

# Now and Then



Magazine

May – June 2018

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Front cover picture: "Cousins' Corner"

Artist: Jeffrey Lockhart

(courtesy of Jean Ross)

Volume XI

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## NEW RESIDENTS

February 2018	Peggy Lovelace	340E
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	Marie Sullivan	365AL
March 2018	Al Brown	216W
	Thomas & Lydia Cass	352AL
	Carolyn Cervantes	338E
	Howard & Arlene Pollack	227W
	John Pope	364AL
	Nancy Powers	354AL
April 2018	Lauria Schoen	224W

## THIRWOOD CENTURY CLUB

Dan Crosby                      March 15, 1918

## MEMORIAM

Edward J. Eckland	February 2, 2018
Ludwig Lange	February 5, 2018
Allen Malloy	February 28, 2018
Dr. Phillip E. Pennington, MD	March 2, 2018
Phyllis Baker Newton	March 5, 2018
Rose Lucille Rak	March 21, 2018
Elaine Martin	March 26, 2018
John Arthur Cunningham	March 27, 2018
Dorothy C. Johnson	April 7, 2018
John Pope	April 16, 2018

## THE BENCH ON THE BLUFF

By Jean Ritchey Ross

This is a love story – a story that started decades ago and is still going on today. It's about two people, of course, but it's about a multi-generational family on East Chop on Martha's Vineyard. It's really about that family's love affair with the Vineyard and with a particular location.

Let's begin. In 1888, Hannah Maria Albright Archbald and her husband James V purchased a small tent type cottage on the corner of Brewster Avenue and what is now East Chop Drive. We were told that across from this cottage, on the bluff fronting Nantucket Sound, there was enough land to provide an adequate croquet court. Storms had created much erosion, but there were still some yards across the road for a bench to be installed. The bench is the center of this story.

Over the years the original house was enlarged with various turrets, porches and wings as families grew. James's daughter, Augusta, and her husband, John H. Brooks, inherited the house, and every summer the "Big House" was filled with siblings, children, cousins and grandchildren galore. Somewhat later, the house became affectionately known as "Cousins' Corner." It was a happy and fun-filled lifestyle and remains so today, enjoyed by generations of cousins and their guests.

Along with the large covered porch with its hanging swing and rocking chairs, there was always a green-painted bench perched on the bluff. People would carve their names or initials into it, family photos were taken there, relatives would wave good bye to those leaving the island, and tourists would stop to rest on it when climbing the hill to the lighthouse. It was certainly used!

During World War I, Ruth Brooks, (oldest daughter of Augusta and John) a Girl Guide (precursor to the Girl Scouts of today) practiced her semaphore on the bench on the bluff. She was about 11 or 12. One day in 1917, a naval vessel, the USS Massachusetts, passed by and someone on board semaphored back. Did she get her badge, I wonder?

The Brooks family lived in Scranton, Pennsylvania in the winter and, being a prominent family, was involved with social functions. At some of the local dances, young men were often invited from New York City to attend and escort the young ladies in the area. At one of these dances, Ruth (about 21) recounted that she talked with a young man, Norton Ritchey, who casually commented on his war experience off the island of Martha's Vineyard. He said he remembered semaphoring with a girl on the bluff. And so, their romance started. This was my mother and father!

Now, what has all this to do with the bench? The original bench was replaced many times because of vandalism or storms, but there was always one on the bluff used by family and friends. Who knows how many proposals may have been made there over the years. It's a romantic spot.

Finally, however, the last bench needed too many repairs, so it now resides in the Brooks' garage. The bluff stood empty.

After the death of Ruth in 1978 and Norton in 1979, my brother Jack thought there should be some sort of permanent memorial to them. What better way than a large stone on the bluff to replace the bench and to commemorate the location where the two lovebirds unofficially met. Jack talked to Ralph Packer, who sent him to a quarry in Acushnet, MA, where Jack and his wife Putsie picked out the perfect stone made of blue granite. It weighed five tons! Packer transported it back to the

