In 1916 I was born, a second child and a fourth generation Californian, in a small hospital at Coalinga, in western Fresno County. At that time Coalinga was strictly an oil and railroad town isolated by surrounding undeveloped desert and wooden oil derricks. Railroad tank cars brought in all potable water. World War I was raging in Europe.

Although born in the Sacramento delta region in 1874, my father, George A. Rutan had grown up in the then small city of Los Angeles. He had dreams of becoming an independent and prosperous farmer. With this in mind he eventually purchased unimproved land near Reedley, in the fertile fruit-growing district of eastern Fresno County. In the meantime he worked in the San Joaquin valley oilfields, mostly on a part time basis until he married in 1912 at age thirty-six. My mother, Rhoda, was born in Minnesota and had come with her family (Stearns) to Redlands, California, in 1902 at the age of fifteen. My parents were married in Lemoore, in the year 1912.

I am proud that my children are of pioneer American heritage. When I was doing genealogy research I failed to find a single ancestor, in both my line and in my wife Irene Goforth Rutan's line, who was other than of early Colonial descent. With the sole exception of immigrant (1675) Abraham Rutan, who was born in the oft-changing border area between France and Germany, all known ancestors were emigrants from some part of Great Britain.

There are also very early connections to the American West. My great grandfather, Samuel Rutan, Sr., crossed the plains to California in the summer of 1852. Leaving from Ohio/Illinois, he brought with him a wife, Sarah Cracraft Rutan, and six children. The youngest was Samuel Rutan, Jr., my grandfather, who was under one year of age at the time. Samuel, Jr. would marry my grandmother Semiramus Benson at Benson's Ferry, San Joaquin County, California, in 1873.

Several years earlier, in 1847, prior to the discovery of gold in California, another wagon train had headed for Oregon territory, departing from St. Joseph, Missouri. This party of forty wagons consisted almost entirely of the Kimzey clan (Kimsey?) and their kin; their cousins and in-laws. One member was the young mother, Edna Kimzey Benson, who would, in 1852 in California, become the mother of Semiramus Benson (Rutan), my grandmother. When Semiramus (her family called her Sissy) was six years old, she lost her father - the victim in a famous murder case. Newspaper records about this can be found in the basement of the San Joaquin County Library in Stockton.

Grammar School Days at Orange Cove 1919 through 1928

My first memories are of a small rented house close to Los Angeles harbor, where father had gone to work in the shipyards. Soon after the end of this "war to end all wars", he sold the Reedley farm, which he had planted to vineyard, and in 1919 purchased farm property two miles south of Orange Cove.

A small house was built and the land planted to grapes and figs. Kerosene lamps were replaced with electric bulbs only when it was necessary that power lines be brought in to operate the essential irrigation pump. The two-holer out back would remain during the ten years that the family, which would eventually include five children, lived there. The original house was soon expanded a bit and in it Mother supplied a warm comfortable haven for her healthy brood.

My sister and I first learned our ABCs at home, and I entered the first kindergarten class at the eight-room public school in town. We were provided with bus service and did not have to walk, except for the few occasions when we missed the bus. We had excellent, old-fashioned teachers who concentrated on reading, writing, arithmetic, penmanship and discipline.

Everyone thought it strange that although I was a good eater otherwise, I would refuse watermelon or fresh peaches. It was finally figured out that if the seeds and the skin was removed for me, I'd dig right in. Of course the peach de-fuzzing machines were not yet in use at packinghouses, nor were seedless melons marketed.

I suffered mightily from being the bed wetter of the family. I was deeply thankful that Mother did not buy into the theory that bedwetting has some deep psychological basis; she protected me and did not allow the others to tease me. She thought I was such a deep, sound sleeper and that this over-relaxed the sphincters. I remember one time when an exasperated Father threatened to place a balloon over my spigot and place a bee inside.

Father's only full sister was Aunt Nell. We thought of her as our "rich" Aunt Nell. She lived, childless, with her husband in Manila, Philippine Islands. Every Christmas a check for five dollars would arrive for each of us children. After the fifth child was added to our family unit, she offered to take one of the small ones and adopt and raise it as her own. Father thought it was a good idea and that this would allow privileges and favors that he was unable to provide. Mother would have none of it and ever after considered Aunt Nell a threat to what was hers. "If she wants a child so bad, let her have one of her own."

A kindergarten class was started at Orange Cove Grammar School and I was privileged to be a charter member. I was one of eighteen in that first kindergarten class. Our teacher was a young Miss Smith, who had a large spit curl right in the middle of her forehead. I liked school and promptly fell in love with Miss Smith. In the first grade our reader was a small text called The Little Red Hen. Reading and other studies came so easily for me that I was promoted in midterm to the second grade. I sorely missed my teacher and the classmates that I left behind. Mother saw to it that I rejoined my group the following year when all were promoted and (by her request) I was not. Through the early grades, I was comfortably at the top of my classes and especially enjoyed the spelling bees.

Fifth grade was one to remember because we had a young, new teacher who had her peculiar methods of keeping discipline. In addition to her yelling, she would order a victim to the front where she kept a heavy, eighteen inch ruler in the top drawer. The victim was ordered to hold out a hand, palm up, and she would deliver the appropriate number of blows. One time a tender soul could not keep from jerking his hand out of the way at the last moment in order to avoid the pain. So Miss Eckert decided to hold his hand in place. Yes, you guessed it. He still could not keep from jerking his hand free, and it was the teacher's palm that got smacked, much to the entertainment of the rest of the class - although we pupils were too cowardly to allow audible chuckles to escape our lips.

Another fifth grade incident is still fresh in my memory. Miss Eckert discovered a few coins missing from the drawer in her desk during recess while the room was suppose to be empty. After we had all reassembled at our desks, she announced she was going to find the culprit and began having us stand one by one in front of the class while being subject to her questions.

A very shy and unpopular girl could not help turning bright red when she was called up. So the teacher promptly proclaimed that this demonstrated her guilt. This girl's mother was so upset when she learned of this that she talked to my mother and they decided it was their responsibility to circulate a petition asking that Miss Eckert be denied a new contract which would then have given her tenure.

It was not like Mother to enter such a fray. Father announced that it would be useless anyway as the teacher was the daughter of the chairman of the school board. But Mother would never lag if she felt that children were being misused. Mother insisted that Father accompany her to the school

board meeting where the matter was to be decided. After the chairman, without success, invited Father out in the alley to settle things, he announced that his daughter was planning on getting married and would not want to teach another year, anyway. Father was not a fighter, and salved his honor about refusing the challenge to his desire for not wanting to hurt the guy since he was of smaller stature.

The school only had one bus, so half the pupils waited on the playground for it to return from delivering the first load, supposedly supervised. The school bully entertained himself beating on whomever he selected. Luckily, this guy was overweight and a slow runner, but he had a compatriot who would catch and hold the victim for him. But also, luckily, I could outrun even the compatriot. (In fact, I would be chosen to the position of "Runner" without a dissenting vote in our tribe of Friendly Indians, which was the counterpart to what is now Cub Scouts).

Playground fistfights took place to establish tough guy pecking order and any new guy was challenged. I think I only took on one guy and neither of us were especially eager, but of course the circle of spectators urged us on. I can only remember that he had white zinc oxide ointment covering some sores on the back of his neck and I ended up with a lot of it on my arms. Ugh.

It was while I was out on this playground that I saw my first airplane up close. The lower grades had been dismissed earlier than the others and as I was outside waiting, I noticed this airplane in the distance, flying very low. Thinking it might land over there somewhere, I started running in that direction. As I reached the edge of the school property, in came this wired up contraption, landing right over my head and taxied up to the school building. Two figures descended, clad in greasy coveralls and helmets. In place of a hand, one had a shiny hook. It seemed the new kindergarten teacher was to be picked up and flown to Fresno. We stood in the propeller blast as they prepared to take off, disregarding the dust, the sand and the small pebbles striking our skin.

A few years were necessary for the vines and trees on the family farm to become mature enough to return a reasonable crop. Prices had tumbled and the great depression of the 1930's was just around the corner. Most all the farmers marketed their fruit through a cooperative effort, usually to the large eastern cities, to which the product was transported in iced (not refrigerated) boxcars, and sold at whatever price it might bring when it arrived. I learned what the term, "red ink" meant. Namely, the money from the sale first went to the sales broker, next to the railroad, then to the local packinghouse that handled the fruit. Whatever was left was the farmer's.

Sometimes there was nothing left, and the year's effort for the grower was not only for naught, but he was left with the debt of his year's work - and might even owe money he didn't have. Red Ink!

On my birthday each Spring, Mamma would find time to meet me after school with the car. She would load up a group of my friends and we'd head for the hills. April was the season when the hills are at their finest. Fields of poppies, snowdrops, blue lupine, buttercup and owl's eye clover abounded. "Watch out, "Mamma would warn, don't put your foot in places you can't see. Rattlesnakes are coming out to lie in the sun." We would run wild in the green spring grass, among wildflowers and boulders until the sun got low. Mother prepared sandwiches and punch, with a small surprise gift for each, before delivering each boy to his home. All the boys thought I had a great mother.

Home life was protective and comfortable. Saturday was the day of the week that Mother delivered us to the small Seventh-day Adventist church five miles away in Orosi. Father very rarely would take us to Sunday school at the community church in Orange Cove.

I got my first bicycle. A used one without a coaster brake, and taught myself to ride it. Braking was accomplished by applying shoe leather to the front tire or by throwing your weight on the rising pedal.

The little brown, shaggy Shetland pony was bought from a neighboring family who were moving. The price of the saddle was more than the value of the animal - fifteen for the pony and twenty-five for the saddle. "Teddy" spent his time chained under the big poplar tree next to the barn; which had been placed a long distance from the house (as was the outhouse) at the insistence of Mother as a means of trying to reduce the ever-present housefly problem. Teddy was an older animal, both wise and sneaky. If he saw you coming at him with the saddle he would bare his teeth, lay back his ears and fiercely charge straight at you. If you stood your ground he would stop short, but the smaller kids were bluffed and this usually required someone else to do the job. Also, Teddy would blow himself up to a larger diameter when it came time to tighten the bellyband. The answer to this was just to wait until he had to breath, or knee him a good one. This mean streak of his would eventually be the cause of his demise.

On a day when I was elsewhere, brother Sam and his friend decided to ride the pony. They managed to bridle and saddle him, but did not make sure and wait until he was deflated so they could then retighten the belly cinch. Thus when Sam's friend got on and rode out across the field he was in danger of being dumped. And sure enough, that's what happened. He fell to one side, the saddle went with him and took a position under the belly of the pony. Next, the pony charged at the thrown boy with ears back and teeth bared. The sight caused the boy to run for cover toward a nearby power pole; and as he ran, the pony was at his heels. Unfortunately for the pony, one of the hind hoofs found a hanging stirrup and stuck there, throwing the animal to the ground. When he again found his feet he was much subdued, and would hardly put any weight on one of his legs.

A neighbor who was an old retired cowboy was summoned to make a diagnosis. He could feel the break in the femur by running his hand high up on the inside of the pony's leg where the skin is thin and hairless. I was invited to feel for myself. UGH. So the neighbor went home for his shotgun. Poor Teddy was led hobbling to the place where he was to be interred and

put down. Sam and I were given the job of digging a hole large enough to contain the carcass. The ground was hard and progress was slow. In fact it seemed that the pony swelled each day by about the same amount as the size of the hole. One day Father came out and sawed the legs off so less effort would be required.

Walking across a newly plowed field one day after a heavy rain, I found a large, beautiful Indian spear-point, exposed on top of a large clod. It was made of black obsidian and perfectly sculptured. Taking it inside, I announced my intention of taking it to school the next day to show off. Father said, "No, that looks like a valuable collectors item." Mother replied, "Let him take it, after all, it is his. He found it." Sure enough, the next day I was mortified when it slipped from my hand and broke into two pieces against the cement sidewalk. I kept the halves around a long time, hoping it could be repaired.

We boys made small pipes from half an acorn and a wheat straw. Discarded cigarette butts fitted into the device snuggly. Filipinos at a labor camp gave us some coarse stuff of what we thought was tobacco. After a few puffs my head started to swim. Thinking I was going to be violently ill, I rushed home and stretched out on my cot.

I think it was sixth grade; at least it was before my voice started to change, I entered a singing contest. The county chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union elected the task of organizing these contests in the local grammar schools. Boys were to compete by singing a hymn. Girls were to recite patriotic poems or readings. Since I had taken a few piano lessons, I selected a hymn that did not have any real high notes. After some practice sessions at home and at school, the teacher came to me and said, "Would you agree to exchange your selection with Tom Kennedy. He feels his hymn has too many high notes for his voice?" I wanted to say No, but knew I was out-powered. Tom's mother had done public solos herself, and I knew she was behind the request. Besides, I had been taught to accommodate requests if they were made in a polite manner. Inside I felt it was not fair, but started practicing on the new song which was, "O worship the King." Tom took the contest seriously and most everyone figured he was a sure winner.
Conversely, sister Frances had a natural talent for her poem and was considered the favorite to win in her group. I can hear her yet practicing that poem at home, over and over. In the group practice sessions, Tom was near perfect.

On the day of the contest (which was to be held in the auditorium with the fancy WCTU ladies sitting in a row directly in front as judges) we contestants drew straws to determine order. I was to be first. Somehow the perceived importance of the event stimulated my competitive spirit and I stood up and bleated out flawlessly in my soprano voice, even the high notes that I had feared.

When Tom's turn came, he started beautifully. But performing before a crowd evidently unseated his nerves a bit, because he ran out of air and couldn't hack the last two or three notes of the first line. And he did the same thing in other places before he completed his offering. It was very humiliating for him, but I was overjoyed. I kept my jubilation inside; celebrating that justice had been done. There is a God who allowed powerless George to win the first place silver medal even though he had to use the rejected hymn. I had held up the family's pride alone, also, because, unexpectedly, a girl from a Syrian immigrant family put on a stunning performance that relegated Frances to second place.

Earlier, the first stirrings of a normal sex drive reared its head. Waiting at the school bus stop, I convinced a neighbor girl to agree to get out of sight in an adjacent dry ditch and play doctor or "Show and not tell." And the teacher came up with a book printed for the purpose of giving sex education. The class listened

without tittering, at pictures of interior and exterior organs. This exercise was pretty embarrassing for the class and seemed to be even more so for the teacher. We were invited to ask questions. We were pretty awed and quiet. Finally, George felt the need to participate. “Why does my penis, in cold weather, shrivel up and get so small?” I felt further uncomfortable when the teacher did not choose to answer my question. On reflection, I suppose she must have felt my question was not really on the subject.

