

LITTLE DID I REALIZE

My Undergraduate Years at Penn
by
Randall Feldman

B.A. Economics, '68



University of Pennsylvania Glee Club



Tau Delta Phi



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Preface

Sometime around June of 2020, Lee Gordon, University of Pennsylvania class of '68, asked me and several others to write a tribute to some professor they had at Penn. As I thought about it, I realized I didn't have any kind of significant relationship with any of my professors in order to pay tribute to them.

As an alternative, Lee asked me to write something about Bruce Montgomery, Penn's own version of Mister Chips, who spent 50 years as the Director of the University of Pennsylvania Glee Club, four years of which coincided with my tenure there singing baritone. I tried but found nothing sufficient to do justice to that extraordinary individual.

But while writing, I started to remember other stories from those years that I thought were worthwhile and started to put them down on paper. They are what follows.

This, obviously, is not everything that happened to me. Some memories did not make good stories; some were just too embarrassing to let others know about. Several people I spoke to said they couldn't remember anything of their college years. Initially, I thought the same thing. But the more I wrote, the more stories I remembered. And occasionally, someone in conversation would remind of yet something else.

I especially want to thank David Conant, Bob Lion, Lee Gordon, and Lee's email chain of Penn grads who filled in some missing pieces in what I was recounting. Here's a toast to you all and dear old Penn.

Introduction

Memories of my undergraduate years at Penn (1964-68) are fragments, like a phrase out of a complete sentence. They are most with me when they are used in storytelling, when I am trying to make a point, or in a conversation when someone says something that leads me to say, "Oh, that reminds me of the time at Penn...."

As with most, my times as an undergraduate were filled with dynamic change. These particular years were unique in so many additional ways due to the Vietnam War with the draft, the generation gap, the pill, the music, civil rights, assassinations, haircuts, mini-skirts ... and the hits just kept on coming.

Freshman Year

including

Why I went to Penn

Caclis

Thomas Penn and Mao T'se Tung

A rant

Pointed objects

Iota

Life, the universe, and everything, or God, Part 1

Rowbottom

Middle Earth

I came to Penn from suburban Philadelphia: Lower Merion. I was six miles from my home, so I had access to my father and mother, the former loaning me a car when I needed one, and the latter wanting nothing so much as to do my laundry (which I graciously allowed her to do).

I had entered the class of '68 to become an astronaut. I started out in mechanical engineering in the same building that had housed, what many claimed to be, the first computer. I had to learn "Swamp." It was a programming language. Then, we had to learn an update, which is when I came to understand that programmers had a sense of humor. The update was called, "Ants." Yep. Swamp with Ants. If only the rest of my first year at Penn could have been so unassuming. Little did I realize.

I soon discovered that mechanical engineering was not for me. It took all of a week. And I switched to electrical engineering. Why I thought this was a good choice escapes me now. The biggest discovery my freshman year was that I actually had to study to get good grades. I had no idea how to study. To illustrate, I went from the highest score in my class in the Physics I mid-term, to the lowest in the final. And that glide path to potential oblivion was to continue for three semesters.

SIDEBAR. The following anecdote may not be politically correct or particularly sensitive for these times, but it took place 50+ years ago and shows some creative problem-solving by Penn freshmen. So, it's included here.

My freshman year academics did have its points-of-interest. One favorite memory was of my teaching assistant in calculus. She was from somewhere in Asia; I don't remember the country. I was not like my friend Lee Gordon who seemed to know all his teachers by their first name. Not me. It never

occurred to me ask them anything personnel or become friendly while sipping Johnny Walker. That, perhaps, was one of my problems.

In any case, my T.A. had trouble communicating with us in this, her second language. Calculus came out like caclis and spoken at light speed. She also had a fondness for the word trivial, which took my classmates several weeks to decipher. It came out something like triv-yuh. We finally started circulating a glossary of terms which anyone could append. She was really a pretty good teacher in spite of our inability to understand much of what she said.

My freshman year home was the Thomas Penn dorm. It was right across the alley from the University of Pennsylvania Hospital at which, as it so happens, less than 20 years before, I was born.

I roomed with Gene Manko, a good friend from home. We hung a picture of Mao T'se Tung on our wall, not because of any political inclinations. We just thought this huge poster looked kinda funny. It added a bit of charm to the stark surroundings. We also thought we invented the idea of hanging a white glove on our door in honor of our innocence. We were naïve in thinking that no one would figure out what it meant. And even though Gene and I started out as good friends, we ended up as being good for nothing for each other. He left before finals without a word. But he did leave me Chairman Mao.

The hall I lived on generated friendships that have lasted right up to the time of this writing. Across the hall from me was Wayne Baruch. We became friendly, joined the Glee Club and Tau Delta Phi fraternity together. Whenever I get out to Los Angeles, I always try to meet up with Wayne, and we have kept in touch regularly through the years.

Also, on that hall was David Conant, who had, as it turns out, the same birthdate as me. Not particularly important, but it gave us something to talk about when we were not discussing YETI. Don't ask. David created the most expletive filled Franklin Field cheer ever heard on the Penn campus. Much to my surprise when I reminded him of it 50 years later, he claimed he didn't remember it. Yeah, right. I will be glad to share it with anyone who would like to see it, but I'll refrain from including it here.

David's room was special. It had a television. And as such, the hall convened there weekly to see David Janssen in "The Fugitive." It was in this room that we learned to "fuge," [Sounds like huge.] which was some sort of hunched shoulder thing that Janssen did every week while trying to elude Inspector Girard.

More than anything else at Penn, the all-male University of Pennsylvania Glee Club (now the Penn Glee Club and with both sexes) was my essential Penn experience. I'll get back to the Glee Club later.

SIDEBAR. By the way, the correct term is Penn not UPenn. We are not some New England state school. This is the IVY LEAGUE!!! There is no UHarvard, UYale, UBrown, UCornell, UColumbia, UPrinceton (Ughh), and Uthat-other-one-that-I-always-forget. We are single word universities. We are Penn! UPenn sounds like some illiterate telling me to send him a letter using a Bic. Can you imagine someone singing "Here's a toast to dear old UPenn?" Are there no traditions that are worth holding onto, especially when it comes to a place where I spent a number of my formative years?

At the beginning of the fall semester, all the freshmen were put through some sort of physical education drill, routine I don't really know what to call it, or whether I remember it correctly. The idea was for us to choose an activity to fulfill our physical education requirement.

In the midst of all of this, whatever it was, the fencing coach came up to me and asked me if I wanted to go out for the fencing team. Now, you have to realize what a significant moment in my life this was. It's not that I don't like sports. I actually like sports very much. It's just that, when kids chose up sides for whatever sport it might be, I was never at the top of the most wanted list.

So, for the fencing coach to approach me like this was mind-bending. And what answer could I give him but ... no. No! Are you kidding me? It doesn't even have a ball associated with it. Right, I want to join a team during which I would be poked and prodded with a sharp object. I don't think so. So, I didn't.

SIDEBAR. My wife is a physician. She likes to take care of me and will occasionally ask me if I would like a shot of penicillin, flu vaccine, etc. Now, I love my wife and trust her completely. But – listen carefully – never let your spouse approach you with a pointed object. Rule #1 of a well-lived marriage.

What I did do was choose squash to fulfill my physical education requirement. I thought, "Well, here is a game with a ball in it, and it doesn't bounce too much so it should be easy to get to. And it all takes place in a small room, so not too much running." Here was a game tailor-made for me. Little did I realize that that ball gets hot when you hit it a lot and moves faster and faster. Eventually I discovered that squash is one of the most aerobic sports ever created.

But squash it was, and I immediately found I loved it. As usual, I was never great at it, but I enjoyed it, and would play it for many years to come. Whenever I moved to a new town – and I moved around a lot – one of the first questions I asked when I landed was, “Is there a squash court in town.” F.Y.I., Ed Michael Reggie, the man with three first names and my squash partner in New Orleans, was best man at my second (and last) wedding.

