical music, and in particular, I remember, for one Canadian radio station that played classical music exclusively.

My maternal grandparents both passed away around 1970, but my father’s mother was still living on her own in the house on Lafayette Avenue in Royal Oak, which was about twenty-five miles distant from my parents’ new home in Northville. During the first couple of years after my dad’s father died in 1957, my parents had still lived nearby. During that time, my brother and I would often ride our bicycles the mile or so to my grandmother’s house on Sunday mornings, and she would prepare for us her favorite breakfast, pancakes with Vermont maple syrup. My grandmother always told us pure Vermont maple syrup was the best, and she would order a case of gallon cans every year to be shipped from a farm in Vermont. Two or

three gallons she would reserve for our pancake breakfasts, and the rest she would distribute to a small group of friends in Michigan.

During that period, my parents would often take us to my grandmother Chadwick's house for dinners, usually on weekends, Saturdays or Sundays. My grandmother would cook and serve. After dinner, we would help with washing the dishes, then sit in the living room, where there was a large picture window that looked out on the street, neighbors' homes, and manicured lawns. I would often earn a few dollars by mowing my grandmother's lawn, and I enjoyed running the small power mower my grandfather had purchased to do so. It was, perhaps, my earliest fascination with devices powered by internal combustion engines.

Later on, invariably, the large console television set would be turned on and the whole family would watch variety shows popular in the late 1950s. On Saturday nights, the favorite was Lawrence Welk. On Sundays it was Ed Sullivan.

On another occasion, shortly after my grandfather's death, my grandmother was shopping for medical insurance. There was no Medicare at that time, and Mutual of Omaha had advertised health insurance policies for older people. My dad dropped me off at his mother's house and left for work. A bit later, the salesman from Mutual of Omaha arrived. He was very polite, spread out a lot of promotional and informational materials, and pitched the health plan to my grandmother. Later in the day, after he had left, my father came to pick me up and discussed the insurance matter with my grandmother. I remember, she told him, "He seemed like a very nice man." It was years later that I realized, thinking back on it, that my grandmother had been apprehensive about having this sales rep for Mutual of Omaha call on her at her home. He was Jewish. I think that's why my dad had arranged for me to spend the day with my grandmother. I don't want to say that my grandmother and my father were anti-Semitic. My grandmother was definitely nervous about the sales call. But I think it was more an instance of xenophobia than anti-Semitism.

By the early 1970s my grandmother was in her 80s, and my dad began to think she would not long be able to continue living on her own. He began trying to convince her to move into our family home in Northville, now an empty nest. My mother had doubts about that arrangement, but my father had always been quite attached to his mother and could not be dissuaded. My grandmother was also reticent to accept the idea, thinking it might be disruptive, but to ease her concerns my father decided he would make an addition to the house, a separate apartment with a kitchen and bath where his mother could live but still separately and have some privacy. He proceeded to extend the basement garage by one additional car length, making it now three cars end-to-end. Above the extension of the garage, he built a new kitchen, bath, and bedroom, and he opened the wall of the upstairs bedroom that had formerly been my sister's room so that area could serve as a living room for the new in-law apartment. Most of this work he did himself. Once this area was constructed, my grandmother's house in Royal Oak was sold and she moved in. My

dad, true to form, had done some exotic truss-work, the likes of which I had never seen before, in constructing the roof over this new space. Trusses he had constructed were visible in the apartment and had a series of round holes about three inches in diameter drilled in their plywood sheaths, presumably to decrease their weight. Also, like the rest of the house, the space was only partially finished.

At some time not too long after that, my dad did arrange to have asphalt tile installed as a finishing touch to the floors in the living room, dining, and kitchen areas of the original part of the house, likely in deference to my mother's wishes. He also installed a wood stove in the dining area adjacent to the small kitchen, and that was increasingly used for heating the house in preference to the oil-fired furnace downstairs. My dad built a large shed behind the house and managed to fill it with split firewood logs that he either purchased or derived from felling a couple of large trees on the property.

Additionally, to take some of the pressure off the poorly functioning septic field, my dad dug a deep hole adjacent to the back wall of the house and built in it a cistern walled with cinderblocks. To this he routed the drain from my mother's washing machine rather than continuing to have it run through the main drainage system to the septic tank. I'm not sure what his intention was, perhaps to use the grey water from the washer for irrigation, but I don't think that ever happened. Not long after that, however, my mother's washing machine ceased to function. For some reason, it was never repaired, and she became accustomed to driving to town with the laundry to wash it at a local laundromat.

Then, sometime in the 1980s, my dad decided he was going to convert the house to a solar heating system. There was a large ten-foot-wide porch spanning the south end of the house. It was covered by an extension of the peaked roof that ran the length of the structure. The end of the roof above the porch was supported by three six-by-six posts. The open porch had access from the living room of the house through a sliding glass door at the center. My dad's idea was to extend the roof about eight feet beyond the porch and to enclose the porch and additional space with a two-story glass wall on the south face, which was near the south side of the hill on which the house was situated. He excavated the side of the hill adjacent to the porch down to the level of the basement. This, I believe, he did by hand using pick and shovel. The idea was that sunlight shining through the large glass wall would heat the two story airspace. Above the glass wall the airspace was left open into the interior of the peaked roof. The air inside the roof was also heated more moderately by the sun. Then, at the opposite end of the house he planned to install vents that would allow air to circulate down from the interior of the roof into the living space. By doing this he hoped to create a circuit wherein warm air from the roof and the glass solar wall would circulate through the house, where it would cool, heating the living space in the wintertime, and back out through the open sliding door or perhaps a more open wall to the porch. Once the solar wall was built and the roof extended from the porch, the project stalled and no further work was done on it. My

parents lived in that house for about ten more years with this big open eight-foot drop-off at the end of the enclosed porch and a non-functional half-constructed solar heating system.

In the 1980s, my sister, after attending school at Grand Rapids Bible College and a nursing program closer to home at Schoolcraft College had taken up residence with her husband in nearby Plymouth, Michigan. Because my parents lived nearby, my mother could often assist with childcare. After their three children were born, at some point my sister and her husband purchased a house near North Center Street in Northville.

I had gone off to graduate school in Massachusetts in 1968. After leaving graduate school in 1974, short of obtaining my PhD, I worked for a company in Massachusetts for about six years. My two children were born during that time. Then I changed jobs and moved to the San Francisco Bay area of Northern California.

My brother Mark, having obtained his master's degree in architecture and design from University of Michigan, got married and worked for an architectural firm in the Detroit area for a few years. The marriage was short lived. Then he became involved in a project in San Francisco, relocated to the West Coast, and lived in San Francisco for about two years. There he met his second wife. Eventually they moved to the Philadelphia area, had a child, and my brother settled in to a long-term position with an architectural firm there.

Thus, by the late 1980s, I and my family were located over 2000 miles from my parents home. My brother and his family were at a distance of about 800 miles. Only my sister and her family lived nearby.

Although close to my sister, my parents typically did not travel to visit me or my brother in our new chosen locations, with one exception. My parents did travel to northern California for a few days in the early 1980s and stayed with my wife and me and our two children at our house in Oakland. What I remember most about that visit is that they seemed to have little interest in going out to experience attractions that I thought might be interesting to them in the San Francisco Bay Area, but spent most of their time with us sitting next to each other on a couch in our living room sort of picking on each other verbally. My dad's affectionate nickname for my mother was Ruthie. And I remember those conversations vaguely as alternating instances of my father saying, "Ruthie, you do such and such," and my mother rather meekly defending herself against whatever she felt was unfair about the content of the latest accusation. And if I remember correctly, she threw back a few accusations of her own. My parents seemed to have settled into what I would describe as a sort of love-torment relationship after forty years of marriage. I think during that trip they did have another destination, perhaps to visit some friend of my mother who lived in California, but I don't remember the details.