Summertime was for going barefoot. We really worried Mother if we stepped on a nail or otherwise got a puncture wound that didn’t bleed, and we had to soak the injured foot in strong and hot Lysol water. Being a trained nurse, she had somehow acquired a paranoid fear of tetanus. I can still feel how tender and soft the bottoms of my feet felt after removing the shoes for the first time in the spring. And how fast they toughened. And how awkward it felt putting them back into shoes again at the start of the school term.

The only vaccination we had to endure was the one for smallpox, and it was not injected with a needle, but was manually scratched into the skin, leaving a huge scab.

It would be ten years yet before much modern technology was introduced that affected daily living. I was proud of my first one dollar Pocket Ben watch, and braided a new black shoelace into a cord to keep it secure. There was still a buttonhook hanging with the shoes in the closet. No Velcro. There were no rugged synthetic fibers to be woven into garments. It was either cotton or wool, and both shrank a lot when washed, so garments had to be purchased with this in mind. Shoelaces made of cotton were always breaking.

Zipper was an unknown word. The first ones were unreliable and would jamb frequently, leading to awkward situations. “Anybody have a safety pin?” Since it was possible for an active boy to wear holes in cheap cotton socks even in a single wearing, I was taught how to darn socks by hand while stretching them over an old light bulb.

If you lived in town, you could have ice-blocks delivered. On our farm there was an evaporative cooler in which to keep milk and other food. This was made by hanging burlap sacks over a frame, with a water tank above so water could seep down and keep things wet, using the same thermal principle as what was later used in “swamp coolers”.

Orange Cove grammar school was not a school of minorities in those days. I remember only one Negro student and one Mexican - Sostenese Corral. There were two Japanese families, where parents did not speak English.

In 1928, at mid-term, I got pushed up into the eighth grade. And I was also about to lose the only comfortable, little school that I had ever known. I would never again achieve a straight ‘A’ report card in every subject without cracking a book.

Whittier (the first time) 1928 - 1931

The great depression came early for the fruit farmers. The water table was dropping fast, requiring expensive well deepening; many were abandoning their efforts and moving away. In the Orange Cove area, there was no ditch water to fall back on.

After only one or two good crops our farm was leased out to one of the larger operators in the area, and Father went back to work in the oilfields. He secured full time work in the booming oil town of Santa Fe Springs, over two hundred miles away. A farmhouse in an orange grove was found and rented near the Quaker town of Whittier. Father rode down from our Orange Cove ranch on the rented truck that carried all our worldly possessions. The next day Mother and her five children left in our 1923 Dodge Brothers touring car. It was December and the side curtain with icing glass panes was put in place.

For some months, Mother had been teaching me (and allowing me) to drive, first by sitting on her lap, then on my own. The high point of that trip to Whittier for me was that I got to drive over part of the old, original "ridge route" that wound over the mountains. It was required at the time that one be fourteen to acquire a license. I still had two years to go. (In the year 2000, I took a tour of that same, long abandoned road, which now has historical significance. I asked the guide, "Have you ever had anyone along who actually drove this old road?" I felt my age when he replied, "No, I don't believe that anyone who did would still be alive.")

Whittier had good schools, and a single movie house that was closed on Sundays. I was to finish the eighth grade at East Whittier grammar school, and go on to take two years at Whittier Union High School, following in Richard Nixon's trail by a year or two. The Nixon kids bus stop was the next after ours, and sometimes we waited together. Richard would not join in the horseplay with we younger ones, but would take a book and retire behind an orange tree.

These were the times when play activities filled my spare time. Bicycles, soapbox skateboards, kites and sandlot, pickup ball games. Digging caves and making rubber band guns. I won "best constructed" kite in a big kite-flying meet. The prize was five dollars credit at the lumberyard. I chose enough cedar to be able to work on a chest in my woodworking class.

I remember seeing my first food "Super Market" here. It was a Piggly Wiggly. In Orange Cove groceries were bought by handing your list to a clerk (probably also the owner) at a front counter. He, in turn, would go back and find each item, one at a time, and bring it to where you were patiently waiting. When all was there, he would add up the cost on a piece of paper. There was talk that if you didn't pay attention, you might find errors in addition, always in the store's favor.

Another Whittier house that we lived in was in the midst of a huge English walnut orchard on Colima Road near the big Red Car tracks. The limbs that overhung the country road provided a dense shelter needed for us kids to enjoy a potentially dangerous pastime. We would select a big wrench or some other attractive item and lay it on the side of the road; attached was a string that led up into the foliage. How it worked was that as an unsuspecting driver overshot the prize and braked to a stop. We would reel in the bait, and then watch up in the tree as he backed to relocate his find. Depending on how we judged the size and character of the driver to be, we would either give him the hee-haw, or remain very silent, fearing the physical wrath of the victim.

After a couple of years here, we moved a mile or so west to Laurel Avenue, in a house near the same tracks. This old two-story house still stands surrounded by newer places built later. Occasionally, we would have a guest at the supper table. It would be a passing hobo who was “riding the rods”, and would knock and ask for food. Father would always give him some task to do while awaiting a meal, and have him sit uncomfortably with the family while he offered the blessing.

La Sierra (the first time)
1931 - 1932

I was fifteen and had finished the second year of high school at Whittier Union High School. It was the only high school around and served a large area using school buses. It was decided that it would be best for me if I would be sent away to school in Arlington at Southern California Junior College (now La Sierra University). Mother’s brother was the farm manager, and he said it was possible that I could work out most of my school and living expenses there on the school farm. A lot of companionship came with life in the boy’s dormitory and I never felt homesick. The farm raised mostly alfalfa for hay and field corn for ensilage, to support the large herd of dairy cows. Workhorses supplied all the farm power.

Learning to work with draft horses was a good maturing experience for me. Every few days, somewhere on that 600 acres, a skittish team would get away from an inexperienced, schoolboy teamster. Watching runaway horses gives one an entertaining but helpless feeling. If obstructions were avoided, the horses finally would become winded and then captured. If not there was likely to be destruction and even blood - luckily, only horse blood as I remember.

None of the money earned was paid to me. Instead it was applied as school credit against my board, room, and tuition. We hoed and irrigated corn, shocked and hauled hay, and spread sunshine (manure), all for the grand sum of fifteen cents an hour - none of which we ever got to see.

It was thought that we had a good deal, and indeed we did. One third of America was unemployed, and there was little welfare help. There were lots of fun times. We boys could usually manage, if we wished, to sneak out of the dorm in the evenings and just prowl around in the dark or go down and visit the “village” girls. My future wife was a village girl, and her mother would invite the boys who were sniffing around into the house for a cake waffle feed.

The live-in, on-campus girl students in their dorm on the other side of the campus were guarded closely, almost like inmates, and we had to be satisfied with sneaking conversations with them into the time between classes. At that time, the third and only other large building at So. Calif. Junior College (originally named La Sierra Academy and later called La Sierra College and University) was the two story administration building. In its interior were crowded business offices, classrooms, an auditorium, a library, a cafeteria in the basement and everything else.

We were required to attend evening worship every weekday in our dorm, and also to carry one subject on religion in our class schedule during the regular school term.

I made several off-campus visits to the village home of Irene and Florence Goforth. Irene’s mother would cook up the most delicious cake waffles served with whipped cream, and make us dorm inmates feel comfortable in their home. I thought Irene acted less frivolous than most girls her age (16). It was also evident she was fighting the teenage battle with acne, as a lot of us were to various extents. She and I had several dates, like on Saturday night hayrides and the like. She could get access to her Dad’s classy 1931 Model A Ford roadster that had a canvas folding top and a rumble seat, allowing six kids to squeeze in.

All cars were smaller in those days; room for only three across in front, which meant that the guy not driving had to hold his date crosswise on his lap. This of necessity put several well-shaped legs close to the gearshift lever which was in the middle on the floor. So the driver, too, got a bit of a bonus every time he reached in that direction.

After one Saturday night party at Irene's house, someone got the less than bright idea of driving over to Redlands to visit what was purported to be a haunted house. There were enough of us for two carloads. The other car was suppose to follow us, because there was someone in the car I was driving that was suppose to know exactly where this haunted house was located. I wasn't driving fast enough for the guy following. He kept tailgating then zooming past and then dropping behind again. Someone said as he flashed on past us, "Let's just ditch that smart aleck."

It so happened that we were driving down Riverside's Main Street; Ten at night and almost no other traffic. I immediately took a right turn, which put us on 7th street that borders the Mission Inn. The first cross street was a blind corner, but heck, we were trying to lose this guy and couldn't afford to slow down. Accelerating, I came to the first cross street. As I cleared the corner of the building, I could see this other car almost upon me. For a moment I thought that I had squeezed across in front of it, but I was not so lucky.

Our car was hit in the back quarter, spun around and rolled completely over, ending up on its wheels on someone's front lawn with everyone still in position in their seats - sort of a miracle, since seatbelts were a thing whose place was long in the future. As we cartwheeled, I can remember only the dirt that fell down from the floorboards into my face. The hardwood struts that held the convertible top were broken, as was the collarbone of the girl sitting on the guy's lap in front. No one else had a scratch.

The other car, whose driver was also running the blind corner, had insurance and this paid for the totaled Model A Ford as well as the medical care for the broken bone. Several months later a lawyer hunted me up in my dorm room at school. He said that I should file a claim. He figured, correctly it turned out, that the insurance company would just pay off rather than reopen the whole case. So a bit later, here he came with a sixty-dollar check, took me to a bank where I cashed it and paid half to him as his commission. It was a windfall for me. As I said earlier, it was the bottom of the Great Depression and dollars were hard to come by - even for an ambulance-chasing lawyer.

Often, Uncle Erman Stearns and wife Laura would invite a group down to their little house on the farm property for a Saturday night of games and popcorn. There were always both boys and girls. I had an early crush on cousin Beatrice. She always seemed so carefree, relaxed and fun loving. These characteristics were mostly the opposite of her twin sister, Barbara. At one Saturday night party, an older cousin, Aura Mae, was there. She observed Bea walk over and plop herself on my lap and icily commented, "Bea just goes over and sits down on a guy's lap like she was sitting on a bench." Anyway I nursed a secret feeling for Bea for more than several years; lamenting the fact that it could never be, since we were cousins.

My second summer there in the boy's dorm at La Sierra (1932), I worked full time on the farm in order to build up credit for the following school term. It was at this time that the school decided to value student labor at twenty-five cents an hour; credited to the school expenses, of course, no cash. Full time meant ten hours a day, and often more, six days a week. There were no classes during the summer and a bit more time for social contacts. But Irene had gone to visit relatives in Oklahoma and I had to look elsewhere for female contact.

Everyone, except the girls of course, did a lot of hitchhiking. There were no freeways, and the traffic load did not require more than a single lane in each direction even on major routes. I would often OPC to visit at home in Whittier. (OPC = other people's cars.) I think everyone who did much hitch hiking eventually found himself propositioned by a pervert. For myself, I had enough fearful knowledge (barely) to repulse the advances politely and firmly.

Came the start of the regular school term in September 1932. The economic depression was starting to kick in with a vengeance. On the national political scene, a very large change was taking place; namely the transfer of the Presidency from conservative, inactive Herbert Hoover, to liberal, and extremely pro-action Franklin Roosevelt.

Was the proper pronunciation Rose-velt or Ruse-velt like it was spelled? We could not get a clue from the media since radio was still new enough so that many did not have one and the announcers were doing it both ways. The newspapers offered no help, of course. The country was also split between those who pronounced the name of the eastern communistic country either as "Rush-a or Roosh-a." My grammar school teachers had argued over the correct pronunciation of Venezuela; then put their heads together and settled on Ven-zoo-eel-a.

One weekend Sunday, a group of us dorm boys talked the school into providing a driver and using the old farm REO speedwagon for an outing. We thought we had labored commendably most of the summer, and we wanted to go to the beach. They provided a responsible adult driver and we piled into the open-air back and took off for a day in the surf at Redondo Beach. Sunburned and salty and having spent all our change, myself and a friend returned to where the truck had parked, only to find that it had left without us.

It was soon dark and hitchhiking through the lonely countryside was not working. After about ten miles on foot and about midnight, we spotted the dim outline of a haystack and figured that was where we would put up for the rest of the night. We found it was a large square stack of baled straw. It was chilly and everything by this time was covered with a heavy layer of dew, but the inside of the stack had retained all the heat of the summer day.

By climbing up on the flat top surface pulling out a couple of the bales in the middle and placing other bales crosswise across the hole, we made a warm, snug retreat. But as soon as we were settled in, we could feel hundreds of bugs crawling all over us.

In the pitch black and without a match or other light source we could not identify what variety they were. We imagined the worst and even squashed and tasted some to try and see what variety they were. But I was pooped and protected myself by reaching down below my crotch and gripping each pant leg up tight as a barrier, and was asleep in a minute.

In the morning we found some water, brushed off some of the hay and got back on the road. We split into singles and in a couple of hours were back on campus. "Oh yes, we realized you were missing, but figured you could take care of yourselves."

One of the dorm boys had an older brother who lived off campus and owned a big old Buick touring car. He was driving north for the weekend and bringing back a trailer with a load of beehives. They dropped me off at a service station near Fresno, and said; "We have to move the bees at night, so meet us here at this same station around eight P.M. on Sunday."

I hitchhiked out to the home of an Orange Cove friend. Here, Bob Howorth, Myron Tisdel and I got an old Star automobile running and drove up into the mountains and camped out at Sequoia Lake. Upon leaving we had to get an accommodating truck to push us up out of the lake basin, since we found that the old car could not make it up the hill to the main hyway, either in reverse or in low gear with a big

running start.

On Sunday, I was at the pickup station in Fresno even before eight o'clock. And I was still hanging around waiting after midnight. I figured my ride was not going to appear and I could not hang around all night. Finally gave up and started hitchhiking south on Hyway 99. Got a ride and found out the guy had picked me up in order to have me drive for him as he was sleepy.

Well, I was even sleepier than he was, and as he watched me drift off the road a few times, he took over and I got some sleep. Past three A.M. he dropped me off at a major intersection south of Bakersfield. I looked across the street and there, under the lights of a service station, was the Buick with the load of bees.