As I mentioned, I pledged fraternity Tau Delta Phi. It was not something I felt particularly strong about. It was just something I did along with Gene and Wayne. We went to Rush Week where you visited a bunch of fraternities that you heard about and wanted to investigate. For some reason, Tau Delt was in that bunch for me. I don’t remember why.

We were accepted and during the second semester went through the pledging routine. I assume most fraternities have some sort of indoctrination for incoming members. Physical and emotional hazing were not uncommon. Ours was rather mundane. For example, we had to memorize the Greek alphabet and recite it whenever a fraternity brother asked.

SIDEBAR. From this experience I learned that the Greek alphabet begins with the letter Iota and ends with the letter Sir. It is just a coincidence that the Penn chapter of Tau Delta Phi was the Iota chapter. I was told later that the letter Sir at the end of the alphabet is obsolete and has fallen into disuse. You will not find it in any Greek language textbook.

At the end of our pledging period, we advanced to Hell Weekend after which we became full members of the fraternity. All pledges swore an oath that we would never divulge what took place. I can only say that hearing Ravel’s Bolero since then, has become – what shall I say – evocative in only the most pejorative way.

During my freshman year at Thomas Penn, I got into many of those late-night discussions about life, the universe, and everything. At one point Bob Moskowitz (later to be known as Robert – don’t call me Bob), who shall appear here several times, asked me if I believed in God. It was one of the telling moments in my life. I had been raised in a Jewish home. I was bar mitzvahed and confirmed. I went to Hebrew School and was given a scholarship to a post-high school Jewish studies program, although I didn’t accept it. In short, I was religious and observed all the important Jewish holidays. Faith was a given. But I was also a student of science and math and had a very empirical way of looking at things.

In any case, in my freshman year, the topics of "man, woman, birth, death, infinity" were a natural outgrowth of a well-rounded effort to avoid studying. And then this question of belief in God came up. My immediate response without any thought at all was "yes." But as I thought about it over the next few days, I realized that the real answer was a bit more complicated. The "yes" was a response of the heart. If I answered the question with my head, I would have said, "No." My heart and head had two different takes on the subject. I went over it many times in the coming weeks and finally determined that I was not going to think about it or get into any discussions about it at all. It was too confusing. And there the issue stayed until my senior year. [To be continued].

One more thing about my freshman year: Rowbottom. It was a time of college unrest. Luckily for Penn freshmen, we had a tailor-made tradition that we could take advantage of. While it changed somewhat over the years, all you had to do at that time was walk around the quad in the evening and start yelling at someone in the dorm, and people would start throwing things at you out their windows and yelling back "Rowbottom." I believe the term originated in the early 1900's when a drunken student shouted at a friend in a dorm whose name was Rowbottom. In any case, by the 60's, a time of student protests, the whole thing had evolved.

For example, I remember one particular night. Everyone seemed to be out on 36th and Spruce. There were hundreds of kids - maybe even a thousand - out there protesting I don't know what, and most of them didn't know what. And down 36th Street comes a single, lone figure: the Dean of Students. He reaches out to grab one person - just one student mind you - and the entire horde turns and runs. We were a courageous lot.

One final brief coda. College life brings many opportunities to learn from people outside your immediate circle of family and high school friends that can add immeasurably to your life. Such was the case of David Conant's fascination with J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings." Dave had often prodded me to read it, but I always found some reason not to.

That summer, I was in Florida visiting my Uncle Charles and was going to fly to Tucson to visit friends of my father. I needed something to read, and I picked up a copy of "The Fellowship of the Ring," volume one of "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

Over the course of the next seven hours [It was a long flight with many hops], I read the entire book, and I was hooked. My love affair with the trilogy would last up to the writing of this brief history, including creating a musical based on the series entitled, "Middle Earth," visiting United Artists in

New York City to find out that I couldn't get the rights to perform it for any reason, singing various songs from the musical to anyone who would listen including one that became a standard part of the repertoire of American Gothic (a musical duo of mine in graduate school with long-time friend Suzi Dietz), and reading the three volumes more than a half dozen times. I can't thank David enough for introducing me to it. It was one of the many benefits of going to Penn.

Sophomore Year

Including

Hitting the wall

Major #3

Raoul

Girls

The radio voice of the University of Pennsylvania IN Philadelphia

The Wall of Sound I

What I wanted to do when I grew up

Women's Lib

"So, what's your point?"

Sophomore year continued my downward academic trajectory. But I found I was not alone. I lived at the Tau Delta Phi fraternity house up on 39th Street. I literally still have nightmares about the rickety old thing.

Tau Delt had a remarkable history during my tenure and just beyond. When I and the 12 others joined, it was ranked dead last in academics, athletics, and social life. When I left my senior year, it was ranked first in all three. I don't know where I got that information, but we can argue about that later. However, I certainly didn't help it out academically my sophomore year. I went on probation.

I lived on the fourth floor with three others. Our grade points the first semester were 2.0, 1.6 (mine), 1.2, and BMS. This last is what the Nielsen ratings people call a TV show that has does not have an audience: below measurable standard. I don't know how the others handled it, but I have always referred to this period in my life as "when I hit the wall."

One night, Bob Moskowitz, now a Tau Delt fraternity brother, came into my room to talk about life, the universe, and everything. I was figuratively pulling my hair out by the roots trying to turn my academic life around. I told Bob I couldn't talk then with all my root pulling and wall hitting. He continued to try to engage me in conversation. I said, "Not now," my frustration rising, trying to conceptualize what the square root of minus one looked like. But Bob continued to prod me. I finally exploded with something like "GET OUT!!!" At which point all 6'5" of him, turned, squawked in a still small voice, "... eep," and left the room.

I started asking people how they studied. What advice could they give me? The only thing I remember from that time was I began to underline in my

books. Perhaps most importantly, I devoted more time to study. In high school, I just sort of got it easily. I was 40th in my class out of 440. But I really just sort of read, and it stuck. Now it was different.

I started to turn things around. By my sophomore year, I was in my third major: chemistry. I don't know why chemistry, but there I was. The first semester I flunked organic. On the positive side, they said I made the purest aspirin in my lab of anyone in the history of first semester organic chemistry at Penn. But apparently cooking up a cool batch of acetylsalicylic acid was not sufficient to raise the grade. I took it again the second semester, and I got a "B." When I compared my notes from the first and second semester, I found that my first semester notes were not just wrong; they were incomprehensible. I was turning things around.

One of the courses I took that second semester was physical chemistry. It wasn't my favorite course, but it was OK. On the other hand, my handwriting, which had been an issue since ... Well, I have to go back to first grade Sunday School to explain what happened in physical chemistry.

So, there was my five- or six-year-old self doing some sort of art lesson. I thought art was OK. Crayons were my friends. Little did I realize.... So, the teacher handed out these pictures we had to color. I got a picture of Moses standing on Mt. Sinai with the 10 commandments, all inside a circle.

So, I was having a grand ole time coloring in Moses in purple, the 10 commandments in green and the sky in blue when the teacher stopped at my desk and looked down at what I was doing. She thought for a moment before speaking. Interestingly, she did not comment on my choice of colors. Instead, she said something that has had a lasting impact on me to this day.

She said, "Randy, you are supposed to color inside the circle." Now, I thought I was doing a pretty good job of coloring inside the circle, but the truth of the matter was that my hand couldn't keep those finicky crayon colors from leaving home. In truth, they were all over the place.

That was the first indication that my future would not entail the visual arts. Next stop, eighth grade at Bala Cynwyd Junior High School.

I had a U.S. history teacher, renowned at the time: Mr. Turner. Mr. Turner looked astonishingly like Alfred Hitchcock, and more astonishingly, talked like him. And he frightened the hell out of every eighth grader.

By this time in my life, my lack of expertise in art had spread to my handwriting. No one could read what I wrote. When teachers asked in what

language I had completed a homework assignment, I realized I had a serious problem. And it was often the case that even I couldn't make heads or tails out of what I had put down on paper either.

So, I decided to try something different. I would not write longhand any longer. Instead, I would print beautiful individual letters. No cursive swirls and loops for me.