Why did I leave graduate school in 1974 short of obtaining my PhD? It's a question I often ask myself. The answer, I think, has to do with materialism and the extent to which children who grow up in more affluent homes are blind to it. Why blind? Because their parents are able to provide for them everything they need and want, therefore they are free from the need to strive for it in their own right and can devote their time to more esoteric pursuits. I was not so lucky, having always felt a need to be gainfully employed to support my own life and education. The situation with a minimal stipend from my grant for graduate study and my wife supporting us with the low salary from her teaching job may have been tolerable in the short run, but as the prospects of a timely end to my PhD studies and availability of sufficiently compensated employment thereafter waned, the pressure to end it increased. In addition to that, my wife and I had organized a six-week summer tour in Europe for fourteen of her high-school students in 1973 under auspices of the American Institute for Foreign Studies, on which we participated as chaperones at very little expense to ourselves. We enjoyed that tour immensely, and I found returning to the somewhat dour atmosphere at Harvard and the lack of desired results of my research efforts as a graduate student depressing. My research advisor had not been supportive of my efforts to define an end point to my studies and had gone off to England with one of his post-doctoral fellows to work on a project. In his absence, I began job hunting. Once I found a position that seemed acceptable and fairly compensated, I simply left graduate school and never looked back. I worked for a company in Massachusetts with increasing levels of responsibility and significant amounts of travel for six years before moving to assume a similar position with even more responsibility, and compensation, in California.

My grandmother, in her 90s, began to exhibit symptoms of dementia, and it was clear at some point that my parents, who were both still working, could no longer care for her properly. They moved her to a nursing home in nearby Novi, Michigan. It was the same home where my maternal grandparents had lived together several years earlier and where they had passed away. My wife and I visited my grandmother there sometime in the mid-1980s during a trip to Michigan. She was confined to a bed and immobile. She could communicate, but was very confused about who I was. She at first thought I was my father. We tried to explain, without much success. I eventually gave her a kiss and told her I loved her before we had to leave. A year or two later, in 1987, my father called me to tell me that his mother had passed away. She was 98 years old at the time of her death. She was interred next to her husband in the family plot they had purchased in a Memorial Gardens cemetery somewhere near Royal Oak. I think it was one of the cemeteries that my father had surveyed when working part time during his college days for Memorial Gardens.

My mother retired from her job with the State of Michigan after twenty years and began to collect her pension. She was about seventy years old at the time, the early 1990s. Other than for some involvement in activities at the Presbyterian church in town, where she was a member, my mother now spent most of her time at home.

During that time, she developed respiratory problems. She did not exercise to any significant extent, had gained quite a bit of weight, and that may have affected her breathing. She suffered from sleep apnea, and on several occasions my father had been unable to wake her in the mornings. He had to call an ambulance to transport her to St. Joseph's Hospital, eighteen miles away in Ann Arbor, and she would be revived by administered oxygen and would spend a few days before returning home. Eventually, she was equipped with an oxygen generator, and placed on oxygen therapy full time. Also, my mother had a knee replacement in her early seventies, and that reduced her mobility. On several occasions I visited when in the Michigan area on business, would stay at my parents house for a night or two and take them out to dinner. My mother always had to wheel her mobile oxygen tank along to the restaurant. Other than that, she always seemed in good spirits, enjoyed eating, and to my amazement was eager to indulge in a cocktail or two before and with her meal, a practice on which my father looked askance. My father in his younger days had enjoyed an occasional beer, especially when working on projects around the house and in hot weather. But, like the cigars he had enjoyed smoking, he gave up drinking beer sometime in his 50s and became a teetotaler. My mother had never been a consumer of alcoholic beverages. Knowing there would be no alcohol in the house, when I visited I would usually stop at a store en route and pick up a six pack of beer to place in the refrigerator on my arrival. Offered a beer, my father would typically demur, then agree to half a bottle if I would share one with him. He said even half a beer made him feel tipsy. Now, however, he would admonish my mother when she ordered a bloody Mary, especially if it was her second, and she would wave him off, telling him at her age it was up to her what she decided to drink.

At home, my mother spent most of her time sitting in her favorite chair in the living room of the house. Because she had trouble sleeping in a prone position, eventually she would become accustomed even at night to sleeping sitting up in her chair. She was still mobile enough to move around the house, do the cooking, and put the dog out on the chain in the yard. During those years my parents had adopted a black Afghan hound that they named Abdul. I think he had a better life than Freckles had years earlier. When not on his chain in the yard, Abdul was part of the family and had access to at least a portion of the house.

About this time, my dad, who was in his mid 70s and had not had a pilot's license since before World War II, decided that he wanted to fly again. His latest project was to construct an ultra-light airplane which might have been powered by a VW engine, or half a VW engine, something like that, and for which he had purchased a kit from a company in Indiana. He had driven there for the initial construction of the fuselage and wings, and somehow managed to attach the separate pieces to the roof of his car – I think he was driving a little Honda CR-X two-seater at the time – in order to carry them back to Michigan. I remember my dad telling me that the fellow at the company in Indiana that had helped him with the construction of the plane gave him

a hug and said to him as he left, with the pieces on top of his car, "You're a funny old man." My dad liked that comment. I did too.

That plane never flew. However, my dad also purchased, in Michigan, another ultra-light plane that was partially constructed with no engine. He had that in the garage at the Northville house, but somehow that one never flew either.

I think my dad told me he did not need a pilot's license to fly an ultra-light airplane. But at some point he decided to take flying lessons and qualify for a license. His instructor was Bob Williams, who had been the music teacher and band director at Northville High School when I was a student there. My dad completed flight training and qualified for a license to fly light aircraft. By this time, he was about 80 years of age. He then purchased a working airplane. It was an open-cockpit stunt plane. He kept that plane at a little airport in Salem, Michigan, a few miles from Northville, and flew it on number of occasions. But he said it had a problem. It tended to wobble on the runway. One day, going down the runway prior to taking off, he decided to look over the side to see if he could figure out why it was wobbling. When he looked up, he realized he was getting close to the end of the runway and needed to take off. He tried to lift off, but didn't have enough speed. The plane stalled, dropped back down, and nosed over at the end of the runway. My dad was, fortunately, wearing his safety harness. He ended up hanging in the harness in the upside-down plane, but managed to let himself down and was uninjured. He got his picture and the story of his accident in the local newspaper, the Northville Record. The plane, however, was not so lucky. It had to be dismantled. He carted the pieces home, and told me he hoped to incorporate some of them into one of the ultra-lights he was building. Shortly after that, my dad bought another airplane. A biplane, he told me, with a double wing. I never saw either of these functioning airplanes during my visits, since they were kept at the Salem airport a few miles from my parents' home.

It was now the mid 1990s, and in pursuance of his new hobby, my dad purchased a lot in an air park in Lake City, Michigan, on which he wanted to build a house. The air park was a development catering to residents with their own airplanes. All the lots were adjacent to a grassy airstrip to and from which residents could conveniently taxi their planes for takeoff and landing. On the other side each lot was serviced by a road, a narrow gravel lane, for automotive access. My mother, who had many good friends in Northville, was not in favor of moving to Lake City. In addition to friends, my ten-year-younger sister Nancy, with whom my mother was very close, and her husband and young family were also living in Northville. My mother did not like the idea of moving away from them. Nonetheless, my father somehow got her to agree to sell their home and relocate. In the meantime, my father began construction on a new house at the air park in Lake City, commuting the 200-mile distance every few days. He rented a house trailer and had it installed on the lot to provide lodging during the early construction process. He would build the house himself with the assistance of various subcontractors, as had been the case with the still unfinished, after more than thirty years, house in Northville.

Eventually, the property in Northville was sold. Because the house was unfinished and the land around it not well landscaped, it sold for a fraction of the prices that surrounding properties in the Westview Estates subdivision were commanding. A year or two later, when I had occasion to visit, my sister suggested that I take a ride out and look at the property in Westview Estates. I was amazed. The family that had bought my parents' house had had the house razed and had constructed a new "McMansion" in its place, complete with modern landscaping. My sister said she and her husband knew the buyers, and one of the interesting things was that they had hired a contractor to tear down my parents' house. The contractor drove by, took a quick look, and gave them a price for the demolition. When he actually got involved, however, and discovered the concrete Flexicore construction – the way my dad had built it was like a bomb shelter – he had to hire a crane and an eighteen-wheeler to come in and haul out the heavy concrete pieces at a cost far above what he had anticipated. I was en route to visit my parents in Lake City at the time, and my sister warned me that my father was in denial, and not inclined to want to talk about what had happened to the house he had built.

My mother moved to Lake City and lived with my dad for a while in the house trailer he had installed on the property there. But my father soon became of the opinion that he could not give her the care she needed while he was working on construction of their new house. Accordingly, he located an assisted living center nearby and arranged accommodations for her there. The understanding at the time was that she would return home to live with him when the house was ready. On occasions when I visited my mother in the late 1990s, she mentioned that she was looking forward to moving into their house when my father had it ready. That was a pipe dream, however. It was never to happen.