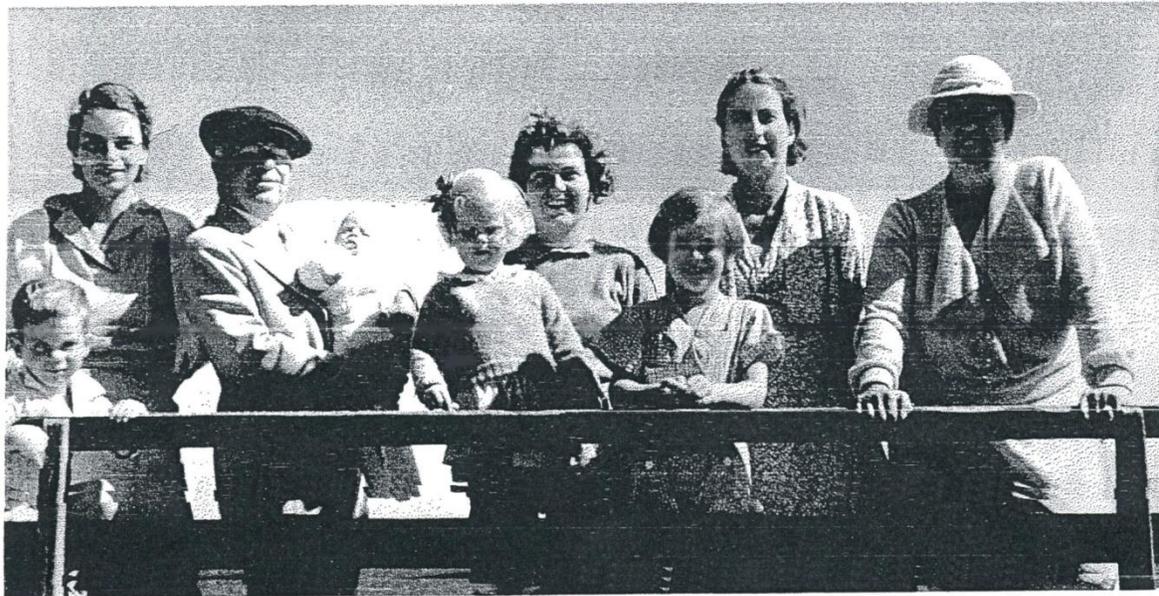
Vineyard on one of his barges, and Olsen Brothers strategically placed it in 1981. As payment, Packer asked only “to stroll on the East Chop Bluff and to sit upon the beautiful bluestone.”

That summer, Jack, using a small hand-held engraving tool, painstakingly engraved the names of “Bebe” and “Skipper,” (mom and dad) with their dates of birth and death onto the granite stone – nothing formal or professional – in keeping with the wonderful carvings on the previous benches. If you look closely on the top left side you can just make out the characters, but erosion from weather and branches has almost obliterated the names.

With hurricane Bob in 1991 and the infamous no-name “perfect” storm on Halloween that year, the bluff became severely eroded. The Army Corps of Engineers and the town of Oak Bluffs opened a “temporary” road down the bluff, but then never followed through in maintaining it. Because of erosion, the bluff deteriorated, and the stone had to be moved. The Town did so several years ago. Now, however, with no maintenance, the bluff “road” is extremely dangerous and the stone is once again in a very precarious position.

Does this end the love story? Will the memorial stone topple into Nantucket Sound? Will “Cousins’ Corner” be direct waterfront with no bluff to protect it? Will the family reluctantly give up its love affair with the big house on the bluff? Only time will tell.

Jean, third from right. Far left, mom behind brother Jack. Grandparents, aunt and cousins.



JACK - RBR - BUMPA + JOCKY B. SALLY PETER JEAN MAMA GRAM 1935



Jean

Pictures courtesy of Jean Ross

## THE COMPARTMENT

By Jane Waters Nielsen

I'll always remember Sept. 24, 1952 – the day everything happened: it was my parents' 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and they informed me that after 25 years they were leaving Portsmouth, Virginia. It was my father's home town, and they were moving to Charlotte, North Carolina, where his company was sending him.

It was also the day that Martha, Jeanette and I had found two potential new apartments to rent in New York, and the day Sam Goldwyn convinced me, by phone, that I had to lose my southern accent as he shouted, "Speak up. I can't hear you," and then hung up. As I recall, he had a bit of an accent as well. At this time, I had been in New York for a year, and was working in the fiction department of Woman's Home Companion magazine.

Back to the two apartments – one was on 11<sup>th</sup> St. and the other at 16 Gay Street. We chose the Gay Street apartment as it was only \$100 per month, and in our eyes was dear, quaint, and had atmosphere. Gay Street was a curved, one block long alley between Christopher Street and Waverly Place. Our mailing address was 20 Christopher Street, as that was the location of the entrance with the mailboxes for the section.

