

**DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY
AND FRIENDS WHO I LOVE VERY MUCH
AND WILL SEE AGAIN IN HEAVEN.**

**DECEMBER 3, 1990
CHARLES A. ANGSTADT**

**MEMORIES ARE MADE OF
STUFF LIKE THIS....**

**AS I DRIVE THRU READING AND
AROUND BERKS COUNTY I HAVE THESE
POCKETS OF MEMORIES. IT'S GREAT!**

**THESE DIFFERENT MEMORIES
FLASH TO MIND. IT MAKES LIVING
IN READING AND BERKS ALWAYS FUN
AND GAMES, DAY IN – DAY OUT.**

**THE MORE PAUL TALKS ABOUT
PETER, THE MORE WE KNOW
ABOUT PAUL.**

**MY BEAUTIFUL FAMILY
IN MY MEMOIRS**

**JOAN, MY BEAUTIFUL WIFE
SUSAN POLITYKA, MY DAUGHTER
RON POLITYKA, MY SON IN LAW
GARY ANGSTADT, MY SON
TOM ANGSTADT, MY SON**

**MY DAD(CHARLES ANGSTADT SR)
MY MOM(MRS WARREN RIGHTMYER)
WARREN(MY STEP FATHER WARREN
RIGHTMYER)
FLICK MY BROTHER(PAUL E
ANGSTADT)**

MOMO (MY MOTHER'S MOTHER
SARAH SCHMEHL)
DAVE HECK(MARRIED TO MOMO)
UNCLE MAC(MY MOM'S
BROTHER MALCOLM SCHMEHL)
UNCLE PAUL(MY MOM'S BROTHER
PAUL SCHMEHL)

MILT FLEMMING(FRIEND OF THE
FAMILY)
DICK(FRIEND OF THE FAMILY)
MRS. HAAS(MOMO'S HOUSEKEEPER)
AUNT MARTHA,AUNT LOTTIE,AUNT
MARY,AUNT CORA,AUNT
CARRIE(MOMO'S SISTERS)
POP BEILER(MOMO'S FATHER)
JOE(BARTENDER AT PENN CECIL
HOUSE)

MOM DOWN HOME(MY FATHER'S
MOTHER/MARY PRINTZ)
CHARLES PRINTZ(MY FATHER'S
STEP FATHER)
DOROTHY HAAG(MY STEP AUNT)
LARRY HAAG (DOROTHY'S
HUSBAND)
MARION PUTT(MY STEP AUNT)
JIM PUTT(MARION'S HUSBAND)

JENNIE GREENWOOD(MY STEP
AUNT)
IRMA KIEFER(MY STEP AUNT)
DONALD KIEFER(IRMA'S
HUSBAND)
HARRY PRINTZ(MY STEP UNCLE)
SHIRLEY PRINTZ(HARRY'S WIFE)
AUNT KATE(MY FATHER'S MOTHER'S
SISTER)
AUNT LANDA(MY FATHER'S
MOTHER'S SISTER)
GUY DUISSINGER(MARRIED TO AUNT
LANDA)

THE GANG AT SPRING AND MOSS
GRADE SCHOOL

POP POP HENNING(JOAN'S FATHER)
PAT TOOLE(JOAN'S SISTER)
CHUBB TOOLE(JOAN'S BROTHER IN
LAW)
MARSHA ZOPF(PAT TOOLE'S
DAUGHTER)
SONNY HENNING(JOAN'S BROTHER)
JUDY MAZLUM(JOAN'S SISTER)
SEIFF MAZLUM(JOAN'S BROTHER
IN LAW)

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MEMORY BOOK

I would like to make some comments about these memories. These memories and events that happened to me are very important to me. I remembered them because I wanted to be sure to tell Susie, Gary, Tom and Joan.

These events and memories took place over many years. I tried hard not to forget them by writing little notes and keeping them in shoe boxes. I also made little cassettes because I didn't want to take time to write the notes.

Purposely, there is no chronological order, there is no organization.

What comes next, comes next, just because it comes next

It would take entirely too much time to organize. I'm not a professional
And I didn't think it was necessary. I enjoyed doing it this way. I had to do it
this way.

I didn't have the time, money or energy to do otherwise.

So much for punctuation.

My father worked at Carpenter Steel. Today it's known as Cartech. It was always an occasion when my father went to the clothing store and bought new, heavy work shoes.

On the way home, he would stop at a junkyard and buy an old automobile tire. He would take the tire home. He had very heavy duty sharp knives to cut a big piece off the tire tread.

He had a black anvil that a shoemaker would use. This anvil is in the basement at 3050 Elm road. You'll see it, It's a big iron thing.

He would take a piece off the automobile tire tread and nail the tire tread to the new sole of each work shoe.

He would cut another small tread out and nail that to the heel of the work shoe. He would take a knife and go around and trim.

The sole and the tire tread kind of matched the sole of the shoe.

He would take the knife and cut out the heel.

After he was done with shaping one shoe, he would do the same thing with the tire tread and heel and sole on the other shoe.

When I was a kid, after these shoes were finished, and the treads nailed on, I used to love to put these shoes on.

It seemed when I tried to walk with them they weighed 50lbs. each. They were the heaviest shoes you can imagine and standing on the tire tread made me 4 inches taller.

Can you picture me, as a little boy, 4 inches taller, walking around with heavy 50 lb. shoes.

The reason my Dad needed these kinds of shoes was at work, he worked on the blast furnaces. Back then, back in the early 40's, they got close to the

heat. There was a tremendous heat.

The tire treads on the soles of his shoes protected his feet from the heat. Because of the grit, dirt, steel and the shavings and that kind of crap, they had to wear well .

Some of the furnace material at Cartech came in iron ore bags. My Dad would bring two or three of these empty bags home and my Mom would take a little knife and cut open the seams of the bags.

They were long bags, they looked like Lebanon bologna bags. She would take an ore bag, cut the threads open and lay the bag out on the table. It was maybe 2- 2½ feet long.

She would sew these bags down the front of each pant leg on my Dad's work pants.

From below the belt, sew a bag down over his knees, not quite to the ankles on the right leg and sew the other bag down over the left leg. Usually there was some ore bag material left over. She would sew and make a scull cap.

It kind of looked like a scull cap that convicts would wear in prison. So my Dad would wear those heavy shoes with heavy tire treads soles and heels, the work pants with the ore bags sewed down the front of the right and left legs.

He would be stripped to the waist and wear this scull cap. That's how my Dad worked on the blast furnaces at Cartech.

One year, a picture of my Dad dressed like that, was on the front of the Reading Eagle calendar.

He is standing there stripped to the waist with his arm out pointing to something or someone at the furnace. In the background you see this heavy blast furnace with the hot flames and the smoke

I tried a few years ago to see if I could get a copy of this calendar from the Reading Eagle. Their records did not go back that far and they didn't have the time or effort to search for the calendar.

Anyway I never found a picture of the calendar and I'm kicking myself in the rear for not keeping the thing.

Let's talk about another side of my father that I loved very much. My Dad had a favorite song. It was called, Deep Purple and it's kind of a classic. I play it on my Yamaha keyboard.

He used to sing the song to my Mom.

When we were kids, we used to listen to my Dad sing. He would sing a few choruses of Deep Purple and everybody thought this was just nice.

It's a very pleasant thought that now, these many years later, when I play my keyboard and I have these old music books and I come across Deep Purple I can play it and I can remember my Dad singing it.

I don't know if my Dad graduated from Reading High school or not. He did not graduate from Wyomissing Polytech. That was a trade school where you learned to be a toolmaker.

It's over where the V & F outlets are now, that was the **Wyomissing** Polytech trade school.

My Dad used to write poetry. That's a surprise. My Dad used to write love poems to my Mom. My Mom used to read them and it used to choke her up and she would put them aside.

Way back in the late 30's I guess early 40's, my Dad had a friend by the name of Eddie. They used to lift weights in the cellar at 1018 Spring Street.

Because we were poor, my Dad used to bring home scrap steel rings and scrap steel weights from the scrap at Cartech..

They would love to stand in front of the mirror and lift weights, talk and laugh. Uncle Flick and I used to watch them.

My Dad would always try to show off how strong he was. That was the way men were back in those days.

My Dad would put the palm of his hand up against a wall, like a chinning bar. Uncle Flick and I would take turns chinning on his arm.

You know, pull ourselves up, put our chin up over his arm and then we would count, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. We would chin on my Dad's arm. Everybody thought this was so much fun.

To show how tough or strong my DAD was, he would hold his lighted cigarette butts in the palm of his hand. The palm of his hand was covered with tough, ugly looking black callouses.

My Dad would smile.

Another thing I remember about my father. They had special kind of nails at Carpenter steel. The nail had a large flat head.

...

The head must have been an inch and a half long. The men at Cartech would take a nail, put it over an anvil, hit the nail and make a ring.

My Dad, every now and then, would bring one of these rings home. Because this nail was bent in the shape of a ring, the nail head spread across two fingers at the knuckles.

We all thought this was kind of neat and Uncle Flick and I would take turns wearing the ring..

There is something else I want to tell you about my Dad. He was muscular and tall. I'd say my Dad probably weighed 190 lbs.

He had two large tattoos, one on each arm. Uncle Flick and I were always fascinated.

On his one arm was a long chinese dragon, between his shoulder and elbow.

It looked like an alligator with big eyes and a long tail. The tongue was

spitting fire and the body was scaly, almost like a snake body.

It was kind of weird but my Dad thought this was great. It was scaly skin like a pale green and the eyes were yellow, a Chinese yellow.

The tongue was forked breathing flaming red fire.

On his other arm ,he had a sideview of a young girl, a young woman. It wasn't my Mom.

It was just a tattoo of the head of a girl with a short haircut like they used to wear back in the 1920's.

I really didn't know my Dad that well. Maybe I should not say that. Let's say I just don't remember too much about him. I do know that he was very much for discipline. Uncle Flick and I were afraid of our Dad.

When he talked we really truly listened. My Dad was quick to smack us on the back of the shoulders pretty hard. My Dad was quick to grab us by the arm and hurt us if we didn't obey.

It's just that my Dad was kind of a rough and tumble kind of **guy** and at the time, I guess that's the way Dads were.

So while maybe some of the memories are kind of sad ones, there was never any doubt that my Dad loved Flick and me

Now I want to talk about one of my favorite people, my Uncle Mac.

When I was a little boy Uncle Mac would drive from Penn Cecil House in West Lawn to town. He'd say okay Charles, let's go.

I would get in the car with Uncle Mac and we would pull out of the driveway, down Cecil Avenue

Then as we would get to the intersection at Penn Cecil, I would put my head out of the car window and I would say, you stopped. Uncle Mac would say, no I'm not.

In other words he would look up and down for the traffic but he keeps moving.

The name of the game is, he is going to go from Penn Cecil, West Lawn to where he wants to go in town and never completely stop.

I keep looking out the window and the minute I think he stops, I hollered you stopped, and Uncle Mac loses the game. Got it.

At the intersection, he pulls out slow and I holler, you stopped and he says, no, I haven't. I said, yes, you stopped.

The cars are coming and we had to pull out fast. Uncle Mac had to decide

quickly, whether he stops and loses the game or whether he pulls out.

He pulls out and we go down Penn Avenue towards the City. The next intersection is a red light. I put my head out the window and I say, you stopped, you stopped. Uncle Mac would say no, no I'm not.

He keeps going through the intersection and I said you stopped and he would say no, he hasn't.

He keeps going through the next intersection and the light is red. He's almost through the intersection and the light changes, and he pulls out again.

We repeat the game. I'm hollering you stopped. Uncle Mac says, no, he hasn't. Every intersection is a near miss. At every corner he is really going through the red light.

Over the course of the summer, this is how I got to meet the West Lawn Policeman.

Uncle Mac lived at Penn Cecil House. He always had a jukebox and pinball machine. Uncle Mac would play the pinball machine for hours .

The reason he could do this is, he didn't have to pay to play the pinball machine.

He had cut a piece off a coat hanger hook. He made a gadget that fit in the slot where a quarter would go. He would slide the coat hanger into the slot.

He puts the wire in and grabs the handle of the coin dropper and pushes it all in together and he gets a free game.

Uncle Mac could do this 50 to 60 times a day. Uncle Mac played the pinball machine as a personal challenge, he always had free games that he won.

He played the pinball machine 8-10 hours a day if he wanted to. The little coat hanger gadget would hang next to the bar.

Uncle Mac was a pretty good piano player. He played very strong and dynamic chords. Not so many songs, mostly chords. It was fun to hear Uncle Mac play the piano.

In addition to the piano, Uncle Mac played the trumpet. He worshipped Harry James.

But Uncle Mac would go one better than Harry James. Uncle Mac would play maybe four hours straight. He would pick the trumpet up and play 4 hours non-stop but he never played a song.

Of all the hours I heard Uncle Mac play the trumpet, I never once heard a song.

All he does is see how high he can play the notes. He plays nothing for 4 hours but high C and above high C.

His cheeks are blown up and he is red in the face. The vein stands out on his forehead. He keeps playing high C, above high C.

It is just high, squeeking. Four hours of that. Most people had to leave the room

.
He keeps playing high C, above high C. It is just high squeeking. Four hours of that

We had a yard at the rear of 1018 Spring Street St. The yard went back to the alley.

Our backyard faced the Lawlor's. Remember Mary, Joseph, John, James, Frances, Paul, William, Bernard, and Robert.

The Lawlor's lived in the 900 block of Mulberry street at the alley. We could run down our backyard over to the Lawlor's house, and the Lawlor's could run out their backyard across the alley and up the yard into our house.

We were very good friendends with the Lawlor boys and with their mother. The boys often asked if they could borrow a table spoon of soap powder to wash dishes.

Quite often the Lawlors went to St. Joseph's church. That is where I learned to go to church because the Lawlor boys were always going to Mass, or were

taking part in services at the church

When my brother and I were little boys, my Mom use to light the four gas jets on the stove, heat a pan of water and have my brother and I take turns standing bare ass naked on a wooden chair next to the gas flames.

Use a wash cloth to bath us as we stood shivering next to the open flames.

My MOM would take a deep stove pan and make coco. Inorder to make my brother and I laugh and have fun, she would regulate the gas flame under the pan so the coco would rise to the top of the pot but not spill over.

She would make the coco rise and fall to the top and bottom, my brother and I would scream and laugh, afraid the coco would spill over

In the living room at 1018 Spring Street, there was an archway, like an alcove, under the stairway coming down from the second floor. This alcove was from the floor up to the bottom of the stairway.

This is where we placed the upright radio, the old Zenith. Where that Zenith radio stood on the floor, took up half the height of the alcove. That's where we used to sit and listen to the radio

In the backyard at 1018 Spring Street was a two-story building. The alley was small and we couldn't afford a car. The building was really a two-story barn. In this building is where the Lawlor's and us would put on our skits and plays.

We would have shows and be dramatic and write scripts. And jump down on the kids from the ceiling rafters. We had a good time.

We would haul the ashes out of the cellar from the house, down the yard and throw them on a pile inside this building so the ashes wouldn't get wet. Outside of this building was an ash barrel with a lid.

That damn ash barrel was always rusting through, so every time you moved it, the rusty sides collapsed and all the ashes would spill out on the pavement in the back of the yard

Another thing to remember about 1018 Spring Street is, my Mom and Dad and my brother Flick and I lived there with a big German Police dog named Butch. Butch would stay in the yard.

The yards were separated by a very low row of bricks buried in the ground on an angle.

It made a little brick fence that was only three inches high. Everybody thought it was so great that Butch would stay in our own backyard.

We didn't have to have a high wire fence to separate the two yards. Everything worked out fine until one day, Geises, the neighbors used to put their pies on their window sill to cool off.

One day they put a roast, like a chuck roast or roast beef on their window sill to cool off when Butch was in the yard.

Well , that took care of Butch and that took care of the roast. After that, we got rid of Butch.

Another memory about 1018 Spring Street, was that two-thirds of the cellar was a dirt floor.

When you came down the cellar steps and walked the length of the cellar towards Spring , there was a little pavement, the length of the house.

In front of the house was a coal bin and a coal stove. Most of the celler was a dirt floor.

However, running along the side of the house and next to the dirt floor was a cement pavement leading to the stove and coal bin.

One day my Dad brought home a live chicken.

My brother and I couldn't believe our eyes. We went down stairs and my Dad took an ax and the stump of a tree and cut off the chicken's head.

My Dad threw the headless chicken under a large, metal wash tub.

My brother and I sat on top the wash tub while this headless chicken bounced up and down like crazy, with blood flying out all underneath and making a hell of a noise.

Every time that chicken came up and hit the tub, I felt like the chicken was hitting against me. I hollered yow, yow, I couldn't believe the noise and how It felt when that chicken came up against the tub and me.

Next door to us at 1018 Spring going towards Boot's, down towards 10th street, lived the Geises. I think the Geises were mennonites.

In their kitchen was a wood burning coal stove, the old kind where you have lids in the top of the stove and you reached in with that little iron fork and lifted up the lids to put more wood on the fire.

That stove had so much chrome and brass on it and was so clean and immaculate that it looked like a machine from heaven from star trek.

It was the gaudiest, fanciest, cleanest looking wood burning stove you ever saw.

One Sunday afternoon when Uncle Flick and I were visiting the Geises, which we did quite often, Uncle Flick was sucking on his pacifier. MOM Geise said she thought it was time he stopped using the pacifier.

She took it from Uncle Flick, opened the oven door and showed Uncle Flick how she threw the pacifier into the burning embers..

Unknown to Uncle Flick, she had palmed the pacifier. She just made believe she threw it in the fire and she turned to Uncle Flick, who was a little boy, and said well that's that.

Uncle Flick looked into the burning embers, turned and walked away and that was the of that

By the way, I smile when I see on TV how young boys today have their own seperate bedrooms. My brother and I as young boys had to sleep in the same

bed.

It wasn't too bad, until my brother developed into a bedwetter. During the hot summer nights, we use to sleep in the nude

Many a morning I'd wake up with my brother acting as a wet fountain alarm clock on my stomach.

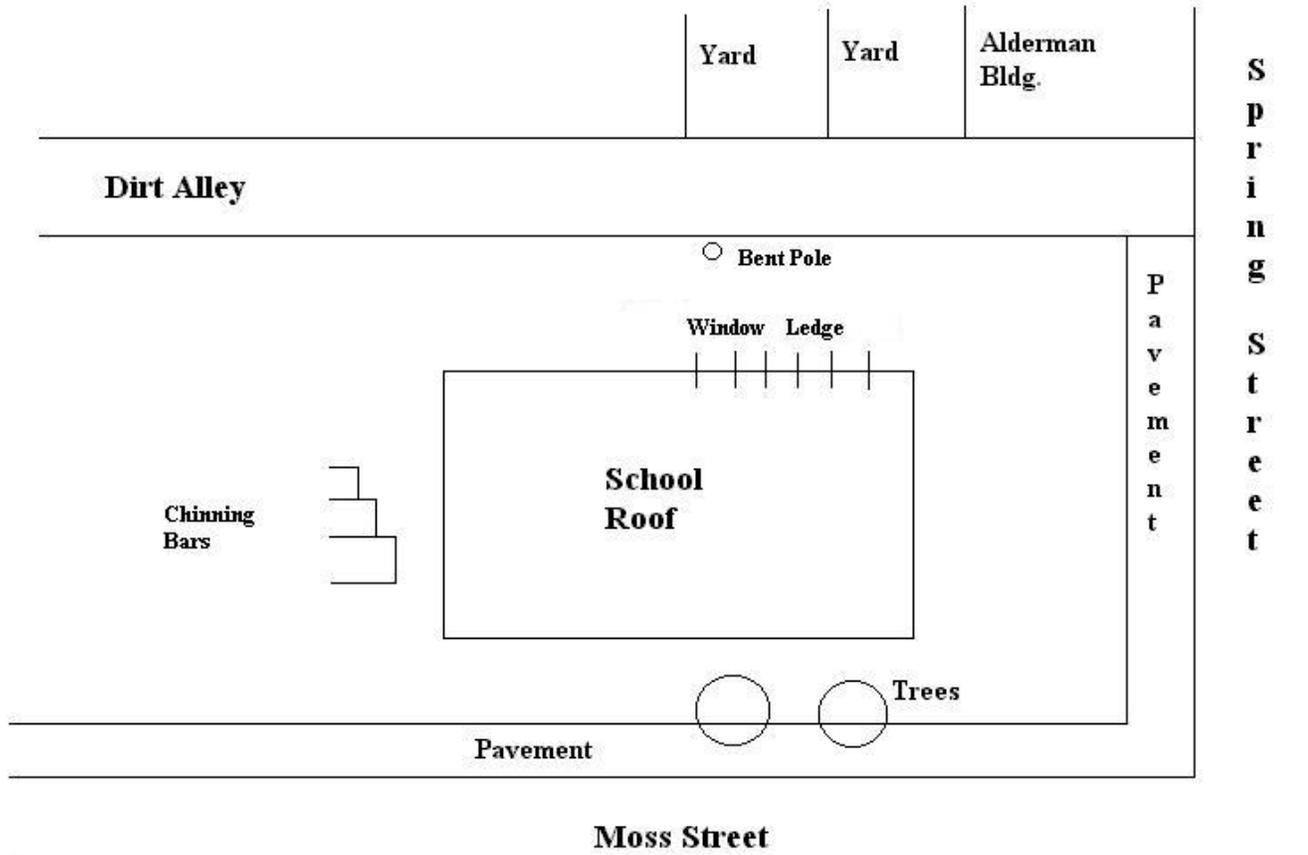
Some more on Spring & Moss school. The guys in the gang were, Robert Huyett, Bill Swoyer, Donny Moyer, a guy named Pappy, Henry Spies and Gene Brumbach.

We would hang out at the Spring & Moss school.

In addition, we often sat and waited at 11th and Spring .

We would run down Spring, keep running as fast as we could until we timed ourselves that we could run across 10th street and not get hit by the trolley going to the car barn.

Today, at 10th and Spring there is a newsstand. They sell lottery tickets, newspapers, and magazines. Well back then, there was an a & P grocery store there and the storekeeper always put his fresh vegetables out on the steps.



When we ran past, each one of the guys in the gang would grab a raw potato.

Then we would run like the devil down Spring and keep on running down to the Strand Movie Theater at 9th street.

Henry, the storekeeper would come out on the corner and holler down Spring,, cursing us and saying he is going to get the cops after us.

We would take our raw potato, walk back to Spring and Moss school, rub the potato on the brick school building.

Rub the dirty skin of the potato and eat the raw potato like you would an apple.

On a Friday or Saturday nite, at the a & P, two of the gang would stand at each side of the front glass window and tap, tap, tap on the glass and make

the little mice inside the store on the window ledge, race back and forth from one side to the other.

Another thing we would do at 9th and Spring, we would stand on the corner at the movie theater. There used to be a butcher shop. I think it was a Mohican.

When people would come out on a Saturday morning from around the corner at the movie theater and walk back towards Spring, they were loaded down with their paper bags and handbags carrying groceries.

They would stand at the corner waiting for the light to change or wait for a trolley. This is across the street from Ollies where McDonalds is now.

When they would stand there, we would holler to them or whistle to them and the people would turn.

We would try to get them to walk into the guide wire that was holding up the telephone pole.

When they would walk into the guide wire, they would bump their heads or they would break a bag.

We would just sit there. Most of the people didn't know quite what was going on or had an accident but didn't know why.

Every now and then, you had someone who figured it out and they were mad and would curse us.

Of course, they would turn and look, as a reaction to our calling or whistling. that was fun and games at 9th and Spring .

Walking back up towards Spring street, now It's a parking lot, is where the northeast Branch of the Public Library used to be.

We either hung out there on the steps leading into the library or we went across moss street and sat on the steps in the front of the grade school.

One day we were sitting on the steps in front of the library and the Policeman, who lived around the corner on 10th street, came walking up Spring from Wamsher's hardware.

While we were sitting in front of the library, before we could get our act together, Billy Swoyer hollers, "Hey Charlie does your old man work?" Then I hollered back, "no, he's a cop."

Well, this cop was always mad and we knew that this would get him real mad, so he turned to cross Spring and came over to the library.

We were ready to run but Swoyer said, hey, this time we don't run, we sit and take him on.

So we waited and he came over and he pointed his finger in the face of each one of us and said that we were hoodlums, that we were no good, that he was going to arrest us, he was going to run us in.

We should know better and why didn't we do the right thing.

While he was giving each one of us a tongue lashing, Swoyer and Moyer were behind the cop making faces at the back of his head or putting up their five fingers at their nose at the back of the cop's head.

The cop didn't know this. so as the cop is talking to me and saying to me that since I was the tallest and looked like I was the oldest of the gang, I should know better and I should set an example.

I started to smile and he reached out and just as he reached for my collar, I took my arm and pushed his arm aside and that was the tip off, we all ran in different directions.

Later most of us ran back to the library steps. We got out our pea shooters and proceeded to bombard the Policeman, about eight of us with our pea shooters. We could shoot 40-50 peas at a time and we splattered this cop with peas

When I turned 16, I thought I was such a good basketball player and athlete. I wanted to go out for sports at Reading High.

My Mom, said no, Charles, you want to go to College, so what we have to do for the money is, you take this job at a clothing store on 9th street.

After school I worked until 6 p.m. Every night at 6 o'clock when the church bell would ring at St. Joseph's church, across the street, I would have to lift and hang a window box display of clothing on the door.

Lock the door, and pull the shade down.

One night when I was hanging this window box up and just about to pull the shade down, I saw some other boys and girls who were in my class on their way to the basketball game at northwest.

They were walking across 9th and Spring street and on their way down to the Spring street subway.

Since I worked until 6:00 and had to go home and eat supper, I couldn't go out for any sports after school. On the way home that night from work, the tears came down my cheeks.

I felt so sad because I knew, at least I thought, I was good enough, to play on the junior high and high school basketball team.

I knew one of the boys on the team. He was an all around athlete in high school. He was an all around athlete on the football team at Reading High and on the basketball team in junior high.

Many, many years later, after I had been married to Joan and I was going on a trip for AT & T, I left early in the morning and called a taxi cab for the Reading airport. When I got into the taxi cab, the cab driver was the boy I knew.

When I sat in the back seat, oh, I was so dressed up, I had on my good overcoat, a hat and nice shirt and tie and a suit and nice luggage.

As he talked to me about old times, in the back of my mind I remembered how I walked home that night and how I envied him so .

Now 10-15 years later, there we were and he was driving a taxi cab and I had a nice job and earning good money.

So in looked like my Mom was right. My Mom, as always, was right and it was best to sacrifice when I was 16 for the bigger gain and the longer haul.

When Joan and I were living at 3050 Elm Rd, I had to go on a trip. I was wearing a black camel's hair top coat. It was beautiful.

The coat must have cost \$200 to \$300. I had on a black hat that cost me \$50. I had on a beautiful shirt that cost a few dollars. I had on a \$10 neck tie and I had on very expensive shoes, the shoes must have cost \$90.

I said to Joan , my goodness,when I add up the money for my shoes, my overcoat, my suit, my shirt and tie, I said, do you realize I am walking out the door and taking this trip, in an outfit wearing \$900 worth of clothing.

What do you think of that I asked. How do I look, Joan. Your Mom looked at me,paused a few seconds, and said, don't forget to take out the trash.

I was in a play in northeast junior High.It was a play with only three actors in it. Two girls and me. I was supposed to be a sea captain who went out to sea. You know, the old sea story routine.

I don't remember what brought it about, but this one girl, and I got into some verbal fight, an argument over something.

I don't remember exactly, but during the course of rehearsals and during the play itself, the people in the play stand behind the scenery and act as cue prompters.

When the actors out on the stage are saying their lines and saying their part, you follow the script, you follow them in the script as you stand behind the scenery.

If during the play someone forgets their line or forgets their part, you give them their cue, you give them the words to say, so they can continue on.

They are quick to pick up when they forget, once you cue them in.

There was a school play, almost every Friday morning at 9:00 a.m. I was standing behind the scenery and the girl who I had the argument with, was on stage looking out a bay window, a big bay window towards the sea

She's giving a long speech about the sea captain.

It became evident that she had forgotten her lines. Maybe it was nervousness, or whatever the reason, she forgot her lines and at that little instant on the pause, she waited for me to cue her in.

I don't know what came over me but for some crazy reason, I just thought to myself all right, I'll get back at you. so when I cued her in, I purposely cued her in at the wrong part. The play end up in chaos.

She cued on the wrong lines and after she started, she realized she was at the wrong part of the play.I had to come in and speak at the wrong part. The play was a real fiasco and turned out terrible.

After the play, one of the schoolteachers, a sponsor of the play, had spent time helping in rehearsals. She selected the play and it was a play she liked. She thought it was good for the kids in assembly.

She was furious and gave me a real tongue lashing after the play because I had cued in at the wrong part. The teacher thought that I wasn't keeping my mind on the play. She didn't know that I purposely cued in at the wrong part.

At Northeast Junior High my Latin teacher was Miss Love. I liked Latin and I liked Miss Love. After all these years, to this very day in 1990, I will never forget the day Miss Love stood in front of the class.

She wasn't too tall and kind of on the heavy side.

She used to wear a wrist watch on her right wrist.

For some reason, I was fascinated that she always had a wide handkerchief on her wrist and the band of the wristwatch went over top of the wide handkerchief.

This wrist watch had a pale gold glass face on it and the watch must have been given to her as a family heirloom.

Anyway what I'm leading up to is, the message that Miss Love told us was, she said that a good friendend of hers had passed away, had died, and that she didn't say goodbye to the person before they left.

She said it is very important that whenever you leave someone or whenever you leave a dear One,always be sure to say goodbye because at some time in your life when you two depart from each other, it may be for the last time.

That is why when you depart, you should always be sure to say goodbye.

I just found out today, 12/1/01, that Miss Love was Joan's home room teacher at Reading High

This is about Chop. This is my Mom's father. Chop used to be a morse code telegraph operator at the railroad station at 9th and pike streets in Reading.

Many times I would go across a long wooden bridge that went high in the air out over the railroad tracks into the railroad yard.

I would take lunch or dinner to Chop. The trains would go underneath the building and underneath the bridge that I walked on.

Inside the building on the walls, every 4 feet, were telephones that were on expandable springs.

When the phone rang, Chop reached for the phone, pulled it away from the wall, held it and talked. When finished, he hung up, let go of the phone and the expandable spring arm sprung back into the wall.

You heard the dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, dash, dot, dot. that would be the morse code and Chop would sit down and play back dot, dot, dot, beep, beep, dot, dot.

There were eight long wooden levers sticking up out of the floor. The levers were coming up out of the floor on a diagonal, four levers slanting to the right and four levers slanting to the left.

Often when I was there, Chop would say come on, Charlie, and give me a hand. Help me to push a lever to switch the track for a train coming through the yard.

He and I would grab one of the levers and push on it

That was exciting to take dinner for Chop.

One time I was at church service down at St. Joseph. On the altar were a number of shelves and on the shelves were different kinds of plants and

flowers.

Each one of the plants or flower pots was wrapped in aluminum foil.

While the priest was giving the sermon, a sheet of flame from one of the candles touched off the aluminum foil. The priest just kept looking over and glancing back and forth and continued to give the sermon.

After one plant and aluminum foil caught fire, the one next to it caught on fire and it really was a blaze.

You could hear the murmuring in the congregation. The priest continued to give his sermon and then the third plant caught on fire and now there was a real little blaze in the front of the church.

Out from the sides, walked two or three altar boys. Each boy picked up one flower pots that were on fire and proceeded to walk in a line and carried the flaming plants out of the church.

In the mean time, the priest just kept right on giving his sermon.

When I was a baby and very young, maybe 2 or 3 years old. Grandmom down home, the one who had only the thumb and little finger, on her right hand, started to call me BABY ABSESICAN.

I don't know what baby abesican means, don't know where it's from, but every now and then over the years, it would come up when I would visit down home. Somebody would call me abesican and it was such a surprise

.
At Northeast Junior High one of the stars of the basketball team was killed in an automobile accident. Everyone at Northeast just loved this guy. He was such a nice guy, kind of a quiet guy.

They had a viewing at Auman's Funeral Home at 3rd and Penn. On the day of the viewing, it was late in the afternoon, the school was let out early, so the student body could go down and pay their respects.

I went down with the rest of the kids. When we got to Auman's, the place was jammed.

It was so packed with students that they were standing outside on the pavement, standing in through the doorway and in through the viewing room right up to the casket.

It took me an hour of rubbing shoulders. There was crying, sobbing and talking and finally I worked my way up to the coffin. Students were going pass the coffin and leaving by a side door.

I slowly worked my way up to view the coffin. When I looked down at him, I went ,OH MY GOD. Here I looked to the right and to the left, I was so afraid someone would notice.

I looked around and made sure that no one noticed that the scotch plaid sport coat and suit that he was wearing in his coffin was the exact same blue scotch plaid leisure suit I was wearing.

I was standing there in this crowd of a couple hundred kids, shoulder to shoulder, sobbing and crying and tears coming down my cheeks. I am looking at him and he and I are wearing the exact same suit!

I walked out through the crowd. I was so afraid somebody would notice and would point and say OH look at Charlie. I couldn't believe my eyes. I left and walked out through the side door and no one ever said a thing.

I guess I was the only one that ever noticed it.

I never appreciated the trouble handicap people had until one day at school where I was teaching. One of my students was in a wheel chair. I saw him coming up 5th street going towards 4th in his wheel chair.

He was going 60 miles an hour on the pavement and he seemed to crash into the curb when he crossed the street. The force of it bumped him up over the urb onto the pavement.

He kept going up to court street, then he made a right. I was going into the Parking garage. I was going slow and I watched him and he didn't know it. He came to the double doors at the school.

The doors opened out so he kind of pivoted the chair, swung around and reached back with one hand and then swung the door open. Pivoted around again and got inside before the door closed on top of him.

He was inside the little vestibule where you could stand inside out of the cold. He reached with the other hand and pulled that door open, swung around again and went in the door.

Now he was inside the school. By that time, I had parked the car and came down. He was waiting for the elevator. I said, I have to go to the main office. You can go up without me.

As I turned to leave, I looked back, out of the corner of my eye. I could see him stretch for the elevator button and push the button again.

When the doors opened, he went crashing through as hard as he could across the space between the elevator and the floor.

Then the elevator door automatically closed.

I had gone upstairs for some reason. I got upstairs ahead of him and was in the classroom. I heard a crashing at the large metal door of the classroom. He said don't worry Mr. Angstadt, I can make it.

He swung the wheel chair around again and hit the door with the back of the wheel chair. Blasted it open and shot into the room.

The automatic door swung back at 80 miles an hour and just missed hitting the back of his wheel chair.

I thought, oh my God, here is a kid fighting his way to get into school and he does this just going one way to class. Then, when he came over to the table where the students sat, the large wheels of his wheel chair wouldn't fit under the table.

He could not get close to write on the table.

He was 2 feet out away from the table. He had to sit by himself near the corner of the table, hold his book on his little crippled legs and knees and try

to write in his book.

I thought, God Love you. Never in my wildest dreams, did I know how hard it was for the handicapped.

While at Penn State, I earned my room and board by working in the kitchen at a fraternity house. I washed pots and pans at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I was not paid any money. I received free meals.

One week, the fraternity was having a formal party and because there was a large number of couples coming, they asked me to act as a waiter at the formal dinner. I had never been a waiter.

On Saturday night, I put on a white shirt and tie and a white coat with tails and black pants, like tuxedo pants. When I was serving at dinner, I had a large round metal tray that held at least 50 or 60 small glasses of tomato juice.

I was passing down the front of the banquet table, I was taking the individual juice glasses off the tray that I held in the air over my shoulder. I was holding it up in the air like a waiter does.

I was taking the individual glasses off and placing them next to the young man, then the young woman, then the young man and then the young woman.

Each one of the fraternity brothers was in a white or a black tuxedo and his date was in a beautiful formal dress for the party. After dinner they were going somewhere to dance at the College.

I worked my way down the table, lifting off the glasses of tomato juice .

I did not realize that when I had picked the tray up initially and started to hand out the glasses of juice, the tray was full and evenly balanced with 60 glasses.

As I got half way down the table, I only had half the glasses on the tray and when I took that one glass of tomato juice off to give to someone, all of the weight of the remaining glasses were unbalanced on one side of the tray.

As you guess, glasses of tomato juice fell to the floor.

I ended up, cleaning up the mess.

In grade school, we would play touch football in the yard behind the school building. The school building was located on the corner of Spring & Moss streets. It was directly across Moss street where the Northeast Public Library used to be.

In front of the building were very large, high elm trees. When you walked on the pavement on Moss street between the library and the school, you could hardly see the sky because there were 3 or 4 monstrous trees along the curb.

Their branches were so large and so thick and the leaves were so dense that you could just see occasional bare spots of the sky.

The gang would run around to the back of the school by way of Spring Street. The alley behind the school ran parallel to 10th street and ran parallel to Moss street. We would stand in the alley with our footballs.

We usually had 2 or 3 footballs. In order to throw the footballs up over the roof of the 4 story school building, you had to take the football in your hand, bend at the waist, and crouch down until your chest and chin almost touched the ground.

You had your entire body crouched together like it was a compressed coil spring.

Suddenly, you exploded and threw the football with all your strength into the air over the roof top of the school.

We were so good at throwing the football and so strong that half the gang would be behind the school building in the alley and the other half of the gang would be in front of the school on Moss street underneath the trees.

We would start throwing the footballs. We were so good that we could throw the footballs from the rear alley up in the air, up over the high roof of the 4 story school building.

The balls would then come down through the trees on Moss street. Obviously when the footballs came down through the trees, the branches would deflect the balls and they would bounce back and forth through the leaves.

Bill Swoyer, Bobby Huyett, and I, are running around like crazy on the pavement on Moss street looking up through the trees. You just couldn't see anything.

All you could hear were these footballs crashing down through the leaves and the tree limbs.

Then at the very last minute, the balls would be deflected back and forth, back and forth and slowly make their way down through the trees. Then you could catch them.

We thought this was great fun because every time you made a move to catch the ball, it would hit a tree limb or a branch and bounce and go another way and you had one devil of a time catching it.

But what made it even more fun is, you had is people who were walking on the pavement or driving their car on Moss street and you could tell from their faces, that the people couldn't figure out what we were trying to do.

We were running around with our head strained, pushed way back looking up through the trees, hollering to each other and fighting and hearing this noise

Suddenly from out of nowhere from out of the tree limbs, the balls would come bouncing down. Then we would run like the devil and catch them

Only on a rare occasion would a football get caught in the fork of a tree and we would lose the ball. It would just stay up there.

Or we figured out that maybe Moyer or somebody was goofing off back in the alley and when they threw the football, it didn't clear the roof of the school building.

Over the years, there must have been a half a dozen footballs up on the school roof. I think It's so great that we thought of throwing footballs over the roof and down through the trees.

It was just something to do, something to show how strong we were and how good we were.

You could only throw the footballs it onedirection. You could only throw the ball from the alley up over the school roof. You couldn't throw it from Moss street back up through the trees.

The weight of the ball with the force of gravity allowed the footballs to come down through the trees. You could never throw the football up from Moss street, back up through the trees

Quite often on a Friday or Saturday night or maybe during a weekday night, the Strand Movie Theater would have dish night.

After you bought your tickets, you took your tickets to the lobby where there were large cardboard boxes full of straw on the floor.

An usher or a manager would reach down through the straw and pull out a dinner plate and give it to you.

This was very popular and the people would carry the plates with them inside into the movie. You would walk down the aisle in the dark and take a seat.

Obviously, some times during the course of the evening while the movie was playing, someone would accidentally drop their plate and make a crash.

The people sitting nearby would jump, the people would strain their heads and try to look and see who dropped the dish or in what direction the noise came from.

Occasionally, during the evening, maybe three or four dishes dropped and crashed.

One evening I was there and it started out, that early in the evening one or two dishes dropped accidentally.

Suddenly a third dish dropped, a fourth dish, fifth and it became obvious to the people while the movie house is dark and while the movie is going on, that the dishes were not being dropped accidentally.

The dishes were being dropped on purpose. Oh it made a hell of a noise. These dishes were crashing and the people hollered and the people were dropping them one or two at the same time

Then people started dropping them one after the other and it sounded like a little machine gun.

The people got distracted from watching the movie. Some people were mad because of the noise. Some people were mad because dishes were being broken.

Oh, the people were laughing and happy dropping the dishes. Some people were picking up pieces of broken dishes and dropping them again.

It ended up a free for all, a real noisemaker. When the lights went on, everybody did nothing but talk about the dishes.

As we were leaving the theater I could hear the manager, the assistant manager and the ushers in a little office.

They said that this thing had gotten completely out of hand and you could rest assured that this certainly would be the last time for dish night..

They are going to think twice before they have a dish night again at the Strand

Some time ago, I wanted to give myself more exercise. I realized that most of my exercise activity would have to be by myself.

On television, I saw a tennis game, which had a heavy lead weight and a 10 foot stretching rubber band.

The idea was to put the lead weight in the middle of your driveway, which acted as a pivot, and you would hit the ball back and forth on the driveway.

Make it bounce on the driveway and then it would pivot and come back and you could hit the ball in the air again or you could bounce the ball off the driveway.

A red sponge ball was attached to the end of this long rubber band. The other end of the rubber band was attached to the lead weight or pivot that you placed in the middle of the driveway.

I bought the set but it just didn't suit me, I didn't like it or there wasn't enough room.

I disconnected the lead weight but kept the long rubber band on the red ball. I went to my patio.

I attached the open end of the rubber band to the beam underneath the patio roof.

Now the rubber ball swung back and forth like a pendulum under the patio roof. I discovered, after a few hits, that the harder I hit the ball the further it went out in the air and made the rubber band stretch.

I got to the point where I was so good that when I hit the rubber ball, the ball would go out, stretch the band, go up in the air, form an arch, and swing back over and hit on top of the patio roof.

Bounce off the top of the patio roof, make another arch, again back through the arborvita, and come back to me standing on the patio.

I discovered I could play a game of tennis using my patio roof as my opponent.

Hitting the ball straight out between the iron bars used for the awning, up in an arch, up on top of the roof and bouncing back again.

I laughed because it must have looked so funny to people walking past or driving past in automobiles to see a red ball come out high in the air, through the arborvitae, out half way across the street, over top of them. swinging up on a rubber band, disappear and bounce on top of my patio roof.

Then come back down again to me on the patio.

I could play fierce, hard games, I enjoyed it a lot, wore out my sneakers and had an awful lot of fun and I will never forget it.

When Joan and I were first married, we lived in an apartment at 11th and Windsor streets. Once or twice over the Christmas season, Uncle Chubb and I decided to go into the Christmas tree business.

It was so funny, we rented an open cart on wheels and drove up to Pottsville.

Uncle Chubb and I had to go out into the forest with a very sharp saw used for cutting down Christmas trees. We cut down a lot of trees because they were so cheap.

We had so many trees we couldn't get all of them into the cart. This cart was attached to the back of my car.

It was so heavy and loaded down. We had a dozen Christmas trees to take home but no room on the cart.

Chubb and I decided to tie these dozen or more trees onto the hitch between the car and the cart. The hitch is where the wagon attaches to the back of the car.

On the way home, it must have been half a dozen times that we kept dropping trees off this hitch.

We would run over the trees with the wagon or we would go back and pick up pieces on the highway, or we just kept right on going letting the Christmas trees drag and come apart all over the highway.

When we got home Chubb and I laughed. When we pulled up at 11th and Windsor we were lucky if we had one tree left on the hitch. We never made any money.

I don't know if I have the time to tell the story about going deep sea fishing with Chubb down at Rehoboth. So this will just be a reminder about the ornery captain.

This ornery captain shouted to the people in a loud ugly voice, that once the boat left the dock, there was no turning back.

He didn't care how sea sick you were, or how close he was to the dock. There was no turning back.

I saw and heard it people who were seasick when the boat moved only one foot away from the dock.

We went 20 miles out on a party boat loaded with people. Since our boat had sonar and could find the fish, other boats followed.

There were about 25 or 30 in people on my boat. Each person has 3 or 4 fishing rods and each rod has 7 or 10 hooks.

Because of the undertow under the boat, the hooks and lines from the fishermen on the right side of the boat are carried by the current under the boat.

The hooks and lines became entangled with the hooks and lines of the fishermen on the left side of the boat.

The people are mad because they think they have a bite.

They pull up their hooks entangled with lines from the other side of the boat. Everyone is seasick. For six solid hours I refused to open my mouth because I knew I would upchuck.

I sat on top of the little cabin, hanging onto the radio mast.

I went up and down and rocked back and forth. After 5 hours out, I looked down at the party boat and saw that everybody was seasick including Chubb.

There were only two men fishing. They were stripped to the waist in the hot summer sun and they were drunk, hollering and laughing and spilling beer.

I looked out over the ocean and nearby were 10-15 other little fishing boats that had followed us. They were rocking back and forth, only their fishing rods were visible.

Those people were all seasick too. It was just terrible.

A couple hours later the Coast Guard came past. You don't see any people on the coast guard cutter.

You just hear the bull horn saying that this area is now going to be open to gunnery practice by the anti-aircraft and by the coast guard. You have to go in.

The coast guard speed away.

The captain starts the motor and putt putts and starts turning around after being out 6-7 hours, 20 miles out into the ocean.

The two men who were fishing, they're mad, they're mad at the captain because they paid for 8 hours of fishing and they're going to get 8 hours of fishing or they'll know the reason why.

