

The First 18

Fred Gielow - July 2025

Not holes. Not golf.
Years. My first eighteen years.

VERY EARLY YEARS

Help! — The earliest recollection I have is when I was standing at home at the top of the steps to the basement, shouting frantically for Mom, who was in the basement doing a load of wash. It seems I was acutely aware that nature was about to call, and I needed her assistance. Pronto. I don't remember if she answered my call in time, but I have a feeling she did not.

Car Heater — Mom was driving me somewhere on a cold, wintry day. She reached down under the dashboard to adjust a heater vent. I watched her do that, but didn't see what she had actually done, so I decided I should reach down, too, and feel around. I was completely unaware our car heater fan was exposed. There was no guard around it at all. I reached down and stuck the middle finger of my right hand directly into the fan blades. My finger was cut badly, and it began to bleed. This forced a quick detour to the doctor's office. My finger healed, but I've had a split fingernail ever since. **Lesson:** People learn by following others.

And sometimes, that's the hard way.

Recreation — One day when I was very young, I was playing in the backyard and I found an open but nearly empty paint bucket and some of Mom's discarded pocket books. I got a stick or something and dabbed paint all over everything. It just seemed like a reasonable thing to do to pass the time. I don't recall receiving any punishment for this transgression.

Boom — In the middle of one summer night when I was maybe four, there was an extremely loud boom that woke up the whole family. My brother and I were sleeping in the same room, and Mom and Dad rushed in to see if we were okay. I wasn't particularly concerned until I saw Mom's face. She was very frightened. Dad thought lightning had struck the house, but thinking back now, I'm not so sure. There was no fire and no signs of any roof damage, except a bunch of shingle nails had been lifted up. It probably was thunder from a lightening strike, but it probably wasn't a direct hit. I found it comforting to know that if there was danger, Mom and Dad would be there.

Memory — One night, when Dad was tucking me in bed, I told him I was having trouble remembering the date I was born. I could remember the month, but just couldn't seem to remember the date. He asked if I had heard the expression "sweet sixteen." I had not, but that was all it took. Dad solved the problem.

Question — I used to enjoy watching Mom use her sewing machine, and I'd sit by the window as she sewed away. One day, she stopped in mid-stitch, looked me right in the eye and said, "Wouldn't you like to have a baby sister?" I needed no time to think about it. My answer was quick and emphatic: absolutely not!

GRADE SCHOOL YEARS (Edison Grade School)

The Triangle — One day in kindergarten, Mrs. Kushman, our teacher, decided we should play some "music," so she issued instruments to several of us, like a drum and horn, that sort of thing. I was given a triangle. I remember feeling insulted. She considered my musical talents so limited that all I would be allowed to do was bang on a piece of metal!

Ice Cream and Cake — In kindergarten one day there was some kind of party, and parents were invited. Ice cream and cake were served, and some of us kindergartners were enlisted to assist. I helped put slices of ice cream on paper plates. There were some pieces of dry ice packed in with the ice cream, and I thought it would be fun to slip a couple of them on the plates as well. Just imagine what might happen. Happily, no one was injured and I wasn't punished.

Reading — I guess I was a little slow at learning the alphabet and reading. For a while, I wrote down

the mirror image of certain letters. As I gradually caught on to reading, I began to object to the childishness of some of the material I had to read: "See Spot run. Run, Spot, run." Really?

Sidewalk Artwork — For some reason, I thought it would be nice to draw pictures with crayons on the walkways leading up to some of the houses in our neighborhood. I completed several artistic renderings before a couple of adults noticed my handiwork. To my disappointment, they were quite unappreciative of my efforts. Moreover, they made it abundantly clear I had done something wrong, something very bad. It was just artwork, I thought. I felt awful when I had to apologize, face-to-face, to the neighbors whose sidewalks I had used as canvases.

Broken Mirror — I was mad at Mom about something. I have no idea what it was now, and in my anger, I slammed shut the coat closet door. Well, attached to that door was a full-length mirror, which shattered into many and jagged pieces. Mom was furious and I was very ashamed. Mom said I was a bad boy. I believed her. I had to pay for a replacement mirror. I think it was \$25, the value of a World War II savings bond.

Health — Like a lot of kids, I caught all the "popular" diseases - measles, chicken pox, mumps, etc. - but it seems I caught more than my share of ordinary colds. I was home in bed for a good number of days each semester, and I wondered and worried

about all the learning I had missed.

The War — World War II affected everyone. Food was rationed, as were lots of other things like gasoline and tires. We collected aluminum foil and fat for the war effort, and we all bought war bonds. My doctor said I was anemic, but my family didn't have enough meat stamps, so I remained anemic. Since I was ten years old when the war ended, I didn't really appreciate how existential the war had been. After the family had rejoiced for a little while in the victory, I said, "Okay. Now, can we all play a game?"

New Year — One New Year's Day, the family was sitting around the dining room table for breakfast, and I looked around and said, "This is supposed to be a New Year, but I don't see anything that's changed. What's new?"

Art Class I — One day in art class when I was in the fifth grade, the students were allowed to mold something with clay, and our creations were then put in the kiln and fired. I made this dog, and it has been in my possession longer than anything else I've ever owned.



Art class II — Another time in art class, the teacher

told us to make our drawings more blurry, not as distinct, more subtle. I was indignant that she was imposing her artistic preferences on me and not letting me pursue my own expression. So to retaliate, I made a drawing that was a scrambled mess of blurriness. It looked awful. When the teacher came around and saw it, she said, "That's exactly what I'm looking for. Well done!"

School Orchestra — The music teacher was Mrs. Crampton, and one day she announced there would be a test to see who could be in the orchestra, and those who scored high would be issued instruments. I didn't like that, because I didn't want an instrument *issued* to me. I wanted to choose for *myself*. But that wasn't allowed. I had been taking piano lessons for a couple of years, so I already had a decent introduction to music basics. When the test was handed out, I decided to intentionally put down incorrect answers. It worked! I was not chosen for the orchestra.

Tar — One day coming home from school, I walked through a lot where a house was under construction. I saw a large container of solid tar, and a thought occurred to me: that black substance might be fun to chew. Yes, of course, that was crazy, but kids sometimes are crazy. I chipped off a piece and put it in my mouth. The taste was terrible, but I chewed on it for a while before I spit it out. I spent the next few days recovering from poisoning.

Taps — In grade school, it was a fad for the guys to attach metal crescent taps to the heels of their shoes, and I eagerly joined in. The taps could be bought at a Five and Dime store and then easily hammered into place with a couple of nails. There was something magical about walking around and hearing a click-click sound with every step. Once, when I was on my knees looking for a book in the shelves at the back of the classroom, a classmate commented: "Nice taps!" I took that as a compliment. Remnants of that fad have persisted through the years.