We scraped, painted and cleaned in preparation for the move. While doing this, the previous occupants came back time and time again to remove items. At this point, all six previous renters claiming to be friends of Louise, the former occupant, had yet to return their keys to "our" apartment. Larry, one past tenant, informed us that he would be keeping his key, but would always knock before entering. We continued with our renovations.

It didn't have a kitchen *per se!* Instead, behind a closet door in the living room was a one-unit apparatus – refrigerator on the bottom, four grubby cooking burners atop that, and an oven above. On the back of the closet door hung the cooking utensils and a small wooden shelf one could pull up and hook to use as a work space to prepare food. (See page 11)

The only sink in the apartment was in the bathroom. That's where the dishes had to be washed and dried. But this tiny room had another unique use. When a party became impossibly crowded and oppressive, one would sneak off to this chamber to find other roommates gathered with an intimate group of friends killing the last of the liquor supply.

The living room (See page 11) possessed three matching straight-backed chairs – one for each of us. Later we added another, purchased from the Salvation Army for 75¢, on which we placed our trash bag. We had two “easy” chairs which we used for our coats, scarves, laundry bags, purses, books and assorted canned goods. These chairs were seldom used for sitting, as the sawdust stuffing in one and the springs in the other were sticking or falling out of the faded upholstery. The fireplace, which is one of the reasons we chose this apartment, had a mantle and shelves on either side, one of which we used as a pantry shelf. The room also held a studio-bed which served as our sofa.

There were two bedrooms. The larger bedroom measured a good 5' x 10' and held bunk beds, a chest of drawers and a wardrobe. Because it was so cavernous we immediately set out to make it cozier; we moved in one more piece of furniture and achieved the “desired” appearance - a train compartment. The second bedroom was miniscule and held only one narrow bed and a chest.

Martha and I shared the larger bedroom. Our later arrival, Tuptim, a Siamese cat, loved to cavort in this room. She would jump from bottom bunk to top of chest, to top bunk, to wardrobe and back again, scattering ashtray and bobby pins in her wake. There was such crowding in this tight room, I could only open the wardrobe door a good two inches, which meant I had to select my daily outfit by the feel of the material. Only one of us could get out of bed at a time. Fortunately, I always got up a few minutes ahead of Martha in the morning. She couldn't get out of bed until I was out of the room.

For all this, I had left a bedroom in Virginia larger than this entire apartment. It was in a comfortable, airy and always impeccably clean home. This was the price we paid for the tiny quarters on a quaint street in Greenwich Village, a niche among the esoteric card shops, jewelry stores, emporium of bizarre lamp shades, and avant-garde book stores, with weird, bearded proprietors. The sooty window sills, the one 9-cube ice tray, dishes and canned goods in the bookcase, the site of ever spilling ashtrays and the land of untidy floors – New York on a shoestring – a mad crazy, talky, smoke-filled, laughing, headachy, crying, jazzy, arty existence. I loved it! I was 21!

To be sure, there were some very interesting experiences during my time in the city. My friend Larry's roommate, Fred, invited me to dinner. He was Austro-French and loved to cook. He had worked for the State Department and the UN, and was now a grain exporter. Fred, 29 years old, was cooking Coq-au-Vin for dinner! I'd just had a gamine style haircut and thought I'd try a new social personality to go with it. Walking over through the rain, I had fears of what I might be getting into. Fortunately, friend Larry was there. The dinner was quite lovely, and Fred embellished it with tales of his days in the French resistance

group called Popski's Army during the war. On his birthday, he had escaped being killed with his outfit because he was relieving himself in the woods when German bombers swooped across the Alps and bombed their camp. German gliders landed SS troops and he escaped into the forest, where he lived on blueberries and mushrooms for several days. He was, however, taken prisoner, but again was able to escape to safety. It was a great evening, and perhaps a very tall tale.

In the summer of 1952, life took a fateful turn for me. A friend in Connecticut invited Martha and me to spend a weekend at her family's summer home on Long Island Sound. During the weekend, I met Raymond "Bud" Nielsen, a neighbor of our host family. Some months later, a series of long distance dates developed. On occasion, he had business appointments in New York when we could see each other, and the next summer, I visited his family in Connecticut. Romance bloomed, and we were married in February 1954, finally bringing an end to my crazy, manic, eccentric career-girl life in the city of New York.