Anyway the boat came back to the wharf and everybody still is kind of sick. I had put on 8 jackets, a jacket that belonged to everybody and anybody, just as they threw their jackets off.

I kept picking them up and putting them on. I was freezing, I couldn't move my arms and I would not open my mouth.

When we came back to the motel, I went into the motel room and lay on the bed and stretched my arms and legs apart. I looked up at the ceiling and that whole motel room went up and down and up and down.

Down home had a white cotton tree at Christmas time. They took a bucket and filled it with coal and Uncle Guy would go out and get a tree, which was just the trunk, and stem, no leaves on it.

Aunt Landa would take cotton gauze and wrap and wrap and wrap the entire trunk from top to bottom and then wrap each tree limb and each branch and then wrap until there was nothing more than just a skeleton of a white cotton tree.

They would hang on the xmas balls. Down home liked hanging a chain of glass beads around in a circle, completely circling around the tree. Usually it was a tree that wasn't too big.

Sometimes it was 4' or 5' but it was always kind of startling because everybody had the green douglass fir or the green long needle tree.

For a long time down home had the white cotton tree at Christmas.

While living at 1018 Spring, hobos would occasionally come up the alley behind the house. The hobo would open the back gate at the of the yard, walk up the yard to the back of the house.

He would knock on the door, tip his hat and ask my Mom, ma'am could you spare someone like myself something to eat.

My Mom always had special tin plates and bone handled knives and forks and tin cups set aside in a special part of the closet for use by the hobos. These tin utensils were not part of the dishes that we used in the house.

My Mom would give him food and he would sit outside on the little wooden stoop outside the kitchen door.

He would sit on the step of the stoop, put his hat back on and eat off the tin plate and drink coffee out of the tin cup

.

My brother and I would be in the house and we would be watching out the back window. We would watch the hobo eat.

He knew the kids were watching him and then he'd smile and maybe wave and keep eating.

After he cleaned off the plate with bread and the fork, he'd wipe his mouth off with a rag he had or that my Mom gave him. He would knock on the door.

When my Mom would come to the door, he would ask her if there were any chores he could do to help pay for the food.

My Mom would say, well, there's a can of ashes downstairs in the cellar. He would go over to the cellarway, go down the cellar steps, go to the front part of the cellar, pick up the can of ashes, carry them up the steps and back down the yard.

Dump the can of ashes in the big ash barrel at the corner of the yard.

He would come back, kind of bow a little, and tip his hat. His words were very soft spoken, he was very kind, very respectable. He'd walk down the pavement and leave out the back gate.

He would reach in over the top of the back gate and make sure that the gate was closed and that he had locked the gate properly. Often the hobo would mark an "X" on the outside of the gate, so he knew to stop again at some future date.

During the latter part of 1990, I decided to go ahead and buy a tombstone for Joan and me down at Morgantown cemetery.

I thought while I'm at the tombstone place, I'd go ahead and buy a tombstone for my father who is buried over at Alsace church cemetery on Kutztown Road.

About a month, at least a month, back in november, 1990, when your Mom and I were coming home from King of Prussia, I stopped at Morgantown cemetery to visit the graves of my Mom, Warren and Momo.

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I walked over to our cemetery lot. I turned to your Mom, I said Joan, if I did not know any better, I would swear that there has just been a burial on our lot.

There was a new tombstone and the way the grass and the dirt looked like someone was buried on our lot.

Joan said well , I must be mistaken. She's sure that I am looking at the wrong lot. She doesn't think anything is wrong. Well , I said, as soon as we get home, I'm going to call the caretaker at Morgantown.

That night, I called the caretaker, and it was around supper time, and when I explained to him and read to him our lot number, he got quiet as quiet could be. He said, oh my goodness.

He said Mr. Angstadt, I sure hate when that happens. We buried someone on your lot.

I made arrangements a couple of weeks later to go down again with your Mom. We picked a new lot, a couple lots away. It still is a nice flat area of the cemetery, in the new section.

While I was there, I made the caretaker change the row numbers and sections for our lot. It's a grid arrangement, like you would have on a map.

I made him change the numbers and the letters on the deed and then he signed it. I thought to myself, well now, I am going to really hurry and get a tombstone on our new lot.

I wanted to do it anyway, and to make sure that this fiasco doesn't happen again.

I proceeded to make plans with Dohner, the tombstone place up near Sinking Spring , up near aluminum alloys where Ron used to work.

About the same time during November, your Mom and I were over at the showboat, I think it was a weekday evening and here was Fern Unger, Aunt Kate's daughter.

She's the one that had the lot over in Alsace church on Kutztown Road where my Dad is buried.

I double checked with her and asked her if it was okay for me to buy a small tombstone and put it on my Dad's grave. She said sure, go right ahead. So that worked out just fine.

Some time had passed and I had problems with unexpected delays with some insurance work I had to do. Christmas was coming up and that was the other reason.

Between these delays that I had with the insurance policies and Christmas coming along, I kept putting off buying my Dad's tombstone, even though I had kind of made arrangements, but never followed through.

I kept putting it off and putting it off. I finally went to Alsace church and talked to the caretaker. I wasn't sure how old my Dad was when he died.

On the day that I checked with the records at the cemetery, as I pulled away, on the dashboard of my car, I have a little clip where I keep memos and notes.

I clipped there the date when my Dad was buried. He was buried on November 14, 1951, which meant my Dad was 40 years old when he died.

As I was going out Kutztown road towards Windsor service, I did a double take on the note, because for some reason, I couldn't figure out why the date seemed so familiar.

What was there about the date. Here my Dad was buried on November 14, 1951. The day that I was at the cemetery driving the car was November 14, 1990.

Good gosh, here I had made arrangements and checked out the cemetery on the same November 14. Holy, holy, what 40 some years later. Talk about de-ja-vue.

When I turned 16, I had a part-time job at a clothing store, so I could not go out for the Reading High basketball team. I played basketball in a league in the City called the Club League.

It was made up of players who played softball during the summer. during the winter months. We played basketball at the Junior High schools located throughout the City.

In the photograph album book you'll see a picture of Richard's Toy Corner.

The sponsor, Richard's Toy Corner, I believe it was at Front and Buttonwood streets. Now the building has been torn down.

Next, it was Zeswith's Music House. Zeswith's was in town on Penn street, they sponsored us. On the team was Harry Printz, Robert Huyett, Billy Swoyer, me, and George Guenther.

I don't know who else it may have been, I think there was a kid named Bruce Liddycoat.

Oh how we loved to play basketball. We played basketball in the club league once or twice a week. We played independent teams the other nights of the week.

During the winter months we must have played at least 4 nights a week. We played at all the Junior High Schools including the YMCA, the Reading Company YMCA, and the Jewish community center on north 5th street.

Near the end of the season, the Reading Eagle Times was keeping scores of individual players and this particular year I was the top scorer. I was #1 in scoring points.

One night we're playing down at Southern Junior High. Usually the public would come in. There wasn't a large crowd, maybe 20 or 30 people from the local neighborhood.

Someone's parents or someone's friend would come along. While we were playing at Southern, I was top scorer in the league.

One of my team mates I believe, was second in scoring.

When the game had started he was 5 or 10 points behind me. During the game, this guy was hot and we were feeding him the ball. As he was running down the floor ahead of me, I was running down with him.

As I went past one of the referees, named Wozzie smith, he turned to me and said well , Charlie, there goes your scoring championship.

It dawned on me that as a result of helping my teammate to make baskets, he was going to pass me and I would be second in the league.

So as this guy was driving in towards the basket, when he was up and tried to make the shot, I went up with him and I blocked his shot.

Well you never heard a place get so quiet in your whole life.

Wozzie Smith's chin hit the floor, my team mates looked at me starred eyed and I smiled. I turned and took the ball back up the floor towards the other basket.

As I went up the sidelines I heard some people in the audience say "what's wrong with that player, he's so dumb, he blocked his own team mate's shot."

Wozzie Smith came past and said Charlie you're crazy, I never heard of such a thing.

Then it dawned on everybody what was going on and what I was doing. There was a time out and back in the huddle every body on my team came over and said Charlie , you big jerk .

We had maybe 10 minutes left in the game. Every time any one would go to shoot, even some of the guys on my team, they would look over at me to make sure they knew where I was.

They weren't quite sure if I was going to block their shot.

The other team was mad as hell but they didn't know what to do about it, as if there was anything they could do. Back then a long time ago, I guess there

wasn't any rule against it.

I smiled and played. Every now and then I got a pass, I scored.
When the night was over, I was still first in scoring.

Every time there's a class reunion, 20 or 30 years later, my teammates and I greet each other. We smile and laugh how crazy that game was.

The other referee in that game
was Cy Young.

Remember, I said how we liked to play basketball. We just thought it was the greatest thing there was. However, it turned out that you could only play during the weekdays.

Occasionally there'd be a game on a Saturday afternoon.

Usually it was just during the week and occasionally on a Saturday, but rarely on a Sunday.

We found out that in addition to the club league there was another league called the Church League. The churches in the City of Reading had formed a basketball league for members of their church.

Bill Swoyer was a member at St. Luke's Lutheran Church at 9th and Greenwich streets. So we all went to church at least once.

By going to church once every 6 months and signing on the congregation roll, you could participate in the church league. We wanted to play on a Sunday afternoon. We did not want Sunday afternoon to go to waste.

We joined St. Luke's Lutheran Church in the church league. It was really the same team that was Zeswith's.

All we did was change from purple and black uniforms to cream and white uniforms. It was the same team. The other guys from St. Luke's, we played rings around them.

The Pastor, who was the coach at St. Luke's, knew about our ulterior motive, but he wanted to win. It was okay with him and the former team members on St. Luke's just went along for the ride.

What was interesting about playing in the church league is we played against teams at JCC (Jewish Community Center).

I think the JCC back then for some reason, I have a recollection, that it was located on north 5th street. It was the no hundred block or the 100 block.

At JCC on a sunday morning, they would rollback the floor and cover up their swimming pool. We would play on that floor.

The pastor at St. Luke's church thought it was great that young men and boys from the church were playing basketball. After a while St. Luke's team was first in the church league.

The night of the championship, the championship was played at a neutral court in at YMCA. Well , my goodness, for us playing at the YMCA was far from being a neutral court, it was almost like a home court.

We played St. Matthews for the championship. St. Matthews is a church located in east Reading, Oh it's like at 16th and cotton, somewhere up there.

The team from St. Matthews was mostly kids from south 17 1/2th St. and Pendra Park.

You get the tie in, do you see how this ties in later on when I'm a playground leader at Pendra Playground..

The night of the championship, we were in at the "Y" and it's a very close game. Every time we get into the huddle – Swoyer, Moyer, Harry Printz and I, there 's some swearing and cursing and pushing and shoving.

Then we all say shut up, here comes the Reverend, shut up, here comes the Reverend. We would just smile and then he would give us a talk on sportsmanship and how we should do our best and that it was only a game.

We used to just bow our heads and listen to him cause we thought, well you know, okay.

What I'm leading up to is, this game in at the "Y" the score was 47 to 47 and the game was down to the last 2 seconds.

I was fouled, someone on St. Matthews fouled me and I had 2 free foul shots with the score tied and 2 or 3 seconds to go.

I am standing at the foul line and there are a lot of people at this game because of the championship. There were a lot of people there from St. Matthews, a lot of people there from St. Luke's who were hollering and shouting .

While I am standing there to take my foul shot, everybody gets quiet.

Now , the whispers, because back then the basketball players used to shoot what you might think is a very old fashioned way.

I've never seen it on television. The player would stoop, hold the ball waist high, and then take the ball and kind of underhand it with a back spin from between his knees, and make the foul shot.

That is the way most of the players would shoot their foul shots.

Well that wasn't the way I shot my foul shots. I would stand there with my right side facing the basket and my left foot onestep back from my right foot.

I would hold the ball up above my head in my right hand and with one hand shoot the ball off the top of my head.

When I was standing there getting ready, everybody's saying oh my God. Now look how he's shooting. Oh, what's he doing.

Well I shot it and the first foul shot goes in and now we're ahead by 1 point.

They give me the ball and I shoot one hand of the top of my head again. We beat St. Matthews for the church league championship.

Everybody hollered and it was kind of a mob scene after the game. The Pastor came over, I turned and looked at him and I'll never forget his face.

He was so happy, the tears were coming out of his eyes and running down his cheeks.

He was so proud and happy for his boys from the church that won the championship. Oh my goodness.

One Sunday afternoon our basketball team went up to the Hamburg Field House to play. I don't remember who our coach was, but anyway we took along 2 different uniforms.

When we got there, much to my surprise, there was a double header going to be played that Sunday afternoon.

We played the preliminary game. We played the first game and after the first game was over, we went back to the dressing room.

Someone, who was in charge, said take your uniforms off and put on the other uniforms.

Here it turns out, we were going to play 2 games, one right after the other. Well that was kind of a surprise and we joked about it.

Back in the Locker room, someone started to talk and said that the people who were there, were spectators who paid admission to see the two games.

We thought this was funny. We didn't know about it and this was the first time that someone had ever paid to see us play basketball.

When we came out onto the floor, some of the people started to boo and shout.

They were mad. Instead of seeing four basketball teams play, they were only going to see 3 basketball teams because they had already seen us play the preliminary game.

They thought they were being gypped. They wanted to see another team play. We went ahead and played the second game.

I don't remember whether we won or lost but for some reason, I remembered that it certainly was odd how things worked out that afternoon.

Whenever we drive through Hamburg and I see a sign for the Hamburg Field House, I always think of that Sunday afternoon when the people were shouting they wanted their money back, they wanted their money back.

Something dumb that I used to get a kick out of at AT & T in the little office cubicle. It was really a small room with a door and maybe an outside window.

There were Gene Alfiero, Bob Brennan, sometime later on there was Ernie Stegman, three or four of us in this little room.

We were always segregated from the other office area because the work we did was confidential.

As part of the job, I always prepared a work folder. a black binder with index tabs, notes, drawings and data. I did a lot of work sitting at the desk.

In order to break the monotony or take a break in the action, I would do a dance step routine.

I would do all my tap dancing while sitting in the desk chair. The desk chair had wheels on it so I could tap my feet and move the chair around and do fancy foot work and fancy steps.

Maybe sing a little bit and work my arms and hands.

Everybody thought this was funny. I hum a little , sing and tap my feet back and forth.

Finally this dance routine evolved it self, where I would go over to the front drawers of a filing cabinet that was 4 or 5 drawers high.

I would push my chair in front of the file cabinet and take the soles and heels of my shoes and dance up the front drawers of the filing cabinet, dance up the front of the filing cabinet.

Swing my arms and sing and dance.

Everybody thought this was crazy. I had a lot of fun. I danced a blue streak up and down, up and down as far as I could, up and down the front of the file cabinets.

In the old Laureldale tract where Western Electric was, this was back in the 40's or 1950's, during the summer months, Laureldale church, had a grove and outdoor picnic area with cabins.

The church would have a summer retreat at Marion and Vine Sts.

Two weeks during the summer, the church served breakfast and lunch. During the lunch hour, people from the office at Western Electric would walk up the pavement into the grove.

People would come over from Lieberknecht. Sometimes workmen in the Laureldale area, plumbers and carpenters would come up. The church had a cafeteria style in these large wooden huts or dining areas.

The sides lifted up to let in the sunlight and fresh air. A decent meal costs 40 or 45 cents or get dessert for a dime. Everybody thought this was so great because the food wasn't too bad. It certainly was very, very cheap.

This is where I got to know the people from Calvary Lutheran Church, Mrs.

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Lerch.

One day during the lunch hour at Western Electric, the guards came in. There was a commotion outside. a swarm of bees had congregated outside the office near the entrance. The guards were afraid someone would get stung.

One of the maintenance men was a guy named Dick Hershey. He was a beekeeper. They called him and a couple of us stood outside and watched.

Dick, without any protective equipment, no vests or caps or anything, went over with a small cardboard box to the swarm that was around the office window.

Reached in with his bare hand. He knew which one of the bees in the middle was the queen bee and all the thousands of bees were buzzing around. Everybody was holding their breath and cracking jokes.

They were at a safe distance, but still every now and then, someone would holler something out to Dick and he would say, shut up you guys.

He reaches in and pulls out the queen bee and puts the queen bee in the cardboard box and closes the box, rips in a little hole.

Thousands of bees swarm away from the office building and go inside the box to be with the queen bee.

Maybe, a couple of bees stayed outside. I'm saying out of the thousands that were there, I mean a real swarm, they all went into the hole that he made in the box. He took the cardboard box and put it in the trunk of his car.

Everybody clapped and laughed. That gave us something to talk about the rest of the afternoon.

About five years ago, around 7 o'clock on a Sunday evening, Andy Straka, who was a good friend from work, called on the phone and said Charlie, are you sitting down, I have something to tell you. I said go ahead.

He said, Charlie, Gene Alfiero is dead.

I said what. He said, yes, he said this morning, Gene played a round of golf, came home, cut the grass and while he was in his garage putting away his lawn mower, he had a heart attack and died.

He said one of his kids who must have been about 8 years old, found him in the garage on the floor. The kid ran home and said to Gene's wife, Mommy . Dad is asleep in the garage.

I couldn't believe it, Gene Alfiero worked elbow to elbow with me at Western Electric. His desk was right next to mine. Gene was kind of like an assistant. Gene always gave 100% and always tried so hard.

Gene never got mad. Gene never got angry, he never cursed, he never got red in the face, he never really showed anger. He must have kept it all inside. Poor Gene passed away around the age of 40.

The other part of the Gene Alfiero episode is that during this period of time on Kutztown road at Holy Guardian Angle, the mausoleum was being built.

Here they buried Gene.

I said to Joan, it never occurred to me, that two or three months prior to Gene's death, that every time I would drive home on Kutztown road and see the mausoleum being built, that one of the first people to be put in the mausoleum would be Gene Alfiero

Gene's mother lived near Third and Franklin streets and she was the cleaning lady for the priest at St. Mary's Church. When they buried Gene, they had a high mass.

His casket was taken into the church. I said to Joan well , here is my chance to really hear some Latin, here's my chance to really hear some old Latin.

Much to my surprise, there was hardly any Latin, there was hardly any Italian, everything was in English.

I said to myself, when I closed my eyes during the church service, it was like being in my Calvary church. Everything was in English. I could understand everything.

When my kids were little, your Mom and I took them down to Carsonia Park. We went to the Penny arcade. I wanted to show Joan and the kids how strong I was. I went over to the punching bag.

You had to put a penny in to make the bag work. The little punching bag was up inside an iron cage. You put a Penny in, reach up, grab the bag, pull the bag down on the rope, down below this iron cage.

Now the bag could move back and forth after you hit it. The idea was, depending how hard you punched the bag, the force of your punch registered on the large meter. I wanted to be very careful.

I was so afraid that when I swing my right hand, I would hit the iron cage and not the bag. I was very careful not to hit the iron cage.

I was concentrating on the iron cage but still trying very hard to see how hard I could hit the bag and show off in front of everybody.

I wind up, step back and I swung with all my might. I was very careful not to hit the iron cage. as I stepped forward and followed through on my swing and my punch. I hit the bag, it made a hell of a noise.

However, in my follow through, when my shoulder and arm went through and under the bag, the bag, that was on this rope, hit the top of the iron cage and swung back and as I stepped in, the bag came back and hit me square in the face.

I saw stars. I thought my head was ringing.. Oh it hit me a hellin, this inflated leather bag.

I turned to Joan and everybody could tell by the expression on my face that something was wrong. I wasn't even sure how to explain it.

One of Momo's sisters, well let's name the sisters: Aunt Lottie, Aunt Carrie, Aunt Mary, Aunt Martha and Aunt Cora. Remember Sonny and Helga Stewart, sonny's mother was Aunt Mary. Aunt Mary's husband was a man named Horace.

Uncle Horace Stewart and Aunt Mary were well to do just before the depression. Uncle Horace had a cigar factory at 8th & Oley, in near where the Jackson rope works is now, that's where the outlets are at 8th & Oley.

The cigar factory was there and Aunt Carrie and Aunt Lottie and Aunt Martha worked in the cigar factory. When I was a little boy, when you went in through the front door, oh, the pungent smell of the cigars almost knocked you down.

It was a very sweet, strong cigar smell but kind of clean.

I would stand there and watch the sisters work. They worked on white marble table tops, like those used to make fudge. The women were always talking.

They would continually feed in the tobacco leaves and roll the leaves back and forth as fast as they could with the palms of their hands.

They would roll, and roll and keep adding a leaf. Roll it in, add a leaf and roll it in. The cigars had to be cut. They had small scissors and small shears to cut the tips off.

These tips were continually being rolled up into the leaves of the tobacco. That was a memory I will never forget.

Uncle Horace was an immaculate dresser. He usually had brown pin stripe, double breasted suits. He always wore starched white shirts that had heavy french cuffs and heavy white collars.

He always wore a vest and he always had a large beautiful gold watch chain and a gold pocket watch.

Quite often he wore spatzs, and a grey derby. He was a very handsome man. Always had manicured fingernails and looked like he had been to the barber every two weeks.

Their home, they lived out on Pricetown road. When you go out Pricetown road towards breezy corners towards route 73, It's on the left-hand side. There was a tennis court in front of the place.

The chicken wire fencing around the tennis court is still there. It's part way up the hill. It's closer to breezy corners, across the highway from a florist that sells shrubbery. They lived there.

I can remember a few times I was there in the summertime with Momo and my Mom.

Aunt Mary, Aunt Lottie and Aunt Carrie believed in Hex's. They talked about people over at Momo's and they would get together at Aunt Mary's.

They would talk about people they didn't like. They would decide to put a hex on them.

They would close their eyes, sometimes hold hands. They would think about this person and then be satisfied that just by thinking how much they disliked this person, they wished the person bad luck.

Sometimes they would have a picture of the person and they would tear the picture in half. one sister thought she could put a hex on TV actors she didn't like on television soap operas.

When the sisters were teenagers, their father was a blacksmith down in Morgantown. The family was so poor, one night for supper, the family ate fried leather from the blacksmith shop.

With tears rolling down their cheeks, the sisters held hands and vowed that they never again would be poor.

It was quite fascinating. These sisters were very aggressive women, very smart women, very good with money and knew the value of money and knew how to handle money. They were nothing like the women of the times.

They were never women who took a step back. They were very forward, they knew what they wanted.

They were very flashy, very pretty, dressed in the latest style, knew how to wear clothing. Maybe the clothing wasn't expensive, but they always looked like a million dollars.

One of the sisters was Aunt Martha. She lived in the 900 block of 11thth street.

I don't know if it was in the house next to Woody the barber. Woody the barber lived on the upper side of 11thth street, maybe 6-8 houses away from Spring street.

Aunt Martha's husband was a man named Herman. It was Aunt Martha and Uncle Herman.

Aunt Martha was kind of pretty. She was not much with make up and the very flashy high fashion clothes that Momo, Aunt Lottie and Aunt Carrie wore.

Aunt Martha and Aunt Cora, as far as the sisters were concerned, kind of took a back step.

Aunt Martha was a very simple, likable, easy going woman. Always seemed to see the good in what was going on, always was very pleasant to be around.

One day as I was coming home from school, Aunt Martha, who was in her 50's at the time, was standing out on the pavement at 11th street and crying.

Standing there with a handkerchief in her hand and looking up and down the

street.

When I asked her what was wrong, she said, her little white french poodle had gotten away from her. She said it ran in towards Penn street.

I put my books down on the porch. I ran as fast as I could in 11th street. To make a long story short, in near City Park, I see this white poodle dog.

I talked slowly, approached it, made noises and quickly grabbed this little dog.

I couldn't believe I got it. I picked it up, walked it back out 11th street towards Spring street. There was Aunt Martha sitting on the front porch, she was waiting and looking. Oh my goodness, the tears came down her face.

She had a smile and a grin from ear to ear. She was so happy. I gave her this little french poodle and she took him in. It made her day complete.

Another thing about Aunt Martha. She had two sons, Richard and Mokie Schultz. Mokie was the trumpet player. His Dad, Uncle Herman was the drummer back in the late 30's early 40's.

They were well known in the local bars around town.

Mokie was very handsome and the young women thought that he was something. He knew he kind of was good looking. Back then, the guys playing in the band drank a little bit, and things got real loose and wild.

When Mokie was singing, it was real funny to see him in action. He kind of had his own style of playing and singing. He played to the crowd. That was Mokie.

Richard was very quiet. I didn't really get to know Richard too well . Later in life, Richard ran the boys Home on Schuylkill Avenue near the Touchdown club.

The City of Reading is converting the old schuylkill boys Home to residential.

Both of Aunt Martha's sons, Mokie and Richard, I think, died within six months of each other. They both had heart attacks.

Uncle Herman had died before the boys. I'd say within 2-3 years after Uncle Herman passed away, Richard and Mokie passed away. Aunt Martha cried and cried.

When you go down route 73, going down from breezy corners towards Boyertown, about 8 or 9 miles down pass the blinking light in Oley, on the left there's the Township office, there's a little midget baseball diamond.

Next door is the Oley Police. Next is the Gablesville Athletic association.

Back then, the schultz boys, Richard and Mokie, used to play Friday night sandlot football. I can remember being down there on a Friday night with Aunt Martha and Uncle Herman.

The Schultz boys, oh they were good football players.

It was sandlot football and it was very rough and tumble.

There were bloody noses and black eyes. They played under the lights but there were no seats. People just stood and watched. There was no wall around the field. It was an open field and they played football.

When Mokie or Richard scored a touchdown, Aunt Martha and Uncle Hlrman were so proud and I felt good, I was maybe 10 years old. It felt good because I knew them and they were my relation.

Every time now, today, I am talking today, 1991, when I drive down the Boyertown road, down to Schaefer's Restaurant. I pass the Gablesville association on the left, I can still see the Schultz boys, I can still hear the crowd.

I can still see the lights. I can still see Aunt Martha beaming.

There is something else to remember about Aunt Martha. Once or twice I went with Aunt Martha and Mokie to Uncle Herman's grave. It had one of those brass plates and attached flower urn.

There is a lid contraption instead of a tombstone. It's a brass plate in the ground and this cup, this brass cup, turn it upside down and then it drops into the plate. when you're not using it for flowers.

You screw this top, get this cup out of the ground, slide it it to the slot, and then you can put flowers in it.

Mokie would unscrew the cup and lift up this brass cup. Being the singer in the band, he would then use this cup and act like it was a microphone. He would sing into the cup, sing down into the hole where his Dad was buried.

We used to laugh and cry at the same time. Mokie was singing the old songs from the band and saying hey, pop, Mom's up here and I'm here. How you doing Pop. Then he would sing his song. Aunt Martha would cry.

I used to stand there, fascinated because in my wildest dreams, I knew Uncle Herman was dead.

He was buried, but there was just a slight doubt, you know, that maybe Uncle Herman could hear Mokie talking to him and singing to him. It was the wildest thing.

In Mokie's band, Uncle Herman played the drums. Uncle Herman thought he could sing. He was the comic in the band. In between songs, he would tell maybe one or two dirty jokes.

If he saw someone going to the men's room, Uncle Herman would play some kind of a snappy drum roll and sing into the microphone, we know where you're going, we know where you're going.

Uncle Herman was kind of a diamond in the rough.

Talk about Chop now, this is my Mom's father. Chop always wore a suit, a dress suit, a vest, a shirt and necktie. When Chop had breakfast, dinner or supper he always drank scalding black coffee.

He would take his cup and pour the coffee into the saucer. He'd pour it in the saucer up to the brim.

He would open both hands, spread his fingers and with 2 hands lift the saucer up to his lips. The hot steaming coffee was waving back and forth and he balanced it. Then blow across it.

He would blow across it very carefully, he would not blow too hard. He wouldn't blow any of the coffee out of the saucer. He would slurp the coffee from out of the saucer,

He always drank the full saucer. That's how Chop drank coffee.

My father used to enjoy going down to Carsonia Park. He would like to ride on the large merry go round. It was a very large merry go round, quite big. The platform must have had four or five horses side by side in a row.

It was full of lights and played loud music when it spun in a circle. Certain rows of horses went up and down, while other horses on the outside row were stationary, they did not go up and down.

This merry go round went around at a pretty high speed, it was really moving. My Dad used to like to sit on one of the stationary horses on the outer edge of the ring.

Near the cashier's cage was a large stand that looked like a lantern post with a feeder arm on it.

On the arm, extending in towards the horses, were little steel rings.

My Dad sat on an outside horse and as the merry go round was spinning past, he would hold on to the horse with his left hand, and reach out and grab a ring with his right hand.

Most of the rings were white steel rings but occasionally there would be a brown brass ring.

When my Dad pulled a brass ring, he returned it to the cashier and received a free ride. My Dad would stay on the merry go round for maybe four or five rides. He might have 60 or 70 white rings that were losers.

Occasionally, he would get the brass ring and would be a winner. He was so proud and happy and was showing off. The brass ring for a free ride was few and far between. My Dad would stay on.

The ring was not quite the size of a half dollar. Not everybody got a good grip on it. They would hit their hand on the ring, couldn't hold it and dropped it.

It was quite a feat to go spinning by, grab a ring, and hold on.

My Dad thought this was great fun. We used to stand outside and watch the merry go round go past. I can still feel the breeze from how fast the merry go round used to go around

I'm not sure, but I think, that for a few months, my Mom, my Dad, Flick and I lived Down Home. When I say down home I mean the Hotel at 9th and Robeson streets. Today there is a Hotel there called nostalgia.

A few years ago, my Mom and I stopped in at Nostalgia and told them about old times. They left us take a tour of the place. The place has been renovated and stuff moved around. It still brought back old memories.

Mrs Blakemore, my home room teacher at Reading High, asked Charles, what do you want to be when you grow up. I said I want to be an archiologist.

She said isn't that nice. My son is an archiologist. Would you like to meet and talk with him.

The following Saturday, my Mom and I met with her son at Reading High.

Her son talked down his nose at me and was very belligerent.

He asked me where I expected to get the money. I said from scholarships and working at odd jobs.

Her son laughed, and said, no, you have to marry the boss's daughter like I did. The Colleges don't have any money for archeology

Down home was Pop Printz, that's Harry and Irma's father. His name was Charles Printz. We called him Pop. Also living at 9th & Robeson was Landa and Guy Deusinger.

Landa was the lady with the black hair who used to wear one special shoe with a high thick heel. She walked with a limp. There was Harry and Irma the twins, Dorothy, Jenny, and Marion. GrandMom with the crippled hand.

My Dad's Mom was Mary. We have an old photograph of her. Mary was the one who always wore those very high laced shoes and coal black stockings. She had black hair. She was very pretty.

Marion and her mother had the same facial structure. My Dad looked a lot like his mother too.

Mom down home was married to Charles Printz, the father of Dorothy, Marion, Jenny and the twins. She had been divorced.

Dorothy, Marion, and Jenny and the twins have the last name of Printz and are my step aunts and step uncle.

Mary was previously married to Nathan Angstadt, My Dad's father.

My Dad, Dorothy, Marion Jenny and the twins had the same mother but a different father.

My Dad's father was Nathan Angstadt.

My Dad was named Charles. Here comes Big Charles, that was my Father, and when I came through the door, here comes Little Charles.

So that's how that all started, those nicknames, Big Charles and Little Charles.

I loved living down home. There was always excitement because of the number of the people. There was always something going on. In the front was the bar room. Pop Printz would tend bar.

He was a slow mover and never had too much to say. He was a very quiet man, a very big man.

He spent the last years of his life living at Dorothy Haag's, which I thought was great that Dorothy took care of her father like that.

Let's talk about GrandMom with the crippled hand. She was very elderly, very old. She wore silver rim glasses, wasn't too tall, kind of frail.

Remember Granny from the Beverly Hillbillies, well, GrandMom down home, kind of looked like Granny from Beverly Hillbillies.

GrandMom, as a little girl, had her right hand caught in a knitting machine. She only had a little finger and thumb. I would look at her hand when I sat on her lap. I would love to touch her hand and her finger.

She knew that there was something about this that fascinated me. She never blinked an eye. She told me how she hurt her hand. There was no trouble and she could do what ever she wants with her hand.

She must have lived on the third floor at 9th & Robeson. It seemed to take forever for her to go up and down those steps from the third floor down into the living room.

Stand at 9th and Robeson streets. Stand on RRobeson street facing the building. The kitchen is to the right rear of the building.

The dining area where down home ate, is in the middle. There was a dining room area for Hotel patrons to the left of the middle.

At the very front of the Hotel on 9th street, right at the corner, was the bar room.

About eight years ago on Christmas eve about 11:30 p.m. Mom called me. Mom back then was living on Pottsville Pike near Clover farms dairy. She had taken in Chop and Chop was very, very sick.

In fact, this was after Mom and Warren had taken Chop from the Berks Heim and brought him home, he was very sick.

She called around 11:30 p.m. Christmas Eve and when I came in the door Mom said, Charles, she said I think Chop died, but I'm not sure.

I said oh, I said well We'll have to check.

Here I couldn't believe my ears. Mom who was the practical nurse said I think Chop is dead. She said I can't go in the room and be with him.

I said oh, I said, well what can I do. She said you just do the best you can.

So I went over to Chop and oh my goodness he was very, very thin and very, very white and he was there in bed.

They had the bed, in part of their living room area. So I went over and I listened for a hear tbeat and I couldn't hear any .

I felt for his pulse in his wrist and I couldn't feel any . I tried to feel for a pulse in his neck and I couldn't feel any.

Then Mom who was standing in the kitchen hollered into the living room, She said Charles, why don't you use a mirror. Put a mirror under his nose or at his mouth to see if there is any moisture on the mirror.

I said, oh well , I say OK, I'll try that if you want me to. So I did that . I placed the mirror in front of Chop's face

.
His eyes were closed and I'm looking and looking ,oh man, talk about looking.

I could have seen a dot, the smallest dot there ever was on that mirror if there would have been one.

I looked and looked but the thought was that as I was looking I was wondering If Chop would open his eyes. I would be so close to him, so close to his face with his mirror.

I wonder what the heck he would have thought, it probably would have scared him and me.

But as it would happen, Chop was dead. Chop had passed away. That was Christmas Eve, about eight years ago.

There's a slight touch of nostalgia and memory just for an instant that when I see the stars in the heaven and the moon out on a Christmas Eve and It's midnight.

I can always remember back what I was doing eight years ago with Mom out on the Pottsville Pike.

Chop always wore a suit. He always had on a light blue or kind of a gray suit with pin stripes. He always wore a white shirt and neck tie.

Chop loved to go deep sea fishing. Once a year in the summertime, Chop would make arrangements with two or three of his buddies from the railroad and they would go deep sea fishing.

You guessed it, Chop was the only man who left to go deep sea fishing wearing a suit, a vest, a white shirt and a neck tie.

They'd leave early on a monday morning. It was usually just a one day trip. He took one day of from the railroad. Late that night he would return.

It was around 10:00 at night and he was always so excited and so happy and talked a blue streak about the fishing trip.

Since Chop only went once a year and his job at the telegraph office was inside, when he came back from the one day fishing trip he always had a bad sunburn, as red as a lobster. He glowed from the redness.

He never blinked an eye at the sunburn, never once complained about the sunburn. He was burning red hot on his face, neck, ears and nose and his hands because during the entire fishing trip he kept on his suit, white shirt, and tie.

We always thought this was so funny.

Once every week Chop would go out to the local taverns. Only once a week, never, never between one Thursday or the other, just only on a Thursday, Chop would go out and make the rounds and come back intoxicated.

The only way to easily describe it, he was tipsy. It wasn't that he stumbled and fell or bobbed and weaved. You could just see in in his face and hear it in his talk.

When he would come in at 2:00 a.m., which was Thursday evening, the following Friday morning, Chop was up at the stroke of dawn, washed, shaved, as stern and as clear headed as ever.

In all the years that I can remember, not once did Chop ever miss one day of work.

He never got sick, he never got tired, he never complained. The sunburn never stopped him. The heavy drinking never stopped him.

Part of the heavy drinking was, Chop who had been married to Momo, was divorced and Chop never got over it.

Chop never once mentioned Momo, but my Mom told me that Chop still carried the torch and the flame for Momo until the day he died.

Remember I said Chop was a telegraph operator. Chop knew the morse code as part of his job on the railroad.

On the radio on a sunday evening, almost everyone in the neighborhood listened to a program by Walter Winchell. He was a columnist. He was like Paul Harvey would be.

To start in his show, for dramatic affect, Walter Winchell would have his telegraph sing out a morse code. You would hear this dot, dot, dash, dot, dot, dash.

While the telegraph was sing, he would say, good evening mr.and Mrs. north and south america and all the ships at sea.

Here's the news. The telegraph would stop and he would report the news.

At the of the program the telegraph would go back on dot, dot, dash, and he would sign of. This used to infuriate Chop.

Chop would say, that Son of a B_ _ _ _ Isn't saying anything.

Here Chop was listening and reading the morse code at the STARTinning of the program. He said it was just gibberish, it wasn't anything. It used to get Chop so mad.

Every time I hear a telegraph operator and morse code I always think of Chop and Walter Winchell.

Remember I said Chop would go out every thursday night and do the town. Well , Friday night was payday.

Every Friday night around 9:00 or even 10:00 p.m., when we lived at 11th & Windsor, I would go down to Wenger's at 10th and Windsor and buy an oyster pie for Chop.

The bakery was going full blast and it smelled so sweet with all the baked goods.

After I would buy the oyster pie at Wenger's, instead of going home right away, I would turn right at 10th & Windsor and walk down to 9th & Windsor.

I would always look in the factory at 9th & Windsor. The hosiery mill was there. The windows were always wide open.

There was always a flashing noise, a hissing and a banging. I'd get up on my tiptoes and look in the window. There were metal forms, it looked like women's legs, upside down.

They were legs of flat metal forms and the men were slipping the ladies full fashion stockings over each form.

They would have a spray gun and shoot moisture on the stockings. The stockings on these metal forms would spin and move into ovens.

It was smashing, hissing and lights flashing, men were shouting and you could hear the gun spraying. It was really something to see and hear.

I would turn and go back up to 10th & Windsor and then up to 11th & Windsor, and give my Mom the oyster pie for Chop.

When I would be home alone, I'd get out out of a little secret box, my DAD'S poems to my MOM. I liked these poems and I'd read them.

My Dad's hand wrting was very nice.

He seemed to do a print write kind of a hand writing. The poems were very serious and very deep and how he couldn't live without my Mom and how he loved my Mom.

It was nice and I'm glad I got to know that part of my Dad.

My Dad and my Mom had knock down, drag out verbal fights and arguments. a lot of it had to do with my Dad hitting Uncle Flick and me pretty hard when he got mad at us or when he got mad at things in general.

It got to a point where when my Dad would come into a room unexpectedly, Uncle Flick would wet his pants. This would get my Dad mad. Then he would smack Flick. Flick would roll across the room after being hit on the back.

My Mom and Dad had pretty heated arguments.

Later on it turns out my Dad developed a pretty bad case of diabetes. The Guy wouldn't stop eating sweet stuff. He always had candy bars in his pockets and he just wouldn't stop eating sweets.

My Mom and him had real arguments about that and one thing led to another and as you might have guessed, Mom said that she just can't take this any more and to make a long story short, my Dad and my Mom got a divorce.

I thought my Mom was going to have a nervous breakdown, I thought my Mom was really going to go off the deep . It really hurt her but based on conversations that I heard with Dot, her close friend, she couldn't take the way my Dad was treating Uncle Flick and me.

It must have been pretty wild, I'm sure.

Soon after my Dad was divorced, that the diabetes gets so bad they have to take his leg off. I don't remember if it was the right or left leg, it was below the knee and my Dad was on crutches.

He seemed to get around pretty good. While it certainly was an inconvenience, my Dad really never complained about it or never felt sorry for himself.

My Dad just seemed to accept that that's the way things were and that's the way it is.

On top of all this, my Dad was really losing weight. I remember him as Charles Atlas from his weightlifting days.

After he had the leg of and diabetes, things set in, oh my god, he was just skin and bones. He was a lightweight, he looked to me that he weighed 110 lbs.

One afternoon, he's on the corner of 11th and Windsor and he's standing up on the steps at Adams dry cleaners. I'm talking to him and I go to leave him. I say so long.

When I turn, out the corner of my eye I see him come crashing past me. Using my reflex, I spun and turned and as he passed me I caught him and we both went crashing down the steps.

It was like a two step stoop and we went crashing down the steps onto the pavement.

I remember this, I swung hard so that I would not land on top of him, so he would land on top of me. Well, it worked, we hit the pavement hard. Our noses were almost nose to nose. I laughed and cried .

He smiled and he had to laugh and for just a couple seconds, we lay there and laughed and cried. Neighbors nearby came over and wanted to know what in the world was going on.

We finally got him up and my Dad held up his crutch. He said the damn wooden crutch had broke. What a memory that one is.

After my Dad had his leg off, somehow he got a job as a taxi cab dispatcher. He was in a little office in near 8th and Penn street. He would call up the taxis and dispatch the cabs for people who called for a ride.

One day when I was in this little office, my Dad had left for a few minutes and a man that was sitting inside to pass time talking to my Dad, asked me, is Charlie. your father. I said yes. The mam said, gee, your DAD he's a mean S-- of a B----.

I said what. He said my god, he always picks fights with the people coming in, he picks fights with the people that call up for a cab and he gets in fights with the cab drivers.

He said I'm so afraid that somebody is going to hit him even if he doesn't have a leg. He said, he certainly isn't afraid of them. I thought to myself, oh my god, Daddy, don't get into a fight with your crutches and one leg.

Years after my DAD passed away, I was going through his legal papers.

I discovered that his application for welfare money as a handicapped person was denied.

Harrisburg said that my DAD's earnings were not diminished since his earnings could remain the same by working more hours.

When my Dad was very sick I visited him in the old poor house, the alms house. This is over where Shillington High school is today on Lancaster Avenue. It was a very large wooden building.

The outside steps must have gone up 20 wooden steps. They almost went straight up, I'll never forget it.

I went up the wooden steps to a large screened wooden porch, I mean the porch was huge. It must have been 100 feet long and 30 feet wide.

Even though the porch was screened in, when I opened the doors, the smell of urine and bedpans and sickness hit me, I thought it was like a hot flash from a furnace, it just stunned me, it gave me a headache.

When I went into see my Dad, I thought my ears would explode inside my head from the smell. I sat there and talked to him. The smell just drove me wild.

So here I am it seems like 50 years later. Whenever I go out Lancaster Avenue and past Shillington High school, there's the memory of the old poor house and the 20 steps to that terrible smell.

During the last two years of my Dad's life, my Dad lived with Aunt Landa and Uncle Guy. He lived near 11th & Marion streets. There's a store on the corner now that always has a sign out front that says, "not more than 3 students allowed".

He was in the row house about 4 houses up above 11th. When my Dad passed away, Landa said that all my Dad had left was \$11.26.

Landa gave me the money, I was so, well you know, heartbroken about my Dad dying, but I was happy that Landa, to the very end, taking care of my Dad and making sure that I got the little money that my Dad had left.

My Dad was buried at Alsace Cemetery on Kutztown road. The viewing was at Saunders Funeral Home.

As far as the cause of death, I think It's so crazy, they said that my Dad died of complications. I thought that was something. My Dad was 40 yrs old when he died. Buried 11/14/51.

I was in my early teens. Landa said that I would have to answer any questions. Should they perform an autopsy on my Dad. I looked at my relatives. They kind of wanted me to say, yes, so I said yes.

I never told anybody, that back then, I never knew what the hell an autopsy was but I said yes.

I rarely dream. I'd say maybe 2-3 times a year or something like that. This one dream that I had, I thought it was fantastic.

I dreamed that I was over at the V & F outlets. Then it was the Textile Machine Works where my Dad went to school. Maybe he might have worked there a few months.

There was a large crowd outside. Hundreds and hundreds of people and in the crowd, well, I'm about 16-17 years old. In the crowd I see my father. I see my father before I was born. I see my father before he married my Mom.

So I went over to him and I said sir, he said what. I said, do you know who I am. He said no I don't. I said that's all right but I would like to say hello, how do you do.

We shook hands and I smiled and my Dad looked at me. I just thought it was so neat that I had a chance to meet my Dad before I was born.

Wow, that's what I call a dream.

Down home at 9th & Robeson most of the living activity was in the dining room. Sunday dinner was a pleasant memory. We always had chicken, mashed potatoes, red beets, peas, chicken gizzards and gravy.

They had the biggest plate of chicken gizzards on the table.

When the gang sat down, I mean it was a gang. Can you imagine, my Dad, my Mom, Pop Printz, Mom Printz, Landa, Guy, me and Flick, Harry and Irma, Marion, Dorothy, Jenny, and Mom.

Landa and my Mom used to eat on second shift or in the kitchen. There wasn't enough room at the table.

Sunday dinner is where I fell in love with chicken gizzards and chicken gravy.

Another thing to remember about down home is Irma and Harry, the twins, were the favorites of Guy and Landa.

What was always so funny, when Irma and Harry and Uncle Flick and I would play parchesie, we would always get into a misunderstanding, as to how many times you could hold a blockade.

Remember how you have those colored squares, most of them were white when you count. Every five or every ten there's a blue or a blue shaded area.

When we would have a blockade, Irma and Harry would get mad because Uncle Flick and I would keep the blockade closed and they couldn't go past to win the game.

Irma and Harry would call over Guy. He was hard of hearing. Guy would always be sitting in a big stuffed chair, bent way over, with his ear up against the radio. He would spend hours bent over listening to the radio.

