

# A Leaf In The Wind

(“Hush! You’ll Wake The Other Kids”)

by

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This work is dedicated to the memory of Melba Windoffer, for had I never been graced by her presence, my life would have taken a different course and this story may have never been told.

## Prologue

The following story is told from a personal perspective. It is not about politics yet it is imbued with politics; for the essence of politics is how we treat one another, and it fans out in to how communities and nations treat each other, and how governments treat its people. Many view politics as the mechanics of how a particular ideology functions i.e., elections or the lack there of, candidates giving speeches and spouting rhetoric, but this a narrow view of what politics are. Religion, western religion to be specific, is politics using a specific dogma to control people and maintain its power base. The political power structures of Socialism, Communism and Capitalism have all been infected and affected by avarice and lust for power .

My reasons for the subtitle, “Hush! You’ll wake the other kids,.” go beyond the context in which it is used in my story, for political meaning can be derived from it as well.

Do not educate the masses for “Hush! You’ll wake the other kids.”

Do not teach the people how to think for “Hush! You’ll wake the other kids.”

Do not rock to boat for “Hush! You’ll wake the other kids.”

Do not expose the injustices in the world for “Hush! You’ll wake the other kids.”

Speak not of ethics and true justice for “Hush! You’ll wake the other kids.”

Do not reveal the forces that control their lives and “HUSH! You’ll wake the other kids.”

In my younger years, I always took people at face value without consideration for their personal histories. I have found that in order to understand someone’s motivations, it is important to know something about their past; hence the first two chapters focusing on my history.

Intuition is a funny thing. It seems to be part subconscious perception and part emotion welling up from deep inside guiding your actions. Often oblivious to the nature of things happening around me and the potential dangers therein, I believe that it has saved me from numerous perils.

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Estuans interius	Passion rages violently
Ira vehementi	inside me
in amaritudine	in bitter delusion,
loquor mee menti.	I talk to myself.
Factus de materia,	Made of matter,
cinis elementi;	risen from dust;
similis sum folio	I am like a leaf
de quo ludunt venti	tossed about by the wind.

(Written by an unknown 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century poet. from Carmina Burana)

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## Chapter 1 (The Only One)

I was born and raised in a small town in western Nebraska. We were a family of twelve children, four girls and eight boys, with age differences spanning a thirty year period.

Our house had two stories with a basement. According to the Property Title Abstract, it was once part of a one-hundred and sixty acre homestead. It was a small house for such a big family. There was a five foot stairway that led up to the front porch which was grand and spanned the entire front of the house. The first floor consisted of a living room, a dining room, a kitchen plus a back porch and garage which were not part of the original house. The second floor had three bedrooms and a bathroom. The basement was used for storage; I remember a number of wooden crates full of homemade lye soap, gallons of honey stored in tin cans, gunny sacks of potatoes and various canned goods in Mason jars. There was also enough space in the basement for a couple of small bedrooms. The front yard was small. The back yard was about three times the size of the front; there was room for a large clothes line (for drying clothes), a small area used as a garden and a chicken coup along the back side of the property. My dad raised chickens throughout our younger years.

In the innocent bliss of a child, I played and did the things that children do, unaware of what my path life would take. Even as a child, there were signs that I was different. On my first day at kindergarten, I wouldn't sit at the table with the other kids, instead choosing to sit under the elevated sand boxes that lined one wall of the classroom. A few days later, we had a substitute teacher, she was not going to put up with this nonsense and forced me to sit at the table with the other children, whether I was ready to or not.

I remember one summer, my brothers & sisters, some kids in the neighborhood and I were going to put on a play. We constructed a make-shift stage in the garage and used the garage door as our curtain. The audience sat on picnic benches in the driveway. I don't remember what the play was about, but my brother tells me that it was called 'Aladdin and the Magic Pumpkin' and we had some interesting props, a pumpkin painted gold among other things. I was the director and my acting skills were channeled into playing the 'martyr' trying to get the cast to perform to my expectations. Had the wind blown this leaf in a different direction, this would quite a different story.

Another one of my childhood eccentricities was to socialize with matronly women of senior years. There was Mrs. Helmeck, the wife of the town blacksmith; Mable Smith, the town librarian and Mrs. Steele who had a little boutique the front room of her house. I would go around visiting them from time to time. They would listen to my childish ramblings, or sometimes we would just sit in silence. I don't know why they tolerated me; they could have made excuses and sent me on my way.

As I passed into my teenage years, an awareness that I was different crept into my thoughts. I was beset by puberty at a younger age than my peers. I had hardly a notion of the effects or consequences of this affliction; what little I knew about sex was learned 'in the streets.' The extent of sex education from my father was a vague, passing comment about 'masturbating to the tune of turkey in the straw.' In thinking back about that comment, he might have been saying that it is O.K. to masturbate or he was giving pointers on technique, perhaps both.

I remember the guidance my father gave me on anger management. One day in the back yard, he told me that whenever I felt mad about something, take a two by four and hit this tree until you can't hit it anymore; advice that I followed on several occasions. I had a strong attachment to my

father. When he worked on the cars, I would watch and learn. On a couple of occasions, he took me work with him and he showed me what he did.

Oblivious as to the nature of my urges and being reared under oppressive Catholic influences, I sensed somehow that there was something sinister about it all and strove to keep it secret. My inner conflicts spilled out and I was labeled a problem child. A decision was made to send me to the Catholic school in Sydney and so, I was sent off to experience, first hand, the psychological abuse of a patriarchal and repressive religion. The diversion of spending my freshman high year at a different school in a different town, temporarily suppressed the inner conflicts.

One evening I was babysitting for the next door neighbors who had a color TV set, we only had a black and white TV set. Color television was a treat and a superb incentive to babysit. As I watched Tara Bulba starring Tony Curtis, I began to wonder why these urges were triggered only by particular males. Well, I thought, perhaps if I kept a list of people who provoked this urge, I could then come to some understanding about it. So, I developed a cipher system to encode the names of these individuals (I didn't want anyone to find me out should they find the list). This was all for not and I don't know whatever happened to that list.

Raging hormones drove me to several exploratory encounters with other boys. In this small town, the list of attractive boys was short which added to my confusion why only these particular ones. I was alone; the only one in the whole world who had these feelings.

The seeds of disdain for convention had been sown. It was a custom for sophomores in our school to be waiters for the senior prom. I was selected to be a waiter for the prom, but declined 'the honor.' I remember standing outside the gymnasium window the night of the prom, feeling detached from what was happening inside and thinking I'm not going to be here when I'm a senior why should I be a waiter for them, now. I did not know how it would transpire, but I knew I wasn't going to be here.

My expressions of rebellion were listening to the songs of Bob Dylan, Buffy St. Marie, Arlo Guthrie, Donovan, Joan Baez et al., and aspiring to be a hippie and smoke pot.

