

Jerry's Book

By Jerry Durand

About Jerry Durand

Staring Jerry Durand

With appearances by others

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Chapter 1, In the beginning...

All of this is from memory, things that happened to me, stories told by my family, and a small amount of written and photographic documentation. Where possible I will include photos, but my family didn't talk much about their past so there will be a lot of blanks.

I've noticed that my life has taken sharp turns at times, things will be going along one path then some sort of branch point comes up and the next thing I know is I've changed trains and am now going in a different direction. In the story that follows I'll cover some major changes and the people who were important at the time. Not everyone who was important in my life will be mentioned nor will all the major events be covered.

Some events have been simplified so they are easier to explain and don't go on for hundreds of pages. All the events here are real, but like life are probably more complicated than they appear on the surface.

Let us begin in the beginning...

My Mother

My mother was born Harriet Marie Fewkes in Bayonne, New Jersey of mixed ethnicity. I know she had Native American, German, English, Dutch, and possibly other ancestors. I don't know a lot about her childhood, only a few things like her father liked his coffee served boiling hot but would then pour it into the saucer and blow on it to cool it enough to drink.

At some point she married a man named John Jones and had 2 boys and 2 girls. One of the girls died young of Meningitis. I've only seen one picture of her at the funeral. I believe she was named Marie.

Time passed and John disappeared, he was in the army at one point but I don't know if this is when he disappeared. He was eventually declared legally dead as nobody had heard any news of him for quite some time.

I don't know all of her employment history but she did work for Koppers Coke making candles. She described the process of dipping large rings of wicks over and over until the candle was right. They selected the best looking candles, wrapped them in nice tissue paper, then boxed and sent off to the high priced New York stores. The rest of the candles were boxed loose and sold to all the other stores.

During WW II she worked at Wright Aeronautical as an airplane engine inspector. She told of times the military brass wanted her to pass "slightly failing" engines as they needed to keep up the shipments. She absolutely refused to pass any engine that didn't meet specifications, she was NOT going to send out defective engines regardless of the number of stars on a person's shoulder.



When the war ended, an announcement was made that everyone was to turn off their machines and leave their tools where they were. They were all now out of jobs.

She worked for a while at a company that made moth balls and other products from para-dichlorobenzene. She operated a can filling machine, placing empty cans in the machine just in time for it to fill and slam the lid on. If you got the can in the wrong place or you were a bit slow it would crush the can, hopefully sparing your hand. She told me the worst part of the job was your body absorbed the smell and no amount of bathing would get rid of it. So, dating was pretty much out of the question but on the positive side mosquitoes wouldn't bother you.

She was having a hard time keeping the family fed and being a single mom in that era was frowned on. Somehow the Carnation Company heard of her plight and sent the family a large quantity of condensed milk free of charge. Not a banquet but they didn't starve.

She got a job working at Western Electric Company as a coil winder. Her job was to load coil forms onto a winding machine and run it until the proper number of turns of wire was on the form. The machines used an early digital display made of Pixie Tubes which had 10 glowing dots or sometimes numbers arranged in a circle like an analog clock. Each tube was one digit, a coil might have a thousand or more turns so she had to watch several tubes closely to stop the machine at the right time.



These machines sometimes broke down and she noticed a certain senior repair technician was a really nice guy. He seemed to be somewhat well off, at least he made more than she did and he had his own small boat at the seashore and even his own airplane! He attended a lot of parties at the NY Yacht Club and was often taking trips across the country and even to South America.

At this point her machine started breaking down a lot more than the other ones in her department, and Frank the senior technician would always come to fix it. He never complained if he didn't find anything wrong with it. He would even stay a while to make sure it was working right...

My Father

My father was born Francis Joseph Durand in Hartford, Connecticut of immigrant parents. My father's story starts in the early 1800s with Joseph Durand who worked for Napoléon as a coach maker. In 1857 his grandson Joseph left France as a defector and moved to the island of Guernsey where he soon married Jeanne Marie and found work in the coach business as an indentured servant. In 1860 he was released from his indenture with high praise from his boss. He was issued a full pardon in 1869 by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Political Direction.



Around 1900 one of his sons traveled from Guernsey to Canada on some business and then entered the USA illegally by swimming across the St. Lawrence Seaway. Apparently escaping to America was his plan all along. Escaping from countries seems to run in the family!



The son settled on a farm in Hartford Connecticut where he married an Irish woman (I do not know any of their names) and raised a family while running the farm and publishing 5 newspapers. My father described him as a short, fiery Frenchman who could beat anyone in a verbal argument. My father described himself as a cross between a hot-blooded Frenchman and a fighting Irishman.

The family history was mostly lost when a relative discarded the family bible. It had documented the family all the way back to France but was now just seen as an old book in French so it was tossed in the trash. I do have a few documents from France and Guernsey but it's not very extensive.

As a young man my father was in a car accident which left him with a large scar on his stomach. He said he was declared dead at five different times but refused to stay dead.

He also fell ill with rheumatic fever which left him with a damaged heart. Being a Durand, this also didn't stop him. Ok, stubbornness runs in the family too.

He was a pilot in the Civil Air Patrol during WW II and he flew many missions searching for submarines off the US East Coast. He was also heavily involved with the Coast Guard Reserve but I don't know if he was ever a member of the Coast Guard. The only pictures of him in uniform are for the Civil Air Patrol. He was also an officer in the New York Yacht Club and a well respected man of both the air and sea. When the war ended, the US government declared that the Civil Air Patrol was not part of the military, so no benefits of any kind would be forthcoming. But, thanks for your help and sorry about those of you that died.



His wild days ran down when he had a heart attack while "pitchfork fishing", that's standing in a stream and scooping large carp out of the water and onto the shore with a pitchfork. The doctor attributed the heart attack to heavy smoking and the previous heart damage. He gave up smoking and the wild parties at that point. But, my father maintained hunting and fishing and was also one of the first licensed firearm instructors for hunting use in the state.