Wow, was that ever a delightful sight. At that time the only structures between Bakersfield and the Grapevine grade were a couple of small gas stations. Traffic was very sparse at the time of the night. This was long before the days of self-service. An attendant would always be there to wash your windshield, check the oil and the tire pressure. Well, we rolled into one of these stations just before daylight, looked through the window and there was the lone attendant sitting at a table with his head buried in his arms - fast asleep.

I was shocked when Laurel Lindbeck started filling his gas tank himself. And even more so later, when he drove off without either waking the attendant or leaving payment. "I'll stop and pay him twice when I come back this way next time." As I said earlier, times were hard, but usually people were responsible.

Pacific Military Academy
Culver City 1932 -1933

The year and two summers I had spent at La Sierra were good for me. I certainly learned how to work and to appreciate the value of a dollar. Also, interacting with a group of good fellows in the same carefree circumstances developed my social awareness at a good rate.

As the new school term started in September, I signed up for my classes and had settled down for the grind of a new school year at La Sierra, which would be my senior year in high school. The subjects were those applicable to a pre-med curriculum. It was therefore a surprise when word came from family matriarch and godmother, Aunt Nell Rutan Applegate. As she had no children of her own, she loved to offer other things which she thought would broaden what she considered to be our narrow horizons.

Be that as it may, Aunt Nell had discovered a private boarding school, (Pacific Military Academy), located in Culver City, which type of training she judged would be just what the raw Rutan boys might need. So two of my brothers, Sam aged fourteen and Charles aged nine, were sent there to start the term.

Sam made out fine, but after two weeks, when Mother visited, Charles threw himself in her arms and on her mercy, crying out that he would surely die if forced to remain in this place. So Mother, who had felt from the beginning that he was too young to be away from home in a boarding school, put him in the car and took him back home - forthwith.

Now Aunt Nell's out-of-the-blue offer was for me to leave La Sierra and go and take Charles' place for the term at Pacific Military Academy, since she had already paid entrance fees and tuition for two. I considered her offer for a short while - like about two minutes. Hmmmmmmmmm; everything paid, no need to shock hay, haul manure and live in semi-poverty! Wow!

Some of the La Sierra adults clicked their lips in a negative way that suggested I was probably headed into perdition. I arrived in Culver City, a bit late for opening date, but in a rather favored position, as I would be a twelfth grader in the twelve grade school. This was a small student body. I remember there were only about ten senior students. A number in the school were children of Hollywood celebrities.

I was promptly fitted with uniforms and equipment, and was on the football and basketball teams. We were coached by an assistant coach from University of Southern California. There was a stable of riding horses for us to use. I was also a member of the military drill team that performed as a vaudeville act at some of the large movie theaters in L.A. There were three different types of uniforms in our wardrobe, and we looked quite the dandies.

We were allowed to check out on weekends, as long as we had accumulated no demerits. If there was nothing else to do we would walk down and take in a movie at the little theater on Washington Boulevard. The new president, Franklin Roosevelt, had declared a bank holiday and all the nations banks were closed. We convinced the theater manager, that we had no money because of the bank closure. He let us in on credit.

Anytime we got off campus as a group, someone would invariably pass around a pack of cigarettes. I didn't want to stand out by declining, so I puffed some, being careful not to inhale so as to avoid the coughing that would mark me as a novice smoker, which I surely was. Another thing to do on weekends was to take one of the big red trolley cars and go into downtown Los Angeles for the day.

Once, toward the end of the year, I was downtown by myself, waiting on a street corner for a bus. Behind me was a newsstand. On a sudden impulse, I turned and bought a package of cigarettes, and lit one up. To my surprise I found the smoke was not only not irritating, but, kind of tasted good. Whoa! That fact suddenly awakened me. Here I was using my own scarce money for something that was showing signs of getting me hooked, which was the last thing I wanted. On another sudden impulse I stepped over to the curb and flipped the lighted stogie into the gutter - and the whole pack followed. Though I've lived a good part of my life inhaling second hand smoke, I've never felt the urge to again partake myself.

The School headmaster thought he had mastered a hypnotism course he was taking in night school, so he decided to demonstrate his skills before a school assembly one evening. There was one hitch. An unbelieving student volunteer was successfully put to sleep, then could not be awakened on command, as planned. The headmaster was alarmed. I was assigned to take him to his room and put him to bed, and a little later when he still could not be aroused, to take him for a car ride out in the night air. This did the trick and we had to tell him what had happened and where he was. Still he felt strongly that he had not been put to sleep by hypnotism, but must have been knocked out by a sucker punch from behind.

One Friday in March (1933) after many of the students had left for the weekend, I, as an officer, had the ones remaining lined up in the courtyard for inspection prior to marching to the dining room for food. Everything went unusually quiet for a few seconds. Then someone shouted “Earthquake!” Nobody moved. I glanced up over my shoulder, and saw, not in back of me but directly over my head the reinforced concrete, two story high wall of the school auditorium tilting like the leaning tower of Pisa. Someone yelled, “Run, boys, run,” and we all split down the hill like a bunch of terrified rabbits.

Upon reaching the edge of the football field, we stood in the open, watching the palm trees whipping back and forth and the parked cars lurching. What was to be known as the Long Beach earthquake took down most of the older brick buildings, including schools, in the lower part of the Los Angeles basin, and led to new construction standards in the state regulations. That quake remains by far the most severe and scary that I have encountered in my time in the earthquake capital state of California. Which, of course, happens to be my whole life except for five years I spent in Oregon - and the one year in uniform in Idaho.

During Spring vacation of 1933, with a few days off, Sam and I OPC-ed out to La Sierra. Mother had moved from the oilfields while Father remained there on the job. On one of those lovely spring days at a season where the normally dry hills were lush and green, Sam and I took the old .22 caliber rifle that has been in the family for years and headed out for a hike through the hills.

After working up a sweat, we rested on a big rock beside some thick, low sagebrush. Glancing down through the brush almost at our feet, we spotted the diamond pattern of a snake’s back, stretched out and nearly completely hidden. A careful visual search identified the head of the rattlesnake. We thought it strange that it had not been alarmed by our proximity. After we placed a bullet through that head, we discovered the reason why, when a squirming and rattling action exploded. But what we discovered there in the brush was not one snake, but two, attached together in relaxed copulation.

After disposing of the second snake, as well, they were hauled home to be skinned; the fangs and rattles being retained for souvenirs. I used to like to go hunting rattlesnakes every spring. Later, I decided that if there was no habitation around it was just as much fun to stir them up a little and then let them go their way.

On one of my weekend trips back to La Sierra, I found that Bea Stearns had set me up with a date with her friend, Vera. I thought I cut a handsome

figure for the girls with my uniform. Anyway, we found ourselves one evening riding in the front seat of a Ford roadster. This time I was not driving, so I was the guy on the right side with the girl on his lap. Vera was tiny. I was tall. This brought our faces close. With my arm around her, we sat in the dark with our cheeks touching, both equally enraptured. Since things seemed to be going so well, my male nature told me that this was the right time to steal a kiss. But when I turned my face to find her lips, Vera exploded with indignation and refusal.

As we returned happily to the cheek-to-cheek position, I tried to figure out what was going on. Then it dawned on me that she was of the belief that an osculation such as I was proposing was the act that got girls pregnant. Many of us were pretty poorly informed about the details of sex, but this was a shocker. Vera was very happy to go back to any other type of what we called “necking.” This was an extreme example of the effectiveness of the way kids picked up our sex education in those days.

As I have said, it was indeed another time. Radio programs put out the same type fare as what was seen in the movies. Later, it was a big news event when they allowed Clark Gable to utter the phrase, “I don’t give a damn” in the movie “Gone with the wind.” He was also the one who startled the establishment by pulling down the hanging sheet that divided his bed from that of Claudette Colburn in “It Happened One Night.”

Following graduation exercises at Pacific Military Academy at the end of the school term in June, I was anxious to return to La Sierra. Brother Sam remained at Pacific Military Academy for another year, and time has shown that the experience did not prove to be fatal for either of us.

La Sierra (the second time)
1933 - 1934

I found myself back working full time on the farm in order to accumulate credit to cover tuition and board and room expenses for the upcoming year. A big pay-raise had been enacted as compared to the rate earlier. Twenty-five cents an hour; ten cents more than my first year there.

I have forgotten what we were charged for tuition and for our room in the dormitory, but in the cafeteria, each serving, in an individual dish, cost five cents. Very occasionally we would cheat a little; like concealing a serving of vegetables by dumping the contents into the bowl of soup before we reached the cashier at the end of the line.

Once in a while we would catch a field mouse as we were shocking hay; then wrap it in a handkerchief to be later shaken loose under the table in the dining room. After the chase by the macho boys to stomp the poor little creature, there was an extra bonus. The matron in charge of the food, was very embarrassed because she thought this meant she had mice in the pantry and this particular mouse was one of hers. After someone tipped her off to what was really happening, we did not dare repeat the stunt for fear of the consequences should we be caught.

I landed the extra job at the farm of doing “morning horse chores.” The duty consisted of getting the horses ready for work prior to the time the regular workday started at six. This meant I arrived at the barn in the pitch dark. I received one and a half hours credit for this and I found that I could do it in one hour if I really rushed.

Get the twelve or fourteen big workhorses from the outside corrals into the barn and into the individual stalls for each team of two. Pitch in the hay. Curry and while they were eating, harness each one and dung out the manure and replace with fresh bedding. Then at six I would go out

into the fields with the others for the ten-hour day, or later, if it was a school day, until the hour of my first class.

This extra job saved me some money in another way, since there was no time for me to have a regular breakfast. We would often eat corn in the field or whatever else we could find. Like cross the highway and pay twenty-five cents for a day old pie from the pie factory. This schedule might have retarded my growth except by this time I already had my height of six foot three. It was during this time, I think, that I started to learn how to appreciate the value of each dollar. Although the system didn't allow me to handle any hard coin, I kept my own copies of work sheets and a record of the cost of each meal. This I blame for shaping my parsimonious nature during later years.

The four hundred acre farm operated by the school was devoted primarily to raising feed for the large dairy herd that supplied not only the school cafeteria, but milk, cheese and ice cream were also trucked into the White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles. Alfalfa hay and field corn that was turned into ensilage were the chief crops.

Come September I signed up for pre-med classes. The first day of school brought an influx of new students. Only a relatively few of us had been granted summer employment there. One of these new students was Charlotte Wesner, from Glendale. "Sally" let me know she had her eye on me by passing me a note in chapel that said something like, "What are you doing tonight?" I was flattered by the attention from this nice looking blonde from Glendale, and we struck up a friendship that turned at once into a boy/girl thing. We would hide out in dark corners of the hall between classes and chat, until we were spotted and given the evil eye by one of the faculty.

My required class in religion for the second semester was held at eight AM and was "New Testament History." The teacher was the college president, E. E. Cossentine. The classrooms were all located in the administration building and had high ceilings with high windows that reached from waist high if you were standing, clear up the whole side to the ceiling. When seated we had a wonderful view of only the sky and the tops of trees. Maybe a pigeon would pass by. I think the windows were planned this way so the students would have a minimum of outside distraction during the lecture.

On this cloudy spring day Cossentine droned on through his mustache, the guttural sound of his voice less than inspiring. Wait a minute. What was this? A single huge snowflake drifted into sight, followed at once by more. And soon there was a storm of them. Each student was transfixed, of course. Snow was, and is, a rare event at La Sierra.

If Cossentine noticed, he did not show it. Soon, the sound of many excited voices playing outside in the snow reached our ears. The more practical teachers in all the other classrooms had dismissed their students so they would not miss fully participating in this wonder of nature.

No one in our room dared moved without permission. Cossentine was showing his authority. Surely, he was aware that his words were reaching not a single ear. Through thirty minutes of agony until the bell rang, we were held captive. Lucky for us the snowfall had persisted, and we missed only the early part of the play in the snow.

Ken Bayless, a friend, also had a connection with a girl in the dormitory, the same as I did with Sally. We planned with the girls to arrange a Saturday night date together in the "approved manner". It was the first week of a new school term in September 1934. I had a 1923 Dodge touring car, which my parents had let me have. (They were insulted when the dealer offered them only twenty-five dollars trade in on a new 1934 Ford V8 they were getting.) The girls were to get permission for us to pick them up in the parlor of the girls' dorm. We boys arranged for Mrs. Fentzling, wife of the English teacher, to be our chaperon. We felt real grown up to be doing this thing "right." Everything went well. We checked the girls out of their dorm, drove into Riverside and explored every nook, cranny and hidden staircase of the Mission Inn, then delivered everyone back to campus on time and took the chaperon home.

Ken was not yet living on campus as I was. The next morning, I was ordered to Cossentine's office and hit with ten demerits, which had to be worked off, an hour for each one. It seemed that, unbeknownst to Ken and I, our dates had fibbed to the dean of girls about where they were going or some such thing; for what reason I never could fathom. Anyway, Cossentine admitted to me that we boys were likely innocent and had been deceived by these scheming girls and were not aware of their transgression. "Regardless of that," he said, "I feel I must punish you, too."

I felt angry and terribly wronged that the president of the college would reason in this manner. The only way I could retaliate was to report for work that Sunday on the farm, skip lunch and supper and get in my full ten hours and the monkey off my back in a single day.

The girls seemed non-apologetic. However, they told us they were going home to Glendale for the next weekend, and why didn't we drive there and meet them, so we could chase around free from the shackles of faculty supervision. How could we refuse? Ken borrowed his father's Nash sedan that had rollup windows and it was a fine weekend, indeed.

Back on campus the following Saturday night while on a hayride, I developed a severe abdominal pain. Every time the steel rims of the wagon hit a rut was like a spear thrust to my insides. I got back to my room and into my bed, but my audible groaning induced the dorm preceptor to call Dr. Reynolds to make a bedside visit. The doctor suspected the appendix, I think, but was confused because I would not agree that the location of the pain was centered in the "lower right quadrant" of the abdomen. "It just hurts in all quadrants."

So he decided on a diagnosis of indigestion and left cathartic pills to get things moving. By next day, the pain was relieved somewhat, but I was so lethargic that the doctor was alarmed and ordered, by telephone, for me to be taken to the hospital in Loma Linda. Ken still had his father's Nash. So he loaded me up, went by and picked up Aunt Laura so there would be an adult to admit me, and we left for Loma Linda hospital.

A blood test verified what was now pretty evident. I was scheduled for immediate surgery to remove what was a ruptured appendix with the resulting generalized peritonitis. A spinal anesthetic was used for the surgery.