I was letting my hair go as long as possible, but was eventually 'sent home' from school until I got my hair cut. There was no sympathy for 'my cause' from my parents. Angered by this lack of support, I took the old '55 Chevrolet and headed for Sydney to visit friends that I'd made during my year at catholic school. I decided to take the 'back roads' to avoid the police; You could get almost anywhere on the back roads if you knew where how; I didn't. I just headed south hoping to find the main road into Sydney. Along the way, the car was getting low on gas. I stopped at a farm house and asked the woman who answered the door if I could buy five gallons of gas. She said that she didn't have any way to measure out five gallons, I suggested that I could watch the gas gauge as she filled the tank and let her know when it was close; She agreed. After we 'gassed up' the car, I handed her two dollars and ask for directions to Sydney; She told me it was about twelve miles away and to continue south to the main road and turn left. When I arrived at my friends house, his parents immediately telephoned my parents to let them know where I was. Needless to say, but I was back at home in very short order.

I sat in my basement bed room awaiting punishment. My father rarely ever punished us, but when he did you knew that it was deserved; this situation would be different. He had been ill for sometime, suffering from diabetes, atherosclerosis in the brain and the beginnings of dementia. I heard the basement door open, for some reason I picked up an exacto knife lying nearby, grasp it firmly in my fist, and held it behind my back. My father stormed into the room, saying nothing, he

hit me so hard that I fell backwards onto the bed. He was standing over me, I was pinned down, he inflicted several more brutal blows, the 'fight or flight' response kicked in and there was no way to flee. I managed to pull out the knife from behind my back and flailed it about wildly, cutting a gash across the back of his hand. He stopped, backed away, stood there in shock for a few moments holding his bleeding hand and then left. I had feared for my life, yet, having no real concept of death; but I would soon learn in a most traumatic way.

On February 14, 1968, my father committed suicide. That morning we were awoken as usual at four in the morning; the three of us older boys has paper routes and people in town wanted their paper delivered early. Something was amiss. My mother had already called our neighbor, Mr. Buskirk, to help look for dad because he was not in the house. I accompanied Mr. Buskirk out to the shed. He knocked on the door and said "Paul", he repeated himself and then opened the door. The only thing that I remember was hearing Mr. Buskirk say "Oh! My God!" I turned and raced back into the house screeching at the top of my lungs. I threw myself face-down on the dining room floor, sobbing, shrieking "No! No! No!" and beating my fists against the floor. My mother's words of consolation were "Hush! you'll wake the other kids."

His death shattered the innocence of my childhood, for even though I was a teenager, I was still a child in many ways, ignorant of the cruel realities in the world. For months, I would dress in nothing but black and on February 14<sup>th</sup>, for years to come, I would do something special to commemorate this tragic event.

Shortly after his death, some friends and neighbors came to tear down the old shed where he had died. They remove all the junk that was stored inside. They attached one end of a chain to a corner of the shed, the other end was attached to a pick-up truck; no matter how hard they tried the truck just couldn't pull the shed down. So, they burned it down and hauled away the metal sheeting that were once its roof and sides. A futile attempt to erase something that could not be erased.

Many things happened in the following months. I remember one incident vividly. My mother's usual means of punishment was at the end of a belt. I think that her subconscious anger, spawned by her blind obedience to her faith, was directed at her children. I was upstairs in the boys' bedroom and she stormed into the room enraged about some serious transgression that I have since forgotten. She began a vicious attack on me with her trusty belt, enough is enough I thought, I ripped the belt out of her hand and glared at her with all the contempt that I could muster; she turned around and left the room. Maybe it was some twisted right of passage, for that day, in her eyes, perhaps, I became a man.

My father's death prompted my family's move to Washington State. All preparation had been made and in mid-August 1968, my mother and the eight of us still at home piled into two cars, she drove the station wagon and I followed, driving the Chevrolet. Driving half-way across the country, driving away from the past, driving into the future, driving into another traumatic event in my life.

In Nebraska, my father worked as a meteorologist for the National Weather Service and was well known because he broadcast the weather report over radio numerous times a week. When ever I introduced my as John Doe, people would invariably respond "Oh! Your father is Paul Doe, he does the radio weather forecast." This loss of semi-celebrity status had an adverse effect on my ability to meet people and make friends.

Life in that small town was very sheltered. I'm not sure that I knew that there was a war going on in Vietnam, nor was I aware of the state of race relations in the country. One quarter of the town's population were Americans of Mexican descent, most of them were Catholic and our family was one of only a few white Catholics; we were a minority within a minority.

This new school I was attending was awash in a sea of humanity. In my home town, you may have had as many as thirty students in a class. Here, there were three hundred sophomores, three hundred juniors, three hundred seniors; more people than in the town where I was raised. It was like being on another planet. I had no social skills. I didn't know how to make friends nor did I feel comfortable doing so. I felt isolated and I became extremely introverted. My grades fell from A's and B's at my previous school to C's, D's and F's.

Over time I made a few friends. My rebellious nature was still intact and I was sent home on several occasions for flaunting the school dress code against long hair and refusing to wear socks with sandals.

In this school, there teachers who openly disliked certain students and teachers who were indifferent to students, phenomena I hadn't ever encountered. However, there a few teachers with whom I managed to establish a good rapport and I did well in their classes.

In the trauma of adjusting to this new world, my secret urges were put on the back burner, but they didn't go unnoticed by one of my teachers (I don't know which one). One day during my senior year, I was in the school library and there surreptitiously appeared the October 31, 1969 issue of Time Magazine with the title 'The Homosexual In America' emblazoned diagonal on the cover. Of course, I read the article with zeal. After five years of fear and confusion, feeling like I was the only one, I knew what I was "I was a homosexual." And there were others, tens of thousands, hundred of thousands, millions of others. I was overcome with ecstasy and jubilation. Little did I know that even among these I would remain a minority of one.

## Chapter 2 (Forays Into A New World)

I wrote to the Mattachine Society mentioned in the Times Magazine article in hopes of getting some information on gay organizations in Seattle. Their response was to send me a membership form; I sensed that they were more interested in money and adding body count to their membership than in helping me, but I joined anyway hoping that I would eventually get the information that I wanted.

My high school senior year dragged along, I got a job working in a cabinet maker's shop working after school and on Saturdays.

Shortly before graduation, I learned of an underage bar for gays in Seattle called the 107 Club. I decided to go find this 107 Club after the class graduation ceremony. I don't know what prompted me to choose that particular time, maybe it was because I was free from the chains of high school. The minute the ceremony was over, I rush home hopped into my car and I was off on a new adventure.

I had been to Seattle several times, usually going to the 'U' District to 'score' some pot and acid, but this time I would be heading downtown to the gay bar ghetto. The trip wasn't well planned, I didn't even bother to look at a map to get an idea of where I was going.

I arrived in downtown Seattle and parked the car; I didn't know that the place I was searching for was a mile south in the Pioneer Square area. I did however manage to head in the right direction. I was on Third Avenue near the King County Court House, I could have seen The Macambo (a restaurant for the workers in the area during the day and a gay bar at night) if I had been facing the other direction. As I was walking, three people were coming towards me, they looked to be about

my age and we exchanged hellos as we passed each other. I wandered around for another hour before finding the 107 Club.

I paid the admission fee, got the customary stamp on the back of my hand and went into my first gay bar. With my back against the wall, I inched to my left until I reached the corner, took out a cigarette, lit it and watched.

A short time passed before I saw someone coming towards me, It was one of the people I'd passed on the street. We exchanged hellos again, introduced ourselves and I joined Jason and his friends at their table. During our conversation, I was asked whether I was butch or femme (my first exposure to gay lingo); since I didn't know the meaning of those terms, I responded with a blank stare. (Now, I would probably respond, neither and both, why emulate the rigid gender stereotypes imposed by a patriarchal society). As for Jason, our paths would cross, again.