Shoe Envy — My best friend in my early grade school days was Herb Daly.

Once he sank ten basketball shots in a row from the free-throw line. He had a nifty

motor bike. He wore very impressive horn-rim glasses. And he had a great pair of square-toe loafers with big taps on the heels. I envied those loafers. So, one day after we had played together at his house, I ran off with them, leaving my loafers in their place. His loafers were "mine," until the next morning when I gave them back.



Levis — All my friends wore Levis. I did not. I felt

like an outsider in the group. I was even teased about it. Finally, I got my first pair, and when I met with my friends, I felt like I finally fit in.

Lesson: The need to belong to a group is quite powerful.

Glasses — I can't imagine why, but I was intrigued with the idea of wearing glasses. Perhaps Herb Daly's horn-rimmed glasses may have made an impression on me. Once, a classmate who had never worn glasses before came into class wearing a pair. I found myself envious. As it turned out, he was only teasing.

Spelling Bee I — Every now and then, there would be a spelling bee in class and the teacher would go up one row of kids and down the next to see who was the best speller. I was not and am not a good speller, so this exercise was always unpleasant. Until one time. The first kid spelled the word: A-D-D-I-T-I-O-N. The teacher said no. The next kid: A-D-I-T-I-O-N. No again. Up and down the rows, all the kids got it wrong. Then it was my turn. I asked for an example. "The next edition of the newspaper will be out tomorrow morning." I spelled the word correctly! Oh, the joy of that moment!

Spelling Bee II — Don Giffles in my class was a super speller. He knew how to spell everything, even words that most of us had never heard before. He entered city-wide, even state-wide spelling bees, and always scored well. He said he practiced

by having his parents go through the dictionary, word by word. **Lesson:** All people may be born with equal opportunity, but some are a whole lot better at some things than others.

What Did I Do Wrong? — One day when I was in the sixth grade, I was called to the principal's office. "What could I have possibly done wrong?" I thought. The principal informed me my grandfather had died and my parents were coming to pick me up. I hadn't done *anything* wrong.

Victory Garden — During World War II, my family had a victory garden in the vacant lot that touched the corner of our lot. The whole family worked hard to raise a good crop of vegetables. I even had a row that was exclusively mine. When we were initially planting, Mom noticed the stem of a tomato plant was broken. She was going to throw it out, but I asked for it. To keep the plant upright, I planted it much deeper than it should have been. Much to my delight, my little tomato plant prospered and produced a full load of tasty tomatoes. **Lesson:** There's hope, even for a broken stem tomato plant.

Shoes I — Every fall, just before school began, Mom would take me to the J.L. Hudson's Company store in downtown Detroit to buy clothes for the coming year. And that meant shoes, too, and she always picked out brown Boy Scout shoes. After a few years, I decided I wanted to make my own selection, and I choose a pair with chains and little

bars in place of the laces. Mom vetoed my choice. Another time, I selected shoes with laces on the side. She allowed that selection. I thought the style was unique and interesting, and it was, but my *friends* did not approve. **Lesson:** Being different is a two-edged sword.

"The Mosquitos" — My school music teacher, Mrs.

Crampton, wanted to have a quartet perform at a parents meeting that was to be held in the school auditorium/gymnasium. Selected, besides myself, were Rich Crawford, Otto Gutowsky, and Herb Daly. We sang "The Mosquitos" song, and our performance was rather successful. (Here's the song, but with other singers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5spRiVatXuk>)

It was the first time I had sung on stage in a quartet. Little did I know then that years later I would perform in a barbershop quartet on stage numerous times and those performances would be truly gratifying experiences. By the way, Rich Crawford went on to become head of the music department at the University of Michigan.

School Library — One period of class each day was in the school library. We were all expected to find a book to our liking and take the period to read it. I remember thinking some of the books were quite short and rather simple. Surely, I could write a book. And, some decades later, I did.

Lost Wallet — It was fun to play in the backyard of our house. Once, my wallet spilled out of my

pocket without my noticing, and it was some time before I realized it was lost. This is a simple tale, but it taught me a **lesson**: *I am responsible for my belongings and if they are not properly cared for, it's my fault.*

Street Football — The older kids in the neighborhood used to play tag football in the road in front of my house. I used to like to watch them. Once on a pass play, the guys came running toward where I was standing. I quickly backed up. This had an unfortunate consequence, as I backed up right into a metal light pole and I banged my head on it. Hard. Blood began to flow, and I was rusted to the doctor's office. Some time later in my room, I reflected on the incident. I felt embarrassed about what had happened and I felt my "wound" now separated me from the other kids my age.

Presidential Succession — One night around the supper table, we somehow stumbled on the topic of presidential succession. Dad explained how the vice president would become president if something happened to the president. And the speaker of the house of representative would take over if both the VP and president were unable to serve. Then, the president pro tempore of the senate, secretary of state, secretary of the treasury, secretary of defense, attorney general, and so on. I asked Dad how many people would have to be unable to serve before *he* would be president. Mom and Dad got a chuckle out of that.

Gymnasium Rope — In the school gymnasium, there were two thick ropes hanging from the ceiling, probably 25 feet above us. Occasionally, the ropes were released from where they were tied to the wall, and kids would take turns climbing them. I don't know if it was physical or mental, but I couldn't climb up very far. Some kids scurried to the top like monkeys in a jungle. That made me feel inadequate.

Bob de Ravignon — Bob and his twin sister, Carol, were in my class. One day, the gym teacher announced Bob had died of some kind of heart malfunction. All of a sudden, death was very real and much closer than it had been, and life took on an aura of uncertainty and danger.

Poems — One day, the teacher read poems to us and then we discussed them. One poem in particular caught my attention. It was about how quickly times passes, and the author remarked it would be wonderful if time could be stopped for just one day. As the teacher walked about the classroom, I got her attention and asked, "How could time be stopped for just one day, because if time was stopped, no one would know when one day had ended?" The teacher said my comment was thought-provoking. I felt so proud!

Pills — Mom wanted the whole family to take vitamin pills, but I didn't think I could swallow them. One morning, it came to a showdown. Mom and I were in the kitchen, and I was going to swallow a vitamin

pill whether I wanted to or not. I put up a fuss, and then Dad joined the battle. We were trying everything: hiding the pill in a glass of milk, wrapping the pill in a piece of marshmallow, everything. Though I tried my best, there was no success. I cried. I screamed. I begged for mercy. I begged to be released from the torture. Nothing worked. Finally, Dad drove me to the doctor's office for even more intimidation and embarrassment. It was very unpleasant. **Lesson:** A time will eventually come when you will encounter a situation and no one will be on your side. You will have no support whatsoever, and you'll be on your own.