During that time, I would call my mother on the telephone every month or so. She was very lucid and we had good conversations. But when I would visit her and ask how she was doing, she would say, "Just waiting, I guess." Meanwhile, my father had some problems in his mind with the care she was receiving. Her doctor had prescribed a hormone treatment with Premarin, a steroid purified from the urine of pregnant mares. For some reason I don't quite understand, my father thought that represented cruelty to animals. Also, because of her sleep apnea, her doctor had prescribed a respiratory device that would help her breathe while sleeping. Second-guessing her physician, my father didn't think it was necessary. The device cost an extra \$110 per month. To my knowledge, the cost was covered by Medicare. But for some reason my father seemed to be concerned about medical costs covered by the government program, even though he didn't have to pay the bills. Because of his concerns, my dad went shopping for another doctor for my mother. He found one that said he agreed with my dad's assessment that my mother didn't need the sleep apnea device, and he had my mother moved to another care facility, more distant, about an hour away in Grayling, where that doctor would be responsible for her

care. I regarded these actions as manifestations of selfishness on the part of my father and a very controlling personality.

During the 1990s I learned to ride motorcycles. Initially it was a convenient way of getting around the city of San Francisco. Later it became a fun way of commuting across the Oakland Bay Bridge to work, and in 1996 I began taking long motorcycle trips across country from California and back. Previous to that, I had visited my parents in Michigan on various occasions, usually during the holidays or when I had a business trip that took me close to their home. On my motorcycle trips, many of which took me through the upper Midwest, I made a point of stopping to visit them in Michigan whenever possible. Once they had moved to Lake City, I would typically stop in to visit my father for an hour or two at the house, then go to Grayling to visit my mother in the nursing home. On one occasion I rode with my father, who drove to the nursing home in his vehicle of that time, a small Honda CRV SUV. My father adamantly refused to wear seatbelts when driving. He found them uncomfortable, I think. It was his opinion, despite all evidence to the contrary, that he would be safer if thrown from the vehicle in an accident, were it to occur. Also, he regarded it as his responsibility and capability as a driver to avoid accidents. This, I thought, was wishful thinking and silly stubbornness.

My mother also suffered from congestive heart disease. But, ultimately, it was the sleep apnea that killed her. She had made her wishes known, that if on any future occasion she could not be awakened, she did not want to be revived. Shortly after the turn of the millennium, in 2000, that happened. She did not wake up, and the hospital to which she was transferred honored her wishes. She was seventy-eight years old at the time of her death.

My father arranged a memorial service for my mother in Michigan. Living in California at the time, having left my lucrative executive position, busy with freelance client projects, and feeling poor after going into debt paying for college educations for my children, I decided not to attend. My feeling was that it was more important that I had visited and kept telephone contact with my mother during her life. Once she was gone, the memories were still there, whether I attended or not.

My sister and her husband, living in Northville, Michigan, were closer, therefore able to attend, and my brother Mark flew in from Philadelphia for the memorial. My brother later shared with me that he was very angry. During the memorial service, my father had apparently taken him aside and, reminiscing, began discussing another girlfriend he had when he was young, saying that perhaps he should have married her instead of my mother. My brother thought that discussion was highly inappropriate. I don't think he ever forgave my father for bringing that up.

Years later, at the time of my father's death, my sister asked me if I was aware that my father had arranged for my mother's body to be embalmed and displayed in an open casket at that memorial service. All I knew was that my mother had been

cremated and that my sister Nancy had custody of her ashes. Why my father would have had her body embalmed prior to the cremation was a mystery to me. Perhaps it was traditional in his era. Or perhaps he felt it was more respectful in the end. Whatever the case, it was clear that my sister also considered it a bit strange.

In addition to the memorial service, which was held at the care facility where my mother had been living, my father, as an additional memorial, purchased a golf-cart type vehicle and donated it to the home. It was intended for use by residents who wished to go out in the local area around the nursing home or in the town of Grayling but were not licensed to drive automobiles.

Meanwhile, my mother, who had been licensed to drive, had left in my father's custody a new Subaru. It was her second Subaru. She liked them. After purchasing it, she had very little opportunity to drive before being confined to the care center. Consequently, the car, although a few years old, was essentially new with only a few miles on the odometer. My father had donated his previous vehicle, the Honda CR-X to Bill, my sister's eldest son, and the Subaru was a perfectly good vehicle for my father to drive. But he traded it in on the small Honda CRV SUV, taking a substantial loss on the purchase price of the Subaru. This, to me and also to my siblings, seemed economically silly. He said he just didn't like the Subaru. If I remember correctly, it had an automatic transmission, and my father didn't like them.

My father, for some reason, had a fascination with the state of Maine, and for several years had been expressing a desire to live there. My mother, however, did not want to be so far removed from her friends in Michigan, therefore resisted that move. The move to Lake City had been a compromise, in deference to her wishes. But in reality, it hadn't been much different. Once they had moved 200 miles north, especially after going into the assisted living center, she rarely if ever again saw any of her friends from Northville again. My father, on the other hand, was free to drive back to Northville to shop for items he couldn't find in Lake City, or to visit such acquaintances as he might have there. On one occasion, my sister ran into him purely by coincidence at the hardware store. He had not informed her, and she had no idea that he might be in town. Apparently, it never occurred to him that if he was planning to be in town he might visit his daughter or his grandchildren.

The house my father was building in Lake City was a two story modern structure with a garage for his car on one side and a corrugated arch that served as a hangar to shelter his airplane on the other. The garage was connected by a short driveway to the lane that provided access to the residential lots from a local roadway. The hangar provided access to a taxiway that connected to the grass runway for takeoff and landing of his airplane. To my knowledge, however, once he had flown his only functioning airplane from Northville to Lake City and parked it in the hangar, he never flew again. The house, like many of his other projects, was never finished. The exterior structure and roof were complete, but interior spaces were still rough and primitive. In addition, my father had purchased, at a surplus store, a large, about 6-

foot-diameter, microwave dome which could receive satellite TV broadcasts. It was mounted on the roof of his airplane hangar. He did not subscribe to any paid satellite broadcast channels, but showed me broadcasts from free channels that displayed, for example, constant silent images of Earth from outer space. My reaction was: Why?

Within a few months after my mother's death in early 2000, my father purchased eighteen acres of land on Route US 1, the coast highway, "Downeast" in Cherryfield, Maine, then arranged to sell his unfinished house in Lake City, Michigan, along with his airplane to a neighbor. He was determined to fulfill his dream of moving to Maine, which he had not been able to do as long as my mother was alive because she would not agree to the move. The property in Maine was a wooded lot adjacent to the Narraguagus River, but with a long cleared meadow that I believe my dad thought would be sufficient for a runway to take off and land with a small airplane. He did not purchase another plane, however, and his flying days were done.

My father began making trips back and forth to Maine in his CRV, driving through Canada, loaded with tools and belongings. In Maine, he began construction of a house on the property he had purchased and arranged to act as live-in caretaker for an old house in the town of Cherryfield, which provided accommodation until his house was ready for occupancy. Occasionally he would haul a trailer loaded with tools and supplies. With him on those trips was a dog he had adopted. His typical pattern was to drive straight through, stopping to sleep in his car if necessary. The drive from Lake City, Michigan, to Cherryfield, Maine, was about 18 hours. On one occasion, he became so tired driving all night that he fell asleep at the wheel. His car ran off the road and crashed into a tree. He must have been going very slow, however, because damage was minimal, and despite the fact that he was not wearing a seatbelt, he and his dog survived with only minor injuries.

When my sister told me this story, I remembered earlier times on family vacations in the 1950s when my dad would insist of driving all night and dozed off at the wheel with my mother and his children in the vehicle. In those instances, the car hit the edge of the pavement and the sound and vibration caused him to wake up and regain control. Looking back on it, however, I'm amazed at the level of what I would call irresponsibility that this entailed. My father was basically putting all of our lives at risk because he stubbornly refused to stop for the night, or simply pull over and get enough rest in order to be able to drive safely. At that time, it was when driving the Willys station wagon in the early 1950s, I also remember my father as a bit of a daredevil on the road. I remember one occasion when he passed another vehicle with minimum room to spare and had to move quickly into the right lane after passing, tapping the front bumper of the vehicle he had passed. A bit of an argument with the other driver ensued, what we would now call road rage. On another occasion, with my mother and his children in the car, my dad engaged in cat and mouse maneuvers with the driver of a large truck. It was my impression that the truck driver was actually trying to kill us, alternately racing past the Willys, which

was not a particularly powerful vehicle, then cutting us off. Somehow we also managed to survive that encounter.