During the summer, I made several more trips to Seattle. I wanted to move to Seattle and made plans to rent an apartment and attend Seattle Community College that fall.

The apartment house was near the corner of Bellevue St. and Olive Way, my apartment was on the third floor. The layout was unusual, to me anyway, this unit had two studio apartments that shared a bathroom. The front door opened into a hallway, at the end of the hall on the right was the bathroom, towards the left end was the door to the apartment that overlooked the street and the center door was to my apartment. It was a good-sized room, there was a large bay type window opposite the door and a kitchenette in the corner to the right of the window.

I signed up to take a few classes at the community college. And somewhere along the way, got a full-time job, working swing shift, at a company that made ski poles. I didn't realize that I was taking on more than I could handle.

At some point, I met my neighbor David, he was a moderately attractive man in his mid-twenties and, of course, he was gay. We had sex a few times and went dancing at the 107 Club on several occasions. I developed an attachment to him that was not reciprocated; Perhaps, it may have been because I was young and inexperienced, or maybe, I was an inadvertent victim of the "gay men's handshake." (Refer to Chapter 7).

The stresses of school, working a full-time job and confusion surrounding my unreciprocated attachment took its toll; I began to miss classes, over-sleeping because of exhaustion from work. Things were spiraling out of control; I was on the verge of mental and emotional collapse. I had to get out of the situation and made arrangements to return home.

For a number of weeks after returning home, I slept up to eighteen hours a day. Gradually, I started to feel better and my sleeping schedule became more normal.

Luckily, I was able to return to my old job cabinet maker's shop and worked for several months until I was laid-off due to lack of work

A short time later, I received my draft notice and was instructed when and where to go for the pre-induction physical. I had heard of the Seattle Counseling Service for Homosexuals but had never been there. I got the address, '318 Malden Ave. East,' and drove to Seattle to talk to someone about my 'draft situation.'

It was an older house in the middle of the block. The reception area had a home-like quality; this was definitely a 'grass-roots' organization. We exchanged introductions and I explained to Allen why I was there. Allen told me to take a seat and he would be back, shortly. I looked through their literature display; there were lists of the gay bars and gay organizations in the Seattle area, and various pamphlets on homosexuality. After about twenty or thirty minutes, Allen returned, handed

me a letter on their letter-head stationery and told me that this should solve my problem. I was delighted that my problem had been dealt with so quickly and thanked him profusely.

I made of couple copies of the letter and on the day I was to report for the pre-induction process, I sent a copy to the draft board, the original I took with me. Since we lived so far from Seattle (the induction center was in Seattle), we were bussed there on a military bus, had to stay over-night at the YMCA and the next morning we were taken by bus to the induction center.

After we arrived at the 'Y' and were assigned our room, I went down to Pioneer Square and see if get into a gay bar. I looked young for my age and was always 'carded' which made it impossible to get into a bar. For some reason this night was different, I walked into the bar and sat down at a table. I was surprised at not being 'hassled' for my I.D.; it was a week night and business was slow, that perhaps being the reason I wasn't carded. A man sat down and we introduced ourselves, first names only, of course. He bought me a soft drink and I told him how I came to be here this night. He suggested that I let him come back with me to 'Y' and spent the night. I politely declined his suggestion.

The next morning at the induction center, things moved quickly. Some military person told all those who had letters to form a line and when it was my turn to give them my letter, they took one look at it and I was out the door. I was sure glad it was over; I had enough money to buy a Greyhound bus ticket, climbed on the bus and headed home.

Now, I needed to find a job. I went to 'unemployment' office and discovered that I was eligible for unemployment benefits. I guess the local economy was still suffering from the Boeing bust and it was easy to get benefits.

It was time to set my sights on moving back to Seattle. This time I rented an apartment on Boylston Ave. about five blocks from my first apartment. I didn't have any idea about what I was going to do. I decided to attend a Gay Liberation Front meeting and the only thing I remember about that experience was a certain tension that I felt being there. I would eventually, surmise it as a bunch of unattractive men looking for potential tricks.

That being a wash-out, I went to 'The Counseling Service' to see if they knew of any other resources for people who were underage. Allen was there and he told me that a gay community center would opening soon and people were working to get it going. And, I was off to the Gay Community Center of Seattle to start the next chapter in my life.

### Chapter 3 (Gay Community Center of Seattle)

I arrived at 102 Cherry street; there was odd looking theater marquee structure above the cement steps that led down to the entrance. I descended the steps and saw a ticket-window on the wall to the left of the door. As I opened the door, a bar came into view; It was fifteen, perhaps, twenty feet long, the mirror behind the bar was almost as long with ornate wood-work holding it in place; there were shelves and cabinet on both sides of the mirror; there were a number of bar stools lining the front and a storage room at the left end of the bar. (It was rumored that this was a speak-easy during prohibition). On my right, there was a wooden dance floor with six red brick columns lining the sides, and a small stage behind that. To the right of the stage, there was a door leading to a back room; the restroom doors were near the corner. To my left was the room with the ticket-window which was used as the office and a room next to office that would be used for meetings and such. Next to the bar storage room there was a door that was purported to lead into underground Seattle. A few feet from the right end of the bar, there was arch way to wooden steps that led up to the alley; (This was used as the entrance to the speak-easy). The stairs were formidable leading up twenty or more feet and someone had to climb them everyday to make sure that the back door was secured.

There was a lot of work to be done and many lessons to be learned. I jumped right in, I was there everyday to help clean and make repairs. My first lesson was on the sexist terms imbedded in language. I was asked to make new signs for the restrooms which entailed laying stenciled letters on pieces of glass, that slide into the front a light box over the doors, and spray painting them black. I had the stencils laid out that spelled L-A-D-I-E-S and M-E-N; Paul happened by and saw this and patiently explained the error of my ways. So, enthusiastic about this new found knowledge, I finished the signs 'WOMEN' and 'MEN'.

To make a point about the intensity of my involvement, I was working so hard that when the opportunity for sex presented itself, I was just too exhausted to partake. Geoffrey had come back to my apartment with me after one particularly grueling day. It was obvious that sex was on his mind and I really tried, but eventually, I told him that I needed to sleep. This offended his delicate male ego and he left abruptly. No amount of subsequent prostrations on my part could convince him of my sexual interest in him. (Must be nice to come from a bourgeois background where work is secondary to everything else). The wound would fester and eventually, my delicate male ego would get it's comeuppance. One evening, the Community Center was hosting some festive event. Geoffrey and I were in the sound equipment room, I don't recall the nature of our conversation but something he said offended my ego. In a fit of rage, I backhanded him across the face and stormed out of the room. Oh! Poor Geoffrey, had I known that he was high on 'acid', I wouldn't have been so petulant. I fucked that one up big time; becoming emotionally mature would continue to be a challenge for some time to come.

Major repair projects were undertaken; we sandblasted the brick columns around the dance floor, we sanded and refinished the dance floor among other things. One of the volunteers was an electrician; he worked on the wiring and fuse box.

We also built tables to furnish the center. An electric arch welder was rented and in the backyard at the Malden house we built table bases using car tire rims. The first rim was laid on the ground, the second was set upright on the first rim and welded in place; the third rim placed horizontally over the upright rim, leveled and welded into place. Voila, instant table base!