The first time I tried this was in a test for Mr. Turner's class. As it turns out, my printing came with its own set of problems. Although the printing was legible, I had to reduce my speed to about a third of what it was previously. I was unable to complete the test by the end of the period. In short, my grades were at risk.

So, I sped up. Eventually, I got back up to a reasonable speed. Unfortunately, my legibility deteriorated in inverse proportion to my words/minute. But at least Mr. Turner understood my efforts. He put up with the illegible printing as long as I could come back after school to translate my scrawl into words.

And that brings me back to physical chemistry, or P. Chem. as we called it.

In my P. Chem class we had another one of those teaching assistants. This person was from the U.S. and could read English, but his tests were somewhat demanding. It was so much so, that I had to increase my speed once again to finish on time. And once again, my handwriting – in this case my printing – was the pits. The proof of performance came when he handed back the first test of the semester. He read all the names on the blue books, and the students dutifully raised their hands to receive them. As it was the first test, he really knew very few of us by name, certainly not me.

In any case, he goes through his entire stack of blue books and has not called my name. He then repeats the name on the one blue book still in his hand. He was not calling my name. He said he was looking for an Hispanic student with the name Raoul Flehdarm. I went up to him, looked at the book, and sure enough it was my scrawl.

The only reason I have gone into this is that to this day, some of my friends still call me Raoul in honor of my atrocious handwriting. This is one of the enduring legacies Penn gave me. God help me.

Girls also started playing a major role in my life in my sophomore year. But when it was time for the Interfraternity Ball, I didn't have a date. I decided I was going to do something rash, and not like me at all. I went into a

lecture class with maybe a hundred or more students. I looked around for the prettiest girl I could find that had an empty seat next to her. I know. It was shallow. But what does sophomore mean after all.

So, there she was: the raven-haired beauty, Jan Corash. After 33 minutes with her I asked her to the ball. She was henceforth known in my fraternity as "The 33-minute wonder." In light of future events, she was also referred to as "Corash (e.g., crash) as in boom!" I should have known it would not go well when she told me soon after she accepted that she didn't want to waste her money on a dress and go to the ball, but we could go out on a date. It was actually a wise decision. Our time together proceeded to go downhill, and we never dated again. As it turns out, we became friends instead. A much better solution for both of us.

Towards the end of my sophomore year, the world saw the beginnings of computer dating. It was called "Operation Match." If you answered a bunch of personal questions on a standardized form, and returned it with the outrageous sum of \$3, they ran it through their computers, and you were sent a list of candidates. I got 22 names of potential matches.

The first name on my list was my fraternity brother Bob Moskowitz. Bob was famous in the fraternity for saying, "My ties are getting wider, and my mind is getting narrower." Based on nothing other than this quote, and the fact that it would not be difficult to take him home after a date, I decided he would be the first person on the Operation Match list that I would approach.

So, I wandered over to his room and knocked on his door. He opened the door, looked down on me from his tall frame, and, somewhat belligerently, said, "What do you want?" I said, "Would you like to go out on a date with me?" He said, "No," and shut the door in my face. As we discussed the incident over the years, he told me he was upset that I never asked him out again.

This actually turned out well for me. I went to the next name on the list: Debbie Nedelman (later to be known as Deborah – don't call me Debbie). She was a freshman at Bryn Mawr. We arranged to meet at her dorm and stayed a couple for the next 2 ½ years. She ended up marrying "a radical dentist," as I put it. Actually, he was a good guy who worked on an Indian (now Native American) reservation. Currently, they live in the great northwest (not on an Indian reservation) and have been together for almost 50 years. I take full credit for their successful marriage.

Moskowitz and I also had become part of WXPN, "the radio voice of the University of Pennsylvania IN Philadelphia." We followed in Dave Conant's

footsteps. David would later become the head of the station, and after graduation, would become the voice of WFLN and, after that, WRTI, showcasing his voice and his knowledge of classical music.

Moskowitz (or Moskowitz B. Moskowitz as Wayne Baruch christened him) and I ended up doing a morning show on the AM (rock 'n' roll) side of the station. [I also did an evening chamber music program on the FM side.] We had many "unsolicited" testimonials for our show. For example, one day his mother came for a visit. Her voice had an uncanny resemblance to mine if my voice was magically transformed into fingernails scratching a black board. On another day, God came in to talk with us, complete with echo. On our final day during senior year, we did a multi-hour tribute to the Beatles. In all these efforts we never once received any feedback from our audience. It was as if no one was listening. We, of course, did not seriously entertain such thoughts.

I should also mention that I have found several of my memories – or at least some aspects of them - were actually figments of my imagination. Two come to mind. I have often said that while at WXPB, I was color commentator for the Penn Basketball games. That part was true, but it was somewhat exaggerated. I did provide color for a game or two, but primarily I was the statistician, providing numbers for those who were really announcing the game. I also said that I was the color commentator for a game with Princeton when basketball great Bill Bradley was playing. As it turns out, that was not true. I did my on-air work in my junior ('66-'67) or senior year ('67-'68). Bradley graduated in 1965.

I did have the opportunity to meet Bradley when he Senator from New Jersey. In the late 70's I was working at public television station WNET in New York City. WNET was in reality licensed to Newark, NJ, and to deal with complaints from New Jersey citizens that the station was located in New York, it opened a studio in Newark. I went to the opening, and he was there. I had the opportunity to talk with him briefly and told him that I hated him. He paused and looked at me with some caution. I smiled and told him that all Penn Quakers had hated him when he played for Princeton. He took it in stride. It wasn't until he graduated that Penn became the Ivy League powerhouse we loved during my undergraduate years.

I should also mention here the Penn Palestra. This was an old arena even then, having been built in 1927. But it was the home of Big Five basketball: Penn, Villanova, St. Joseph, Temple, and LaSalle. I seem to remember that all Big Five basketball games were held there, but as noted my basketball memories should be taken with some caution.

For me, going to the Palestra – and I went to all the games - was a much more spectacular experience than going to Franklin Field for football. For one thing, we tended to lose football games. Basketball did not have that monkey on its back. But more important was the sound. When the excitement mounted and noise level rose, the atmosphere in the Palestra was this incredibly intense wall of sound. The pressure on your ear drums was dynamic. It didn't hurt; it just made the moments ... extraordinary.

At the end of my sophomore year, I had to pick a major. I thought I would major in chemistry now that I started getting decent grades. Little did I realize that that "F" in organic was actually a bit of a roadblock. I had no idea that success in a major was indicated by getting good grades in the key courses. Without any pause whatsoever from receiving my notification of intention to major in chemistry, the department sent me a notification of "No, you're not."

Now what was I going to do?

Ever since I was a little kid, I had said that when I grew up I wanted to be a baseball player and an astronomer. As for baseball, I actually was pretty good at wiffleball. Around my neighborhood, I specialized in polyethylene sports: wiffleball, frisbee, and hula hoop. These got me no scholarships, and, as it turned out, wiffleball did not provide me with any of the skills you needed for college baseball, even in the Ivy League.

That left astronomy. And remembering my original intention for my college education - to become an astronaut - I wandered over to the Astronomy Department and met with the Chair.

I said, "I want to become an astronomy major."

He said, "No, you don't."

I said, "Yes, I do."

He looked at me for a moment and then said, "No, you don't."

I said, "I thought I did."

He said, "You were wrong."

I said, "Really? I could have sworn"

And then he interrupted me and said, "Where do astronomers spend much of their time?" This was 1966.

I thought about it for a minute and said, "On the top of a mountain,"

And he said, "And where is that mountain?"

"Far away from city lights?"

"Yes. And at what time does most of this take place?"

"Between midnight and 4 a.m.?"

"And what kind of social life will you have?"

I didn't answer for a minute, and then I slowly stood up and said, "Where's the office of the Chair of Polyethylene Sports?"

To this day, I don't remember what he said. True story.

By this time, I had two realistic choices. I wanted to finish in four years and the political science and economics majors would let me do that. The political science major had a 50-page term paper required in the first course I would take. I had never written anything longer than five pages, and even though economics would undoubtedly give me a lower grade point average, I didn't think I could handle a 50-page paper.