Gym Record — During one school year, the gym teacher kept detailed records about each of our physical activities: running, jumping, throwing, etc. I remember her telling me I needed to do better. I thought I was doing the best I could, but apparently I wasn't measuring up. I was very frustrated and unhappy.

Gym Incident — Several mats had been laid out in a row for gym class one day. The teacher said she was going to show us some gymnastic tricks. When she indicated that class members were going to demonstrate the tricks, I said to myself, "Not me, not me, not me, not me!" She chose Herb Daly and . . . me. She directed Herb to lie on his back and put his feet straight up in the air. Then, she directed me to stand next to Herb's head and reach out and grab his ankles, which I did.

Meanwhile, Herb grabbed my ankles. Then she directed me to lunge forward. I saw immediately that this would not end well. Of course the objective was for me to leap ahead and by so doing pull Herb up, and we would then form a sort of human wheel that could "roll" down the mats laid out in front of us. I hesitated. The teacher insisted we begin. I lunged forward. Well, the trick was for me to tuck my head between Herb's legs, but no one had informed me of that little detail, so I lunged forward, and the top of my head smashed with a loud thud into the mat. No wheel had been formed and Herb and I crumbled into a big heap. I nearly broke my neck, or head, or something. All the kids watching thought this demonstration was jolly good fun. I didn't. Herb and I never did get the "wheel" to work properly. **Lesson:** You can't always trust those in authority.

Ralph and Joe — A program called "Ralph and Joe" aired on CKLW, an AM radio station in Windsor, Ontario. I thought the skits they did were wildly entertaining, and I asked Mom if a couple of friends and I could go see the program. She agreed, but the show aired early in the morning, probably 7 o'clock, maybe even earlier. That meant we had to get up at 4:30 or 5:00 and drive to and cross the Ambassador Bridge, then get to the station before air time. That we did. I thoroughly enjoyed the show. At its conclusion, Ralph or Joe - don't remember which - did a back flip! The trip was a total success. Radio fascinated me. I knew that when I grew up, I

wanted to do something in radio.

Elephant Encounter — Paul Funk was about my age, maybe a little older, and he lived two doors down from me. His dad was an official in Detroit's city government, and one day he took Paul, some others, and me behind the scenes at a circus. I guess it was a circus. The highlight was seeing a huge elephant and getting up real close to it. Slices of bread were handed out for us to feed the pachyderm, but I was reluctant to take my turn. The elephant keeper said, "Well, maybe next time you won't be so frightened." Little did I know then, but years later, to my complete delight, I rode elephants in Nepal, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. Oh my, how thrilling and wonderful those rides were!

The Garage Door Incident — Paul Funk and I decided we could push the Funk family car in and out of his garage, and that would be a lot of fun. I'd push, while Paul "drove," then we'd switch. First, Paul had a successful try at the steering wheel, then it was my turn. I couldn't see the spacing on the right very well, but I knew if I kept the car as close as possibly to the left, there would be plenty of space on the right. The logic was flawless, but there was a complication. It was a "barn door" kind of garage door - it slid open and closed - and unknown to me, before I got in the driver's seat, the garage door had been moved a foot or so in the closed direction. Paul pushed and I allowed enough space at the left, but with the door

partially closed, there wasn't enough space on the right. Everything was going swimmingly for a brief few seconds, then the right side of the garage door opening contacted the right side of the car. There was a loud scraping sound. It was not a good day.

Screen Door — Not long after the garage door incident, I went to visit Paul, and I tripped on the concrete step leading to his back porch. I fell forward and my head smashed through the screened door. I began to think I had turned into a wrecking ball. Luckily for me, the Funks were very understanding and there were no major repercussions, except for my feeling regret and embarrassment.

Dog Bites — I was bitten twice by dogs when I was a kid. Once by Herb Daly's dog. It wasn't much more than a scratch. The other I received while running along Abington Road toward Grand River Avenue. A dog saw me running and knew he could outrun me, and to be sure, he could. And did. He nipped me on my left leg and he tore a three-inch hole in my pants. And he drew blood, but it wasn't very serious. Dad was an attorney and he negotiated a settlement: a new pair of pants.

Root Beer — I really liked root beer and I asked for and received a big bottle on one of my birthdays. After the bottle had cooled, I took a big drink. It was wonderful. "Don't drink too much," Mom cautioned. But the root beer was so tasty, I

drank most of the bottle in one sitting. And then I paid a price. I had consumed more than my stomach could tolerate, so shortly after going down, the root beer came back up. I didn't like root beer for years after that. But I do again now. **Lesson:** Moderation is a good thing.

A Play — Every Thanksgiving and Christmas, my family, Mom's sister's family, and Mom's parents gathered for dinner. Sometimes we met at our house in Detroit. One such time when I was probably seven or eight, a play was planned. My brother wrote a script and he, his friend (Jack Winham), and I were the performers. My line was, "Corporeal Hickum reporting, sir. The German tanks have just broken through." I went to Mom. "I don't think I can remember that," I announced. She assured me I could. Mom made red, floor-to-ceiling curtains that were hung in the basement, cutting the rec room in half, to make "stage" and audience sections. The curtains were on a bar with cords attached, so we could open and close them. The performance was a grand success. I remembered my line. Flawlessly.

Drowning — I think Paul Funk's mother and father belonged to a country club. Once I was invited to go with them (and Paul of course) for a swim in the pool. Several others were swimming there, and we were all having a fine time. At the deep end, I decided it would be interesting to see if I could hold my breath and swim down to the very bottom, so I took a big breath and struggled to swim down

probably seven feet. It was difficult, but I made it. The bad news was that by then, I needed air, and I needed air rather urgently. I fought frantically to swim up to the surface. The struggling only exacerbated my need for oxygen. As we all know, I made it, but I was in total panic. When I broke the surface, I took a gigantic breath of air. Then, I looked around. Everybody was swimming about as if nothing had happened. Here, I nearly drowned in front of everyone, and no one even noticed.

Song — One time, when the family was walking along a road not too far from the cottage, Dad made up a song about me. He sang it to the tune of "I've Got Spurs That Jingle, Jangle, Jingle," and I thought that was really neat. It was a special moment.

Lesson: People enjoy attention.

Fish Pond — There was a small fish pond in front of my aunt's and uncle's cottage on Lake Michigan. The pond was maybe eight feet long and four feet wide. One Sunday morning after chapel, my brother (Jim), our cousin (John), and I were looking at the fish in the pond, the edge of which was lined with wet and slippery stones. Jim and John dared me to walk along the stones, and foolishly, I accepted the challenge, and proceeded to fall full body into the slime-filled water. All the Sunday-best clothes I was wearing were drenched and I was totally humiliated. **Lesson:** Sometimes family members don't have your best interests at heart.