He did have one embarrassing incident where he agreed to go with a friend on the maiden voyage of a yacht that had been rebuilt. They got well out into Long Island Sound when they started taking on water. It was later found out that the wrong material had been used to caulk the seams and now the boat had more leaks than they could count. My father headed the boat for the nearest land, a small uninhabited island while calling SOS on his walkie talkie (the boat radio didn't work, either). He ran the boat into the shore and he grabbed his friend and they both jumped off as the engine stalled and the boat slid out to sea and sank. The next morning his face was on the cover of the NY newspaper, taken as people he knew in the Coast Guard rescued him and his friend. It took a long time to live down the name "Shipwreck Frank". I have a copy of that newspaper somewhere but haven't found it.

He worked for a time for Ford Motor Company and then eventually became a senior repair technician at Western Electric. He said he was offered a promotion to the engineering department but refused as he considered it would be too much stress.

Instead he directed his energies to other enterprises. He and a Chinese friend bought a surplus military C-47 and founded a freight airline, I don't know if there were any other people involved...he never mentioned anybody. They flew nights and weekends when not working their day jobs. My father also founded an amateur radio (HAM) station at Western Electric. Employees with ham licenses were allowed to use it at lunch and on breaks. He talked to people all over the planet, I still have boxes full of QSL Cards (postcards) confirming conversations from regular people to politicians and even explorers in the Antarctic. I seem to remember him saying he also talked to a cosmonaut.

There were many adventures with the freight airline, carrying furniture from NY to Chicago, fertilized turkey eggs to the West Coast, carrying bringing returning soldiers to the East Coast, and during vacations they would fly parts to sugar plantations in South America. They also imported sugar from those plantations, deftly avoiding the tax authorities and kept a very famous NY hotel stocked with sugar for their dining room. They also did things like take a teen who was helping them at the airport to Chicago and return him in time for dinner. They bought the teen a Chicago newspaper so his parents would believe he'd just been to another state!

They lost the airplane when the US authorities announced that they could not bring the plane back into the USA, maybe someone found out about the sugar. Well, they happened to be in South America at the time, swapping sugar mill parts for a load of sugar. After much negotiation it became clear that they would not be able to bring the plane back and the airport was running up a bill for "storage" of the plane. They eventually stripped the plane of everything valuable and went home, abandoning the plane as payment for the storage bill. I still have part of the radio gear from that plane.

As a child I didn't think anything of the visits from my father's friends, a Chinese guy we called Chuny (chun-ee) and a man named Samuel. I only later found out that Samuel was the maître d' of the famous NY hotel and Chuny was a member of a family high in Chinese politics. It turns out it was his diplomatic passport that enabled a lot of the adventures of the airline. It's good to be friends with important people.

So, while my father was past having a great social life (a pilot and boat owner apparently got him lots of feminine attention), he started noticing this lady at work whose coil winding machine kept breaking.

My Parents

featuring the appearance of me.

After dating for what seemed an eternity to her teen children they finally got married with great approval of the ready made family. My father's friends were convinced he was crazy, marrying a somewhat sturdily built widow with three kids. He never regretted it, while I'm sure they had arguments, they obviously didn't last long. I know one argument was on their honeymoon, my father left most of their money on the kitchen table so they had a very budget trip. I don't even know where they went.

Something else didn't last long, I came along and spoiled their peace and quiet. Ok, they already had kids so there was no peace and quiet. My mom told me my father was super proud having a son of his own, especially since they were already in their 40s. I remember bits about the apartment we had when I was little. We had a small upstairs apartment in the Ironbound section of Newark, NJ. It was not exactly a high rent apartment, my father now only had his day job income and 6 people to feed. The landlord lived downstairs so "DON'T MAKE NOISE, YOU'LL DISTURB THE LANDLORD!" The place was heated with pot-bellied stoves burning coal and the kitchen had a Franklin style coal stove for cooking on. Amazingly the bathroom had a "modern" gas fired tank for hot water. You lit a match, turned on the gas until the water was hot, then turned it off. Apparently it was enough for one bath. We also had electricity! One light socket hanging from the ceiling in each room and an electric refrigerator! It was a super modern Frigidaire.



I don't know when my father became interested in photography but I remember him developing pictures in our small apartment, I have many hundreds if not thousands of pictures to look through for later posting as well as some of his photography equipment. He also had a small ham radio which was absolutely forbidden by the landlord. To hide the antenna he converted the clothesline into a folded dipole antenna. It still worked fine for clothes, but to use the radio he took all the clothes off the line and connected the cable from the radio, then he could chat away (in Morse Code with headphones so there were no sound in the room). To convince the landlord the radio interference wasn't from my father, sometimes he would turn on a piece of test equipment called a grid dip meter and then made sure the landlord saw us leaving for the store or park or something. Of course the landlord's radio would be filled with

interference but there are the Durands walking down the cobblestone street. Must be someone else.

An aunt and uncle lived with us but I don't remember anything about them other than Uncle Horace made me a nice bird house that was placed outside the bedroom window so we could watch the birds.

I was too young to remember any hard times like sharing pea soup made with a single pea. Ok, we weren't THAT poor.

I would occasionally be taken to visit "grandma". I have no idea which side of the family she was on or what her name was. One time we went to visit but she had moved to a new building and I had a fit, grandma didn't live here. Grandma encouraged my curiosity, she would do things like give me an old broken clock to take apart. It wasn't until later that I got to where I could put things back together so they worked.

I do remember some details of a time when the kitchen was being repainted, I asked for a glass of milk then shortly later found a glass of white liquid on the table. I took a big swallow before realizing it wasn't milk but was where my sister-in-law was cleaning her paintbrush. I'm told I had my stomach pumped but don't remember anything about that. It did do slight damage to my vocal cords which became apparent decades later when I was working with early computer sound systems and digitizing my voice.

We managed to make a trip every summer to Moose Pond Lodge in Maine all the way into my early school years, until the owners retired and sold the place. I have fond memories of those trips but of course don't remember all of them. I'm told I took my first steps there and did a lot of fishing.