This was the year 1934, prior to the availability of any of the wonder drugs such as penicillin or the sulfas. I don't remember receiving any medication. A large drainage tube was wound around inside and the end left hanging out. Lay on the right side only so gravity can aid the drainage; and let's see if your constitution is

strong enough to overcome the massive infection. I had been pitching hay all summer, was as lean and brown as an Indian, so was favored in that regard.

After the surgery, I was assigned three nurses to watch over me in eight-hour shifts for several days. Two of them treated me as if I was unconscious, sitting silently and knitting most of the time. They would let me hold a little ice in my mouth every few hours, which was a treat as I was denied either food or water. The third nurse was Wilma, the day nurse. She stayed on several more days. She was a recently graduated registered nurse. She took her duties seriously. Alcohol rubs to reduce the fever. Back rubs. Insert the tube to bleed off the painful gas that my weakened system was unable to expel unaided. She would talk to me constantly.

I remember she told me the whole story of the problems with the medical student to whom she was engaged to marry, etc. She kept me connected. Without a doubt, she saved my life. I was unaware at the time, but later learned that the doctors had minimized my chance of surviving. I have a diary that states that I lost forty pounds while in the hospital for less than two weeks. Forty pounds from an already tough and lean 170 pounder!

Many, many years later, after we were both gray, I had the chance to again meet Wilma and thank her personally. And learn that, no, she did not marry the medical student. As she had told me, what had bugged her so badly about him at the time was that he was so germ conscious that whenever she invited him to her folks' house for dinner, he would go direct to the bathroom, soap his hands thoroughly, cross them over his chest and refuse to touch anything until dinner time.

I spent another week on an army cot in the back porch at Stearns' house on the farm while regaining my strength. I was there when I learned that my friend, Ken, had been killed in a motorcycle accident. Three boys on one motorcycle at night. Sneaking out of the dorm to attend the county fair in Pomona. I had recovered just enough, barely, to be able to attend the funeral.

By this time (1934) Mother had moved from La Sierra back to near Coalinga where Father's job as a pumper in the oilfields was located. To the same barren spot on the same hill and in the same rickety house in which they had first lived as newlyweds in 1912, and where they were when Frances and I were born. This time I stayed there with them for a few weeks and hiked the hills looking for fossils while eating a lot and getting back my previous physique. My Father was struggling there to hold down the last job his health would let him keep. He was developing Parkinson's disease.

At this juncture dear Aunt Nell stepped in to suggest that she would help out, as she so often did for one member of our family or another during her whole life. She would finance my return to school if I would go to the then primarily agricultural State college at Davis, California. She had decided that I was the one best suited to prepare myself to operate the still leased-out family farm at Orange Cove.

University of California at Davis
1935

Aunt Nell's monthly check of forty-five dollars would cover the cost of my room in the boys' dorm across from the Quad on campus, and also what I ate. At that time tuition was free for state residents. (It is odd that I cannot now recall where I received my victuals or what I ate, but it must have been at the school cafeteria. Without any physical labor to do, here I attained the highest weight of my life - two hundred fifteen pounds.

I registered for a geology course and other subjects which would get me on track for a degree. My grades were average only. I suppose if I had knuckled down and stayed the course that Aunt Nell had in mind, I might have spent a career with the Department of Agriculture as an inspector of some kind, since it was not realistic that with a degree, that I would be satisfied to actually return and operate the little farm at Orange Cove.

Aunt Nell could see I was unenthusiastic, and I told her as much. She asked, "Well, what would you like to do?" I suggested to her that I would like to pick up again on my pre-medical studies. Her wish was that I not go back to La Sierra. She arranged for me to visit, and took me on a tour of University of Southern California to see if I would like it there. But now, since I was selecting a path not of her choosing, it was her turn to be unenthusiastic. That was the end of her financial offer, and she transferred her special interest to brother Sam. He got a year at the University of Michigan in Davis.

That semester, I had opted to take, in lieu of the required Physical Education class, the R.O.T.C. military training that was offered on campus. My earlier training at Pacific Military Academy stood me in good stead here. At the end of the semester and as part of the final test, as it were, the entire company of students, equipped with rifles, were put through a manual of arms drill while standing in close ranks, in full uniform.

The company commander barked out commands, while the non-com officers stood with eagle eyes looking to pick up anyone who made a slip in the cadence which was performed in unison. If one was detected, the offender was ordered to the sidelines. "Company, Attention. Parade rest. Right shoulder arms. Present arms. About face. At ease. Left face." No marching was involved. We privates slapped our rifles and entered the spirit of the competition.

Soon we were reduced to a small number of surviving soldiers numbering less than the number of eyeballs daring us to make the smallest slip. This number was soon reduced further and I found myself standing with only a single competitor. The company commander speeded up the sequence of commands, attempting to induce one of us to err. But we performed flawlessly and as much in synchronization as two puppets attached to the same cord. Finally, failing to induce either of us to make a single false move, we were declared dual winners.

A hitherto unnoticed face in the crowd, I now found myself offered the privilege of being one of the four personal body guards who would escort the then governor of California, Frank Mirriam when he would be on campus to take part in the annual Picnic Day celebration and parade. It made me feel even a bit more important inside to decline the honor. My roommate and I had already made plans for that time. We were to hitchhike north to his home in Redding and spend the Spring holiday break at his home, and I was really looking forward to that. His father

was director of the local chamber of commerce. This friend's last name was Stanley. He was older and had spent a couple of summers at an isolated fire lookout tower. We had what we thought was an appropriate nickname for him - "the old owlfucker."

It is a fact that certain short instances stay painted on your memory for the remainder of your life. And as Stanley and I stood beside the highway with our thumbs out waiting for the second ride of the day in one of those little towns over on Highway 99, (Willows? Arbuckle?), we were on top of the world enjoying a sensationally majestic spring day. He pointed straight north up the highway to show me that snow covered peak of Mt. Shasta. "I've lived in Redding all my life and would never have believed that Mount Shasta could be visible from this far south." It was just great getting away from campus for a bit.

Davis was also a long way from where my dream girl lived in Eagle Rock, and I figured I had no hope of seeing her until the end of the semester. But I reckoned without Sally's wile. She had an uncle who lived not far from Davis and was planning on taking his family down south for a short visit. She convinced him that he should stop by the college and pick me up on his way.

All I had to do was to duck out on two or three class days. He had two or three small kids and we were all together inside a brand new Chrysler Airflow sedan that he had just purchased. So Sally and I got a chance to make up for lost time, and I was dreaming of things that might be in the future.

Early that summer, upon getting my final grades from Davis, I made my way back to southern California, in time to attend graduation at La Sierra and visit my old friends there. A number had been accepted for medical school at Loma Linda.

I managed to get some irregular work at several jobs paying subsistence wages for the next several months. And of course, I could see and hold my one and only nearly every weekend.

But one day in October 1935, upon receiving some strange signals on the telephone from Sally, I drove over to see what was going on. It was short and brutal. She had met "another", who was willing to move ahead with marriage right now. Explaining, "he squeezed me so hard to get me to accept his offer that he cracked one of my ribs." I was heartbroken and felt helpless and useless. I picked up and moved north back to the home ranch at Orange Cove, where there was board and room and work available in the fruit packinghouses.

My sister and cousins were all pleased that my Sally days were over and tried to make me feel better. "Don't feel too bad; she was really not your type; you can do better, etc." None of this helped. But my understanding Mother gave me a little hug. And she knew the right thing to say to me, "First love is very special. I know how you feel. Just give it some time."

And it was not helpful to receive in the mail several weeks later, a letter asking if there was something I could do in the way of rescue, since her marriage was proving to be a big mistake, she wrote. The thought of being a white knight and riding to the rescue did enter my mind for an instant, but I had partially recovered, and could perceive reality from fantasy - at last.

Orange Cove Ranch (the second time)
1935 to 1939

Father was now a semi-invalid, could in fact do nothing but set in his rocker and read. Aunt Nell again stepped in with a plan and money. She would have brother-in-law Carl Beckett, who was an out of work carpenter living in Los Angeles, come up to the old family farm property in Orange Cove and build, adjacent to the original old house already there, a new house with all the amenities like indoor plumbing and the like. Mother could care for Father and the two children who were

still at home and in school. So they moved back (from the oilfields) and stayed in the old house that was made barely livable until the new house was done.

This period was at the very heart of the hardest times of the Great Depression. Aunt Nell agreed to supply Carl with three thousand dollars for the job, which was to include a tank house for the water supply and a septic tank for the wastewater disposal. Carl was to keep whatever part of the money that was not used as his own share.

I was around there some at the time and put in time as carpenter's helper, ditch digger, etc, under Carl's direction. I expected he would compensate me with some minimum, token wage. This never happened. He figured since this house was being supplied for Father's family, any member should be happy to contribute their labor gratis. After everything was completed, Carl stated that he had expended two thousand dollars only, giving him fair compensation for his work.

I was keenly aware that time was slipping away when I should be extending my education. I was supporting myself but contributing very little to Mother, who was in charge of keeping the whole thing afloat. I was using most of what I earned myself. I loved to drive "down south" and visit old friends and cousins there, and did so - perhaps once a month. The family's thirty-four Ford V8, which had "suicide" front doors, (although they were not called that name until much later), provided reliable transportation for whomever needed it.

Gasoline was cheap, varying in price from thirteen to nineteen cents per gallon. It is noted here that a gallon of gasoline sold at a comparable amount to a gallon of milk; and that ratio still holds true seventy years later. The idea of pumping your own gas was yet in the future. As you drove in for a fill-up, the station attendant was immediately at your service, checking the oil level, as well as washing windows and checking tire pressure if you asked.

The big oil companies offered incentives in the form of a set of mugs, which you collected one at a time. Other prizes were large frame-able photos of natural wonders of the west. One place had a standing offer that they would give you the tankful free if, when the automatic shutoff kicked off, the meter showed an even and exact dollar amount with zero cents. For a while we used a fifty-gallon drum that we set up on a rack at home. A tank truck would deliver and fill the barrel at a wholesale price.

It was on one of these visits back to La Sierra that I came into contact again with Irene Goforth. She had spent a year at boarding school in Oregon - her senior academy year. She was now chumming with cousin Barbara Stearns and they were both taking college classes there at La Sierra. Many girls (in my group, anyway) were not intent on planning and pursuing a career. Rather their dreams were of a man, a marriage and a family. Most had "hope chests" for holding items to that end.

Irene was of this mind, and transmitted the same to me, as we dated, necked and dreamed. I had to admit to myself that I did not have the necessary drive and bravado to go out and beg for the money needed to get back into college, although I noticed some of my friends had managed to do it. Few public funds or student loans were available. A few private philanthropists were out there. Besides, I was genetically allergic to going into debt - whatever the reason.

I did long for something of my own and someone to share it with. The idea of taking on responsibility for someone besides myself was scary, but everything carried a risk, I told myself.

Irene and I decided on a wedding date nearly a year down the road - June one, nineteen thirty-seven. The customary rite of asking for her hand from her father had to be done. I think Irene had primed him well and the

exchange was short and positive. Clyde Goforth was not known as a conversationalist; he did not feel the need to offer me more than a grunt and a few words indicating his permission.

Now there was something new for me to look ahead to, and my drives down from Orange Cove seemed shorter. Mother invited Irene to come up and stay for a week in order to get a direct preview of coming events. If she fostered some doubts she did not share them. Girls as well as boys had experienced the facts of the times and kept their expectations limited.

I had been using the 1934 Ford V8 sedan that belonged to the folks, but dreamed of a car of my own. I located a 1931 Durant roadster with rumble seat that had been sported up with extras and was a cool looking automobile. Special fourteen-inch wheels took "Doughnut" tires that carried only fourteen pounds of air pressure, and spotlights were mounted at both sides. It did have a fault that was common also with Essex cars of the day - the transmission gearing was such that when in high gear the engine wound up like it needed an overdrive, which it didn't have.

I couldn't come up with all the money ($175), so I was allowed to borrow against the pink slip of the Ford. As I remember it now, I never was able to repay all of what I owed on that debt, and left a balance for Mother to worry about at a time when she was struggling. The memory bothers me to this day.

It was fortunate that I was not expected to come up with any of the expense of the wedding. Irene found a funeral parlor in Redlands that rented their chapel out for small weddings. An Uncle, Sophus Borg, drove from Santa Ana to perform the ceremony and accepted the five dollars that I gave him as fair payment.

There was a reception the same evening back at Irene's house in La Sierra. Afterwards, we made a successful escape from the group that was waiting for us. When we finally made it to the privacy of a hotel room in Riverside, we found most of the clothes in our suitcases had been tied in hard knots.

Irene could not bring herself to change into her nightie in my view, so she did it in the privacy of the very tiny clothes closet. In looking back, I can't remember why she didn't use the bathroom for that. Things went slowly that first night together in the same

for the first time and indeed for several following nights; like they say about porcupines - very carefully. The next morning, after stopping by Irene's folks for breakfast, we put the side curtains on the Durant as it was cold for June, and departed on our honeymoon. We had only a few dollars and wanted to stretch them, so we headed south. Spent two nights in Ensenada below the border, which at that time was a really small village.

As we rounded the last hill and stopped at the viewpoint we saw a vacant pristine white sand beach that reached to the distant horizon, noting a small attractive motel right at the water's edge. But to economize we took a room over in the middle of town, which had a feather mattress, and I guess also a bedbug. Because, next morning I found a welt the size of a half-dollar in the middle of my back. So we said, "To heck with it" and went over to the motel on the beach and splurged. Five dollars well spent.

The several times I've been back to Ensenada since, I've mourned the destruction of that beautiful beach - now converted to a commercial harbor, with all the ugly accouterments.

After two days, we drove back to the border and met Irene's old friend, Daisy and her "steady", at Agua Caliente racetrack and watched the horses run. Horse racing was illegal in California.

Soon we were back at the farm in Orange Cove. We rented a one-room apartment that had a bed that folded into the wall in nearby Reedley, where I worked in the packing sheds that season. Later, we went back to the farm and fixed up part of the old house enough to be livable. Most of the acreage on the farm was planted to Emperor grapes. Ever since the time of the move to Whittier, when I was twelve, it had been rented out on a share lease. For that year of Irene and my marriage, the folks had allowed me to assume the care of the vineyard to see what I could do with it.

Pruning and tying in the winter - then the whole summer of irrigation and fighting off hordes of mosquitoes. When checking the water, I would take along the rifle and shoot rabbits to break the monotony. The grape crop set and colored well and I could almost feel, in my pocket, the income it should bring. At crop maturity in the fall I agreed to sell the crop in the field to a buyer for forty dollars a ton, with them deciding when to start picking.