Christmas — Christmas was always a big deal. My parents would stay up really late wrapping presents and putting up the tree and decorations. We were told Santa brought presents, and he also set up the Christmas tree. Oh my, what excitement and delight each Christmas morning! Jim and I always got lots of gifts. Probably most memorable over the years was an Erector Set. I loved playing with that! It gave me hours and hours of pleasure. Happy memories.

Santa Claus — I was told the Santa at the Hudson's department store was the real one and the others were pretend Santas. I remember the Sunday morning at breakfast when I was finally told Santa wasn't real. Of course, my brother, who was four and a half years older, had known this for a quite some while, and I felt resentful such a hoax had been perpetrated on me by my entire family.

Sewer Drain Clog — On one cold winter day, Herb Daly and I were walking back from school, and we noticed ice had blocked a sewer drain. Realizing we had a civic duty to perform, we began work to free the blockage. We probably worked an hour, maybe two, and were wet and very cold from our efforts, but we got the drain unclogged. I told this heroic story to my parents at the supper table that evening, and Dad gave me a quarter for my efforts.

Forgotten Bat — Once, after a game of baseball, one of the kids forgot to take his bat home with him. I found the bat and decided it was then mine. I

blanked out his name and wrote in my name on it. I'm embarrassed to admit this. It seems my moral underpinnings were not yet underpinning sufficiently.

Eavesdropping — I somehow learned that if I connected a pair of earphones to two contacts on a telephone connection box in our basement, I could eavesdrop on a phone conversation. I was excited about this discovery and I proceeded to hook up a two-conductor cable from the box, out the basement window, up the brick wall to the second floor, through my window, and into my bedroom, where I could attach earphones whenever I wanted. Some time later, a call came in and Mom answered. I plugged in the earphones and started to listen. Unfortunately, I knew nothing about signal loads, and when I made the connection, it overloaded the circuit and Mom couldn't hear anything. I couldn't either. The call was long distance, from Mom's mom in Ann Arbor, and we all had to hang up. And that put a very quick end to my eavesdropping career.

Walking with Dad — Dad worked in a law office on the tenth floor of the Ford Building in downtown Detroit. He wanted to leave the car for Mom, so each day he'd walk four blocks to Grand River Avenue and take the bus to and from work. I used to like to meet him in the evening when he got off the bus, and then walk home with him. It was a special time to be together. As we walked along, Dad took long strides, so I found it necessary to

run a little every now and then to keep up.

April's fool Day I — I had prepared a bunch of slips of paper with the words "April Fool" written on them to hand out to kids in class. When I went to the school bathroom, the janitor was there. A thought came to mind: what if I could pop one of my little slips into his pocket unnoticed. Wouldn't that be a hoot! But, oh my goodness, how risky! Should I do it? What would happen if I got caught? I decided to go for it. As the janitor walked past me, I noticed his pocket was ever so slightly open and I very quickly slipped a paper in the opening. He didn't notice. And all of a sudden, my dare was done. I can't imagine what he thought when he later discovered it.

April Fools Day II — Paul Funk and I thought we'd play a trick on his parents, so we used safety pins to prevent the bathroom towels from being removed from the racks. We were giggling with glee over our mischievousness until Mr. Funk appeared with blood streaming down his face. He hollered, "Who put pins in the towels?" Paul and I were terrified. We didn't foresee that there could be any real danger in our prank. Until then. As it turned out, it wasn't blood at all, but lipstick. Mr. Funk had turned the tables and had the last laugh: an April Fools joke on *us*!

Allied Radio — I ordered lots of things from the Allied Radio catalog: switches, wires, indicator lights, tools, and a lot more. Once, the company

mixed up my order, and the package delivered to me contained a very expensive amplifier. The chassis was chrome plated and it was absolutely beautiful. What should I do with this unexpected windfall? Well, I packaged it up and shipped it back. My moral underpinnings had engaged. But I didn't even get a thank-you note from Allied Radio.

The Sound of My Voice — When I had saved enough money from my paper route, allowance, and Christmas and birthday gifts, I bought a Knight amplifier, speaker, Shure microphone, and appropriate cables and connectors. I remember sitting on the floor of the upstairs hall connecting everything together. I turned the amplifier switch on and spoke into the microphone. My voice came out of the speaker. It was wonderful! That may not sound like anything special, but for me it was. I had entered a new dimension.

Bull Whip — Paul Funk came over one day with a bull whip. He had learned how to snap the thing and make a gunshot-like sound. He wanted me to hold a piece of paper in my hand so he could snap the whip and slice the paper in half. I thought that might be a little dangerous, but Paul assured me he was well practiced in this trick. Amazingly, I agreed, and his whip snapped the paper in two pieces with a loud bang. Next, he thought I should hold a paper in my mouth as he cracked the whip again. I was considering the wisdom of this when Mom came on the scene and put an end to Paul's demonstrations. Thanks, Mom.

Dogs — During my childhood, my family had two dogs, both black cocker spaniels. The first was Smokey, a great dog, but after a couple of years she had to be put down because of cancer. Next was Inky, who, from the start had a real temper. One time when Mom and Dad went out to visit friends, Inky had a tantrum and chewed up several chairs in the living room. My brother and I didn't know how to intervene, so when Mom and Dad returned, the living room was a mess. I think my parents blamed us for not controlling Inky. A short time later, the dog was given away.

First TV — Paul Funk's family was the first family I knew to get a TV set. It had a black-and-white screen maybe ten inches diagonally. A big, plastic lens was purchased and placed in front of the screen to make it look bigger. We watched that thing often, and the fuzzy, flickering images were mesmerizing. I never imagined that some decades later, I would be the proud owner of a stunning 75-inch, high-definition color TV. **Lesson:** Technology can be wonderful.

Riding My Bike — One happy memory from my youth was riding my bicycle. It felt so good to peddle along the road with the wind streaming by. I remember one time in particular. I was biking in front of our house and in full voice I was singing "Sentimental Journey." I felt so free and so very happy. What a pleasant memory!

Lost — Mom would occasionally take me to Hudson's

department store. Sometimes it was to shop for things for her, sometimes things for me. She would park the car in a parking lot a couple blocks from the store. I used to like to ride the escalator, up and down, ten floors, while Mom shopped. One time, for some reason we couldn't find each other at the appointed time. I had no way of getting in touch with Mom, so after wandering about for a while, I retraced my steps back to the parking lot and got in the car and waited. It was some time before Mom checked the lot and she was frantic. I didn't know what all the fuss was about.