Plywood was bought to be used to build a cabinet for the sound system. Somehow, I ended up building the cabinet. The tools at my disposal were a skill saw, tape measure, wood chisel, hammer, nails and glue. I was pleased with the results. The cabinet was seven feet high, four feet wide and three feet deep; the shelves were inset into the sides for strength, it had inset center dividers and full length doors on the front that opened from the center. There was ample room for a turntable, amplifier and plenty of space to store LPs.

During this period, I met many of the people who would shape my life in the coming months and years.

Even though we were still working on the place, we were open and people could drop-in, chat, have a cup of coffee and look over the literature on display, but we needed to bring in money to help with the expenses. A decision was made put on dances to raise money. At first, we used LP's for the dances, but later on, we would hire bands and had live music. The details of this are of little consequence and I will not bore you with them.

One day, we were taking a coffee break, enjoying some Starbucks Viennese blend (This was back when Starbucks actually sold good coffee, not the rancid cattle urine they currently peddle as gourmet coffee). Who should come bouncing down the steps, it was Jason! I didn't recognize him at first, but I finally realized where we'd met. We chatted a bit about the first time we'd met among other things. He was moving into her/his female identity, but I would learn more about this later, for our paths would cross, yet again.

About six weeks had passed since I first walked in the front door of the Community Center; the subject of me moving into the house on Malden was raised. For the first time in my life I was in an environment where I felt total acceptance. The idea of paying less rent was certainly a motivating factor. I took all these people at face value; knowing little about their pasts, it wasn't a concern for me at that time. I was in the moment, we were doing something important and that is all that mattered. I decided to make the move. The Malden House would become the 'Collective' that ran the Gay Community Center of Seattle.

I would like to take a moment to elaborate on the issue of sexual politics. While living at Malden, I heard rumors that people thought life there was one continuous sexual orgy; I passed this off as a sexual fantasy of older men who had repressed their sexuality and wished to be in such a situation. The truth was far more convoluted; It was a situation where 'person A' is attracted to 'person B', but 'person B' isn't interested in 'person A', he is attracted to 'person C' and so on. The noxious idea, "I'm an oppressed gay man and it is your political responsibility to have sex with me," was in play. This rhetoric was used on people in the house as well as politically active men outside the house; some fell victim to this manipulation to one degree or another. I would have none of it; I had yet to learn about politics, but if that was an example, I wasn't interested.

One of the staples of Malden House, as important as food, was the 'pot' supply. Some smoked more than others, but most household members were 'stoned' a majority of the time. I did not indulge; I was happy with my illusion of reality, being in an environment that was supportive of the gay lifestyle. However, there was one day when I decided to spend the whole day stoned. I just sat in the living room, smoked dope and watched everybody go about their daily routines.

Home and work commingled. There was still much work to be done at the Community Center. Although there had been previous inspections, the city building inspectors kept finding more things that needed to be fixed. The main complaint was the inadequate ventilation in the back rooms; there was a ventilation system but the fan motor needed to be replaced. The minor infractions were numerous. We hunted down a new fan motor and other things needed to make the repairs. For the next few days, work proceeded at a frenzied pace. The night before the inspection I worked until four o'clock in the morning and went home exhausted; that afternoon after I awoke I called to see if we passed the inspection and Yes! we had. Shortly thereafter, I was given a card, signed by all of the members of the Collective, thanking me for my hard work; there may have also been a present, I don't remember, but I still have the card.

One of the bad habits of my younger years was driving like a maniac. My favorite race course was from the Gay Community Center to Malden House. It was like an up-hill roller coaster ride. When it was time to go home, we would pile into the '58 Ford (it had a bored-out 357 cubic inch engine in it), I would stop at 2<sup>nd</sup> & Cherry, wait for the light to change, proceed up Cherry timing myself to hit all green lights, turn left onto the freeway, then drive like hell to the East Olive Street exit, zip up Olive across Broadway to East John Street, turn left on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, jog over to Malden, turn left and in 1 1/2 blocks I was home. Often times, I was going fast enough that when crossing 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Avenues, the front wheels of the car would lift slightly and when the rears wheels came up the incline to the flat surface, the people in the back would be lifted off the seat.

On some of the occasional trips home to visit my family, I started to notice something that I'd rather have avoided (ignore something and hope it goes away). But, this wasn't going to go away; it became obvious that one of my younger brothers was gay. I don't know if he knew that I was gay; (Gee! maybe, I should ask him). So, I explained the situation to the other members of Malden House and it was agreed that I would invite him up to stay for a few days. I said very little to anyone about what I was doing in Seattle; I just simply ask him if he would like to come and visit. I don't know how long after he arrived that he figured out what was going on, or what his reaction to it all was; (Gee! maybe, I should ask him). After his first visit, he would come to Seattle whenever he could.

We settled in to a routine and the Community Center. Jason had become a more frequent fixture. Often we passed the time playing bridge; there always enough people to get a bridge game together and we indulged ourselves quite often.

Eventually Jason moved into Malden, he or rather, I should say she was using the name Paula, moving into her pre-op transsexual identity. She would cajole me into doing drag and I indulged her. To me, it was just another form of theater (Ah! but had the wind blown this leaf in a different direction). I had done mime, among other things, I had created a mime character and from time to time participated in Guerrilla (/Gorilla) and Provocative Impromptu Street Theater. I wasn't entrenched into the rigid stereotypical gender roles that still plague society, today; so, we would dress up and go out to restaurants and gay bars, and generally have a good time.

When 'Fiddler On The Roof' was released in theatres, Faygele thought that it was very important the we see the film and took us all to see it. I enjoyed the movie, but it would be a long time before I understood its innate political significance.

Ah! Faygele! When I first met him, he was simply known as John Singer, going to work at the EEOC everyday, dressed in a suit and tie. He hadn't yet dawned his gender-fuck persona as Faygele. I've heard him referred to as a 'drag-queen' and I don't believe that to be the case, not unless the meaning of drag-queen has changed over the years. In those days, the manner of elaborate dress that mixed gender roles was called 'gender-fuck.'

A conference on issues in the gay movement was to be held in Madison, Wisconsin near the end of November 1971. Some members of the collective felt, for my political edification, that I should go. I can only give retrospective view on the conference as I did not understand much of what had happened.

A rift had formed in the Gay Movement; lesbians felt, and rightly so, that their concerns were not being adequately addressed. The term 'sexism' was being hurled about. Women were angry and men felt guilty; neither of them could temper their emotions with intellect and reason to recognize that they were (and still are) both victims of an oppressive patriarchal society. It is an all too common human failing, and it is pervasive, that it is easier to lash out at a specific target than to take on the amorphous patriarchal forces that are the real cause. There is no blame to be laid, only cause and effect to be examined and understood; but, we are not taught how to think; education of the masses has always been about producing cogs to prop up the status quo and the education of the elite is about how to use those cogs.

The days of the Gay Community Center were numbered, plans for the future were already being made and out of this Gay Community Socials Services was born. The Community Center, as it existed, was not what the Gay Community needed. I had no concept of this for I was young and still living in the moment and had no plan for the future. The Gay Community Center was in existence for less than ten months, but the seeds had been planted out of which other things would grow.