I needed some advice, so I went to see the counselor assigned to me by the University. Little did I realize that this meeting would have a major impact on my life.

We met at his office, and I went through a rather detailed discussion of why I was there. After about 45 minutes of this, he said, "I think you ought to take a year off to get your head together."

He saw me thinking about this and to encourage me he said, "I just had a similar conversation with someone just before you, and that student is going to do just that."

I paused and then asked, "Was that student a girl?" [At that point, I referred to all females of my age, and probably much older, as girls. I had not been liberated. That was about to change].

He said, "Yes, how did you know?"

I said, "Because if I took a year off, I'd be drafted."

In the blink of an eye, I became a women's libber. It was a major paradigm shift in my life. I knew of women who were better athletes than I, better coordinated, stronger, better stamina, and probably more mentally fit for the military, but none of them had this sword of Damocles hanging over their head because of Vietnam and the draft.

It was not that I was a male chauvinist. Not at all. It never occurred to me that women shouldn't have the same opportunities as men. But there were differences, as my Southern mother pointed out to me teaching me proper manners. You opened a door for women; you walked on the street side of the sidewalk with them; you put your hand behind their back to assist them up the stairs; you paid for them on dates; you stood up when they left or returned to the table, etc.

I just had never really considered the issue in any depth. But that changed in that one telling moment. I could not and would not take a year off to get my head together. Somehow, I would have to shift the various fragments of my head back into one piece some other way.

In the end, I decided that economics would be my major.

To be able to finish in four years, I had to go to summer school for Economics 101. I signed up and got as my teacher a young fellow from Calcutta named Yoginder K. Alagh. [Eventually, he would return to India and become a noted professor, economist, and Union Minister of Government]. He called me Randall (with a very wonderful rolling "R"). I called him Dr. Alagh.

In his class I found out that economics, while "the dismal science," could also be rather harsh. We were having a discussion about government support of families in India. As it turns out, this support did not increase per child after you reached a certain number of children. I asked, "But what about the children whose families do not receive additional funding? How are they supposed to get by? The kids could starve." And he said, "So, what's your point?"

As it turns out, I enjoyed economics. And then came the final of that first course. I thought I did OK, but I really didn't know. This was a crucial test for me. If I did poorly, I didn't know what I would do about a major. It could mean the end of my career at Penn.

Dr. Alagh passed out the blue books with the grades on them. I got an "A."

Now, you have to understand that by this time with a rather unspectacular (to put it mildly) grade point average and a series of majors that did not want me, my self-confidence was shot, and presumably my head was in various states of fragmentation (according to my guidance counselor). I did not believe I could have deserved an "A."

So, after the class, I went up to Dr. Alagh, and I actually asked him if the grade was correct. He took the blue book from me and went through it question by question, and said things like, "Good. Oh, yes, very good. Yes, this is good. This is good. Excellent. Good. Very good." And handed the book back to me and said that the grade was correct.

It's 50 years later, and I still remember this so clearly. All of a sudden, as it shifted back into place, I realized that I had gotten my head together.

Strange Interlude

Including

The compulsion of tying one's shoelace.
To be young, healthy, and really, really, stupid.
Fourth North and Frodo

Just before my junior year began, David Conant, Stan, a friend of his from Passaic - That's the Passaic in New Jersey - and I took a road trip to Yellowstone. I have just a few memories from that episode, but they are strong ones.

PART ONE. At one point we rolled into Grand Junction, Colorado, just before sunrise. I don't remember where Dave and Stan went, but I was out walking looking for a place to eat and found myself in a nice residential area. I noticed that there was this police car out and about, a block away, and I did something I never should have done.

If you ever find yourself in this kind of situation, try not to look suspicious. But my shoelace came untied. I hate it when my shoelace is untied. You have to find someplace to kneel down, and, in full disclosure, I have tender kneecaps. They don't like to be kneed upon. And certainly, with a cop car just down the street no doubt eyeing this grubby young adult at 4:30 in the morning, you don't want to attract any more attention than you have to.

But my shoelace was untied, and I had to deal with it. I knew it was the wrong thing to do, but I was compelled. It was as if I had been given a post-hypnotic suggestion to kneel down and tie the damn lace. And that is exactly what I did.

Who does such a thing? Any policeman knows that only nefarious types kneel down and tie their shoelace at 4:30 in the morning in a residential area of Grand Junction, Colorado. They receive training on just this type of situation.

And sure enough, as soon as my kneecap touched the ground and started to cause me extreme pain, the police car turned on a dime ...

SIDEBAR. It is interesting to note that the expression "turned on a dime" has, like everything else, been a victim of inflation. According to wordreference.com, it has been around since the 1880's, but was originally "turned around on a five-cent piece." Thought you should know.

and started coming down the street directly towards me. It was a leisurely turn and leisurely approach and a leisurely lowering of the window, and a leisurely scanning of my grubby face and rumpled clothing, etc.

At the same time, I put on my most innocent look – I could do that pretty well – and finished tying my shoelace (slowly enough for him to see that I actually had a shoelace that required tying), stood up (pleasing my kneecap), and greeted the officer, with a humbly pitched, “Hello, officer.”

The good news is that he took one look at me and knew that I was not going to burglarize the homes of the good citizens of Grand Junction. But he did ask for my identification and what my business was in his fair city. I said that I was looking for some place open for breakfast. He said that he would drive me to an all-night eatery and to get in the back seat, of course ... behind the metal mesh screen which had never happened to me before or since.

He really did take me to the restaurant, and very soon thereafter, Dave, Stan, and I continued on our way.

PART TWO. From there we hightailed it [I have only ever used that term in describing leaving Grand Junction, Colorado] out of town and headed to Yellowstone National Park. We were young and healthy, and decided to put our outdoor skills to the test by hiking in the park. We were also really, really stupid.

We started out fine. We checked in with the park rangers and decided to go to Heart Lake via a pretty good trail. Dave had rented a tent that we were going to take with us ... a 50 lb. tent ... a 50 lb. bulky tent ... a 50 lb. bulky inconvenient-to-carry tent.

But, hey, it was a good trail, no grizzlies had been sited. The weather was fine. What could go wrong?

We could go wrong. It was an eight-mile hike. I don't know about Dave and Stan, but I hadn't really done any hiking to speak of. The good news was we actually did succeed in making it to the lake, and then, from the shoulders of whoever was carrying it at the time, the tent fell to the ground. Each of us was enormously glad that we had arrived. Yet, we just stared at the tent as it lay there and knew we did not have the strength to put it up.

But no real problem with that. There was a cabin there.

The cabin was locked.

So, we called upon our last shreds of fortitude to set up the tent and crawl inside, but not before Stan decided the fish in the lake needed fertilizing and emptied upon it the contents of his stomach.

We awoke the next morning and took virtually no time at all deciding to leave the tent at the cabin with a note affixed to it asking the good park rangers who would find it, if they would be so kind as to take it back to Yellowstone headquarters, pack it up, and send it to Dave's house.

When we staggered back to the area where we parked the car, I found a bush that needed fertilizing and emptied upon it the contents of my stomach. We might have been young and healthy, but we were also really, really stupid.

Dave never found anything that needed fertilizing.

SIDEBAR. In reviewing this episode with David, he said that both Stan and I puked in the Lake. I said that it might be true of Stan, but not me. I chose the bushes after the return hike. Dave responded with one of those lines that can and should be used by all of us who revere the truth: "One always remembers one's puke." Penn just keeps on giving.

Our trip out west had several aftereffects. One was that three months later, the tent appeared at Dave Conant's home in Passaic, New Jersey. But before it could be returned to the rental store from which it came, his parents had to fork up the several hundred-dollar COD charges which accompanied it.

PART THREE. We left in what some might call a moment of spiritual need and headed for Salt Lake City.

As we drove into town, we found ourselves on West 4th North Street. I think we had been driving for way too long, as we started chanting 4th North over and over again. 4th North. 4th North. 4th North. It was just the funniest sound we had ever heard. It became a Mantra of Hilarity.