Irma or Harry would call Guy over from the radio to the parchesie board and ask Guy, isn't it right that Charles has to open up his blockade.

That he can only hold the blockade for three passes, three shakes of the dice. He has to open that blockade.

Well, Guy, I don't think ever played parchesie. Guy certainly didn't know the rules of parchesie. So Guy would look at the board and he would ask, who does this belong to.

Well that belongs to Harry. Who does that belong to. Well that belongs to Charles. Who does that belong to.

After Guy got the lay of the land and understood that his favorite twins were in trouble and losing, Guy would say oh yes, yes, the rules say Charles you have to open.

You have to open and let Irma go through

No, no, my brother and I would holler. It was the same routine all the time. Harry and Irma, only ever asked Guy about the rules when Harry and Irma were losing.

So Flick and I would open up and let Irma or Harry go through. My brother and I would always laugh so hard and roll on the sofa and roll laughing on the floor. Because it was always the same reply from Guy.

On the second floor, at 9th & Robeson, at the rear of the building lived a tenant. It was a husband, wife and little boy.

This incident occurred I guess while I was in junior high.

I was in the kitchen at the kitchen sink. There used to be a large side porch on Robeson street near the rear of the building. Down home always had an awning and porch chairs.

What was nice about this porch, when you sat on the porch, you could b down, look over your shoulder, and talk through the kitchen window to some one inside the house, in the kitchen.

One day when the awning wasn't there and the porch was bare, I was inside at the kitchen sink, having a glass of water. Landa was over at the table.

Suddenly out the corner of my eye there this boy who lived on the second

floor, crashed down past the window and landed on the porch.

The kid pushed the screen out of the second story window, jumped down, and landed on the porch.

What's kind of cute about this kid, the kid had a strange voice, you know on the our gang comedy they have a kid called Froggy, that's exactly the way this kid's voice sounded.

He had the lowest, froggiest, funniest voice you ever heard.

This kid came crashing past the window. I turned at the sink and said to Landa, did you see that.

I ran out the door and by the time I got outside, the kid was up and running towards Moss and Robeson. He was running up the pavement.

I said wait, wait, are you hurt, are you hurt. I turned after a couple steps up Robeson street, I turned and his Mom was behind me.

She said, he told me he was going to jump. She told him I was going to spank him. The kid said if you take another step, Mom, I'm going to jump.

This kid had jumped out of the second story window, landed on his feet on the porch and was running up the street. I couldn't believe it.

Let's talk about the kitchen sink down home. Two faucets came out through holes in the top of the white sink. Stretched between the hot and cold faucets was a tin dish plate where you put the soap.

Always next to the soap or on top of the soap was a tin cup. This was the cup that everyone used when they wanted a drink of water. For some reason this went against me. I always thought that the taste of the soap was on the cup.

I didn't particularly like that everybody drank from the same tin cup either. When I would get a drink, I would hold the tin cup up in such a way that the water would pour out of the cup over my lips.

I would not touch the edge of the cup with my lips.

The water would pour out of the cup, run down over my lips, down over my chin, down over my neck and chest.

Everybody always used to say, why is it little Charles seems to have such trouble. He get a drink of water. Every time he gets a drink, he turns and he's wet down the front.

I was always ashamed and embarrassed to tell them, I felt the cup tasted of soap. For the longest time I would pour as careful as I could, trying to get some water out on my lips but not let my lips touch the cup.

One day down home, I don't know if we were playing cards or parchesie. Aunt Kate, this is Aunt Kate that used to live near Moss and Exeter, this is Aunt Kate who used to help tend bar.

Back in those days Aunt Kate would kind of help in the bar room. It was never clear to me because of the liquor license, whether Aunt Kate was allowed behind the bar to serve the drinks or not.

Or there was some question whether her name was on the license for the bar.

Aunt Kate spent a lot of time in the bar room. On a rare occasion I glanced in. Aunt Kate was serving behind the bar.

What I am leading up to is, Aunt Kate comes back to the dining area with a cigar box and said come on I want you all to see this. We came over and sat around the dining room table.

She opens up the cigar box and it was the cutest, funniest thing. Here she gets out sheets of gold foil.

Real gold . I was surprised. The gold was between tissue paper. She had one piece of gold foil, then a tissue paper, then a piece of gold foil on top of that, then a tissue paper.

This was real gold. I had never seen real gold. I always thought of gold rings or things like that. Here was gold.

It was very, very fragile and very flimsy. She wouldn't let anybody touch it, afraid of fingerprints or afraid of breaking it. It was my first experience with gold and for some reason, I'll never forget it.

One day down home, there was conversation about a girl. I was a student at Northeast Junior High school. Dorothy Haag asked me if I knew this girl. I said, yes, I did. I said, she was a whore.

Aunt Dorothy was furious. She hollered, what did you say, did I hear you right. Where did you ever hear such a word. Well, I said, yes, she's a whore.

Dorothy Haag swung and she slapped me across the face and said how dare you say that. Where did you, oh she hit me, I mean square across the face and tears were coming down my cheeks. I'm getting red in the face.

Dorothy said, do you understand, do you know what you're saying. do you know what that word means. I said yes, as the tears came down my face, I said yes, I said a whore means she's fat.

This is about Pop Printz, Charlie Printz. It was always fun. It seemed every Saturday morning Pop Printz would go fishing. What I got a kick out of was, Pop Printz would go fishing even when it was raining.

For some reason, it always just seemed odd that Pop Printz would take a black umbrella with him.

It just seemed funny that in my mind's eye, I could see Pop standing on the bank somewhere with this umbrella and he'd stand there in the rain fishing.

I don't know why, but I'll remember it.

Something else I always remembered about Pop Printz, he always liked yellow cheese. It wasn't cottage cheese, it was like cup cheese, that's probably what it was.

Every Saturday morning, Pop Printz would go to market. He would come home carrying the paper bag or canvas type shopping bag. There was always this cup cheese.

He also always had white sugar cookies. It was a large cookie, almost the size of your hand and had scalloped edges completely around the outside of the cookie.

We dipped that cookie in coffee and it always tasted so good. That was my Saturday mornings down home.

As far as my Dad is concerned, I must say something about Jenny. It seemed every time I would go to see my Dad, Jenny was visiting him.

Let's say he'd be sick in his room or that I visited my Dad when he was in the hospital, whenever my Dad was sick in bed, whenever I went to visit, Jenny was always there.

This really was rough not only just to see my Dad, but I realized that Jenny really seemed to care how my Dad was doing and how my Dad's health was.

I guess I want to say there will be a special place in heaven for Jenny.

When I see Jenny at a birthday party or a family reunion or Joan and I will bump into Jenny at the Berkshire Mall, I always want to hug her because I remember how Jenny helped take care of my Dad.

On occasion, Mom down home, my Dad's Mom, had a misunderstanding with her husband or with one of the kids. They would leave and slam the door. Mom would sit and cry.

Mom was kind of a large woman. She had a very bad case of water in her ankles, water in the legs and knees.

She wore big laced black shoes and dark black stockings. She used to sit on her rocking chair in the kitchen.

I was a little kid, I used to climb up on her lap. She'd rock and rock and cry and snuffle and I'd get close to her and sit on her lap and put my head on her chest.

She'd rock and kind of pat me on the back on the head and cry a little bit and rock. My god, I loved Mom down home.

I just used to feel so sad and we'd rock and rock and oh, my goodness, Sometimes I'd be sitting on her lap, for an hour or two hours.

I believe Marion Printz was in 9th grade at Northeast Junior High and I was in 7th grade. Marion was part of a precision drill team for girls. They were called the Scotch Highland Lassies.

She wore a white blouse with long sleeves and a large ruffled collar. The blouses had fluffy big sleeves and there were wide ruffles at the wrists.

She wore a green and black scotch plaid kilt, and a green and black scotch plaid beret. She had a scotch plaid scarf, on a diagonal, from one shoulder down across her chest to her waist in front.

The other end of the scarf continued on from her shoulder, on a diagonal, down across her back to her waist in back.

She wore scotch plaid stockings that came up to her knees and black patent shoes with a large square silver buckle.

She was part of a drill dance team, just like river dance is today on TV.

There was 20-25 girls shoulder to shoulder. They made a star or a criss-cross or diagonal and then one girl would face front and another girl faces back.

One girl faces front and one faces back and then they would go in circles and do a precision drill, dancing a kind of tap step, high tap step.

Marion was quite proud of this. I was quite proud. She would walk home from Northeast wearing the kilt to 9th & Robeson. That was very pleasant and a lot of fun. I was always proud of Marion.

Just in passing, the first dance I went to at Northeast, Marion came over to me while we were in the gym. She said come on, Charles, I'll show you how to dance.

For the next hour, Marion showed me how to slow dance.

My Dad's funeral was at Sander's Funeral Home. When we left, they asked me to ride in the first car.

I was by myself, I vaguely think someone might have been with me, but I can't remember who.

The rest of the people, Guy and Landa and everybody else, were in their cars and in the funeral procession. We went from Sander's Funeral Home out to Alsace Church on Kutztown road.

When we were going up the hill into the cemetery and down the other side, I heard the driver say, my goodness, this is a lane for only one car and there's a car approaching us, coming up the hill right at us, in the same lane.

I looked and there were tears running down my face. Oh, I laughed and cried and laughed and cried. Here it was Guy. Somehow Guy and Landa who were well back in the procession when we first started at 12th & amity.

To go that little distance, somehow he got lost in the traffic or made a wrong turn. Anyway, as we were coming down in the cemetery, Guy was coming up and meeting the first car head on.

Oh I loved Landa and Guy and it just seemed so typical what might happen during the excitement of burying my Dad. Guy was excited and Landa was probably telling him where to make the turns.

Anyway, Guy had to go backwards down the lane. Oh ,it took so long because we had to go so slow, following Guy driving backwards down the hill with the funeral procession in front of him. I couldn't believe it.

On a hot summer day, the gang from Spring street saw the rag man. Back when I was in grade school, the rag man, and the ice man had a horse and wagon.

The rag man spent most of his time with a slow moving horse pulling the wagon with big wagon wheels. It looked like an open buck board.

The horse and wagon walked thru the back alleys in the City and he'd holler rags, paper, rags, rags, paper, rags.

He would buy bundles of newspapers. People would come out of their backyard and he would stop and buy their newspapers.. This is the way people got some extra change.

Near the of the day, the rag man's wagon was packed high with newspapers. The bundles of newspapers were piled up higher than the sides. They would almost spill out but he had them under control.

One day the rag man went down Robeson street followed by Swoyer, me, Huyett, and Moyer. The rag man went down to the Hotel at 9th & Robeson.

He has an iron weight that he puts on the curb so that the horse doesn't walk away.

There was no place to tie up the horse so he has this long rope and weight, it looks like ½ iron bowling ball.

He puts this weight on the curb and the horse is well trained, and just stands there and relaxes.

The rag man puts on the brakes, gets down off the wagon and goes into the Hotel. Moyer and Swoyer and us, for some reason, we all had the same idea at the same time.

We ran down and jumped up on top of the wagon and unloaded maybe 10 or 12 bundles. We kept saying that's enough, that's enough, but Moyer would say just one more.

After we had maybe 12 bundles taken down of the wagon and put down on the curb, we sat there and waited for the rag man to come back out of the barroom. We sat on those bundles in the hot sun and must have waited 2 to 3 hours.

The rag man finally came out. He spent hours in there drinking. When he came out, he was feeling pretty good.

We sold his newspapers back to him and helped him put the papers back on the wagon. We took the money and walked away. We thought we were smart and really pulled a fast one.

One day when I was going to grade school my father and I were in a little corner grocery store at Moss and Spring streets. It was a corner from where the school was.

This little grocery store was called Mesty's. My Dad and I were in the store and when I looked out of the store window across Spring street over at the school yard, I could see that Harry Printz was in a fight

What I could see, Harry was in a fist fight. I said to my Dad, look, I'm going over to help Harry.

My Dad said, no, no, you let Harry go. He said Harry must learn to take care of himself. My Dad was something.

One year during Christmas in Muhlenberg Township I was Santa Claus. I had to go to Riverview Park and pick up a red corduroy suit.

It was the most beautiful Santa Claus suit you have ever seen. It was hand made.

There was a plastic envelope for each white glove, there was a plastic envelope for each of the white cuffs, there was a plastic envelope for the jacket and there was a plastic envelope for the pants.

There was a plastic envelope for the cap and there was a plastic envelope for each of the black boots.

I put on this suit and it looked great. I got into a carriage which was being pulled by two little ponies. This carriage was really not a carriage, but a little flat bed behind the ponies.

There was a wooden kitchen chair nailed fast to the wooden floor of the little flat bed.

I sat on the chair and as we went through Riverview Park and Muhlenberg Township, I hollered to the boys and girls, Ho Ho Ho boys and girls.

Every time I'd say Ho Ho Ho, these ponies would stop dead in their tracks and I would fly off the chair down onto my knees.

I'd get up and say to the driver, hey guys, you have to let me know when you are going to stop. They said okay.

So again going through the streets and I'm hollering Ho Ho Ho boys and girls, the ponies stopped dead in their tracks.

I'd fly off the chair down on my knees and I'd say to the guys, I thought you were going to tell me when you were going to stop.

The driver said, listen mister, when you say Ho Ho Ho the ponies think you want them to stop and that's what they do. Don't say Ho Ho Ho.

I went the rest of the trip just waving to the kids. As you would have guessed, when I came passed 3050 Elm road, here's Susie and Gary.

I don't know if Tom was there or not. I looked and just waved .

As we were going past the house, Susie said, Gary, It's Dad, I can tell ,its Dad. I try to act like Santa Claus.

We went up the street and that night around 6:00 p.m. We're at Hartman's farm. We stop and I walk out into the corn fields.

The driver looks up at the moon and the stars and the snow and he says, well, that's a sight you don't often see.

The other guy said what's that. He said you don't often see Santa Claus relieving himself in a corn field.

On the way home and during this ride everybody thinks they're doing me a favor by offering me drinks.

Well after three hours of having drinks at every house in Riverview Park, I

was feeling pretty good.

When I go to get back on the flat bed I slipped, I'm a little topsy turvy, I guess.

I slipped, falling in the dirty snow and mud in this beautiful suit.

So that night, after I had taken the Santa Claus suit off and put it all back in the separate bags, I tiptoed down the pavement to the house to return it.

Dropped the suit on the front step. Rang the bell and ran like the devil back to the car. Drove away. I was so scared of the woman, I thought she'd be furious.

As soon as I turned 16 years old, I went to work at a local clothing store near the Strand movie theater. I worked everyday after school until 6:00 p.m. and full-time Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

I swept the pavement. I would carry and stand mannequins on the outside pavement in front of the store. Turn empty shoe boxes upside down on the shelves so it would look like we had a lot of shoes on hand. I waited on customers.

I would operate the bailer to bail cardboard and tissue paper. Let me tell you about this bailer.

You had to remove the 5 ft. long arm and the 4 ft. square metal plate from the top of the bailer, it was a steel box.

You carefully loaded the bailer with pieces of cardboard and tissue paper making sure the level of loading was evenly balanced and made up of alternating layers of cardboard and tissue paper, one on top of the other.

After the bailer was filled up to a height of 5 ft., the metal plate lever arm was connected to the bailer.

You used your arms and climbed on top of the lever at your waist, hung on, and used your body weight to press down and compact the load.

You locked the bailer in place, strung wire around the front and back of the bail, cut the wire with metal cutters, removed the lever arm, the metal plate and metal sides.

You tipped the bailer over until the bundle falls out on the floor. If everything was done right, no problem.

However, if the bundle was not loaded evenly or the wires not connected properly, as the lever arm pressure was released, the bundle exploded.

It blew up in your face, breaking the wires and throwing cardboard and tissue paper all over the floor.

What a mess it was to clean up and bail it again.

It was 6:00 p.m. and I'm still working at the clothing store. It's closing time.

I use to hang a window box display across the glass pane at the bottom of the front door and pull the shade down over the top glass pane. This was done as the nearby church bell was ringing 6 bells.

You can bet there was always that last customer running up to the door as you were closing.

Inside the window box was usually a display of shoes, shirts, ties, handkerchiefs and a small mannequin wearing a jacket.

You always had to be careful not to knock over that mannequin as you moved the window box.

The people and I who worked at the store argued over what time to close the store. one person said if the bells rang, the store was closed.

The other person said, unlock the door, remove the window box and wait on that last customer.

Everyday after closing, I would carry 6-7 pairs of pants to the tailor who lived nearby. It cost the store 35 cents a pair to adjust the length of the legs or adjust the waist.

As I hung the window box and pulled the shade, I could see my school friendends walking and laughing on their way to the basketball game at Northwest junior High.

I used to have to swallow hard. There was always a little tear in my eye because I would miss all the fun and had to work.

I worked every Wednesday after school with the owner. The owner was artistic and made the two large store window displays and the window box display.

Shirts, neckties, shoes, pants, caps and jackets were displayed in the windows on little wooden pedestals. He used black ink, different style pen points to make little sale price tickets pinned to the clothes.

Once a month the owner, in his stocking feet, would bring in the old display from the store windows and replace it with a new display.

The clothing from the old display was always faded. Quite often the outline of a sock was faded onto the front of a colored dress shirt.

You had to ask customers if they could wear the faded clothes as work clothes. By closing time on Wednesday, all faded clothing had been sold at a discount.

One of the jobs I did at the clothing store, I had to measure the inside seams of men's pants with a tape.

I didn't like getting down along side a man and reaching a measuring tape up inside his leg and blindly trying to find the low point of the seam at his crouch.

I used to choke when I saw an angry man coming back through the door carrying his pants which I measured.

They were either too long or too short.

Back then, men's socks came in different sizes and they were usually anklets. If you didn't know your size, you made a fist, you pulled a sock over your fist, toe to heel.

If the toe and the heel overlapped, the socks were too large. if the heel and tips did not meet, the socks were too little.

Often we discovered we had two different kinds of shoes left. The same style but different sizes. Or a customer came in with two shoes wrong style, same I was always told that this was my fault, that I made the mistake.

I had to stock piles of pants on shelves according to sizes, with the low 30 to 32 to the high size 40 to 48.

In order to look at or try on a pair of pants you had to lift up the pile with your left arm, reach in up to your shoulder and pull out the pants with your right hand.

Usually two or three other pants came flying out and landed wrinkled on the floor.

I knew I was being watched by my boss who didn't like what I was doing.

For wrapping pants, you pull a sheet of a large heavy roll off paper standing on a 2 foot high ,chrome paper cutter.

Like an archer, you use your fingertips to pull the paper of the roll, quickly turn your hand and use the chrome cutting bar to cut the paper.

I couldn't do it right. as many as 2 to 3 times I pulled and ripped the paper to shreds in front of a customer. I would throw sheets of torn paper down by my side behind the counter and smile.

In the rear of the store I could hear my boss say, oh boy.

The older customers and the men in charge at the store were always talking Pennsylvania Dutch. I could tell when long conversations ended in a joke because of hardy laughing.

After the customers left, no one would ever tell me what they were talking about.

A favorite word used by one of the supervisors in the store was usta. a customer would say well you use to sell these pants. He would smile and say well usta died.

Some of the employees the store had the power of negative thinking. Our boss said we should tell customers about the clothes we have in the store, not about the clothes we don't have.

The store needed the power of positive thinking.

During the war years of World War II, certain clothing was rationed. Clothing like salt and pepper work pants, red and blue work hankies and occasionally long underwear was rationed. We could sell only 2 work hankies to a customer.

The customers would leave the store, return about 20 minutes later and buy some more hankies. The people were playing games.

During the war, the same clothing came in at different times at different prices. We all agreed we should not have the same clothes at different prices.

So sometimes the prices were lowered to solve the problem and sometimes the prices were all raised.

Living nearby was a young man, very quiet, who tended to be a mama's boy. He enlisted and six months later, on home leave, he had been changed into a fighting machine. A real commando.

He no longer even needed his glasses.

At the clothing store we used to crack new shoes. The customer would say, this shoe really hurts me.

I'd say, let me see it. so you take the shoe and put your hand at the heel and you bend the shoe from the heel to toe and crack the stiffness. Now the shoe is more comfortable.

I learned to let the cash register drawer open at night when closing, so robbers would not have to break the register open, to find out there was no money in the register.

Down in the basement mounted on the walls around the bailer were round glass balls filled with red liquid. Part of the mounting was a compressed heavy duty spring with a sharp point.

There was a metal seal holding the spring back. if there was a fire, the heat melts the metal seal, releasing the spring and the point breaks the glass.

The red liquid would turn into gas vapor and smother the fire. It sounds good, but the thought always scared me being down there next to the bailer choking in the gas.

The owner of the store had a number of different stores. He drove his personal car to deliver dozens of pants and shirts.

The clothing was piled high on the back seat and floor of his beautiful car.

I spent hours down on my hands and knees in the back seat unloading and then carrying piles of clothing into the store.

After closing the store at 9:00 p.m. on a Saturday night, I would often go to the second show at the Strand theatre. I was usually tired and disappointed that there was standing room only. Even the balcony was filled.

One of the men I worked with in the store was a gentleman who was born again. Often when showing a customer pants and shoes, he would ask the question, sir, are you saved.

Where do you expect to spend eternity. Often this gentleman would sing his favorite hymn or repeat his favorite psalm from the Bible to me or the customers.

A lot of customers were quite surprised.

When walking home from the movie about 11:30 p.m. as I was passing a store window, I looked in and saw in my reflection that I was walking bent over almost from the waist.

I stood up quickly and the pain in the right side of my stomach was terrific. Well, I had a appendicitis and spent the next week of my paid vacation in the hospital.

One Saturday morning my Uncle Mac called at the store and said Charlie, I'm going down to the army navy game, do you want to come along.

In the army navy game was Glen Davis and Doc Blanchard. I asked the owner if could have off without pay and go to the game.

The owner said, no, and he also said that if left I would lose my job. Well I looked at the owner, thought a second, and said well, I guess that's it then, because I'm going to see the army navy game.

Uncle Mac picked me up in front of the store and we went 90 miles an hour to Philadelphia. Parked right at the stadium in a big space that said, please do not Park Here. We had terrible seats at the football game, way up in the top rows.

The following Monday, I returned to work. Nothing was said to me about taking off and I said nothing about it.

My Mom and I went to visit Aunt Lottie. One of the sisters to Momo. While we were in her living room I noticed that she was wheeling the wheel chair like she was going in and out of a hole in the floor.

I said Aunt Lottie, what's wrong. She replied, oh nothing.

I looked at the wheel chair and saw that the tire on the wheel was an inflatable kind and she had a flat tire.

She said it was that way for months. It was no bother. I said, my god, I'll fix it.

So I fixed it, I took the tire and the inner tube off, patched it and put it back. Poor Aunt Lottie didn't have anything to give me, I knew she didn't have any money. I didn't want any money.

So she gave me some pieces of leather, small pieces of leather that her dead husband had left in the cellar. He used to have a leather working kit.

When the fire tower on top of Mt. Penn opened, Mom and Warren and I took Chop up to skyline drive. It was a beautiful clear summer day and you could look out over the City of Reading and see for miles.

Chop went to the wall and looked and looked and nobody said a word. Then Chop said, well, here comes the 3105 right on time. The 3105 was the number of a train coming through the railroad yard where he worked.

Chop was looking at the train from the top of the mountain. We all laughed and laughed.

We thought he would say something about the City and the countryside. Oh boy, Chop was the railroader. He takes out his pocketwatch and says, yep, 3105 is right on time.

Chop had a beautiful pocketwatch with a cover and as the second hand turned you could hear a slight beep, beep, beep.

The glass face of the watch was cut with facets, crystal cuts. It was made of heavy glass crystal. The watch was sent once a year to the office at 6th & Spring streets where it was calibrated for accuracy. Chop used it to run the trains on the railroad.

As I said before, Chop was a telegraph operator. He had a little station at 9th & pike. I used to take lunch out over the bridge and over the railroad tracks and visit Chop.

Chop was never too comfortable around children.

My Mom bought Chop a small parakeet and Chop enjoyed it very much. Chop would let the bird sit on his shoulder. This blue parakeet would sit on his shoulder while Chop would read the newspaper.

Chop would turn the page and sometimes the parakeet would turn around and face the other way.

After a few hours of sitting, the bird had yellow slim bird droppings on top of Chop's shirt, down the front and down the back of his shirt.

Chop said it never bothered him and I don't believe it did, but I'll say this, the bird droppings looked terrible.

I told you on the other tape that Chop passed away Christmas Eve.

Well , After the funeral at Sanders Funeral Home, the funeral procession left and went to the cemetery up Perkiomen Avenue, across the street from the Lutz funeral Home.

Chop was buried in that cemetery near Arners on the viaduct. as the pallbearers were lifting Chop out of the hearse, my Mom said, I think you have Chop's head and feet reversed. Oh no, Mrs. Rightmyer the funeral director said.

My Mom said, now look, I cannot have my father buried where his feet would be, Chop is going to be buried next to his mother.

My Mom said I can not have Chop buried with his feet up next to his mother's head. It would be like that for the rest of eternity.

My Mom said, I want the casket turned around. Oh no, Mrs. Rightmyer, oh no. My Mom said will you please open the casket.

Oh no, we cannot open the casket.

My Mom said please open the casket. So they got these little keys out and raised the lid a little bit and my Mom was right. They closed the lid, locked it, turned it around and now Chop is laid next to his mother and their heads are side by side.

This story is about the boys choir at Christ Church. One Friday afternoon Momo took me into Christ Church at 5th & court and I was going to audition for the boys choir.

This is where I met the 20 boys in the boys choir and Miss Evelyn Essick. She wore a large flowing cape like batman.

She wore a coal black dress, large cape, hat, and black shoes. I guess Miss Essick weighed 90 pounds.

The boys were sitting around the piano in this large church room. Miss Essick is in front of a grand piano. It must have been 20-25 feet long.

She sang the scale on the piano and turned to me. I was about 10-12 years old. I sang the scale too. Some of the boys in the choir snickered.

I asked if have to do this. So I went la, la, la la.

I'm nervous and I think I'm failing. I noticed that Momo glanced over at Miss Essick and their eyes made direct contact. Momo kind of winked.

Momo raised her head a little bit and Miss Essick said yes. She said, Charles, I'm sure, you would make a valuable contribution to our choir. I joined the choir as an alto, a boy alto.

In the choir we wore black robes which covered our arms, body, and down to our ankles. On top, we wore a white linen shroud that covered our arms and top half of our bodies.

A white stiff collar like Sir Walter Raleigh wore was around our necks.

At rehearsals, Miss Essick never sat. There was no piano stool
There was no piano bench.

Miss Essick stood in front of the piano with her one foot forward and the other one back

Miss Essick was quite a musician. She played with one hand and directed the choir with the other. She could direct and play the piano with either hand.

She always wore a large black hat. It looked like a big fluffy pancake on the side of her head. It really looked like a pancake.

The bottom of that big flufy hat came down to her chin and the top of the pancake hat stood up in the air above her head.

This is the way she stood and played the piano and directed the choir. Each boy had to look Miss Essick in the eye and I'm not exaggerating.

Each boy had direct eye contact with Miss Essick all the time.

The second your eyes drifted, she would crash on the piano keys and point to you, point to her face, demand your eye contact.

Sometimes she would slap her own face hard to get attention. They were some rehearsals.

One night a man and I from the choir had to go to Miss Essick 's studio to pick up some music. I couldn't believe my eyes.

In her studio around the four walls, built into the four walls was a large fish aquarium.

She had a fish aquarium on one wall, a fish aquarium on the other wall, a fish aquarium on all four walls. The tanks had underwater lighting which was blue/green.

All the other lights in the apartment were turned off.

I now realize that one of the reasons Momo wanted me to join the choir is discipline. Momo wanted to be sure that I knew about discipline and

listening and respecting others.

Listening when someone talks and doing what you are told to do.

Momo was smart, she knew what she was doing. I wasn't there to sing. It was nice to sing but it was secondary.

One of the boys lost eye contact, Miss Essick threatened to throw a vase full of flowers. She would walk around the piano and sock the boy on the arm, or push him hard on the side of the head

She would stamp her feet for eye contact. Oh my goodness, those were rehearsals.

I was paid to sing in the choir. I was paid \$4.00 to \$8.00 a month, 4 to 8 silver coins in a pay envelope, wasn't that nice.

Over the years, it was a tradition for the choir boys to carve their first and last in initials somewhere on this big grand piano in very small letters. There were hundreds of small initials all over and around the keyboard.

One night after practice, another boy and I had a key and you know that part of the piano that has a curve in it like a harp, we went over there and I carved in real big letters, "CHAS".

It was kind of away from where all the other initials, it really stood out. When Miss Essick saw this after rehearsal, she gave me a tongue lashing. She was furious.

After she hollered at me, that night, I came back with q-tips and a bottle of mercuriochrome that I bought and tried to match my carving into the stain of the wood.

On new Year's Eve, the boys choir sang at the midnight service at Christ Church. One feature of the singing was the Allelulia Chorus.

If you're familiar with the music, you'll know that there's 4 alleluia's in a row, then there's a long pause before the very last alleluia.

One of the boys in the choir did not have eye contact with Miss Essick as she's directing behind the organ curtain. He came in too soon and sings alle by himself.

Well, when we were back in the dressing room to take the gowns off, Miss Essick came crashing through the door, went over to this boy and socked him on his back because he wasn't watching her.

30 years later I met this boy at 5th & court. I said hi Albert and he said hi Charlie. I said how are you doing. He said, I'll never forget when I came in

wrong on the Alleluia Chorus. Wasn't that funny.

Here he is, I don't see him for 30 years and as soon as I see him on the street, the first thing he says he remembers, is coming in at the wrong time on the Alleluia Chorus.

Some of the boys in the choir took private singing lessons from Miss Essick. Naturally most of those boys sang the solos in the choir.

Many, years later I met one of the boys who was a soloist. I met him over at Sears. He had retired from the Marine Corp as an officier and was selling vacuum cleaners.

At least two-thirds of the choir boys sang soprano. The rest, including me, sang alto. I believe it was the only all boys choir in Reading and Berks county.

Young boys singing soprano is really very pretty. Especially when they sing high C's and E's.

One sunday, the boy who normally helped Miss Essick behind the curtains at the organ during church service, couldn't make it. They asked me to help Miss Essick .

I had never had any training, I had never seen the boy.

I had no idea what the job was. They asked me to do it, I said sure.

The job was getting the pages ready for the next hymn. Follow the church service, the prayers, and the bookmarks.

Opening the books and turning the pages, holding the hymnals open as Miss Essick played the organ.

While the Reverend was standing up on the podium giving his sermon, I'm getting the hymnals ready, the cards ready, the book markers.

As you might have guessed, one of the hymnals came crashing on the top of the organ, down on the third keyboard. Oh, it made awful loud noise in the church.

I looked over and the Reverend was up in the pulpit. He looked down his nose at me, made a face, turned and continued on with the service.

On special occasions the choir, instead of coming out the door and going right up into the chancel, would go completely down the side of the church, around the front and up the middle aisle up into the chancel.

The boy, who carried the large heavy gold cross on a long pole up in the air in front of the choir, wasn't there. They asked me if would carry the cross. I said sure.

We're standing in the middle of the room ready to come into the church. I had the cross in front of me and I knew the cue in the music when you start to move. I am three feet in front of the choir.

As we go to walk out, nobody told me the cross was up in the air higher than the top opening in the doorway. The cross went bang against the doorway . The bottom of the cross came back and hit me hard in the face.

I led the choir up and down the church aisles with tears coming down my cheeks.

The boys choir practiced on Friday from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. You took an hour to run up to the diner for hot dogs and came back at 7:00 p.m. Then the boys practiced with the men from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

I looked up to one of the men in the choir. He was my mentor, I wanted to be like him. Not so much because of his singing, but because of his manner and the way he handled himself.

He was an absolute gentleman. He was immaculate in appearance, the right clothes, the right colored clothes, he talked softly, wore a black camel hair coat, light gray velvet gloves He was what I called a gentleman.

Oh, I wanted to be like him.

He was always bowing to people, smiling. He had a handsome soft, pretty face. Years later, after I had been out of the choir, I saw this man and his wife at 5th & Walnut streets.

I was there waiting in the car for a red light, I saw this man crossing the street with his wife. He was holding a glove in one hand, and wearing the glove on the other hand.

His wife had her hand in his arm. It looked like they were walking down the aisle of a church, they were just crossing the street. Oh, I just worshipped this guy.

Wouldn't you know, many years later, at breakfast, Joan and I are at the stadium diner, and this man and his wife are there. I don't know if they came in or if they were already there.

I said to Joan, we have to talk to him and say hello. It was a little embarrassing to tell him how much I admired him.

I just couldn't believe that I'd meet this man 30-40 years later. It was just great.

There used to be a Coney Island hot dog diner next to the church. That's where the choir boys would go in and have supper.

The diner was a very busy place. The windows were always wet and steamy. There were no tables or booths just a long counter with stools.

The specialty was Coney Island hot dogs with barbecue sauce.

The council of Christ Church never liked the diner. Church council felt the diner was demeaning since it was so close to the church. That it spoiled the overall appearance and atmosphere of the church.

The council bought the diner, demolished it and replaced the diner with a garden and iron fence along Court street.

The boys were in the church from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Sometimes we played games. Sometimes we'd wrestle.

Sometimes somebody would get a tremendous long stepladder and set it up.

We could climb up into the steeple at Christ Church. The steeple was

probably about 80 feet high. How about that.

I mean you were really up in the bells. You could go up and your head would be inside a bell next to the clapper that rings the bell. It was dangerous, but, hey, we did it.

One Sunday I had the occasion to climb up into the steeple and watch the man play the carillon (bells). There were wooden handles, maybe 12-14 handles in a row with chains coming off the back.

He had little sheet music and he wears gloves. Oh I loved those gloves. They are gloves that you use in aerobics and by weight lifters. The fingers are cut out.

He plays the hymn, pushing the levers, ringing the clappers. The bells don't swing. Maybe there's 6 to 8 bells in different sizes. Just the clapper inside the bell goes back and forth and hits against the side.

That plays the song. When he's finished, he stands there, takes the gloves off and lays them on top of the handles, so they'll be there next Sunday. Oh I thought it was great.

Now when I go past Christ Church, I look at the steeple from outside in the street. I can still see the ladders and I can still see and hear the bells and clappers, beautiful memories.

I can still see Miss Essick, I can still hear the choir singing.

Chubb used to do one thing that I didn't think was right but I left him do it. Whenever we would connect piping for a gas stove, a gas range or a gas hot water heater, Chubb would check for leaks.

He would strike a match and hold the match around a threaded joint. He would move the match around the couplings to see if there was a gas leak.

I had always thought, gee if there's a leak and there's a match. I used to think maybe Chubb isn't doing this right.

He'll blow us up, but you know I used to go along with it. I'll always remember how scared I was checking for gas leaks with a lighted match.

Chubb knew a lot about automobiles. He had worked on stock cars, he had been a used car salesman.

One time I had a two door sedan, you don't see many of those anymore. We were going to give it a paint job.

We went to this little garage and because we were joking and feeling good, we took every can of paint that was in the garage, half full, almost empty, not quite full, and we just kept pouring all the different colors into one big can.

As we were pouring the colors in, the color mix kept changing to yellow, a green, a blue and then suddenly when we were just about pouring the last paint, it turned eggshell blue.

A beautiful eggshell blue.

We painted the car eggshell blue. Chubb had a paint brush and I had a paint brush. This wasn't a spray job. It was a paint job like you paint a house.

We laughed and laughed because when you stood 10 to 15 feet away to look at the car, it was a crazy color but the paint didn't look too bad.

When you went up close to the car, you could see thousands of brush marks, thousands of bristle marks where we painted the car

For some reason, Joan always thought this was very funny how we painted the car blue. When Joan sees a car when we're out driving, she says there's a car, eggshell blue, like you and Chubb painted.

Chubb was also a fisherman. I guess it was at Rehoboth, we went fishing on a bay, not in the ocean, but a big bay. The waves were rolling. I do not like water and boats. There is something about it, I just don't like.

Chubb wanted to go out on a rowboat in the bay. So, OK Chubb, I'll going along.

Because I don't like boats and water, Chubb had a long army surplus life preserver that looked like a 10 ft. long sausage.

I bent the preserver in half, wrapped it around under my arms and hooked both sides together in front on my chest.

I am sitting in the rowboat while Chubb is pulling on the oars and we are going around the bay.

Much to my surprise and dismay, the only thing you could catch in this bay were 6" and 8" long eels. There were hundreds of eels in this bay.

Not only would Chubb catch an eel, but the eel spins around and gets all tangled up in the fishing line.

Chubb pulls it into the rowboat. This eel is jumping around. Chubb uses his army bayonet to kill the eel, after missing 3 times to stab it.

He takes the line off. I'm sitting there watching. After a few hours on the bay, I'm still sitting there with the life preserver still around me.

A guy in a speedboat goes past. He circles around our rowboat and you hear his engine go putt, putt, putt, putt and his speedboat stops. You realize he is having engine trouble.

Guess what this guy does. He jumps out of the back of his speedboat, stands on the bottom of the bay. Puts his hands up on the back of the boat, starts walking on the bottom of the bay and pushes the motorboat into shore.

Here the bay is only 5-6 feet deep. I wore that crazy life preserver for hours for nothing. I took it of. I had a large sweat mark around the front and back of me. All for nothing. Oh Chubb.

At my Dad's viewing at Sanders near the 11th & pike playground, one of Aunt Kate's boys, a young man by the name of Bruce, was standing outside on the pavement.

When my Dad's viewing was over I happened to walk over to the window and looked outside and there was Bruce.

I went around to the door and I said, Bruce, aren't you coming in. He said, oh, I'm not dressed, I have on a sweatshirt and I just came from work. I don't think I'm dressed right.

I said, there is no one here, Bruce. He said do you think It's all right if I come in. I said sure, Bruce, come on in and say goodbye to my Dad.

Aunt Kate had another son. His name was Sherwood. Sherwood took care of himself and made a living selling soft pretzels.

Sherwood had a little red wagon with a big cardboard box in it. He would go to 9th or 10th street and buy soft pretzels, put them in this box and pull this wagon back to 11th & pike playground.

He would stay inside the playground and make the rounds selling soft pretzels.

Everybody bought soft pretzels from Sherwood because they were fresh, hot and I guess, cheap. I would say from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Sherwood had made the rounds.

Everybody liked Sherwood and talked with him as they sat on the benches in the playground.

Just a few months ago at the of 1996 or early 1997, I happened to be in the Wyomissing Library. as customary, I always look at the new books first.

Here was a book, the 50th anniversary of Wyomissing Polytec. Some of the men who graduated from the Polytec school had gotten together and published a 50th anniversary book.

I quick grabbed the book, knowing my Dad had gone to Polytec and looked in the index.

There was his name and I paged back and my gosh here was a picture of my Dad in the class of 1932 at Polytec.

He was so handsome. He was wearing a dark black sweater and had combed his hair to the side. I was so pleased and proud. I xeroxed a copy.

I told the librarian what had happened. How I got this picture of my Dad. Oh, she said isn't that funny. When that anniversary book came in the other day, I kind of glanced through it.

She said, I was wondering who would even bother to look at a book like that. .I thought that was so funny.

My home at 3050 Elm road is on a lot 100' by 100'. The lot, when I bought it, had been scooped out. All the topsoil was gone. It was a deep hole. 90% of the inside of the lot was scooped out.

I bought the lot from Fred Eisenbrown, the local well known tombstone, statue maker who lived up at the top of Elm road at the two brown marble columns.

Those two marble columns are from Fred Eisenbrown. They're from his tombstone business at 6th & Elm.

He did a tremendous amount of business with tombstones and statues at Charles Evans cemetery.

I would say 60% or 70% of the tombstones, the mausoleums, the statues of angles, of civil war veterans and statues of little babies, were bought from Eisenbrown.

Fred Eisenbrown said to me, "OK, kid, he said, I want \$1,500 for the lot." I said all right. I asked is it OK if give you \$50 a month. Sure, he said we will just shake hands on it.

So we shook hands and I started to give him \$50 a month .When the \$1,500 was paid, he gave me the deed.

It just so happens that the sewer lines were being installed in Muhlenberg Park. When that contractor was digging sewer lines down the street I knew he'd be looking for a place to dump the stone. I talked to him.

I said look, I said you got it made. I said you could take those stones and dump in in my lot because it is all scooped out. I said, just don't give me all stones.

I said for 2-3 truckloads of stone, give me a truckload of top soil of the good stuff. He said sure, kid. So I left for work and time passed. I received a phone call from a neighbor across the street from my lot, Mrs. Love.

Mrs. Love said, Charles you better come home because I think there is something wrong at your lot.

I came home. My lot was 4-5 feet higher than the crown of Elm road. I had to crawl on my hands and knees up the dirt pile to stand up on top.

Standing up on top of this dirt pile, I was higher than the roof of my car that was parked on Elm Rd in front of my lot.

The whole lot was piled high with free fill.

My Mom and Warren came out and I'll never forget the look on their faces as I stood up on top of this pile and looked down on them. They stood there on Elm Rd.

My Mom said Charles don't you think there is a little too much dirt here. I said, no Mom, I think It's just right. Here we are 30-40 years later and it is just right, just right.

I will never forget this story about building my house. At dfferent building shows I'd run into contractors. One day I talked to this contractor and he said, oh, you're going to build a house. Let me tell you something.

He said, I'll dig and put in the footing, I'll put up the cement block walls, I'll put up the first floor and I'll put the shell of the house up and I'll do it for this much money, what do you think of that.

I said, well , I just don't know, I really don't know.

Kid, he said, you're wasting my time. You don't know what the hell you're doing. I was just testing you. He said, he never would have done all that work for that amount of money.

He said I just wanted to see if you knew what you were doing. He said you don't know. You're wasting my time and he walked away. Wow, there was a lesson for that, he was right, he was right.

Now, when other important matters turn up, I do my homework, I make sure at least I think I know what I'm doing.

When I was building this house, before I got the basement floor in, I had a very bad water problem. When it would rain, the whole basement would fill up with water.

What I would do, I would have these wooden folding step ladders ,maybe three or four of them. I would stand them around in the water, maybe the water was 6-8 inches deep.

Then I would have these sump pumps and I would connect them in such a way to run the hoses out the basement windows to get the water out.

One day there was a real torrential downpour and the water was deep. It may have been 12-14 inches high.

I'm walking from ladder to ladder. I'm carrying the electrical cords from the sump pumps over my shoulder. Down the steps came the fire chief from Goodwill who I had called.

He looked over at me. I'm standing between two ladders. He said, kid ,don't move. He said, I think you're going to electrocute yourself.

I decided to build as much of the house as I could. The arrangements were with Pop Pop Henning, who had been in the roofing and siding business. He was the General contractor for the mortgage with Bank of Boyertown.

Any time I needed professional help, either Warren or Pop Pop Henning would do it, or I would get a professional and pay them to do it.

Pop Pop was legally responsible but I was running the show and trying to do as much of everything that I could.

When it came to ditch digging, I saved money by using a pick and shovel to dig the sewer trench from the house straight out to the curb.

It was during December, near Christmas time, and I would do this digging at night. I had a big flood light out front. I used a pick and shovel to dig the 10 feet deep trench down to where the sewer pipe was going to go out to the curb.

I remember just like it was yesterday. I was down in the trench hole and I looked up and I could see the steam coming off me in the cold because I was sweating.

The moon was up and the stars were out. I looked to the curb. I didn't use a chalk line or surveying equipment, I just eyeballed everything.

When I was 4 feet out from the house, instead of going straight, I was going on a diagonal from the house to the curb.

I had to start over. I had to line up and start digging to the curb. Just for an instant, I said to myself, what the hell am I doing. It was so hard.

After the shell of the house was up, I put in the hardwood floors and I ran the electrical around cold. Nothing was hot, all the outlet boxes and all the wiring were cold.

Joan and I wanted plaster walls. So, I put up plaster board and at the of the day, Warren and my Mom came out and they stood in the living room.

They saw the plaster board that I had put up, and my Mom said, Charles there is something wrong with your plaster board.

I was sitting on the floor really tired, sitting kind of indian style and I said, what do you mean something is wrong. She said you have bulges in the plaster board.

I sat on the floor and I looked. I had nailed the plaster board over top of the electrical outlet boxes.

I had gone right over top of them around the whole room. When you stood and looked around the room, the walls had bumps.

I never even saw the outlet boxes.

I went down over top of the electrical outlet boxes and covered them up.

Pop Pop Henning and I did the patio. All the cement work on the patio, the patio roof, no plans, no sketches. I would tell Pop Pop what I wanted and we just did it as we went along.

I always had a thing about porch steps moving away from a house. For some reason when I visit houses I look at their porch steps and see if the steps moved away from the house.

I said I don't want that to happen at my house.

When Pop Pop Henning and I put in the porch steps on the patio, we dug a hole. We first built a wooden form and hung it in the air. It was a floating form for the steps.

We attached wires to the front and sides of the doorway of the house to hold this wooden form in the air.

Down inside the form in the ground, we dug out a hole. When we poured the cement, the cement filled up that hole first, then the floating wooden form.

Those patio steps will never move because the cement in the steps is part of the cement in the patio. The steps going into the kitchen door don't have the

nicest appearance.

The rest of the patio floor is against the steps. The steps and the patio are all one piece of concrete.

I said to Pop Pop, you and I are not going to do the front steps. Because It's the front of the house, I want the front steps done by a professional, I want that done right.

I knew of a local contractor who had done hundreds of cement steps in the township .