The break up of the Malden house is just a blurred memory. It was just after sunset, darkness was looming, I had packed my belongings in the old '57 Ford and as I stood there looking at Malden House for the last time, a sense of panic came over me. Where am I going to go? I didn't want to go back home, again, after living in such a liberating environment. The only option was to go to the Counseling Service (just a block away). Allen was there; things were in a state of disarray because they were in the process of moving to their new location on 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. Allen was sympathetic to plight and allowed me to stay there for the night.

The members of Malden House dispersed into other living arrangements; some created the Sherwood Forest Collective which would run Gay Community Socials Services, some went to the Little Red Hen Collective and others went to stay with friends. Even though living arrangements had changed, we would still be working together on future projects.

## Chapter 4 (Seattle Counseling Service for Homosexuals)

The house at 1720 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue was impressive; it had three stories. There were concrete steps lead up to a short walkway that led to the wooden steps up onto a porch that ran the length of the front. The large wooden door had a beveled glass window with an ornate carving just below it and an antique looking door handle.

Inside, there was an open space ideal for use a waiting area; there was a large stair case that led the upper floors; from the front door, you could see the back door through a hallway that led to the kitchen; on the right, a set of double doors inset with square glass panes led to the room to be used for telephone counseling and the downstairs office; next to the telephone counseling room there was a large room with a built-in collapsible divider used to make two smaller rooms and another door near the back.

The front staircase had a landing about a third of the way up which led to steps going up to the second floor. There were three rooms in the front; one in the corner and one of each side of it. Towards the back, there was a restroom at the end of a short hallway; there was a small room to the right which would eventually be used for the V.D. clinic; to the left of the restroom was another small room with another doorway on the back wall that led into an add-on. The add-on ran almost the entire length of the back of the house; this would become the upstairs office.

In the center of the upstairs hallway there was a door the open onto the stairs to the attic rooms; there were three rooms in the attic; to the left as you can up the stairs was the smallest room; directly in front was the next largest room and to the right was a room larger that the other two combined; this would become my room.

I don't know why I got that room; I don't even know why they let me stay. My unemployment compensation had run out, I had very little money and had to live on food stamps.

We got the Counseling Service settled into its new digs and the routine was becoming more even paced. One day, I was walking north on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue when a passer-by said hello; I stopped in my tracks; I felt like I'd been hit upside the head with a brick. I was dazed; why would a simple hello provoke such a reaction? I would soon find out, perhaps, that very evening. Back at the Counseling Service, I was in the kitchen with a fellow staff member. She was an intelligent and perceptive woman. She asked what was troubling me; she knew something that I didn't. My suppressed emotions exploded out of me; I began sobbing uncontrollably, tears streaming down my face; she couldn't have understood very much of I was saying because I was crying so hard, but some key words came through clearly .....Malden House.....head games.....those horrible people..... I think she knew that I was trying to express my feeling of abandonment due to the sudden collapse of Malden House. The next morning, I awoke to a brighter world, everything seemed more vivid and alive, the suppressed emotions had been purged and the sun was shining again.

Around this time, a new state of awareness was upon us and meetings were held to discuss changing our name to something that would be more inclusive of our clientele. The term Sexual Minorities came up and so, we became the Seattle Counseling Service for Sexual Minorities.

The number of volunteers staffing the telephones at the Counseling Service was increasing and there was less for me to do. The director, sensing that I needed something to keep me busy, gave me the task of constructing financial records from the banks statements. Up to this point, no records

had been kept. Deposits were made and checks were written but nothing was ever documented; and the bank statements were never balanced. Sound Financial records would be needed to apply for grant monies. So, I embarked upon my new task.

With a little help from Beatrice, who was a CPA, the financial records were soon in order, except that there were six months of missing bank statements. We called the bank and got nowhere, so, I went over the bank to see if we could order duplicate statements. After I explained the problem to the woman who was helping me, she went over to some file cabinets, looked in a couple of drawers, returned to where I was standing and handed me the missing statements. They had the wrong address on them and were returned to the bank as undeliverable. The task was soon completed and I became the bookkeeper for the Counseling Service.

(The only problem was a discrepancy of twenty cents between my records and the bank statement. This prompted me to take accounting classes at Seattle Community College. I took a lot of good-natured ribbing for this; most people wouldn't have bothered looking for the twenty cents. Well, three quarters of accounting classes later, I came back and found the mistake; there was a miscellaneous bank charge of twenty cents that I had failed to record in my accounts. Anyhow, back to the past).

A diversion of a romantic nature is in order. {Sweet Sir Galahad came in through the window in the night when the moon was in the yard, he took my hand in his and shook the long hair from his neck and told me I'd been working much too hard ..... told him all the sadness of those year that number three ..... (Joan Baez)}

I'd seen Robert around, at the Community Center among other places; I always thought he was attractive; I knew he had a 'lover' but little else; I had no idea that he might be interested in me. Well, one night, I heard a knock on my bedroom window, remember that I was on the third floor, I was surprised and a little alarmed, I went to the window, opened it and there was Robert! I was so bewildered that I wouldn't let him in through the window, he had to climb down and come in through the front door.

Our relationship would grow over the coming months and would last for several years. Rereading the letters we had exchanged at that time, I see that there were some issues that I needed to work out; none of these being a need for a mutually exclusive relationship; the dynamic of ownership of one's partner, that plagues so many intimate relationships, did not exist. We had something special and his other relationships were of little concern to me.

I remember one particular evening, we were in a park near Queen Anne Hill. The park looked out over Puget Sound. Robert and I were laying next to each other in the grass, I reach my arms around his back at chest level and pulled him over on top of me, it was a gesture of intimacy with no sexual intent. He attempted to prop himself up, fearing that he might cause me harm for he was six inches tall than me and outweighed me by at least thirty pounds. I gasped his hands, my palms against his, our fingers entwined, maneuvered my legs under his and held him in such a way that he was unable to touch the ground; I just wanted to lie there for a few moments feeling the full weight of his body against mine. Later on, Robert was massaging my neck and shoulders; I could feel the muscles at the back eyes relax, a sensation I'd never experienced before or since, my whole body relaxed; I was in nirvana.

Gay Community Social Services was working on the Lavender Country Project and I would become involved with it at a later time. GCSS had opened a community center in a building next to

the Counseling Service; I visited the center a few times but never became involved because I was too busy with the Counseling Service; plans were being made for the big Symposium.

The Symposium was aimed at professionals in the mental health, medical and legal fields to educate them on Lesbian, Gay and Transgender issues. There would be lectures and workshops given by professionals who were active in the Gay Community. Also, there would be discussion groups. Volunteers need to be trained to act as facilitators for the discussion groups. Registration forms needed to be printed, mailed out and processed upon return. And, I don't have to tell you who would be handling the financial records. The Symposium would be held over a two-day period. For the last day of the Symposium, we had planned an evening of entertainment featuring musical artists from the Gay Community including Sue Isaacs, Lavender Country and others.

We felt that the Symposium was a inspiring success and were in a celebratory mood for the evening's entertainment segment. I was made up in my signature mime costume. There was a delay due to some technical problems that had developed. I felt a sense of restlessness from the audience. I improvised a stall tactic; I ask Bruce to follow me with a spotlight as I went out on stage and did an impromptu mime skit. (Ah! But if the wind had blown this leaf.....). The technical problems were resolved during my performance and the show went on.