Eventually, my father was able to occupy his new home. I visited him there on a motorcycle trip in 2003. The dog my dad had adopted in Lake City, Michigan, a medium sized male of indeterminate lineage whom he called Blackie, was there with him. Blackie had a lame front leg that he would always hold up when walking. He was a very sweet dog and very affectionate to strangers, always poking and looking for attention. The house was a two-story frame structure with clapboard siding. It was still unfinished, especially the interior, and my father's lack of housekeeping was evident. There was dust and sawdust everywhere. My father put out a cot for me to sleep on, and I spent one night with him. In addition to the house, which he was constructing himself, he had paid a contractor to construct a large garage where he stored many of his tools, a riding mower he used to manage the grass on his property, and where he parked his car. Looking at the two-story structure my father had built, I was curious. I said to him, "When you build a frame house like this, my understanding is that you frame the walls and then tilt them up and join them with the other walls in place. When it came time to tilt up the walls, who did you get to help you do that?" My dad, about eighty-seven years old at that time, said, "Nobody. I put them up myself." I was amazed.

My dad drove us to dinner the evening of my visit in his Honda CRV. I was comfortable riding with him. He was a bit slow, but appeared to me to be a good driver, although he still refused to wear a seat belt.

My sister told me a story from my dad about this time. One evening, he had decided to explore the wooded area of his property that bordered the river. While he was walking along the shore in the woods, however, it began to get dark. My dad became disoriented and couldn't find his way back out of the woods to his house. He ended up sleeping in the woods all night. In the morning, he climbed a small tree and was able to see his house and then find his way home. Sort of a crazy adventure.

My dad, however, was running out of money. He had a small inheritance from his mother, also the proceeds of sale of the house in Northville, but he had apparently exhausted those resources. Part of the problem was not only expenses for construction of the house in Lake City, his airplanes, funeral expenses for my mother, and the vehicle he had donated to the nursing home as a memorial for her. But he had also exhibited poor judgment as related to automobiles. He had a tendency to purchase new ones every couple of years even though his existing vehicles still had many serviceable miles remaining. My mother's Subaru was just one example. Remember, at this point my father was retired and living on his Social Security payments, which were minimal, reflective of the fact that his income during his years of employment had not been large and that he had opted to retire early after my mother had gone back to work and provided most of their support. He was

not exactly in a position to be purchasing new vehicles every year or two, with the substantial losses inherent in the trade-ins. But he did so anyway.

A solution to his financial problems arose, however, when he encountered a couple who wanted to purchase part of his eighteen acre property in Maine. He sold them half the property after just four or five years for a price per acre significantly higher than he had paid. This provided a financial resource for him to continue construction of his house. The couple built and occupied a new house on the portion of the property they had purchased, then expressed a desire to purchase the remainder of my dad's property, and offered him a contract wherein he would sell them the property but would have the right to live in his house, on the property, indefinitely, as long as he should be able to do so. At the signing of the contract of sale, my father out of charity or good will, volunteered that he would continue to pay the annual property taxes on his half of the property, and that was penciled in, even though it had not been part of the original agreement drawn up by the buyers.

Endowed with new funds, my dad continued to spend and run through the money. His Honda CRV had developed some problems, with the ignition switch I believe he told me. It didn't sound like anything serious. Something that could probably be fixed and the car would suffice for many more miles. But for some reason my dad resisted the idea of getting it repaired. Instead, he turned negative on the Honda CRV and purchased a new car to replace it. The new one was a recently introduced economy model, the Toyota Yaris. But within a month or two of purchasing that vehicle, my dad decided he didn't like it and traded it in on another new vehicle, a Kia sedan, no doubt with a significant financial loss on the trade in. I had recently divorced after twenty years of separation, and remarried. My new wife and I visited my dad in Maine in Summer, 2007, and at that time he had his new Kia sedan and was continuing to work on finishing the interior of his house.

But, we knew, my dad never finished anything. We weren't the only ones that felt that way. On a motorcycle trip in 2004, I stopped to visit my mother's older brother Jim and his wife Marion in Charlotte. North Carolina. I spent the night with them at their townhouse. During conversations, they mentioned that my dad never seemed to finish anything. After I moved to Santa Fe and remarried in 2007, on one occasion my mother's younger brother Cal and his wife Mary Jane, both avid fans and habitual visitors to Santa Fe from their home in Colorado, stopped by to visit my wife and me at our house. They made similar comments then, and again a few years later when Eileen and I stopped to visit them during a trip to Denver for a friend's wedding. It was pretty clear that my mother's brothers had been aware of her situation and frustration over not having a finished house in which to live during her later years. This was something that continued to drive me crazy. As a result, I vowed never to be like my dad and not finish projects. When I get involved in a project, I tend to become single-mindedly devoted to that project until it is finished. Some say I am a perfectionist. I think it's just a reaction to my father. I'm a little nuts about it.

In fact, my father seemed to have the problem that he would get excited about a project at its beginning and be very motivated. But as time went on he would tend to lose enthusiasm. Also, if things didn't go exactly as expected, he would become disappointed, turn negative, and move on to something else. This phenomenon was something I had actually observed among engineers I had worked with in business. My opinion was that they required management by someone with a strong sense of purpose in order to make sure that projects were completed successfully. In my father's case, not having that, his changes of direction would often involve decisions to modify whatever he had been creating before the original concept was completely implemented. Consequently, everything was always a work in progress and never became a finished work. A high school classmate of mine, during a recent visit to New Mexico, recently pointed out to me that this was a trait that my father perhaps had in common with one prominent American, Thomas Jefferson, who reputedly had the same problem when constructing his home, Monticello.

In the next year or two, complications developed. The couple that had purchased my dad's property divorced, but the ex-wife continued to occupy the house they had built on the other half of the property, in a cleared area, visible from my dad's house at a distance of about 100 yards or so. She was a horsewoman, and at some point suggested to my father that she would like to build a horse barn between her house and his. My dad was against that, and told her something to the effect that "that would be a dangerous thing to do." My interpretation, when I heard that, conveyed to me by my sister who was most frequently in contact with my father, was that it sounded like a threat. In telephone conversations I had with my father shortly after that, it was apparent that he had become somewhat hostile toward his neighbor, who had also been his benefactor. Also, his original interactions with the couple that had purchased his property included the husband, who had now moved away. All interactions now were with the ex-wife, who apparently had a rather strident personality.

In telephone conversations, I tried to encourage my dad to calm down, but it became clear that wasn't going to happen, and he began to talk about wanting to move and finding some land where he could build himself yet another house. He wanted to be in a more rural area with less interference from neighbors, an idea that amazed me because Cherryfield, in downeast Maine, about forty miles north of Mount Desert Island and near Machias, was just about the most rural place I could ever imagine living. In fact, my wife and I thought of it as "Hicksville" based on our 2007 visit during which we drove for miles looking for a good restaurant in which to treat my dad to dinner and eventually stumbled, by accident, onto a nice restaurant in a little bed and breakfast in Jonesboro. There wasn't much civilization, at the level we had come to value, up there.

During this time, I tried to keep in touch with my father by telephone as much as possible, but in practice that meant about three or four telephone conversations per

year. During those telephone calls, we would often discuss politics. The father I had known as conservative and a bit right-wing during my college days had transformed into a dedicated liberal. He supported and voted for Barack Obama in the 2008 presidential election. He had been extremely antipathetic to the policies of George W. Bush and against the invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the 2012 election, my father was disappointed in Obama because he felt he had not been aggressive enough in stopping the wars that George W. Bush had started. His favorite candidate was Russ Feingold from Wisconsin, and he hoped that Feingold would seek the presidential nomination in the Democratic Party and run. I told him that was a pipe dream. It wasn't going to happen, and Obama was still the best alternative to Republican craziness. My dad also expressed dismay that my sister had been a supporter of George W. Bush, mostly because he was a born-again Christian and that resonated with her religious beliefs. I was aware of that, but there really wasn't much we were going to be able to do about it, and we had to love her as family, regardless. Although I had long been estranged from my father, I began to warm to him when he took flying lessons in his early 80s, and his political views expressed to me in his 90s were much in line with my own, so in a sense we reconnected, mostly via telephone conversations that usually lasted only ten or fifteen minutes before I could sense my dad wanting to end the conversation. I think his concern was the expense of minutes for conversation on his cell phone. He had, by this time, abandoned his land line and communicated by cell phone only.