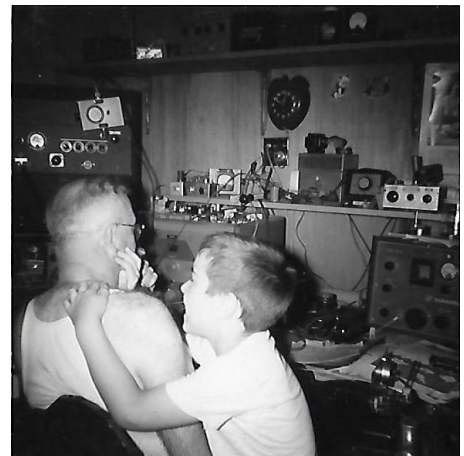
In 2006 my wife and I made a trip to Maine and found the old lodge. It's now a girls summer camp and we later found out nobody is allowed on the property except the owner, his caretaker and the girls, not even parents can visit. Well, don't leave the gate wide open! When we arrived we blew the car horn, drove up to the main house and called out to announce our presence but there was nobody there so we took some pictures and left. It was much as I remembered it with the cabins under the trees in the picture on the left.



Irvington

I was getting to be school age and my father was determined I was NOT going to school in Newark. My siblings were all off on their own now so it was just the 3 of us. Somehow they managed to buy a house in the next town over in Irvington, New Jersey. The house was around 100 years old but very comfortable and large enough for us, with a garage which we used for a workshop since we didn't have a car, and an entire room in the basement dedicated to my father's ham radio. The room had been for coal storage (large enough for an entire truckload of coal) but the furnace had been converted over to gas before we moved in. So, we cleaned up the room and put up nice wall boards, added plenty of power outlets and upgraded our main fuse box so turning on the transmitter didn't blow a fuse. He bought a new transmitter (DX-100) and receiver (HQ-140X) in kit form from Heathkit. I and my mom put a lot of it together on our dining room table. My father, always proud of his son, showed my work to his boss who said if I was older he'd hire me on the spot. My father used that radio gear all the way until his death. He also made other radio gear, such as an SWR meter from a beer can and carefully machined parts (using the Western Electric machine shop on a break) and even a gallon paint can full of oil and a simulated antenna for a test load. There was a directional antenna hidden in our large unfinished attic with a rotation motor on it. I helped install it, but liked to imagine it as some mystery creature when it turned at night. It made a very interesting sound over my bedroom. We also installed a stealth vertical antenna outside. It looked like a water pipe going up the side of the building but of course it wasn't. If you looked closely you'd see a matching coil at the bottom and a wire snaking into the basement. I once amazed my neighbors with a magic trick, I held a standard 4 foot fluorescent tube in my hand (being careful to keep it near that "pipe") and called out some magical enchantment. My father in the basement turned on the transmitter, putting out enough power that the lamp glowed brightly. I called out another command and it went out. Pure magic! Always keep the neighbors entertained.

I'd often listen to him when he talked to people using voice (no landlord to hide from now), I never knew what part of the planet he was going to be talking to. Maybe



he even talked to some UFOs, who knows? I also built my own receiver and started thinking towards getting my license.

My father once took me in to Western Electric. I wasn't old enough to be allowed in, but he showed me how to walk into someplace like you own it. It worked! My wife and I later used that trick to walk onto a motion picture studio lot without anyone stopping us. Inside Western Electric I got to see many wonders of how telephone equipment was made, very modern automated machines for the era.

When we could no longer go to Maine for summer vacation, we started taking bus trips all over the USA. At that time the buses had a "flight attendant" who served food and there was a small bathroom on board. This allowed the bus to travel day and night, only stopping for refueling and to let some people off while others got on. We went to or through almost all 48 states!

Go out and see how things are done for yourself! Don't wait for things to happen, make them happen. Boldly go where you have never gone before. But, don't be stupid.

My nice Linda was my age and we got along like friendly brother and sister. She was born in Europe while her father was stationed there, so I didn't see her until they came back to the USA.

My nephew Kevin and I also got along great. Kevin is younger than me, I would make him toys and things which he loved and I almost always had time for him.

I was never interested in normal sports, my father took me to a football game once but I didn't find it interesting. I played sports in school when it was required, but that's it other than track in high school. I wasn't interested in competing, but I did join the athlete's gym class so every day I was working out with the sports team and keeping up with them.

Sometime in the late 1960s my father had another heart attack. He was placed on medical leave from work and we lived off his reduced medical pay and some income from his union. When the medical leave ran out (I think it was a year), the company forced him to retire or be fired. He applied to the union for retirement, but they said he had only worked 29 years and 6 months. You had to work 30 years for retirement and they refused to let him pay for 6 more months of dues. So, nothing from them. I learned a valuable lesson at that time about unions.

Florida

a new life

Since he was reduced to retirement pay he and my mom decided we should move to a lower cost house. My mom's brother Bill had moved to Florida so they went down to look around while I went to a summer Boy Scout camp. I took my rifle, plenty of ammo, fishing gear, sleeping bag...I was good for the whole summer.

They found a house they liked in Sanford, Florida. It turns out the Navy air base in town had been closed and everyone associated with the base left, abandoning their houses. The government, saddled with a lot of empty houses, did some quick (low quality) repairs on them and sold them CHEAP. My parents put down a deposit on the house, went back to NJ and fetched me from camp, then we packed up and moved. They put the old house up for sale but ran into trouble. The insurance company insisted the heat be left on which meant leaving the water on for the steam boiler. Well, the bathroom sink developed a leak which damaged the hardwood floors on both the second floor and the first floor. My father went back to NJ and spent a LOT of time there repairing things by himself. I don't know how long it was but I know it was a lot of work for him and hurt his health. After the repairs, the house could finally be sold. Then we found the couple who wanted to buy the house didn't have anywhere near enough money, but as they were a minority the state required us to sell it to them anyway. We had to buy high risk insurance to protect the bank, but, it was sold and my parents could now concentrate on the mad scientist they were raising (back in NJ I had already been making my own firecrackers, launching model rockets, and powering up a miniature gasoline fueled rocket engine in the back yard).



My parents was going to pay off the Florida house out of the money from the NJ house sale, but the real estate agent said why, you have a 30 year low interest mortgage. So, they kept paying the small house payments. My mom and I finally paid off that house years later.