One of the things the Counseling Service provided was client advocacy. Innovative and unique methods were used to 'come through' for the client. I remember one incident when Richard Snedigar, who at the time was the Counseling Service's director, was trying to get some financial support for a client through Social Services. After a particularly harrowing ordeal with a social worker at the social services office, Richard became very frustrated and boomed in an extremely loud voice so that the entire office could hear, "YOU PEOPLE MUST THINK THAT THIS PLACE WON'T BURN DOWN!" Needless to say, the client received his financial assistance without further delay.

I became involved with the Lavender Country Project just before the album was released. I went with some GCSS people to the printers where typefaces were chosen and the album jacket design was finalized. There was a plan to have fifty special album jackets made. They would have a plain white front with 'Lavender County' in gold lettering. After the jacket covers and the lyrics sheet inserts were printed, they were sent off to company that would assemble and package the album. The company assembling the album was not explicitly informed of this plan and the fifty special album sheets were thrown into the trash because they thought it was a mistake. (Those damn bastards never bothered to check with GCSS; I still get angry every time I think about it).

Distributing the Lavender Country album was a community wide effort. I was responsible for handling most of the mail orders of the album, and had a stack of albums and mailing sleeves in my room at the Counseling Service. I made frequent trips to the Post Office get the albums delivered to their recipients as quickly as possible.

One method we employed to promote the album was one that had been used for the Gay Community Center on Cherry Street. This was matchbook cover advertising, but we went about in a unique way. We would go buy matchbooks with plain white covers, and a rubber stamp was designed so there would be printing on the front, back and edge of the matchbook. We would then take the matchbook cover, bend it back to the staple, lay it on a flat surface and imprint it with the rubber stamp. We had a division of labor going, one person would open the matchbook, hand it to the next person who would stamp it, and the next person would close it. We made hundreds and

hundreds of them passing them out to bars and other establishments. I scanned one of the matchbook covers into the computer and it is shown in the pictures section at the end of this story.

I had very little involvement in The Elwa Land Project. In looking back at my financial records, I see that made a twenty dollar donation. Most everyone around at that time knew the source of the money used to buy Elwa. I was with the first group of people who went out to Elwa; I stayed just one night and returned to the city.

At this time in the early and mid-1970's, the Seattle Counseling Service was the focal point of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender movement and had a broad base of community support. This high visibility made it a target for what was termed 'organization raids' by groups seeking support from the LGBT communities for their particular causes.

My time at the Counseling Service was nearing its end. I had learned things there that helped me put past experiences into perspective and had experiences there that would be put into perspective from things I'd learn in the future at which time I'd have experiences that would.....isn't fractal geometry just a bitch!

#### Chapter 5 (Hotel California) (The Missing Chapter)

This chapter isn't really missing; it currently resides on a web page located at <http://untoldstories.zxq.net/>

#### Chapter 6 (Relationships)

Promiscuity may to some have been the highlight of the '70s; but this was not the case for me. I always preferred to get to know someone before engaging in more intimate activities. Some may characterize promiscuity in different ways; having various stable on-going non-primary sexual relationships, is not in my definition of promiscuity.

There were, also, numerous platonic relationships that were of significant importance to me.

My first, and only, childhood crush was on Kevin. I felt a strong desire to be around him, and did so, as much as circumstances would permit. This was unusual to me because I had other playmates who were boys but they did not arouse this need in me. On a least one occasion, he stayed overnight at my house. We slept in the nude with our bodies pressed against each other, for I had little notion of anything else, but this seemed exciting enough.

Gloria was a friend from my early teen years. She was a cross between Melanie Safka and Janice from Dr. Teeth And The Electric Mayhem Band. She was a compatriot and my refuge from a rigid and apathetic society. We like the same kinds of music, aspired to be hippies, wanted to smoke pot,

drop acid and someday travel to San Francisco. We spent many hours living in our fantasy hippie world.

I met Richard through my work at the Counseling Service and this relationship would be one of the most influential of my life. Our relationship was that of a platonic teacher-student nature. He was twelve years old than me and had much wisdom to impart. He had read numerous books on such topics as history, politics, art and religion, among others. He had a vast store of knowledge gained from personal experience. He also, loved music and was particularly fond of jazz.

We enjoyed long conversions on all manner of subjects. In one of our earlier discourses, I expounded on some of my unconventional viewpoints. From this, Richard saw me as being receptive to alternative perspectives and new ideas. Our conversation lasted until almost dawn and I believe that this cemented our association for the years to come. Except for a five year period of estrangement, we remained friends until his death in early 2001.

Since drugs contributed to Richard's demise, I would like to expound on my naiveté about his drug use. I didn't put the pieces of the puzzle together until just a few years before his death. He had been using 'speed' off and on for years, even before we had first met at the Counseling Service. I was never much of a drug user. I has smoked pot and 'dropped acid' on occasion, but never saw what the big deal was. Well, my 'middle-life crisis' would be about drugs. I had become enticed into using cocaine. When I could not find any around the Olympia area, I thought that Richard in Seattle my know a contact. Upon visiting him and explaining my plight, he said "Oh! I have something much better!" and that is how became acquainted with 'crank' (street speed). For the next six to eight months, this would be a driving force in my life. I would slowly became aware of the emotional, mental and psychic damage that speed was causing and it would be some while after I stopped using speed and regained my emotional, mental and psychic health that I would finally put the pieces together and realized the extent of Richard's drug use.

There did seem to be some positive aspects about speed; I had always liked music and it amplified this experience. I collected all kinds of music big band (swing), bluegrass, classical, comedy, folk, pop, rock'n'roll and on and on. I developed some unusual obsessions for collecting Silly Wizard, Weird 'Al', polka music, Mitch Miller, among others. So let this be a warning to all of you would be meth users, because you, too, could end up owning a complete collection of Mitch Miller albums. {Be kind to your web-footed friends, for a duck may be somebody's mother. Be kind to your friends in the swamp, where the weather is very, very damp. Now! you may think that this is the end, Well! It is! ... (Mitch Miller)}

Ian had been working as a volunteer for the Counseling Service and that's where I met him. He was the first person with whom I would set up a household. We rented an apartment in the Iliad Apartments on Bellevue Avenue and purchased furniture for it. The sexual aspect of our relationship didn't pan out, but that seemed to be mutually agreed upon and we continued to live together as roommates.

I had heard about the gay bathhouse in Seattle; I think it was called the Atlas Steam Baths and I decided to check it out. The bar scene wasn't a good place for me to meet people. The combination of loud music and beer drinking wasn't conducive to initiating relationships. I never did acquire a taste for beer and didn't care to associate with those under its influence.

I arrived at the Atlas, early one evening and got a room. Only later would I learn that at two o'clock when the bars closed the place would fill up to capacity with many people renting lockers

while waiting for rooms to become available. The Atlas had three floors which were connected by cold and drafty stairwells. They had a sound system with speakers all over the facility and music was played at a level where one could hold a conversation without having to compete with the music. There were lounge areas with couches, chairs and reading material laid out on end tables and lamps to provide light for reading; there was also a television. They had a wet sauna, a dry sauna and maybe even a weight room.