I got him to do the front steps. As he was doing the steps, I said to him, now look, I am very much concerned and afraid that those steps are going to move away from the house.

Oh no, Charlie, we've done hundreds of steps.

We tie in those rods, those steel rods that you see in the highway. We tie them in. We punch holes in the block of the house and we tie the steps in.

Oh no, you don't have a thing to worry about.

Three years later. Go out my front door. Those front steps have moved away from the house. That was a professional first class job, yeah, and the back steps had not moved. It makes me sick.

Every now and then when we're out eating at a diner, I see this cement contractor. I'm ready to say to him and another thing, you did a damn poor job on my front steps.

I was tired from working on the house. I mean, I worked on the house every night after work and all day Saturday and Sunday. It took two years to finish the house.

I had a circular saw. I plugged it into the outlet. After I plugged it it, the saw started to spin. I had the saw on my lap and it was spinning inside the saw guard. The saw guard was protecting my whole stomach.

I just reached over and pulled the plug out and sat down. My head was pounding and my heart was pounding. I could just feel the vibrations of the

blade spinning through the blade guard and it was sitting on my stomach.

The gang down at Spring and Moss had nicknames.

One was Mort or he was called Moron. There was a young man who lived in the neighborhood, he wasn't part of the gang, but he always somehow would get in with us.

His nick name was Valentine.

Then there's a guy named Pappy. There was a much older guy, because he had a very bad acne condition over his shoulders and down his arms, we called him Pus, yes, you heard it, Pus.

Joe was in the gang. His claim to fame is the 3 chinning bars. These are metal bars. One is 10 ft. off the ground, the next one is 8 ft. high, the next one is 6 ft. high off the ground.

These chinning bars were located at the side of the school between the school building and the first row house on Moss street.

We used to think it was great fun to swing back and forth on these bars. If you were on the highest bar, you could swing up against the school building with your feet.

Stop and use your feet to hold yourself up in the air.

You were on the top bar holding on with your hands and feet. Then your feet could walk up the side of the school building on the bricks. You could hold yourself up in the air with your feet above your head and your hands holding on to the bar.

We wanted to see how far we could walk up the side of the school building.

It was Joe's turn. One day, Joe was up on the side of the building and he's really up pretty high. Suddenly he swings down. Both hands are always on the bar when you swing.

You just hold on and swing back and forth.

A couple of us could even swing back up on the side of the school building and start walking up the building again.

Most of us just swung back and forth until we stopped swinging and would drop off. Joe swings down and goes out in the air and lets go.

He did a back around somersault and crashed hard on the ground.
We ran over and asked what happened.

Well, Joe said he felt his hands slipping on the bar, so he left go. Think about that.

20 to 30 years later I'm in town at an outgrown shop on court street near the post office, here is Joe and his mother. I haven't seen Joe in many years. I said, hi Joe, how are you doing. He kind of mumbled.

His mother turned to me and said, you know, Joe just got divorced. I said no, I didn't know that. Yes, she said, Joe, was married and it made him nervous, so he got divorced.

Quite often the horse drawn ice cream wagon stopped at Spring street. It started out from the car barn and walked all the way in Moss street to Spring.

Usually halfway down the block one or two little kids jumped on the back of the wagon, lifted their feet and were hanging on the wagon for a free ride.

If someone in the neighborhood wanted ice cream, the wagon would stop at Spring street. We all would run over to the wagon.

The horse stops, some of the kids get ice cream and when the horse stopped, he proceeded to relieve himself in the middle of the street. Everybody would holler and point at the horse.

The people are still buying the ice cream. No one ever seemed to mind this sight. No one ever seemed to mind the smell. It was just a little party and good times.

The horse, relieving himself, became part of the fun and everybody pointed and talked about the horse.

This was funny. The horse proceeded across Spring street on his way.

Down at Spring & Moss we played tag and runny. We would run and jump and hide.

When we played runny the boundaries of the game were up to 6th street to the Guard House, up to Hampden Park up at the top of Spring street, out to the car barn.

As far as going in towards town, we only went to Windsor street. The boundary was all out in the northeast section.

Part of the game of runny was tag. I tag you, now you're it. You have to tag somebody else.

It was pretty simple, but quite often the game got a little complicated, because as we were running around the neighborhood chasing each other, someone would get the idea to kick over a garbage can that was standing on the curb.

Then someone else in the gang would kick over another garbage can.

After a while, one can, two cans, three cans, boy, you could hear the cans flying and crashing because there were eight of us.

Everybody is kicking garbage cans over. The adults in the neighborhood come out and they were cursing us. We keep running and kicking their cans over. That was the way we played runny.

Spring and Moss school was a large red brick building. Five feet up from the ground was a sloping ledge in the wall. The sloping ledge was on a 45 degree angle.

Above the ledge, the wall continued up to the first floor windows, continued up to the 2nd floor windows, then the 3rd floor windows and the 4th floor windows.

The entrance to the first floor was in the middle of the building.

The gang would stand at the side of the entrance, away from the building, run over towards the school, quickly put one foot up on the building and quickly put the other foot up on top of the sloping ledge.

We could almost run the entire length of the building on the ledge. We were running five feet up in the air on the side of the building.

Someone had the idea when the kid in front of you was halfway across, the next kid starts to run. So there would be two or three kids running in a straight line, one behind the other, on the ledge at the same time.

Most of the time you could run about half the length of the building, lose your balance and fall off. It hurt when you hit the ground.

We were usually outside for recess. Some of the classes were still inside. As we ran along the side of the building, the teachers inside could see our faces as we ran pass the windows. The teachers came outside and chased us away.

The rest of the brick wall on the first floor next to the windows went up to the second floor and so forth. There was a ledge all around the four sides of the school building.

The gang was always talking about how far they ran across the side of the building on top of the ledge.

In the basement of the school was the boys' lavatory. It was usually half lit by sunlight from a small outside window. It was clammy and wet.

There were no urinals. Instead there was one large stall made of coal black marble slabs. A marble slab on the right, one on the left and a marble slab in front.

On the front slab, about six feet above the floor, was a small opening where water would flow out to rinse down the wall where the boys had urinated.

As you might have guessed, three or four boys, would take turns and watch each other relieve ourselves.

The purpose of the game was to see if you could urinate up against the water flow coming in and stop the water flowing down the wall.

You would stand there and say, oh yeah, I have the water inlet stopped but someone else would say, no, you're too low. I would say, yes, and we would keep disagreeing with each other.

We had a little water battle with the water coming down the front wall. We took turns. Two or three boys fighting this water battle.

Sometimes there was another battle or challenge in the stall. We took turns placing our face and chin up near that little inlet to see if we could drink some of the water coming in without touching the slab with our lips or chin.

We thought if you could twist your head in such a way, you could get a drink of fresh clean water, and not have your lips touch the wall.

You would lean in and suck some of the water. Someone would holler, you're lips are touching the wall. No, no he's not touching it. Someone would say oh yes, and oh no he's not touching it. It's hard to believe.

But it seems when you're a little kid and nobody has any money, you kind of take the fun where you can.

We used to throw the footballs up over the school roof. We also played football in that little playground right behind the school. To go for a touchdown you would run down the dirt alley towards Robeson street.

You would run off the school property and run maybe 20 feet down the alley. The ball would have to go through the air over someone's yard or over a garage. The people didn't like this, the ball sailing over their property.

Gong the other way, the curb on Spring street was the goal line. You run over the curb and run out on Spring street between the moving cars. We would then throw the ball.

There were near misses with the cars blowing horns and braking. One day I'm in the middle of the street looking all around for the football and a car comes at me and stops. Who's driving the car.

My Mom. She stops, gets out, and waves me to her. I leave the game, walk and get in the car and we drive home. I had always told my Mom I never played in the street.

The whole side of Spring & Moss school on the first floor and second floors had big plate glass windows. We would play football there on the playground.

I would say in the course of a year we would break maybe two windows at most, throwing the football. We were so good at throwing the football.

A touchdown was when you threw the ball and hit the corner of the bricks of the building next to a window. That was kind of an another way of making a touchdown.

In the middle of the playground was a permanent pole. We bent that metal pole in half. You would think that pole would be in the way when two teams would play each other touch football.

Oh no, when you were the quarterback and you were running with the ball, you used the bent pole as an extra player on your team to give you interference. You would dodge behind the pole.

If you'r running out for a pass, you would run pass the pole and at the last minute, grab hold of the pole and swing around and use it as a pivot to catch the ball. Nothing ever stopped us. We had a lot of fun.

Remember I talked about the bully and the red belly. That guy, I don't think had a girl friend until he was about 50 years old.

He was engaged to be married at age 50. About three or four months after he was engaged, he dropped over dead from a heart attack. Oh that's sad, so sad.

As we became teenagers we all had bicycles. We would go to the bicycle shop and buy an extra long rod to raise the bicycle seat. It was a long steel rod.

You raised the seat until your toes barely touched the pedals. We had that rod as high as it could go.

There were 4 or 5 of us riding our our bikes. We would go down to the subway at Nichols and Spring street.

The goal was to see if you could ride up the subway and not stand up on the pedals. Keep sitting on the high seats and pedal.

This was way back when there were no gear shifts, there were no 10 speed bikes. These were just plain old bicycles that you pedaled hard with your legs, no gear shifts.

Halfway up the subway one or two of us would start dropping out. The rest of us are still pedaling and the wheels were turning. We're riding up the pavement.

Maybe one of us would reach the top. Then we would turn around and come down Spring street going as fast as we could, down under the subway into the dark. We would pedal back to Spring & Moss school.

There was another little caper we would do on the bicycles. We would wait at 9th & Spring street for the trolley cars that were going in 9th street to Penn street. We would wait there at the red light and the trolley was stopped.

Then when the traffic light turned green and the trolley would move, half the gang would be on one side of the trolley and the other half on the other side.

We would reach up and grab the wire grating that was over the window, usually the window was closed. We would grab on and have the trolley take us for a ride into Windsor street.

When we got to Windsor street, the trolley would stop again.

We would hang on or we would let go and ride a round in a little circle. When the trolley pulled away, we would ride over and grab on again.

Someone in the trolley would yell, look at those kids. The conductor would stop a little sooner than he normally would at the next intersection.

He would open the door, get out of the trolley. Well , we all had let go and went riding around in a circle behind the trolley.

The conductor would stand there and hollar you G-d kids, Now, you cut that out. You stop that. We were just circling our bikes. He gets back on the trolley and closes the door.

As the trolley pulls out, we leave our circle and swing over again and grab on. Most of the time we hung on all the way in to 9th & Penn St. When the trolley would turn to go down Penn street, we would all let go.

We would head back to Spring & Moss.

The gang at Spring & Moss would play in the alley behind 1018 Spring Street. There was a street light pole in the alley behind the house.

One of the games we loved to play was kick the can. We usually played this at night under a street light. There were 10 to 12 of us. Each one was given a number and we would do odds and evens or pitch a Penny.

Somebody got the job of throwing the can down the alley as far as he could and hollering a number.

If that was your number you raced down after the can while the rest of the gang ran and hid.

Pickup the can and run back backwards. Then go back to the street light and shout kitty, kitty can, kitty kitty can and everybody stops.

Look around and see who's hiding, who's stopped in their tracks. Put the can down and start to take steps over to the person who is nearest you or the person you think you can run faster and tag.

After two or three steps, everyone starts running. The game turns into tag. Tag a person and they have to go back to the can, sit on the ground next to the can.

Then chase someone else and tag them. They come back and sit next to the other guy sitting next to the can. Keep running around and tag others. After a while, half the gang is now sitting side by side on the ground next to the can.

Someone who was hiding or someone who is a faster runner than the guy who's tagging everyone, beats him back to the can and kicks the can down the alley.

Everyone who was sitting there will, because someone kicked the can, now are free to run and the game starts all over again.

Kick the can usually lasted an hour or two and was fun. Another game that didn't cost any money to play.

In the alley behind the school we used to love to play marbles.

The alley was a dirt alley. Running down both sides of the alley was the dish water and wash water from the backyard of the homes on 10th street.

The alley was very dirty, with black coal dirt, and a lot of soap detergent. We played with a little circle.

Put two marbles in a small circle, stand across the alley, take other marbles and toss one to knock a marble out of the circle.

Then you played. You wanted to keep your hands up out of the dirt. You put your left finger tips in the dirt and right hand on top.

You used your right hand and thumb to shoot your marble at the marbles in the circle.

Sometimes in order to have a better chance at hitting another marble, you took dirt and made a little mound.

You made a golf tee to sit an opponent's marble up in the air. I was average when it came to shooting marbles.

The Reading Eagle/Times is having the marble tournament at City Park. Because I was born in December, everyone else was too old and I was just under the age limit. I was oldest in the contest.

I went into City Park and they had large clay circles. Remember I said I was used to black coal dirt, wet with detergent, kind of crummy conditions. City Park had nice clean conditions.

They didn't play with a little circle. They played with a circle that must have been 5' in diameter.

They played where you stayed inside the circle all the time and knocking marbles out of the circle. This was just the opposite from the way I played.

I had little or no experience and was out of the tournament after the first round.

Remember the big school house with the brick ledge on a 45" angle, you take a tennis ball and run up close to the side of the school building ,throw that tennis ball, to hit the corner of the ledge.

It would either hit the slanting ledge or the ball would hit the corner of the ledge.

You always tried to hit the corner because the corner exerted extra pressure on a tennis ball to bounce the ball back over the guys who were standing in the outfield.

We were facing the building. Someone runs up and throws the ball against this ledge and the ball goes up in the air and you catch it, out.

If it hits the ground and takes one bounce that means an imaginary player is on first base.

If he takes it and throws it again and it takes a bounce, that means another imaginary player on first and second.

I don't quite remember. We had rules, depending on where the ball hit and depending on how many times it bounced, it was a hit, double, triple.

A home run was when the ball would hit this brick ledge, go back in the air and over everybody's head in the alley and over the black iron fence into the yard behind them.

Just like in baseball today, when somebody hits a home run. One of the guys who was playing the outfield would reach back over the iron fence into the yard and catch the ball.

Like they do today when they reach back over the fence in pro baseball.

One of the guys jumps back to catch the ball and lands on the iron points of the fence. Each point was in the shape of a flower.

When he came down, the points stabbed him up under the arm pit. It was just enough to hold him up on his tiptoes.

He's not quite hanging in the air. The blood is starting to trickle down his side

When we try to lift him up off the points, he hollers, oh, oh that hurts. We were afraid to lift him up. We turned to the people walking past and said we needed help.

The people said oh you wise guys are pulling tricks and pulling dumb stuff and causing trouble. We don't believe you. This is just one of your shenanigans.

So finally we talked some people into coming over to help us and then 3 to 4 of us lifted the guy up and pushed and shoved around and got the points out of his side.

We took him to the doctor, it wasn't really serious. But at the time, it was something to worry about.

Every now and then, the gang we would go into the public library at Spring and Moss street. The library had a dumbwaiter to take the books up and down between first and second floor.

The first floor was the adult area. The second floor for children.

I don't know where the inside steps were. They had a dumbwaiter on ropes. Pull the ropes and the dumbwaiter would raise and lower the books between the first and second floor.

When the librarian was busy or away from the desk, we would go over to the dumbwaiter and either pull the little elevator all the way up or we would look down the shaft.

Someone would take a library book off the shelf, and proceed to tear the pages out.

We would watch the papers float down the shaft. That's what we used to do every now and then. It was something to do.

At Spring & Moss grade school they had different substitute teachers. Miss, I forget her name, was for penmanship. She would come once a week and we would all do the penmanship exercises.

Then another week, a teacher would come in with a pitch pipe and we would sing songs. In fifth and sixth grade, we loved to sing and we loved to harmonize.

Some of us sang melody and some of us were altos. This love of singing was way before I ever went to Christ Church.

We would get so carried away with the singing that we would turn into the aisle between the desks and put our heads together to harmonize better.

It was more fun to sing like that because you were close to each other and you could hear each other sing.

The full time teacher thought this was great. She loved when we sang and harmonized and got the pitch from her pitch pipe.

When she was absent, the substitute music teacher would come in and asked, what are you boys doing. just what do you think you are doing.

Why, who would ever allow you to do that, stop that harmonizing and sit back in your desks. She took all the fun out of singing.

Mr Snyder let me use his barn across the street. for my horse, free.

I bought the hay and the straw, took care of it and cleaned it. There was a little corral in front of the barn. After I had the horse about a year, I thought the horse understood me and I understood the horse.

When it came to putting the horse back in the barn, I thought it was no longer necessary to lead that horse back through the corral into the barn.

One day I was standing outside the corral gates, the saddle is off, all the gear is off, except for the harness, I hit the horse on the butt, but I didn't lead the horse in. That horse took one step, turned and ran away.

My heart started thumping. I chased the horse down near Hain Avenue and lost him.

I walked back home. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to call the Police, I didn't want to call the Humane society. I just waited and waited. Hours later I was outside. Two little boys asked me if I was looking for my cow.

My horse was laying over in the field, legs up in the air as he scratched his back.

Weeks later I'm riding that horse along a ridge and every other step feels like the horse is stepping in a hole. It was 5:00 or 6:00 in the afternoon.

I looked and there's the shadow of me on the horse. My shadow is on the side of a small hill. The horse is only running on three legs. One hind leg is pulled up.

The vet came and there was something about the way he handled himself with the horse. I asked what's wrong. He said I'm not quite sure. He said I'll tell you. I've never worked on a horse before.

He said he worked on dogs and cats and birds but this was his first time on a horse. I could tell the vet was scared of the horse. The horse knew he was scared. The vet said sell the horse

After all the work, time and effort, I really wasn't having that much fun. I was a little tired of it. It was a lot of work. It seemed for every hour that I rode the horse, I had three hours of work cleaning the stall.

I rented a horse van and driver. I was going to take the horse to the auction at Green Dragon. The driver came with the van.

I could not get my horse to walk up the plank into the horse van. The horse just didn't move. I pulled and pulled and he wouldn't move. I played around with the horse trying to get him into the van for at least an hour.

A car pulled up. It was the owner I rented the van from. He was mad. He said this is taking too long, what's the trouble. I said I can't get the horse to go up into the van.

The owner went over behind my horse, put his head and shoulders up under the rear of the horse's hind legs and picked the horse up on his shoulders. He carried the rear of the horse up the plank and shoved the horse into the truck.

Never in my wildest dreams, did I think you could put your head and shoulders up between the hind legs of a horse, carry him and push the horse like he was a wheel barrow.

It took so long to load the horse. On the way to Green Dragon, I looked back into the truck and could not see the horse. The horse was lying collapsed on the floor tangled in the ropes. We were hurrying, we were late.

The rope that was supposed to keep the horse in place was tangled around his neck and his head. We pulled alongside the road.

I untangled the horse's head, harness and ropes. It took at least three-quarters of an hour.

It's very late when we get to Green Dragon. We arrived in the last half hour of the auction. When I get there, no one is in charge anymore. Everything seems to be closed.

It seems in the last hour no one in charge is around. I see all the horses going through a gate into a building. I go into the building.

Now I'm inside this ring with twelve Amish boys running around in a large circle in between two horses, one horse in each hand. I'm on the end of the line. Everybody is running pretty fast.

Since I came in last, I'm in front of the first Amish boy with his 2 horses.

Everybody is running, while the perspective buyers are looking the horses over. Everybody starts to laugh because it's obvious from the look on my face, that I'm scared, that the Amish boys' big horses might run over me.

I run around and around and the auctioneer is yelling, kid, kid, get out of there. He waves his hand and I run my horse out the side door. Outside somebody gives me \$50.00 cash. Don't ever own a horse. Don't ever own a horse.

A few years later I talk to four cowboys in a diner, who were transporting horses in a large van. I told them how my horse had been lifted up and pushed like a wheel barrow.

I asked was this a common practice. They said hell no. They never heard of such a thing in all their years of working with horses.

Remember I said, the farmer let me use his barn. He used to take me over to Laurel Run creek. He'd say OK, Charlie, look down at the creek.

What do you see? I'd look and say, I don't see anything but water.

He said, right. That's a dead creek. You don't see any snakes. You don't see any minnows. You don't see any fish. You don't see any little animal tracks along the bank of the stream. That's a dead stream.

I asked why is that. From that chemical plant upstream. He said up there, someplace, there's a chemical plant. That's why this water in Laurel Run creek is a dead creek.

He told me about his little dog. He had a little mutt. Kind of a mixed breed. He said, he's a good dog for catching ground hogs. He said ground hogs are good eating. I said, yuck and he said come on, come on.

He said, but every now, and then, the dog picks on a ground hog that beats him up.

Sometime later this poor man was in a trench digging a ditch. The sides of the dirt wall caved in and pinned his legs up to waist. He couldn't get out.

Everybody was trying to dig him out and he was talking to them while they were digging. Everybody thought since he is talking to the guys then he must be OK.

Winni died of internal injuries from the weight and the force of the trench pushing against him from the waist down.

I played saxophone in the concert band at Kutztown College and I was in the orchestra and marching band. I commuted every morning with a friend who owned a car.

I would hitch hike home after afternoon classes. The sax was heavy and hard to lug around.

One day, pictures were being taken of the band and orchestra. I forgot to take my sax to school. I asked to borrow a trumpet and if I could have my picture taken with the trumpet section of the band.

I asked to borrow a violin and have my picture taken in the violin section of the orchestra. The professor of music said “no.” He said what am I going to do with you.

Hey, I didn't have my saxophone. It seemed like a good idea to me. It made sense to me.

One evening, after band practice, a friend of mine and I were waiting for a ride home. We were waiting to go home with the music professor. The same professor who had given me the devil a few weeks before about the photographs.

We were waiting in Schaeffer auditorium. My friend was sitting at the piano in the orchestra pit in front of the auditorium, just playing some chords, nothing fancy. I was standing in the main aisle at the extreme rear of the auditorium.

I noticed there was a long pole. It must have been at least 20 feet. It was a long pole with a brass hook used to open and pull down the second story windows in the auditorium.

I took this pole, put it out in front of me. I put one under my arm and the with the brass hook out in front of me. I stood at the top of the main aisle.

I hollered to my friend, charge, I started to gallop down the aisle like I was a medieval knight on a horse with a lance out front.

My friend who was sitting at the piano, looked up and saw me galloping down. He stopped playing, reached over for his large briefcase and turned. He put the briefcase over his arm like it was a shield.

He got up from the piano. He hollered charge.

Now he was galloping up the same aisle.

I was galloping down the aisle with the long lance and he's galloping up the aisle with a shield. Just about in the middle of the aisle I jabbed into his shield and much to our surprise, we hit hard.

That long pole, about 3' from the where the brass hook was, splintered and broke. It really made a noise. We took the two pieces of the pole and jammed the splintered s together.

I just stood the pole up against the wall like nothing happened.

In the mean time the music professor who was in the next room, hollered out, what was that. What was what, we said we didn't hear anything.

The professor came into the auditorium and said to us, what was that, what was that noise, what happened.

He turned towards the pole leaning in the corner. He said, were you guys messing with, he went to reach for the pole I hollered, don't, don't touch it.

It was too late, he grabbed the pole. When he grabbed it, the top with the brass hook, the pole splintered again. The top half with the brass hook came down and landed on top of the professor's head.

The professor hollered ouch and said, God Damn you guys.

About a half hour later this professor was driving my friend and me back to Reading. The professor in the front seat. My friend and I were in the back seat.

All the way down to Reading, it seemed that no matter what the professor said, my friend and I were in hysterics. We just laughed and laughed. Tears came down our eyes. We thought this was so funny.

This music professor passed away on August 14, 1998. He was the one who looked for a clarinet for me at Northeast Junior High and said there only was an oboe. He was a nice guy, a good guy.

I wanted to take advanced Spanish at Kutztown. Because so few students were taking Spanish, the classes were small. I had to take Spanish 1, 2, 3 and 4 out of sequence.

I explained to the professor who taught all four classes, that you couldn't take Spanish 3 ahead of 2. You couldn't take Spanish 4 ahead of Spanish 2.

She said don't you worry about a thing. She said I'm sure it will all work out. I would go to Spanish classes and half the time I didn't know what was going on. I just used to sit and listen.

Remember this friend where we were galloping up and down the main aisle. We were both in the Kutztown marching band and there was an away game. My friend was driving.

He had a car, so I went with him. We both were wearing our marching band uniforms. We couldn't find the other football field where the game was.

We were driving around the countryside and stopped at a farm where they were making cider.

We talked to the farmer and tried to get directions. One thing led to another and we walked to his barn. We had a couple paper cups full of cider.

We talked some more and watched the farmer run the cider press. Had some more cups of cider and looked at the horses he brought in. We had some more cider. All the cider was free.

Time passed. We never left the farm. We never went to the football game. We laughed and giggled and drove home.

The Dean of men was a scholar who spoke with a broad British accent. It sounded like he was always at Harvard or Oxford. As needed, he would substitute in many of my classes.

If they needed a substitute in math he would substitute. if they needed a substitute in history, he would substitute. if they needed a substitute in social studies, he would substitute.

I thought this man must be well rounded and well versed in order to substitute in all these different subjects.

No, No, the way it turned out, no matter what the class was, and he was a substitute, he always did the same thing.

That is, he always talked about Julius Caesar, Mark Anthony and the Roman Empire. It didn't matter what class he substituted for, all he talked about was Caesar, Anthony and the Roman Empire. What a fooler he was.

At Kutztown, in order to make sure you had an all around education, you had to take music appreciation. You had to take art appreciation and library science.

You had to take a course on the history of civilization.

Of all those courses, much to my surprise, the one I liked best and the one I'll always remember was the course on art appreciation.

The professor was a tall leggy gentleman, 6'2" 130 lbs. He was very dynamic and very forceful when he talked about art. He talked about colors, texture, shadows. I liked him.

He would always put his right leg up on top of the desk. He kind of stood on one leg while the other leg was up on top of the desk. He leaned on his knee with his elbow. I enjoyed that.

Many years later I'm parking the car on the lot at Berkshire mall. I see the art professor walking up the pavement next to Sears.

I walked over, introduced myself, and told him how much I enjoyed his art course.

He was kind of surprised. I said, oh yes. I said, I'm so glad I got to see you, again. He was flattered , felt good,smiled. He didn't remember me.

A few weeks later, I read in the obituaries, the death of the art professor.

One of the professors looked like Elmer Fudd wearing black shell rim glasses. He taught the history of civilization, politics and government.

He said he had been on the staff of General Eisenhower in Europe after World War II. That he took an active part on Eisenhower's staff dealing with the Russian High Command in Berlin, Germany.

He said he personally met Joseph Stalin. I knew he had no reason to lie. He seemed sincere and seemed to know what he was talking about.

After he said he met Joseph Stalin, from then on in class, he always referred to Stalin as Uncle Joe.

One day the boys at the College were stopped from going to the locker room before gym class. They were told to go right into the gym.

All the boys were lined up in a straight line. It was announced that some of the boys at the College had a case of crabs, that's like a venereal disease.

The boys in the class lined up in a row. A doctor came wearing a white coat and laser 3d glasses. He also wore big yellow rubber gloves.

He made each boy drop his pants and their undershorts. He touched our private parts and was looking to see any signs of crabs. I'll tell you, it was humiliating.

You felt like a jerk, just like a fool.

I was a Kutztown student in my freshman year about 1948-1949. After I had a course on how to be a teacher and saw how poor the salary was back in those days, I transferred to Penn State.

I told the professors at Kutztown ,I said, my goodness, I made more money this past summer as a riveter at Parish Pressed Steel company than a teacher earns all year.

I transferred in my sophomore year and enrolled at Penn State. I thought I'd take a course where the money was, accounting.

I would like to talk about Mom down home. This was my Dad's mother. Her name was Mary, everyone called her Mom.

Mom down home loved the name, Charles. My Dad's name was Charles. The man she married the second time was named Charles. It seemed that everyone, all the boys and men were named Charles.

As a result, down home would say here comes Big Charles when my Dad entered the room. When I came through the door they would say, here comes Little Charles. It was kind of cute and kind of fun the way things were.

Part of the confusion of talking about down home is, Charlie Printz had his first saloon and barroom at 9th & Robeson. Then he moved to another barroom at Moss and Robeson, and moved back again to the barroom at 9th & Robeson.

One day when I went to visit down home at Moss and Robeson, I couldn't believe my eyes. There was gray duct tape all over the windows, around the window frames, around the cracks in the window frames.

There was duct tape all around the door frames.

All first floor windows and doors and all second floor windows and doors were taped closed. There were big ugly yellow signs posted which had little skull and cross bones.

I read the signs and I was surprised. The signs said, danger, this building is being fumigated.

No body gave any warning. I didn't know what happened. I just was surprised to see this, it was kind of eerie and ugly.

In this same building, I don't remember if it was before or after the fumigation, I really don't remember.

One night, Mom down home(MARY) got up, after midnight, walked over to the kids bedrooms.

She made sure the kids were asleep and covered up. Mom went back to her bed, laid down and died in her sleep. Oh my, oh, my how I loved Mom down home.

I'm coming to a part of my life, fairly recent when I was at AT & T. One day, the boss came in and said, men there's a New York telephone strike and we are going to need volunteers to go. I said, I'll go.

My boss said, now wait, Charlie, you don't even know what's It's about. Just give me a chance to explain it.

On a friend day night, 40 of us would go into the Abraham Lincoln Hotel lobby. We had a chartered bus to go to NY City. We'd leave about 8:00 p.m..

All expenses were paid. For the most part we got time and a half and double time for working in NY City.

We stayed in the Lexington Hotel, which is behind the Waldorf Astoria at 43rd & Lexington. AT & T gave us vouchers for expenses.

The vouchers were to cover expenses for room and board, our meals, laundry and tailoring, and other expenses while living in NY City.

We soon found out, that it didn't matter how much money you spent, you were only going to be reimbursed, for \$20.00 per day.

It didn't matter if you spent more or less. The company was going to pay you \$20.00 per day.

Each one of the men made up phony expense vouchers and made every voucher total one penny less than \$20.00. Since \$20.00 was the limit, it wasn't necessary to keep a record of your expenses.

You made up a voucher at the of the week and made sure that it was a penny less than \$20.00 for each day. I thought that was cute.

In NY City, after work at the phone company, I did not venture more than a half block from the Hotel. In the Hotel, I saw men having fights in the revolving doors..

One man's coming in and one man's going out. They can't get together on the push and the pull.

So they push and pull until one throws the other guy out of the door on his knees onto the pavement.

Standing in front of the Hotel, I see three women, who obviously were prostitutes, kicking and socking another prostitute who was down on the pavement. You noticed three or four prostitutes coming across the street. .

You assumed that those prostitutes were coming over to help the one who was getting beat up. No, those three or four prostitutes came over and joined in kicking and socking the prostitute who was down on her hands and knees.

There was a game being played every night in the hotel lobby. A prostitute walks in the front door of the lobby. The night manager runs from around the counter and says, now you get out of here, get out of here.

He walks over and chases her out the side door. While the manager is going over to the side door chasing out the prostitute, five or six prostitutes come in the front door and hurry to the elevators to go up.

The night manager walks back. I'm in the lobby. He says to me, isn't it something. One acts as a decoy and I act like I'm chasing her out, knowing that the others are coming in. He said we play the game every night.

It was hard physical labor working at the telephone company. Most of the time I was pulling very thick, heavy copper cables off six feet diameter spools.

Quite often the spools were hanging on racks on the ceiling. There were miles and miles of these cables. We physically pulled them through the ceiling racks, pulled them up, pulled them down.

I finished work about 8 in the evening. I got back to the Hotel about 9:00 p.m. I'd go through the door, lay on the bed, and fall asleep, dirty clothes and all .

I was asleep and almost unconscious until 11:00 p.m. I would get up, wash and shave, go downstairs around the corner and have my supper around 11:30-11:45 p.m. I usually went to a place called Tad's for a baked potato, steak and a salad.

I ate there and finished around midnight. That was the daily routine.

Sometimes about 10:00 p.m. in the restaurant there is standing room only. The maitre'd won't seat me because I'm alone. Party of two, you go in, party of three, you go in.

I'm a party of one. 20 to 25 minutes go by and he just ignores me. I would turn to another man, who was alone. The maitre'd would say, knowing I was alone, he would again ask, are you with someone. I said ,yes, I'm with him.

I would go in with a perfect stranger and we'd sit at a table. The stranger would read his newspaper and I'd eat. Not a word was said.

It's midnight, I go back to the hotel. In the lobby is a drug store. I sit at the counter and have coffee. I get to know the night druggist.

As you can imagine, after midnight you get the crazies, the weirdoes, the hobos, the homeless, the drunks, the wild people, the after midnight crowd

Some have money, some don't Everybody looks at everybody, nobody says anything. A little scary.

I worked in the phone company located at Forest Hills, NY, where they play professional tennis tournaments. Looking out the second or third floor window, I can see the tennis courts and empty stadium seats.

In the morning we would leave the hotel and go to work on the subway. About 20 minutes later we'd get to Forest Hills. Usually there were four pickets on strike outside walking around in a circle with placards.

Parked right at the curb was the Police car with two Policemen. The four pickets would walk around in a circle and the two Policemen would be leaning against the Police car.

Sometimes the cops would talk to each other, sometimes they would talk to the pickets.

The six men from Reading wait to go into the phone company to work. We don't cross the picket line.

Instead while the pickets are walking, we cross the street to the diner. Have coffee and toast and talk. At 8:20 a.m. the union no longer pays the pickets. The pickets only get paid 20 minutes from the union treasury.

They leave, the cop car leaves and the guys from Reading pay for their breakfast and walk back across the street. That way we didn't have to cross a picket line.

Once when I was in the diner I said to one of the cashiers working there. I don't understand all these TV cameras in the diner. The cashier said what do you mean.

The people, after they eat, steal the knives, forks and spoons. When we stop them, they are loaded down with all the silverware and dirty dishes. I said, oh boy, oh boy.

One evening, in NY, I heard about Jack Dempsey's restaurant. The well known prize fighter. The restaurant had a good reputation.

I was terribly disappointed. The service was poor, the place was empty. I was the only person there at 8:00 p.m. and the steak was cold. As I leave the restaurant there was a lot of noise outside.

There must have been 200 jews outside on the pavement. They are the hassidic jews with the black hats, black overcoats and black curls down the sides of their face.

They were demonstrating across the street from Dempsey's restaurant. They were demonstrating against a movie that was showing Fiddler On The Roof.

Hundreds of jews were dancing in a circle, holding hands in a human chain. one or two were playing violins and singing.

50-60 NY Policemen were in beautiful blue wool suits, with gold buttons down the front and double breasted suits, visor caps and white gloves.

The Policemen are holding hands too. The Policemen are making a human chain and are moving against these young jews. The Policemen push the crowd back. The crowd yells and push the Policemen back.

The crowd is pushed back towards me as I stand across the street. The human chains are swinging closer to me and then swinging away from me.

At one time, a Policeman who was holding hands, was pushed over to me. I could hear the cops talking. One cop said to the other, are you going bowling tonight.

The other cop said, yes I think so. The wife said I could go. Yes, I'll be there.

As far as the NY Police were concerned, this was just a routine tour of duty, a routine job. It was just another day on the Police force.

One night I had some extra energy, so I thought I would go see Johnny Carson. I waited in line.

When the crowd went through the door, for some reason, when we went inside this building where the TV show was, I got separated from the group of people that I went in the door with. I was alone.

When I looked there was nobody around. I thought I heard someone say they were heading for an elevator. I look and I see an elevator. It's a freight elevator.

I press the button. The door opens. As I step in, the door closes, I'm in with four black gentlemen in tuxedos.

The little guy in the front is Sammy Davis, Jr. I said, good evening. He said, good evening. He said, oh, these are my uncles.

It turns out that night, Johnny Carson wasn't going to be there. Sammy Davis, Jr. was substituting for Johnny Carson. I finally returned to my group and sat down in the audience.

What I remember from that show is, it was unrehearsed.

As Sammy Davis, Jr. is dancing around, tap dancing and singing, and swinging around, joking and talking, the TV cameraman had a devil of a time keeping him in focus and keeping the microphone steady.

Sammy Davis kept moving. That was fun to watch Sammy Davis, Jr. in action and the camera man trying to keep up with him.

I had been working in New York, at the beginning of December, it was near Christmas. One night, I had some extra energy so I walked into Macy's department store.

I headed for the men's department, it was on the third or fourth floor. I asked a man who works there. I asked what is the commotion over there at the neckties, why is the crowd over there.

He said, don't you recognize that man. I said, no, I said, I can hardly even see him.

He said, that's Mohammed Ali. Oh, I said all right. There were young people there and a couple of adults getting his autograph.

I said to myself, let's not make a fool of yourself. Let's just let the guy alone. Everybody is there, he doesn't need me there.

I look over and the crowd is gone. Mohammed Ali is standing there in front of the neckties.

I don't know, I just walked over, went up to him and I said, hi and he said hi. I said, you know something and he said what. I said, you don't look so tough.

He smiled and he said, well I'm not so tough.

I had the newspaper with me.

I said, do you mind giving me your autograph. He said, sure. He signs the top of my newspaper. Oh my goodness.

I still have that newspaper in my rec room.

The Hotel Lexington was directly behind and across the street from the Waldorf Astoria.

It was fun to see the big limousines pull up and then pull away and everybody all dressed up in fancy clothes.

Many times the bus boys and waiters would come out the back door of the Waldorf and come into the Hotel Lexington or the drug store for something.

I smiled because these waiters and bus boys dressed like they were captains on the love boat. Oh, the uniforms and gold buttons. They always had their hair combed.

I said to the one waiter, oneday, I said, hey, are things expensive at the Waldorf.

He said expensive, listen if you call up for room service and order a cup of coffee and I bring it up to your room, he said, that's \$6.50. I said, sounds expensive to me.

I don't know if I was going to the phone company to work or coming home, I'm waiting there on the platform in the subway. The subway car slowly pulls out.

A woman runs over on the platform, reaches in the subway window and grabs the wig of a woman sitting inside the car.

The subway car leaves. The woman sitting inside hollers. The woman who has her wig, turns and runs back through the crowd with the wig.

In New York, I used to spend a lot of time with Ed who was from Reading. Wherever you went in New York, there was always a crowd of people especially at these deli's.

Ed and I developed a routine.

When we go into a deli and get close to the glass case where the lunch meat and food is displayed, Ed would grunt and say rah, rah, and I would grunt and say uh, uh.

We would point to the food and grunt to each other.

You would be surprised how the crowd kind of steps back and gives you lots of room.

Ed and I were acting crazy. Just acting nuts for fun.

Years later, when I see Ed at the Berkshire Mall, we'll make these sounds to each other, just like old times. People thought we were crazies and I guess at the time, we were.

I went to Northeast Junior High school. How I loved the clarinet, Woody Herman, Benny Goodman. We didn't have any money to buy one so I went to the music teacher at Northeast.

He said I could take free lessons on the clarinet. The instrument was provided free by the school.

The teacher said well , Charles, let's go to the closet and see what we have.

He knew what they had. We opened his little closet door and the closet was empty. onesmall case was there. Gee what's that? He opens it up and I looked. The teacher said, well , it looks like a clarinet.

I said, well , that's not a clarinet.

He said, no it's an oboe. I took lessons and learned to play the oboe. After three years of playing the oboe, I won the music award for the most improved senior in music at Northeast Junior High.

In high school, I took lessons from a woman named Loose from Leesport.

I never liked that her reed/mouth piece was always smeared with red lipstick.

Many years later, I took piano lessons from Helga Stewart and Tommy Fessler. I took alto sax lessons from Sam CorrenttI at Zeswitz. I took oboe lessons from Jan Garber at Wittichs.

I learned to play the electric bass guitar, solid body and hollow body guitarar from Les Price and Ken Rohrbach.

When I think of all the time, money and energy I spent on music and I'm not a natural musician like I want to be. To this day, I cannot play a song without the written music and I never understood the music circle of 5th 'S.

The Phys. Ed. teacher at Northeast was a very straight laced gentleman. One time, the gym class was on the playground in front of the school building at 12th street & Marion.

One boy was misbehaving, wouldn't listen and was acting dumb. The Phys. Ed. instructor went to grab the kid and hold him hard by the arm. The kid ran and my gosh, this instructor ran after him.

They ran across the playground down the bank, down the pavement to 12th & Marion. Then the kid ran across the street. The Phys. Ed. instructor would not leave the school property.

He shook his fist at the kid, I don't know what he said. He walked back up the bank and back to the class.

The class had been standing there watching this going on. The Phys. Ed. instructor turned to my gym class and said, and I'll bet you, that kid is a cigarette smoker too.

My 8th grade homeroom teacher was in charge of the school bond drive for U.s. savings stamps and bonds. She was the coordinator and collected the monies, kept the records, sent in the monies.

In the front of my classroom on the blackboard, she had the names of the students in her homeroom.

Angstadt, I was first, then Baker and the rest down the line. Every week if you bought a 10 cent stamp, a US savings stamp for the war effort, she would paste a gold star next to your name.

She did this for week one, week two, week three, week four, etc. After a while most of the students in the class had gold stars up there, but I didn't.

I did not have 10 cents a week to buy a gold star. One day the teacher turned to me. We were in class but she turned to me and started talking to me.

She said, Charles, I find it hard to believe that you and your parents cannot afford an occasional 10 cent stamp to help our country in its time of need.

I said, yep, we don't have the money. My Mom said to tell you we don't have the money. I smiled. She was taken back, I thought, lady, you're not going to embarrass me.

The boys took electric shop at Northeast and it was usually a 2 hour period. The regular classes were about 1 hour but electric shop and metal shop were 2 hour periods.

In the first hour, the electrical instructor would build a little electrical armature.

He would start from scratch, do the wiring, pull the insulation off, the wire, and put it all together.

He would turn to the class and say, this is what I want you boys to make in the next period. He would turn and throw the armature he made into the waste basket and leave the room.

After the instructor left, the boys in the front row dove for the waste basket. Sitting in alphabetical order, I was close to the waste basket, and usually grabbed the armature. I had the armature the instructor just made.

The next hour the boys had to start from scratch and make their own armature. I didn't have to because I had the one the instructor made.

When the second class period was over, the class attached their name tag to their armature and hand it in to the instructor.

The next week you had the double period again. The instructor would grade your work. The boys would all smile because they knew who had handed in the instructor's armature. He would hold it up with my name tag.

He would say, well , Charles this armature Isn't too bad. It could be better. This is what's wrong and I can't give you an "A". You'll have to do a better job.

Here the instructor is evaluating his own armature and saying how poor it was.

In the last half of the year after electrical shop, we had sheet metal shop. The teacher's claim to fame was he could write on the black board with his left hand and his right hand at the same time.

He could write with two hands at the same time with his right and left hands going in dfferent directions.

One day we were sitting in rows of benches in metal shop. There were boys in the front row and the boys in the second row. The instructor turns and says to one boy, he says, you, don't move.

Again he said to the boy, you, don't you move. He told the rest of the class to turn around slowly and take a look at the boy.

It just so happens, this boy had large protruding ears and the sunshine was coming through the window, shining on the back of the boy's ears.

You could see all the little veins and the big veins shining in the boy's ears. The metal instructor said, isn't that a beautiful sight to see.

One summer vacation while going to Penn State, I went to work on third shift at the Parish. The first night I went to work I heard the noises, the smell, the lights and the banging.

I never had been exposed to anything like this big factory and assembly line work.

The foreman said, here kid, these are for you.

He gave me a big pair of iron worker gloves. I thought, well, I can take care of anything with these gloves on.

No, he said here, give them back. He took one glove and went over to a metal bin.

Took his hammer, laid the thumb finger of the glove on the sharp edge of a table.

With a hammer cut off the thumb finger of the glove, cut off the pointer finger, cut off the middle index finger.

Did the same thing to the other glove.

I was wearing these big iron worker gloves with three fingers cut out. What a disappointment that was.

I went to work at night at 11:00 o'clock. At night. After working all night, until seven the next morning, I would go meet Joan. We would go swimming and we'd play volleyball.

At 5 o'clock I'd head for home, changed into work clothes and 10:00 PM I could hardly see straight. Without any sleep, I'm going back to the Parish to work.

Some nights at 2:00 in the morning when the horn at the Parish blew for a 10 minute break, I just let go of the rivet gun and dropped straight down on my knees. On that dirty, crummy, greasy floor.

I was so tired I was numb. I had a break at 2:00 to 2:10 A M

Some nights I was so tired, I just didn't know what to do.

It occurred to me to use my rivet gun. It was a cold working rivet gun. It had jaws that came together and squeezed the rivets.

I turned the rivet gun and hit the rivet on an angle instead of straight. I purposely hit a defect on the assembly line.

I sent a car frame with my bad rivet down the line.

About 8 minutes later the line would stop and I could hear the worker with the air gun knocking out my bad rivet. While the whole line in the Parish stopped, I'd would drop down on my knees for a breather.

It didn't take long after another hour and other bad rivets for the foreman to look at the books to solve the problem. It's Angstadt. Get him out of here.

They took me off the line because they knew what I was doing.

Everything at the Parish is on piece rate, an incentive rate. No one ever trained me but after doing it so often, you train yourself. I guess that was the idea. However, by the of summer, I never made the output rate.

On first shft, 7 to 3, the man did triple time. I stayed over on first shft and watched the man come in, stack some auto parts here and stack some auto parts there.

I realized I did most of the work with my right hand. He did the work using both hands.

He has the rivet gun balanced and gets out of the way as it swings up and down. His right and left hands work together in a rhythm pattern.