Now Emperor grapes were a large table grape that matured and ripened later in the growing season than other varieties. And they colored up better after the cooler days of autumn came on. There were no cold storage facilities such as they use nowadays to hold the fruit for shipping at a later date when the demand and the prices might be better. So fruit was shipped as ripened, after picking and packing. Most went directly by rail in so-called refrigerator cars to the East Coast markets. Actually the boxcars were kept cool with blocks of ice; the ice being replaced at intervals as it made its way across the continent.
I remember it was Halloween. The buyer said, "We will start picking your vineyard nest week."

There had been a rainstorm earlier that brought snow to the nearby Sierras. Several of us went out to see what fun we could stir up that night. This was before trick-or-treating had come into vogue. We prowled around in the dark and looked for an outhouse or two we could tip over. By the time we returned home our fingers and ears were numb from the unusually cold air.

Morning revealed a white frost on the ground. The question was - had it been cold enough to damage the fruit on the vine? It was way too early to expect a killing frost. Well, the next night was colder yet, and when temperatures were even lower for the third night, all doubt was removed. The hopes for a good crop had been destroyed and was a total loss.

A winery would buy the damaged grapes if they were delivered. Sam helped and we picked and delivered a few loads, but the costs involved cut the profit almost to zero. And we didn't like to work for nothing even in those days.

One incident connected to this remains strong. We asked Irene to drive the old Dodge car, which had been converted to a sort of field pickup truck, driving between the rows. A stop and go operation as we loaded on the full boxes of grapes which had earlier been picked. From behind, we would yell to Irene, "Go ahead" and "Stop." From our perspective, we thought Irene had done an adequate job considering it was something new for her and she had been exposed to smelling gas fumes all day. Everyone just naturally pitched in and helped wherever one could be useful.

That evening I could tell something was bothering Irene. When I asked what it was, she answered (referring to her job that day), "Well, I've got a headache and I've never been yelled at so much in my life." She had earlier told me that she could never remember a single time that her parents had raised their voices or had even had a single argument. In contrast, the Rutan family did quite a bit of hollering back and forth. I assured her that it was just another system in play and did not mean anything personal. "You will get used to it," I said. And she eventually did; and could hold her own in the telling-off department. But it was a harsh initiation for her.

Why I remember this incident so well is that it turned out that there was another reason why she was feeling bad that day. The other part was that she was experiencing the first early effects of being pregnant. She bounced back, and this was the only time that Irene ever mentioned that just maybe she wished she were back home with her mother. Later I would tell people that we were married on June first and Dick was born on July first; adding after a pause, "The next year."

That year and another passed routinely. We had our church friends and others that had been my classmates in grammar school. Economic conditions were not good and it was truly a time of hand-to-mouth existence. Being the first grandchild in the two families, Dickie was a husky and resilient child that did not require nor get much

special attention. He had an independent nature from an early age. He always tried his best to act like a little man, and didn't need to be reminded often.

It was during this time that I had my first bout with an arthritic condition now called "Ankylosing Spondylitis." It was mainly manifested by pain in my lower back. It was accompanied by an anemic condition that sapped the energy and spirit. Doctors really had nothing to offer.

When I developed Iritis in one eye, the condition was not recognized as connected, but rather was seen as a possible source of a general infection in my system, which was deemed the underlying cause of all my trouble. Gradually things improved, but I was kind of a semi-invalid for six months. Setting for an hour in a hard church pew or in an auto seat for very long would activate the condition again.

The Oregon Years
1939 to 1945

Clyde Goforth, Irene's father, was up to his old tricks of trading for property, sight unseen. He had a desire to move to Oregon when he retired from his job there in La Sierra with the little domestic water company. He acquired a farm near Estacada, Oregon, and thought it a good idea for Irene and I to move there to see what he had got. The plan was that he would send money at intervals and I would make improvements to the buildings in preparation for the time that he would move there. And we would get a place rent-free.

Living had been pretty slim anyway, and this sounded like the chance for a great adventure. We liquidated our few belongings, put the mattress and box springs, plus the canned fruit we had on hand into a little trailer with some other basics, and departed. Our cash funds consisted of one hundred dollars, which we converted to silver dollar coins and put in a tin can that we carried in the glove compartment of the trusty Durant roadster. We put in a couple of toys for eleven month old Dickie-boy.

First stop was San Francisco, where the World's Fair, celebrating the opening of the bridges, was in full swing. We got a cheap room next to the U.S. Mint in the middle of the noisy city and felt already like explorers. After a grand and full day out on Treasure Island, which had been dredged up specifically for the site of the fair, we headed north on the coast highway, not wanting to entail the cost of the room for another night.

Fatigue soon overtook us and we sacked out in the car by the side of the road somewhere short of Santa Rosa; then on through the redwoods and into a motel near Crescent City. Then the third night was spent at the house of one of Irene's friends from her Laurelwood class who lived near Salem, Oregon.

As we continued on early the next day, we dropped down on a narrow highway to cross the Clackamas River that ran through the little town of Estacada. We truly felt that we were the new Oregonians. It was a sunny June (1939) morning. The car's top was folded and huge trees interlocked overhead, filtering out most of the sun's rays. Man o' man; this seemed a long ways from Orange Cove!

The Great Depression was still hanging heavy over the small towns of America. We got busy right away learning how to live off the land. There was a large barn for livestock with a hayloft. A wood shed that would hold a full winters supply of fuel. And a cold room buried half way into the ground. The house was a nineteenth century two story structure with no plumbing of any kind, inside or out. Walk out to the little well house, lower the bucket on a pulley and pull up what is needed not only for the kitchen but for the livestock as well. Irene's folks would drive up once or twice a year.

Gradually, we made living improvements. I lowered myself twenty-five feet to the bottom of the hand-dug well in order to deepen it, with Irene standing by at the surface. A little electric pump was installed to supply water to the kitchen faucets. Additional water pipe was installed inside the firebox of the kitchen range so that hot water was at hand, since that wood flame there was almost a constant. I extended the electric lines to the wood shed, and on out to the barn, so that the milking and the chores could be done by Edison bulb and not by kerosene lantern glow. And finally adding a small bathroom, laundry room, toilet and shower.

We were to remain in this place for nearly six years. Our social contacts were mostly through the small church, which was built down in Estacada proper, three miles down the hill. After planning and discussion, the decision was made to add to our little family. Nellie Ann was born March 9, 1942 in the Portland Sanitarium. Mother Rutan grey-hounded up from California to help out for a week or two.

While she was there, word came from a neighbor that there was a voice telegram waiting at their house. Theirs was the nearest telephone, about half a mile down the road. I was away with the car at work, and Mother was really worried. So she interrupted her work with Irene and new-born, bundled up and walked though swirling snow eddies to find out what emergency had come up. When she listened to a simple congratulation message on the arrival

of a new baby, she was disgusted and a bit irate - at Aunt Nell who had wired the message from the Philippine Islands. She of course had no way of knowing how much trouble it would be to deliver and receive.

Too soon, Elbert Leander Rutan unexpectedly made known his arrival date, which would be June 16, 1943. To add this third child was an event which brought to our attention just what responsibilities had suddenly, it seemed, been loaded on our shoulders. We felt we had passed though a gate that had just opened fully into serious adulthood.

After "Burpy's" arrival, and in the temporary throes of post-partum depression, Irene "gave" the new little one to me to be mine alone. "Okay, he is all yours." I accepted her offer, telling her she would regret her attitude some day; which she did by the next sunrise, of course. I would only remind her of her indiscretion very, very occasionally, since I knew it was a sore point with her.

As the economy picked up by reason of the war effort in the nation, I took work in the shipyards in Portland where Kaiser was building Liberty ships. I also worked off and on at a little "gypo" sawmill further back in the woods from where we lived. It was reached by driving the last two miles on a plank road.

I then took a job with the US Forest Service working as one of a small crew of about ten men. We were to go up to the end of a narrow gravel road to the headwaters of the Clackamas River, which is no small stream. The mission was to build a couple of bridges over the river so as to open up a vast acreage of virgin timber that could be harvested and that was needed to further the war effort. There was a nationwide shortage of steel, so we were to put up these bridges with material that was at hand in the woods.

The towering Douglas fir that we cut and shaped produced support for the center span. They were over three feet in diameter and one hundred twenty foot long. These temporary bridges supported huge logging trucks through the war years and for a time afterward. I shall ever remember that winter, working at times in the wet and snow. We were in midst of a beautiful virgin, Oregon forest. A handsome landscape unmatched and unspoiled. The home of deer, beaver, river otter, cougar.

It was a special time in my life. I still kept the farm going, too. But I was starting to have more and more trouble again with my back. Every morning it would take me longer and longer to get loosened up. In the middle of some nights I would need to get out of bed and walk the floor to get rid of the muscle spasms which had awakened me. I began to realize that a future of physical labor was something that I would likely not be able to manage in the future. I couldn't shake the feeling that what was needed was something that would change the course of my life in a major way. A new start as it were. I wanted to do something else with my life.

As if in answer to this wish, things were quite suddenly changed for me early in 1944. I got a "greetings" letter from the president, ordering me to report to my local draft board for military induction. I was advised by several friends to appeal, on the basis that there were still young single men available, and it was unfair that I, with three small children should be selected. The way that things were arranged, was that local draft boards were set up everywhere even in the smallest of towns. They were manned by local people. Each month they would get a request from Washington, which asked them to produce and deliver a

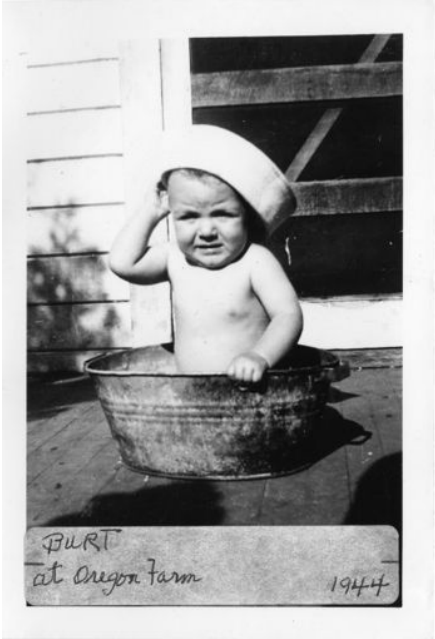
certain number of warm bodies for the military.

Since local people had sole control of who would be tagged, local politics came into play. Appealing my selection and asking for a hearing, would likely have exposed the boards protection of favored individuals and they probably would have quietly rescinded my order until later. This, I chose not to do, because I felt that this was the catalyst that could indeed change the course of my life in a new and better direction. The church gave me a nice farewell party and a small bible.

My back trouble was in remission, so when I reported to Portland for the preliminary medical screening of my suitability, I felt there would be no problem. When asked about any previous problems, I merely stated that I had had in the past some back trouble which was classified then as some type of arthritis. The old doctor looked at me as if he thought I was trying to take the route of a shirker and wrote on my records, "claims arthritis."

I was over-sensitive and took this as an insult to my patriotism. I silently vowed that I would in the future deny having any unfavorable health history, if queried. Usually, draftees, particularly those with a non-combatant classification of 1-AO, were shunted into the Army for potential medical training. But at that particular time, all branches were taking draftees. I chose the U.S. Navy; primarily because I detested the thought of maybe having to serve in the mud and discomfort of a "foxhole." After six winters on the Oregon farm I was fed up with wading around in the inevitable winter rural mud.

I was given a few days before reporting, and sold the milking cows and other stock which was judged Irene could not handle. And most all of the load of my uprooting was left on the shoulders of my faithful wife. (Did she have a choice?) Just prior to this time, Irene's Dad had retired from his longtime job in California. He had taken a down payment from me to buy the farm where we had been living for over five years. Within two miles of us was another farm which he bought with the proceeds of the sale of his house and lot in La Sierra. So Irene's folks were nearby to be called on, while I was away.



I was given a train ticket to Camp Farragut, Idaho, which was a large primary and temporary training site for the Navy. My ticket included a chit for a private sleeping berth for the overnight trip to Idaho. This was indeed a new experience. My own berth

with clean sheets and porter service. WOW! It was March ninth, nineteen forty-four; also Nellie Ann's second birthday. Burt was a healthy nine-month-old child.

The motion of the train hypnotized me at once into a deep sleep. When I awoke and peeked out, I could see it was daylight, we had clicked off the three hundred plus miles, and we were rolling slowly through the scrub pine country in the panhandle of northern Idaho. Soon the train was being spotted next to the huge reception center for new recruits at Camp Farragut. After a quick breakfast, that entire day consisted of being "processed." The purpose was primarily to give each person what was probably the most detailed physical examination they had ever had. All this done en masse, waiting in line at each station until your turn.

The first stop was a room where about twenty barbers relieved you of very nearly all your hair, amid much wisecracking. "Would you like to keep your sideburns?" One swipe with the clippers. "Well, hold out your hand." Next stop - place every item you possess, including your clothing, in a small cardboard box and address it back to your home. From then on you continued the day stark naked. And it did take most of the day.

One of the last stops before you were given your new wardrobe, put on busses and hauled to your barracks, was the orthopedic screening. I was given one look, jerked out of line and placed on a gurney for a closer exam. "You've had a broken leg at some time." I denied it, but had to own up to my history of "arthritic" problems with my lower back. The decision was made to take me out of line and send me to a temporary holding barracks where I would stay for several days while undergoing further medical evaluation.

Of course, by being jerked out of line I never reached the clothing issue station. So I was ordered to make my way clear to the back of the huge building where the railroad spur came in. There, awaiting shipment out, piled on an open platform were the hundreds of boxes of all the guys that had been processed that day. My job was to locate mine and reclaim my civilian clothes. I hadn't felt too exposed up to then, because I was just one nude body among many. But when I stepped out into the open air and March wind, it was another matter. The Gods were with me and I found my box almost at once.

Rumors were abounding among the guys in the holding barracks, as I waited to get X-rays and final resolution. At the end, I had a very understanding doctor that sat me down as he reviewed my medical files and history. He said, "I will sign you out to be sent home right now if you want me to." I told him that I had not been having trouble with my back at all for a while and was feeling good and wanted to be sent on into training.

He then gave me the best medical advice I have ever received, and which I have attempted to follow for the remainder of my life. "Okay, I'll send you on to duty. You'll probably make it, but remember that wherever you are don't waste your money going to doctors; they are not going to benefit your condition. Eat good nourishing food, get the full amount of regular rest and don't put yourself under a lot of stress." So I was given all my military clothing, once again boxed my civilian duds, and was carted off to a Special Assignment company at Camp Scott. Here in this S.A. Company were gathered guys with an assortment of things, such as color blindness and such.