We had lots of family trips to see places all over Florida and regular hunting and fishing trips with dad (mom no longer went with us, she preferred to tend to the house while we were gone), and building all sorts of things like a radio tower in the back yard. The photo is me with my mothers shotgun on one of many hunting trips I made with and without my father.



In the photo from the left are me, my father, my cousin, my father's sister, my oldest brother's wife and daughter, and my mom.



My father's sister and her family bought a house a few blocks from us when her husband retired. He had also worked for Western Electric but as a senior accountant and was the first employee to work there 50 years. He lied about his age when they hired him, so when he reached 65 years old they realized it was also his 50th year there. He got a big going away party, real gold watch, and amazingly they gave him a telephone. At that time NOBODY owned their own telephone, they were all the property of the Bell System. Except for this one phone. Which was also gold plated. Unbeknownst to the company, my father's brother Jimmy worked in the plating shop and grabbed the plating job when it came in. That phone has a LOT of gold on it, never a sign of tarnish and it never scratched off.

When my uncle went to have phone service turned on in Florida the phone company there, of course, said he stole that phone. My father marched in the door, flashed his company pass (he'd apparently gotten a special high level lifetime pass when he retired) and showed them the AT&T journal cover with my uncle being presented that phone by the president of AT&T. He got his phone installed.

Stand up for yourself and your family!

Then, after we'd only lived there a few years my father had his last heart attack. He pretty much died in my arms while I was giving him CPR. He never got to meet any of my girlfriends, never saw me ride a motorcycle through the woods at breakneck speed and all the other joys of a teenage son. Well, I'm sure he was watching but I would have liked to have him physically with me. Often I think of



showing him something I've learned, discovered, or invented. I'm sure he's smiling and pointing out his son to any spirit who will listen.

Make your parents proud of you and you won't have many regrets as you grow old.

Mom and me

My mom and I got along great, so that made life easier for both of us. The picture is her with a prize fish she caught. She was an honorary teenager, my friends all liked her and she was always available for our problems. We didn't have a lot of money, there was the life insurance my father carried plus my mom got a government benefit until I reached 18. I got a job in a local restaurant doing repair work and eventually filling in for kitchen help that didn't show up. I was making top money at \$1.90 per hour and free dinner. I also mowed lawns with a mower I customized that was able to cut down the very dense grass that grew when people neglected their lawns for too long. I was able to charge a lot more for those, nobody else had a mower that would cut it.



I became friends with the minister of our church and later he started a youth group with me as a senior member (not that I was that all that old but he trusted me). There I met a young lady named Sue who seemed really nice and interesting. Later whenever we were in the same class and nobody was looking she would do things to get my attention. We eventually started dating, not super serious as she was also seeing a friend of mine. Sometimes the three of us even did things together. I didn't know it at the time but she had been a teen model for one of the large mail order catalogs, she'd even been to Moscow on assignment and brought back a white furry Russian hat that I would later call her marshmallow.

Well, my mom didn't really approve of Sue and her parents didn't approve of me. So she started dating someone else that her parents recommended. They eventually got married and moved out of state. I thought that was the last I'd see of her.

I've always gotten along well with girls/women, Maybe it's all the time spent over the years with my mom, sister, sister-in-law, niece, and others. I also used to visit an elderly widow who lived a few houses away in Irvington, we'd talk for hours while she sipped from her very stained coffee cup. In any case, I spent a lot of my youth hanging out with girls who were friends, not dates. My one requirement was they had to be able to think/do for themselves.

School Days

New Jersey

In NJ all the kindergarten through “grade school” classes were in a small group of buildings that were 5 blocks from home up a hill. I, of course, walked this by myself once I got used to the route. I apparently threw a fit on the first day of kindergarten, I didn’t want to be left with all these strangers. In one of the early grades I got in trouble with the teacher. She was trying to teach integer numbers but I already understood fractions. That just wasn’t allowed. Authority doesn’t like people who don’t follow the rules.

Then, in 3rd grade I was banned from any science discussions in class. I wasn’t allowed to watch science film strips, nor read Science News or participate in any of the science lessons. I was a “disruptive child”. Of course leaving me by myself during science classes allowed me to start earning the title. My father became a disruptive parent and apparently made a string of complaints about that teacher.

In, the 5th and 6th grades I had a wonderful teacher, Mr Nolan. He realized my interest in science and engaged me in discussions with the class. I would build things for the class, sometimes with my father’s help and sometimes on my own. Once Mr Nolan talked me into doing a simple science demonstration for the class and after much prodding I agreed, I’ve never been one for large audiences. Just as I was about to start he paused me, opened the door and LOTS of students piled in to watch my little demo showing how burning something in a closed space creates high pressure gas which can send a cork flying across the room with a satisfying POP! Yes, I was demonstrating how a gun works in 5th grade with half the school watching. How times have changed.

When it came time for Jr. High School, I found this was in a new building further away, but of course by then I had no problem walking long distances. There were lots of new kids there and I found there were also a few youth gangs. I didn’t take sides and the top gang leaders decided I wasn’t a threat to any of them. I had some classes with one of the leaders, *Danny the Dart* (a play on his real name) and was friends with one of the leaders girlfriends but I never had any problems.

Then it was 1968 and time to move to Florida.

Florida

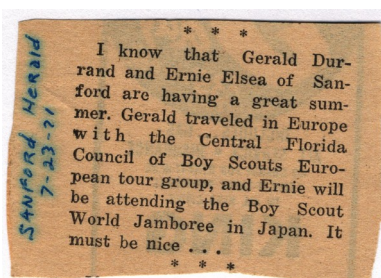
When we moved to Florida we found the grades were calculated differently so I wound up back in a Grade School for a short while. It was a new building complex, hex shaped buildings made of brick. The hallways were hex shaped rings, the rooms had no doors, just openings to the hall. I think this was the first year the school was used as there was still construction going on. One time we even had a worker fall through the ceiling into class.