I could not believe my eyes as the man swayed back and forth around the moving rivet gun using both hands to produce triple time.

Remember I said three fingers were cut out of the gloves. To pick up the rivets, and to pick up the steel auto brackets, there are steel splinters in the boxes with the brackets and the rivets.

Ouch, ouch, quite often the steel, jagged splinters stab into your uncovered fingers. Sometimes they go under the fingernail, sometimes into your finger tips. Oh, they hurt when you pull them out.

Don't break the splinters, leaving a piece of steel inside your finger. Push the splinter back and forth to make the hole larger so it can be removed.

When you get it out, use mercurochrome and a band aid. It usually gets a little infected and oh did they hurt, did they hurt.

For two weeks I worked on the straightening jig. The automobile frames are moving on the assembly line hanging down from overhead racks.

The auto frame is dropped into a jig to see if the parts welded and riveted are level.

The sides must be level, parts must be parallel, and on right angles. Throw into place little jigs, little pieces of tooling to see if everything is lining up.

Usually, certain brackets welded on the side bars of the frames are out of alignment.

I had to step up in the air on top of a table that's as high as a kitchen table, swing a 16 pound sledge hammer to hit and align the brackets.

You make sure that you and the other man work together. He swings his 16 pound hammer down between his feet hitting the side bars.

When he lays the hammer down, you step up and swing your hammer between your feet.

In the meantime, the entire factory assembly line is stopped because that one frame is in the jig on top of the table.

When everything is aligned and ready to go, step down off the table, push a button.

The frame moves to the next station and the next frame to be aligned goes down in the straightening jig for me and my partner to work on.

I did this for two weeks. I was so tired when I came home I couldn't sleep. I did not sleep for two weeks.

When I came home I was numb.I told the foreman ,I can't do this.

Yet other men did it but I couldn't do it, I couldn't do it. The men really work hard at the Parish. They earned good money but they work hard.

There is no two ways about it. Quite often, I would feel something like a stone was in my eye. Located next to me was a welding booth.

Six welders, three on one side of the car frame and three on the other side. They arc the welding rod to start welding.

That spark or flash hits you in the eye if you were not careful. After a while your eyes swell shut..

Put vaseline on them and not work for two days. Usually a cover was hung so the spark and the flash didn't fly across the assembly line and hit you in the eyes.

I loved the Parish. Sometimes I go home out Third street. I see the trucks and the coils of steel.

There was something good about men working hard, earning good money, and kind of cocky and sure of themselves.

Talk about the Penn Cecil House. Dave Heck was married to Momo. In order to provide free entertainment on a Saturday night, Dave would stand behind the bar with a glass stirring rod.

The glass rod was as thick as your finger about 15 inches long.

Dave turns on the radio, or juke box. Dave takes the glass stirring rod and goes back and forth across the glass liquor bottles standing on shelves at the back of the bar.

The liquor bottles were different sizes and different shapes and had different amounts of liquor in them. Dave swings the glass rod right and left and hits the liquor bottles in time to the music.

He would put on a good show and everybody clapped and had a good time. Sometimes Dave would use two stirring rods, one in each hand.

There was an article written in the Reading Eagle/Times about Dave doing this crazy loud music.

Momo had her own style of providing entertainment. You know the large metal tray that a waitress would use on a Saturday night.

Around 11:00 o'clock and no one was looking and nobody expected it, Momo would take this tray and drop it on the floor.

She would drop it on the floor in the bar room. It would crash with a loud bang. The crowd would jump and holler.

This was more cheap entertainment at Momo's Penn Cecil House. What a gang, what a gang.

Every 4th of July, Momo would put a card table on the curb on the corner of Penn Avenue & Cecil. Either Harry the handyman or someone in the neighborhood would sell fireworks.

Momo actually didn't do too much business, but It seemed every 4th of July She had fireworks to sell.

Every now and then my brother and I would sit out on little chairs and try to sell the fireworks.

It is nice selling fireworks but it is nicer not selling fireworks because at the end of the day, on the 4th of July, my brother and I would carry all the fireworks that were not sold, to the back yard behind Penn Cecil House.

We'd take a metal lawn chair and turn it over on its side like a rocket launcher. Then Momo and Dave would come out and Joe the bartender and maybe one or two people in the neighborhood would come over.

We'd set these rockets of the chair and aim them towards Wilson High school up on Grandview Blvd.

Quite often, Joe the barter would be standing and feeling good, with a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other. He would be lighting fireworks and setting them off.

Joe had a roman candle. A roman candle is a round tube about 12 inches long. You light the , hold the candle straight up in the air, and color balls shoot out.

Red, yellow, blue, green shoots out of the into the sky and goes 20 feet to 30 feet up into the sky.

One 4th of July, Joe was not too careful and holds the roman candle up and we all stand to watch.

The hot, colored balls, instead of going up out of the the top of the tube, are coming down out of the bottom of the tube, down past his armpit and shirt. Joe was holding the candle upside down. Everybody laughed and Joe spilled his drink.

Sometimes on the 4th of july, we would send a rocket up in the sky towards Wilson High School. A few minutes later, some people up at Wilson would send off their rockets.

We thought it was fun as if we were send messages back and forth between Penn Cecil down below and Wilson up on the hill.

There was a friend of the family who I liked very much. One week this friend and his wife and my Uncle and his wife went deep sea fishing. The wife of my friend falls overboard .

The husband is diving in and out of the boat. Swimming and looking for her. Coming up for air.

He was diving under the water looking for her. Coming up for air but she drowns.

The Coast Guard and the local Police get involved. At the Police station, during questioning and getting the details of the accident, one of the State Troopers questions the husband. How were you and the wife getting along.

Are you sure this was an accident. The husband, I'm not mentioning his name, socks this big Trooper on the jaw and knocks him down. They arrest the husband. Oh it was so sad, so sad.

Sometime later, the husband enlists in the navy. He became a boxer and sparring partner for every boxer in the fleet. He fought everyone and anyone regardless of the weight difference or level of experience.

He had been punched hard and often around his head and body. He left the navy. Next he was a lumberjack in the French Canadian Woods.

He told me that stories about “king of the hill” were true. On a Friday night, the lumberjacks would fight and brawl in the local barroom.

Whoever was left standing, became the foreman or boss of the camp the following week.

He said, in the wintertime, the lumberjacks would use their axes to break the frozen ice on an outdoor water trough, Shave with the sharp edges of their axes and rinse their faces with ice cold water.

A few years ago, I was surprised to meet this ex-lumberjack, I think it was in Laureldale. He remarried a young French canadian girl and had 2 little girls.

They lived and were roughing it in the mountainous area of Muhlenberg Township.

My heart breaks and I cry for this good guy who, long ago, lost his wife on a deep sea fishing trip.

Everybody knew that Momo would never tell her age. Momo would never tell anyone how old she was.

In fact, part of her routine was, when she introduced me to her friends, she would always say here is Charles and he is 10 years old.

I am this big kid, at least 12 years old and Momo would tell everybody that I was only 10 years old. She would appear younger but I used to feel like a goof.

To this day, down in Morgantown on Momo’s tombstone, date of birth on her tombstone is blank. Momo made sure to the very that no one ever knew how old she was. Yes, date of birth on Momo’s tombstone is blank.

Part of the entertainment in the Penn Cecil barroom was Joe the barter. Sometimes he would play the musical saw. He was pretty good at it. He would put the handle of the saw under his leg and bend or curve the other of the saw.

With his hand use a violin bow to stroke the saw. Joe would hum or whistle at the same time he played. Some more entertainment at Penn Cecil House.

Joe had a kind of puppet. It was a carved block of wood painted black to look like a man wearing a black tuxedo with white dress shirt and red bow tie. On top was a wood head wearing a black top hat.

Both arms were attached to the shoulders of the body with little nail hinges. The elbows for the arms also had little hinges.

Wooden legs, painted black to look like tuxedo pants were attached with hinges to the bottom of the body. The knees and, shoes painted like spatzs, were also attached with hinges.

Joe sits sideways on a small piece of plywood 1/8" thick, which exits out in the air in front of him. a piece of wire coat hanger was glued into the back of the black tuxedo.

Placing the end of the coat hanger under his armpit, Joe balances the puppet out in the air, so its shoes just touch the plywood. He uses his hands to tap the plywood in time with the music.

The puppet swings its arms, legs and shoes and dances in time to the music.

Sometimes on a Saturday night a gentleman would come in about 7:30 p.m., sit down at the piano and start to play. Sometimes he would sing an occasional phrase. At 8:00 p.m. he was still playing and singing.

At 9:00 p.m. he is still playing, at 10:00 p.m. he is still playing. There was no break.

He was kind of in a world of his own singing a couple of phrases, playing a song. No one can get his attention, he doesn't talk to anyone. If people would try to talk to him , he just ignores them.

Now It's midnight and Momo and Dave want to close the barroom. They ask this gentleman to stop. He completely ignores them. He just keeps playing. He just keeps playing.

Momo and Dave said maybe they should call the West Lawn Policeman. I said, I don't understand this.

Momo and Dave had previously made arrangements for this gentleman to be on leave a few hours from the Wernersville State Hospital to play the piano.

He is playing the piano and is not going to stop. He just keeps right on playing.

Around 12:30 or 1:00 a.m. the West Lawn Policeman comes. The problem is explained to him. It gets kind of physical. The Policeman grabbed the man by his arms and legs and pulled his hands away from the piano.

He crashes a little bit off the piano bench.

Two men came down from the hospital to help physically solve the problem. This was a sad part of Saturday night entertainment.

Quite often when I was a little boy, Momo went to Atlantic City to visit friends and she would take me along. On the beach, Momo takes me down towards the waters edge.

She would turn me around and say, Charles you look up there.

Do you see that "H" in the sign Hotel. The Hotel may have been a few yards from the waters edge but it seemed like a mile or two miles.

She said, Charles, stand there, and just line yourself up with that "H".

Start walking away from the ocean back towards the Hotel in line with that “H”. You’ll find my friend and I on a beach blanket.

Momo would give me a shovel and a sand bucket, turn and walk away. For hours I would play in the sand.

Hundreds of people around me on the beach, but I’m starting to get the feeling that I’m alone.

I turn to find the “H” and I start walking back. It worked. I never really had any trouble and never really got lost.

I’m writing about these memories for the family. I’m having a lot of fun.

I didn’t realize when I started, what I really was doing. I wanted Sue, Joan, Tom and Gary to kind of get to know where I’m coming from and why I’m the way I am.

It never dawned on me until now that I’m halfway through this project just how much fun it is reliving these stories. These stories and events are very important to me, I Love Them.

I was a freshman enrolled at Kutztown College. In my sophomore year, I transferred to Penn State. Momo, Dave and my Mom drove me up to Penn State.

World War II was just about over. When I got to the campus, it was chaos. Everybody was lost. No one knew where to go.

We drove into the campus, I got out, and went into Old Main, looking for someone in charge of administration.

They can’t find my name or transfer papers. They look some more, I wait, and they still couldn’t find my name on any list.

Momo, Dave and my Mom said, well ,Charles It’s getting late and we have a 3-4 hour drive back, so we have to leave.

I gave everybody a hug. I had this big black steamer trunk from Momo and a

duffel bag. I wave goodbye and watch them drive off.

A couple more hours pass and they find my name on a list. The list was lost with six or eight names on it.

However, no dormitory room was assigned and it was felt that it wouldn't be too much of a hardship to spend the night sleeping in a chair in the lobby of Old Main.

I put the steamer trunk and my duffel bag down. I put my legs over the arms at the sides of a big chair and tried to go asleep. I spent my first night sleeping cramped sideways in an old chair in the lobby of Old Main.

I loved the library at Penn State. I kind of liked most of the professors, the accounting and finance courses, insurance courses, I liked them. But when I was away from the classroom, then it hit me.

I was not in a fraternity, I was lucky, I had a single room in a boarding house. I used to work in a fraternity kitchen, washing pots and pans for food'

Most of the time outside of the classroom when I wasn't studying, I was kind of lonely and felt left out.

At Penn State you had to walk everywhere. You had to walk a half mile there and a half mile back.

Everywhere you went there were long lines of students. I used to study, though, that I did. I studied 3 to 4 hours every night.

I knew I was there to study and I wasn't going to let this being lonely stop me.

One of the reasons that I was so lonely is, I wanted to be with Joan. My gosh, I missed Joan. On a Friday night, I would study 3 to 4 hours.

About 11:00 p.m. after I finished studying, I washed and shaved, pack a little bag, and walk outside to the main highway coming out of State College.

I stand there at midnight on a Friday day night, look at the moon and the stars, and hitchhike to Reading.

The way I had it figured, anyone coming out of State College on a Friday night at midnight was going somewhere, Philly, Harrisburg, Reading.

I would hitchhike home. I was lucky. Back then it was safe to hitchhike. Back then, if people knew you were from State College, they gave you a ride.

Most of the time, I could get a ride to Reading. Sometimes I could get to Lebanon. Occasionally things didn't work out.

One night, I got out of a car in Carlisle, Pa. I wasn't quite sure where Carlisle was.

When I'm standing outside of Carlisle hitchhiking, I knew Harrisburg was nearby. It was about 2:00 a.m. and a local Policeman stops. He says, young man, you are not allowed to hitch hike in Carlisle.

I said I didn't know that. He said come on, get in and he drove me out to the boundary line on the outskirts of Carlisle. He says, now you get out here, and you hitch hike. I got out and hitch hiked.

On another Friday night coming home, I was in Lebanon at the intersection of 422 where the Lebanon steel company was on one corner and the Lebanon Diner was on the other corner.

It was 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, Half a dozen big tractor trailers are parked outside the diner. Truckers were inside at the counter.

I stood at the doorway and I hollered up through the diner. Can I have your attention.

I could see them all look over and I said, I'm looking for a ride to Reading. One of the guys at the counter said, I'll take you, kid.

A few times when I would be stuck at a truck stop or a bus stop on the way home, I'd see the truck driver's feet up along side the window.

I'd go over and tap on the window and ask him if he is going to Reading.

He'd say, no, no. He was mad because I woke him up.

I was in a tractor trailer one night, a huge tractor trailer, the trucker was coming from Ohio. The whole trailer was full of crates of fresh eggs. I directed him on the right and left turns to Reading.

We got into Reading about 5:00-6:00 a.m. at 6th & Spring street and I direct him down Spring street.

We are part way down and he says, Christ, the trailer was too high and he could not get down underneath the Spring street subway.

He curses and turns around and backs around. Spring street from 6th street down to the subway is kind of a steep incline.

He is backing around there about 5:00-6:00 a.m. on the side of the subway towards the Guard House. He turns around and goes back up the hill. He stops at the top there at 6th & Spring street. I said I'll get out here.

The next time I hitch a ride on a tractor trailer I'll remember to give directions and try to keep it mind how high the trailer is in back and how low the subway is.

I told you I worked at a fraternity house at State College. They did not pay me money. I had free meals. My job was to wash the pots and pans in the fraternity house.

They were large, institutional pots and pans, big sinks, and a lot of detergents and scalding hot water.

I used to always take my shirt of and wash the pots and pans in my T shirt.

On a Saturday, once a week, we would scrub and mop the floors in the kitchen of the fraternity house. Three or four other guys and I would make a game out of it.

I would stand over the drain in the middle of the floor with a mop and the guys would have one bucket of water with some detergent in it.

They would slop this water around on this big floor and I would stand guard

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over the drain.

Any time the water came over to go down the drain, I would quick mop it away from the drain. The water would come down and I would take the mop and sweep it away again.

I kept sweeping the water away from the drain. We would do the entire floor with one bucket of water. The water became very black and dirty.

One bucket of water that's all we would use. We thought it was fun.

The water was like sludge. It wasn't even water any more when we finally disposed of it.

Most of the rooms in my boarding house had 5 or 6 beds in one big room. Each guy had a bed and a desk but they were all in one big room.

At State College, I didn't go to a college dormitory or fraternity. I lived in a boarding house, alone in a single room with a bed and a desk. The guys referred to my room as the bridal suite.

One night there was some excitement in the hall. Someone was hanging a white bed sheet up over the dormer window. Someone brought in a movie projector. I said what's up and was told to come and watch dirty movies.

The place started to fill up. The word got around. Not just guys that lived in the rooming house were there, their friends were there. There must have been close to 100 guys crowded into the rooms, nooks and stairways.

The movie started and five minutes go past. Suddenly you hear the door crash open and someone hollers, It's the Police. All bedlam broke loose.

guys were hiding in closets, jumping down stairways, one or two went out the side window to the next house. They were running down the steps, pushing each other.

The cops came in and they wanted to know who was in charge. Well , no one was in charge. One thing led to another.

When in was all said and done, the guys asked about how the cops knew we were showing these movies.

It turns out, when they hung the bed sheet across this dormer window, with the bright projector light shining on the sheet, the back of the sheet could be seen through the window.

Neighbors were standing outside on the pavement looking up at the dormer window. Most of the house was dark and this one window was lit up. The dirty movies could be seen outside down on the pavement on the back of white sheet.

The neighbors called the cops.

After I graduated from Penn State in 1952, Momo said, well , Charles, what do you want for a graduation present. What would you like?

Momo loved me, but when she said, all I had to do was ask, her voice kind of strained a little bit. Momo didn't quite know what I would ask for.

Momo, I said, that's easy. She said, it is. Yes, I said. I want one of Aunt Mary's paintings that you have in the barn loft. well , she was kind of relieved.

Momo and I went up the stairs in the loft and she said, there's six paintings , Charles, how do you know which one you want. Momo, I said that's easy. I want the biggest One.

I have this big 6' square painting hanging at this very minute in my living room. It's a forest scene and I love it, signed Aunt Mary 1923. That was my graduation gift from Momo.

A few months later, Momo had a fire or a big accident in the barn and the rest of the paintings were lost.

Money was scarce for me at Penn State. One day I went to the pursers office. The gentleman was a perfect stereotype.

A dark blue suit, vest, gold watch and chain, kind of a thin man with a bald head and glasses sitting behind a huge desk. His office was black walnut paneling.

He said, young man, what can I do for you. I said sir, I don't have any money and I have to go home. He said, now wait, let's discuss this. He asked just how much money do you have.

I reached in my pocket and I got out a dime, a nickel and a penny and I said, 16 cents.

We talked some more. I repeated that's all I have and I wasn't getting any money from home.

The purser said maybe we can help you out, young man. He gets up from his desk chair, turns around and walks to a wall safe.

He sets the combination, turns the handle, opens it up and walks into the safe room like at a bank. Turns around and comes out with a ledger book.

He blows the dust off and opens the book. Inside this ledger book was golden yellow parchment paper that had printing on it.

Behind the printing embossed in big letters, as big as the book, was the word "PAUPER."

He fills in the form ,The form says that I, Charles Angstadt, do declare to the citizens to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that I am a PAUPER and I accept this money willingly. I signed the paper.

He kept it and wrote me a check for \$25.00. I said thank you, I took the check and lived on the money.

Two weeks later, I was back again. The purser said are you back. Yes, I said I'm back. He did the same thing again, I signed that I'm a pauper again. He gave me another check for \$25.00. Time passed. I went to him again.

He said, we can't have this. We can't have you keep coming back here all the time. We'll have to get you a job at the College.

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The next Saturday morning I was outside next to the chemistry building with a 800 foot garden hose.

I'm hosing down the windows from the outside of the chemistry building. I didn't wipe them or clean them, just shot them with water.

Occasionally I would go inside to the chemistry labs. There were 10,000 little jars with lids. I would take a damp cloth and wipe the top of potassium, iron, sulfur, etc. I just did one swipe of the lids.

Since graduation when the Penn State Alumni Association or one of the students calls, they want to know if I'd like to make a donation. I reply, I'd love to make a donation.

How much would you like to give, Mr. Angstadt. I'd listen to them on the phone and I'd say, I want to give \$25.00.

Every year when they call me and ask how much I want to give, I always smile and say I would like to give \$25.00. This pauper is giving the money back. Pay back time.

After the war. the president of Penn State was Dwight Eisenhower's brother, Milton Eisenhower. He had his office in the Old Main Building where I had my first class at 8:00 o'clock in the morning.

Quite often, I'd see this man, he wasn't too tall. He looked pretty much like his brother. He often came to Old Main in a tuxedo, top hat, black tails and a beautiful white shirt and grey spats.

As always, I'm kind of loose and when I see him at the door I would say, good morning Milton. He would say, good morning and how are you, young man. What's your name?

Oh, I said my name is Charles Angstadt. Well , he would say, good morning Charles, I hope you have a good day in class.

From then on, after that initial meeting, maybe once or twice a week, I'd get to the door ahead of him and I'd hold the door open for him. I'd say, good morning Milton, and he'd say, good morning, Charles.

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He was always going to banquets and dinners and meetings with the trustees. He was always dressed up. He dressed like a funeral director.

If he got to the door ahead of me, he'd hold the door for me and say, good morning ,Charles. I'd say, good morning, Milton and we would both smile.

My buddies at school couldn't get over that I was calling him by his first name. They couldn't get over the fact that quite often he was there waiting at the door, holding it open for me.

Speaking of Eisenhower, when I was a Muhlenberg Township Commisioner, I received free tickets to a Republican Rally to greet Dwight Eisenhower and Mamie at Hershey, Pa. There were a couple of hundred Republicans at the Rally.

I asked to excuse myself through the crowd and went out to Eisenhower's car just as it pulled to the curb. I waited for the doorman to open the door and then I greeted Dwight Eisenhower and Mamie as they got out of the car.

I shook Ike's hand and said welcome to Hershey. I kept holding on to his hand and I would not let go. I just kept smiling.

Finally a secret service man asked me to return to the crowd. I said certainly.

Much later on in the evening, from my vantage point in the fifth balcony, I looked down on Eisenhower's dining table and saw his table did't have anyone visiting.

So I went down to his table,walked over,smiled at Mamie and looked for Ike. I didn't see him, then I realized that a man's head pressed against my chest was Ike.

He turned his head side ways and looked up almost directly in my face. I smiled and said, hello

Again a secret service man put his hand on my shoulder and asked me to leave. I'll never forget ,Ike had steel blue eyes.

I don't remember if it was at the Eisenhower rally or not.
I think it was at a different rally where I shook hands with Richard Nixon.

As Nixon passed on his way to the stage to give a speech, he shook hands with his supporters. I was taken back, his hand shake and grip felt like that of an old woman.

His hand was very soft and white. As a matter of interest, from my seat in a little side balcony, I could look over Nixon's shoulder and follow his speech on the teleprompter.

Today, Thursday, March 13, 1997 is Joan's birthday. Happy Birthday Joan, I Love you. We had a nice little party over at the Motor Inn with a little piece of cake with a candle on it.

The waitresses sang happy birthday and I sang along with the waitresses. So happy birthday, Joan, March 13, 1997.

I was in grade school. I went out for the hardball midget baseball team at 11th & Pike. Because I was born in December, 1930 I was just under the age limit.

I was as old as you could get to play midget baseball. What was interesting about my tenure as a baseball player is, 19 times at bat, I hit 15 home runs, unbelievable.

However, the reason I hit the home runs was first of all when I came up to bat, most batters would have so many balls, so many strikes and then a hit. Not me. The very first pitch, no matter where it was, I hit it and I hit the homeruns.

I always hit the very first pitch with all my strength because I was terribly nervous. I was so scared and nervous. The first pitch, high I hit it, low I hit it.

At the end of the season, the piker midgets had to play the midgets from Hillside. The pitcher from Hillside was Harry. He was the league's champion pitcher, striking everybody out. He strikes out 15, 16 batters in every game.

His pitch was called a slider. The ball comes in from the pitcher and just in front of you, turns and slides out. I knew this from talking to the other batters.

The day of the championship game I was sick. I don't think I was fooling and afraid to play, I really didn't feel good and for some reason, the day of the game. That morning I had gone to the store with my Mom and bought new shoes.

We called them work shoes, clod hoppers. I remember wearing those shoes and going out to 11th & pike to watch the game, to watch Harry pitch.

When I got to 11th & pike, the score was tied, and it was the last inning of the game. The coach turned to me sitting with the spectators and said, Charles, you go in as a pinch hitter.

Today, they call them a designated hitter. Back then it was a pinch hitter.

I thought okay. I knew how Harry pitched with his slider. In the batter's box, I took one step up towards Harry, towards the pitcher. He threw the first pitch and I swung at it. Strike one, because it was a slider.

I took another step towards Harry and now I was standing up in front of the batters box. Harry throws the second pitch a slider, I swing and miss.

Strike two. I take a third step towards Harry.

Now home plate is way in the back. I'm standing way up in front of home plate. Still in the batters box but I can't step front any more.

I'm at the front edge of the batters box. Harry throws the next pitch and just as the ball is starting to cut into the slider, I swing. I'll never forget.

I saw the ball hit the bat right above my hands, not in the big thick part of the bat but right in the handle. It hit right above my hands and the ball went straight at Harry's feet.

When he bent over to catch it, too late, it went between his legs. We had a man on first or second and I start running towards first.

The ball went out over second base and out into center field. It's bouncing out to the player in center field. I'm rounding first base and the other teammate of mine is running around second.

I'm running around second and my teammate is running around third. My teammate runs around third and goes home to score the winning run.

I round third, the ball is relayed it and I'm heading for home. I slide in as hard as I can. The ball comes in.

I'm out but we had won the game because my team mate ahead of me had come in with the winning run. We had won the game.

Even though I was out, I hit the ball that won the game.

Thirty years later I run into Harry at a diner or I run into Harry down town and he will say, Charlie, you robbed me out of that championship.

Come on, I said. Yes, he said you should have never hit that. I thought I had you. He'll always remember losing that game because I hit the ball at his feet and it went out into the outfield.

Once a year the midgets played the old timers. The young boys would play the grown men who were former midget baseball players. Usually a Friday night.

There was always a crowd at 11th & pike playground. This is right across the street from the northeast library. I'm talking about a couple hundred spectators. It was quite a show. These grown men played the boys in baseball.

In this Old Timers game, I'm in center field, I'm way out close to the field house .

I'm about 10 feet away from a tremendous flag pole that was out there up on the macadam, up near the field house. Well , one of the old timers, one of the stars, he's at bat.

He hit the ball, oh, it cracked, and the ball came out towards me really high in the air. I'm going back, I'm going back, now I'm up on the macadam.

I'm backing up to the field house that's how hard this old Guy hit the ball. I'm going back and I'm looking up, waiting for the ball and the ball goes Bang, the ball hits the flag pole way up high up near the flag.

It hits this metal flag pole, and now it bounces back in towards second base, back towards home plate. By the time I run back into the field to pick up the ball, he's rounding third and going across home plate. He hit a home run.

During the summers and even part way into spring and fall, I would help my step father Warren install hot air furnaces. We would completely knock down an old furnace with a sledgehammer. I was good at that.

I was good at taking an old hot air furnace apart. These were coal burning stoves I'm talking about.

I was good at taking the sledgehammer and knocking a chunk out here and carrying it out. Knocking another chunk and carrying it out and completely dismantling an old hot air furnace in a home.

Warren, in the meantime, was getting all the new furnace parts ready as I was clearing all the old out. He would be getting the new parts ready and then he and I together would install the furnace.

Each new furnace part would go one on top of the other, with black cement. We were good. We had installed maybe 100 furnaces in the course of the time I worked with Warren.

After the new furnace was installed, Warren would take a nail and go upstairs. He was going to install the electrical thermostat to run the furnace.

He finds a spot on the wall. Takes his eye and finger and goes down to the floor, to the baseboard, drives the nail through the floor.

He goes downstairs into the cellar, locates the nail, takes an electric drill behind the nail and drills up. He is coming up through the floor in back of the nail.

Coming up with the drill inside the wall. He goes upstairs and measures up 4 or 5 feet and drills a hole in the wall.

He takes a metal chain and stuffs it in into the hole in the wall where the thermostat goes in, and drops a metal chain down inside of the wall. After that he keeps feeding the chain down the hole.

He goes downstairs. He reaches up through the hole with his finger and pulls this metal chain down.

He's in the cellar pulling down the metal chain. He goes back upstairs, attaches electrical wiring to the chain, links them together. Goes back downstairs again and pulls the chain down.

He is pulling down the electrical wire for the thermostat. He attaches the wire to a special electrical attachment, in the top of the furnace to measure the heat.

He attaches a new, pretty shiny thermostat on the wall upstairs.

The electrical attachment had a coil that went into the hood at the top of the furnace.

I must have watched Warren install hundreds of these thermostats. One day he said, well , Charles I have to do something else. I have to leave. You install the thermostat. I said OK. He left. This was my first thermostat.

I drilled the hole upstairs, drilled the nail down below, came up in the middle of the wall and fished the wire, I fished the metal chain link down.

The only thing is when I went down in the cellar and reached my finger up through the hole to get the metal chain to pull it down, I could not find the metal chain. I must have fished with my finger for an hour.

I was all bloody around my finger. My finger started to swell and pulse. Two hours I fished for that metal chain and could never find it.

Warren came back. He asked how am I doing. I showed him my bloody finger and he just shook his head and smiled.

He walked over and put his finger up through the hole, turned it around a little bit and pulled the metal chain down with the electrical wiring and attached it to the furnace.

Oh, I felt so dumb and couldn't believe that for two hours I couldn't find the chain.

Years later after the thermostat story, poor Warren passed away. Auman's called and my Mom said, Charles will be in.

I said what's up. my Mom said, Auman's wants you to come in and take a look at Warren and make sure he looks okay for the viewing and the funeral. I said, okay.

I went in and I guess they had what's called a slumber room. Warren was there, in like a bed. It wasn't a coffin, it was like a bed.

Mr. Auman was there and he said I'll be back in a few minutes. Mr. Auman left. I looked at Warren and the tears came down my face. I turned my head up toward the ceiling and like a wolf. I went ooooooh, ooooooh.

One day after I had a haircut at Schartel's, I was leaving and noticed on the mirror there was a Polaroid picture. It was a little cat sitting on the toilet. I looked hard and close and here was a cat sitting on the toilet.

The toilet seat was up and the cat was sitting on the rim of the toilet facing front. I asked Schartel, what's this. Why he said, my cat. We don't need a litter box.

Any time the cat has to go, he just climbs up on the toilet and sits on the rim of the seat.

I thought it was cute. The cat sitting there so nice with his tail kind of wrapped around. It looked like a siamese cat. So Schartel's cat didn't need a litter box.

Schartel also had a parrot in a large cage. When a customer entered the barbershop, the parrot would call in a high soprano voice, Schartel, Schartel.

Schartel would always look in the large mirror in front of the chair and talk to you in the mirror while cutting your hair.

One day, I noticed a book on the counter, and paged through it. It was a book of thousands of big and little sea shells.

The printing under the pictures was in Japanese. I asked Schartel if he could read Japanese, he said no. He just looks at the pictures of pretty sea shells.

After cutting your hair, Schartel swings you around in the chair to face the parrot. He asks the parrot how you look. The parrot whistles WEEEEEE WHEEEEEEE sounding like a man whistling at a pretty girl walking by.

Let's go back to Spring Street & Moss, to the grocery store, across the street from the public library. The grocery store was cadecorner from Spring & Moss school.

The grocery store was the neighborhood store where almost all the neighbors bought groceries.

When you go to the store and buy some milk and bread, you say to the store owner, put it in the book. He would get out a big ledger book, all of the pages were thumb rolled. The book always laid open.

The next day you stop in, buy lunch meat and chips and pretzels and say put it in the book. The whole neighborhood put everything in the book.

The owner writes it in the book. Hardly anyone had any money. On Friday, my Dad would get paid and on Friday night or Saturday morning, would go to the store and ask, what do we owe you.

On Friday night or Saturday morning, my Dad would pay the weekly bill.

Let's say the bill was \$75.00. Maybe you only paid \$60.00. You had the balance to carry over to the next week. Quite often, you could hear the people talk.

Some people had running balance adding on each week and it was getting out of control.

In addition to the book trade, when you went to the grocery store, you would always ask if there was a bone for the dog, remember Butch.

You would always say, do you have any bones. The grocer would put a couple bones in the bag for free.

When I go to Redner's and Weis' today, I pay for butts of left over lunch meat. Back then when you went to the store, in addition to the dog bones being free, the butts were also free.

Today at Redner's and Weis grocery store, people are anxious for you to do your shopping and anxious for you to leave. Back at the neighborhood store, there were usually 2 or 3 women sitting in the store.

Some of the women would come in at 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning and be there until 1:00 or 2:00 in the afternoon. This was a place where people gathered to gossip.

The neighborhood grocery store, was a good lucrative business with their book trade. This little store at Moss & Spring street was called Mesty's. The son would sharpen his knives right in the store. He was a butcher.

These little stores usually were good butchers. You could get almost anything you needed at this local grocery store.

At 1018 Spring Street, we had the neighbor, a good friend, who was a numbers writer. Everybody in the neighborhood played the numbers.

It was just like people who play the lottery today. People walking on the street would hollar across the street, to each other, do you know what number hit today.

Only back then it was kind of unorganized and very informal. People could only afford to play pennies. Play 234 in a box, play 234 straight for 2 cents. put one cent on this and one cent on that.

If you thought you had a hot number, everybody knew what the hot numbers were, then you'd bet a nickel.

This numbers writer had a dining room table. It was a huge table with a white linen on it. It was piled high with the gray card board sheets that are used inside a man's shirt from the laundry.

Somehow she got these cardboard sheets from the laundry. She would write all these different number combinations (234, 324, 423) on these cardboards.

When a number would come up from a horse race that was a winner, she would page through these cardboard sheets. I would venture to say there were about 20 on a pile, 10 to 15 piles on the dining room table.

There were numbers in rows down each piece of cardboard. When a lucky number came up, she would go through the cards, go down a row and said yep, I had it.

But she never played it. She just loved to be in the action. Nobody had any money, just bet pennies.

The numbers writer also had in her possession dream books. When placing a bet, if you had a dream recently, you could look up the dream in the dream book and find the lucky number indicated by the dream.

She got a fee for writing the numbers and collecting the bets. It wasn't a government agency. She handed the money over to somebody.

When I was a boy I lived at 1018 Spring Street. When Sue and Ron were first married they lived at 1018 Windsor street. Nana and Pop Pop Henning lived at 1018 Greenwich street. What a strange coincidence.

A good friend of my Mom was a woman who lived up around the corner of Mulberry street. She had kind of a tough life, a rough life. Her husband was a race car driver and spent all of his time and money on race cars.

The wife pumped gas on a little street across from St. Margaret's church at Rose and Spring street.

This woman lived on Mulberry street and lived two doors away from the alley. She lived next door to the Lawlor's. The shades were always pulled down in her house.

You rarely went in the front door. You always went in through the back door to the kitchen. On that rare occasion, when you went in the front door, there were white bed sheets over each piece of furniture in the living room.

She had two black and white Irish Setters. Great big dogs with a lot of hair. The odor knocked you down. These two dogs always had the worse case of exzema.

I was afraid to touch them and afraid to get near them.

Most of the time this woman was visiting in our house at 1018 Spring Street. My Mom and her would talk in the kitchen. My Mom and her always had something to talk about.

She talked to my Mom and my Mom talked to her. They talked to each other at the same time. She would be there for hours and until late at night.

Down at Spring & Moss grade school all the teachers were ladies and they were all "miss". They were Miss Smith, Miss Adams, Miss Callahan, Miss Henne, Miss Acker. Back then if a teacher married, she lost her job as a teacher.

The school board thought a woman could not divide her time between being married and a teacher.

The boys in the fifth grade always won the chinning contest in the city schools. I asked myself, why is it that her class always wins the chinning championship.

Well, I soon found out. Very early on. I found out that during recess while everybody else played games, the teacher made the boys go over to the chinning bars and for 20 minutes we had to take turns practicing chinning.

When the 15 or 20 minute recess was over, the boys stayed out an extra 5 minutes and continued to practice chinning. The year that I was in fifth grade, the boys won the chinning contest in the City schools again.

In the classroom, this same teacher made the boys in class take turns standing beside her and scratch her back. Many times I did it.

We would take turns and scratch her back. I'd say we did it for 20-25 minutes. She would say okay, Charles, you can sit down now. Robert it is now your turn. Robert would come up and stand next to the teacher and scratch her back.

Let me tell you one of the tragedies at grade school. It was Halloween time and my Mom bought me the greatest indian costume you ever saw. It had a large indian chief headdress with feathers.

Feathers were down the side and a long tail of feathers like a pigtail went down the back. It had leather and red beads and tassels and leather pants.

I wore my good shoes because I thought the teacher would have a harder time guessing who I was. The contest was going to be right after lunch.

When I came in, the teacher had pulled all the shades down to make the room kind of dark and shadowy. In order to confuse the teacher, everybody was dressed in a costume and mask and the kids all sat in different seats.

The teacher walks around the room, up and down the aisles and just looks. Not a word was said. Everybody was just sitting there. The teacher comes down the middle aisle.

The very first one she comes to, is me, and she says Charles. I was stunned and I was mortified. I will remember this forever.

Because of this tragedy, when little kids come to 3050 Elm road all dressed up, I guess and guess, making sure I'm not even close to who it is dressed up because I know how it felt.

No, you don't guess who they are. You act like you don't know who they are. You want them to feel good and have a good time. You want them to laugh and have a good time. You don't go "Oh I know you." Come on.

I probably should have told you long before this, that when you went to Spring & Moss grade school, the opening class exercises every morning was the pledge to the flag. The teacher had a little pitch pipe and you sang the National Anthem.

You put your hands out front and the teacher walked up and down the aisles and looked at your finger nails and turned your hands over to make sure you had clean fingernails and hands. If you didn't, out to the washroom you went..

When the writing assignment came, you had these real long pens with the scratchy points. In the corner of the desk was a little ink well .

The boys would have to take the bottle with one of those pouring spouts on it and take turns pouring and filling the ink wells .

Of course, from one week to the next, the ink would evaporate and get thick in the well . Still we just poured and obviously there was an accident and this purple/blue ink spilled. When it hit your clothes it never came off.

In first grade I went to Spring & Moss with the twins, Harry and Irma. I didn't mind it. However, two hours later, I was separated from Harry and Irma.

They were going to be in the first grade on the first floor and I was going to be in first grade on the second floor.

I sat at that desk and I cried and I cried for three hours. I did nothing but cry because I wanted to be with Harry and Irma. The teacher moved me down stairs to the first floor.

Remember I said all of the teachers were "miss". Well this one teacher was in a lonely hearts club.

Just as an after thought, this teacher had three or four wooden indian clubs , they looked like bowling pins, and threaten the class to use them if the class did not obey her.

One day she was visiting in this office or studio. The people who operate the club didn't know she was there. She was in the next room .She heard the owners plotting to kill her.

Somehow they were going to make money by killing her. She went to the Police. I remember going to school and the newspaper headlines "Teacher almost murdered in Lonely Hearts club." Oh my gosh.

When we went to class that day I could hardly look at her. It seemed that when I looked at her, I saw somebody killing her.

In grade school we used to get little pints of white milk. We paid for the milk and it was very cheap.

One day my Dad gave me money to pay for my milk and he said after you pay for your milk, go over to the other teacher to pay for your brother's milk.

I went to my third grade teacher and told her I had to have the change to pay for my brother's milk. The teacher smacked me hard across the face. She said listen here, do you think I'd steal your milk money.

I just put my hand out and she gave me the money.

After school, I told my Mom what happened, how I got smacked in the face. I no sooner told my Mom and she was out the door on her way down to the school.

An hour later I looked down Spring Street and walking up the pavement is this teacher and my Mom.

When they got home I looked at my Mom and my Mom said, Charles, this is an old school chum of mine, we went to school together. She and I were great friends.

My Mom said, you must have done something wrong and didn't tell me.

That night the teacher had supper with us. How lucky can you be.

Now here is something. Susie said she didn't know, and I bet you, Gary and Tom didn't know. When I was in grade school, I stuttered and I stuttered pretty bad.

It was very simple. I went to speech class twice a week. They took me out of social studies or they would take me out of writing class and put me in with two or three other kids. We had speech class.

A woman came in, she was a speech teacher. We always had these big round magnified mirrors. We always made faces with our tongues and teeth and taking big breaths. I'd say in two years I was cured.

At Spring Street one of the gang was called Moron. There was also a kid whose name was Valentine. Then there was a kid called Pappy.

In the gang was a much older guy and because he had a bad case of acne over his shoulders and down his arms, we called him Pus.

Yes, you heard it, Pus. This guy seemed to be with us occasionally and his claim to fame was he always had money which he shared with the gang.

Located between the school building and the first row house were chinning bars. We used to think it was great fun to swing back and forth on the chinning bars.

There were 3 connecting chinning bars. One is 10 ft off the ground, the second one is 8 ft off the ground and the third is 6 ft high.

When you were on the highest chinning bar, swing and go up the side of the school building with your feet. With your feet, walk up the side of the school building on the bricks.

You hold yourself up in the air and see how far you can walk up the side of the school building.

Well , it was Joe's turn. One day Joe was up on side of the building and he was up pretty high. Suddenly he swings down and on the bottom of the swing, instead of holding on and swing back, Joe lets go.

He swings and goes out in the air and does a knock around somersault down on the hard ground. We run over and ask what happened. Oh, he said my hands were slipping on the bar, so I left go. Think about that.

Thirty years later I'm in town at an outgrown shop on court street near the post office. Here's Joe and his mother and I haven't seen Joe in many years.

I said Hi Joe, how are you doing. His mother turned to me and said you know, Joe just got divorced.

Oh, I said, no, I didn't know. Yes, she said, my son, Joe, was married and it made him nervous, so he got divorced.

The horse drawn ice cream wagon started out near the car barn and walked all the way in Moss street to Spring street.

At Moss and Spring street some one in the neighborhood usually wanted ice cream so the horse would stop at Spring street. We all would run over.

Usually half way down the block one or two little kids jumped on the back of the wagon with their hands, lifted their feet and hung in the air on the wagon while the horse slowly walked in Moss street.

The horse would stop and some of the kids got ice cream. Usually when that horse stopped, he proceeded to relieve himself. Then everybody would holler and point, as the horse is relieving himself.

The people were still buying the ice cream and no one seemed to mind the sight. No one ever seemed to mind the smell. It was like a party with good times.

The horse by relieving himself was part of the action and everybody thought this was funny. The horse proceeded to cross Spring street.

At Spring street, we played tag and runny. We could run and jump and hide. When we played runny, the boundary was 6th street up at to the Guard House.

The other boundary was Hampden Park up at the top of Spring street. The other boundary was the car barn.

As far as going in towards Penn street, we hardly ever went in more than one block, maybe to Windsor street. The boundary was all out in the northeast section.

Part of the game of runny was tag. I would tag you and then you had to tag somebody else. It was pretty simple. But soon the game got a little complicated.

Because as we were running around the neighborhood chasing each other and hiding, someone would get the idea to kick over a garbage can that was at the curb.

Then someone else in the gang would kick over another garbage can that was on the curb.

After a while it was one can, two cans, three cans, well you could hear the cans flying because there were eight of us. Everybody was kicking these cans over and the neighbors would come out and curse us.

We were running and kicking garbage cans over.

It was terrible, it was fun.

For some reason, when we played runny one guy was a bully. When he first came into the gang, we had trouble accepting him.

He was maybe four or five years older than us and kind of a little slow mentally. He would grab the sodas from us and drink the rest of the bottle.

In the few times that he played runny, when he would tag you, he would sock you.

One day when he came walking over to the gang, we all looked at each other and said this has got to stop. We're going to give him a red belly.

When he walked over to us, out of the clear blue sky, four or five of us jumped him.

We grabbed him around his neck, held his arms wrestled him to the ground and got him down and we pulled up his shirt. Each one of us took turns slapping this bully on the belly.

Maybe 20 minutes later, there was a big red spot on his belly. From then on he was just one of the gang and we never had any trouble with him. Isn't that something .

We would stand to the side of the entrance and we would run over towards the school building. Put one foot up on the bricks as a step and the other foot up on this ledge.

We would run on the slanted ledge of bricks along the side of the building.

We were up on the building running on the side of the building pass the windows. The teachers were inside. We were on recess and some of the other classes were in progress.

We could almost run the distance from the middle of the school to the very end of the building on Spring street. We would run like the devil.

Because you were moving fast and it wasn't that easy, you would trip yourself.

You would run and your feet would get tangled and you would fall down on the bricks in the playground yard.

It hurt, but oh, we used to run along side of the building especially on Saturdays when the school was closed and no one would stop us.

We would run and take turns.

Then somebody had the idea that you wait your turn until the person in front of you was halfway across the building, then there would be two of you in single file running alongside the building. It was so much fun.

Now I'm going to get serious. In the basement at Spring & Moss School was the boys lavatory. It was usually very dark and it was wet. There was a lot of moisture in the air, it was clammy. The boy's urinal was a black marble stall.

On the left side was wall of black marble. On the right side was a wall of black marble. There was no conventional urinal. It was just this stall with three marble walls.

On the front wall there was a little opening where the water would come out to run down the front of the wall where the boys would urinate.

As you might guess, when three or four of the guys were down in the boys restroom, we would take turns and watch each other and relieve ourselves on the wall.

The purpose of the game was to see if you could urinate up in the air and fight that water that was coming in and running down the wall.

We would stand there and someone would say, oh yea, I got it and someone would say oh no, you were too low.

You would keep going like this trying to fight, having a little water battle with the water coming in and down the wall.

We would take turns. One, two, three, four and five of us taking turns fighting the water battle. After the battle was over, came the real contest.