This was clearly not the normal set-up for visiting the world headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had read about the Mormons in my 11th grade U.S. History class, but didn't know much more about them than that. I was determined to learn, but I especially wanted to hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

We signed in at the visitors' center, and the first thing I learned was that we were not going to hear the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. This probably is the root cause of my present-day compulsion to plan in depth every detail of any trip I take. And many of these trips have taken me around the world.

So, as a consolation prize, I bought the Book of Moroni, which is the last of the books that make up the Book of Mormon. According to the text, it was written by the prophet Moroni sometime between 400 and 421. I read it cover to cover.

And now for the end of Part 3 and this interlude.

Four months later, I am back at my apartment in Philadelphia, getting ready to go out for a rehearsal of some sort, when the doorbell rings. I go to the door, open it, and there are two clean-shaven young men in white shirts, dark ties, and dark pants, saying they are from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I asked how, out of the several million people in Philadelphia, they happened to ring my doorbell. They said that they got my name and address from the visitors' book at the Mormon visitors' center in Salt Lake City. A word to the wise here.

I told them I was actually interested in talking to them because, in our trip out there, in addition to the Mantra of Hilarity that I had learned, I had read the Book of Moroni. But I had a rehearsal to go to, so I couldn't give them much time. I didn't demonstrate the Mantra of Hilarity, but I did tell them that I enjoyed reading the Book of Moroni very much, because more than any other religious text, it reminded me of one of my favorite books, "The Lord of Rings."

There was a bit of a pause while they stared at me, and then in unison without another word, they turned and walked away.

Junior Year

Including

Major #4

Liberal Arts

Glee Club – Freshman Year – Wall of Sound II

Glee Club – Sophomore Year – 1.6

Glee Club – Junior Year – There are many small groups
in the University of Pennsylvania Glee Club.

“The dumbest son-of-a-bitch”

The unofficial mascot of the University of Pennsylvania
Girl, not girls

“If you’re going to San Francisco ...”

Tay-co

“My, that was disturbing.”

So, my junior year began, and I had a major: Economics. And I, as it turns out, specialized in communist studies. I took Russian History taught by Penn legend, Alexander Riasanovsky. Along with so many others of his students, I was caught up in his recounting the stories of his heritage.

A QUICK ASIDE. I am a terrible teller of jokes, but I learned the following story from Riasanovsky and have used it many times over the years.

Riasanovsky enjoyed explaining how his father got thrown out of Russia. He told us that, prior to World War I, the capital of Russia was St. Petersburg. Then, during the first World War, the name changed to Petrograd. And when Lenin died in 1924, it was renamed Leningrad.

It was when the capital was called Leningrad that his father got caught up in the bureaucracy that the communists installed. He was filling out one of the numerous forms that were required. It asked where he was born. He dutifully wrote in St. Petersburg. Then it asked where he was raised. And he wrote down Petrograd. The third question asked was where he lived now. And he wrote Leningrad. And finally, the form asked, where he wanted to live. He said St. Petersburg, and he was thrown out of the country.

Never fails to get a smile or a laugh.

I think it was in my junior year that I took a History of the Symphony course as an elective. I cannot remember my professor’s name, but the course still lingers in my thoughts. I remember very clearly her talking about a Brahms symphony, and how she noted Brahms was stirring the pot [She actually did

stirring motions.] as the music became more intense. I can still identify many symphonies and composers today by the criteria she gave us in that class. I mention this only because the subject matter of this elective still remains with me more than 50 years later. Surely, this is a mark of a great liberal arts education.

It reminds me of the course South Asian Studies 403. The professor's name was Royal Weiler. It was a history of South Asia up to the year 1200. Rather esoteric. In the first class he said that we would only ever use what we would learn in that course at cocktail parties. But, in fact, it was pretty good, and I learned about something that I would likely never have thought about otherwise.

My junior year was filled with me clawing my way back to some semblance of success in my grades, developing my first major relationship with Debbie, taking part in Tau Delt, and the Glee Club.

I have always been involved in music. For one thing, it is part of my heritage. My great grandfather on my mother's side was a cantor. My mother was a concert pianist and piano teacher. And although I always had some musical instrument near me growing up, singing was my passion. I was always in the school choirs and even came in second place in some sort of singing competition in Junior High.

I don't remember how I happened to learn about the Glee Club, but I do remember there was never a question that I would audition. And I got in.

It was the signature experience of my college days, and, in fact, it was and is what makes Penn, Penn for me. .

At that time the Glee Club numbered maybe 80+ men, and for me, more than anything, being in the center of that sound will always be the quintessential Penn experience. The Club generally had four musical parts: first tenor, second tenor, baritone, and base. I was placed in the baritone section, and I always sought a spot in the center of the entire group: baritones and basses to my left, second and first tenors to my right. I was in the middle of yet another wall of sound, as Phil Spector would have called it. But this one had harmony, and to paraphrase the Glee Club Director, Bruce Montgomery, it was magnificent.

The Glee Club would always have a tour somewhere each year. My freshman year it was out to the mid-west by bus. We stopped to get the best doughnuts ever in a small shop in the middle of Kansas. Along the way, we would sing at Howard Johnson restaurants with Bruce getting

everyone's attention with his masterful voice, and never getting management's approval. He just did it, and always got applause.

In the meantime, I, along, with several other members of the club at the time were in various stages of illness. It was so bad that, to protect other members of the club, the sick ones moved to the back of the bus and set up an area that we called "The Clinic." Of course, it didn't really help the healthy members at all, but misery did love company, and those of us in The Clinic seemed to fare better.

While that was going on, Pete Kurzina, the President of the Club, was in the front of the bus booming out periodically, "Well, here we are on the open road." Then he would push an imaginary horn, and he would shout out and everyone would join in (as best as I can write it), "BAHMP, BAHMP." Why did he do that?

Where was Bruce in all this? I have no idea. Probably sleeping. Once when Bruce was sleeping on some bus trip, the Club lifted him up and put him on the shelf above the seats. When he eventually woke up of his own accord, he took it relatively well and just gave us first the "Where exactly am I" look, and then the "Oh, thanks a lot, guys" look.

On the tour my sophomore year, we stopped in Kansas City. The NCAA had just passed a new regulation requiring certification of a 1.6 minimum grade point average for all student-athletes. Penn and the rest of the Ivy League didn't like the idea, although we easily met the 1.6. Being the good Quakers that we were, we picketed NCAA headquarters singing "The Ivy League Medley." We definitely had too much free time on our hands. And although we won our first Ivy League basketball championship, we were not allowed to play in the NCAA tournament.

Then there was Snurgiss and Gr'doo. I think it was Jeff Hahn who developed these terms, or perhaps it included other members of his singing group, Three Pennce and a Yen. However, Snurgiss and Gr'doo changed my life. OK, it was not that dramatic, but I remember the terms to this day and have passed them along to several children and grandchildren who perhaps have made them accepted vernacular of others.

Snurgiss and Gr'doo are, to a greater or lesser extent, terms of logic. They make up all the things we know and don't know in the world as we know it and don't know it. In short, snurgiss is anything that is inside your nose. Gr'doo is everything else in the universe. If there are parallel universes, they may or may not have these terms. It is unclear if the definitions

include the multiverse or not, or if they are peculiar to our specific spacetime location.

I once got into a philosophical discussion with an 11-year-old friend of mine, who asked very wisely, "Does Snurgiss become Gr'doo once it leaves your nose?" The answer is unimportant especially since I can't remember it. The question was brilliant. But really, only Jeff can answer the finer points of the definitional implications therein.

Every year before classes resumed in the fall, the Glee Club would journey to Buck Hill Falls in the Poconos. It was a real version of "Dirty Dancing's" Kellerman's, the upscale Catskills resort. For some reason Bruce thought this was a great retreat for us to learn the repertoire we would be using in the next few months. It also seemed to be very Bruce-ish, so we accepted it. At the beginning of my sophomore year, I got my first look at the resort. There was even a Buck Hill Fall's song that we sang every year, just like Kellerman's song in "Dirty Dancing." We always had a great time, and we never put Baby in the corner.