It also rapidly became apparent that they were teaching English MUCH differently than in NJ. Here they were teaching Robert's English. It actually made sense to me but then it was canceled. They weren't sure what to do with us since they couldn't dump us into the standard program, we would be years behind. So we all started studying literature,. A LOT of literature. I like literature but there are limits. I started doing things like making an electronic cricket that was quite good a getting a giggle in class while the teacher tried to find it. Friends borrowed it for things like the gym locker room. I still have that in storage, I wonder if it works after 50 years?

I started settling in and making friends, often with the girls and of course some of the cheerleaders. I've always liked independent thinkers, people who go out and DO things. I think that's why I wound up friends with so many cheerleaders throughout school and after.

Then forced school busing started and I now had to take a school bus to a school on the poor side of town. Of course they were not at all prepared to continue our lesson plans so we sort of randomly got assigned to "elective" classes and schedules. The first day of Spanish class the teacher asked us to write an essay on why we chose Spanish for our second language. One student stood up and said "I think I speak for everyone here, we didn't choose this class." The teacher looked confused but we got through the year and I even learned a little Spanish (in between taking apart the no longer functional audio playback systems that were built into each desk). These were somewhat trying times but didn't last long.

The times were such that it seemed none of us stayed in any one school for very long.



After the 9th grade I somehow wound up on two Boy Scout “Good Will” tours, first to Canada and then through a lot of Europe. I see one of the newspaper articles says I was awarded for

being in the top 10% of 9th graders in the nation. I don’t remember the award but maybe that was how I got on the tours.

In both Canada the Europe we had a chartered bus and would travel to the next city overnight. I learned what a band on tour must feel like. In a bit over two weeks in Europe we visited 10 countries.

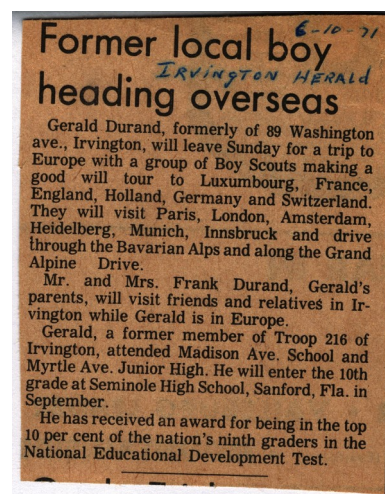
Now I was in Middle School for a short while. That was a large, old building on the main street many blocks away. Of course I walked there. Nothing much happened there, the roof fell in on a class (not mine), lots of study in hot classrooms.

Finally I made it to High School. That was a complex of newer buildings located between our house and the brick school, so it was an easy walk. I was assigned to a bus that would take me there, but if I wanted to sleep late I’d walk and still get there in time for classes.

Here I was close friends with the head cheerleader and several others of the “in” girls. Their sportsman boyfriends didn’t quite know what to make of me but were assured by the girls that I was safe. One guy followed his girlfriend and me all around town spying on us to see what we did. I’m not sure if he was pleased or disappointed, we didn’t do a single romantic thing unless he considered dinner in a fast food restaurant romantic.

I also became friends with some of the minority people at school, and like with the gangs in NJ, I was declared “ok”, neutral. Some people didn’t like seeing a white kid hanging around with the non-whites, but they mostly left me alone (the cheerleaders were also keeping a lot of the boys on a leash with threats if they ever harmed me).

I got interested in running and joined the athlete gym class where I could work out with the sports teams. I was accepted as an oddity, but I’ve always been strong and fast. I wasn’t interested in being on any of the teams, I just liked a good workout and could generally keep up with and occasionally lead the other guys.



In high school I drove a car my mom bought for me, it was a big Buick so there was no problem fitting in three sisters that were friends and eventually the sister of another girl I knew. This new girl was named Sybil and we would eventually start dating. I drove them all to school and they helped with gas money. We also all ate lunch together in the car since we weren't allowed to leave campus and the cafeteria was crowded and uncomfortable. One time the school police thought I had drugs (why else would all these girls hang out with me?) and while I was leaning against the driver's door talking to my friends the guard yanked open the door dumping me on the ground and causing me to kick the girl in the front seat. He snatched a plastic bag from my hand, sniffed it and said "COOKIE CRUMBS!" I, still laying on the ground, said "yes sir, we ate the cookies". He tossed it back and left me laying there as he stormed off.

I even let one of my friends, Cathy, borrow my car, not exactly legal as we were both under legal age (but had driver's licenses). The picture is Cathy having some "clean" fun with me, she said now I could say I'd seen her in a bath tub. Everyone knew her as Misty but I was allowed to use her real name since I'd known her before she changed it, this confused people nicely.



There is nothing wrong with keeping people wondering, it exercises their brains.

I had many normal and some abnormal adventures in high school. For one, I chose classes that I felt would aide me in the future such as welding, engineering, typing, cooking, and athlete's gym. While it drove the school counselors crazy I have used everything I learned in those classes. I also took an adult Civil Defense course given by the US Army and got high grades, it covered dealing with war and other disasters. The counselors didn't know how to add my Army diploma into my high school record, but they stuck it in anyway.

During my high school years I studied drafting and then mechanical engineering. I became very proficient at programming the "programmable calculators" they had. These were a prelude to desktop computers. The large one was a *Wang 720B* and I was able to make it do things the designers never thought of. I even programmed it to do computer dating, it could hold up to 200 people and matched them on 16 different questions. It was a big hit and profitable for the Science Club. I and a few other people also programmed it with a

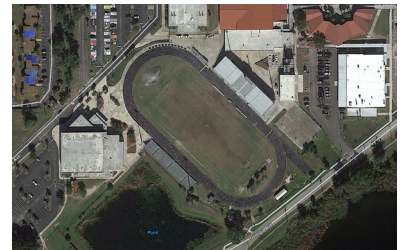


lunar landing simulation using all real numbers. The goal was to land on the moon without crashing, gaining new respect for the guys who had to do it for real. It was so real it astounded the school physics teacher.

We also programmed a game called *Star Chase* where you flew spacecraft around a sun and a few planets. We had simulated real gravity so you could sling yourself around a planet or find yourself sucked into the sun. The school physics teacher could never get the hang of the spacecraft having inertia...if you turn off the engines you keep going as fast as you were going...it's not a car with air friction to slow you down.

I later helped the school set up a computer science class for beginners.