We each took turns going in the stall with our face and chin up against that little outlet to see if we could drink some of that water coming in and not touch the wall with our lips or chin.

We tried not to touch the wall against our chin because we knew what we had just done there.

We thought if you could do it in such a way you could get fresh clean water and not have your lips touch the wall.

You would lean in and try to suck up this water and then someone would say you're touching and you would say no, I'm not touching it.

It's hard to believe but it seems like when you're a little kid and nobody had any money, you try to take the fun where you can.

We would throw the footballs up over the school roof. We also played football on that little playground right behind the school.

When you would go for a touchdown, you would run towards Robeson street and run down the alley. You would leave the school property and run down the alley.

Then the ball would have to go through the air over someone's yard and garage and, oh, the people didn't like that, the ball sailing over a corner of their yard.

Going the other way, we played for a touchdown, the curb at Spring street was the goal line.

You would run over the curb and run out on Spring street in between the moving cars, looking around, making sure there are no cars coming .

Wow There were near accidents and cars blowing their horns. One day I'm out in the middle of the street and I'm looking and I see a car. It stops and I look and guess who is driving the car, my Mom.

She stops and gets out. I come over and leave the game and get in the car and drive home. You see, I had always told my Mom that I never played in the street. She was mad.

I thought it was interesting that on the whole side of the Spring & Moss school building, the first floor and second floor had 6 windows, big plate glass windows. We would play football there on the playground.

I would say in the course of a season, maybe, we would break two windows at the most. We were so good at throwing that football.

A touchdown was also when you could throw the ball and hit the corner of the bricks on the building next to a window.

That was an official way of making a touchdown.

In the middle of the playground was a half bent volleyball pole. After pushing on the pole, we bent that metal pole in half.

You would think that pole would be in the way when two teams (four players on each team) would play each other in touch football.

Oh no. When you were the fullback or the quarterback and you were running with the ball, you used the pole as an extra player on your team, to help give you interference.

You would dodge and weave behind the pole.

Or if you were running out for a pass, you would run past the pole and at the last minute grab onto the pole and swing around and use it as a pivot to catch the ball.

Nothing ever stopped us. We had a lot of fun.

Remember I talked about the bully and the red belly. I don't think he had a girl friend until he was 50 years old. He was to be married at age 50.

Three or four months after he was engaged, he dropped over dead with a heart attack.

When we were a little older and we were teenagers, we all had bicycles. We would go to a bicycle shop to get the rod to raise the height of the bicycle seat.

The rod would raise the seat on the bicycle as high as possible, at least 12 to 14 inches high. We were up so high that our tip toes hardly touched the pedals.

We would go down to the subway at Nichols and Spring street. The goal was to see if you could ride up to the top of the subway and not stand up on the pedals. Keep sitting in the seat and pedal.

This was back when there were no gear shifts. There were no 10 speed bikes. We just had plain old bicycles. There were no gear shifts. You would pedal and pedal.

After a while one or two of us would drop out, half way up the subway. Maybe, one of us reached the top.

We would turn around and coast down Spring street going as fast as we could, going into the dark underneath the subway. We would pedal back to Spring Street & Moss. Oh, that was fun.

Another little caper we would do on the bicycles was, we would wait at 9th and Spring street for the trolley cars that were going in 9th street to Penn Street.

We would wait here at the light and when the traffic light would turn green and the trolley moves, half of the gang would be on one side of the trolley and the other half would be on the other side.

Reach up and grab onto the metal grating that covered the windows.

Usually the windows were closed. We would grab on to the grating with one hand and have the trolley take us for a ride into Penn street.

When we get to Windsor street, the trolley would stop. We would hang on or let go and ride around in a little circle behind the trolley.

When the trolley would pull away, you would ride over and grab on again. Someone in the trolley would holler to the motorman, those kids are hanging on the cage again.

He would stop a little sooner than he normally would at the next intersection.

He would open the door and get out of the trolley. We let go of the cages and ride around to the back of the trolley.

He would stand there and say you
G-- D-- kids now you cut that out, you stop that.

We would stay on our bikes until he got back on the trolley and closes the doors. The trolley pulls out, we would go and swing around in a circle and hold on again.

We hung on all the way until 9th and Penn. When the trolley turns and goes down Penn street, we let go and started heading back.

Another thing that Tom said he got a kick out of, I don't have it down in my notes, but I remember and I should have. At 12th & Marion there used to be a trolley called the northeast loop.

This was the trolley car that came up Penn street, went out 10th and at Elm St. would switch tracks and go up Elm St. to 12th street. Turn left and head out to the car barn on 12th street

Well, at 12th & Marion the trolley must make the turn and has to stop. The

conductor comes out and switches tracks to continue up Marion street.

The gang would be there at 12th & Marion at night. When the trolley stops to switch tracks, and as it pulls out, one of the gang goes over and pulls the electric power wheel of the trolley down off the overhead power line.

Because the power wheel of the trolley was on a spring, when we let go, the power wheel flies up side ways and hits the power line.

Sparks fly, the trolley stops and the lights inside the trolley go dark for the passengers. The people inside holler.

The gang often played in the alley behind 1018 Spring Street. There was a street light on a pole in the alley. One of the games we liked to play was kick the can.

We usually played at night.

Each one of us was given a number and maybe we would do odds and evens, or pitch pennies, but somehow, someone got the job of throwing the can down the alley as far as he could and hollering a number.

In kick the can, someone throws the can down the alley and hollers out a number. If it's your number, you run and pick up the can and come running back, backwards.

While the rest of the gang ran and hid.

Run backwards, back to the pole. Then bang the can up and down, up and down on the cement and in time with banging the can, holler kitty, kitty can, kitty, kitty can. Everyone must stop in their tracks.

Put the can down and take steps towards the person nearest you or towards the person you think you can run and tag.

After you tag the person, he has to go back and sit on the ground next to the can. Then chase and tag somebody else. They have to go back and sit by the can.

After a while half the gang is sitting side by side on the ground next to the can.

If someone was hiding or if someone got away from the guy who is tagging everybody, beats him back to the can, he kicks the can down the alley.

Everyone who was sitting there is free to run away and the game starts all over again.

One game usually lasted one or two hours and was fun. Another game for poor kids to play.

In the alley behind the grade school, we loved to play marbles. The alley was a dirt alley.

Running down both sides of the alley was dish water and laundry wash water from the back yards of the houses on 10th street.

Usually the alley was very dirty with black coal dirt. We played marbles with a little circle. Each player would ante up a marble in the circle. Five players would have five marbles in the circle.

To start the game, the closest you tossed your marble to the circle went first. Sometimes you blew your hot breath on your hands before shooting or you shook your open hands to increase circulation.

Each boy had his own style of shooting. Some times to make sure of hitting your opponent's marble, you would take dirt and build a mound like a golf tee and put his marble up in the air.

Then you shoot the marble. I was average when it came to shooting marbles.

The Reading Eagle/Times had a marble tournament in at City Park. I was born in December, 1930 and everyone else was too old, I was just under the age limit.

I was the oldest but was still able to be in the contest. City Park used large circles on large clay pads. I was used to black coal dirt with detergent and a small circle of marbles.

City Park had nice clean conditions. They didn't play with a little circle they played with a large circle that must have been 5to6 feet in diameter.

They played where you stayed inside the circle all the time, knocking marbles out of the circle. I had no experience with this. After the first round, I lost and was out of the contest.

Every now and then the gang would go to the public library at Spring & Moss, the northeast Branch of the public library.

The library had a dumb waiter to take books up and down between the first and second floor. The first floor was the adult area.

I don't know where the inside steps were, but the upstairs was for teenagers and kids.

The dumb waiter had a bin to put the books in and you pull on ropes that would take the dumb waiter with books between the first and second floor.

When the librarian was busy or away from the desk, we would go over to the dumb waiter and pull the little bin all the way up and look down the shaft or make the bin go down so that it was at the bottom of the shaft.

We would look around to be sure no one was looking.

Someone would reach for a library book from the shelf, tear the pages out and watch the papers float down the shaft. It was terrible. I'm so embarrassed. That's was we used to do every now and then.

Often at Spring Street & Moss grade school, were substitute teachers. There was a teacher for penmanship. Her name was either Horton or Norton. She would come in once a week and the class would all do penmanship exercises.

Then, another teacher would come with a little mouth organ, and we would sing songs.

The teacher for penmanship stands in front of the class and holds a tablet up in the air, shoulder high. She writes on the tablet with her other hand.

Usually it was a scribbling up and down, up and down while holding the pencil on a 45 degree angle and gliding her hand on her finger tips.

Sometimes she wrote a chain of circles that looked like a long “slinky” on its side.

Every week for one year, the writing teacher wore the same black dress and the same little black hat with a little artificial flower bud on the side.

In 5th & 6th grade, the gang loved to sing and harmonize. Some of us were altos and some were sopranos. This was way before I ever went to the choir at Christ Church.

We would get so carried away with singing, that we would turn in our desk seats into the aisle between the desks, put our heads together to harmonize better.

It was more fun to sing like that because you were closer to each other and you could hear each other sing.

The regular homeroom teacher thought singing together was great. She liked when we sang and harmonized. We listened to her and got the pitch from her pitch pipe.

When she was absent, the substitute music teacher said, why are you boys harmonizing together. Just what do you think you are doing.

Why, who would ever allow you to do this. Cut that out, just sit back in your seats She took all the fun out of singing.

.I don't think many people knew that I bought a horse. Yep, I bought a horse from a young lady down at Boyertown for about \$150.00 I kept him right across the street.

There was a barn (Snyder's Barn) and Mr. Snyder's barn wasn't being used.

He let me keep the horse there for nothing. I bought the hay and straw and took care of it. There was a little corral for the horse.

After I had the horse for a year and a half, I thought it was no longer necessary to lead the horse through the corral into the barn. One day I was standing outside the gate to the corral.

The saddle was off and all the gear was off. I said to the horse git. I slapped the horse on the butt and didn't lead the horse in. The horse took one step, turned away from the barn and ran up over to the field.

The horse ran away up over the field. My heart starting thumping and I chased the horse. He ran down over the hills toward Hain Avenue. I lost him.

So I just went back home. I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to call the Police or the Humane society. I just waited and waited.

A couple hours later I was outside and there were some kids walking up the street. One little kid said, hey mister, are you looking for your cow.

I said yes. The kid said, he's over in the field. They thought the horse was a cow.

He was over in the field on his back with his legs up in the air. The horse was scratching his back.

Later I'm riding the horse along a ridge across the field. It was 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. The sun was over in the West and I could see the shadow of me on the horse.

The horse is only running on three legs. One hind leg was pulled up and he was running on three legs.

I called the Vet. I sensed there was something wrong about the way the vet handled himself with the horse. He said I'll tell you, Charles, I never worked on a horse before.

He said he worked on dogs, cats and birds but this was his first time he worked on a horse. I could tell the vet was scared of the horse. The horse knew he was scared. The Vet said, sell the horse.

After all the time and effort and I guess, I wasn't having that much fun. I was getting tired of it, it was a lot of work.

It seemed for every hour that I ride the horse, I had three hours of work.

I rented a horse van and a driver. I was going to take the horse to the auction at Green Dragon.

When the van came, I could not move the horse. I could not get my horse to walk up the plank into the horse van.

I played around with the horse trying to get him up the plank for at least an hour. A car pulled up and it was the guy who I rented the van from. He was mad.

He said this is taking too long. I said I can't get my horse to get up the plank.

The man went behind my horse, put his head and shoulders up under the horse's hind legs. Picked the horse up on top of his shoulders and walked the horse like he was a wheel barrow up the plank into the truck.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think you could put your head and shoulders between the rear legs of a horse, lift the horse up in the air and walk him like he was a wheel barrow.

As we're driving along the way to Green Dragon, I looked back into the truck for the head of the horse. The horse isn't there. I quick look again. The horse is down on the floor. .

The rope that was supposed to keep him in place got tangled in his harness and the horse was laying down on the floor of the van. We pulled along side the road.

It's very late when we get to Green Dragon. The auction is in the last half hour. When I get there, there is no one in charge any more. Everything seems to be over. In the last hour, no one is around.

I see all the horses going through a gate into a building. The Amish boys are running through the gate with a horse in each hand. I wait my turn.

When the last pair of horses go in, I run in and now I'm inside this big ring with all the Amish boys running around with their horses.

Everybody is running pretty fast. Since I'm last in line in the circle, I'm right in front of the first Amish boy with his horses.

Everybody is running while the perspective buyers are looking the horses over.

Everybody starts to laugh because it's obvious from the look on my face that I'm scared. I'm afraid that the Amish boy with his two big horses running behind me, might run into me.

We go around and go around. The auctioneer says kid, get out of here. I run out the side door. Outside somebody gives me \$50.00 and takes the horse.

Don't ever own a horse, don't ever own a horse.

Remember I said I could use the barn because the farmer lived there. Well , the farmer had a brother. I got to know the farmer's brother well . He used to take me over to Laurel Run Creek.

He would say, OK Charlie, look down at the creek and tell me what you see. Then I'd look and I'd say, well I don't see anything but water.

He said, right. He said that's a dead creek. I said a dead creek.

He said, well , you don't see any snakes, you don't see any minnows, you don't see any fish, you don't see any animals that live along the bank of that stream. He said, that's a dead stream. I said why is that.

He says its contamination from that chemical plant up near Tuckerton.

There's a chemical plant and I'll bet you that's why Laurel Run Creek is a dead creek.

Then he told me about his little dog. He had a little mutt, kind of a mixed breed. He says, oh yea, you need a good dog for catching groundhogs. He says groundhogs are good eating. I said, yuck, come on.

He said my dog is a pretty good fighter, but every now and then, he meets a ground hog that beats him up.

I said, what do you do with groundhogs. He said, you eat groundhogs.

Sometime later this farmer was working with the water company. He was in a ditch digging a trench and putting in a water line when the sides of the dirt wall caved in and pinned his legs up to his waist.

He couldn't get out and everybody was hurrying to dig him out. He was talking to them while they were digging him out, I guess he's OK.

Well this poor Winni died of internal injuries from the weight and the force of the trench pressing against him from the waist down. There was enough damage to his stomach, abdomen, etc. that he died.

At Spring & Moss grade school I'd say once a year the teachers would conduct eye tests. The kids would go into the lobby of the school and stand at the of the hall.

At the other of the hall stood a teacher holding a card with a letter, say a letter "E".

I'm standing at the of the hall. The distance was about 20 feet between the teacher and me. I held a little 3 X 5 card over one eye and motioned with my other hand whether the letters held by the teacher pointed up, down, right, or left.

This was repeated several times with different letters for the other eye.

After the kids had their eyes tested, we had a hearing test. It was so simple and so easy. Down at the end of the hall you would stand and it was quiet. The teacher made everybody wait perfectly quiet.

You would stand down the hall and place your right hand over your right ear. The teacher would whisper a letter and you would have to try and hear it.

Sometimes you would hear it and yell the letter out and other times you would say, I can't hear it.

She would repeat whispering. She would do the same thing with the other ear. So much for the hearing test.

It was so easy and so much fun to give eye tests and hearing tests for 25 kids in the class. It usually would take the whole day.

Sometimes at the grade school one or two kids in class had lice, little bitty things in your hair. The teacher would go up and down the aisles and not touch but would look over your hair.

You knew what she was doing, She was looking for lice.

If the teacher thought you had lice, you were sent home with a note. At home your mother had a very fine tooth comb and would comb your hair one way and then the other way.

If there was lice on the comb or you thought you had lice, a sticky salve like vasoline was rubbed in your hair.

Your mother would take an old silk stocking, roll it up and down at the heel and toe, and slip this stocking over your head.

Then you went back to school. With that salve and stocking you could go to class. You were not contagious. Quite often I'd be sitting in class and I'd look around the room.

I'd see stockings on heads over here and stockings on heads over there.

Some of the kids got fancy and had their stockings in pigtails down their backs.

When I was in 6th grade I had my first teeth which were my baby teeth. However, when my second teeth came down, they did not push out the first teeth. The second teeth came down behind the first teeth.

I went to the dentist at 11th & Spring street next to the Seafod House. The dentist said, Charles, I'll tell you what we're going to do. I could see in his face.

He knew that we didn't have money for braces and we didn't have money for expensive dentist operations.

The dentist said let nature take its course. As the second teeth come down behind the first teeth, the first teeth slowly came loose and came out by themselves.

But my second row of teeth were back too far. He didn't like that.

The dentist gave me two or three dozen tongue depressors, the wooden tongue depressors that the doctor puts in your mouth to hold your tongue down to look at your throat.

He gave me dozens of tongue depressors.

I would take a tongue depressor, put in in my mouth and bite down on it.

By biting down on the bottom of the tongue depressor , it pushed the top of the tongue depressor against the second row of teeth.

I would bite on that tongue depressor the whole day.

When I would go out in the morning I would just pick one out and go down to the gang with the tongue depressor sticking out of my mouth.

I had it in the whole day, biting on it.

You can imagine, by the end of the day, the tongue depressors got splintered and sometimes I bit them in half.

Most of the time, they became very dirty and sticky and I would throw them away and get another.

In the course of six months of biting on the tongue depressors every day, those second teeth were pushed front to where they belonged in my mouth.

Many years later, when I would accidentally greet this dentist at Berkshire Mall, he'd say Charles, give me a smile. Then I would smile. He would say, good job.

When I was 16, I had a part-time job as an usher at the Strand Movie Theater at 9th & Spring street. The uniform was a light blue sport coat with "Love Boat" Braid on the shoulder, a white shirt, a red bow tie and gray pants.

The pants were 6 inches too short in length. I was told that since most of the time I worked in the movie where It's dark, no one would notice.

As an usher, I would stand at the top of the aisle while the movie was on and it was dark in the theater. a man and woman would come to my side. I would ask them, where they would like to sit.

The man usually would say, just below the middle aisle. I had a flashlight to shine down on the floor between me and the couple so they could see where to walk.

We would walk down the aisle while the movie was playing and stop a little past the middle. Then the man would usually say no, two more rows down.

I would bend over to the people who were sitting in the seats and say, would you excuse us please. They would get up from their seats and I would step back. I was still shining this little flashlight on the floor.

The couple I was escorting goes in and sits down. The other people who stood up, sit down again. I turn off the flashlight, and walk up the aisle to stand and wait for other patrons.

Sometimes a couple at the top of the aisle would say, no, we'll find our own way. The wife would say, let the boy help you. The man would say ,all right kid ,just down there.

You take the flashlight and by that time, the couple is walking ahead of you.

You were walking three steps behind them shining the flashlight on the floor trying not to disturb the other people watching the movie.

The people watching the movie didn't seem to mind being disturbed by me as an usher but did mind moving when asked by the couple.

I was fired after three nights on the job. When there were no people to take down the aisle, I would sit down in the row seat and watch the movie.

The manager said, no, I don't want you do to that.

If there are no people there, you just stand, keep standing and wait for people.

I said, why can't I sit here and watch the movie until someone comes in. The manager said, I want you to stand and wait. So I did.

Once or twice while I was standing, I turned the flashlight on while the movie theater was dark and shined on couples watching the movie. The manager said, get out of here, you are fired.

When the Strand opened, it was a beautiful movie theater. The part that impressed me was the carpet down the main aisle. It had some kind of chemical in the carpet that made it glow in the dark. It had an ultra glow of purple and black.

Another thing I remember is, when you went over to the water fountain. It was a big black porcelan sink and there were fluorescent lights that had a purple tint to them on each side of the sink.

As a result, your fingernails and your teeth glowed white, super white.

Everybody would get a drink, stand up, make a face and show your teeth glowing in your mouth.

One night during the summer, word got around the neighborhood, the Strand was going to show a very risqué movie. The crowd started to form early at 9th & Spring street.

Not just one after the other, but four wide in line. That wide line starts, goes up Spring street, along side the movie theater and continues up to the northeast public library at Moss street, a half a block away.

One dollar a person was what they charged. Everybody had one dollar bills. The cashier was giving a ticket for a dollar, a ticket for a dollar. After a while it got so bad, the cashier's cash drawer was overflowing with dollar bills..

She would just throw the dollar bills over her shoulder to the floor. Now, all these dollar bills are laying on the floor around her chair. The assistant manager came through the crowd and opens up the cashier's door and starts to help her.

When I came to the cashier window to get my tickets I looked in. The manager was on his hands and knees on the floor behind the cashier's chair picking up the dollar bills that were piled knee deep.

That was the first inning of the "X" rated movies down at the Strand.

I want to talk about some of the things and jobs I did looking back over the summers. I had been a playground leader for the City of Reading.

There was a one week orientation at Schlegel Park Playground where you learned different games like volleyball, hopscotch and all kinds of games.

At the end of the week, everyone was anxious to know their playground assignment.

I was assigned to Barbey's at Schuylkill Avenue and West Buttonwood. You go over the Buttonwood street bridge to Schuylkill Avenue. An IGA store is where my playground used to be.

Before I went to the playground, the head of the recreation department of the City of Reading called me over and said Charles, what you have learned this

week is very nice.

But when it comes to the games that we learned to play at Schlegel Park, Well , we don't play those games at Barbeys.

Oh I said, well what do you do there. Basically he said you just stop the fights. You keep the fights down.

The first week on the playground I saw all the little kids. There were billboards right along the side of the pavement.

Walking on schuylkill avenue going towards the City of Reading, on the left side, were the row homes and on the right side was the playground. The playground was behind three large billboards.

Walk around the billboards to get to the playground.

The little kids would climb up on top of the billboards and when the people walk past on the pavement, the kids would spit on them. They would hide when the people would look up.

They would spit and spit and then hide. I told the kids not to do this and well, they did it whether I was looking or not, they just did it.

After two weeks I couldn't figure out how to make the kids stop spitting from top of the billboards. Then it dawned on me. One morning I got most of the kids together at the table in the playground.

I said this is what we are going to do. The next time we see someone going up to the billboards to spit down on people, the rest of us have my permission to throw stones at them.

Everybody liked this. All that spitting stopped because the minute some kid would walk over towards the billboards, the rest of the kids would pick up stones. They knew it was all right to throw stones at them.

The spitting stopped and no one threw stones.

That was the solution. My supervisor at City Hall wasn't too keen on my idea.

Once a week on a Friday morning, the Policeman who walked the beat stopped at the playground. He would walk into the playground.

I knew he was there because all the activity would stop at the playground.

The games stopped, the talking stopped, everything stopped. The Policeman would walk over and then I would turn around. He would say to me but loud enough for everyone to hear.

Listen here, Charlie, if these kids give you a hard time, you send them to me and I'll take care of them. He would spin his club in the air, turns around and walks down Schuylkill Avenue.

When he is partially down the avenue, all the bottles are breaking, the swings are being banged together, soda bottles are being broken. When that cop left, all hell broke loose.

A week or so later I stopped in to Spike Moyer, he was the head of the recreation department. I said keep that cop off my playground.

Keep that cop away from my playground. I don't need him and I don't want him.

He is more trouble than he is worth. So the cop stopped coming around and it worked itself out.

On every playground there is a utility shed. Balls, bats, volleyballs and nets, all the cans of paint and things used to clean up were stored in this utility shed.

As a playground leader you had to be careful because when you would go into this shed, if you were not careful, the kids would slam the door shut put a cloth pin or stick through the hoop on the door latch to lock you in.

All summer long, I always made sure that the shed door was propped open with a big rock or a big stick. I would always be inside just a few minutes and then get out.

Summer was almost over and for just that one instant I'm inside and I knew

it.

I could feel the door going closed. The door slammed shut and the kids locked me in.

The kids outside pushed and shoved the shed back and forth. They pushed the shed over on its side. The paint cans, the ropes inside and all the bats and balls spilled on top of me.

Finally, somebody took pity on me, pulled the stick out of the lock and I was free.

Everybody thought this was so much fun.

One summer morning, a boy about 10 years is playing box hockey and is winning all the games. The rules of the playground are, you continue playing until you lose. Then you have to give up the hockey stick.

This kid refused to give up the stick. I grabbed him by the arm and was hurting him, but I acted like I wasn't. He tried to pull away but I kept hurting him. He hollared let go, let go

After I let go of his arm, he threw a pocket knife and it stuck in the board in the middle of the box hockey.

The boy ran home to get his big brother to beat me up. The kids are excited to know that Charlie was going to be beat up.

About 20 minutes later I see this kid's brother walking up Schuylkill Avenue and I'm wondering how in the world I'm going to handle this. I look down and this guy is 10 years older than me.

As he gets closer I smile and his brother smiles, here he was a friend that I knew from Reading High. He said are you, Charlie, and I said, yeah.

I said are you this so and so's brother.

He said yes. He said, is my kid brother giving you a hard time and I said, yes, he's a pain in the butt.

This big brother goes up and smacks his little brother and he said listen, you behave up here at the playground and you listen to Charlie.

Don't give Charlie a hard time. We smiled at each other and the big brother walked back home.

I think if I had done this book any other way, I never would have started and I never would have gotten done.

My summer job at Armor Meat Packing. It used to be at 2nd & Pine, Rdg.

The man's job was stabbing hogs in the throat. The hogs are going down the rail on wheels and as they glide past, the man sitting on a very high stool, removes the stiletto knife.

The blood stream just misses him. Down at the of the end of the rail, is another man with a chain saw or some kind of electric hatchet.

The hog is cut in half.

Instead of one hog hanging down, there are two halves hanging down. They were all moving one after the other. If you want to hear noise or smell something, that was it.

There's a number of work stations with women wearing chain link mesh gloves. They have knife sharpeners. As the hog goes pass, the head is cut off. It's thrown into barrels.

The barrel is loaded with heads. The next station you have two women with gloves on and they are smoking. They are very careful because they don't want to get blood on the cigarette.

The head goes here and the jaw goes there. Then you have the other barrel for the eyes.

My job is to hand truck the barrels to dfferent work stations. Being new and not watching what I'm doing, I turned the corner with the big hand truck as the hogs were swinging around the corner.

One of those hogs that was hacksawed in half flapped all around me.

I was inside this hog and I went ahhh, ahhh. Everybody thought this was so funny. I was soaking wet with blood and had to change.

A few days later I went over to where the steers were slaughtered. A truck backs in and makes the steers walk off into a big pen. It's a steel pen. The steers are all crowded in and their heads stick up in all directions.

One of the workers walks around the pen with a big sledge hammer. He wears a big rubber apron, rubber pants, rubber boots, rubber gloves and is probably smoking. He goes over and hits each of the steers between the eyes.

If you close your eyes and listen, you would swear someone was breaking an eggshell and cracking it open. Sometimes he must hit them twice.

Usually there were 20 or 30 steers and they would all drop. The man pulls a lever and the side of this pen opens up like a garage door. All the steers slide out onto the floor.

One or two of the steers would stand up and they were crossed eye. They had a big hole in their head.

I was there one day when a steer was still alive and standing. Everybody shouts steer loose, steer loose.

Everybody jumps up and hangs on the walls and holds onto the windows. The steer comes walking down the floor and passes me.

I look at the steer with his big horns. Somebody on the walls has a gun.

He gets ready to shoot. Someone yells, are you nuts. If you shoot him here, then we have to drag him all the way back up.

So a guy from the other end of the floor jumps down off the window sill and makes noises and bangs buckets together.

The steer turns around and goes back up after him. When the steer comes back they jump back up on the walls. In the mean time, the gun was passed up the wall between the men. Someone shoots the steer.

I asked them, why doesn't someone hit him on the head with a sledge hammer.

They said no. We'll hit the steers on the head with a sledgehammer when they're in the pen. Nobody is going to stand in front of a steer when he is outside the pen. That's why the steer was shot.

I worked with a young man at Armors who was built like a gorilla. He made Arnold Schwarzenegger look like a wimp.

The guy was just one pack of muscles. He would unload the frozen steers from the refrigerated boxcars.

One time I helped. You know how big a steer is. The steer is cut into 4 sections. Each section having one leg. Each leg hung in the refrigerated cars on meat hooks.

This muscle man stands across from me and we're standing there with this quarter of a steer on the hook between us. He has his arms around the steer.

We are going to lift the leg off the hook. He asks me, do you have a good hold, Charlie.

He stands there and says to me, grab a hold, Charlie. I get behind the leg and our chins are close.

This guy was on the other side of this piece of steer. He says, are you sure you got it. I say yea, yea I got it.

He is holding it. But now he is going to unhook the steer.

He wants to make sure I'm ready. He says are you sure you got it, Charlie? You sure you got it because I'm going to lift off the hook.

I said go ahead. He lifts off the hook and it was like I was holding a freight truck.

I just grabbed but it was a couple hundred pounds.

I fell to the floor on my knees with the steer. He said I thought you had it, Charlie.

Remember I talked about the summertime and the refrigerated box cars. I spent a few days standing on a dock next to a refrigerated box car next to a refrigerated building.

A man inside the building is dressed like an eskimo.

I am standing on the deck stripped to the waist with short pants on because it's summertime. The cold refrigerated boxes are given to me from the cold boxcars and I give them to the man inside the building.

After awhile the sweat from working runs down and hits the top of my pants.

The top of my pants are wet, but because of the cold air coming out of the boxcar and the cold air coming out of the little door in the building, the sweat freezes on my pants at the waist

After awhile, you are hot and sweaty and at the same time you get chills. I'm sweating and then I'm freezing.

I got sharp pains in the stomach, so I got off that job.

Everything in the armour meat packing plant was greasy. At quitting time, at break time or lunch time the men on the third and fourth floors put their hands on the stair railings, lift their feet and slide down the railings.

No one uses the steps.

The man right behind you, slides, and the man in front of you slides. There are 6 or 8 guys sliding down the railing one after the other, all at the same time.

They lift their feet and go sliding down, make the turns and come sliding down. Slid down the hand railings and came down three floors. That was fun.

There was another thing the men did that I couldn't do.

There were big open metal barrels, at least two feet wide, 4 feet high filled with pork chops, legs, feet, gizzards and all kinds of meat.

The men would tip the barrels, then use their hands to palm the rim and move the barrel. While the barrel is tipped, role the barrels from place to place by palming the rim.

The men could tip and roll two barrels at the same time, one barrel with each hand.

I was supposed to learn palming and rolling the barrels. I would take a barrel, put my foot along side and tip it. I would tip it on its side and roll it with my two hands.

After while I get lower and lower as the weight is shifting. I keep getting lower and lower until I'm down on my knees and the barrel fell to the floor. Sometimes the meat would drop out onto the floor.

That meat had to be thrown away. When that happened the boss was mad. I couldn't palm and spin one barrel with my two hands.

Well here I am back again on dear old erin's isle. March 17 was St. Patrick's day. My music lesson was playing Peg O my Heart. So much for the dumb stuff, let's get serious.

One summer I picked peaches in the orchards at Leesport. I went down to Second and Penn, that's where the unemployment office was. There were trucks there, open stake body trucks. I climbed on the truck.

Some hobos rolled out of the boxcars and they climbed on the truck. The Sheriff's department was there with some men from the prison. They got on the truck.

I'm standing on the back of the truck holding on. When we get to the orchard, we all pile out. Next we jump on real low bed trucks where the peach baskets were.

The trucks did not have sides. The driver speeds 60 mph down little narrow lanes between the peach trees.

The peach trees are so heavy and laid down with peaches that the limbs are drooping way down over the road.

As he is driving 60 mph up these little trails, the branches of the trees are banging on us, scratching us and banging on us and scratching us.

It was about a 10 minute ride back into the middle of the orchards.

We jump of of the truck and unload the empty peach baskets.

The man in charge from the orchards says, now listen you men, you are here to work and we won't take any fooling around.

He said now let me tell you, if you have a peach fight you are going to walk back to Reading. I said to myself, a peach fight, what in the world is a peach fight.

We were given 6' high ladders, some buckets and peach baskets. The man said now you two go there, and you two go here.

We started to climb up into the trees. We stand on the ladders and pull peaches.

We put them in a bucket and tumble the peaches into the basket. About 2 ½ hours later something flies past me and hits me on the back of the head.

Oh It was sticky. It was a peach fight.

You take a peach and bite it. You have a peach with a big hole in it, that is sticky and goey. You throw the peach at somebody.

Now the peaches are flying back and forth between the trees and hitting pickers who are up on the ladders.

The boss comes over and says I told you guys. Well, things quieted down. After picking peaches for a few hours.

I had stripped to the waist because it was so stinking hot. The sweat was on my chest and down my belly.

All the peach fuzz was getting in the sweat and I was starting to itch and scratch like crazy.

After a couple hours, I couldn't take it anymore.

I came down the ladder, looked around and there was a horse trough a couple yards away. I ran over .to it.

There was scum and algae on top of the water but I held my breath and dipped in the trough all the way down to my waist.

I had this scum and algae all over me. It was terrible.

Near the of the day, the baskets were full and taken to an area where the man who worked at the orchards, kept a tally. Each picker had so many baskets.

The pickers go into a little field house in the middle of the orchard. We're going to get paid based on the number of baskets picked.

The boss who was so ornery at the start, and said we would walk home, was sitting at the table next to a pile of money.

He had one dollar bills and five dollar bills and a gun.

He lays the gun on top of the money as a paper weight. Things got a little quiet. There were little kids, maybe 10 or 12 years old who were picking.

The man said, listen I'm not paying men's wages for what little boys do. He wasn't going to pay the kids

The kids picked one or two baskets but he wasn't going to pay them.

Some great big fella who rolled out of the boxcars at Second and Penn, came over and said, listen, he said. Those kids worked hard for those few baskets and pay them.

Everybody looked at everybody and I thought oh my god, he'll shoot him. I kind of stepped back towards the door. The man with the gun said, all right, all right.

We were taken back to Second and Penn in the back of the truck again. I guess it was around 6:00 p.m. I was full of scratches and cuts and was bleeding.

The scum was still attached to my belly and to the top of my pants. What a mess.

Now we come to the good part of one of my summer stories.

After Barbey's playground I was assigned to Pendora My goodness, Pendora Park was like heaven compared to Barbey's. Remember the billboards, the milk bottles and the soda bottles.

Well, here was Pendora, trees, volley ball courts, basketball courts, baseball fields. a beautiful field house and there was Joan.

Oh my , oh my , when I saw Joan, there was just something about Joan that I knew she was it.

Joan was there most of the time. She was very active in the softball and volleyball.

Then at night or even late in the day, we had these little 45 rpm records and they would have dancing in the field house.

Joan showed me how to jitterbug.

That was the start. I Love Joan very much.

On summer vacation, I worked with Pop Pop Henning and Sonny. They worked at roofing and siding. Pop Pop Henning was in business for himself.

Would you believe that my very first day on the job, we were going to fix the slate roof on the church steeple of St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 16th & Perkiomen.

We had to open up a 100 ft. ladder. Pop Pop climbed up the ladder and went up to the church steeple. Sonny climbed up the ladder and went up to the church roof.

I climbed up the ladder and when I got to the top, the top of the ladder was tied fast to the church with heavy ropes.

I had to step across the space between the ladder and the church.

I had to step from the top step of the ladder over onto the roof.

I would look down and I stood at the top of the ladder. I couldn't move. I started to freeze. I'm scared.

I was frozen with fear for 10 minutes. I took my right foot and put it over,

Now I'm straddling between the ladder and the church.

One foot on the church steeple roof and the other foot on the ladder. The ladder moves away from the church a little.

I step across and stand on the church roof next to the steeple. I look up into the sky and my toes inside my shoes curl downward like a chicken or a rooster.

I want my toes to grab onto the roof. Again, I couldn't move. Tears started to flow from my eyes.

Sonny and Pop Pop are walking around the steeple and around the slate roof working. I manage enough nerve to sit down and lean against the church steeple.

I'm so scared. I freeze and can't move.

I sat there, I sat there the whole day.

I just sat there up in the heavens, I just sat there.

About 3:00 p.m. I was able to stand up. Pop Pop had set up a temporary scaffolding, a wood rope pulley on the side of the roof that dropped a hook on a rope down to the pavement.

Pop Pop is down on the pavement and asks me to pull a bucket of tools up. I lean on this pulley with my right hand to talk down to him. The pulley is tied to the roof on a temporary basis.

My weight leaning on the rope and pulley causes the scaffolding to collapse..

I fall and slide across my knee. My leg goes up under me.

I'm sitting on my left leg and my right leg goes out over the edge of the church roof. I'm sitting on top of my left leg and my right leg extends out over the edge of the roof into the air.

I look down at Pop Pop. He hollers up, are you OK Charlie? I move oh so slow. I crawled back to the roof where I was sitting before.

I sat there again.

I sat there and didn't move for about 2 to 3 hours, maybe 4 hours.

Around 5:00 or 6:00 o' clock Pop Pop and Sonny start getting all the tools

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and materials together.

The scaffolding with the pulley is set aside. Pop Pop and Sonny go down the ladder. They are ready to go home. I'm still sitting up on the roof.

While I'm sitting up there, I hear Pop Pop and Sonny putting the materials and the tools inside the car.

I'm still sitting up there. It maybe takes an hour to load up the car.

Pop Pop Henning hollers up, are you coming Charlie. I said, yep. Remember I said I had to step over from the ladder to the roof. Now I have to step from the roof to the ladder.

My whole body is twisting and turning inside. I'm trying not to look down because I was so scared. I swing my foot around into the air.. I made it, I came down this ladder. One step at a time.

Go to 16th & Perkiomen and look at that steeple. When I got down, Pop Pop said Charlie tomorrow when we come here, why don't you stay down on the pavement and use the pulley to send tools and materials up to Sonny when we need them.

Up on the church roof, Pop Pop and Sonny worked on a part of the roof next to the steeple, that was two or three stories higher than the roof where I was sitting. Pop Pop and Sonny walked around and worked on little ladders.

So much for St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Another job with Pop Pop was out in South Temple. A back porch roof. It was only up one story and I was painting a tin roof, green. After St. Paul's, being up one story was a breeze.

I'm painting and painting with green paint and when I go to stand up, I step on a part of the roof I just painted. My feet go up in the air.

I remember going passed the spouting. I asked myself as I fell, am I going to fall and take it, or am I going to help myself. This thinking was all done in an instant. I said, no, I want to help myself. I turned and wanted to land on my feet.

My foot hit the spouting and the spouting went down and bent into a big V shape. It straightened me up. I went down and landed on the pavement.

My chest came down on top of my knees. The can of green paint splattered on the pavement next to me.

Pop Pop was out front and came running back. Are you okay Charlie. I laid flat on my back and said yes, I'm all right.

I don't know how Pop Pop ever explained to the home owner the big green spot on the pavement.

I'm sure to this day that green spot is still there.

In Reading near Washington and Walnut street, Pop Pop Henning, Sonny and I were installing the wooden floor of an inside parking garage.

Pop Pop bought the wood from a dismantled railroad boxcar. The individual planks of the wood must have been 4 inches thick.

Pop Pop bought hundreds of nails or spikes that were 6 inches long. We sat on the floor and used 8 lb. sledgehammers to spike the boxcar planks to the old floor.

I remember laying down the planks diagonal in one floor pattern and the second layer of planks on top in a different floor pattern.

When finished, that floor weighed a ton.

One time in Mount Penn, I was working on a back roof using an air hammer. The air hammer had a heavy rubber belt and this rubber belt went back and forth to move a chisel.

I was trying to chisel the loose mortar out between the bricks.

This air hammer would always get away from me and go in and break off large chunks of brick.

The chisel would jam between the bricks and when I pull it out it would

always break some of the brick off.

I tried and tried not to break the
bricks ,only the mortar. After awhile it looked pretty bad..

I was breaking about every fifth brick. I stop, step back and look at the wall with all the broken brick.

I loved working with Pop Pop Henning. He was a good carpenter and very conscientious.

No lost motion. He knew all his tools and everything was always sharp, straight, true and nothing fancy.

He and I did work at the apartment at 12th & Robeson where Sue and Ron live now.

We were working in the living room and I remember Pop Pop Henning was standing and working a little saw horse

He stepped back and I yelled stop. The saw horse became unbalanced. I can see it as plain as if it were today. I can see Pop Pop falling off onto the living room floor right on his butt.

He bounced two or three times, just like a ball.

He went boom, boom, boom. I asked John are you okay. Yea he said, just don't tell Fronia (his wfe).

Remember I said I used work on furnaces with Warren. The last furnace I worked on was over at Wilshire.

I found out later that the furnace was in the house that my boss at AT & T had just bought a few weeks before.

I was good at knocking down old furnaces. A lot of the work with furnaces is with sheet metal.

I used to love to watch Warren use the right hand shears and the left hand shears. Then the right hand snips and the left hand snips.

Sometimes Warren would use both shears or snips at the same time. One shear or snip in the right hand and one shear or snip in the left hand.

Measure and draw circles on the sheet metal with a compass. Use the sharp pointed of the compass to puncture the metal, turn the compass sideways ,enlarge the puncture, then cut out the holes.

Depending which shears you use and how you cut, sometimes the sheet metal cuts and rolls away from you or sometimes the sheet metal cuts and rolls towards you.

I was always getting nicks and cuts from sharp metal edges and points of sheet metal. I spent a lot of time mixing paste with water. I also had rolls of asbestos tape.

Wherever there was a seam or wherever piping fitted together, I would apply this wet tape and smooth it around the seams. That was a good way to get cuts if you weren't careful.

You had to make sure it looked nice.

When the water evaporated, that asbestos tape would get real hard and tight. It would stop furnace gas from getting into the house.

The following summer at Kutztown College in speech class, nobody knew who you were and, nobody knew what to talk about.

The professor said well , Charles, tell us what you did this summer. Okay I said.

So the following week I stood up in front of class and explained to the class how to dismantle and install a hot air furnace.

I went through the different parts of the furnace, how to knock it down and using snips and shears, how to assemble it and the thermostat.

When I finished, the speech professor looked at me. She was kind of stunned and quiet. She said well , I don't know what to say.

In her world of academia, it never occurred to her that, maybe, there were men and young boys knocking down and installing hot air furnaces and getting cuts and nicks.

She said, well that certainly was an interesting talk, Charles.

I would like to talk about a story that I probably should have talked about

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earlier.

This is one of my best memories. My Mom, Grandmom Rightmyer, went to the Humane society at 11th & Amity.

She wanted a little dog to be a watch dog.

When my Mom talked to the people at the Humane society, they take her on a tour.

As she walks through the kennels, there is a little dog, a little scottish terrier, with short legs, a wide body and a brown head.

Most of the time the dog sits in the corner and looks away from the front of the cage.

My Mom asks what is wrong with that dog. The attendant is quiet and says, We don't know.

We think it's a mental problem. That dog just won't respond.

My Mom looks at this dog and the dog must have looked back at my Mom. My Mom asks what are you going to do with the dog.

If nobody picks this dog up in a week or so, we are going to put it to sleep.

My Mom says, I'll take that dog. The attendant said we want to make sure you understand that the dog may not listen like you think . My Mom says, I'll worry about that.

My Mom takes the dog home to north 10th street, my Mom has Buster Brown.

Over the years that my Mom had the dog, Buster Brown was the healthiest, nicest, funniest, little dog that I would ever have wanted my Mom to have.

In my Mom's back yard, part of the yard was cement, there was a cement patio walk and a little grass area.

Buster Brown was trained by my Mom to do her business only on the cement.

I used to think this was so funny. Buster Brown would go to the back door

and scratch the door.

My Mom would open the door and let the dog into the yard.

Buster Brown would go out on the cement, do her business, come back and scratch on the door and my Mom would let Buster Brown back in.

My Mom would go out with her little shovel and bucket and clean the cement with a garden hose.

Over the years everybody in the family loved Buster Brown. She was so little, you could easily put her over on her back and shake her.

Her little legs would try to push your hands away.

The minute she would hear a strange sound in the house or the yard, she barks.

That was beautiful. That is exactly what my Mom wanted, a watch dog who barks.

One day my Mom said, come on, Charles, we're going to take Buster Brown over to the Vet. The veterinarian's son was in business now .

All through the years his father took care of Buster Brown.

My Mom knew that the Vet's father was going to be there to put Buster Brown to sleep.

I was wearing a long sleeve white shirt. As I cradled Buster Brown in my left arm, I saw the old Vet squint to measure the dosage in the hypodermic needle.

As the old Vet turned, and with tears rolling down my cheeks, I said, loudly, the dog, doc, the dog, not my white sleeve.

Just in passing I have to say something about how my Mom did things. Out in the yard she had this little garden and grass area.

She didn't think it was right that the roots from her plants could go under the fence and crowd the roots in the neighbor's yard.

My Mom had her maintenance man, who did work for her, dig up all my Mom's plants and dig a trench along the fence.

My Mom buried a a roll of sheet metal down along the fence, back filled

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with dirt and had her plants planted back in.

The plant's roots will never come back up under her fence and crowd the roots of the plants in her neighbor's yard.

One day the maintenance man said, Charles, I want to tell you something. When your Mom tells me what to do I'm never sure how to do it.

He said until one day it dawned on me, well I don't have to worry about that, I don't have to think about that.

Whenever I come to your Mom's place, not only does she tell me what to do, she always tells me how she wants it done.

It's that simple. Isn't that something.

One time I took little Tom to the circus up at Leesport. After the show, the circus the ring master made an announcement to the crowd.

The ring master said that anyone who stayed after the show and helped take down the tent would get paid \$7.00 an hour.

He said they would pay children and adults \$7.00 an hour. It was a cute little circus with clowns and animals.

After the show, I walked over with Tom to the ring master. Tom and I were the only ones who were going to stay and help take down the circus tent and circus seats.

In comes the elephant with a chain and harness.

They take the elephant over to the large pole holding up the center of the tent.