Running away — When I was quite young and indeed foolish, I decided to run away from home. I don't remember what triggered this decision, but one winter Sunday morning I declined to go to church with the rest of the family. I put on some warm clothes, got my ice skates, locked the door of our house, and rode my bike to the ice rink next to my school. I guess my thinking was that I'd spend the rest of my life happily skating around on that ice rink. You can see there wasn't a whole lot of substance to my thinking at the time. Well, it turned out the ice on the rink that day was all broken up and skating was impossible. At that moment, reality kicked in, and I could see my grand plan was a total disaster! But, now what? I had locked myself out of the house. What was my next move? Luckily, I discovered I *did* have a key to the house in my pocket - I had forgotten about it - so I biked home, put away my bike and skates, and

was seated comfortably in a chair when the family returned from church. I never told my family about my botched run-away scheme. **Lesson:** Be careful when you make life-altering plans.

Gasoline — Once when we were taking a trip, the whole family was in the car, and so was my frail grandmother, Nana. We stopped for gas, and Dad asked for ethyl. The attendant said the station only had half and half. Nana piped up from the back seat: "We'll take the ethyl half," she said.

Confirmation —

My brother and I were confirmed along with several others in a service at the St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The



ceremony was only memorable because it was a little too exciting for one girl in the group. She threw up. In the picture, I'm at the left, my brother is at the right, and my God parents are at the upper left.

Sunday School — I remember the moment like it was yesterday. Sunday school always seemed disorganized and as far as I was concerned, largely useless. We'd gather in groups, and members of the congregation would talk to us about Bible

stories or whatever they wanted. In one session, the adult cautioned us to take full advantage of our youthful years, because when we grew up, our lives would be miserable. The “wisdom” was rather disconcerting.

Church — Nearly every time I went to church, the minister, Reverend Widdifield, chided the congregation and said we had all sinned. (How did he know that?) So I took that to mean I was a bad person. I would do everything I could to be a *good* person, but, at the next church service, sure enough, Widdifield would say it again: everyone had sinned! Another frustration I had: Widdifield said we all had to give our lives to Christ. But, I wanted to control my own life and make my own decisions. As I understood it, Widdifield was saying I should give all my possessions to the poor and needy and dedicate my life to spreading God’s word. I didn’t want to do that, and I thought, consequently, I was bad. One more thing: we were encouraged to leave our worries and problems in God’s hands. That struck me the wrong way. I felt I should take responsibility for my worries and problems and attend to them myself, not leave them for God.

Faith — I remember the moment well. Dad and I were walking into the kitchen and I asked him how someone can have faith. I think the question surprised Dad and he didn’t have a good answer. He said a person just has to believe. But that didn’t answer my question at all. How can someone believe?

Hugs — When I was young, some psychologists were advising parents to withhold expressions of love for their kids. The rationale was that showing love would spoil a child. And, my parents, wanting to do what was right, took the advice of the “experts.” Although Mom and Dad would sign their letters, “With love,” there was no verbal expression of this sentiment. I can’t remember one time when I was hugged. Of course the psychologist “wisdom” was pure hogwash. When I was married and had kids of my own, I was adamant about hugging them each time we got together. **Lesson:** Sometimes, experts are dead wrong. And the consequences can be damaging.

Setting Fires — Once, my brother (Jim) and his friend (Jack Winham) and I thought it would be exciting to set fires in the vacant field at the end of our street and then quickly put them out. Jim and Jack were doing fine. They were getting nice little blazes and then extinguishing them. I was having no luck. My fires went out almost the moment they were started. At one point, I turned around to see what Jim and Jack had done. I didn’t realize that my last attempt was actually a success, and when I wasn’t looking, it turned into a good-sized blaze. By the time the three of us realized that, we had a real conflagration to put out.

Migraine Headaches — Through most of my first eighteen years, I had occasional migraine headaches. Mom had them, too. Some were

debilitating. I'd have to lie down in bed. Once and a while, they'd worsen into painful and powerful dizzy spells. If I opened my eyes, everything would be spinning around clockwise at a million miles an hour. Lucky for me, the migraines disappeared about the time I entered college. I'm very thankful for that. I think Mom's migraines went away, too.

Fourth of July — One of my fondest memories at the cottage was evening Fourth of July picnic parties. Sometimes, two dozen or more residents from along the lake shore would attend, and the hot dogs and hamburgers and potato salad were always yummy. Many would stay for the sunset, and then head back to their cottages, but a handful would stay on into the evening as the fire slowly died down. At some point we'd begin singing and we'd all join in with a series of songs we knew. Memories of those times are precious. **Lesson:** Singing can be a source of much pleasure.

Photos of Florida — Some while after my uncle returned from a trip to Cypress Gardens in Florida, he put on a slide show to show us his pictures. At that time, except for a trip or two into Canada, I had not been outside Michigan. I thought the photos were amazing. I wondered if I'd ever be able to actually visit Florida. It seemed so far away, and so exciting. Little did I know then, but while working for IBM years later, business trips took me not only to Florida, but to other states as well, and indeed to a few countries.

Trickery — One of my friends had a devious plan. I think I remember who it was, but I'm not sure (it wasn't Herb Daly). The plan was for the four of us to go to the nearby Five and Dime store, pick an appropriate counter, then tell the sales person we had dropped a quarter somewhere in the displayed products. According to the plan, the sales person would assume we were telling the truth, she'd get a quarter from the cash register, and she'd give it to us. I was not supportive of this subterfuge, but we were all friends, so I went along with the group. But, I wasn't going to do any of the talking! Anyway, the plan worked. To a degree. But instead of immediately getting a quarter from the cash register, the clerk began rummaging through the merchandise in search of our "missing quarter." She pulled out items, looked in corners, moved things here and there, searched high and low. And then a strange thing happened. She found a nickel and a dime hiding in the merchandise and gave them to us. Our "spokesman" thanked her and then added that it must have been a nickel and dime he had dropped. The clerk bought the flimsy story.