In retrospect, this "career girl" came as close to turn-of-the-century rooming-house poverty as any 19<sup>th</sup> century shop girl. I had exactly \$18.40 in my bank account after two plus years in what one might consider glamorous jobs and no big spending habits, plenty of budgeting and planning. Was it worth it? YES!

Postscript: Earlier this year my dear friend, Martha, sent me a web address for Zillow website and said to check it out ... the website advertisement follows.

ZILLOW listing for 16 Gay:

This is an incredible opportunity to live in one of the most quintessential and exclusive Greenwich Village blocks – Gay Street! This pre-war second floor, floor through 1 bedroom apartment with an Add'l HOME OFFICE /DEN is situated in the idle of this quaint block and combines character w/charm. It is only 1 of 3 apartments in the entire building. The unit offers recessed lighting in every room, a spacious living room with a working wood burning fireplace. Built in 1910. \$1,221,780. Rent estimate \$7,995 per month.

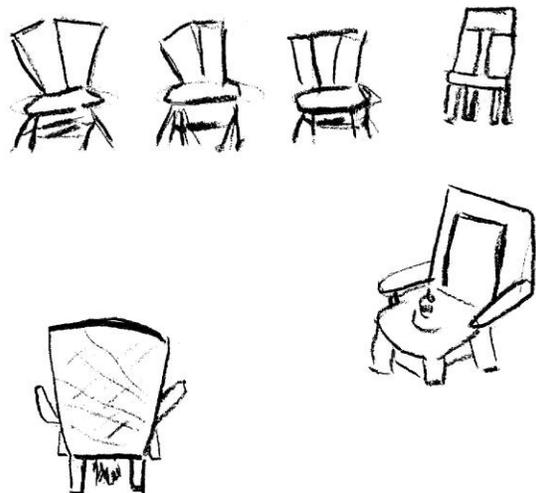
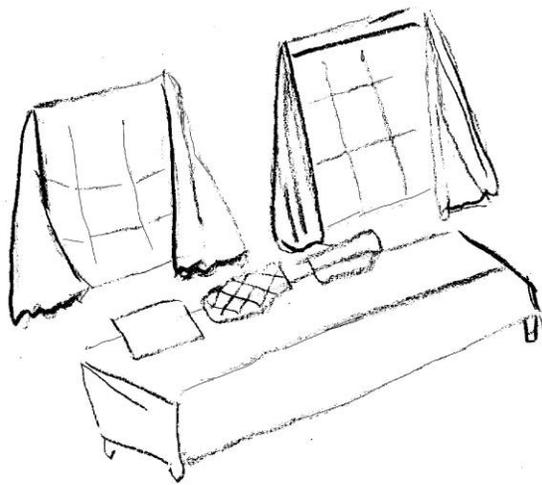
Sketches by Jane Waters Nielsen



Kitchen



16 Gay Street



Living Room

## A TIME WHEN TAKING A CHANCE PAID OFF

By Janet Crosby

I am not a gambler in any sense of the word. I do not buy raffle tickets, play the lottery, nor bet on the horses. I believe these things are the wrong way to try to “get ahead” of the game, and are a wrongheaded way of thinking, causing more misery and anxiety than pleasure or reward. Much of my thinking about gambling stems from the way I was brought up. My father was a Presbyterian minister, and, if gambling wasn’t necessarily considered a sin, it was certainly a waste of time, and in many cases, money. We always had better things to do individually and as a family.

Nevertheless, eleven years after my husband Jack died, I began to feel that a little male companionship might just fill a void in my busy life. That is, what to do with those rare moments when I was not going full tilt at teaching, church work, or interacting with my granddaughter, Rebekah, who was living with me at that time. After all, my daughter was dating, and my granddaughter was dating. Why not me? My life needed a little excitement, and the environments in which I moved provided next to no opportunity to meet someone of the opposite sex. So, I decided, “Why not take a chance and make something happen?”

For several months I had been receiving letter invitations from Great Expectations, a highly respected dating service right in Stamford, CT where I lived. I had thought about the possibilities that they presented in their brochures, but I had hesitated and delayed any decision or action. “Do I really want to do this? Am I being silly? Am I too old for this?” Up until now I certainly had no opportunity to meet anyone through my work – I taught in an independent all-girls Catholic school. I was a member of a small church which offered no potential contacts in my age group, and I certainly wasn’t interested in singles bars. So, after

much mulling and procrastinating, I finally decided to be pro-active and take a chance on Great Expectations. I called and made an appointment for an interview. I think my granddaughter was surprised by my action, thinking I was stepping out of character, but she didn't try to talk me out of it.