A few of us from the Science Club who were in the mechanical engineering class also designed a new sports stadium for the school. As club president I did the stress calculations and designed the lighting system as well as the overall look of it. We all worked on the drawings and made a scale model of the entire school with the new stadium, including little trees and cars.



The school had a licensed engineer look over our drawings and he stamped it all approved. The school board then took our drawings and the model, removed our names and just said this was the new stadium they were building.

I learned another valuable lesson. Keep your own copy of documentation.

I had several good friends during this time, my best friend in high school being Iris who lived with her twin sister on a small ranch with her aunt, uncle, and their son. Their parents had died when they were too young to remember.

The photo is Iris and me at an event in 1977 where we were required to dress up, the photographer posed us that way. It was the first time she dressed up, shocking a lot of people. She was normally happier in blue jeans out riding on her horse. People were convinced we were dating, but we were just good friends who hung out a lot together. Maybe you would call it dating, but we didn't think of it that way. I even helped her to secretly see a guy that her aunt and uncle didn't like, I thought he was nice enough. They eventually



eloped, shocking everyone that she didn't marry me. Her wedding "dress" was a shirt I had given her that she loved and her normal blue jeans.

Sybil and I started dating sometime in high school after her sister introduced us. It was the first time either of us had dated anyone seriously and we stayed together about 5 years, well into college. It seemed to everyone that we would be married, my mom even liked her a lot. Sybil's parents even grew to like me, even if I was an engineering student (they didn't think much of anyone who didn't study liberal arts). Her mother would drop her off at my house early every school day and Sybil would have long chats with my mom in the kitchen while I was still asleep.



When it was time for me to get up, she'd devise some interesting method of waking me, I seem to remember cold water one morning. Then she would go back to chatting with my mom while I showered and dressed. The picture is her in my mom's kitchen one morning.

Sybil studied music concentrating on pipe organ and would play everything from classical to rock music for me on a large pipe organ in a church when nobody else was around. She even went on a musical tour of Europe and found out how expensive it was then to call me from Warsaw.

Had we married we would have settled down locally and been more or less a typical southern family.

Universe had other ideas, an abrupt turn lay ahead...

Florida Technological University

Since renamed to UC Florida

An original name suggestion was **Florida University at Cape Kennedy**,
but then they realized what the initials spelled out

My parents original plan was that a friend who was a high official in the Pentagon would assign me to the Coast Guard Academy so I would have top schooling without much chance of being shot at. The friend liked me and was all for it, but he died just before I was old enough.

Ok, plan B. For some reason that I don't remember, possibly that one brother was in the Air Force, I applied to the Air Force Academy. It's a long process with many steps, one of the first was taking the Air Force Officer's Qualifying Test to see if it was worth going any further. There were a lot of flying related things tested, such as being able to identify targets when flying low to the ground when all you had were satellite pictures. It was hard but I did my best on the test. A few days later received a phone call from the Marines, they said I got top scores and they wanted me. My Air Force recruiter wanted to know how the Marines got my scores before he did.



Nobody keeps secrets.

While continuing the long process to get into the Air Force Academy, I applied for and was accepted at Florida Technological University. Because of my grades I was able to skip my freshman year so I started as a sophomore with a dual major in Engineering and Computer Science (why only do one hard thing when you can do two?)



I was learning "real time embedded programming", this is where the programmer is very precisely telling the computer what to do, step by step (and sometimes less than a step). It's something that's very hard for all but the craziest programmers to understand. I excelled at it and became a favorite of the dean. He even had me teach a graduate class in programming WHILE I was an undergraduate. I made sure his/my students were good at what they did.

One day he called me to his office to introduce me to the new, very good looking and very smart secretary he just got, a student working for some extra income. I walked in and she said "Hi Jerry, how's..." and rattled off some friends names. The dean couldn't understand how I knew her. She's a smart engineering student, why wouldn't I know her? We all had a laugh about it later.

Anyway, I joined the Air Force ROTC at college to get a head start on the air force. I showed up in the office there in my usual attire, long hair, old motorcycle jacket, jeans... The commander looked at me and started to explain how they had pretty high standards to join, but maybe I could slip in if I tried hard. Then he opened my record folder. I was in and an officer within minutes.

I was interviewed by and then received a congressional nomination to the Academy from US Congressman Louis Frey Jr.



Now started the real testing, important things like how far I could toss a basketball while on my knees on a thick, soft cushion.

For some tests, I had to travel to an active Air Force Base. I was assigned to officer quarters, of course, but still looked like I did when I first walked into ROTC (I'd "forgotten" to cut my long hair all that time). Remembering my father walking me into his work, I placed my official paperwork in my shirt pocket and struck out to look around the base. I was able to walk up to and inspect any plane I wanted to along with going other places, nobody stopped me.

Eventually, I had to get a military hair cut. I put on my ROTC uniform without my name badge and showed up at Sybil's dorm room. It took her a short while to realize it was me. Then she walked me around so her friends could wonder who that new guy was she was with. I had to show ID to several of them.

Alas, Universe had other plans, another turn... My eyesight wasn't good enough for the Air Force. I could have gotten into the Marines, but no, they get shot at! I'm not sure why I never applied for the Coast Guard Academy as originally planned.

Sybil and I were going to different Universities and she started hanging out with people who drew her away from me. We split up a couple of years into college.

I spent a lot of time with my friend Iris and at one point told her of a dream or vision I'd had. Very strange, in it I would move to California and marry a lady from San Francisco. I also described starting a company that was in demand to solve all sorts of problems and some personal adventures I would have. We thought it was odd, but other than remembering it from time to time we didn't think too much about it. It turned out to be extremely accurate.

Some time after Sybil and I split up, an old friend contacted me at my university and said Sue was back in town and was asking about me...did I want to meet her? I agreed and he drove her to my apartment that evening. I found out she was no longer modeling but had become a sheriff's deputy since her husband was the town sheriff. Also she and her husband were separated due to him abusing both Sue and her daughter. In that era it was almost impossible to do anything about it since he was a "respected" official.