Mr. Collins — This is probably one of the worst things that ever happened to me. Mr. Collins was my eighth-grade social studies teacher, and he took a liking to me. At the end of the last day of class before graduation, I stayed to clean the blackboard for him and help tidy up the room. Mr. Collins was very nice to me and over time, gave me several gifts. One was a chameleon that lived for a

while on a curtain in my bedroom. (I was afraid he'd venture to where I was sleeping and I'd squish the critter to death.) Mr. Collins invited me to see a collection he had (don't remember of what), and I biked over to his house (probably a couple of miles away) to see it. He took some time showing me, but then he had me sit down beside him on his couch. He then covered our laps with a blanket and he began, very carefully at first, to touch me. I didn't know what to do. We were "friends," but he was doing something I didn't like. And I was very confused. How do I react? I could never imagine such a thing happening. He made me promise I'd never tell my parents what had happened. Not knowing any better, I agreed. Weeks and months went by. Mr. Collins took me to a hockey game, a baseball game. Each time, the blanket was there, as was the touching. I wanted to tell Mom and Dad, but I had promised I wouldn't. Finally one day when I was in the basement at home, the emotion and fright burst through and I began to cry uncontrollably. I was shaking from head to toe. Dad demanded to know what the problem was, and I broke my promise to Mr. Collins and told him. He didn't exhibit any emotion to me that I noticed, but he immediately got in the car and drove over to Mr. Collins' house. Years later, my bother told me Mom thought Dad was so incensed, he might actually kill Mr. Collins. I have no idea what actually happened during their confrontation, but I never again saw or heard from Mr. Collins. Thank goodness! Looking back, I imagine Mom and Dad were furious they had been unable to prevent me

from having that horrible experience.

HIGHSCHOOL YEARS (Redford Highschool)

WRBG — My school had an announcement system with speakers in each classroom and each speaker could be individually turned on and off from the broadcast room. School announcements were the responsibility of Mrs. Brown and her radio speech class. I took that class several semesters and I was frequently selected to make announcements. Once, I had a bright, but naughty, idea. The three students in the little broadcast room would first turn off Mrs. Brown's speaker, and we'd make a regular announcement to the rest of the school. Then, we'd turn off the rest of the school's speakers and turn on just Mrs. Brown's, and then we'd make a funny, outrageous announcement just to her. Wouldn't that be a great joke, we thought! We were so taken with the idea, we couldn't help giggling and making all sorts of mistakes during our announcement to the entire school. Then, we turned off the rest of the school and turned on Mrs. Brown's speaker and made an absolutely perfect announcement to her. A day or so later, she commented that several teachers had told her our recent announcement was uncharacteristically bad. She couldn't understand why.

Miscalculation — I hated Latin class. I found it hard to learn the vocabulary and I didn't like the recitations during the first few minutes of each

class. I seemed to do poorly with them. One day, I thought I had relief. There was going to be an announcement for an upcoming school fair, and I thought I'd surely be selected to make the announcement. If I was selected, I'd miss the recitations, which were only a couple of minutes in length. If I wasn't selected, well, the glee club was going to sing briefly as part of the announcement, and I thought certainly I'd be one of the singers. And if I wasn't, there was still a good chance I wouldn't be the ones called upon that day to make Latin recitations. My fool-proof plan failed miserably. I wasn't chosen to make the announcement, I wasn't chosen to sing with the glee club, and I was selected to make a recitation. "I'm not prepared," I said. **Lesson:** "The best-laid schemes of mice and men often go awry." - Robert Burns. (I should mention that although I hated Latin, it was tremendously helpful to me to better understand English.)

Singing — A few days before Christmas one semester, the glee club sang Christmas carols in the school halls. The highlight was when we paused in the stairwell coming down from the second floor, and sang "The Hallelujah Chorus." Oh my goodness, the chords reverberated back and forth like we were in an echo chamber. It was truly exhilarating.

Shoes II — The cool kids in school wore blue suede shoes, so of course I had to get a pair. I remember going downtown to a Flagg Brothers shoe store to get just the style I wanted. I also

remember white bucks and saddle shoes were popular, and I naturally got a pair of each. I also came across a pair of canvas shoes with tire treads as soles. I bought them (of course), and they were really nifty! **Lesson:** Shoes can become a means of expressing creativity. Or, they can help you feel you're part of a group you wish to identify with.

Pegged Pants — As I mentioned before, Mom took me to Hudson's for all my clothing needs. She would pick out whatever she thought was appropriate. But, I wanted to make my own decisions, and as I grew older, I went to Hudson's by myself. All the cool kids wore pegged pants, so I wanted to as well. Mom was opposed, but when I was on my own, well, I was on my own. I asked the tailor to take an inch or two off the circumference of the cuff at the bottom of each pant leg. Then, when there were no repercussions for doing that, the next time, I'd ask for another inch or two off. The crazy thing is that decades later, when bell bottoms came in style, I wanted the tailor to go in the other direction. **Lesson:** Fads are completely unpredictable and they often make no sense, but they are surprisingly strong influences.

Workshop Project I — I spent many a pleasant hour working at my workbench in the basement at home. I built Heathkits and other electrical devices, and I engaged in various woodworking projects. One time, I was constructing a storage unit and I put my finger underneath a wooden panel so I could tell

the instant a screw I was screwing was about to emerge. I didn't want the screw to come through. I did this numerous times. Then, I needed to drill a hole, and absent-mindedly, I put my finger on the other side of where I was drilling. I quickly learned that drill bits can move quite quickly. The bit exited the wood almost instantaneously and drilled right into the middle finger of my left hand. I let out a yelp, wrapped my finger with my handkerchief to stop the bleeding, concluded my woodworking efforts for the day, and went to my room. As I was going up the stairs, Mom asked, "Anything wrong?" "Nope," I replied, "everything's fine."

Workshop Project II — Once, when I was tinkering at my workbench like so many times before, I didn't watch closely enough what I was doing, and I came in contact with 120 Volts AC. The electrocution hurled me back three or four feet into the side of the furnace, but that may have been a good thing. If there had been just an open concrete floor, I could have cracked my skull wide open. **Lesson:** When you're doing something that could be dangerous, concentration is critical.

Microphone Repair — The finish on one of my microphones was cracked and peeling. I decided to remove the coating and add a fresh coat of paint. I scraped and sanded, but the coating didn't budge. Alright then, plan 2. I thought I'd burn the coating off on the gas-fed burner in the basement that Mom used to heat starch for Dad's shirt

collars. Just holding the microphone over the flame wasn't working, so I left it on the burner for a while. When I checked a little later, the whole thing had melted into a blob. So much for that microphone.

Playing Ukes —

Three other students and I performed in a highschool talent show. We all played ukuleles and sang "Penthouse Serenade."

It was a grand success. We had a ball! (Photo from the highschool yearbook.)



Racing with the ukes are Don Gascon, Maynard Evans, John Lama, and Fred Gielow.

Minstrel Show — Each year my high school put on a minstrel show. It was a blast. There were lots of jokes and various performances (singing, dancing, etc.). I was Mr. Interlocutor when I was in my senior year. I had no idea the show was racially inappropriate. To me, it was all just good fun. Everyone seemed to enjoy it. No one ever complained.