This was toward the midpoint of the war. Lots of warm bodies were needed. The Navy had in stages reduced the normal twelve to sixteen week "boot" training camp until it was now only five weeks. Five weeks with a minimum of close ordered drill, but plenty of strenuous classes of all kinds - physical training, I.Q. tests and shots - both on the rifle range and into the deltoids.

At the end, most would be assigned directly to ships of some type for routine sea duty. A few, myself among them were selected on the base of test scores, for further education in special schools. I was to spend eight more weeks, right there at Farragut in the Hospital Corps school. But first, everyone would be given a two weeks leave and told not to expect another until the war was over. I was one of the few whose home was in the Northwest, so my train trip home was short.

Rainy, damp Oregon gave me two weeks of uninterrupted cloudless, warm and sunny weather. It was a wonderful fortnight. I became aware, as not before, of what a great wife and little family that I had, and was soon to leave again for an unknown length of time. One job I did while I was at home was to go out in the woods and cut and split enough wood to fill the woodshed to its capacity.

Hospital Corps school was comprised of a short exposure to most of the subjects one might have expected to take if in pre-medical training. We had an instructor that we all loved and we gave her the nickname, “Trixie.” Whether it was practicing injections into an orange, or practicing giving a patient a bath, she would say, “Here, let me show you a little trick.” In the latter instance her trick was not to forget to check the navel for lint.

At graduation, all were advanced one rank to Seaman second class. All that is except the ten percent that had received the highest grades. As one of those, I was awarded a promotion of two ranks and made a petty officer. Pharmacist Mate, third class. And a few dollars more in pay. Remembering the pay arrangement, I think I was given twenty-one dollars a month directly and the rest, Seventy-eight dollars I think, was mailed to Irene.

I was sorely disappointed to receive orders to remain and report for duty at the large Navy hospital that was right there on base, down by the edge of Lake Pond O’Rielle. Almost all the rest were dispersed to duty on ships in far away places. The O in my draft board classification of 1AO, limited me to serve only on shore duty. So, I was now given an iron cot in a big, bare room devoid of anything except other iron cots. We had learned in boot camp to live out of our seabag, carefully placing our woolen uniforms under the mattress at night to retain the press.

So I reported to the hospital and was assigned to duty. It was kind of just like a regular job. I was free of any other kind of supervision and could leave the base anytime I wanted to. Mostly, I did a kind of roving duty; filling in on a ward wherever needed. A lot of night duty which was easiest because most everyone is asleep. But penicillin, the brand new wonder drug, was in limited supply, but the military had a high priority. The injections were to be given every four hours and I can still remember the large needles used and how dull they were.

I remember two new recruits who were brought into the hospital from one of the boot camps with an unusual problem. By mistake they had each received one hundred c.c. instead of the intended two c.c. Both of their names began with the letter “A”, so they were at the head of the line when their company was lined up to receive their immunizations. A last minute volunteer, who claimed he knew how to do it was assigned to injection duty.

The system used was to inject two c.c. for each man, using the graduated scale imprinted on the side of a one hundred c.c. syringe. New, sterilized needles were exchanged after each person. And to expedite, a second syringe was used so the process could go on while the emptied one was being refilled. Only in this instance the full contents of each of the 100 c.c. syringes were expelled into the arm of each of the first two guys in line. As I remember, the two patients were rushed to the hospital and observed for a couple of days, but there seemed to be no short-term serious ill effects.

It was during this time, that Irene

got enough gas coupons to make the trip from Oregon. She brought the three kids and rented part of an old house in nearby Coeur 'dAlene. So whenever I was off duty, I would take a bus and come "home."

After several weeks my work and Irene's stay came to a sudden halt when I turned myself in to sick bay one day due to painful joints in my feet and in my upper back and neck, as well a feeling lousy in general. There were many cases of rheumatic fever there at that base, and it was assumed that this was what I was developing. Until they did a sedimentation rate blood test and spinal X-rays that showed otherwise.

My lower spine showed lots of calcification and extra bone spurs in the area where I had had the problem six years earlier. I tested anemic and there was some swelling in the finger joints, but the worst settled into my upper back and laid me up but good.

The diagnosis of Chronic Arthritis was made, and plans were to get me back on my feet and discharge me forthwith. However, I had a very understanding doctor, and he suggested that he could arrange for me to stay there in the hospital longer while receiving more extensive treatment. So we said our goodbyes and Irene returned to the farm in Oregon and I became a full timer in the chronic disease ward of the naval hospital there.

The kids had enjoyed their stay, having had many more playmates than they were used to having. So I agreed to spend what turned out to be three and a half months as an in-patient; being given every conceivable therapy that might build me up. When I was released just a few days before Christmas 1944, I was free of pain and felt better than I had for years.

Medical advice given was that I should not subject my body to heavy physical labor at any time in the future, and probably seek a place to live that had a dry and warm climate. So at my discharge and while on the train from Spokane to Portland, I made preliminary plans to return to California and acquire some more education. There was a medical technician training school that I had in mind.

But the question of just exactly what the future prognosis might be as regards to my "arthritis" remained hanging over my head like a dangling sword. Arthritis and rheumatism was usually associated with the elderly, and was considered a progressive condition.

It was good to be back among family, friends and familiar places for the Christmas season. Soon, in the mail came a surprise in the form of a letter informing me that my case had been reviewed by the Navy board and Veterans Administration. And it was decided that my medical condition was "service connected" and my disability would be rated at forty percent. A check was enclosed and a letter saying that there would be a regular forty-five dollar monthly payment in the future, tax-

free. I would have lifetime access to medical care through the Veterans Administration.

By March of 1945 we had disposed of most of our property, there in the Garfield district of Estacada, Oregon, including the farm itself, and turned a little profit in the amount of one thousand dollars which became our emergency nest egg over the next several years. Irene's mother and father had moved up from California and were well established there on their farm just a couple miles away.

Arlington, California
1945 to 1946

So there we were in our '33 De Soto sedan with a little trailer attached on our way back to California after nearly six years of being webfoot Oregonians. I treasure the memory of that time in the green (and too often wet) Pacific Northwest.

That old De Soto was a super automobile and had only one flaw which could not seem to be fixed. There was a fault in the alignment, I guess. If you moved sideways over even a slight parallel ridge or depression, it would lurch. What a pain! Later, I turned it in on my first new car - a six cylinder '46 Ford.

After a lull of five years, new cars were once again being cranked out of factories, but slowly. Every car dealer had a long list of people who had paid a deposit to get on the waiting list. I was able to get the Ford because everyone ahead of me on the waiting list would not take a Ford unless it had the V8 engine. And I soon found out why. That car vibrated like a pick-up truck, blurring the image in the rear-view out of focus. After six months I sold it at a price above what it had cost new, which could be done with a lot of manufactured items still in short supply. Government agencies prevented retailers from boosting the sticker price, to the advantage of the individual buyer who was not so restricted upon resale.

Back to the trip south. With beds fixed for the kids in back, we drove straight through. Slowly, because we were on old retread tires. New automobile tires were rationed and probably the hardest thing to acquire at that time. Besides being bumped, while I was parked by the side of the highway crossing the Cascades, by a huge truck which skidded on the ice, we arrived in Arlington and put up in Irene's sister's little house temporarily where we caught up on our sleep.

Ordinary jobs were plentiful. We secured space in a temporary wartime housing area, while I mulled over my next move. What memory remains from that place is the constant smell of stove oil from the leaky space heaters. We remained there over a year, and one of my part time jobs was to pick up resident's complaints at the project office and take care of them. Most of the complaints were malfunctioning space heaters.

I had delayed contacting the Wooster school of medical technology about matriculation until we were a little more settled. In June of 1945, I attended the graduation exercises at nearby La Sierra University where I met several old buddies. They strongly urged me to think of applying for Dental School.

It was not easy to think about dedicating five years. It was postwar boom time; everyone was out making big money. But I could receive some help from Public Law 16, which was similar to, but better than the G.I. Bill. I qualified because of my medical discharge. I would have qualified for only two years training under the

latter, but P.L. 16 would carry me with marginal support, twice as long.

So for that first year I attended Riverside Junior College part time and got the subjects I lacked to qualify for entry into Dental School in 1946 - against fierce competition from all the returning GI's. I obtained my acceptance to enter what would become the Class of 1950, at the School of Dentistry, University of Southern California.

Most of the class, which numbered 125 students, were returning military veterans. The majority of those had four-year college degrees and had served as officers during the war. Many of the others came from families where the father was established in the medical/dental field and could help financially and otherwise.

I was not discouraged and was confident that I could hold my own. So here was this twenty nine year old man with a faithful wife and three small children, taking himself out of the hot job market to further his education. We took another step Irene and I agreed on. Lay persons at that time had various names for the procedure; doctors called it a vasectomy.

The severity of the housing shortage can only be imagined today by those whose memory does not go back that far. People were living in garages and even tents. Minorities or those with small children were discriminated against routinely in the competition for rentals. Governmental control and anti-discriminatory regulations did not exist.

When it came time to move from Arlington into the huge metropolis of Los Angeles (after spending a glorious six week vacation on the Goforth farm in Oregon), we were faced with the realities of life. An old 22-foot trailer was obtained, but the closest park that would accept us with small children was fifteen miles out in Gardena. Irene was stuck in this dreary place with no car; and when I was home there was no space or atmosphere for study. The whole living situation was intolerable.

The School of Dentistry was situated in an ancient, modified building on the fringes of the campus next to the huge University itself. I was not aware that the Dental School at that time was in reality a private school, that was allowed to only use the University of Southern California's name, and in addition grant USC diplomas to graduates.

By chance I learned that the University had just opened some family housing units for students. Most had gone to football stars as enrollment incentives. For the sake of public relations, two units were set aside for veterans who were considered by the VA to be disabled. The campus newspaper reported that these lucky two had already been drawn by lottery from over two hundred qualified applicants. On learning this I was incensed that I had not learned of this until too late, since I would have qualified to enter my application.

Learning that the financial vice president of the University was the one in charge of handling the housing, I ventured over among the big buildings at the center of the campus, found his office and requested an appointment to speak to him. To my surprise, I was escorted in and introduced to this very polite, but intimidating figure. I expected my point would be respectfully heard and I would be dismissed. The point I planned on making was that since I was in the dark until too late, there had been insufficient publicity given.

Surprisingly, Mr. Fisher not only heard my complaint through, but asked personal questions about my circumstances, etc. After awhile, he opened a drawer in his desk and took out a key, saying, "I am impressed with your need and the way you have stated the case. This key I have in my hand is the key to one of those two housing units. Just this morning, one of the veterans who was selected came here and turned his key back in. Young man, here is this key; the unit is for you and your family."

I put the trailer up for sale immediately and got ready to move in the next day. However, I received a call to return to Mr. Fisher's office. "I am very sorry, but I must ask you to return the key to me. I did not realize that you were a dental student. Those units were built with University funds, into which the dental school contributes nothing. Desperately, I lied. "Oh, my! I am in a spot. I have already sold the trailer in which I am living and will now be out on the street." "Surely you can cancel the sale." I opined as to how I thought I could not. "Well, go out and try." With that, I left but with the key still in my possession.

I went straight to a telephone and called my advisor at the Veteran's Administration. He reminded me how very unpopular it was for anyone to mistreat a Veteran, recently returned from defending his country. I suspect he phoned Mr. Fisher and told him what he had told me he would do if I found myself homeless; which was that he would set my whole family on the curb, out on the street. Then place a call to a newspaper reporter and photographer so the story could be told publicly of how come a brave vet was being mistreated by the University.

Mr. Fisher knew when he was outgunned, I guess. We quickly moved into the apartment and I never heard another word from him. It was to be our home for the next two years for my freshman and sophomore terms.

Wow! Talk about a miracle. The quarters would hardly be luxurious, but I would be only three blocks from my classrooms. The units were built as duplexes constructed of single wall aluminum sheets with roofs of the same material. No ceilings, and opaque, thin framed plastic paper in place of glass windows. A nice little kitchen and a very small bathroom. The remaining space was completely undivided with rough plywood sheets for flooring.

We made out by hanging bedspreads and sheets for room dividers and triple decker bunk beds for the kids. It was situated right up against noisy Exposition Boulevard which had a railroad track down the center. But the expansive green of the large park and the stadium was just over there across the street. We felt secure among the college football stars and were grateful for every day.

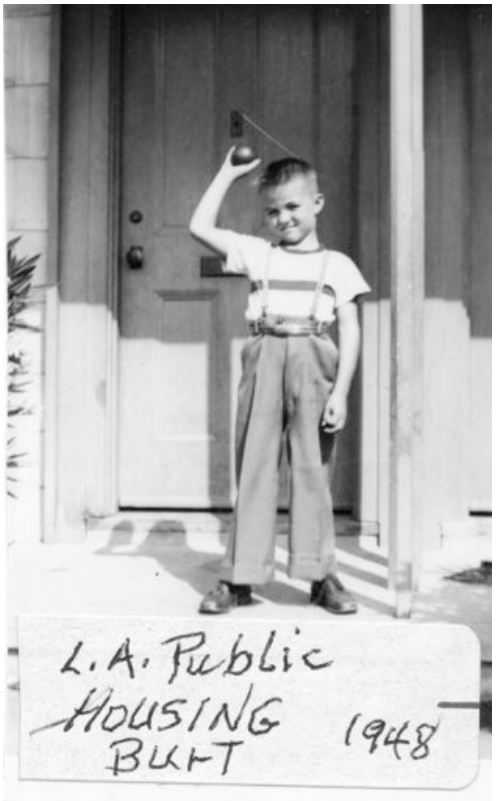
I found the competition at dental school a thing that I could handle without straining myself excessively. I avoided the fraternities and other student social groups. I kept my nose clean and positioned myself right where I wanted to be, which was within the top third of the class.

The first summer was the only break from school that we could expect. I found if I picked up a couple of classes in night school, I would be qualified to receive a Bachelor of Science degree along with the doctorate when I graduated. I took an art appreciation course, but never found time to pick up the other class.

Irene worked that summer. She did alterations on men's suits at one of the department stores. I kept my eye on the kids while I built a little tear-drop trailer out of plywood, using an axle from the wrecking yard. It was the neatest, most compact little camp trailer you can imagine. Before classes took up again in September, we took off for the northwest. We stayed a few days at the Goforth farm and saw other tourist places we had never got to go to when we had lived there earlier. It felt great to have a vacation out of the big city.