The night wore on, I encountered very few people that interested me and if I found someone, the interest wasn't mutual. Shortly after midnight, I caught sight of an attractive man and watched him from a distance. I followed him into the lounge where he had seated himself on a couch next to an end table; I planted myself on a couch kitty-corner from him. He glanced over at me and not knowing what proper protocol might be, I blurted out, "Would you like to come to my room?" He looked at me for a moment and responded, "Oh! You have a room?.....Well, let me think about it!" I was naïve, the thought never occurred that this could be a polite brush-off. So, I picked up a magazine and skimmed through it, patiently awaiting his response. After a few minutes, he said in somewhat a reluctant manner, "O.K., let's go!" Perhaps, he felt that he would be trading sexual favors for a relatively safe place to sleep.

We made the customary introductions and talked for a long while. His name was Jon, he lived in Vancouver, Canada and had come to Seattle with friends over the Canadian Independence Holiday. He also told me that he was attending art school and was working on a degree in that field. I sensed that he was tired, sex was not foremost on my mind and so, we fell asleep cuddled next to each other. After several hours of sleep, we awoke and had a torrid sexual experience. Before parting ways, he wanted to exchange addresses and we did.

Over the coming days, the encounter with Jon was never far from my thoughts, I wondered if he felt the same about me. About a week later, I received a letter from Jon and upon reading it became ecstatic to learn the feelings were mutual. The intimate aspect of our relationship lasted for several years or more and eventually, dissolved into writing occasionally, just to keep in touch.

Don! Another story of an unreciprocated attachment. {Sometimes, I find I get to thinking of the past, I remember hoping that love had come at last, I kept right on loving; you went on a fast; Now you are too thin and my love is too vast ..... (a bastardization of a Leonard Cohen song)}

Don, Dan, Rick and I had moved to a house together. We were involved in the same political activities and felt this would facilitate our cause. We were known as the House of Four. For me, this would only be a temporary situation.

I had felt a strong attraction to Don for sometime and I didn't see his primary relationship with Dan as an obstacle to us forming a bond. I had enticed Don into sexual encounters on a few occasions, but ultimately, I was rebuffed I wasn't sure what the reason was; perhaps, he felt that it would be another smothering relationship as he was experiencing with Dan; or maybe, he didn't have a mutual attraction; or something more sinister, it was not in the best interest of the cause for political comrades to be having sexual relations with each other. Nevertheless, knowing the reason would not have relieved my anguish or lessened my anger.

This situation, along with the growing contradiction between rhetoric and behavior (what was being preached, was not being practiced), led me to decide to move out of the house. This had to be done surreptitiously, as I did not want to be confronted about "losing my religion" or other such issues.

I was working a part-time swing shift in the Data Processing Department at the Seattle P. I. and had some discretion over how I planned the evening's work. I had rented an apartment in Capital

Hill area and enlisted the help of some friends, Robert (Sweet Sir Galahad) and Russell among others. When the big day came, I rented a U-haul truck and parked it a few blocks from the house. The other members of the house would be at a meeting that evening and my plan was in action. I took a break from work and met my friends at the appointed time and place. We made quick work of things, in a short time, we had my belonging packed into the truck and taken to my new apartment. (Free, at last!; Free, at last!)

This would be the end of my active political life as I had become disillusioned by people using politics for their own self serving interests (Feed my lambs!, feed my ego!, feed my sheep!). I would fade away into the gay masses becoming just another John Queer Public doing all those thing that the average John Queers did.

Russell would be of great comfort to me in the coming weeks as I recovered from the trauma experienced at the House of Four. Russell had expressed a sexual interest in me but I tried to be diplomatic in conveying that I wanted our relationship to be platonic and he seemed to accept that. Although I would see Robert and Jon from time to time, Russell was my mainstay. We would go out dancing, go on hikes in the country, walk around the city, go to midnight showings of the 'Rocky Horror Picture Show' or just engage in conversation over a cup of coffee or tea. I took up hobbies such as tailoring clothes and ice skating to help fill the void in my life.

The time was coming when Russell's interests would take him to England. As a parting gift, I had purchased a white onyx jewelry box for him. I had no card with the present; to him, this was a serious faux pas and he was emphatic that I write a little note. I indulged him and after careful reflection, I handed him a card that said "Thanks for being a friend when I really needed a friend."

I don't remember how I met Philip, however, I was attracted to him and wished to develop a relationship. He was just over eighteen and had been out on his own since becoming an emancipated minor at the age seventeen. I visited him at his apartment numerous times and don't recall ever having sex with him. However, something was amiss; it seemed that he had a compulsion to find a preconceived category in which to put me, so that he would know best how to relate to me. This dynamic left me feeling dehumanized, a thing rather than a person; perhaps this was because he was young and he viewed people as a set of inflexible constructs as a way of dealing with them.

One winter night, actually, it was around four o'clock in the morning; Philip, his friend Tom and I were heading to Tom's apartment from Philip's place. It had been snowing and everything was blanked in white with nary a trace of human presence. We were head north on Boylston; Tom's place was five blocks on the other side of Olive Way; my apartment was up Olive Way and two blocks past Broadway. When we reached the corner of Boylston and Olive Way, I stopped. I had an intuition that I had been grasping for something that couldn't be, perhaps I was giving up the hope of finding that illusive primary relationship. I turned to Philip and simply said "I have to go, now"; then I turned and walked away into the cold wintry night.

My last sexual relationship, and by last I mean final, because at fifty-eight years of age, I see no prospect for another. The importance of this relationship involves the demonstration of all the things that I had learned over the years and felt were important. Not that I didn't still make a few mistakes along the way, but those seemed to have been forgiven.

There were a couple of gay social groups around the Olympia area, Gays and Lesbians of Washington (GLOW) and the Gay Men's Social Network (GMSN). One of the social spots was at

King Solomon's Café and Lounge. This is where I first met Harvey back in 1990, a young man of barely nineteen years. Harvey had a stuttering problem, but I had enough interest to get passed that flaw; he seemed to be somewhat of a maverick and that's what piqued my curiosity.

At first, we would meet at King Sol's for coffee and to socialize with other people. It quickly became apparent that he had no ulterior motivations and the desire for friendship was genuine. I invited him to my house to help me work on some projects. When he lacked transportation I would go to his house to get him whereupon I had the occasion to meet his parents. The situation arose where he would stay overnight; I saw this as more of a trust exercise than an opportunity to initiate a sexual encounter and we slept in the same bed without an inkling of an intimate gesture. This occurred a few more times (one might call it the world's longest foreplay). Then, one bright sunny afternoon, we were alone at the house. We were playing tag and wrestling like children, at one point we came to be in a very intimate sexual position; I looked at Harvey and said, "I have been waiting for a long time for us to be in this position." This led to our first sexual encounter. Sometime later he would tell me that it was the first time he'd ever had sex without being drunk, Gee! it sure felt good to be somebody's first time.

I don't know if Harvey had any expectations about our relationship and I wasn't going to lay any expectations I might have had on him; we just enjoyed the time we spent together. I did not want to own him; he was young and I felt that he should be free to have other experiences whatever they may be.

The intimate part of my relationship with Harvey lasted for several years. One day, after not seeing him for a while, I went out looking for him and learned that he had moved to Eastern Washington. From then on, I would only see him occasionally when he would stop by on an unannounced visit.