Class Play — Our senior class play was "Stage Door,"

and I played the part of Mr. Kingsley. Our performance was going along nicely until near the end, when my mind went completely blank. I didn't know where I was, what I was doing, or what I should be saying. Fortunately, one of the other players saw my dilemma and quickly ad-libbed a few lines. That was all it took to get me back on track, and the remainder of the show was uneventful.

But, it was a narrow escape. There was another memorable moment during our performance: the kissing scene. I knew it would invoke all sorts of hoots and hollers, and of course I was right, but I got through the scene better than I expected to. (Photo from the highschool yearbook.)



Dancing — I never liked dancing (except for square dancing, which I actually enjoyed). It seemed to me regular dancing was mostly a way to show off. It was a means to draw attention to yourself, to put on a performance. As a rather shy kid, I wanted to keep out of the limelight. But that was back then. Years later, I took considerable delight in performing in a barbershop quartet on stage. By that time, drawing attention was a *good* thing.

Lesson: Values and perspectives change over time.

Buns — I was a member of the Redford Red Hi-Y club (affiliated with the YMCA), and one of our projects was selling hot dogs at football games. Sales were brisk, and I needed to get more buns. A wheel barrow was employed for that purpose, and I quickly wheeled it over to the school entrance where we kept our supplies. With a full load of buns, I raced back to our hot dog stand. Of course this was in full view of everyone in the stands. But there was a problem. On the route I took, there was a hole in the ground and I didn't notice it. I was running at top speed. The wheel barrow and its cargo were bouncing up and down in front of me. Then, the wheel found the hole and dove into it. The wheel barrow came to an abrupt stop, but I didn't. With everybody watching, I went head over heels and the packages of buns went flying. I'm sure it was quite a sight to behold. I had a few bruises, but worse, a heavy dose of embarrassment.

Tryouts for a Play — I remember the scene vividly. There was going to be some kind of play and I was finagled into trying out for it, and tryouts were held at the Detroit Masonic Temple Auditorium. I remember sitting in a theater seat on the right side, facing the stage, and I was beside myself with worry I'd be called up on stage to read from the script. I thought surely I'd flub the lines and make a fool of myself. Finally, I just left the auditorium before my name was called.

YMCA Movies — As a member of the Red Hi-Y Club,

I got involved with the Northwest Detroit YMCA. The Y had a number of programs for kids, some of which used facilities at my highschool. I met the Y's activities manager, Jack Cole and he asked if I'd show movies to kids Saturday mornings. I agreed and found it very rewarding and enjoyable. I also helped out with various tasks at the YMCA office. I once entered a Y-sponsored essay contest and I came in third. (I'm standing at the back middle of this photo.)



Math Club — I was a member of the high school math club. In each meeting we discussed fascinating mathematics-related topics like mobius strips, rubber geometry, parting hair on a bowling ball, or something else. There were always wonderful, mind-bending topics to think about.

Speeding — One day, I decided to use the family car - a Buick - and drive from Detroit to the cottage on Lake Michigan. Along one fairly isolated stretch of highway, I thought I'd see how fast the car could go. I stepped on the accelerator and

watched the speedometer needle move up to 65 mph, then 75, then 85, then 95, then 100! The car could have gone faster, I'm sure, but I quit when I reached 100. Racing that way was a very stupid thing to do. **Lesson:** Sometimes kids (at least some kids) do really dumb things.

Car Chase I — For evening recreation, sometimes several of us would "cruise around the neighborhood." Of course, that depended on one of us being able to borrow a family car. We'd drive around and see if anything interesting was going on. During one such cruise, we encountered a car full of older kids who were driving around, too. The problem was these kids had been drinking - probably a lot - and they were looking for a fight. Initially, we didn't realize that, and we stopped and got out of the car to say hello. The others got out of their car and started swinging. It was a good thing their alcohol levels were elevated. They were quite uncoordinated. One guy chased me, but I zigged and zagged and he never put a hand on me. After a few minutes of this, we leaped in our car and drove away, hoping to elude the fighters. But they hopped in their car and tried to catch us. We raced up and down Grand River Avenue, making all sorts of maneuvers, but couldn't get away from them. At one point, we drove into the parking lot of a police station. The other car followed us! Surprisingly, our driver then drove out the other side, and the chase continued. After a while, our pursuers seemed to lose interest and they drove off. Thank goodness. That incident could have

ended very, very badly.

Car Chase II — Terry King was a friend. Once, he had his family car and I had my family car. He was following me rather closely and all of a sudden it seemed our little innocent drive had morphed into some kind of race. I'm not sure how that happened, but I was zooming along the streets and he was right on my tail. I quickly realized this was really foolish, so I slowed down to stop. Apparently, Terry didn't notice the race was over, and his car slammed into the back of mine. There wasn't an enormous amount of damage, but there was plenty. The best part of the story is that both cars were insured under an AAA policy that covered *all expenses* if both damaged vehicles had AAA coverage. They did. Terry was grounded for a couple of weeks, maybe it was a month. My parents imposed no penalty on me. I thought they should have.

Car Horn — When I figured out the family car horn actually consisted of two horns, each with a different note, I thought it would be fun to change the wiring. I got a switch and bracket and wired one horn to one switch position, the other horn to another switch position, and both horns together to a third position. I'm not sure my parents ever found out about this "improvement," as I always kept the switch in the third position.

Spinning Tires — I used to visit Otto Gutowsky's house and we'd play basketball in his back yard. I

was driving my family car and I parked it in the street by the curb on an accumulation of fallen leaves. When I decided to head home, I thought I'd be a little dramatic and I spun the wheels. It wasn't a robust demonstration, but the tires did spin briefly. The next time I was at Otto's house, Otto's father told me he had lost all respect for me as a result of my demonstration. I was devastated. I figured I'd never get that respect back. **Lesson:** Respect is indispensable and it can be lost in an instant.

A Tall, Thin Tree — One time, I drove to someone's cottage, it might have been Otto Gutowsky's cottage, I'm not sure. I'm guessing it was maybe fifty miles from Detroit. Anyway, several friends and I had been invited to stay a couple of days. I parked the family car in a spot right in front of a tall, thin tree. It was a perfect parking spot. We had a great time and the days flew by quickly. When it was time to leave, I got in the car and checked the rear-view mirror. All clear. So I backed up. I completely forgot about the tall, thin tree - I just didn't see it - and I backed up right into it. The back bumper was dented. Why were these things happening to me?

Glee Club Performance — Once, our high school glee club was invited to sing on a radio program that included the Four Freshmen quartet. I think it was on WWJ, a Detroit AM station. Oh my goodness, what fun! What a thrill to sing on the radio in a glee club! And with the Four Freshmen, too!