My dad, at this time, was very pessimistic about prospects for the future. When I spoke to him by telephone in 2006 and informed him that my daughter had given birth to a girl, my father's first great grandchild, his response was, "Why would anyone want to bring children into this world?" A few years later, my daughter and her husband, along with my granddaughter and infant grandson, visited my dad during a trip to Maine with friends. My dad on that occasion was very friendly and affectionate to his great grandchildren. My daughter and her husband were very impressed with the house he had built and the life he was able to live at his advanced age.

My dad's eyesight was still good, and he was an avid reader, mostly of magazines. He had no television or computer, so printed matter delivered by mail was his main source of information. During telephone conversations he often suggested publications I should read for information, largely about politics. Among his favorites were *Mother Jones* and *The Nation*, both very liberal in their political orientations.

My father had also become very concerned about animal welfare, and was making frequent donations to the American Humane Society and ASPCA. Possibly this was a sign of guilt, considering the way some family pets had been treated when he was younger.

During these first few years in Cherryfield, Maine, my father became infatuated with another woman who lived in an older farmhouse the other side of his. She was divorced, about thirty years his junior, and had never been out of the state of Maine in her entire life. My dad had befriended her, and she liked him and essentially became the one person in the world who lived close enough and cared enough to watch over him. At one point, my dad confided to me that he thought he would ask her to marry him. I advised that he should not be surprised or too disappointed if she turned him down. I never met the woman, so this advice was not so much based on any real insight into their relationship, just the fact that she was so much younger, and perhaps I did not regard my father at 90 years of age, and the man as I knew him, cantankerous, with virtually no financial resources, as a particularly attractive catch from a marriage standpoint. He subsequently proceeded with his plan, and true to my prediction, was turned down. But they remained friendly. She also had an adult son who lived with her and helped in keeping track of my father, looking in on him every so often.

This association with his neighbors saved my father's life on at least one occasion. His neighbor checked in routinely and found him lying unconscious on the floor of his house. She called 911 and arranged to have him transported by ambulance to a hospital about thirty miles away in Ellsworth, Maine. It turned out that my father's gall bladder had failed, become necrotic, and had to be removed. After recovering from the surgery, my dad told me he felt fine. "Why do we even have those things?" he asked. A few years later, my daughter developed gall stones and had to have her gall bladder removed when pregnant with her second child. I began to wonder if this was a family disease that would affect all of us, although to my knowledge my brother has never had the problem, nor have I. I seem to remember that when my grandmother was hospitalized and required surgery in her mid sixties the problem had been gall bladder. Also she suffered from diverticulitis. My father had never experienced that problem, but my own diverticulosis, less serious although possibly a precursor, has been diagnosed incident to other exams on several occasions.

On another occasion, my dad tripped over his dog and broke his hip. I think he was able to summon help himself on that occasion. He underwent surgery and had a pin placed to hold the bones for healing. After the surgery, he spent about a month in a rehabilitation facility before he could return home. His neighbor looked after his house and his dog during that time. My dad had to use a walker for some time, and thereafter a cane, until his hip had fully healed.

As a result of disillusionment with his neighbor who now owned his property and house, however, my dad found a rural area that was being subdivided about eighty miles from his house in Cherryfield, and he arranged to purchase a two-acre lot on land contract. He had to make monthly payments for about ten years out of his Social Security check, which was minimal, and if he missed a payment the property would revert to the owners. In addition to that, my dad borrowed \$6000 from a lender he referred to as a "loan shark" in order to buy materials and hire contractors

to begin building a house on the two-acre property. He liked the property because it was in an even more remote area than Cherryfield, and it seem my father just didn't want to be bothered with other people. With these funds in hand, he managed to drill a well and have a foundation poured on the property to support a small house. He told me during one telephone conversation that he would have the land contract for the property paid off when he was 103 years old. I told him, jokingly, that he might only have a few years to enjoy the property after that.

My brother was concerned for my dad's safety in doing further construction work. He observed that during his recent visits my dad had begun to appear a bit frail, was losing strength with age, for example seemed to have difficulty hammering nails or even lifting a hammer. My brother and I both thought this idea of building a new house in a more remote location was crazy, especially considering that my dad would be even further removed from doctors, hospitals, and medical help in case of injury or emergency. We both suggested that he should give up the new construction, simply decide to relax and enjoy the house he had already built, and perhaps content himself with doing some finish work on that home if he needed to keep busy. There was no indication that my dad gave any serious consideration to our suggestions.

The strain of making payments to the "loan shark" in addition to other obligations from his small Social Security benefits caused my dad to start cutting corners. At first, he began to backslide on his agreement to pay the taxes on his half of the property that had been purchased with the agreement that he could live there indefinitely. The owner of the property, the ex-wife, complained to my siblings, and started making remarks about needing the money and if my dad didn't pay she would need rental income from his house to cover the taxes. We had to reason with my dad and pressure him to work out a payment plan. It appeared he was reticent to do so, especially because he thought he would soon be escaping to another new house, but eventually acquiesced. In addition to that, my dad became distressed by the payments demanded by the "loan shark", actually a financial division of Citicorp, which was unsympathetic when he was unable to make all his scheduled monthly payments. They attempted to collect the payments by direct deductions from my dad's bank account, and he countered by changing banks and closing the original account. This, it turned out, was a case of too smart by half. He seemed to have forgotten that his car insurer, Geico, was automatically deducting payments from that account. Consequently, he went into default on premium payments for his car insurance. He received a notice, but failed to respond in time to maintain his coverage because for some reason he didn't think it was urgent. Then, coincidentally, he had a minor accident with his car. As he described it to me, he did not see a stop sign at an intersection in the approach to a parking lot in a shopping center in Bangor, Maine, where he was headed to get a haircut, which to me is a bit funny because my dad had started going bald in his twenties and had very little hair. Hell, I'm seventy years old and have plenty of hair. But I stopped getting haircuts about ten years ago, maybe twelve. I just let it grow, wear a pony tail, and trim it a

bit occasionally. Anyway, my dad said the stop sign was obscured by vegetation. But by the time he realized he had entered the intersecting street unintentionally and hit the brakes, a large pickup truck struck the front of his car on the driver's side.

My dad suffered a minor foot injury that took a couple of months to heal, but his car was totaled. I assumed he had been driving the Kia sedan he had purchased four or five years previously. When he called me to describe the situation, including the fact that his insurance coverage had lapsed, I said, "Well, the Kia must have been paid for by now and couldn't have been worth much." He said, "Oh. I wasn't driving the Kia." I said, "What were you driving." He said, "My new Chevrolet HHR." A local Chevrolet dealer had apparently talked him into buying a brand new car on credit, financed by the trade-in of his Kia and a \$16,000 loan from Ally Bank, GM's finance affiliate. At that point, my brother got involved and wrote my dad a letter telling him that, at 94 years of age, it was probably time for him to stop driving before he hurt himself or someone else, and Citibank and Ally Bank were out of luck – their reward for lending money to a 94-year-old man living on Social Security with no assets. My brother assumed my dad had been at fault in the accident. I was not so sure, but in any case I agreed with my brother's advice about the continued driving and the finances. My dad, however, was seeking contributions to help him buy another car to drive. He had his eye on a used high-mileage minivan priced by the owner at \$2000 for which he had seen an ad. None of the siblings were willing to bankroll that fantasy. In addition to that, his drivers license had been confiscated by the local police in Bangor, Maine, at the time of the accident, and he did not follow through on the required procedure for review to get his license restored.

My dad, as a result of these events, became a bit antagonistic toward my brother, telling me in several telephone conversations that Mark had written him this letter telling him to stop driving, which he didn't agree with. I told him I did agree with my brother. But my dad didn't seem to record that.

I don't know what ever happened to the totaled Chevrolet. Perhaps Ally Bank recovered it. Regardless, it became their loss.