I had just assumed that the pole was stuck in a hole in the ground. No, the main pole was sitting on top of a steel plate which was on top of the ground.

They hook the elephant up to the steel plate and make the elephant walk away.

As the elephant walked away, he pulls the steel plate away, the pole comes crashing down.. We stood out of the way of the circus tent as it fell.

There must have been about 50-60 other smaller poles to help support the big tent. We just slid them onto a truck.

I glanced out of the corner of my eye. Tom was going around pulling very small metal wires out of the ground.

There were hundreds of them. He was having fun. He was the only one doing this. There were hundreds of metal wires to be picked up.

After the poles and canvas were loaded in this tractor trailer, only the main center pole remained to be loaded. This pole was about 50-60 feet long, the diameter must have been 5 to 6 feet.

Ten men stood on one side of the pole and ten men stood on the other side. I was on one side with the ten men and last in line. I was at the end of the pole.

This pole had a slight taper to it. It was much broader at the bottom and tapered up to the top.

All the men grabbed a hold. The men on each side were carrying and at the same time were running this pole up on top of the other poles on the tractor trailer bed.

As we all run up onto the trailer, the first two men running to the trailer peel off and slide the pole, then the second two would peel off and so on.

This huge metal pole is making a loud noise because it's hitting and sliding on top of the other metal poles on the trailer bed.

The final pair of men start to peel off. Now I notice as the men peel off, the pole is getting heavier.

I just assumed when they peeled off, the weight of the pole would be lighter, the weight transferred to the trailer.

But it didn't work that way. The weight seemed to be transferred back to the to the end of the pole. Two men were left holding the end of the pole. I was one of the two men.

I was on one side of the pole and a big bruiser was on the other side. I felt like ten tons were pressing on my shoulders and arms when this other big bruiser and I peeled off.

I fell to my knees. I went ooooooh and the other men laughed.

They knew what was happening on the tail end.. Those guys put me on the end on purpose. They knew the weight shifted. They played a trick on me.

I thought Tom and I would have an experience working together, as father and son. Tom still walked around pulling wires out and I ended up on my knees.

One of the stories I love and I will never forget is about Susie. She was in Miss Betty's tap dancing class and the class was going down to Channel 6 in Philadelphia for the Chief Halftown show.

I was the one driving the car and it was a pretty good drive.

For most people it's not a long drive to Philadelphia but I think it's a long drive. We went to Channel 6 and we were there on time and had to wait.

Miss Betty's class was just one of the classes that was there. There were six other classes there for tap dancing, a piano player, an accordion player, a singer, other groups from around the Philadelphia area.

There was a little boy there with a big accordion and the boy started to play while he was standing up.

Chief Halftown said hold it, I want you to play the accordion sitting down

The boy said, he can't play his accordion sitting down, it is too big. I have to stand up. Chief Halftown said, no, you are going to sit down.

They made the little boy sit down on a chair and he was uncomfortable. He started to cry.

It is hard enough to play the accordian and now they made the kid play sitting down.

30 years later whenever I see an accordian in a music store or I see some one on television playing the accordian, I wonder where that little boy is.

After the rehearsals and during the recording, I wander around backstage. It's after midnight and getting late.

Backstage I bump into Larry Ferrarri. He talked and talked and didn't let me say a word.

I don't remember what he was talking about, he talked to me solid for an hour. He just talked and talked.

The recording session was over and it was 2:00 in the morning. The kids all get in the car for me to drive them home.

I'm going to work the next morning. I'm not a long distance driver, especially at 2:00 in the morning.

I couldn't believe it, driving seemed to take forever just to get to Howard Johnson's at Brandywine. We arrived home at 3:00 in the morning. The kids are still talking and happy.

We spent three-quarters of an hour at Howard Johnson's talking and eating.

We drive home and it must be 3:30 when we get home. I got up at 6:00 and went to work.

When I got home that night, Joan says guess what, and I said what.

She said, Chief Halftown called , they are not satisfied with the way the show turned out.

We are going to go back again tonight.

While I'm talking about the kids, I used to take my son Gary to the Reading fair stock car races. Gary loved the races. As a young boy, 12 or 13 he loved

the noise at the stock car races, the dirt and the dust.

It seems that thousands of people that go to the stock car races love the dirt, the noise, the drivers, the cars and the food . They just love talking to each other.

I used to sit on the corner seat, maybe the third row up.

You really couldn't see because the people were always standing. They were anxious to see what was going on.

I would sit on the third row next to a railing. I would lean against the railing and fall asleep. With all that noise I would still fall asleep.

Gary could take care of himself at the stock car races.

Now I want to talk about the last weeks and months with my Mom, she had cancer. She had just had medical treatment that didn't work.

We were at the hospital and the doctor said the only thing we can do Mrs. Rightmyer is try nuclear medicine.

My Mom said, no, no doctor. She said, Charles here, will take me home. I took my Mom home and we had a bed in the dining area where she lived on 10th street. I had around the clock nursing service.

A sister and sister-in-law were licensed practical nurses and between them they made their own schedule, when it suited them to go to the store, when it suited the one sister to take care of the kids

Between those two, they just took care of their own scheduling which made the scheduling very easy for me.

I had to interview and hire one other nurse to take care of my Mom so she had 24 hour coverage.

The sister and sister-in-law, were middle aged ladies.

This third person that I interviewed and hired was a young lady who said oh yes, she knew all about taking care of people, like my Mom.

She said, I have had a lot of experience. She seemed trust worthy and sincere, so I hired her.

The sisters were what you expected from licensed practical nurses. They were very professional and business like, prompt, efficient, courteous and the whole bit.

This young woman was efficient and professional and part of her routine was she would sing songs to my Mom.

My Mom was never really much on music and I don't know whether my Mom liked it or not but the girl sang songs and they were nice songs.

They were songs from when she was a little girl.

My Mom never said anything. So I just thought okay, all right.

This young girl would tell my Mom stories about things that happened to her when she was going to school and back home.

Now the end is near for my Mom. One of the sisters called me at work and I came down the hill and she said, your Mom, I guess this is the end .

I really couldn't tell if my Mom could hear me or understand when I talked.

I raised my voice and told her how much I loved her.

I took one of my Mom's books, one on the life of Michaelangelo that my Mom liked so.

I opened the book up and read some paragraphs to her. I could not tell if my Mom was still alive, but I like to think so.

Then there were other books that she had on the studies of the Bible and books she had taken to Bible school a couple of years ago.

I read those paragraphs, the psalms, verses she had underlined. I read those to my Mom. Like I said, I hoped and prayed that she could understand.

I'm reading one of these verses out of the Bible to my Mom and I look over and my Mom's eyes closed .My Mom passes away.

During the course of my being with my Mom and reading out of the Bible, these practical nurses changed shifts.

The young girl came in. I said my Mom passed away. This young woman said I'm sorry to hear that, I always liked your Mom.

The young practical nurse said, your mother was the first patient I ever had that passed away. I don't know what to do.

In fact, I don't think I can do anything, I'm scared, she turns around and starts to leave, I said it a nice way, look, we just can't let my Mom like this.

She said, well , I'm sorry I can't help you. Just do the best you can.

I went back to my Mom. There were tubes and fluids, and bottles hanging and pills laying at her side. I started taking care of my Mom.

I disconnected the tubes and disconnected the needles, I took care of Mom.

While it was sad and uncomfortable, I was just happy taking care of my Mom who always took care of me.

One year Uncle Mac says come on Charles we're going to go fly a kite. Uncle Mac had a kite, a big paper kite with a long tail. Joe the barter is going along.

We get in the car. Joe is driving, Uncle Mac is in the front seat and I'm in the back seat with the kite.

We drive up to Grandview Blvd. up in front of Wilson High school. As we are getting out of the car, I said to Uncle Mac.

Uncle Mac we can't fly a kite today because there is no wind, there is hardly any wind at all. Uncle Mac says, oh yes, Charlie, oh yes, there is.

Uncle Mac takes the kite from me, goes around to the back of the car, stands on the bumper and leans against the back of the car.

He leans against the car and his feet are on the bumper. He has the kite and tells Joe, okay Joe. We are going out Grandview Blvd. from the City towards West Lawn.

Uncle Mac is on the back of the car holding onto the string of the kite trying to get the kite to fly.

Uncle Mac is hollering, faster, faster, Joe, faster. I'm in the back seat of the car looking out the back window.

I can't believe my eyes the kite is spinning around in a circle in the air behind the car.

I'm watching, Uncle Mac is hollering faster, faster. Suddenly the kite goes around, goes over and catches itself in the rear wheel of the car.

The kite is being shredded as it goes around and Uncle Mac is hollering faster, faster.

The kite is going around being shredded on the back wheel and I'm in the back seat in hysterics. I am laughing so bad the tears are coming down.

The last I heard was Uncle Mac hollering, faster, faster. Oh how I loved Uncle Mac.

One winter, I'm sledding up behind Wilson High School. You sled down the hill for two or three blocks, then the banks drop down sharply and continue down to the baseball field.

I just made a trip down on my sled and I am on my way back up the hill. Here comes a group on a tobaggan with no steering.

They were holding onto the ropes and the tobaggan is going very fast and straight ahead. It speeds past me and I watch it go down, down the hill and down the bank, down to the baseball field.

I couldn't believe my eyes.

The wooden benches for the baseball team to sit on, are made out of tree

stumps and heavy wooden planks. The tobaggon went under the benches and the seats, hit and bang the people in the face.

There must have been six on the tobaggon, them, bang, bang, bang. These young kids were laying all over the place.

I can't believe my eyes. I turn, call and wave to the people up at the top of the hill at the school. I holler, come on, come on , help, help.

The people up at the top are hollering back, Hi, Charlie, we see you. I'm hollering come on, come on. Oh that was terrible.

The ambulance finally came. Some kids walked away from the accident and others went away in the ambulance.

Every time I see a tobaggon in a sporting goods store or on TV it reminds me of that terrible tobaggon accident at Wilson High school.

I'm coming at you with these Uncle Mac stories because they are something.

One day I'm sitting at the table in the kitchen at Penn Cecil and Uncle Mac is over at the sink. He is disappearing in a cloud of steam.

here is steam all over the place and I see him drinking scalding water.

I say to Mrs. Haas, the housekeeper, what is Uncle Mac doing. Well, she said, you know he has had nothing but baby girls and somebody said to him, if he drinks scalding hot water, the next babies will be baby boys.

So Uncle Mac is drinking this hot water and it's running down his lips and he is grabbing the towel and Oh, It's scalding hot.

It seemed to work. He finally had baby boys.

Uncle Mac had a friend, a buddy, who was always over at Penn Cecil House. He always was there sitting in the bar room. This gentleman was always quoting shakespeare.

He was always talking about Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire, Cicero and quite often he would talk for an hour in Latin.

The few people in the bar room would say, hey Milton, say something for us. Then Milton would stand up .

Usually it was like 3:00-4:00 in the afternoon, not too busy but certain

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clientel were in the bar room.

Milton would say Friends, Romans, Countrymen, Cicero and Citizens of Rome. He would talk in Latin for an hour.

He gives a dramatic oration, a dramatic performance and when he was finished, this clientel would applaud.

They loved to hear Milton talk in Latin about the times of Caesar and Cicero.

To another episode of Uncle Mac. Oneday I was coming north on the turnpike from Philly towards Morgantown and a car going the other way speeds past me.

I said to myself that car must be going 100 mph.

I looked and there were tremendous sparks under the car as it was going down the turnpike. Here the muffler is dragging.

I said to myself. I think that was my Uncle Mac driving.

A couple minutes later a State Trooper goes past me speeding after Uncle Mac.

Somewhere I made a U turn and I go back down the turnpike towards the Trooper and Uncle Mac.

A couple miles down the turnpike, there is the State Trooper on the side of the road with his lights flashing and a couple yards in front of him is Uncle Mac's car.

Uncle Mac is just sitting with his head back on the front seat. I could see that. Between Uncle Mac's car and the State Trooper's car is Milton.

Milton is turned toward the cornfields in Morgantown.

A beautiful corn field is nearby and Milton raises his arm and says, the City Civibus Defensa and Cicero. Milton is shouting Latin to the cornfield.

The State Trooper walks up towards me and oh my gosh, the State Trooper

looked like he was 14 years old.

He looked like a boy scout with his broad rim hat on, he looked so immaculate in his suit. He asks me, as he pointed towards Milton and Uncle Mac.

He asks, is everything all right. Oh yes I said, I said that's my Uncle Mac and his friend. The Trooper said oh. I turned and went back to my car. The trooper walked back to get in his cruiser. I just headed for home.

One time Uncle Mac and me and Uncle Flick were up at the tower at skyline drive. Uncle Mac hollers, let's go. He starts running down the mountainside full speed.

My brother and I start running down the mountain after Uncle Mac.

You just go 100 yards and you realize that this run is now a running fall. You're losing your balance.

You are losing momentum and you are crashing in the leaves and falling and crashing and running.

Uncle Mac was crashing through the bushes and trees, running ahead of me. Some how Uncle Flick ends up sitting on a ledge in a stone quarry.

Flick calls to Uncle Mac and me and says I'm scared. I asked what do you mean, you are scared. He says I'm afraid to move, I'll just fall into this quarry and kill myself. We said, oh come on.

It turns out that Flick was scared and started to cry . Uncle Mac and I inch over and hold hands with Flick.

About a half hour later, we get Flick off this ledge. Uncle Mac hollers here we go and starts running down the mountain again.

Again we start tumbling, running, and tumbling and running down the mountain.

Joan says I exaggerate, but I am not exaggerating now. My Uncle Mac, Flick and I ran down the mountain falling, stumbling, falling, running, stumbling.

We didn't stop until we were almost to the back of Reading High. Uncle Mac was far ahead most of the time.

I could just hear him crashing through the bush, but couldn't see him. We ran down the mountain.

Everybody knows there's the railroad that runs parallel to Penn Avenue near Penn Cecil House. If you stand on the corner at Penn Cecil you can see the railroad tracks.

One day Uncle Mac and I were out for a hike. We were walking on the railroad ties up in Sinking Spring.

We were up near Hess gas station. We were stepping from one railroad tie to another.

For some reason, I was walking on the ties outside or next to the railroad tracks. Uncle Mac was walking in between the railroad tracks on the railroad ties.

As we are walking we are talking, suddenly Uncle Mac hollers, here comes the train.

I start running because I don't know if the train was coming or not, or if Uncle Mac is just kidding. But anyway, he and I are running just as fast as we can.

Now that I am running as fast as I can, I am getting a little tired. I start missing the railroad ties.

I am missing and running on one railroad tie to the next. I don't remember what Uncle Mac is doing.

He is not having any trouble. I start missing the railroad ties and start stepping in coal dirt.

I run and when I step in that coal dirt, I go in up to my ankles. I have to pull up hard on my feet. My socks and shoes are very dirty.

Suddenly while running , I lose my shoes.

My shoes come off because they are stuck in the coal dirt.

I run back up the tracks in my stocking feet. I put my shoes back on. We are down in front of Penn Cecil House and Uncle Mac says come on, we can go home. I look and there was no train coming.

He was just kidding. However, in my mind I thought there was a train coming.

We walk across Penn Avenue into the backyard of Penn Cecil House. We have this dirty, crummy coal dirt on our clothes, pants, shoes, and stockings.

I wash up with the garden hose.

We get ourselves dried off and I had an extra pair of shoes because I stayed at Penn Cecil House.

I put my shoes on and here is Pop Beiler. How's that, Momo's father. You got that, my Mom's Mom is Momo and Momo's father is Pop Beiler.

I move my foot over to Uncle Mac for him to tie my shoelaces.

Pop Beiler says, what, what, you a young man and you don't know how to tie your shoelaces.

For the next two hours in the backyard, I practiced tying and untying my shoelaces. That is where I learned to tie my shoelaces from Pop Beiler.

Remember the episode up on Grandview Blvd where Joe the Barter was driving the car and Uncle Mac trying to fly the kite.

Well that Joe, I would say, 30 years later, I saw him at the Reading Fair. I'm showing Tom the cows and I walk around one of the barns.

It was a very hot day, and around noontime. A motorcycle, a big Harley Davidson motorcycle was parked. Here is a man, a big man sitting on bails of hay, eating a sandwich.

I say to this guy, Joe, Joe don't you remember me. No he says, no I don't. I tell him that I'm Charles from Penn Cecil.

His face lit up and I was so glad to see him. A big bruiser with a Harley Davidson shirt on but I still wanted to hug him. It was so good to see Joe again.

At one of my afternoon trips with Uncle Mac, we were over here at the covered bridge in the Tulpehocken area. We were going to walk through the covered bridge.

So I'm walking through the covered bridge. Part way in, just looking at the wood beams and painting that is on the walls.

I turn around and my Uncle Mac isn't behind me. When I started walking Uncle Mac was behind me.

I hear a voice holler, hey Charles and I look. You know the big rafters that support the roof and the sides, all the beams must have been this thick and it was like an arch. These rafters were up under the roof of the bridge.

Uncle Mac is crawling through the spacing up there between the arches, the trusses and the roof.

So I back track and now I follow Uncle Mac crawling up against the roof through these trusses.

It must have taken us two hours because once you got to the middle of the bridge, each space was starting to get smaller.

Your head would go and your shoulder and your feet would go and oh finally we got down to the other side. All the way through the trusses and the arches and we come out the other side.

We walk about a mile and walk past some homes.

There's two quarts of milk in glass bottles and I remember this. There were two quarts of milk in glass bottles and a little bottle, which must have been the cream.

Uncle Mac looks around, picked up the two quarts of milk and gave them to me. Reached in his pocket and got out the change to cover the cost of the milk that we were taking.

I don't want to say stealing because we were paying for it.

He puts the change on the porch and we walk away holding the bottles and I look back. I see the little creamer sitting there with the nickels, dimes, and quarters that Uncle Mac left. Isn't he good, Isn't he good.

Now I'm going to 11th & Windsor. I live at 11th & Windsor and there is a knock at the door and it's Uncle Mac. He says come on Charles we're going in town. I look and he doesn't have a car. Uncle Mac is on roller skates.

I put on my roller skates and we roller skate in 11th street. All the way in we roller skate down cherry street to 8th & cherry to go to the bookie joint.

Uncle Mac knocks on the door and the guy opens a little window and he says oh it's curly. He opens the door and Uncle Mac and I skate in.

Well, all the guys in there gambling, laughing. What's the noise, what's going on. One of the guys says, it's curly and he is on roller skates. They laughed.

We were in at the bookie joint in Reading for eight hours. We went in like around 2:00 in the afternoon and we were there until 10:00 p.m.

The whole time inside, Uncle Mac's betting and we are on roller skates. After eight hours, we roller skate home.

Another story about Uncle Mac. I don't know if it's a classic or I don't know if its funny. I don't know if it's wild but I am going to tell you the story.

When the fire tower, the tall tower next to the pagoda, had an open house on skyline drive. The crowds would go up on Saturday and Sunday and the crowds would wait around the bottom inside the fire tower.

Go in the door and there were steel iron steps that went around in a square, up and around the building. There were so many people there that you waited your turn. I don't know how tall that fire tower is, you can guess for yourself.

All I know is ,that you waited inside, maybe four or five deep, and you just waited until you could go up on the observation deck where you could walk around the top of the fire tower.

I remember the stairs were square until the last four top floors.

Then the steps turned into an iron circle of steps going up to the top floors. But before you get to the iron steps, there are a lot of strangers. People you never saw before, waiting their turn.

It's Uncle Mac and I, and I am guessing, it's his daughter Sarah. I don't know why, I just think it's Sarah.

While we are all standing on the steps or leaning against the wall, Uncle Mac picks Sarah up.

I'm guessing Sarah is 5 or 6 yrs old. He takes Sarah and lifts her up under her arms and holds her out over the railing, over the open space in the stairwell. I'd say we were about 10 stories up.

He holds her out. And oh, the people step back and push back against the wall. You could have heard a pin drop.

Uncle Mac didn't say a word. He just held her out there for about a minute. He then took her back over the railing and sat her down . Well , all hell broke lose. Some people hollered, call the Police. Other people said, that man's nuts.

Other people said, he is trying to kill his daughter. Other people asked, what's going on. That was one for the books with Uncle Mac. That even had me confused.

Uncle Mac used to have a gas station down at Perkiomen Avenue, near charcoal chef. I went in one day and Uncle Mac was playing checkers. I will never forget.

There was a big red and black cloth checkerboard. It wasn't a board it was cloth, with big checkers.

When a customer came for gas he said, Charlie, sit in for me. Well , okay so I would sit in because Uncle Mac was out pumping gas.

I make one or two moves and I think the guy jumped me once and we just waited. How are we doing Charles, asked Uncle Mac. I said okay.

Uncle Mac said good, because we are playing \$10.00 a bet on every game. This was Uncle Mac, everything took the form of a bet, a challenge. He was the gambler.

When I was there at that gas station, a customer came in with a flat tire. He wanted the tire changed. Uncle Mac said, hold it, Charles, give me the keys to your car.

I gave him my keys. Uncle Mac took the tire and wheel off the customer's car, put it in the backseat of my car.

He went down Perkiomen Avenue about a half mile to a friend who had a gas station and equipment to change tires. He fixed it, put it in the back seat of my car, drove back and put it on the car belonging to the customer.

One time I was in at 6th & Walnut streets, the intersection near Community General Hospital. There was a commotion, one or two Police cars and it people standing on the corner. Uncle Mac was visiting someone at the gas station.

There used to be a gas station across from Community General. Now it is a Parking lot. I went in, saw Uncle Mac and heard the talking.

During the course of discussion with the men, Uncle Mac bet the men that he could walk catecornered across the intersection, blind folded and not get hit by a car.

The bets were made and Uncle Mac put the blindfold on and walked catecornered across the intersection.

The cars stopped and beeped the horns, near misses, accidents and the guys got out and were going to kill Uncle Mac.

Often in the summertime Uncle Mac, Aunt Cecile, Momo, Joe the Barter, my Mom and I would all crowd in one car and drive down to the beach in Atlantic City. Uncle Mac would drive.

Usually every third time he drove, he would get a ticket for speeding. My Mom was so mad and would say “what are you going to do with him.”

Because there was a group of us and we weren't going to a motel or a place to change into bathing suits. We would stop in the bushes, maybe five miles outside of Atlantic City where these little sand dunes are.

The women would go over there in the bush and the men would go over there in the bush. We would all change around into our bathing suits and trunks and come back and get in the car.

There were maybe three of us in the front seat and maybe four in the back seat. We would park in a parking space at Atlantic City.

Everyone gets out of the car and before you know it, Uncle Mac is halfway down the beach running towards the ocean.

We watch and Uncle Mac dives into the waves and starts swimming straight out into the ocean.

Five minutes later, the life guards are blowing the whistle at Uncle Mac. Uncle Mac is still swimming straight out and the life guard is blowing the whistle. The flags go up and the jeeps come with life guards.

The guards row out the life boat and Uncle Mac is still swimming straight out.

The life guards go out on the row boat and pick up Uncle Mac. Dump him in the row boat and row him back to the shore. They get out of the boat and the Atlantic City Police are there.

Uncle Mac is arrested for disobeying the life guards.

Driving home, we stop at the sand dunes again. The women go here and the men go there. We are all like lobsters. We are all burnt with sunburn and we are miserable and sticky from the sand and ocean water.

Someone says, look let's not get changed around. Let's just get back in the car and drive home in our swimming suits and trunks.

The ride home is miserable. You couldn't touch each other. It was so uncomfortable.

My Uncle Mac had Alzheimer's disease the last few years of his life. I couldn't go visit Uncle Mac. I wanted to remember Uncle Mac the way he was. Always calling me, Charlesy do you want to come along.

I am talking about 11th & Windsor. I was in 10th or 11th grade at Reading High. I would come home from school down Windsor street to 11th & Windsor.

Quite often I forgot my keys and the door was locked. My Mom wasn't

home yet.

I would go into the back yard on Windsor street. We lived in the apartment on the second floor above the dry cleaner.

I would climb up the back porch where there was a little over hang and go around the side of the over hang. I am up one story.

I'm climbing along the Windsor street side of the apartment along the outside of the building. I am up two stories.

I would climb to the second story porch, to a railing around the porch.

I'm going to climb over the railing of the porch, hoping the back door to the kitchen would be unlocked.

That's the way I would get into the apartment when I locked myself out. I did this a half dozen times.

One time though I'm hanging on to the side of the building.

Even though I crawled to the second floor, because of the way Windsor Street slopes down, I'm really high up in the air ,three floors.

My Mom came home from work and said Charlesy, what are you doing. Now when I think about it, it was really crazy, it was really stupid. It was dangerous.

We had this apartment at 11th & Windsor, it was a nice apartment. It was big, private and during the World War II, we had rent control. There was a thermostat to control heating the apartment.

The thermostat was locked inside a little metal cage.

The landlord had put this little cage and lock over the thermostat so we couldn't burn so much heating oil which was rationed.

It was very simple. my Mom would take a wash cloth, turn on the cold faucet water, and hold the wash cloth under the faucet and ring it out.

Place the damp wash cloth on top of this metal cage and the thermostat temperature would come down. The oil burner would kick on.

We took the wash cloth on and off when we knew the landlord would come to collect the rent or do plumbing work in the kitchen.

We would just be sure that the wash cloth wasn't on the metal cage at the wrong time.

I lived in the apartment at 11th & Windsor above Adams Dry Cleaners. It is still there today.

Directly across Windsor street was a beautiful little mansion where a very well to do couple lived. The woman's parents owned the local knitting mills.

Her husband was pastor of St. Thomas Church across the street.

They had a chauffeur. He would wear a black cap, with a black shiny visor and black gaberdene double breasted suit with brass buttons.

He also wore leather leggings from his knees down to his ankles like you wear if you drove a motorcycle. He also wore black leather shoes.

Hundreds of times I would look out of my window on Windsor street or I would be out on the porch and I would see the chauffeur go over to the garage behind their mansion.

There was a garage with two or three cars which they owned. He would get one of the cars, usually a black cady.

He would drive down the alley, turn in Windsor street and drive up along the curb along side the mansion.

He would hold the door open and bow or tip his hat as the woman entered the car.

I wasn't envious of the money, I can truthfully say that. It was more just the fascination of seeing something so out of the ordinary in the neighborhood.

Here was this beautiful home, a mansion surrounded by a black iron fence, a beautiful garden, a black caddy and a chauffeur.

The house must have had 12 rooms for just two people. The chauffeur lived next door in the first row home.

I loved to watch the chauffeur tip his hat, bow and drive away.

One Sunday morning about 10:00 a.m. I was out on our second story back porch. That mansion also had a second story back porch. I could stand on our porch and look over at their back porch which was up about the same height.

The pastor across the street, was on his porch and he turned and looked down across the alley at a woman who was the neighborhood bookie. She was hanging up the wash.

The reverend had a beautiful Harvard sounding voice. He called, Mrs. S----, don't you believe that on the Lord's Day we should not hang out our wash.

This little lady who was fight cat, turned and looked up at him and she said, listen, listen you S.O.B. You mind your own business and I'll mind mine.

While I'm talking about the apartment at 11th & Windsor, there was coal dirt everywhere outside the apartment. We are at 11th & Windsor and the railroad car shops are at 6th & Spring streets.

All that coal dirt floated out of the railroad yard and the trains, floated over the City and settled.

This coal dirt was everywhere, everywhere you could imagine, it was everywhere. It was terrible.

Because the apartment was kind of old, the back of the building supporting the balcony was sinking. As a result, the windows in the window frames didn't fit perfectly tight .

We were always rolling up newspapers and stuffing them around the windows. Hoping that would keep the cold air out.

It didn't take long for the newspapers to turn rusty brown and get so brittle that the paper breaks.

In the bathroom, we had a 6-8 ft. high hot water tank. Today, if you go out in the country, you'll often see the people lay the unused tank on its side, cut it open and put flowers in them.

Standing next to the tank were the gas heating coils.

You didn't have continuous hot water. You made hot water.

You opened the door of the coils, struck a match, turned on the gas and lit the gas jets.

You closed the door and through peep holes in the door, you adjusted the height of the flames around the hot water coils.

The water went through the coils and was heated by the gas flames.

The heated hot water passed through the coil and went into this large holding tank. You made hot water to wash the dishes or to take a bath.

You felt along the sides of the walls of the water tank to tell how much hot water you had.

You had to be careful when striking matches and lighting the open gas jets.

Quite often while making hot water the phone would ring, or someone would come to the front door.

You forget that the water was being heated in the hot water tank.

You were outside on the pavement and you remember the hot water tank. You run to quick turn it off.

The tank had a relief valve but I'm sure it was dangerous.

Across the street at the church I had catechism classes. It was nice and fun to go to the sessions before you were confirmed. But I had trouble believing

what was taught

When they took the picture of our catechism class, the boys and girls were standing in rows in the chancel of the church.

One boy's head and ears were in line with the gold cross in the chancel. The horizontal bar in the cross was behind his head and blended in exactly with his ears.

It looked like he had square elephant ears exiting out of his head. The photographer should have seen that.

Here are some random thoughts about AT & T. These are memories that I just don't forget. I want Sue, Ron, Gary, Tom and everybody to know about them because I remember them. I enjoyed them so, it just made my life happy and it felt good.

Quite often when you watch a football game on television, after one of the players scores a touchdown, he takes the ball and he spikes it on the ground. Everybody thinks this is so funny.

At work one day, after coming back from studying a job I had my work folder of a job I was studying.

As I came through the door of my office. I took my work folder and I spiked it on the office floor.

It made a crash and everybody looked. Everyone smiled because they knew what I was doing.

I did it just to break the boredom and stay loose in the office and my job. I spiked my work folder.

Throughout the different areas of the factory or the office there were locations where the guards sat for security.

One of the places that the guards sat was at the top of the main stairs, coming up from the basement floor.

The factory stairs were made of boiler plate.

They were real heavy iron steps. One day I came up the steps and at the very top step, I didn't bring my foot up high enough and tripped.

I was at the desk where the guard was sitting.

The routine was, when I tripped instead of falling to the side, I quick did the dance step, the tap step, the Fred Estaire step and spread eagle.

I looked at the guard and smiled and the guard just shook his head.

These are the little things that let you keep your sanity on the job.

I was working at my desk and one of my friends who was an engineer came to see me. He was kind of a tall, lanky fella.

I am in a large office area, there are desks and chairs all around, but the engineer just squats at the corner of my desk. What I call the vietnamese squat.

You cross your ankles and sit, but your butt is not on the floor. You cross your ankles and the way you are balanced, you are off the floor doing the vietnamese squat.

He sat like that and I am looking down at him. He squatted for almost an hour while we talked.

He wasn't talking personal, he was talking business. I thought to myself, I could never go to someone's desk and squat down on the floor and talk up to the person. Yet it was very natural for this engineer to do this.

One summer day there was a commotion outside the building. I looked out the windows and one of the supervisors who lived in the neighborhood came to work on his horse.

A beautiful brown horse with a brown saddle. The supervisor was wearing riding clothes and he tied the horse to the fence.

The horse ate the grass on company property. The horse waited until 4:30 PM.

The rider came out, untied the horse and went home by way of the streets of Laureldale. I thought this was funny.

See if you can follow this routine.

Quite often I would go to a supervisor's office where one or two men in higher management were talking. You come into the room and they completely ignored you. They weren't talking business, they were talking personal business.

Because of how I'm built, it hurt my feelings and it kind of got me mad.

I had a routine that I had developed for such situations. Without moving my lips, and trying to throw my voice, I said out loud, Hi, Charlie, how are you.

How are you doing. I replied, Oh thanks gang, I'm doing just fine. Well , I'm glad to hear that.

These two supervisors were startled and they looked at each other in disbelief. Common courtesy and common decency, you know.

This is the truth. What I am going to tell you is the truth.

I went to a meeting at AT & T about clean rooms, super clean rooms, where the people wear white caps and gowns and gloves and even booties. They wear white masks over their faces.

The purpose of the meeting was to explain to people who work in the clean rooms and people like me who visit the clean rooms, how to sneeze.

Most of us at the meeting thought they were kidding but no, they were quite serious.

Because of the cleanliness, the humidity and temperature control in these clean rooms, you were told how to sneeze, the proper way to sneeze.

I follow this routine. Well I try to, here at home, especially in the kitchen and other parts of the house.

When you feel a sneeze coming on , bend over at the waist, and place your nose down near your belt buckle. Sneeze directly down towards the floor

Some time in the past at Western Electric, we had different locations around the United States. One of the locations was in North Carolina.

We were told that our supervisors were going to report to higher up supervisors in North Carolina.

North Carolina sent up their public relations people. They issued a newsletter and wanted to get to know Laureldale.

When the reporters and photographers were up here, my boss said, Charles, come with us.

Two reporters, a photographer, my boss and I went over to Bernhardt's Dam.

My boss tells the reporters and the photographer, Oh yes, he says, quite often the men here at Reading come over during the lunch hour and fish at Bernhardt's dam.

I turned and said to my boss, nobody ever fishes. He says shut up, Charles, shut up, they fish here. The reporter he writes it down.

While at Bernhardt's a little boy, about 11 years old is fishing. My boss goes to talk to him and for some reason the boy takes his fishing rod and runs away. My boss chases him.

They run, I don't know how many yards and finally my boss and the little boy come walking back.

My boss gave the little boy a dollar and the little boy gave me his fishing rod. I stood on the bank of Bernhardt's Dam acting like I'm fishing so they could take a picture.

I turn and said to my boss, look, because I am standing on the Dam Breast and I'm using this little boy's rod, the hook and the worm are two feet above the water. It's not even in the water.

The photographer said, that's all right, that's all right. The way I'm taking the picture it will look like it's in the water. He said don't worry about it.

Such phony stuff.

One day, a U.S. senator came to visit the Laureldale plant and he was in talking to the #1 man and the #2 man. They wanted to make some kind of a dedication out at the plant entrance.

My boss told me and my co-workers to come out to the front steps. We need a crowd. He would say you come, you come, you come.

He made a crowd so the senator could smile and shake hands with the top manager at this dedication.

As soon as the picture was taken, my boss said, all right you loafers, get back to your desks, get going, don't loiter out here, back to work, back to work.

I have a little story that I wasn't quite sure if was going to put it in my book but after thinking about it, I will. I was hope that the family gets get the message.

About three years ago, over at the health club at the spa in Wyomissing, that's the one with the great big statue out front. It was in December near Christmas and involved a group of men. Back then it was men only.

The club didn't have separate lockers, so it was a day, when it was men only. When the men were talking, one of the men who I didn't know very well , said to me, Oh he said, let me tell you what happened at home .

My wife was attaching Christmas balls and trimmings on our Christmas tree.

He said, so while she and I were talking, I walked over to a box of Christmas balls on the sofa. I picked up a Christmas ball and I'm carrying this little ball over to the tree. The wife hollers stop.

Just what do you think you are doing. She said why that Christmas ball doesn't belong there on the tree. She said, give me that ball.

He said that happened 30 years ago and he said not once in those 30 years since, have I ever touched a G-- D---. Christmas ball.

I turned my head and I looked at the man and I'm pretty sure I didn't say anything but I could see his feelings were hurt.

There is the Christopher Columbus statue at City Park and there is a joke associated with the statue. That Columbus is standing there in the Park and is pointing West to where the restrooms are located.

It is just a joke but it is cute.

Every time I look at the Christopher Columbus statue I think of it pointing to the restroom.

Take a good look at the face of Columbus. The sculptor of this statue lived in New York City. He used a local wrestler as a model.

I used to see this wrestler on a Sunday afternoon at the armory in at Rose and Walnut streets where PAL is now.

His name was Marvin Mercer, he was the model for the face of the Christopher Columbus statue.

As the story goes, many years later, after this statue was in the Park, Marvin Mercer took his daughter in to see the statue.

The daughter, I guess she was a teenager, when she looked up and saw the face of the statue, said Daddy, It's you, It's you.

There used to be open pavilions in the tennis courts at City Park. One summer night I played with a dance band underneath the pavilion. The band leader asked me to sing with the band.

I thought it was so funny because I sang a song that I never rehearsed.

I stood up at the microphone, sang from the sheet music, with my arms out in front around the microphone. I sang a Love song.

I sang the song because I knew that Joan was in the crowd.

I was singing and showing off because I knew Joan could hear me. After singing, these other two referee friends of mine gave me a nickname.

Every time they would see me, they would call me Mel Torme.

Between Moss and 9th Spring on Robeson, there is an alley. If you walk down the alley towards Spring street, the alley is a dead end alley.

It ends at the fire emergency doors at the Strand Theater.

The gang and I used to run down the alley and at night while the movies were on, we would pound our fists on the doors. It would scare the people

inside and make them jump.

Mr. Wamsher had a hardware store at 9th & Spring streets. For 30 years, every time I went to Mr. Wamsher, all he ever was wearing was a pair of overalls and a tight blue knitted sweater.

He used to wear this dark blue, knitted wool sweater over top of his bare shoulders and overall tops.

He didn't wear anything underneath, I always thought how that woolen sweater used to itch him. He seemed quite comfortable.

What was funny about Wamsher's was, Mr. Wamsher talked in a very high pitch, soprano voice.

If you closed your eyes you would have thought it was a woman talking.

He always had all the time in the world to wait on you. He knew exactly where everything was located.

The drawer on the cash register was never closed, it was always part way open. On top he always had a few nails and screws.

Everybody knew of Wamsher's hardware store.

His mental knowledge of his inventory of parts was unlimited.

After Joan and I were married, we went to Miami Beach for our honeymoon. At this nightclub, your Mom and I were dancing on this little dance floor.

Also on the floor dancing, was a tough looking guy wearing an open shirt. no neck tie and a sportcoat.

He was dancing with a blond and the spotlight was on them. It was Jake Lamata the prize fighter. Robert Dinero played Lamarca in a recent movie.

I used to wear zoot suits. The baggy pants were taken in at the ankles so hard you could hardly get your foot through. Because the pants were so itchy, quite often underneath my pants I would wear my pajama pants.

At 9th & Amity, there is a junkyard near the railroad tracks. A long time ago, I stopped at the junkyard to have my car inspected. It was bright and early on a Saturday morning.

The men inside were kind of tough guys. You could tell they worked in the junkyard. Two of the men were crying.

I was surprised. I couldn't figure out why the men were crying.

It turns out that it was Saturday morning and the night before on Friday, one of their friends who worked at the garage was killed driving at the stock car races at the Reading fairgrounds.

Every time I drive on 9th street, as I go past the junk cars at 9th & amity, I always think of how sad I felt when I heard those men crying for their friend who was killed.

I was at JC. Penney with Tom and the boy scouts. I made a race car out of a block of wood. In the races, Tom's car would not go down hill because it did not weigh enough.

I had a wrench, not a pipe wrench, but an open wrench. I turned the car over and nailed the wrench to the bottom of the car.

The judges and the officials couldn't believe their eyes. I acted like it was all planned.

I was so embarrassed. All the other cars were works of art made by their fathers. Tom's car wasn't. The other cars were just fabulous.

Tom's car didn't run very well and looked pretty bad.

I'm sitting in my automobile in front of the new mausoleum on Kutztown Road in front of Holy Gardian Angel. About two or three years ago they started building this mausoleum.

Never in my wildest dreams did I think one of the first people to be buried in the mausoleum would be my good friend from work, Gene Alfiero.

It breaks my heart, every time on Kutztown road, when I go pass the mausoleum, I think of Gene and his young son, who was about 12 when Gene died. He looks just like Gene.

The son has coal black hair. Isn't that something. His wife's name was Barbara. Every now and then I think of all the good times with Gene..

While on Kutztown Road I'm fascinated by the fact that in front of the church is a statue of Jesus With Open Arms.

Usually there is a pepsi cola sign out on the lawn about a spaghetti supper.

Another thing that intrigued me about this location, when I look up and down and across the street, all the telephone poles with their wooden cross beams, look like so many images of crosses.

Every pole and every street light pole looks like a cross. It seems like all the crosses are in a row down the street. How about that.

Just down the street from Holy Gerardian Angel is where singer Equipment is on Kutztown road.

What I always remember, when I drive past, is in the middle of that field was that black wooden house where old man Madaira lived.

When the Police would go past, they would always look for the light on the front porch to make sure the light was lit.

This was Mr. Madaira's way of letting the township Police know that he was still alive and was okay.

Charlie Madaira would call me up when I was the township commissioner at 2:00 in the morning.

His name was Charlie and my name was Charlie and at 2:00 in the morning he would say Charlie, we can't forget our boys.

I used to say, what boys Mr. Madaira. He was talking about our boys that went down with the battleship Maine in Havana Harbor in Cuba.

He was talking about the boys that were lost on the Battleship Maine at the beginning of the Spanish American War.

Boy, was that an eye opener. I tried to talk to him and get that squared away at 2:00 in the morning.

When I was a young boy and I lived at 1018 Spring Street up around the corner on Mulberry street there was an older boy. He must have been about 10 years older than me and was olive skinned.

He used to walk very fast up and down Mulberry street. All the time he was walking, he always whistled.

Instead of making his lips round and blowing through his rounded lips to whistle, he always had his lips straight and whistled through his teeth.

He always whistled as he hurried along.

Later on in years, he never drove an automobile but he learned to ride a bicycle. All the time he would ride his bicycle, he whistled between his teeth.

The thing that was kind of funny was the way he rode his bicycle. He rode the bicycle as if the bicycle were a scooter. He did not sit on the seat.

He stood on one pedal with his left foot. He was completely off the seat pushed with his right foot and coasted.

As he pushed and coasted, he would be whistling through his teeth.

Well, now here it is 1987 and I can't believe my eyes. While I was coming up Court Street going to Pace, guess who is on a bicycle but much older and pushing only when he has to.

I came up along side of him at 5th & court street waiting for the light and I rolled down the window when I was next to him. He was still using the bicycle as a scooter and still whistling through his teeth.

I just went over the iron bridge at Pottsville Pike at Met Ed and not every time but often than not when I go over that bridge I remember the one day I received a call over the phone from Gary.

Gary had been driving my beautiful blue pontiac that was full of chrome, 4-door and it looked like a convertible. It had a beautiful blue body with a cream top. The entire inside of the dashboard was chrome.

Gary said the light was green and the other driver said it was red. Gary had tears in his eyes.

I said that's all right, Gary. The car was completely demolished.

The thing that I think was so fascinating was that a week or two before Gary's accident, Susie had been in an accident and her Nash Rambler was also completely demolished

Idon't remember the man's name, but he came and gave me an estimate of \$400-\$500 to build my fireplace. It cost \$20.00 extra for that mantel that's sitting on top of the fireplace.

I was home the day the bricklayer started to build the fireplace.

I was fascinated by the fact that for the first hour he did nothing, but just lay out and measure and use his chalk line to position pieces of tile on the floor.

He started to measure from the middle where the fireplace was going to go.

He measured over to the right wall, then he measured over to the left wall. The fire place was to built in the corner of the down stairs rec room.

Finally, he put the heaterlator in place. Inside the metal fireplace is a draft plate for the chimney. When he was finished, I loved the fireplace.

I paid the man and told him he did such a good job.

Then it seems like it was a year or two years later, there was an article on the front page of the Reading Times.

On Penn street I think it was in the old Whitner's building ,some men were working and doing remodeling work .

They disconnected the elevator and some unknown persons reconnected the wiring on the elevator .The brick layer who built my fireplace had been looking down the shaft.

The elevator came down. He was decapitated.

I look at the fireplace, My God, you can't believe what happens to people.

At 11th & Windsor when winter was approaching, we would take newspapers, fold them on the kitchen table, tear up the newspapers and stash them around the windows.

We would push the newspaper into the little trough inside the windowsill.

Then bring the window down, close it and jam the window into the newspapers.

After while the sunshine coming through the windows made the newspapers turn brown and brittle.

The Reading railroad was located in the City at 6th & Spring streets. These car shops were exhausting soot all the time. The soot would fall back down on all the homes in the City.

It would lay all around the top of the buildings and cars. This black soot was terrible.

It smeared and you had a devil of a time washing it off your hands. It would even get on your clothing. It was on everything.

At 11th & Windsor apartment, the inside steps came up to the landing at the top of the steps. The top step was cut out of the landing.

You stood on the landing and then stepped down on the first step, to go down the steps.

The first cut for the first step was taken out of the landing. You had to be very careful.

At the bottom of these steps you couldn't go down and stand on the bottom landing and open the door, because the door opened inward and trapped you behind the door.

You always had to keep standing on the last step, swing your body out, hold onto the railing, reach and grab the doorknob, to open the door.

The dining room was right next to the doorway and to the right of the doorway when you face the apartment on Windsor street.

One day your Mom and I decided to paper this room. The upright piano was the only furniture in the dining room.

In the apartment at 11th & Windsor, the living room was very pretty. It always had the morning sun.

We used to share the cellar with the dry cleaning store. Part of the cellar had been partitioned off using plywood wall board.

In the part of the cellar used by the dry cleaners was a crummy old toilet and the oil burner.

One day I was lubricating my bicycle. I was putting a little grease on the sprocket and pedals. When I cleaned the oil off my hands, I flushed an expensive boy's ring off my finger down the toilet.

Back at Suzie's apartment, the thermostat was for her apartment only.

One day at the 11th street apartment, there was a tremendous noise coming from the second floor and there smoke.

I went to investigate and found a chimney coming from the first floor up through the 2nd floor of the back patio. The chimney had been partially dismantled and there was a wooden cover over top of the chimney.

My Uncle Paul is testing his out board motor on the second floor portico. Can you picture that. At 11th & Windsor on the second floor there's a portico.