Boys' State — A couple months before my highschool senior year began, I attended Wolverine Boys' State, a program where Michigan teenagers travel to East Lansing, the state capital, and pretend to be state representatives and senators for a full week. It was a wonderful experience. I found myself in the position of house of representatives secretary. Or something like that. I had to read the names of all the "representatives," one by one, when a vote was taken. I wish I'd had some other position because I butchered many of the names I read. One guy complained to me and give me his name's proper pronunciation. Unfortunately, that was after the program had concluded.

Boys' City — This was sort of like Boys' State, but it was just for the city of Detroit, and it was only a day long. Basically, the idea was to elect a "mayor" from the high school kids in attendance. A couple of candidates were identified as mayor candidates, and a spokesman was selected to make a speech for each candidate. Through some quirk of fate, I was a spokesman, and believe it or not, my candidate won!

Out Late — Once, after staying out late (maybe to midnight), Mom and Dad were already in bed when I got home. Mom called me to their bedroom, I'm not sure why. Anyway, she smelled tobacco smoke and became very upset. I don't remember if I had actually smoked a cigarette or if I was just with others who had. But seeing Mom so unhappy upset me! A lot! It tore me apart realizing I had caused

her unhappiness.

WDET — I was chosen from my radio speech class to participate in some stories presented on WDET, Detroit's public education FM radio station. Every month or so, I'd receive a script for the upcoming broadcast, and I'd go over it carefully. I even developed a series of symbols to write in to remind me to raise my voice or lower it, to speak faster or slower, etc. I felt very special when I took the bus and walked to the radio station. Then, to be part of a live broadcast was truly thrilling! One time, I was in a show on WWJ, and we broadcast a story live from a good-sized auditorium with an audience watching. Afterwards, there were questions and answers. I was asked something or other and then I asked, "Do you think my character or the other character was best?"

The moderator immediately interrupted me. "No, no," she said sternly, "It's 'Do you think my character or the other character was *better!*'" I was properly humiliated in front of everyone. My fondness for radio was captured in this photo, from my highschool yearbook.



Mom's Cooking — Mom cooked the most delicious food.

Her meals were almost always wonderful, except when she served liver or a couple of other items. Every Christmas morning, we'd have pop-overs, with lots of butter. Oh my, they were out of this world! Her potato salad couldn't be beat. Likewise for her scalloped potatoes. She baked Lake Michigan white fish just perfectly, and I don't like most fish. And her Hollandaise sauce! My mouth is watering just thinking about it. One of my greatest regrets is I didn't thank her enough for her delicious meals and the many, many hours she spent in the kitchen preparing them.

Luray Caverns — During spring break one year, a family trip was planned, and one stop was the Luray Caverns in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. I had been given a Kodak Reflex camera (probably as a birthday gift) and I was anxious to take pictures inside the cave. I knew it would be dark, so I got a flash attachment and I got a dozen flash bulbs. They were expensive, but I knew they would be worth it. Inside the caverns, I got some wonder shots and then I was anxious to get the film developed. Of course in those days, that took quite a while. Finally, the prints came back. I opened up the envelope and every single snapshot I had taken inside the cave was black. I didn't realize that light from a flash bulb only travels a short distance before it peters out. **Lesson:** Life is filled with disappointments.

Lost Paddle — Mom and Dad were part owners of a

cottage on Lake Michigan and we'd spend a month or so there every summer. My parents bought an inflatable raft for my brother and me. Two paddles came with it, and one time as I paddled about, something bit me on the hand. It really stung, and I lost grip on a paddle. It slipped into the water and sank to the bottom of the lake. When I tried to explain what had happened to Dad, he left me with the impression he didn't believe me, and that I simply dropped the paddle by mistake. That was a crushing blow. I was telling the truth, but Dad thought I was not. That really hurt.

The Flag — At the cottage, Dad made sure the U.S. flag was flying every day. He'd raise it up the flagpole in the morning and take it down before sunset. Years later when Dad died, I decided to continue the tradition. I enjoyed doing so.

NYT Youth Forum — I was selected to go to New York City and appear on a panel with five other teenagers as one of the *New York Times* "Youth Forum" programs on the Du Mont Television Network. Our topic for discussion: "Can We Maintain Ethics in Government?" The whole family got on a train in Detroit and rode to NYC. At Grand Central Station, we caught a taxi and got aboard with all our luggage. It turned out our hotel was just around the corner from the station. Shortly before the TV program aired, the moderator asked each of us what position we had held in the Boys' State program we had each



(I'm seated second from the left.)

attended. Well, my Boys' State experience was by then months in the past, and the title I had held was long forgotten. I was the second one asked the question, and I had to say something. We weren't on live TV yet, but we were in a full auditorium. So I made up something, like "Secretary of the Agriculture Commission." I was relieved there was no laughter, but then I needed to rack my brain to come up with the *real* title, which happily, I was able to do before we went live. This narrow escape only intensified the terror I was experiencing. If the moderator was able to catch me off guard like that before we even started, what damage could she do when my image and voice were being broadcast coast to coast? I don't remember much of what transpired during that TV broadcast. And, if truth be known, I didn't remember much immediately after the show concluded. However, I do remember aggressively challenging the show's topic. Can we maintain

ethics in government? Whoever said there are ethics there to begin with? After the show, my family went to a nice steak restaurant for dinner. I wasn't hungry. I hardly touched the steak I ordered.

Car Trip I — My best friend (at the time), John Lama, was able to use his family's car for a week-long trip, with just the two of us, north into Michigan's upper peninsula, then down through Wisconsin, through Chicago, around the bottom of Lake Michigan back into the State of Michigan, and finally back home. It was a thoroughly delightful trip.



We had a wonderful time, but made the mistake of eating at a restaurant in the Dells, Wisconsin, where we both got food poisoning. By the time we reached the Chicago YMCA, our destination to stay for the night, we were very sick puppies. I remember one of the people at the Y pointing out nearby spots where there had been recent shootings. But we had more important things to think about. John got over his poisoning by throwing up. I hoped to avoid that, and I did, but I ended up paying an even steeper price. When I woke up the next morning, I found that my body had evacuated the poison (not via my mouth), and I was lying in it.

Car Trip II — Another friend, Dick Moore, got his family's car and we drove down to Cleveland, where his sister lived, then over to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. And we drove further south, but for the life of me, I don't remember where. **Lesson:** As we age, we forget a lot of things. And we don't like that one bit! But many magnificent memories remain and thinking back to those times so long ago is a real treat.

Note that although these memories are quite vivid in my mind, my mind is now 90 years old, and I find I've remembered other things incorrectly. Though I think these tales I've told are true, I certainly can't offer any guarantee.