The interview was scheduled for a Tuesday evening after work. I was feeling a little anxious and nervous, but at the same time excited to begin my new venture. The Great Expectations office was attractively decorated, and everyone who worked there was cordial and understanding of the possible nervousness of the prospective members coming for their first interview. I was escorted into a small but pleasant office for my interview. How had I heard about Great Expectations? I had learned of their service through the mailed brochure and letter. What were my reasons for seeking a dating service? My life seemed to be at a dead end as far as any social life was concerned. What did I hope to achieve from signing up? I was looking for someone who enjoyed the same things I did and wanted to date occasionally. These questions were, of course, designed to put one at ease and start talking. We continued talking for some time, and I asked questions about how their system worked and was pleased with the answers. Then it was decision time. Do you want to sign up and proceed with the program? Yes, let's go ahead.

That meant parting with a sizeable chunk of cash – thank goodness for credit cards – and signing a contract stating their obligations and mine. After setting another appointment for a photo shoot and a video-taped “conversation,” I left with a form to fill out which was to include a brief autobiography and my expectations for dating, companionship, or whatever else might develop. As I left and drove home, my mind was tumbling with impressions, our conversations, and what to say my expectations were that would sound sophisticated and not silly. Well, I

had a couple of weeks to work it all out and to choose my wardrobe for the photo shoot, which required two different outfits, one formal and one informal.

Two weeks later, on a cold, sunny Saturday, I headed for Great Expectations and the next step in my big adventure. The photo shoot went well, and after a trial run with the video camera to get relaxed and become used to being filmed, I had a good film interview with which I was quite pleased, because I looked as if I were having fun talking about me. Having completed my part of the contract, there was now a waiting time while they compiled my information for presentation in the women's album for viewing by potential "dates." The video was available in their video library. To elaborate, there was a men's section of albums and videos for women to view, and a women's section for men to view. I was now free to look through the books, view the videos, and make a selection if interested. Only first names were used and if you selected a person, you would inform your counselor, and she would call the person indicated to see if he (or she) would be interested in meeting you. If so, then you would be given a phone number to call, and the rest was up to you. It was suggested that on the first date you meet for coffee or lunch at a mutually convenient place. Neutral ground was considered a good beginning.

I did not know when my bio and video would be in the "library," but I was assured it would not be too long. In the meantime, I browsed the books for a possible interesting date. I guess I was too picky, for none turned up that particularly caught my attention. About mid-January I had a call from Great Expectations telling me that someone would like to meet me. Would I like to come in and take a look-see? I did and said, "Sure, have him call me." I had hardly arrived back home when the phone rang, and a very pleasant man's voice introduced himself as Dan Crosby and he would like to arrange a lunch date to meet me. We talked a while

and decided to meet on Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Long Ridge Tavern at noon.

There was snow on the ground and it was a cold day, but the sun was shining when I headed for my luncheon date. Dan had arrived before me. When I walked through the front door, I saw a tall, slim gentleman with a welcoming smile step forward and say, "Janet? I'm Dan." I think we were both a little nervous, but we managed to appear as if this were an everyday occurrence. We were shown to a table for two by the window. The waiter took our order for drinks, and we began our getting-to-know-you chat. After a while we ordered lunch and kept up our nonstop conversation. It was not a three-martini lunch, but we stayed well into the afternoon. When we finally left the restaurant, Dan said he would call me during the next week, I said that would be fine, and we departed for our respective homes.

My mind was whirling with all kinds of thoughts. My husband, Jack, had been thirteen years older than I, and here was a man twelve years older. This did and did not surprise me, for what has age to do with friendship or even love. There were other similarities between the two, but differences as well. Not that I knew Dan very well, but we did cover a lot of territory in our lunch conversation. Lo, there was much to think about during the next few days, before I heard from him again.

He called the following Wednesday and invited me to his house for lunch, which he would prepare for me. Ah, I thought, a man who cooks. It sounded good to me. He would pick me up the following Saturday, and so our second date was set.