My brother had suggested that my dad work out an arrangement with his friendly neighbor and her son to provide transportation for shopping, trips to the bank, and other essential matters, and that he pay them a small amount monthly in consideration of their help. During a short trip to Maine to visit, my brother reviewed with my dad the amounts of his Social Security benefits and worked out a budget that showed him how he could afford to do so, especially considering the absence of payments for his car and auto insurance, and suggested he simply default on the "loan shark" account and give up the land-contract purchase of the distant property. It's not clear to what extent my dad implemented this budget. I think he continued making payments on the property, at least for a while, fantasizing that somehow he would be able to get a car and drive again to continue construction there. My dad did make monthly payments to his neighbor for a while also, but

eventually let that practice lapse. His neighbor, however, was kind enough to continue helping him with transportation and other matters despite not being compensated for doing so.

It was my feeling, as a result of these events, that my dad was becoming a bit senile and out of touch with reality. Otherwise, however, with regard to politics and family matters, he seemed quite perceptive. He had expressed concern to me on a couple of occasions that he was having memory problems and might be experiencing symptoms of Alzheimers. He said his mother had developed Alzheimers in her nineties, and he was concerned that he might also. My dad still seemed very cognizant to me, and my take was that his memory lapses were just normal aging phenomena, similar to ones I occasionally experienced myself, and should not be a source of much worry.

Fast forward a couple years. My dad had to give up the property and the new home he hoped to build eighty miles inland. With no car and no way to get there, it wasn't possible. He defaulted on the land-contract payment, lost whatever he had paid in, and somebody else, a single woman I believe, picked up the property and completed a house there on his foundation. My sister and her husband drove to Maine and paid him a visit sometime in 2013. He talked them into driving him out to visit the property. They had directions on GPS, but during the drive he became agitated and repeatedly insisted they were going the wrong way. When they finally got there and saw the house that had been constructed, he was confused and not sure that was really the property he had been purchasing. My sister also told me, sometime later on, that during that visit she mentioned the house in Northville where we had lived and grown up. She told me my dad appeared to have no recollection of that house, whatsoever.

During a telephone conversation earlier that year, my dad told me his doctors said he was in good health. He told me he felt good and did not appear to have most of the ailments that people his age tended to develop. My guess at the time was that he might actually live to the age of 105. It didn't work out that way, however.

I expected my dad to live to 100, at least, and proposed to my brother and sister that we should plan a family reunion in Maine to correspond with his 100th birthday. Meanwhile, in 2014 I proposed to my brother Mark and his wife Shelley to schedule a visit with me and my wife and travel to Maine to see my dad. I thought we could discuss the reunion idea while we were there. I hadn't seen my dad face to face for about seven years, since my new wife Eileen and I had driven up to Maine after visiting her mother on Long Island shortly after our marriage in 2007. Also, my brother, a little put out with my dad over the driving matter I suspect, had not been to Maine to visit my dad in the three years or so since his accident, although prior to that it had been his habit to get up to visit him at least once each year – a higher frequency than his siblings, but mainly because he lived the closest. Another reason I wanted to visit was that telephone contacts with my dad had become much less

frequent. He virtually never answered his phone. Occasionally, if I was lucky, he might pick it up, but that was happening only about once a year. When he did not answer, I was unable to leave him voice messages because he had never activated his message inbox. He had an arrangement to call my sister every Saturday morning, but recently had been defaulting on those calls. I had asked my sister to make sure my dad had my cell phone number and encourage him to call me, but he never did. A face-to-face visit appeared to be our only chance to communicate.

Mark and Shelley agreed to the trip. We worked out a time with my brother's busy schedule supervising architectural projects in several states, and we arranged to stay at a B&B a few miles north in Jonesboro for three nights in early October, the one where my wife and I had found the good restaurant a few years earlier. I did manage to contact my dad by telephone to tell him when we would be coming to visit. I didn't mention that my brother and his wife would be driving up also, but left that as a surprise. Unable to obtain flights from New Mexico on a reasonable schedule into Bangor, Maine – it would have taken us overnight and almost two days to get there – my wife and I flew into Boston's Logan International Airport, rented a car, stayed one night in Saugus, north of Boston, and drove the five hours to downeast Maine the next day. In addition to visiting my dad, the trip was also a great chance to see and socialize with Mark and Shelley. I hadn't seen my brother and his wife face to face for about five years, since Eileen and I had stopped at their house in Pennsylvania en route home by car from a trip to attend my son's wedding in Brooklyn, NY, in October, 2009.

Visiting my dad's house on the morning after our arrival, he recognized us as his two sons but was initially a bit confused about which of us was which. That confusion appeared to be resolved in short order and did not recur during our visit. He also seemed to be a bit confused about my marital details. Although he had met my wife Eileen in 2007 and remembered her, he mentioned that he thought my first wife was deceased. She was not. We had simply been separated for many years and then divorced.

We found my dad's house in disarray and needing significant cleaning and maintenance. There was a problem with the water supply to the sink in his kitchen, some kind of a blockage. My dad said he had a plumber who could fix that. Meanwhile, his house was filled with smoke from the wood stove that he was using for heat. It seemed there had been a problem. As he described it, he had to purchase a new door for the stove, but the new door did not fit properly. Consequently, he was using the stove with the door off, and, especially when he started a new fire, before it started to draft strongly up the pipe into his chimney, a lot of smoke would come out into his house. My father's current dog, a border collie name Josie that he had rescued from some other area of Maine a couple years earlier, was very overweight and dusty, apparently had not been bathed for some time, although my dad told me he did take her to a groomer occasionally. Josie was very sweet and friendly. Her favorite resting place was a niche under the concrete pedestal on

which his wood stove was mounted. And she had a dog door leading out to a fenced area behind the house where she could go as necessary to relieve herself, although the door tended to stick and required my dad to intervene to operate it when she needed to go in or out. Josie also had a tendency to retreat to the stall shower in my dad's bathroom when disturbed by the commotion created by our visit. The shower, the only bathing facility in my dad's house since he had no tub, appeared not to have been used for bathing for some time. At one point, I asked my dad how often he took a bath. He responded by saying, "That's a very embarrassing question." I did not receive an answer. It was my brother's guess that my dad had not bathed in at least a month. My dad had dark spots on his face that I assumed to be age spots, but my brother's opinion was that it was dirt. My wife was appalled by the smoky atmosphere in my dad's house, even became a bit sick by the end of the day, but my dad insisted he did not mind the smoke. It could not have been healthy.

There was very little food in my dad's house, and I asked him what he typically ate. He told me, "I have a very simple diet. I mainly live on milk with some chocolate syrup added." We also found several packages of blueberry muffins in his kitchen. I suspect both he and his dog were consuming those.

My brother and the two women took on as a project to clean my dad's house. We drove to Ellsworth and found a Walmart store where my wife and I purchased towels and rugs to replace the ones in my dad's house that were irreversibly soiled while my brother and his wife purchased a large vacuum cleaner and other cleaning supplies. We returned to my dad's house and began cleaning.

While my brother vacuumed and the women cleaned, I sat with my dad and talked with him to try to keep him calm. He was concerned that the cleaning process would move items and he would not be able to find things he needed. I knew he was used to being alone, and all these people cleaning his house were sort of an invasion. I assured him everything would be replaced as found and alerted the others to the need for that. Also, I had purchased an inexpensive hearing device on Amazon.com for my father, and spent some time showing him how to use it. It did seem to help a lot with his hearing, but he had trouble understanding how to put it on his ear and operate the controls. I suggested that he show it to his neighbor and get her to help with it when she came to visit. My dad showed me the supply of firewood he had piled in the screened porch at the side of his house, but told me some of the split logs were too long for his stove. He told me he would cut a few inches off the end with his circular table saw before burning them, so they would fit. The saw was in the room of his house intended as the living room by design. However, the room had never been used as a living room, but instead served as a shop where he had several power tools, including the table saw, and piles of materials including wood planks. The room was a mess. Everything in there was covered with sawdust. My brother and the women pretty much ignored that room during their cleaning activities, focusing their efforts more on the spaces my dad used for living. Those included the kitchen, a room adjacent to the front hall and the wood stove that he used as both a

den and a bedroom, and the bathroom with a functioning sink, shower, and laundry area including a washer and dryer. The washer was functional, but did not appear to have been used for some time. My wife Eileen arranged to operate it to clean the pile of clothes that had accumulated and needed washing. My dad also told me that he needed to order an additional supply of firewood, and he had a source that would deliver it. Once it was dumped in front of his house, he would carry it into the screened porch area and restack it. My dad was also very concerned that we all be careful to keep the door to his house shut. He told me if Josie got out she had a tendency to run, and he had trouble getting her to come back in when that happened.