It was in November of 1965 that we performed in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. This was a big deal. We actually got to go to New York, get in line, walk, stop walking, turn left, turn right and then walk, all the while singing. We were from the University of Pennsylvania. We could do this. And we did, but I have an additional memory or two from the experience.

We were singing something; I don't remember what. Maybe the Ivy League Medley or the Penn Medley. I don't know. But at one point we stopped right in front of the TV cameras on the sidewalk. We were told to turn left and sing. Well, we turned left, and there I was: smack dab in the middle of the front of the group – center stage, as it were – and looking right into a camera lens.

Way down in Ft. Lauderdale, my Uncle Charles happened to be watching this annual event, and who does he see looking right at him out of his living room television? His Damn Yankee nephew. He jumped up screaming some rebel epithet, went to the phone, and dialed up my parents to ask why his sister let her young son roam the streets of God forsaken New York City. Little did he realize I was about to be corrupted.

When we finished with the parade, a group of us decided to go get a drink. Drinking age in New York City was 18. It was 21 in Philadelphia. So, I went along with Glee Clubber Don Hazard and a bunch of others and was introduced to my first bar. We all sat down like we knew what we were doing. Everyone was ordering drinks but me. I didn't know what to drink. The sum total of my knowledge of alcohol was Manischewitz wine once a

year on Passover. But ole Don Hazard was from New York. The waitress accidentally thought he ordered two black and white scotches which she brought to him. I, being the good friend I was, and being totally ignorant of the ways of liquor, took one of the drinks and downed it in one gulp. To this day I can feel the burn of that liquid winding its way down my throatal passages, and, I have never hazarded (pun intended) another scotch, black or white or purple since.

Every decade in the 20th century was memorable, filled with notorious events that had a tremendous impact on the American culture and the world. You can argue which was the most dynamic or unsettling, but it would be difficult to keep from recognizing the 60's as a pivotal point in the American experience. Sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll, racial protests, war, generation gap, long hair, the pill, you name it.

SIDEBAR. At that time if you said, "the pill," everyone knew what you meant. It is a measure of how far we have come (or gone) since then that you now have a plethora of choices from which to define this one phrase.

The Glee Club and its members were no different than any other college-age group at that time. We were all experiencing a great amount of stress, especially because of the Vietnam War. The times they were a-changing, but we still were going to Buck Hill Falls every year, and we still had short hair and no mustaches or beards. In the first half of our "concerts" we wore white tie and tails. In fact, in another mid-west tour, there is a famous photo of members of the Glee Club having a snowball fight in those most formal outfits. In the second half of our "show" we wore blue blazers, grey slacks, and Penn ties. But in that second half, the Club included in its repertoire dancing (or really just walking around) and small groups. There were many small groups in the Glee Club, and I was in none of them. In my junior year, that would change. I helped create in two small groups: Half-a-Six Pennce and the Penndings.

The Half-a-Six Pennce was named after a Broadway show without the double "n." We were a folk trio with John Small on guitar, Ronnie Klein (later to be known as Ron – don't call me Ronnie) on tambourine (and the MC), and me on upright bass. The three of us were an interesting collection. John, every once in a while, would throw in an extra beat. Ronnie and I weren't clear on why he did this. Neither was John. But he looked so good playing guitar, it didn't matter. I played the bass. I really had no training playing the bass. But after all, it had just four strings, and you only played one string at a time. How difficult could it be? And I don't think Ronnie had ever seen a tambourine before he started playing it with us.

In truth we weren't that good, but we did manage to get a regular gig on a local children's TV series: *The World Around Us*. Maybe once a week they would schedule us to do three songs around a particular theme, e.g., food, the weather, etc. Usually, I got to write one of the songs that we would sing. It was fun and gave us a little spending money, until we were thrown off the air.

It was a time of unrest in the country. At one point we were performing during the protests and police arrests around the Democratic National Convention. The theme for one of our shows allowed us to pull from our repertoire the folk song, "Sinner Man." So, Ronnie, who introduced our songs, came forward and said, "This is dedicated to all the corrupt politicians in the city of Chicago."

We eventually returned to the show after a prolonged absence.

I had started to write some songs during my years at Penn. Mostly, I set other people's words to music. These included several from the aforementioned David Conant and Bob Moskowitz. Somewhere along the line I found Eugene Field's poem, "Little Boy Blue." I gave it a nice, lilting melody, and eventually incorporated it into the *Half-a-Sixpence* repertoire. So, it was inevitable that Bruce Montgomery heard it.

Bruce came up to me after the song was done and said that it was very nice, but did I notice that its music was an exact replica of the "Huron Carole" that Bruce had arranged? It ranks right up there with one of the most embarrassing moments of my life.

I quickly redid the melody, and while similar, was different enough to eliminate the comparison.

Perhaps, that one incident explains why Bruce never forgot my name. I did many other things in the Glee Club of note. I was Business Manager, student director, and semi-produced a record album when Bruce was busy doing other things. But in the course of the next four decades plus, whenever I happened to visit the Club for a concert or alumni gathering, Bruce pulled out of that amazing memory he had, my name. I attribute it to the "Little Boy Blue" incident, although many of my Glee Club friends would say that it was just the mind of Bruce Montgomery.

The Penndings gave me one of the peak experiences in my time at Penn. I don't remember exactly how we came into being. Most likely, I just wanted the opportunity to have a male and female sound. Perhaps, it was my love for Peter, Paul, and Mary, or the Mamas and the Papas. In any case, I found

six members of the Glee Club and six members of the Pennsingers, the female counterpart of Glee Club. We split into male and female groups when we performed with the parent organizations adding to our repertoire.

We did mostly folk rock and some of my own songs. We were generally a fair to middlin' group, but our first night was magic. We sang in a coffee house on the first floor of Houston Hall. And we nailed it. I came out of that evening riding a performance induced high I have never forgotten. We sang a number of times including once more in the coffee house, but it was never the same.

My junior year is both memorable and not memorable due to the arrival at Wharton of my classmate Donald Trump. He transferred in from Fordham. Truth be told, I never met him, even though I had 10 classes in Wharton. And, in fact, no one I know from my Penn years ever met him. But the second and third-hand stories keep swirling.

One such story has one of Trump's professors claiming he was "the dumbest son-of-a-bitch" he ever had in one of his classes. Another story is that he paid people to go to class and take his tests for him. I don't know if either of these is true. It has also been reported that Trump claimed that he graduated first in his class at Wharton. I have been told there were no rankings in Wharton at the time. I don't know if this true. However, there were a number of people who were honored on the Dean's List (top 15% of the class), and awarded Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Summa Cum Laude on their diplomas. He wasn't on any of those.

When Trump won his party's nomination and became President, there was a notable lack of coverage in the Pennsylvania Gazette. Regardless of one's feelings about him, this absence of a feature article was unworthy of this award-winning publication.

My junior year, I moved out of the Tau Delta Phi fraternity house and roomed in an apartment at 36th and Walnut with David Conant and Leon Croft. Leon was a hallmate of mine along with David freshman year. The apartment was typical for the area. Nothing about it unusual, including the cockroaches.

Cockroaches were the unofficial mascot of the University. At least they were to me. I'll give you two examples.

Our apartment was riddled with them. At one point the three of us declared war. We scoured up roach spray and had at it. One spot after another we hit with the aerosol. We did not have long to see the results. Thousands of

roaches poured out of every crevice in that place. The floor was blackened with them. And it did not make one iota of difference. They simply took up residence elsewhere, and continued to make us miserable for both years we lived there.

Nearby was Pagano's restaurant which we regularly visited. I preferred the veal picante which treated me to a really very good lemon veal entrée. One day we went in there, and I ordered the veal which came with a salad. The salad came first and while mixing the dressing onto the lettuce, I discovered a cockroach right between tomato slices. Sick to my stomach, I left the restaurant, and in the immortal words of The Kingston Trio, "He never returned; no, he never returned." Ever.