Uncle Paul was repairing his out board motor. In order to test the motor he attached the motor to the broken down chimney. The motor caused the loud noise, gas fumes and smoke.

People are walking past down on the first floor pavement and they don't know that the smoke and tremendous noise is from an out board motor running on the second floor portico.

We rented the apartment for \$37.50 a month with rent control. Now that the war was over, rent control stopped and the landlord could charge whatever he wanted to charge.

My Mom and I were so afraid that the rent would be raised so high that we couldn't afford it. The following month the landlord raised the rent \$5. My Mom and I were so happy.

While I was a student at Reading High, I attended confirmation classes at St. Thomas, at 11th & Windsor. I don't really remember too much about what was taught to us.

However, one thing I remember was, we had a confirmation picture taken.

I am sure somewhere in my scrapbooks there is a picture of a confirmation class.

The picture was taken in the church chancel. We lined up in rows, young women in the front row and young men in the back row.

When the picture was finally taken, one young man in the back, top row had his head lined up with the cross that was on the chancel.

The cross beam on the cross came right out even with the back of his head.

His ears on the picture bled in with the cross arm and his ears stuck out on either side of his head. He looked like a human being with elephant ears.

When winter was coming, we would take newspapers, lay them out on the kitchen table. We would tear up the newspapers and stuff them around the windows.

You would open up the window and stuff the newspapers into the little trough on the window sill and around the sides of the windows.

Bring the window down and close it on top of the newspapers.

After awhile the sunshine came through the window glass and all around the newspapers were fading brown, antique brown. You could tell that the newspaper was fading from the sunlight.

Because there were railroad car shops at 6th & Spring street. all the soot, those little coal fibers, would fall back down on all the homes in the City.

The homes in the City were covered with this coal soot, this black crumy soot. It was terrible, itsmeared when you touched it.

You had trouble washing it off your hands and clothes. It was all over the place, all over the windows, the cars, the railings, everything in the City was covered with coal black soot.

Another thing about 11th & Windsor, the inside apartment, steps coming up to the landing at the top. The top steps were cut out of the landing.

You stood back on the top landing, stepped down on the first step, to go down the steps. that first step was cut out of the landing.

You had to be careful because whenever you had visitors or someone not familiar with the steps, they were always walking across the open landing and falling down the first cut out steps.

Another thing about the steps at the bottom, you couldn't stand on the bottom landing and open the door because the door opened inward.

Visitors didn't know not to stand on the bottom landing and would open the door. It would crowd them back into the corner behind the door.

You had to stand on the last step, hold onto the railing with one hand, reach and grab onto the doorknob with the other hand and swing the door open in front of you.

The dining room was in the middle of the apartment when you face the apartment on Windsor street. One day Joan and I decided to paper the dining room..

We decided to paper with a beautiful lime green with vertical stripes. Joan and I cut and measured the paper and I stepped from chair to chair, in front of the piano.

When I was ready to paper the last wall, I must have been halfway around the room.

The paper was not being pasted up perfectly straight. It was leaning to the right. By the time I applied the paper and paste to the last wall, the paper was really leaning to the right. Joan and I laughed.

When we stood in the middle of the room, you had to tilt your head to the right. It looked like you were in a funhouse.

The living room had a nice little feature to it. It always had the morning sun shining through the living room windows. Living room also had a bow window.

We used to share the cellar downstairs with the dry cleaning store. There was a little entrance on Windsor street. The oil burner was not in our part of the cellar.

It was in the back part of the cellar which was used by the dry cleaner. That's where the oil burner was and a real crummy old toilet.

One day after riding my bicycle, I was putting a lot of grease in the sockets for the pedals, when I cleaned my hands off I lost my ring down the toilet.

Uncle Paul and Aunt Lucille and Uncle Mac and Aunt Cecil also lived in the apartment at 11th & Windsor with my Mom and Dad and my brother and me. I'm not sure of this.

For the longest time the rent at the apartment was \$37.50 a month. City council was having a meeting at City Hall to drop rent control. The war was over, rent control was going off.

The landlord could charge whatever he wanted to charge. I went to the meeting at City Hall. a number of people were there and they were told that now the landlord could charge whatever he wanted to.

My Mom and I were so afraid that the rent would be raised so high that we couldn't afford it.

The rent was increased from \$37.50 to \$45.00. my god my Mom and I were so happy, that the rent only went up \$7.50. I used to pay the rent every monday at 6th & Buttonwood at the Hotel in the Puerto Rican section of town

I used to pay the rent once a month on Monday. every monday.

I used to give the landlord's wife the \$45.00 cash which I got from my Mom. I used to have a pencil and used to write the rent receipt for the landlord. I would give her the rent receipt.

The Lowe's Theater was near the corner of 7th & Penn near the railroad tracks. The Lowe's was kind of first class, an upper class movie theater.

For some reason, the reputation of the Lowe's with its movies, it was a level above those movies shown at the Astor.

The Lowe's was very pretty inside and always had MGM movies. Near the Lowe's going down Penn street was Wittig's music store. Wittig's music store was a first class store. It was nothing like a flea market. It was first class.

It had musical instruments like pianos, saxophones in the windows on Penn Street.

Right above the entrance to Wittig's on the second floor was a studio. The entire second floor had a big plate glass window. At Christmas time, someone would be playing the organ.

There were loud speakers out on Penn street.

As you walked up the pavement and looked up through these big plate glass windows, you could hear the Christmas carols and see the back of the organist. It was really nice.

One Christmas I was in at Wittig's and an elderly man came in, sat down at the piano and played Christmas carols in concert style.

Before, during, and after playing, he never said a word to any one in the store. After he left, I asked a store clerk, who the man was.

he clerk said, he doesn't know anything the man except that the man comes in every Christmas for years and does his thing.

Getting back to Lowe's Theater. Between Lowe's and the railroad tracks was a very small hat store.

That's right, here's a small store on the corner next to the railroad tracks where they sold all kinds and styles of hats and neckties.

In this store worked a very good friend of mine. He worked there part-time as a young man. Who would think that you could have a store just for hats and neckties.

What I should have said was the hat store only sold hats for men. There were no ladies hats it was just a hat store that sold hats for men.

The Park Theater was between 10th and 11th street. The Park Theater was near 11th & Penn on the right hand side as you walked up Penn Street.

The Park Theater only showed what you might call B rated pictures. For some reason, it never came across as a first class movie theater.

Maybe I'm wrong about that, but it always seemed to be second or third class as far as its reputation as a movie theater was concerned.

Adjacent to the Park Theater was a restaurant, and a bowling alley underneath on the bottom floor. One day in this restaurant was a good friend of mine.

I don't know why I was in town or if was looking for him, Anyway, my friend was in this little restaurant at the Park Theater ordering supper.

I went in and I said, hello, how are you doing?

He told me that his parents were on a long trip. That they would be gone for some time. He said that I was just in time to have supper with him.

No, I replied, I'm going home for my supper, why don' you come home with me, to my place.

My friend and I walked home from 11th and Penn streets to 11th and Windsor Streets. It's about ten blocks. But talking and laughing made the walk seem short.

I took him to my home and my Mom at the apartment. He had supper with us.

My Mom was always glad to see my friend. They always seemed to hit it off with each other's company. I was glad my friend came home with me because my MOM and I rarely had company at supper.

It's funny that something so simple as the supper made me happy and happy inside.

Some time back, I saw an ad in the classified section about selling tombstones. I answered the ad and met a gentleman.

He was either a Greek or Turkish origin and he sold tombstones out of a large warehouse on Lancaster Avenue, back where Angelica would be.

He was a very nice gentleman and we spent a lot of time just talking about things in general. He took me back to the tombstone warehouse. This man had a reputation as a very fine sculptor.

For some reason when I went back to look at the workshop where the tombstones were, I just assumed I would see some fancy stone work because the man was a sculptor.

When I saw how they prepared the tombstone, I was so disappointed.

It turns out, to prepare a tombstone with the flowers or roses, the names and the dates, was very simple.

At least I thought it looked simple, because they used a large stencil out of heavy duty rubber.

The stencil had all the outlines of roses and pedals and names and dates. After they attached this stencil to the tombstone, they just used a good sand blasting hose.

They used a blasting machine and carved in initials, dates and names into the tombstone.

It was kind of mechanical. I felt that after a little practice, even I, who is not artistic, could have done a half-decent job.

So that was a disappointment. Another one of my money making plans didn't work out.

In my senior year at Reading High, all the boys had to pass a swimming test at the local YMCA. For sanitary reasons the boys did not wear swimming trunks.

You did not wear any kind of trunks. You were completely bare ass naked.

While the boys were splashing and jumping in and out of the pool, the swimming instructor would stand along the side of the pool smoking a cigarette.

He had his regular street clothes on and he would stand and put his arms up and do the australian crawl and count 1,2,3,1,2,3 He was mad when the boys splashed and made his cigarette wet.

He would put his right hand up and count 1, 2, 3 left hand and count 1, 2, 3, with his right. At the same time he was standing along the side of the pool in his street clothes, a cigarette.

Turning the side of his head and the side of his mouth, trying to keep his cigarette dry.

As a joke, the boys would jump in or splash and then he would get mad because we were getting his cigarette wet and he couldn't smoke it any more.

I probably should have mentioned that you had to swim the length of the pool three times in order to graduate.

I can't believe that in the Historical review, the Winter issue 1995-1996, on page 36, there is a picture of the Fleetwood Historical society. There are three men in the picture.

What has me furious when I see a picture like this.

There are only three men, it isn't a crowd scene or a group scene, It's just three men and it mentions the man's name in the middle of the picture.

But there's a man standing to his right and there's a man standing to his left and the picture doesn't name those men.

These men on the right and the left are friends are mine. The man on the right is Rodney Burkert and the man on the left is Bob Knoll.

Knoll used to be my supervisor at Western Electric and Rodney Burkert was a guard and was in my high school class.

It just gets me so mad that the photographer would take their picture and not tell you the names of all the people in the picture.

If you ever have a chance to check this out, I understood my Mom to say that somehow on her side of the family, Chop's side of the family, we were related to Charles Evans from Charles Evans cemetery.

Chop's name was Paul Evans Schmehl.

My brother was Paul Evans Angstadt and I was Charles Absalom Angstadt.

Somehow she implied, but maybe I misunderstood, that on Chop's side of the family we were related to Charles Evans, the founder of Charles Evans cemetery.

Prior to World War II my Uncle Paul was a civilian pilot. Once or twice he took off and landed at Madaira airfield where Kutztown Road is next to 5th Street Highway.

Everyone in the family thought that since Uncle Paul had already been licensed as a pilot, he would probably be drafted and go into the U.S. army air force.

Well it turns out that during his medical exam he had trouble with his feet and low and behold he ended up in the infantry.

He was stationed, most of the war, up in Alaska to help guard the coast from any invasion of the Japanese.

Quite often, maybe two or three times a week, he would write letters to my Mom, his sister. I will never forget.

These letters were always in nice written, longhand pencil.

Back during the war, the soldiers who wrote letters did not have to pay any postage. All they had to do was write in the upper right-hand corner where the stamp would be the word "Free".

My Mom kept all these letters. When my Mom passed away, I found them. There must have been at least 100 letters maybe 200. She had tied them in packs with a string.

I didn't want to read the personal letters. I thought about it. I destroyed the letters. Here I am years later and I'm sorry. I wish I would have kept the letters from Uncle Paul to my Mom.

One night, I guess it was a Friday night, I was returning home from an out-of-town trip for Western Electric. When I got to Philadelphia for the flight from Philadelphia to Reading, I was told that I was bumped.

Someone else took my seat and I would have to wait an hour or an hour and a half for another flight.

For some reason I just didn't buy this. No, no I said to the attendant I want to talk to someone in charge. I refuse to accept the fact that someone else can bump me out of my seat.

I had not really traveled that much and wasn't aware of procedures but it just didn't seem right.

I talked to the man in charge and I said, I demand some kind of action, I started throwing my weight around.

I said, I am with AT & T and I'm sure we have hundreds of people all over the country that fly on the planes and I said I'm going to report this to the proper authorities at AT & T and Western Electric.

I just will not accept being bumped and having to wait an hour and a half in the lobby 8:00 or 9:00 o'clock at night.

The man said, well hold on sir. I waited a good 15-20 minutes and over came a young man who looked like he was 16 years old wearing a shirt, tie and sportcoat

He said are you Mr. Angstadt and I said yes. He said come with me.

We walked out on the airport runway and I wasn't quite sure where we were going and suddenly it dawned on me.

Right in front of me sitting beneath the big wing of this air liner was a little piper club. This single engine plane.

It was a two seater.

The boy took my luggage and we threw it in the back seat.

I was sitting in the cockpit, side by side with this young man with the steering mechanism, that wheel that looks like half a wheel that goes back and forth, right to left.

It was it between my knees.

He said okay sir I'm going to take you to Reading. We taxied down the runway, went ahead of these other big airliners that were waiting in line to take off.

We taxied down the runway.

The lights were blinking and shining and we take off.

It seemed like we were flying 1,000 feet in the air, I'm sure it was more than that. It was so low.

I remember after flying about 20 minutes, I looked over my right shoulder and there is the tower and pagoda.

It looked like the tower and the pagoda were above my shoulder, above my head, that's how low we were flying.

We landed this little two seater at the Reading airport and he apologized again and I just shook my head.

After I told the story to Joan I thought it was so funny how they took care of me when I demanded some kind of action.

Every day as you drive around town you pass the cannon at centre Avenue.

I guess it's at Hardees, a black iron cannon near the car wash on Centre Avenue.

I think most people when they drive past, see the cannon and the stack of black iron cannon balls.

What most it people don't know is that the cannon was put there first without the cannon balls. After a few years pass, the city fathers brought in the cannon balls.

These cannon balls really have nothing to do with the cannon.

The cannon balls are the wrong size. The cannon balls are too big for cannon. They never could have been used in that cannon.

City council or whoever was in charge just thought, oh well , nobody will really know the difference. It's symbolic, so we'll just put the wrong cannon balls in front of the cannon and it will look good.

Quite often you read articles in the newspapers where vandalism was committed at cemeteries in Reading and surrounding area.

It always makes me think of the nice, beautiful cemetery stone that Joan and I have down at Morgantown Cemetery.

I thought since our stone was so heavy and wide, vandals would not kick over the stone and break it.

Then it occurred to me, that someone could spray graffiti, use paint spray cans and spray over the tombstone.

I thought to myself, I wonder if my home owner insurance policy would cover something like that.

I thought, oh gee, how crazy things can get.

During the Bicentennial Year I went down to the Keystone Fire company at 4th & Bingaman streets.

A few of the firemen were there. I said I was told they have a beautiful silverware collection.

They were very receptive and very glad to see me. We walked up to the third and fourth floors.

On the top floor there's all this beautiful sterling silver silverware, a fire engine and horns that the firemen used to use.

There were little statues and plaques.

It's a display that took my breath away.

It was unreal that in this section of town which was very busy and crowded, was this silverware collection. I couldn't believe that in the top floor of this building was this beautiful, silverware.

It just stunned me, it just seemed that it was in the wrong place.

The firemen bragged so about the equipment and I'll never forget that little tour.

They showed me all the old ledger books and all of the old chairs and old billiard tables, it was quite something to see.

This Keystone Fire company is not at 4th & Bingaman. This fire company is located at 5th or 6th & Bingaman just as you come off of the Bingaman street bridge when you come into the City.

When I was a young man in junior high, I used to go over to the Reading Public Museum on a Saturday morning.

Because they knew me and because I was there quite often, they would let me alone downstairs in what would be the basement and the library.

I used to look at all the beautiful books on Egypt and archeology.

There were big wide drawers, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 big file cabinets of drawers and I used to go over and pull them open and inside was the Levi mengel butterfly collection.

They were the biggest butterflies you ever saw.

Some wings were so big they looked like bats from South America, from Africa, from North America and from all over the world. They were all mounted on pins in the drawers.

They weren't just thrown in the drawers like clothing, there were metal pins coming up from the bottom of the drawer and each butterfly was stuck on a pin.

It looked like the butterflies were flying, in rows, and rows, and rows.

I noticed that some were decaying and disintegrating into dust. So much for the butterfly collection and my times of being an archeologist.

I used to own an apartment at 12th & Robeson where Sue and Ron live now. Before Sue and Ron, I rented to a young lady who lived alone.

Before she moved in, I had installed a beautiful wall-to-wall carpet in her living room/dining room area in the apartment.

She lived there maybe a year or two and in the corner of the dining room

right on the brand new rug, her cat did her business.

There was no litter box, the cat just used the new rug as the litter box.

What a mess to clean. The smell was horrible.

Some years back I would go to Albright College to the art film festival, where local photographers show their movies. The students would discuss the film.

I don't go any more because the film festival is 8:00 at night and it's too late for me.

Parking at Albright College is atrocious and you have to walk three blocks in the dark at night, so I don't go anymore.

Some things I remember about the film festival, I think are funny is that whenever home movies are being shown, that big circle at the very beginning of the film, goes 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

I could never tell if that 5, 4, 3, 2 was part of the film that the photographer purposely made, or they were having trouble up in the camera booth.

I didn't know whether to applaud or not.

One of the art films was 20 minutes of a gray cat actually eating a black crow.

It was 20 minutes of no sound, no music, no noise, just a cat sitting there, eating the wings, the feathers and body of a black crow.

That was an art film.

One good thing happened at the art film festival, an idea that I thought was pretty good.

A young man showed movie slides on the screen and had a little portable radio. He just turned on the local radio station.

It didn't matter what time he was turning the radio on, or what station.

Whatever music was on this little portable radio, he felt added to the pleasure of his story that you were watching on the screen.

I thought that was a pretty good idea. In fact I would like to try that some

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time.

Just before my stroke, I had scheduled to film one of my aerobic classes. I had talked to the manager at the spa about taking pictures. He said sure take all you want, Charlie.

I used to think about how I would put the camera and tripod over in the corner of the room and be careful not to film young ladies who didn't want to be on film.

My stroke came unexpectedly in my sleep, in July 1998. I never got pictures of me in my aerobic class. I'm sorry.

I would have liked to have seen myself and I would have liked my family to have seen me.

What was kind of cute about the aerobics class was quite often they would play aerobic tapes, the oldies but the goodies.

Many of those songs that they played for aerobics were the same songs that I would sing and play at home on my keyboard.

I would play these songs on my keyboard at 6:00 in the morning before I would go to aerobics class.

I didn't know they were going to play the same songs in aerobic class, that I just played at home. That was fun.

One of the summers on vacation from Penn State I worked a few weeks at Armor Meat Packing plant at Third & Pine. It's not there anymore, it was torn down.

One week I loaded railroad boxcars with huge cartons of dial soap using big hand trucks. I would run up the ramps into the boxcars with the boxes of dial soap.

When I went home at night you could smell me coming a half block away. That dial soap just penetrated my clothes.

This was a slaughter house, a meat packing plant. There was grease on everything, particularly the handrails on the stairways

Men would slide down from the third floor to the second to the first floors.

They would stand up and put their hands on the railings on the stairs, lift their feet, go around in a circle and slide down from the third floor, to the second, to the first floor.

I had no experience with the freight elevator. Everybody gets on with hand trucks, boxes and cartons. I get on. Whoever is standing next to the buttons works the freight elevator.

I always tried to stay away from the buttons.

But one time I don't know how it happened, I'm next to the buttons. I press the buttons to go down and I don't know what else I'm supposed to do.

But anyway it seemed like we were overweight (overloaded) and we went down fast. Crashed into the big springs at the bottom of the elevator shaft.

We hit those steel springs. It made a noise and a couple of the men fell and a couple of the men were hanging onto the hand trucks.

They said Charlie, my God, don't you know how to work this thing. I said, no. No one ever showed me.

One day I helped unload the refrigerated boxcars loaded with steers that are cut in quarters. You know how big a steer is, well it was cut in four parts, a leg in each quarter.

They were frozen like a rock and hanging on meat hooks.

The men put their arms around each quarter, lift up off the meat hooks and run down a ramp into another building.

There was a worker there who was built like a gorilla. He said, come on Charlie, you and I will start unloading. He put his arms around the hind leg and I put my arms around the same hind leg.

He said now look, Charlie, I'm going to lift off the meat hook.

He said do you have a good hold. I said, yes, and he said are you sure, and I said yes. He left go.

I grabbed on and I thought a freight train was hit me.

I was down on the floor, on my knees, holding this steer between my legs. It weighed a couple hundred pounds.

One day I walked over to where hogs are slaughtered. There is a big ferris wheel two stories high with a chain every couple feet. There were 40-50 hogs in the pen.

I would take the chain from the ferris wheel and throw it around the back leg of a hog.

The ferris wheel goes up in the air and lifts the hog up and hangs the hog in the air by its hind leg. As that hog goes up I take the chain and put it around another hog and that hog goes up.

I take another chain and put it around the leg of another hog and that hog goes up.

After awhile there are 10-15 hogs up in the air on this ferris wheel.

These hogs are going around this big ferris wheel in a circle 30 feet high. If you want to hear noise, you should hear 40 hogs hanging by one leg.

They go up this ferris wheel and just as they are coming down they slide off onto a rail and start going down into another room.

As they start down the room, there is a man sitting on an 8 foot high stool. As the hog goes past, he takes an ice pick and sticks it into the hogs throat.

The hog moves past and then he pulls the ice pick out. The blood just shoots right, past the man, it just misses him.

The man is sitting up on a stool and the hogs are going past. They are still screaming and hollering and oh, it is such a terrible noise.

At the of the rail is a worker with a chain saw/hatchet.

He rips and cuts the hogs in half, not completely, just so they open and flap. The blood and the noise and the chainsaw make a terrible sight and sound.

At the plant are women at work stations. They usually work in pairs.

They start hitting (whop) with an ax and there goes a hog's head into one barrel. The other woman with a crowbar, rips the jaw from the head.

I couldn't believe my eyes, this was terrible. At another work station the women were taking the eyeballs out of the hogs head.

I was pushing hand trucks, delivering the barrels to different work stations..

Oneday, as I was hand trucking barrels of parts, I went around a corner and ran into the inside of a flapping hog that went completely around me.

I'm inside the hog and I'm hollering ahhhhhhhhh. I pushed the flapping sides away from me.

I'm smeared with blood from head to toe. Everybody laughed, all the women laughed. They thought it was so funny that this College kid is having trouble.

A few days later I'm in another part of the armour plant. There are barrels of bologna, barrels of pork chops, and barrels of legs, livers. The men pick and balance the barrels on the rim.

The men palm the barrel and roll the barrel on the rim with their hands.

The barrel is tipped and balanced as they roll the barrels. They take another barrel with their other hand. Now they're walking and tip rolling two barrels in the palm of each hand.

They asked me to help. I could only move one barrel at a time. I would go over to the barrel and tip it. I slowly was falling down on the floor and landed on my hands and knees on the floor.

Everybody laughs and thinks this is funny. While trying to impress the Boss, I went over to a barrel to move it. The weight shown on top of the lid was 500 lbs.

I placed my right foot at the bottom side of the barrel, grabbed a hold of the top of the barrel with both hands and all my strength to tip onto the rim.

The barrel and I flew across the floor.

The barrel was empty. The boss and everyone laughed.

One time I spent a week hand trucking 500 pound barrels of lard into boxcars. The barrels were on their way to Belgium. I would run up the ramp into the boxcar, stack and stagger the barrels on the floor of the boxcar.

Move the ramp up higher and run the barrels up to stack on top of the first row of barrels. I continually bump my head on the top of the boxcar as I move the barrels.

I fill the top row and stagger my way with barrels over to the open door.

The last barrel just fits in the space that's left in the top row. I remove the gang plank and close the boxcar door. I was never so tired. Every muscle in my body ached.

I spent the last week at Amour unloading refrigerated box cars. I was standing on the dock on a hot summer day, stripped to the waist.

On my right side is a refrigerated boxcar and on my left side is a refrigerated building with a port hole window.

The worker in the refrigerated boxcar, is dressed like an eskimo. The man in the refrigerated building is also dressed like an eskimo. However, I'm standing in between them on the dock stripped to the waist.

They hand me the boxes from the boxcar and I hand them through the port

hole window into the building. The sweat is running down my chest and runs below my belt.

Because of the cold air coming out of the building and boxcar, the sweat is freezing down the front of my pants. It turns into white ice, I used to get chills and shake, chills and shake. I was cold and hot at the same time.

I learned about hard work at Armor. I learned how hard people work for a living. There is one story I must be sure to tell.

I just forgot it until now.

When the steers were brought in to be slaughtered, they were brought in trucks.

When the men open the back of the truck the steers go into a large steel pen like a steel box, four sides, all steel. The heads of the steers and their big horns are sticking up out of the pen.

A man walks around the top of the pen with a sledgehammer.

He swings the sledgehammer and hits each steer between the eyes. When he does this, it's just like hearing an eggshell crack.

He pulls a lever and the sides of the pen collapses and the steers slide out on the floor.

One or two steers stand up. Cross eyed and legs crossed. The man comes over and hits them again between the eyes.

As I'm working some distance away. I hear somebody holler, steer loose, steer loose.

Somebody said I got a gun, I'll shoot him. The steer is running down the factory floor.

All the men working on the floor jump up on the building wall and hold onto the windows as the steer runs past. We just hold on and watch him run.

Somebody says don't shoot him down there, if you shoot him down there, we'll have to drag him back up here where we want him.

So, they pass the gun. The workers hanging on the wall pass the gun from one to the other.

Somebody at the other end of the room jumps off the wall and bangs metal buckets together to attract the steer's attention. The steer comes running back towards him and somebody else shoots the steer.

Bang. I couldn't believe it, I couldn't believe it.

Always on the week, I look in the magazine section of the newspaper to see what's doing at the Temple Fire company. They always have the name of the band that is going to play on Friday night.

One time the ad said No Music Tonight and I blinked.

I thought is No Music Tonight the name of the band or is that the notice to the people that there is no music tonight.

The bands have such crazy names. I thought maybe the band had a name called No Music Tonight.

Here's a story from 7th grade at Northeast Junior High school. My homeroom teacher said I want to tell the class a story.

He said there was an immigrant in a naturalization class to become a U.S. citizen.

The teacher was explaining the symbolism in the American Flag.

He said, you see the stars in the flag represent the States in the Union and originally there were 13 stars, each star for each of the 13 colonies.

The Red stripes on the American Flag, represent the blood of the people who sacrificed themselves for our liberty.

The White stripes in the flag represent the purity and the goodness of our country. The white symbolizes how good America is.

The teacher led the immigrant to the window and asked him, what do you see flying over our building.

The immigrant replied, pigeons.

One of my favorite stories about Christmas. I was in my first or second year at Penn State. During Christmas vacation, I was a substitute mailman.

It was a good paying job for young boys like me, Usually students would start early in the morning at the post office at 5th & Washington streets.

You were given bags already filled with mail and sorted. Trolley car tickets or bus tickets were also given.

You would leave the post office and walk in 5th street and stand in the middle of Penn street and wait for a bus or trolley.

This particular year, I started at 10th & Washington streets. I worked with another student from Kutztown College.

We went on the trolley up Penn Street, get off at 10th & Penn and walked back to 10th & Washington streets.

However, instead of going right ahead and passing the mail, this friend and I went into the Washington Bar at 10th & Washington.

We talked to the owner and he said sure, whatever you want to do.

So this friend and I went into the back room, where there were large billiard tables. We took the mail out of the pouch and laid the mail down in rows on the pool tables.

This is mail for 100 block of 10th street, this row is for 1000 Washington, 900 10th, etc.

We sorted all the mail and laid it out in rows on top of the billiard table. We talked to each other and kept warm and sat and waited until an hour or so passed.

We knew that there was going to be another mail delivery at the drop off mail box on the corner.

After we looked out the window and saw the mail being dropped off, we went down to the box, opened up the box and brought the second delivery into the Hotel.

We took the time to resort the second batch of mail and mixed it in to the first batch of mail.

Instead of making two mail deliveries in the morning and two mail deliveries in the afternoon, we were only going to make one mail delivery in the morning and one mail delivery in the afternoon.

It sounds good from a practical point of view. But what happens when you re-sorted that second delivery into the mail. Each home was getting double the amount of mail that they would get at one time.

The packs of mail were real thick and when you went out and made this delivery, you almost couldn't get all the mail into the letter box because it was a double delivery.

But you forced the mail in anyway and oh, it shredded the mail, bent the mail, and tore the mail but you still shoved it into the letterbox.

Once or twice, while carrying the mail, it started to snow. The ink on the envelopes was running and you were not sure of the name or address.

You put the mail into the slot anyway.

You push it in, you shove it in. If you're not careful, you slip and fall. The mail goes flying up in the air and lands in the snow.

You quick pick it up, wipe the snow off and hope the name and address is not smeared.

While it saved us an extra round trip, it made a mess.

It really made a mess because the envelopes full of Christmas cards were being pushed into the mailboxes and you could tell they were tearing.

You had half the envelopes inside and half outside. You just kept pushing and jamming the mailboxes. The running ink from the snow and the torn envelopes resulted in mail delivery that was almost was obscene.

I'm talking about one of the tough guys from the gang at Spring Street & Moss. Many years later I'm over at the Berkshire mall in front of Pomeroy's and he comes over and says Charlie, I have to tell you something.

I said what, what. He said, gee he said, I'm so very much in love.

I said what, he said, yea Charlie, I found the girl that I want to marry. I know I'm in love with her and I'm so excited. I said, you know I'm not quite sure why you are telling me.

Well, he said I have to tell somebody and I was so glad to see you, so I'm going to tell you.

I'm sure I'm going to ask this girl to marry me and be my wife. I said, well all right.

He left and some time later I told Joan the story and I said, I was just so taken back that this guy in the gang who was so rough and tumble, never had too much to say. He talked my ear off.

They were married and lived up near Berks Heim. They had horses. I would see them occasionally on horses in a parade. I saw in the paper that his wife died rather early in life.

Oh what a heart breaker, what a heart breaker.

A long time ago when Gary and Tom were little, we were in the Indian Guides. I'll never forget the kids and the fathers.

It was part of a YMCA program. We met in different homes.

One night I had the kids in my rec. room. I was in front of the mirror.

I wanted to do a magic trick and entertain the little kids. I did the only trick I knew.

I wanted to show how I could hold a pencil inside my hand without using my fingers. I did the trick. Nobody smiled, nobody was amused.

I forgot that I was standing in front of the mirror on the wall. When the kids

looked at the front of me, they could also see the back of me, in the mirror.

They could see my finger holding the pencil. The only trick I ever knew and I screwed up.

Another story about Indian Guides. I don't remember if we were collecting Christmas trees or dropping off Christmas trees.

Anyway there were three of us men in a little pick-up truck.

As we were driving around Riverview Park one of the men said, he and wife just returned from Calcutta, India and things were so bad in Calcutta.

It's dirty and it's crowded.

I thought to myself, I guess he was stationed for work in Calcutta.

As we were driving along he said, this week, we're going over to Tokyo.

I turned and said B--n where do you work, what do you do. He said that he and his wife were a song and dance team in the USO. That's why they were traveling around the world.

A few days ago I talked to Joan about B-- and his wife T----, the song and dance team. I hadn't thought about them in about 30-40 years.

Joan said didn't you see them in Weis market,yesterday.

I said what do you mean. She said B—and his wife T----were in Weis' yesterday. I can't believe it.

I don't think about or see somebody for 40 years. I decide to include this Christmas tree story in my memoirs and the day before I type the story,

I miss seeing the couple at Weis' store.

I saw it on TV in an art show put on by the Kutztown College.

Symbolically speaking when paintings and sculptures show famous generals, Napoleon, Custer, Sheridan, Grant, on a horse, if the horse has four feet on the ground, then he was an average general.

If the horse has one hoof off the ground, then the general was above average .

In many paintings of Napoleon, Napoleon's horse has only one leg on the ground and has three legs up in the air.

This shows he was exceptional as a general. That is the symbolic way artists speak to you.

How's that for a little bit of trivia. Most people don't know or just don't care. That is the kind of stuff, I get a kick out of.

Let me tell you about one of the teachers at Reading High. I think I was it 10th grade or 11th. He was an English teacher, very much a gentleman, very quiet, reserved and laid back.

He was an intellect, a kind of philosopher. This is what he said one day.

He said, ladies and gentlemen, I want you to know that it is the little things in life that make you happy.

For instance, he said, when a piece of buttered bread falls off the kitchen table and lands on the floor butter side up, think how good that makes you feel.

Let me tell you something else about this philosopher, gentleman. I'm in the hall late for class and I run down the hall.

This English teacher is there and says Charles, Charles.

He has a yellow legal pad and a flair pen.

He says I have to write you up for detention. For running in the hall.

Detention means I have to stay after school. I said, sir, I'm late for class.

He said, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, but this must be done. He writes the slip. That day I had to go to detention. That was the only time I had detention.

I had to stay over an hour after school with the wise guys. I was with all the wise guys who were always in trouble and always getting detention.

The man in charge, one of the teachers that I never had for any of my classes, looked like a Zombie, looked like Frankenstein.

He stood at the head of the class full of delinquents. I'm one of them now.

He said listen you guys, I want you to sit here and I want you to be quiet.

I don't want to hear a sound out of any of you. He leaves the room.

After he left the room, one of the delinquents gets up and bangs the chair on the floor, against the wall and the door.

Everybody starts talking, nobody smoked, but everybody started talking, eating candy bars.

Some delinquents were trying to sleep.

The teacher never came back. At quarter of five everybody just left and that was that. So much for detention at Reading High.

Boscov's north, now it's been open a few years, but the week that Boscov's North opened, as part of the opening exercises, that first week, they had a class on karate.

In this little auditorium, I was there, half a dozen other adults and two little kids, maybe 10 years old.

Dillman, the karate instructor is there for a karate demonstration. He wears a black belt and white suit. He is in his bare feet.

Dillman starts talking about the history of karate.

He goes back to the chinese dynasty in China and tells you how karate has expanded and improved. After Dillman's been talking about karate history for 20 minutes, these little kids, interrupt Dillman.

They hollar out, mister, mister, hey mister, we want action, we want action. We want action.

Over the years, on a Sunday afternoon there is a young man in his 30's. He often wears white patent leather shoes like you wear with a leisure suit.

He wears these white shiny shoes, a bicycle helmet, and he pedals almost every Sunday up the Allentown Pike to Kutztown.

Sometimes on a Sunday, Joan and I are driving home and we pass him coming home from Kutztown.

We do not have any idea, what his name is or where he lives. But over the years, and I'm talking 5 or 8 years, we look forward to seeing him on his bicycle. One day I couldn't believe my eyes.

I'm in at 8th & Penn Streets in the City. There is this young man across from the farmer's market on his bicycle using a cell phone at the curb.

While we are both waiting for the red light, across the street an ambulance is parked with the flashing lights, in front of the farmer's market.

The ambulance driver and helper get out of the ambulance and one of the ambulance drivers starts talking on a cell phone.

I look over at the man on the bicycle. I could hear that he was listening in on the conversation across the street that the ambulance driver was having.

I waited and watched and you could see from the expression on the young man's face that he was tuned in on the same frequency. He knew what they were saying over there at the ambulance.

By the way he is still around Reading, on a Sunday afternoon on his bicycle. It seems like forever that Joan and I have been watching him ride his bicycle. Sometimes on Kutztown Road, we see him.

All of us are so proud of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. Some time ago, Joan and I went to see it. Afterwards, I was thinking . There is something about the Vietnam Memorial that seemed familiar to me.

It wasn't the black marble, but all the names on the wall. Then I remembered. Reading used to have almost the same kind of a memorial.

In City Park behind the black anchor chain from the Battleship Maine, there was a huge billboard in the late 1940's.

It must have been three stories high and 100 to 200 feet long. It was in sections.

Between each section were painted long American Flags and written in the section between the flags were the names of the men from Reading and Berks county who were serving in the armed forces in World War II.

It kind of had a Red, White and Blue décor to it. The names in alphabetical order. That's why there was something about the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. that seemed familiar with me.

Some time ago, I attended electronics classes on a Monday or Tuesday night over at Northmont school building . When I went in, I couldn't find the room for my class.

By accident I opened the door into an art class. They were artists sitting around with the paint brushes and paints. I don't remember what they were painting. I said excuse me, and I went back into the hall.

I no sooner got back in the hall when a man came out, who obviously was the instructor. The instructor asked me if would like to model in the nude for the class. I said no

In City Park there is a big stone Statue of a Dove, together with his head and feathers, on a little pedestal. The sculptor of this dove was the art instructor at Northmont

Every time I drive through City Park and I see that Stone Dove there in the Park or I drive out through Northmont I think of this instructor.

Can you imagine me standing nude in front of an art class in the nude.

Down home in the barroom at 9th & Robeson, the bar was 20-30 feet long. Men stand at the bar and drink beer. There was a brass railing that stands 6 inches off the floor. The men stand and put their foot on the railing.

15 or 20 men are at the bar drinking beer, smoking and chewing tobacco. As needed, each man, turns his mouth down towards the brass rail and spits into a ceramic trough underneath the rail filled with running water.

Water runs out of a faucet in the base of the bar into the trough. The water is running slow enough to keep that slop moving along to the drain.

Sunday morning when the barroom was closed, Pop Printz cleans the barroom and washes down the trough.

Another thing to remember about the barroom, on the opposite wall from the bar, opposite from where the men stand, was a huge mural of Custer's last stand.

Hundreds of Custer's cavalry men and hundreds of Indians are fighting, shooting and scalping each other.

Hundreds of Custer's men having their hair pulled back and indians scalping them. Hundreds of the cavalry men shooting indians with their revolvers.

Standing in the middle of the picture in a buckskin outfit with flowing red hair and a mustache, was Custer.

I would stand and look at this picture for hours. Each little scene is so fascinating.

A beer company had installed this photo-type mural. No longer around for others to see.

While in Junior High, I used to visit the Reading Museum..I had a chance to open the large drawers in the basement which contained the Butterfly Collection.

The drawers were full of hundreds of butterflies stuck on top of large pins with their wings open like they were flying..

The butterflies were old and decaying.The drawers were full of decaying powder from the Butterflies.

I am on the mailing list for the art film club at Albright College. I can't go to the showings any more because the films are shown starting at eight o'clock at night, which is too late for me, I fall asleep. I have to walk too far from where I park.

One of the film showings was twenty minutes of a cat eating a black bird,that's right, a cat eating a black bird,feathers and all.

One presentation that I liked was using a portable radio as background music for the film. Just turn on the radio and whatever music was playing use as background for the film.

Before I had my stroke, I was in aerobic classes at Flying Hills and Colonial Hills. After retirement, I started lifting heavy weights and barbells.but became too stiff and too tired.. The instructor suggested swimming but I got an ear infection.

Another instructor said I should go in the aerobics class with the women. He said it as a joke.The class consisted of 20 young ladies and me.I really felt my old age.

I made arrangements to use my camcorder and take a few pictures of myself in class but I had the stroke and now you will never see me exercise in asrobics class.

Every morning before class I would play my key board in my rec room and sing the oldies but goodies.

Then in class, much to my surprise, we would work out to the same songs that I was singing at home a few hours before

Today at 11th and Spring street is Bob's sandwich shop. It used to be Bard's variety store. On a Sunday morning, long wooden planks were placed between chairs in the store.

These planks were piled high with the Sunday newspapers to be sold to the people coming up Spring Street from St Joseph's Church.

Bards also had a parrot in the store and it was not in a cage.

A gas jet was always lit with a flame where men could lite their cigars.

During the bicential year I gave \$100.00 to the bicential committee to invest in long term bonds due in 20076. There were 100 other investors who invested \$100.00 each.

The bonds would be worth \$1,000,000, in 20076 The money is to be used for the next Centential celebration.

When my Mom died there was a misunderstanding over the Will. I am not sure whether my Mom changed her mind about things for Flick and me or Flick and I misunderstood her will. As a result, Flick and I stopped talking to each other.

A few months after my stroke, I called Flick to tell him about my stroke. His wife, Joan, said that Flick had cancer and died two years before.

I let out a hollar over the phone and cried and cried. It was a real shock.

When my brother and I were in grade school, we used to walk every day to the the YMCA for summer day camp.

We would walk from 11th and Windsor over to 6th and Oley, over to the swinging bridge. At the intersection on Walnut street were large storm sewers. .

Flick and I would crawl down inside of the storm sewer and look at the large rats living down in the sewer.

On the way home, Flick and I would go over the Swinging Bridge at the 6th Street Outer Station. Flick would stand at one of the bridge and I would stand on the other .

At first we tried to swing the bridge from side to side, but the bridge was too heavy.

Then Flick and I took turns jumping up and down and discovered that we could make the bridge swing up and down like waves in the ocean.

The Bridge was about 2 blocks long and we could make the Bridge swing at least six to eight inches up and down, rolling like waves in the ocean .Waves rolling back and forth between Flick and me.

We used to laugh and laugh.

Reading used to be a City of vestibules. That's right, I said vestibules. Many

Of the row homes in the City had a vestibule. That is a little room just inside the front door.

You would remove your galosches, place place your wet umbrella in a stand, hang up your coat, open the wood and glass vestibule door and enter the living room.

When I first started going with Joan, we ate quite often in the Crystal Restaurant on Penn square.

One night as I sat talking to your Mom, the chrome chair that I was sitting on

slowly started to collapse. I ended up flat on the floor, down under the table.

As I laid on the floor , laughing hysterically, your Mom wanted to know what was wrong. She thought I was playing one of my jokes.

She leaned down and asked me if everything was alright.I couldn't stop laughing.

All the people in the restaurant stood up to see what happened.

The owner of the restaurant came over,helped me to my feet,apologized and said the meal for Joan and I was free.

Of all the hours and days Susie, Gary and I have talked together, I just recently learned of the following:

Yesterday, Septembewr 4th,2001, Su said that she was so mad that President Reagan visited the graves of Nazie SS soldiers in Germany, when Reagan was president She said she was so angry she sent Reagan a Western Union telegram telling him so.

Gary and I were stunned when we heard this. This was the first time Sue told us about her anger with Reagan and the telegram.

In the early 70's up near Harrisburg is a Neuclear Power Plant or station called THREE MILE ISLAND.

One day there was an emergency alert due to an accident at the plant. I decided to take my family and my Mom out of town down to Pat and Chubb's place at Rehobeth Beach in Delaware.

We all got in the car, including Buster Brown the dog. Much to my surprise, Joan said that she was not going, that she wanted to stay at home with her parents.

Pat and Chubb were not home, so we stayed in a motel for the night.

After the crisis was over, the next day,at home, there was disagreement how serious the neuclear accident was at the plant. One of my friends at work, laughed and said it was nothing to worry about.

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Then I discovered that during the crisis ,this supervisor, let himself in at Western Electric and removed a Geiger counter. He checked for any radiation at his home. He never told me that

I should have known better, this guy was an airplane pilot, who for fun ,was always flying thru the BermudaTriangle

A few months ago I attended a discussion group at the NE Public Library about Tom Brokaw's Book the Greatest Generation.

I had read the book and was disappointed, since the book was a collection of stories received from Veterans of World War II.

Rather than comment on the book , I talked about the Home Front in World War II. For instance, the City Council of Reading constructed a cement bomb shelter in City Park. The shelter only had enough space for 4 persons

During the war, butter was scarce,everyone started to eat margine. It always looked like lard to me in a plastic bag with a little round orange dot.

The bag had to be kneeded so the dot started to mix with the lard and change its color to look like butter.

To this very day I will not eat margine

For service men killed in the war, their mother received a little flag to hang in the front window of the house.

The little flag had a red border, a white field with a little gold star in the middle of the of the white field.The mothers were called "GOLD STAR MOTHERS."

Gasoline was also rationed. The local ration board gave out little coupons, A,B,or C , deping on how important your job was toward winning the war. The A coupon was for the most gas.

After a while, the people sold the coupons to each other for money or traded the coupons with each other.

Red and blue work handkerchiefs were also rationed. At the clothing store where I worked, the people would buy two handkerchiefs, leave the store, walk around the block, return to the store, and buy two more.

Soldiers could write letters home for free. Just by writingn the word "FREE" in the upper corner of the envelope where the stamp would be.

At the home front we were asked to save lard and grease left over from cooking. At the of each meal , my Mom would pour the left over grease and fat thru a strainer into an clean tin can.

After a number of lard cans were accumulated, the cans were dropped off at a designated location.

It used to be,when there was a death in the family, the family would nail a funeral wreath to their front door. Their neighbors would walk and talk softly in front of the house.

The kids would not play in front of the house. Cars on the street would not blow their horn when passing in front of the house.

If someone in the house contracted measles, chicken pox or the mumps, a white sign or placard was nailed to the side of the front door entrance warning others to stay away.

When Flick and I were in grade school, we had a friend of the family who lived with us at 1018 Spring Street. She was like a nanny. However she was slow mentally and had very poor eyesight.

One cold winter morning she helped my brother and I dress for school. My brother started to laugh hysterically, He called to the nanny but she ignored him and just kept asking what, what.

She didn't realize that the wire coat hanger was still inside the back of the coat. When she put it on my brother, the wire hook was sticking up behind my brother's head as she button up his jacket

After our parents had gone to work early, the nanny would wake up my brother and me and make us breakfast. We would have coffee soup.

We each had a cup of coffee with milk in it and there were about twenty pieces of buttered bread spread out in front of each cup.

We dip the buttered bread into the coffee and had coffee soup, eating with a spoon.

Much to my dismay and sorrow, I was told by a friend , that he knew a mother who had a flag with FIVE GOLD STARS

END