After the second year our class would move to the school's dental clinic building uptown at sixteenth and Los Angeles streets. We had hopes of getting the summer months off, but were notified that though there would be no classes, we were expected to volunteer to keep the patient load flowing and the income for the school that went with it intact. Furthermore, volunteering would be mandatory, unless we could accept finding ourselves way behind the others come September.

By the beginning of my junior year, housing was still tight. Working with the city housing department, I became eligible to get on their waiting list. Rules said that if the children were not of the same sex, you could receive only a three-bedroom apartment, of which there were very few. Pleading with the director and pointing out that my family had been living in no-bedroom quarters, we finally got her to make an exception for us. That two level place we were granted was small, but for us it was first class living - Estrada Gardens in East Los Angeles.



The kids kept growing and all were in school; Irene went to PTA meetings. And George kept plugging away taking third and fourth year classes and putting in half of each day at the school clinic treating patients.

Aunt Nell wanted us to come and visit her seaside place in Maine and offered to pop for the bus fare. There was a two-week break before we started the senior year so we decided to do it. Dick and Nellie were put on the train to go and stay with their grandparents in Oregon. The other three of us (Burt was four) got the round trip tickets to Maine and back. "I've been working for Greyhound for twenty years and this is the first ticket I have ever written that goes to both Portland, Maine and Portland, Oregon."

We rode straight through to Buffalo where we got a three dollar room so we could go out the next day and see the famous Niagara Falls. It was a gorgeous day, and we were not disappointed. And the stay with Aunt Nell, right on the rocky Maine shore was equally pleasurable. We had our first lobster dinner, right on the sand, using seawater and driftwood to produce the boiling water into which we dropped the lobsters and watched them turn red. Aunt Nell was taken by Burt and predicted a great future for him.

All too soon it was time to board the greyhound for the reverse trip. We arrived in New York early in the morning. We fully expected to find a room, but I was intimidated by the big city. We decided to see the Statute of Liberty. Being new to New York's amenities, specifically the underground, when the doors to the

subway car came shut, I stepped back, which was a mistake because Irene and Burt were ahead of me and they stepped forward. Irene had not a cent with her. We had a time finding each other, again. "I was sure you would just go to the next stop and wait for me." Well, it seemed reasonable to me to go on to the end of the line as we had planned and wait for you there."

Then at the end of the day, back with the Greyhound for a night's rest as we rolled on to Washington, D.C. We did the same one-day tour of that city, and then got back on the bus and stayed until we arrived in Oregon at the Goforth Farm. I've forgotten how many days it took, as we traveled the northern states, but we stayed with it, non-stop. Then gathering together the rest of our flock, we gratefully made our way back home to the comfy beds and hot showers of our apartment in L.A.

Sometime during our last year there, Dick found the model airplane club and got some experience in building and flying gas-powered, control line planes.

In 1950, during spring vacation, two of us students made a trip by car, looking for some small town where it might be feasible for us to consider setting up our own dental practices after graduation and State Board. We stopped by Palmdale and looked at the office of a dentist we knew as a part time instructor in the school clinic. California State board week was hectic, which made the prospect of graduation exercises and granting of degrees that followed sort of a weak climax. I had arranged to take the Oregon State board which was the following week and wanted to use the weekend between for closing out our apartment and getting an early start to Oregon, where we were to put up at the familiar old Goforth farm near Estacada.

I inquired about attendance at the graduation ceremonies, and was told it was not mandatory and my certificate would be mailed to me if I did not show up. So we shoved off at once with all our belongings in the '49 Ford V8 sedan. No trailer this time! I spent another hectic week at the dental school in Portland passing requirements for Oregon state licensing.

California's San Joaquin valley has always felt like home to me. We still had several friends in the Reedley / Dinuba area; dating back to the time I had attended grammar school in nearby Orange Cove.

Aunt Nell was proud that I had completed my education. She offered to loan me the money that I would need to equip and open my private practice. Being stubbornly independent, I decided to see if I could arrange a bank loan on my own. Besides the car, I had no security to offer, but a kind-hearted Bank of America assistant manager consented to stake me five thousand dollars. I rented space for my office in Dinuba.

There was a shortage of dentists at the time and at once I had my appointment book full. I remember that I took in forty-two dollars the first day, and was soon making a hundred dollars and more, which to me was big-time. For someone who had not been earning anything for so long, it was a big deal and very gratifying. I had a lot of catching up to do.

We rented a big, old farmhouse in Orosi, and got the kids enrolled in the Adventist Junior Academy. In looking back, Dinuba was nearly the ideal small town to raise a family; and the 1950's was the last decade before hippie culture and student rebellion moved in as part of the American way.

At the end of three years, we were in our own lovely house in the best part of town, and had at least three cars parked in the driveway, since the kids were now old enough to have driver's licenses.

From the very beginning I enjoyed the freedom of having time off to do the things I could never afford before. I put that above the extra money to be earned if I slaved away overtime at the office. I declined the pressure to be open evenings. My office from the first was locked from Friday noon until Monday morning.

My interest in aviation was re-awakened and acted upon when Will Wonderly and I went out to the local airport the summer of 1953 and took some instruction in a Piper J-3 cub. No classroom time was required and as soon as we soloed (after eight hours), he and I bought a used Cessna 140. Before the end of the year we found a third partner (Jerry Coigny) and acquired a Model A Beechcraft Bonanza.

I could write a lot about the joy of traveling and seeing America in this wonderful machine. The jet age in airlines had not yet arrived. Much of the passenger action was still in DC-3s, and the Bonanza could cruise right with that plane. I must say the two thousand dollars I invested in that project returned its worth many times over.

The greenery of golf courses has always appealed to me. Based from the time on the farm when all the water went for the crops, with none frittered away on a soft lawn. I was smart enough to wait until I sold the airplane in 1958 before joining the Kings River Golf Club. The lowest handicap earned was thirteen, and I was aged seventy-nine before I shot my age. Have had two holes-in-one.

In the summer of 1955, I closed the office for three weeks and we planned a camping trip with the family through Montana and the northwest. Burt didn't go. He had broken some ribs while playing Tarzan, so my sister kept him for us.

The car and the tires were new and I gambled that we would not have a flat, and so removed and left behind the spare wheel and tire in order to get more room for the tent and other camping equipment in the trunk. Our procedure was to camp for two or three days, then get a motel to wash off the accumulated dirt before going on. It was a family trip to remember. The Great Salt Lake. The Grand Tetons. Yellowstone. Glacier National Park. Banff and Radium Hot Springs.

By 1962 I had moved to an office in another part of town, and soon, an outlay of capital for office modernization and new equipment was indicated.

Other things were happening. Dick was in the Air Force and had become a husband. After high school, Nellie had moved to San Francisco and had a job in an oral surgeon's office. I figured she would tire of it and then we could get her back on track for more education. One of my biggest regrets is that I did not push that agenda with more authority, which I should have done as a responsible parent.

Burt agreed that he would continue on to college. But for the present he was totally involved with his friends who built and flew model airplanes of all types. He spent much of his time in his workshop in our garage, taking part in zero social activities at high school. He figured he would just attend the local community college for two more years and carry on as before. It was a blow to him, when I saw my duty clearly this time, and advised him that he would be going away to college and living on campus in the dormitory. No argument. So it was away to Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo.

By 1962 we had been twelve years in Dinuba. Irene and I were forty-five year olds. Our family was dispersed. The nest was suddenly empty. We were free to begin a new life - or were we?

Looking back, I remember 1958 as being a good year. The office grossed $38,000 of which close to seventy percent was net. At the time, the average wage earned was around five thousand. Also in 1962, for no special reason that I could identify, I became depressed. My longtime dental assistant quit, and going to the office every day became a drag.

I fretted over everything that didn't go just right and found it hard to enjoy the many positive things in life. I couldn't wait for the weekends so we could get in the car and could get out of town and go someplace else. On the positive side, the lingering symptoms I had been experiencing because of the arthritis experience were occurring with less frequency.

We made a trip over to Sansum clinic on Santa Barbara so I could go through their procedure of taking a complete routine physical going over. To begin with, I made it a point of telling the doctors that I had this history of arthritis, because I knew they would zero in here once they looked at the X-rays of my back. I said that I was doing pretty okay with it for the present and was not there to get an evaluation of that particular thing.

Nevertheless at the exit conference, while giving me a fairly clean bill of health on other things, they informed me that they felt it was their duty to comport to me their opinion about that very thing. "New research being done has resulted in a name being given to the particular kind of arthritis we think you have. It is called Marie Strumples disease. Our advice is that you should be taking this certain drug routinely, or the outlook will be a progression of the condition, ending with you having a *poker spine*." I declined their advice and their strong medicine, but was bugged by their prophecy.

A not-so-young patient in the dental office was from a local farm family. I encouraged him to go ahead and commit to the dental education he was considering. Now, in 1962, he had just received his Doctor's degree and was considering setting up his own office. I suggested to him that my practice might be for sale, and he expressed interest. We made a deal, with me carrying a five-year note for his debt. Although he found he had an incurable ailment, he never was late or missed a payment. Sadly, he was forced to retire and died soon after.

We purchased a new nineteen-foot travel trailer with all the extras. We

rented out our house in Dinuba. It felt good to be footloose and fancy-free. I figured we could spend the best part of a year just being gypsies. We stayed at various places in the Sunbelt, including time in Mexico. We did a train trip to the East Coast to meet Dick as he arrived back from his air force tour in Iceland. He had shipped back an extra car, so Irene and I had the fun (?) of driving an underpowered Volkswagen bug back westward across the whole of America - against the prevailing headwinds.

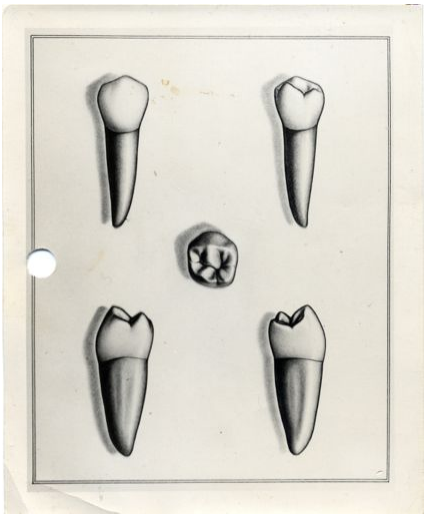
The leisure bit began to wear thin long before the year was up. So when my friend and classmate, Dr. Anderson, suggested that he needed an associate in his practice in Ukiah, I talked myself into thinking it would be a stress-less job, and accepted.

We found a nice apartment in Ukiah near the office that had a big swimming pool. That summer of 1963 we explored out-of-the way places in the redwood country of the northern coast in our spare time. With the approach of winter, it seemed like it did nothing but rain. My depression, which had never really left, returned. I arranged several counseling sessions.

We had been in Ukiah for just one year. I knew when I decided to join him that my associate-ship would not benefit Dr. Anderson unless I remained for a minimum of at least two years. He did not ask, but I had committed myself to this schedule. So it was particularly devastating when I had to face the fact that I was not doing anyone a favor to carry on. The time in Ukiah was especially hard on Irene. Just an ordinary wife would have pulled out for sure, but she stuck it out with me.

I gave Dr. Anderson notice. We hired a moving company to carry our few possessions down to Dinuba and store them in the garage of the rented house there. The feeling of relief as I helped load the last items into the truck was too intense to ever fade. It was already getting dark and the rain was pouring down. It was just the two of us again, back into the travel trailer with zero commitments. I was too spent to drive more than a few miles, and we parked for the night under a roadside oak, lulled by the sound of heavy rain beating on aluminum, with the only plan being to head south to the Sunbelt.

Several months of total relaxation soon brought a sense of boredom, so I visited the offices of Los Angeles County Dental Society to inquire if there might be some volunteer work I could help out with. I was referred to a Dr. Okrand who was setting up a screening program to monitor the funds that were being expended for dental treatment of those eligible under the MediCal program.



Dr. Okrand was delighted to find a California-licensed dentist, who was free to begin work at once. It seemed to be just the kind of low-key job that I had in mind at the time. In order to secure the services of physicians and

dentists, the County offered the benefit of a short six-hour workday in lieu of a wage increase. My work would consist not of routine chair-side work, but rather of performing “dry fingered” dentistry at a desk with a telephone. That is, mostly paperwork, reading X-rays and approving treatment plans, with a few dental examinations if the request was for dentures.

At first I considered this job to just be short term, temporary arrangement. But then decided that if I could qualify for a permanent Civil Service position, I’d stay with it for the time being.

By this time the nineteen foot trailer was really becoming cramped, so we found a house in Whittier that we bought. It was not too attractive a place, but had a large back yard where I could wear away my frustrations. I felt that the fringe benefits of this job (paid vacation and sick leave, retirement benefits, etc.) would balance off the lower direct salary in the long run.

I would complete nearly seven years, becoming the deputy Chief of the Dental Department for the County of Los Angeles. Then when the State of California took over for the County, I put in nearly ten more years with them as Chief Dental Consultant for the Health Services Division, in charge of a unit comprising at its peak of nineteen dentists and an equal number of clerks and supporting staff.

Irene and I attended the Whittier Seventh Day Adventist church. Our attendance took a hit when, through Nellie’s employment, we became eligible for unlimited, free stand-by passes on American Airlines. We made numerous long weekend trips to all corners of the United States, and several abroad. It was fun. Airline travel was less complicated back then. The planes were seldom sold out; you had a good chance of making first class where the food was really super. For a while on longer flights, all 747’s carried a grand piano so passengers could stand around, sing, eat peanuts and party.

Dick was in Vietnam doing what he had always dreamed - but though he had missed by being too young for the Second World War - shooting up things from the single seat of a jet fighter.

Nellie had left the dental office job and was building lots of airtime with American Airlines as a flight attendant, from her base in San Francisco.

After graduation from Cal Poly, San Louis Obispo in 1965, Burt had taken a job as civilian flight test engineer with the Air Force at Edwards AFB.

Meanwhile, back at my job, Jerry Vail, who I worked with at the County job was asked to go over and survey the situation in the basement in the old Hall of Justice building, where the Office of Medical Examiner / Coroner was located at that time. Jerry asked two of us other dentists to go with him. It seems that the physicians who had been performing the autopsies had also been traditionally handling the related work that included the dental identification. Someone finally concluded that their work in the dental field was understandably lacking, and it was time to improve the quality.