My junior year was clearly hugely important to me in so many ways. But perhaps most significant was my relationship with Debbie.

We had only been involved for about one month at the end my sophomore year, her first at Bryn Mawr. Over the summer, I would collect change and several times walk over to Merion Station along the Pennsylvania Railroad - the "Main Line" - and make a long-distance call to her. Little did I realize until years later that much of what followed over the next two years was typical of a first major romance, or as the memorable line from the movie "The Sterile Cuckoo" would reveal, "First love is beautiful hurt."

As I was only six miles from home along a commuter train line, I was able to go home anytime I needed to drop off clothes for my mother to launder, or to borrow a car. I would often get the car to go out to Bryn Mawr and pick up Debbie.

Our relationship grew dramatically junior year. We became firmly attached to each other. We were in my car at Bryn Mawr taking our time to say good night, and I couldn't hold in the declaration any further. I said, "I love you." I had never said that to another living soul in my life.

I grew up with a very loving family. There was never any doubt in my mind about that. But I don't remember ever hearing "I love you" spoken. It wasn't until years later that I heard how often it was used when my wife, Madelaine, and her children all said, "I love you" to each other when closing a phone conversation or walking out the door.

In fact, saying "I love you" became the basis of my definition of love. It's when you just can't keep it in anymore and have to tell that person sitting across from you how you feel.

For me with Debbie, it was a thunderous revelatory moment. I had never thought any further than saying it. But when Debbie responded that she loved me too, it was as if my body turned all the colors of the rainbow. I was overwhelmed. We spent quite a few more minutes in the car saying good night and doing other things.

The summer of 1967 has become known as "the summer of love." The lyric, "If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear a flower in your hair" was emblematic of what was happening there. In preparation for potential graduate school in international relations, I went there to see Stanford and, just because, Berkeley.

I went to Stanford first, and it reinforced my desire to go there. It was a beautiful school with a great academic tradition. The next day I went to Berkeley and fell in love. The University of California at Berkeley just completely suited me. And it was quite a surprise. I had included visiting Berkeley because I was going to be in the area. That was all. But the atmosphere I experienced there just spoke to me. I was hooked.

I left Berkeley and immediately went over to the Haight/Ashbury section of San Francisco. Little did I realize that the tie and jacket I wore for my interview was an open invitation to every street person in the area looking for spare change. It was a revelation and taught me an important lesson in wearing appropriate clothing for the environment in which you happen to find yourself.

It was either before or after this trip that I went to visit Debbie in Beverly Hills. A bunch of things of interest happened on this trip aside from meeting Debbie's parents and sister. For one thing, it was my first encounter with smog. That week Los Angeles had a smog alert every day which left me with a week-long headache.

Then, there was this – what shall I call it – food incident. Debbie was driving me down Wilshire Boulevard, and we passed a Jack in the Box fast food restaurant. I saw a sign on the front that I did not quite understand. I said, "Tay-coh. What's a tay-coh?" Debbie, demonstrating a driving skill I didn't know she had, immediately performed a 180 degree turn, and took me to get my first taco. In 1967 they hadn't yet made it to the greater Philadelphia area.

Then, there was the music. Debbie and I had our favorite group of performers and songs. It was pretty much the Mama's and the Papa's: California Dreamin' and Monday, Monday. Debbie got us tickets to the Hollywood Bowl for what was supposed to be the last Mama's and Papa's

concert. We were very excited to be going. The opening act was this guitar player that we had heard of but were not really familiar with: Jimi Hendrix.

So, there we were listening to the music of Jimi Hendrix for the first time. How should people who liked the sweet harmonies of the Mama's and the Papa's react to the acid rock of Hendrix? Well, when he finished this opening set, we turned to each other and said almost simultaneously something like, "My, that was disturbing."

It reminds me of the time freshman year that Dave Conant invited me to come down to his room to listen to a comedy album. As it turns out, it was Bob Dylan. I sort of got it. Anyone listening to Dylan at that time, who wasn't tuned into his lyrics, might have thought he was putting us on because of his rough voice. I thought the whole thing was kind of weird, but not very humorous.

So, not appreciating a leading edge of counterculture – be it Dylan or Hendrix - was not something new to me.

The M's and P's, by the way, were fine.

Senior Year
Including

The incredible year of the incredible decade
Glee Club – Senior Year – Stokey
Panties
LBJ/MLK
Life, the universe, and everything, or God, Part 2
What they don't teach you about love.

My senior year, 1967-68, and 1968 in particular, has been referred to as the incredible year of the incredible decade. So many memorable and infamous events took place. And we on college campuses bore witness to it all.

Most pressing on me and my male classmates was trepidation about what would happen when we graduated. The War was going strong and had seriously divided the country. Unrest in the streets was rampant. And the draft was ever present on my mind.

I thought briefly about going to Canada, but never really considered it a possibility.

At the time, college students were exempt from military duty, but come graduation day, that would end. I considered filing as a conscientious objector. I had never really seriously thought about my feelings towards the military. But Vietnam caused me to confront where I stood morally on the War and the issue of fighting at all. After a long period of introspection and discussion, I filed for the conscientious objector status. I knew I would not be approved for it. They would interview me, and I would say that if it came down to killing someone to protect my family and loved ones, I would do so. I just didn't think the War was where I could take this same stand. That would simply not do for those reviewing my draft status. They would take me.

I applied to graduate school: three programs in international relations (Berkeley, Stanford, and Northwestern) and one in education at Penn.

To apply to the international relations programs, I asked a political science professor, who specialized in communist studies, for a recommendation. He sat me down and asked what I intended to do with an advanced degree in this area. I said I didn't know. Trying to be helpful, he asked if I wanted to go into the foreign service. I said probably not. He asked, "What about teaching?" I said probably not. He said, "Then, why do you want to go to

graduate school in international relations.” Without hesitancy I said, “because I like learning about it.” He then said, “Why should I write you a recommendation, when there are others who are asking me to do the same thing, yet they know what they would use the degree for?” I had no answer for him.

Truthfully, I don’t remember whether he wrote the recommendation or not. The bottom line to this was that I didn’t get into any of the three international relations schools, which left the Penn Graduate School of Education.

I think it was just about this time that graduate student deferments were eliminated. So, if I had been accepted in any one of the three schools in international relations, my draft board would be calling me. The program at the Graduate School of Education at Penn was a teacher intern program. That meant you would be teaching while studying for your master’s degree. And teaching would get you a draft deferment. As it turns out, I got into Penn. My experience in this program and teaching in Chester High School changed me forever, but that is left to another memoir about my life after undergraduate years.

My final in-class memory comes from my Conflict Resolution class. The professor had us buy his book which, as I recall, was close to a thousand pages long. I read the assignments, did the papers, and took part in class discussions. I was doing “B” work. When the grades came out, I got a “C.” I didn’t understand and did not agree with the grade, so I went to see the professor. When I asked him about it, he said that my comments in class never had anything to do with his textbook readings. He never said they were not interesting or that they didn’t add to the classroom discussion. Only that they did not reflect his book. I thought my comments had been creative, and, of course, brilliant. He didn’t change his grade. As a result, I am writing now about his narrowmindedness in this paragraph.

Meanwhile, the Glee Club was going strong. No long hair there at all, but the music was as good as ever. I was Business Manager my senior year planning Club trips and occasionally student director in rehearsals, as well as the singing. I loved it all.

One amazing experience was to produce to a greater or lesser extent (mostly lesser) the Glee Club album, “Afterglow.” We had recorded a bunch of songs to be included in the album, and most of them were ready to be affixed on vinyl LP. It was at about this time, just before Christmas break, that Bruce Montgomery came to me and said he was going to be busy and that I had to produce the album cover and get the album itself inserted into

the plastic cover, and get the whole thing put together or “fabricated.” Frankly, I don’t remember any of the details. All I know is that I got it done, and it was sold successfully for years.