Well, one thing led to another and she and her 3 year old daughter wound up moving in with me. Sue's daughter adopted me as Dad right away, I was the nice one. Many people who knew us from when we first dated didn't know about her marriage and assumed the daughter was mine. It really confused people when we took care of Sue's sister's son for a while, suddenly we had TWO kids.

Keep them wondering, the stories can be amusing.

Sue and I were mostly busy with work, I in the testing lab and she worked in a food processing plant. We did get to travel a little, even became somewhat friendly with a very rich man who offered to let us use his castle for our wedding, but we told him we weren't planning on getting married. At least we hadn't planned on it then.

Sue had traveled with her modeling career, was very intelligent, independent and strong willed. Seemed like a good match.

When Sue's divorce was eventually finalized we got engaged and all seemed set for us to settle down in the Sanford area. Her parents and my mother weren't exactly thrilled, but sort of gave in since we got back together after all those years apart.

This would have been more city life, two hard working parents trying to make a better life for their kid (or maybe kids).

Universe had still other plans...

Continental Testing Laboratories

A friend got me a job at an electronics testing laboratory while I was in college, we did high reliability testing for civilian, military and aerospace devices. I started there as a technician but I soon worked my way up to designing test fixtures for everything from computer parts to critical aircraft navigation parts. I even became certified to test parts for manned space flight and worked with a large aerospace company to come up with a unique way of testing parts that became part of military standards. I also occasionally worked as an expert witness to prosecute people making counterfeit parts.

I became more proficient at programming the specialized test machines and had my programs certified for use on military missile parts and more manned space flight parts.

In 1978 the company bought an expensive, new computerized test machine. It was the latest offering from Fairchild in Silicon Valley, California. I was selected as the natural choice to be sent to California for training and certification on the machine. Sue and her daughter stayed behind while I flew off to San Jose, California.

The training was a combination of computer programming and electronics test theory. Most other attendees had a background in electronics but computers were new to them. With my years of programming experience combined with the high reliability testing background I got pretty much a perfect score on all the exams. I was looking forward to getting home and celebrating, but...

Somewhat unprofessionally, I was approached by one of the instructors and asked if I'd be interested in working for the company. Who, me? I said I wasn't really interested, I had a good job in Florida and a fiancée with a kid. But, as I was in California until the next day I accepted a tour of the semiconductor division and a meeting with one of the supervisors. After the tour I had a nice chat with the supervisor and then caught my plane home, not expecting anything to come of it. One memorable thing from that trip was my hotel room. After I was there a couple of days I noticed a bulge forming in the ceiling. Curious, I touched it which caused the paint to split dumping out a lot of water. It seems the paint was the only thing holding the ceiling up. I was moved to a new room.

Warning, Universe is about to make a big change in my life...

After I was home for around a week, I was contacted with a job offer as an assistant engineer for a LOT more money than I was currently making and all moving expenses paid by the company. I was thrilled but Sue wasn't. She did not want to go to California no matter how much I'd be making, she didn't want to move again with her daughter. We split up a few months before I packed up our car and headed out to California. I gave my old car to Sue and should have gotten her to sign her part of the new car over to me before I left, but we weren't on the friendliest of terms at that point and I had to be in California soon.

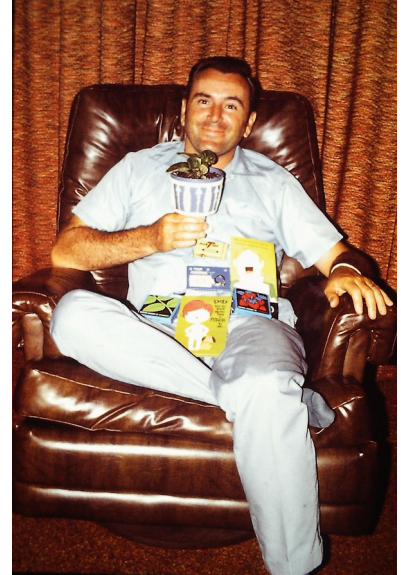
California, here I come

When she heard I was moving, Sybil contacted me and we met for lunch. We agreed to leave the past behind and be friends. She and my mom helped me pack things for the move. The company paid for a moving van plus all the things I'd need right away went into my car.

Before leaving Florida I stopped at my brother's house in the Florida panhandle for the night. From there it was onto the freeway headed west. I pretty much only stopped for food, fuel, and bathroom. I slept in my car on the side of the road or in rest areas. In Texas I had pulled off the road onto a service road far enough to not be seen from the freeway...or so I thought. At oh-dark-hundred I was awakened by a bright flashlight in my eyes and a police officer banging the window.

After he verified that I was ok, no traces of alcohol or drugs, he wished me a safe trip and left me to get some more sleep.

I arrived in San Jose, California on July 4th, 1978 and there were large fireworks shows all over. I like to think they were celebrating my arrival.



Fairchild, Mountain View

The company had arranged for me to stay in a hotel until I could rent a place to live. I checked in, cleaned up, had dinner and got to sleep in an actual bed. The next day I reported in to work in Mountain View and found I'd been transferred to a new department. My new supervisor was only about 10 years older than me but reported directly to the division head. This, of course, was according to the hidden plans of Universe. My job now was writing test programs for those machines I had trained on during my previous trip as well as various duties as a technician. It seems they had somewhat exaggerated my job title, I was only a senior technician but I didn't find this out until later as the company only referred to our job grade by numbers. As long as they were paying me top dollar, I didn't really care about the title.



I started spending my free time looking for a place to live, I couldn't stay in the hotel for too long although I had plenty of cash left in my moving allowance. By accident I made an appointment to look at a place in Sunnyvale. This was further from Mountain View than I had planned, but it was available and cheap. Small, but as it was just me it would do. Also I had been told the company was building a new facility quite a ways south so I'd probably want to move in about 6 months.

As I had free time in the evenings and weekends I walked around the area and found a community center not far away. They had live theatre there so I started attending and bought a "sponsorship" which wasn't too expensive but got me free tickets to all the shows. This would prove extremely important later, but Universe is good at keeping secrets.

I also opened an account with the company credit union, I still have that account today but my account number had to have several zeros added to the beginning as they expanded over the decades.