My brother removed the old soiled rugs to my dad's garage, and the new rugs purchased at Walmart were installed on his floors. One of the rugs removed, however, was a long runner that had covered the concrete floor in the main hall adjacent to the room where my dad spent most of his time and in front of the concrete platform where his wood stove was located. We had been unable to find a runner of similar dimensions at Walmart, and instead replaced it with two or three smaller rugs. My dad, for some reason, became very agitated by the fact that the new rugs did not completely cover the floor in his hall. Consequently, my brother made a return trip to Ellsworth to search for a new runner he could install to make my dad happy. While he did so, I drove Eileen and Shelley back to the B&B where we wanted to rest a bit and clean up for dinner. My brother arrived shortly afterward, having returned to my dad's house to install the additional rug on his way.

The first evening that we were in Maine was a Sunday night, and we had arranged for the manager of the B&B in Jonesboro to cook a special dinner for us in the restaurant, event though it was normally open only Wednesday through Saturday. The second night, after cleaning all day at my dad's house and taking a break for lunch mid day, we were very tired and actually skipped dinner. My brother and I sat and talked that night over a bottle of wine until very late, discussing my father's situation and what should be done. The third day we had arranged a dinner for the four of us at a nice gourmet restaurant, Christopher's at Eagle Hill, located at a research institute in Steuben, about halfway between Cherryfield and Ellsworth. Tuesday night was an off night, and we were one of only two dining parties in the restaurant, but the meal was excellent and we had a very good conversation.

My take on my dad's situation was that he was becoming less able to care for himself, living on his own, and we should perhaps find an assisted living facility for him. My brother, however, felt, based on conversations with my dad, that he was committed to living on his own, and that if forced into an assisted living center would surely die. He felt it was better to honor my dad's wishes and let him continue to live independently in his own home, regardless of the consequences. I tended to agree with that, and decided to go along with my brother's wishes. In addition, we were concerned that if we alerted adult protective services in Maine to my dad's situation, that they might try to force him to leave his home and move into assisted

care, and that would have the same adverse consequences. Accordingly, we decided to content ourselves with cleaning my dad's house and also trying to contact his neighbor to, hopefully, get him to pay her something every month in consideration of all the help she was providing. My wife especially was very concerned about the way my dad appeared to be using his friend, and even suggested that perhaps, in the absence of cooperation from my dad, we should pay her something. I was actually willing, just so we could stop worrying about it, and offered to write a check for, how much(?), right there on the spot. \$1000? \$2000. I couldn't get an answer, so we let the matter slide.

During the time the others were cleaning, on the first day, I walked to the house next door in an attempt to discuss matter with my dad's friend who looked after him. There was nobody home, but I left a note with my cell number asking her to call me. She did not.

Before returning to our B&B, I and my wife along with my brother and his wife drove to her house to see, again, if we could talk to her. She was not there, but her son arrived home while we were there, and we had a long conversation with him. One of our concerns was for the monthly payments we had encouraged my dad to make in consideration for their help with transportation. In fact, he had been paying them nothing. We knew he had the money. So if he wasn't paying them, what was he doing with it? The son told me my dad's grass mower had died and my dad was saving money for a new one. I thought that was silly. Rather than buying a new mower to ride around on, my dad should have been just paying someone to come mow his grass as needed. I actually suspected my dad was saving the money in hopes of buying a car. He did appear to have a significant amount of cash in his house. During our visit he showed me a wallet stuffed with large bills. In fact, my dad had told me during our conversation while the others were cleaning that he thought maybe he could buy a car and move to some place farther north, in rural Maine, some rural place where he could drive without a license or insurance and the "constabulary" would allow it and not bother him. Plus, what were they going to do to him at his age. After all, he was 98 years old. Based on that conversation, I thought the story that he was saving money for a new mower was a ruse. Despite our attempts to contact my dad's neighbor and discuss these matter with her, she never responded.

On Tuesday morning, as the others continued cleaning, I decided to try to solve the problem of the door on my dad's wood stove. I determined that the new door would fit, although there was a fiber seal that had to be stripped out. The original door had apparently had only a channel that mated with a ridge in the body of the stove. Once I determined that the new door would fit, there was still the problem that one of the original hinge pins for the two hinges was missing and the other was bent. It appeared to me that my dad might have tried to install the door with only one hinge pin and it had sagged and bent the pin. I found this surprising, since my dad, as an engineer, had usually had better sense about mechanical things. At any rate, I was

able to take the one bent pin to the hardware and lumber store about a mile down the road toward the center of Cherryfield and find a couple of machine screws of the proper dimensions that could replace the pins in the hinges. I returned to my dad's house and mounted the door on the stove. He would now be able to close it once the fire was burning to prevent smoke from coming out into his house. Over the course of a couple hours the air quality in the house improved markedly. My dad, however, expressed concern that he would not get as much heat out of the stove with the door closed.

Then, about noon, I saw someone mowing the grass at the house next door and walked over to talk with him. He turned out to be an ex-boyfriend from high-school days of my dad's lady friend who had come to visit her for a few days. They had gone out the night before, which was why we had missed her and only been able to talk to her son. And now she was at work, at a school where she worked as a teacher's assistant. We spent quite a while talking, and he told me that the lady was very shy and also was a very loving person who liked to help people and was not interested in being paid for doing it. Nonetheless, my brother and I felt that looking after my dad and chauffeuring him for errands was becoming a significant burden, and she deserved some compensation. I encouraged him to discuss our concerns with her and urge her to contact me. However, we were not successful in contacting her or meeting with her during our visit.

On Wednesday morning, after breakfast and before driving back to the airport in Boston for our flight back to New Mexico, my wife and I stopped at my dad's house to say goodbye. I saw the new rug my brother had purchased. He hadn't been able to find a long runner like the one we had removed, but with the additional rugs he purchased the entire floor of the hall was now covered and my dad seemed to be happy with that. I took a couple of pictures of my dad and gave him a hug. It was the last time I would see him.

Apparently my dad's neighbor and her son looked in on him that day, after we had left. If I remember correctly, she placed a telephone call to my sister in Michigan and reported to her what a good job we had done cleaning my dad's house. It appeared to me that perhaps the woman had been shy about meeting my brother or me, but felt more comfortable communicating with another woman. Despite my dad's longstanding friendship with his neighbor, up to this point neither I nor my brother had ever met her.

About a month after our visit, my brother received a call from the woman who owned my dad's property. She was worried about fire danger. Apparently, there had been a small fire in his house. My brother learned that my dad had left the electric table saw that he used for cutting firewood in his shop running. The motor had overheated and set sawdust in the saw to smoking. The fire department had been called. They had extinguished the sawdust, but also decided that my dad's wood stove, which he had been using to heat his house, for some unknown reason, did not

meet the fire code. I wondered if my dad had been using the door that I had repaired on the stove, or had he removed it because of his idea that he got more heat without it. Consequently, the firemen had not only thrown his table saw out of the house, but had also ripped out the wood stove that he used for heat and thrown it out the door. Also, although my dad had told me during our visit a month earlier that he was about to order a new supply of firewood for the winter, at this time, now into November with increasingly cold weather, he appeared not to have done so. His landlord said there was very little firewood remaining on his porch. Now, as the cold of the Maine winter encroached, my dad had only a couple of old electric heaters available for heat. Originally, he had installed a gas heater fueled by liquid propane from a tank in his yard, but he had told me during our visit a month earlier that the propane heater was nonfunctional and he also preferred heating with wood, which was less expensive.

A week or two later, my brother received another call from my dad's lady friend and neighbor. My dad was in a hospital in Machais, Maine, north of Cherryfield. He had apparently built a fire on the concrete floor in his house with scrap wood from his shop in order to heat his house. There was no flue from which the smoke and gases from combustion could escape, and he had suffered carbon monoxide poisoning. His neighbor had discovered the situation and called for an ambulance which had conveyed him to the hospital.