He arrived around 11:00am and we set off for Wilton. When we arrived, I could tell he had made a good effort to "clean house" and prepare for his guest. He showed me the house, and shortly after noon

we had lunch. He had made a squash soup, the recipe for which he had obtained from one of his previous “dates.” It was very good. Then he served a tuna mold salad, which is one of his specialties. That too was very tasty. Food and conversation seemed to be a natural setting for us. Later in the afternoon we drove around the Westport shore area and spotted a great blue heron and a few other shorebirds. Dan, I discovered, liked birding and was fairly knowledgeable when it came to pointing out what to look for in order to identify birds. This was a day when we learned about each other’s hobbies and interests. We shared our interests in music, classical and jazz. It was good to know that television was not high on either of our priority lists. When I arrived back home, Dan asked me if I would consider going to Florida in March to meet his brother and sister-in-law. He was planning a visit and he would like them to meet me. I think I startled him when I said, “Sure, I’d love to go during my March vacation. It would be good to get out of cold Connecticut.”

That was a most enjoyable trip, and I passed inspection by his brother. The following July, we visited Dan’s son, Ned, and his family, and they were very accepting of their father’s new companion. Later, I met his twins, Peter and Ann, and also received their stamps of approval. Time flew by and Dan and I were married in the summer of 2000. Thus, my “taking a chance” has happily “paid off.”



The Wedding Party

## AN EXTRAORDINARY TRIP: HELPING HANDS

By Tony Dick

### Chapter 2

Day 4 – Tuesday – May 29, 1990

Life teaches you some valuable lessons, whether you are ready to learn them or not. Today, I was about to learn one of those biking lessons.

The day started with a light rain falling. Being one who likes to keep moving and making progress, I was not about to waste this day in my tent waiting for the rain to end. So, I began the process of breaking camp. I am a tidy and meticulous biker. I like things neat, clean and in their place. This was impossible on this day. Everything had some mud, dirt, or moisture on it. I finally hit the road at 7:30am, had breakfast at the Greek Diner and mailed my first set of postcards.

Riding in the rain is tough and can be dangerous, and I was about to have my second accident. I came upon some railroad tracks. Now I know what railroad tracks mean to bikers and how to avoid their hazards. As I approached the tracks and feeling rushed by an on-coming car, I failed to hit the tracks at exactly 90° perpendicular. Instead, I hit them at 85°, a slight angle, and with the wet tracks it was enough to send me crashing hard to the road. The panniers (bike bags) saved me from serious injury. Nevertheless, I hit my right knee and it was badly bruised and cut. Also, my ego was tarnished, as there were witnesses to this foolish ineptness on my part. It also hurt my feelings a little that the driver of the car showed no concern by not asking if I was all right.

Later in the day, I would hit the road edge with my rear wheel. I almost lost it again had it not been for some careful maneuvering. This incident knocked my rear wheel off line, so a repair was necessary. But more lessons of riding in the rain were still to be learned.

In Belvidere, NJ, one of the more charming towns I rode through, I stopped in for a morning muffin. The locals could not believe I was riding from Boston. They stared and looked puzzled. Only some traveling elder ladies were curious enough to ask questions and exchange conversation. They were most intrigued by the specialized equipment bikers use, like the shoe cleats and shirts with rear pockets.

The Delaware Water Gap is quite the reservation area. All along the river it can be seen where people have established resort homes or boat launches. There were also several power plants located on the river.

A note to those of us who worry about our youth and their knowledge of geography: I have learned on this trip not to ask anyone under 17 for directions around their own town. Not only do they not know where Arkansas is on the map, but they also don't know their neighboring towns or local streets. I guess that is to be expected.

The New Jersey towns of Milford, Frenchtown and Lambertville are lovely villages, and New Hope, PA is pretty. The latter has a very long towpath (for the old canal) on which one can pitch a tent. I would have used this spot had it not been for the rain.

It started getting colder and I was getting wetter, especially from my waist down. Finally, at 2:00pm I decided to pack it in. The rain never ceased and kept getting heavier. I looked for shelter in Milford, NJ, but the local B & B (Bed and Breakfast) lady was not around. So, I continued another 4 miles to Frenchtown, NJ and checked in at the Frenchtown National Inn, a beautiful old inn built in 1851. The lady, upon seeing my Condition, took pity on me and gave me the largest and best room in the house for only \$50.

As I unpacked my bags, the real lesson of riding in the rain became all too apparent. Every article, every stitch of clothing, was wet. It was a disaster. Fortunately, my room was large enough to accept all the wet articles. Everything had to be dried out and ready for the next day.