The job wasn't super demanding so I was able to spend time coming up with better ways to write these test programs as well as goofing off with the other technicians. My desk was in a back part of the building near the test equipment and I shared the room

with three other people. On my left was a lady who was much busier than I was but was always getting calls from a boyfriend when she was out of the office. I simply photocopied a message that he'd called and all I had to do was put in the time. She didn't find this amusing, but I was just getting tired of writing out the same message all the time. She wasn't completely humor free, one day she glued my teacup to my desk.

To her left sat one of the top recruiters for a bogus religion who was always trying to recruit me. On my right was a new age guy with a poster of someone pretending to float in the air. He thought it was real, but the picture was obviously fake.

To pass the time on slow days, the guys had loaded a multi-player game called Star Chase on the computer. As it was a mainframe, we had to use remote low speed terminals to play but somehow they'd managed to get enough allocated for all of us to "work" on. The game was entirely text based and took up a huge amount of computer resources. I think the computer time was billed to a different project every day.

I also found a new game called Adventure. Again, all text based it turned out to be a very popular game of the era and I played it on and off for many years.

Fairchild, Palo Alto

I was transferred for a while to the Palo Alto Advanced Research Division where I worked on things such as the new solid state video cameras that went into missiles. I was still writing software and building test fixtures, just for more interesting devices. I had an office in the basement of one of the buildings and I actually liked it, there were pipes and machines everywhere. The hallways looked like what you see people running through in spy movies and how the inside of spaceships are sometime portrayed (a lot like a Vogon ship, only Douglas Adams hadn't written that story yet). I thought of it as being on a ship, often damp, always dim (no Hollywood lighting here), strange hisses and gurgles in the pipes and machines that would start and stop on their own for no apparent reason.

Photos of one work area and my desk in two different locations. I actually had a window once but that room had no heat. In winter I often wore the jacket on the wall while at my desk.



Fairchild, South San Jose

When the new building was ready for us to move in, we had to design our own office/laboratory. It was shared with the CCD memory division (a short lived computer memory that used video camera chips to store data). I worked with their people and came up with a nice space that would be good for all of us.

Then the company architects changed it without telling us. We yelled and screamed to no avail. We were stuck with it. The biggest problem was having floor to ceiling walls was reserved for executives only, but the CCD devices are light sensitive and need to be tested in the dark. It's hard to find dark when your wall is 5 feet tall with a brightly lit test area next to it. The poor guys in that end of the lab had to work under black velvet sheets.

There were, of course, other issues with the building such as the architects completely underestimating the amount of heat given off by the test equipment. Because of this it was often quite warm there, so the dress code in the testing area was reduced to lightweight cloths with the night shift (when there were no executives around) being barely decent.

The commendation letter has an error, the number of die (chips) per wafer was several hundred, there were 5 special test die per wafer.

This is when I started working a split shift. I had to be in the building during the day for meetings, but there were no spare (very expensive) test machines for me to use to develop new testing software. So, I

FAIRCHILD
CAMERA AND INSTRUMENT
CORPORATION

INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

TO: J.Husher
DATE: 3-17-81

FROM: C.L. Chen *CL Chen* M/S: CC: J.Dorosti
J.Durand

RE: Improvement on T-84 Testing Program

T-84 testing program for 64 KDRAM has been rewritten to improve testing speed. Jerry Durand wrote the new T-84 program, which improves testing speed such that it takes about 10 min. for one DRAM wafer (5 dies). The new program prints out the data of 5 test dies in a computer page as shown in the attached print-out. Also, the testing results are stored in the computer in a special formatted file, which is used for trend-data plot after testing a whole run. Jerry's work will be extended to all the other T-84 programs for various products. This work is recognized as a key contribution to DEG.

Jerry Durand
- Good Work.
- Need more contributions
of this nature. The 64K team
has too much time devoted
to testing in general.
John Pharo

FORM 10-289 12/74 STOCK NO. 8407-55

would come in during the day for a few hours then return at night when I could get work done as not all the machines were used at night. In some ways I've maintained that work routine since then.

One time we were notified that another department would be sharing our office space while their floor was being set up for them. My boss and the boss from the other department met me at my small office and said I would have to share my office with a technician from the other department. They hoped we could get along. Nina walked around the corner she'd been hiding behind, into my office and gave me a big hug which I returned. This left the bosses very confused, one commented to the other "Do you get the impression they know each other?" It turns out we'd met on the bus to work some weeks before and had started dating.



Universe has a sense of humor.

We dated for around a year, mostly taking trips through the California mountains on my motorcycle, but parted as friends due to a medical issue she had that would have been hard on me. She did not want to do that to me.



Nina later sent a message that she was very pleased I'd met Sharon, she wanted nothing but the best for us.

Staying with her would have been yet another path.

Time for another sharp turn...

Finally, Sharon!

There was much cheering!

After working in South San Jose for a while I rented a room from one of the computer operators who lived a lot closer to work. She was a single mom with two young kids and a horse. We worked different shifts so things were working out nicely, occasionally we'd take a trip on the weekend someplace. It was good for the kids to get out and I could help watch them.

After some time a friend of hers wanted to move into my room and convinced my landlady that I should go.

So, I wound up in the far south of South San Jose renting a room in a house with a lot of other people (even living in the garage). I'm sure we were over some legal limit on people but nobody complained. We all got along and the rent was cheap.

It was at this time I noticed an announcement in the theatre newsletter that the technical director for an upcoming show needed backstage help. Sounded interesting, I called her up and applied for the job. It turns out she was a visiting technical director, she had come with the artistic director for this one show. In any case she let me know when and where to show up.

It was very interesting working back stage, lots of challenges to work out with very little time or money. There were also a couple of semi-serious injuries to other workers we had to deal with.

Sharon and I found we worked very well together, even after long hours together we still got along. Ok, I did once accidentally cover her with spattered glue, but no permanent harm done. Maybe that was so we'd stick together.

By the time the show closed we were dating and announced our engagement at the cast party.

Universe said THIS is the right lady! It was about time! I was now almost 25 years old, I guess I had a busy youth.



(to be continued for many decades to come)