My brother arranged an emergency trip to Maine to deal with the situation. He found my dad in pretty good shape and was able to take him home from the hospital after a couple days. In the meantime, he began to investigate possibilities for assisted care. He visited a veteran's home in Machais for which my dad could qualify because of his World War II service, but to do so would have to be certified as mentally incompetent. My brother tried to arrange for a mental evaluation of my dad while he was in the hospital in Machais, but for some reason it was not done, and my dad was discharged without resolution of this issue. My brother told me the administrative staff at the hospital at the time he checked my dad out appeared clueless about the whole situation. My brother was now beginning to accept the idea that perhaps my dad would be better off in some sort of assisted living situation. He thought the veterans home might be the best possibility. He did observe that my dad seemed to enjoy interacting with the nurses at the hospital in Machais, and that was perhaps an indication that he would not be unhappy in a care facility, in fact might enjoy having people with whom to communicate, although not able to be in his own home.

Back at my dad's house, my brother installed a couple of electric ceramic heaters that he purchased to provide heat. He told me he also had purchased a better hearing device for my dad and showed him how to use it. He contacted the local fire marshal, but could not obtain an explanation of why my dad's wood stove had been deemed not to meet code and removed. He also contacted local suppliers of pellet stoves, thinking to have one of those installed in my dad's house would be a better

solution to his heating problem, but all the local suppliers were backed up and could not arrange installation for several months. In looking around my dad's house, it appeared to my brother that my dad's washing machine had not been used since our visit a month earlier. Also, he was under the impression that my dad was wearing the same clothes he had worn during our visit and probably had not taken a shower since either.

My brother did manage to meet with my dad's shy neighbor and discuss the situation with her. His conclusion was that she was just a very sweet and simple person who liked my dad, felt compelled to help people in need, and had no desire for any monetary compensation for doing so. Finally, frustrated, and facing work demands back at his architectural firm, my brother had to leave. I discussed the situation with my brother by telephone after his visit, and we agreed that, in gratitude for the assistance that his neighbor had provided, on my dad's death any remaining assets in his estate, which we knew would be slight, should go to her.

Life appeared to return to relative normalcy through the winter of 2014 to 2015. But then, about the beginning of March, my dad's neighbor checked in on him and found him in bed, cold, with low body temperature, a slow pulse, swollen legs, and a lot of sores on his skin. He also had difficulty walking and complained that his shoes hurt his feet. She called my brother to report the problem, and managed to transport my father in her pickup truck to the hospital in Ellsworth, Maine, about thirty miles distant, despite a threatening snowstorm. She complained to my brother that she felt the care my father required was beyond her means, and my brother's advice to her was to back off and stop assisting my father in hopes of forcing adult protective services to take charge and provide supervision. His neighbor, I should mention, also took custody and cared for my dad's dog Josie whenever he was in hospital and unable to care for her. She loved dogs, however, and had a couple of her own. So the additional burden of Josie was probably minimal. During the conversation with my brother, she also mentioned that during a recent trip to the bank, my father had withdrawn a large sum as cash. She thought \$2000. For what purpose was unknown. I told my brother I thought perhaps my dad had been about to act on his escape plan, maybe give the cash to someone to purchase a car that he could somehow drive without license or registration. It was just a suspicion I had.

At the hospital it was determined that my dad had a bacterial infection on his skin. He was bathed and placed on antibiotics, which were effective in combating the bacteria. After a couple days in the hospital, during which time my brother and sister were both in contact with the doctor in charge of my dad's care and encouraged him to evaluate his competence and perhaps release him to a care facility rather than sending him home, the hospital staff determined that, in their opinion, he was competent to live on his own. There was a big snowstorm, a couple of feet of snow, in that part of Maine, and there was nobody designated to receive my dad when he was released. So they released him on his own signature and sent him home in an ambulance. When the ambulance arrived at his house, the driver did

not feel comfortable leaving him alone, but managed to find his neighbor and then left him with the assurance that she would look after him. He stayed at his neighbor's house for a few days, then returned to his own and she checked in on him daily.

Why the hospital staff adjudged my father competent to live on his own despite the obviously increasing illogical behavior that indicated he was losing reason and reality is a mystery. Perhaps in this day and age they are so used to dealing with people with crazy ideas who are still able to act relatively normal while in their care that they just don't recognize symptoms that might cause an elderly man to be a danger to himself. Alternatively, perhaps they just don't give a shit.

A day or two after my dad returned to his house he had a visit from an adult protective care worker in the town. The worker communicated with my sister after the visit and noted that my dad had appeared a bit hostile toward the idea of visits or assistance from her department. Two days later, another worker looked in on him and reported that he seemed more cooperative at that time. However, he complained to her that the bandages the hospital had put on his feet were uncomfortable. Therefore he had removed them. That was a bit worrying. A visit for psychological evaluation had been scheduled, but it would be a couple of weeks before the busy case worker was able to see my dad. Before that, however, within a day or two, my dad had a fall and hit his head. His neighbor found him unconscious and called 911. The emergency crew determined that his body temperature was low and his pulse was weak at only thirty beats per minute. They transported him back to the hospital in Ellsworth where he was placed on a respirator. He remained unconscious and unresponsive for a day or two, then began to respond. Meanwhile, tests had determined that he had possibly lost kidney function as a result of the trauma.

Notified of my dad's fall and readmission to the hospital, my sister who is a nurse, and her husband arranged to drive overnight to Maine. While there, my sister conferred with my dad's doctor, and then, assuming the worst, made advance arrangements with a local funeral home for cremation in case of his death. My brother and I agreed to share the expense. Meanwhile, my dad moved in and out of consciousness, and only limited communication with my sister was possible. The three of us were consulted and, consonant with what we believed to be my dad's wishes, consented to having him removed from life support if, in fact, there was no chance that he could survive and breathe on his own.

Once my dad showed signs of response, the hospital did remove him from the respirator and he appeared to be able to breathe on his own. Having made arrangements, including visiting the courthouse to arrange for my sister to assume guardianship for my father and access to his bank account and possibilities for hospice, my sister and her husband had to return to Michigan where she had obligations to resume her nursing duties. During the night after they left, my dad

regained consciousness briefly and spoke to one of his nurses. He expressed his wish not to be put back on life support. His kidneys were failing. He told the nurse that he wanted to die. In deference to his request and the consent of his children, the hospital did no additional intervention, and during the next day his breathing slowed the eventually stopped in the afternoon. It was March 10, 2015. He was a little more than two months shy of his ninety-ninth birthday.

My brother made a quick trip to Maine to search through my dad's house for any items he didn't think should be left for individuals outside the family to see. During his search, he could find no trace of the \$2000 or so in cash that my dad was alleged to have withdrawn from his bank account. My sister, during her visit, had managed to locate my dad's wallet among his effects at the hospital, but it contained no significant cash. Additionally, very little balance remained in his bank account – perhaps enough to pay an outstanding bill from a neighbor in Cherryfield who had plowed his driveway during the recent snowstorms, but no more. So that was the extent of my dad's estate at the time of his death – virtually zero.

My dad had expressed to my sister a desire to be interred in the Memorial Gardens cemetery in Michigan where his parents were buried. Although my sister was aware of the arrangements my father had made for my mother to be embalmed before cremation after her death, she decided it best not to discuss details of his own funeral arrangements with my father, fearing that he might specify the same procedure for reasons his children could not understand. He did not address the issue, consequently the arrangements my sister had made for cremation services were carried out and my dad's ashes consigned to my sister in Michigan, as had been those of my mother. I suggested to my sister that she contact Memorial Gardens to determine what arrangements could be made to inter my father's ashes in the plot along with his parents, and whether perhaps my mother's ashes could be placed there as well. Resolution of that issue is, to my knowledge, still pending. Tentatively, my siblings and I plan to gather in Michigan on what would have been my father's 100th birthday for a memorial.

I had received notice that my mother's youngest brother Calvin had passed away a few months before. Her older brothers Don and Jim had both died in the past three years. My father was the last of his generation in my family. Exceptional longevity has strange effects on the living. The closer a relative gets to 100 years of age, the more we tend to believe they will live much longer. Perhaps some day this will change. As of now, it is a rare occurrence. None of us know, really, when the end will come. When we survive to a very old age, despite hope, it tends to come quickly and unexpectedly. Perhaps that is a blessing.