In the spring of every year the Glee Club honored someone with an “Award of Merit.” The previous year it was William Dawson, a wonderful arranger of choral music, especially Negro spirituals. My senior year, the Award went to renowned composer and conductor Leopold Stokowski. Stokowski was not known for choral arranging or writing, but he was a strong supporter of young musical artists. That is what he won the award for. Dawson greatly admired Stokowski, and I was honored to be asked to be his host. Although he was my responsibility, little did I realize that my most memorable moments would be with Stokowski.

Debbie was my date, of course, for the award dinner. Stokowski was a somewhat intimidating presence. We approached - not timidly - but maybe cautiously. My intention was to greet him and then introduce Debbie. I put out my hand expecting him to do the same, but although mine was out there, his did not arrive. Rather, he smoothly glided his hand over mine, and reached for Debbie’s hand instead. My hand, momentarily caught in mid-air with nothing to do, slowly removed itself from the scene, as he and Debbie shook hands. Then, he turned to me and said, “Ladies first. Ladies always come first.” I mumbled something like, “Of course.” I had had my first lesson from the maestro.

The second came later.

At every Award of Merit dinner, the Glee Club would perform some appropriate song. For Stokey [I only refer to him that way when I tell this story.] the choice of something to perform was a little more difficult. He did not write choral music, as far as we knew. So, Bruce decided that we should do the Bach cantata, “Sheep May Safely Graze.”

Bruce would not hesitate to do something a bit beyond the norm in our concerts. “Sheep May Safely Graze” was a perfect example. When Bruce first told the Club we were going to do this arrangement several years earlier, he asked if anyone in the Club played the flute. I said I played flute in junior high. He said, “You are first flute.” I thought that was a rather unusual way to audition, especially given that I hadn’t actually played for seven years.

He asked if anyone else played the flute. No one raised their hand. Not to be deterred by such impediments, he asked if anyone played a woodwind. Mike Thompson raised his hand. He said he had played clarinet. Bruce said,

"You're second flute." Bruce was not concerned about strict adherence to convention. Eventually, Bob Lion was added to our duo, playing the cello.

We played "Sheep May Safely Graze" with the Club singing behind us many times. That we instrumentalists did not embarrass ourselves was the best thing that could be said about our performances.

That was the background of this song at the Award of Merit banquet which the Maestro himself conducted.

We got through the performance with our usual aplomb or lack thereof. But then came the moment of truth. Stokey approached us. Both Mike and I were terrified. What would he say? What could he say? This was the man with perhaps the finest ear for classical music in the world, and he was going to tell us what he thought of our flute playing.

He came up to us and looked into our eyes. And pausing a beat just to put us through a little more hell, he finally said, "I have never heard two flutes with such different tones." And then he walked away. Mike and I looked at each other for a second, and then, to his retreating back we said, "Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you."

Debbie and I had other memorable experiences, but I will share just one more day. We went to Baltimore to double date with Lee Gordon and his then girlfriend and later wife, Sandy. Sandy went to Goucher, and we went to the dorm to pick her up.

We were waiting for her to come down from her room, and I was leaning up against some sort of pillar or maybe it was a wall. I don't remember for sure. But around the other side I heard the following conversation.

One girl was talking to another. They were having a discussion about boys, of course. One said to the other, "How do you know if you have had a good date." The other girl replied, "When you get back to your room, take off your panties, and throw them against a wall. If they stick, you've had a good date." Imagine! Who would have thought it of Goucher coeds! True story.

SIDEBAR. Or is it? As it turns out, neither Lee nor Sandy remembers double-dating with Debbie and me. In fact, Sandy didn't live in the dorms. She was a commuter student. I do remember Debbie and I driving down to Baltimore to double date with someone. Maybe it was my high school friend Alan Gilbert who was at Johns Hopkins. Or come to think of it, the location

might have been Towson State University. Or maybe Debbie wasn't with me on this trip.

I think P.J. O'Rourke said it best:

For a purely untrustworthy human organ,
the memory is right in there with the penis.

That spring brought a series of incredible events from outside the classroom. Vietnam, of course, was prominent, and the politics swirling around it. On March 31 I was in my apartment, communing with the roaches, when I heard over the radio President Johnson say, "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president." This was a huge shocker. I remembered thinking back to high school on the first day back after President Kennedy had been assassinated. I had been picked up by the school bus, and Sandy Jablon was sitting across the aisle from me. He pointed out that Johnson could be our president for the next 10 years. LBJ had just exited that prediction early. It was just one of many key steps in the rocky road leading to where we find ourselves now. But there was one more thing that was even more shattering to me about to take place. Just 10 days later, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated.

The Penn campus had been relatively quiet that year considering what was going on at other universities around the country, and, in fact, around the world. But a few days after the assassination, I remember very clearly going to a demonstration on College Green between College Hall and the Van Pelt Library.

I have acknowledged very few personal heroes in my life. Dr. King was one of them. It was such a time of turmoil in the country. For me, as a senior in 1968, the Civil Rights movement, Vietnam and how I would handle the draft, and the more typical concerns of our very uncertain futures after graduation were causes of great anxiety.

I went to the Dr. King gathering with the hopes of finding some solace and solidarity with what I believed were the ideals that I shared with him. However, the cultural divide on campus and beyond was too great. One of the speakers said something to the effect that we were going to have a few moments of silence to honor Dr. King and that it better not be broken by a white person.

I was devastated by and furious at this comment. As I thought at the time – trite though it may have been – he was my "King" too, a man of peace, who

would act on his principles non-violently. This was certainly not what he would have wanted. I immediately turned and walked away. The experience did not change my path. Among other things, I would go on to teach in urban schools, write a high school American history curriculum centered on the African American experience, and produce a gospel special for PBS. It was just a reality check on the world I lived in.

It was about this time that the other discussion about life, the universe, and everything came up. A friend of mine asked the question I had last heard in my freshman year dorm: Do you believe in God? This time my response was different. I immediately said no. The Yale sociologist, William Graham Sumner, described it perfectly. He said he put his religious beliefs in a drawer one day, and when he came back and opened it up, they weren't there.

But there was more. When I said no, two things happened almost at the same time. After three years, my heart and head were now on the same page. I was whole. I felt at peace with my beliefs. They were now an integral part of who I was.

But at the same time, I immediately felt loss. My religion, my faith, and their rituals had played an important part in my life, in my family, and in my culture. They had lent me support and stability. In good times and bad, they were there to rely on. That was not the case anymore. It was as if someone had cut out a chunk of my side. I knew there was an emptiness there. I was missing something that had been important to me.

Regardless, that was who I was now. And although I have since investigated various religions, philosophies, dimensional theories of space and time, nothing has shaken that unity of feeling and thought that began in that moment. All because of conversations I had at Penn.

But one thing Penn did not teach me was about relationships. In fact, no one had. My relationship with Debbie was deteriorating. It wasn't because of any arguments or lack of agreement on who we were or what we wanted. Rather, that infatuation associated with "first contact," as it were, simply was going away. I had heard that you had to work on relationships, that there were ups and downs, but it never occurred to me that the emotional highs I had had and were the bedrock of our relationship, would not continue. By the end of my senior year, Debbie and I were winding down. As I finished my first year of graduate school, our relationship was finished as well. What they don't teach you about love could fill all the libraries of the world, not just those at the University of Pennsylvania.

Postscript

I stayed at Penn for two more years, and then moved on to the University of Michigan, and sometime later to Southern Methodist University. My middle years were filled with travel around the United States in Hartford, Los Angeles, Dallas, Boston, New York, Madison (Wisconsin), Evansville (Indiana) and Harlingen (Texas) with people and places I came to love. Eventually, I moved to New Orleans which is occupying the last years of my life. I have dealt in depth with career and now with retirement, and what love really means.

But little did I realize that my post-graduate years at Penn would be as important to my evolving personality and worldview as my undergraduate years had been. That's yet another story for another day.

As I said before, my memories of that time – now more than 50 years ago – may not be totally accurate in any number of ways, but the essential essence of them is true. Feel free to send additions and corrections: rfeldman@ramamail.net.

New Orleans
September 15, 2021