So, I ended the day with 57 miles in only 6 hours of riding time. It was still pouring rain at 8:00pm. I noticed that the fall I'd taken on the railroad tracks was starting to show signs of serious swelling. For the next three days, I would be packing it in ice. In spite of that, I still felt strong and healthy. I wondered when I would crash from this high. The weather report for the next two days promised good weather.

Day 5 – Wednesday – May 30, 1990

The body did not want to go this morning. It was cold (37° F), windy and cloudy. I did not sleep well last night. One nightmare had me reacting to the fall on the railroad tracks. Another time I was jolted from my bed when the firehouse siren went off right outside my window. Boy, was that a shock of some magnitude! The innkeeper should warn their guests about this hazard.

But things had a way of always improving on this trip. Although, the wind was cool and strong, it was directly at my back. I made the 17-mile trip to Lambertville in less than one hour, as the road was absolutely sterling at 5:30 in the morning. The road west from New Hope, PA to outside Norristown is also beautiful. Several bridges were out along this route, but they were still passable on foot. It was here that Bobby Goldberg's map saved me valuable time. (He's the cyclist I met earlier outside Pine Plains, New York who generously gave me his maps.) Written instructions are a must with so many lefts and rights. This was

Bucks County (a suburb of Philadelphia) and a biker's fantasy. I could spend a week biking all the back roads here and love every minute of it.

At a grocery stop – Norristown, PA (a large city), I met a retired biker. He was 69 years old and still doing centuries. I asked him if he would like to ride with me through this city, but he did not have the time. He was a real talker. Negotiating the city of Norristown was a major problem, and I was sick and tired of looking at the map all the time. I wish I had marked roads or someone to follow.

I got to Valley Forge National Park about 2:00pm. This is one big park with a fascinating history. I was dog-tired at this point but still had another 40 miles to go. My knee was also troubling me, and I needed to pack it in ice. All these concerns soon faded away after taking in the slide show at Valley Forge. The hardship these men of our revolution endured during a bitterly cold winter was an inspiration to me. How could I ever complain of being tired when so many lost their lives here?

I met two bikers at Valley Forge. Tommy was a packer like me. He was travelling to Texas from Boston but going 30 – 50 miles a day. His bike was a sight to behold. Along with all the standard equipment, he had a few other items that caught my eye. He had mounted a six-speaker radio behind his seat, and for inclement weather he had a pair of large rubber galoshes with metal buckles. Everything he owned was on his bike. I wish there had been more time to talk to Tommy.

Ed Brown, the other biker, was out for a local ride. He knew the terrain and was willing to lead me through Valley Forge and another 12 miles further toward Pughville. This proved most helpful because it meant I did not have to keep referring to the map, which causes a lot of stop and go. I welcomed Ed's kind offer.

I reached St. Peter's Village near French Creek at about 5:00pm. This is a lovely old Victorian village that is being rediscovered. One man purchased 23 buildings for \$858,000 and is in the process of restoring them. It reminded me of Grafton, VT. I ate dinner at the St. Peter's Inn and talked with the owner's daughter.

It was about 7:00pm when I reached the entrance to French Creek campgrounds. A lady was walking her dog in this remote and hilly area. As is my custom on this trek, I always stop to talk with the locals to get the "lay of the land." The exchange with Mary did not produce much useful information except for one important thing: it took up time, enough time for Mark Scholefield (a local biker) to reach our location. Had Mary not been there, Mark and I would never have met. Meeting Mark provided another important highlight of my trip. It was clear from the outset that Mark and I were kindred spirits. He did his cross-country bike ride eight years ago and remembered the many people who helped him along the way. Now it was his turn to help someone, and I provided that opportunity. Mark invited me to stay in his apartment, and it didn't take me long to accept, even though it meant an additional 10 miles. Fortunately, it was all downhill.

Mark's apartment was in a lovely Victorian mansion in the town of Birdsboro, PA. Mark was 31 years old and had spent some time in Shrewsbury, MA. He worked for AT&T as a chemical engineer. He cooked me a pasta dinner, and we talked bikes, books, and backpacking. My knee was really acting up after 97 miles, so I again packed it in ice. Mark's apartment was typical for a bachelor of today – messy. I didn't care. It was a palace as far as I was concerned, and his company was very much welcomed. I felt at home there, with the bag of ice on my knee and my first glass of wine on the trip.

Chapter 3 will be in the August/September issue.



Tony and his Tent



The Bicycle

Photos courtesy of Tony Dick