That basement was a dank smelly place. We found the doctors had never noticed that they had been charting dental identification records using a chart on which the molars were shown transposed from right to left and vice versa. Other things were equally messed up. We got things straightened out, and then were asked to stand by on call whenever they had an unknown body where dental records were paramount in the process. At first, we had to do the work directly on bodies that were often in varying stages of decomposition. It took some getting used to. Happily, soon after this, a brand new building was provided for the County Coroner, and other things were modernized.

We would arrive and find that the technicians had already removed the teeth and jaws in one piece from the corpse and placed them in a jar of formaldehyde, awaiting our arrival. After doing the charting and completing the identification, those jars were kept, even though the body was released to the families.

There were the few cases involving famous persons. I purposely avoided reporting for the work of identifying burned bodies of the Symbionese Liberation Army members. The Hearst family and the authorities were almost certain that one of the bodies would prove to be that of Patricia Hearst. But when X-rays were obtained from various dental offices and comparisons were made, such was not the case. Then two days later, another body was discovered in the ashes of the house. This must surely be Patricia Hearst, they reasoned. The family and the news media hung around waiting verification, and again they were disappointed.

By this time, we had bought a vacation house, located on the golf course at Gilman Hot Springs near Hemet. On purpose, we did not have a phone put in. Most every Friday, after a hard week at the office, Irene and I would head for the retreat and relax, away from the hustle bustle of the city.

After arriving that particular Friday evening I turned the radio on and heard the news of the shoot-out and the fire that was expected to flush the outlaws out of the house in which they had taken refuge. I knew dental identification would be mandatory, but also was aware that there were other dentists who could be summoned if I did not report. I could claim I was not aware; thus retaining my treasured weekend.

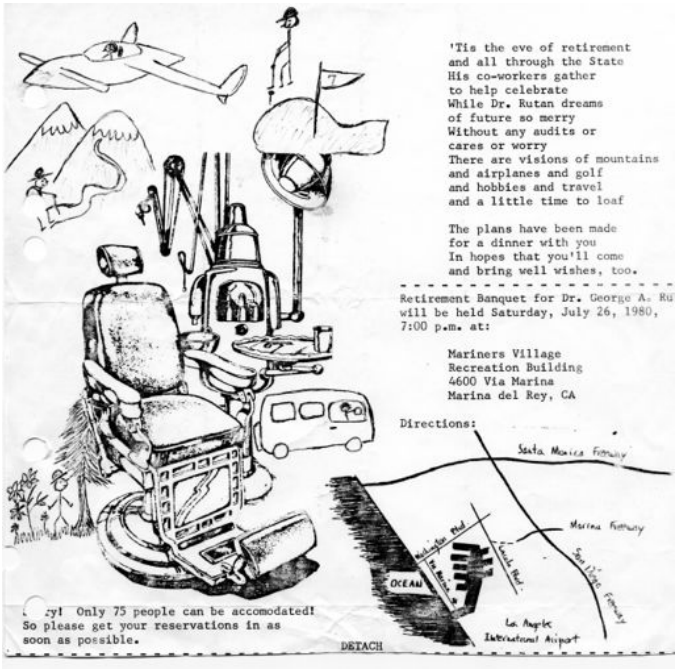
In 1973, California State Health Services Department contracted out the work that my department had been doing. And everyone was transferred or terminated. Many of the dentists took jobs in State Hospitals or prisons. I

remained and was assigned to a new medical quality review team as the dental member. It was being formed to oversee a new program that was being established. This program was the precursor of what would grow into the Health Maintenance Organizations of the present.

Since those contracting to provide health services were paid on a flat per capita basis for those who enrolled, no statements of claims for payment or for prior authorizations was submitted. Thus oversight from information that had been obtained by these means was not available. Instead they were audited directly by this team that I served on. Each site was visited twice a year, with all the subsequent paper work. This involved a lot of travel. The work was not demanding, and often was a bit boring.

I began to think about collecting back some of the money that had been withheld from my pay over the years. By taking my retirement, I could accomplish this. Also, it had been one of my goals to retire earlier than the normal age of sixty-five. So, at age sixty-four, in 1980, I did just that. We bought a cabin at Big Bear, located right adjacent to the airport, and a new, more relaxed period of my life began.

Although our plan had been to get out of the big city with its traffic and air pollution, we remained in the Whittier house (8526 Calmada Avenue) for five more years. Did some traveling and whatever else we wanted. That little house served us well for twenty years.



Old men sit and rock. Old men nurse their memories. And tonight, as I turn back the hands on my clock a miniscule one hour, I cannot deny my chronological aging. My eighty fifth birthday is this Saturday. Physiologically, I feel too young for a rocker, yet I admit being comfortable with a lifetime of memories.

Certainly the memory of the effort to prepare for the world flight, and the success of the noble aircraft "Voyager" does not fade. Nor unlike many memories that dim, I can recall each of those persons of character who volunteered themselves to be part of fulfilling that dream.

I REMEMBER the pride I felt in the fact that the primary movers and shakers of this effort were of my own blood. This was Dick and Burt's project from the very first. Even though there was and had always been a certain level of jealous competition between the two brothers, their individual areas of expertise complemented each other perfectly for this task that they had chosen.

I REMEMBER the first day of actually preparing hardware for the project. The job was to build the insulated metal oven, which would hang from the girders when finished. And be lowered to cover and cure the individual parts of the unique plane that could only be envisioned that first day.

All day on my knees, helping Dick drill and place pop rivets on the parts laid out on the concrete floor. As I tried to straighten up and drive home at the end of that day, my thoughts were, "Today my muscles are stiff and sore. In the morning I'll really be hurting. I have volunteered to do this, but how much help will a cripple really be? Is this really the way I want to start my retirement?"

I ate a good meal that Irene had prepared for me, eased myself into my recliner and picked up the remote. Just then the phone rang, "HELLO Pop. This is Dick. After you left Mojave, Bruce Evans arrived from San Diego in his VariEze. He is going to stay and help me on this oven job, so we won't be needing you tomorrow, but we can use you as a "Go-fer" later on." Ah! Sweet reprieve. And from then on, as other volunteers showed up, I carefully dodged any of the chores that involved "dog labor" - as I'm sure others will recall.

I REMEMBER the morning of the launch at Edward's Air Force. The small force of volunteers were gathered at the "hammerhead" to perform that for which each had practiced. Irene and I were not needed and tried to stay back out of the way. I suspect that what happened next was instigated by the efficient public relations man, Peter, who had expressed the idea that we, as parents, should be well removed from the immediate area of action. An official AF sedan pulled up beside us and a Colonel said, "I am at your disposal to take you to any spot on the runway you would like to be to observe the takeoff."

I had much earlier decided, at the time of previous distance and speed record attempts that had been made in Dick's Long-EZ, just where I liked to be to observe things. So Irene, daughter Nell and I were standing at the exact mid-point of Edward's main runway. My heart rate began to increase as I heard Voyagers engines go to full power. At a mile and a half distance, it required that I bring up my field glasses to verify that the plane was at last moving. There was another mile and a half at my back.

I know that I was not the only one who felt that even with all the perils of the nine day flight that might lie ahead, no moment could be more fraught with danger for the ship and its crew than the next one hundred and twenty seconds.

Soon I saw an unexpected sight. Voyager was screaming closer. But both wingtips seemed glued to the rough

runway surface, and a white plume extended back in a vortex at each end. It couldn't be smoke; was it vaporized fuel? No? Oh, of course; it had to be the by-product of the wing itself being ground to a fine powder.

The slightly nose down attitude caused by the enormous weight of the fuel did what no one had anticipated. The resulting slight reduction of the angle of attack on the wing was preventing air passing over from producing lift. Nothing would change until the nose of the plane was raised.

Such a major and unanticipated occurrence surely called for somebody to order a takeoff abort. And as the plane came abreast and scorched past me I could indeed hear the throttles being retarded, and I relaxed a bit and released some of the air I had been unable to exhale before.

But no, George! The change in engine sound that you heard was not created by someone in the cockpit. That was created inside my head and was the well known "Doppler Effect" due to the source of a sound passing close by at high speed. I got the field glasses up just in time to observe the shape of the wing slowly change appearance from a downturned frown to a big beautiful smile.

I REMEMBER how the Voyager hangar in Mojave had been a mad-house of fanatics with helicopters flying media in and out. Hardly time to grab a bite. So forget eating, George. You need to lose some of that belly fat anyway.

I REMEMBER how I missed most of the action at Mojave, which continued unabated during the actual flight. Yes, it was hard to participate much from a hospital bed in the intensive care unit hooked onto monitoring machines.

I REMEMBER that it took the doctors several days to decide that it was not the text book heart-attack that I had appeared to be on admittance. But what was it then? "To be safe, we will keep you here a few more days."

"Okay, but if you don't discharge me in time for me to be there at the return of the Voyager, I'm out of here on my own responsibility."

It took the efforts of George Jutila, the Voyager flight surgeon, and a successfully accomplished treadmill test, to spring me in time for all the excitement of the Voyager landing on the dry lake bed at Edwards Air Force Base.

Irene Goforth Rutan - how does a mother handle the terrible fear and concern that has to happen when she must silently stand by when one of her own places his life at such risk?

Every volunteer will testify, I'm sure, that Irene appeared serene, calm and unperturbed during the entire course of the flight. It was not just a stiff upper lip when in public. I can testify that she expressed no concern at what may happen, at any time. She said that she just knew the abilities of her boys were up to the task, and she was fully confident that they would accomplish their goals.

While, I myself, could not help but worry about the dangers that awaited the flight at every stage, I was forbidden to mention any of that in her presence, because "If you talk like that, it must mean you are against their success, and in this they need everyone's full confidence. I don't want to hear another word."

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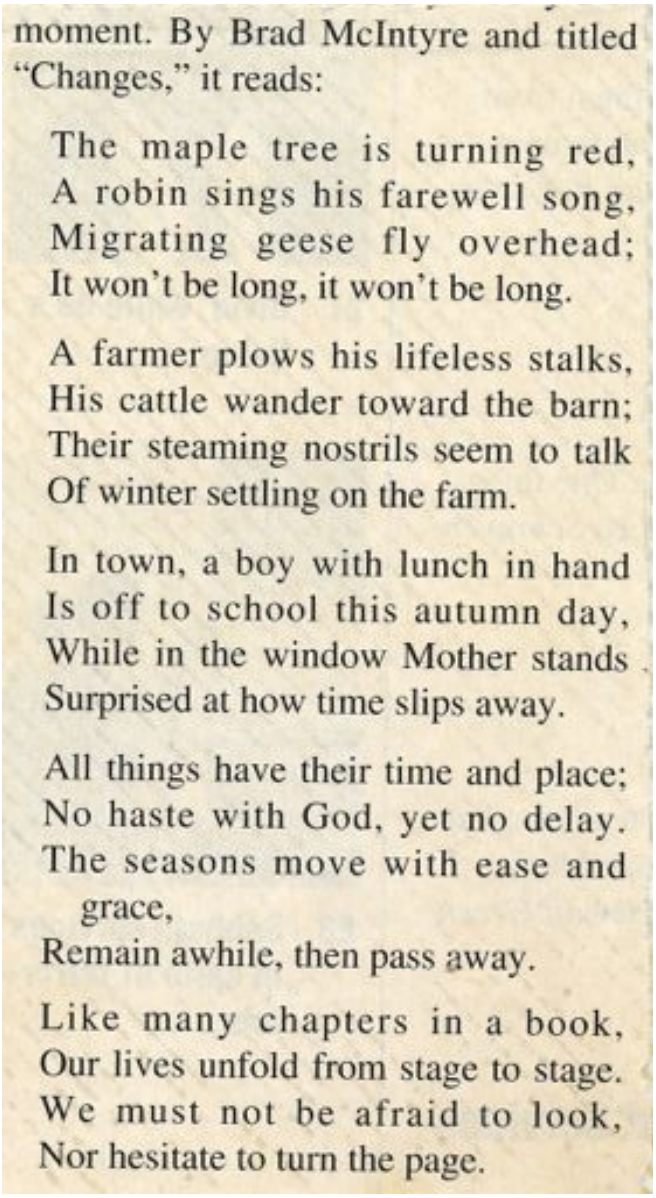
Closing this narrative out here in Palmdale in 2003, which will probably prove to be home for a period of time equal to the twenty years we were in Whittier, I find that even though I am alone, I am grateful for everything I am being allowed to enjoy. If permitted to live my life over again, there would be many things that I would change. Yet among the good things of life, I feel that I have experienced most of the best.

RUTAN, Dr. George Albert Jr.

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.

George Albert Rutan passed away in Lancaster, California August 28, 2009, of natural causes, at age 93. George's great-grandfather, Samuel A. Rutan Sr, crossed the great plains from Illinois to California by wagon train in 1852. His great-grandmother, Edna Kimzey Benson, arrived by wagon train in 1847, prior to the California Gold Rush. George was born in Coalinga, California on April 7, 1916, the first son of G.A. Rutan Sr., a farmer and oil-field worker, and Rhoda Stearns, a homemaker and beloved mother. George served in the U.S. Navy during World War II and graduated from the School of Dentistry at the University of Southern California. He moved his family to Dinuba, California to set up a dental practice in 1951. George became a private pilot in 1953, which inspired his family's life-long interest in aviation.

George "Pop" Rutan was preceded to heaven by his wife of 63 years, Irene "Mom" Rutan in the year 2000. He was also preceded in death by sister Frances and brother Charles. George is survived by two brothers Samuel Rutan and Kenneth Rutan; children Dick, Burt and Nellie Ann Rutan; two daughter-in-laws; eight grandchildren; their spouses; and twelve great-grand children. He leaves behind loving nieces, nephews, cousins and friends from around the world. He will be missed by all.



moment. By Brad McIntyre and titled "Changes," it reads:

The maple tree is turning red,
A robin sings his farewell song,
Migrating geese fly overhead;
It won't be long, it won't be long.

A farmer plows his lifeless stalks,
His cattle wander toward the barn;
Their steaming nostrils seem to talk
Of winter settling on the farm.

In town, a boy with lunch in hand
Is off to school this autumn day,
While in the window Mother stands
Surprised at how time slips away.

All things have their time and place;
No haste with God, yet no delay.
The seasons move with ease and grace,
Remain awhile, then pass away.

Like many chapters in a book,
Our lives unfold from stage to stage.
We must not be afraid to look,
Nor hesitate to turn the page.