## Chapter 7 (Odds and Ends)

Sex is the "gay men's handshake;" most succinctly it is a euphemism for promiscuity, with the added concept that gay men have sex to get the issue out of the way before developing a friendship (or not developing a friendship).

Romance and politics: Many people have viewed politically aware people as stoic, this should not necessarily be the case. I have presented my relationships in somewhat of a romantic light, that is not to say that I have romantic ideals or a romanticized viewpoint about relationships. My relationships were what they were, and are what they are; I do not imbue them with illusory ideals about how they were, are or should be. Everybody deserves a little romance, just don't become deluded about it all.

Marriage is an archaic institution that should be abolished. Marriage attempts to force you into a mutually exclusive relationship with underlying dynamics of ownership of one's partner. If you look at the history of marriage, it has rarely been about love; it is usually about what's best for the socio-economic system. To expect one person to meet all of physical and emotional needs of another is an exacting demand and there are few people who can do this. If one is secure in their primary relationship, the secondary relationships of their partner would be of little concern. Although, I can understand gay marriage as a political statement, I don't understand why one would

want to emulate an oppressive institution, such as marriage. I believe in “civil unions for all,” even heterosexuals.

Thou shall not worship false idols; but, *all idols are false idols*. When you make people into idols, you idealize them and this takes away from their humanity; but more importantly it takes away from your humanity. The person you worship is no longer a person but a thing, prone to become laden with deception.

I mention this incident here because I don't know where it's fits in the chronology and many details have been forgotten, but it merits being told. One day I was approached by this particular individual, asked to go pick up a typewriter (there may have been other things mentioned, but I only remember the typewriter), and given keys. There was one, or possibly two, other people who I accompanied to this office which was in an old stored front just south of the Central District, somewhere near the International District. It was the headquarters of a group whose cause the Gay Movement was supporting. An uneasy feeling crept over me, but I did as we were asked. Sometime later, I heard that the office had been 'broken into' and some office equipment was taken. I felt shame and a sense of betrayal; I said nothing. Only, years later would I learn of the nature and extent of those sinister influences, but that is another story and it is not mine to tell.

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### *Scan And Pictures*

**gcc**

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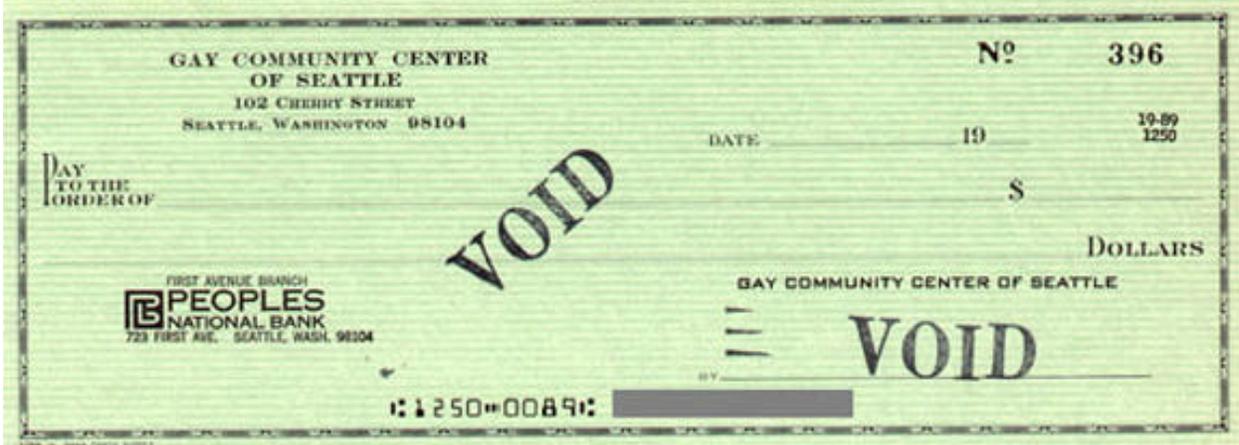
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Women's Nite  
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Gay Community Center Letterhead





422 Malden Ave E.



My mime character



Me in drag – Age 19



Me today at age 58



Gays and Mental Health Symposium

An original Lavender Country promotional  
matchbook cover



My home in Nebraska



# Epilogue

## **The Zen Iconoclast's Credo**

(by John F. Doe)

### **Preface**

It is difficult to find a clear and concise definition of Zen. Simply put, Zen is a methodology which stresses meditation (thinking or thought) over reading. This is not to say that reading is unimportant; reading is an adjunct to the thought process (meditation) and personal experience.

Western thinking stresses that there is only one path. While in oriental philosophies, there are many paths to enlightenment (knowledge) and in some cases, this includes the single path of western thought. Western philosophies are constrained by this one path methodology of thinking (the linear thinking model). This makes it easier for those in control of political, governmental and religious institutions to maintain the status quo and protect their power base. Linear thinking leaves few options, everything is either black or white, good or bad. There are no fine shades of gray or ying and yang.

This noxious linear thinking methodology infects our educational system and leaves people wondering why students in this country rank so poorly when compared with the rest of the world.

In religious institutions, money and power are elevated above spirituality and spiritual enlightenment. As humans, we are made of the material in the universe and we need to feel a connection with it. When we look at the night sky and see but a small glimpse of the cosmos, we need to feel a part of it. When we hike in the woods and see the trees, rocks, rivers and sky, we need to feel a part of it. And, we are, there is nothing mystical about it. Western religious institutions tear all this away from us by bearing down on us with their oppressive dogma.

Political and governmental figures relish the one path, linear thinking methodology as it makes it easier for them to dupe a majority of the people into thinking that theirs is 'The' right way.

### **(Part 1)**

Attention must be paid to the area of general human failings that exist in all political, religious, social and business entities. We must become aware that these are learned behaviors and we must unlearn them.

Idolatry is a most noxious learned behavior. One of the root causes of idolatry is belief without reason or examination and it is ubiquitous. One must realize that idolatry is a two-way street. For example, a cult leader cannot be a cult leader without followers, a god cannot be a god without worshipers, a capitalist cannot be a capitalist without wage slaves and all are caught in the web of idolatry. Some other forms of idolatry include the pecking order, one-upsmanship and keeping up with the Jones.

No one is exempt from the phenomenon of idolatry. I, myself, although acutely aware of it, am not exempt from being ensnared in its trappings .

No one person can be right all the time. We are all human and therefore, we are sometimes wrong. To idolize someone, to the point that everything they say is gospel, is an example of not being able to think for yourself. You must gain the ability to glean out that which is true and correct, ignoring that which is not.

Those who become idols (or claim to represent them) want to teach you what to think, not how to think, because if they taught you how to think, you may find some disagreement with their precepts and that would erode their power base. There can be a fine line between learning how to think and what to think, often when we feel that we are learning how to think, we are just being fed regurgitated rhetoric on what to think.

An idol should strive to be a teacher not an idol, because one has the responsibility to try to bring others up to their level, and not to glare down at them from above. I would like to make the following point about teaching. It is the most noble of professions, but it has been compromised by economic expediency. Teachers are reduced to churning out cogs to maintain the status quo. We are trained to go out and spend money to keep the socio-economic machine running.

If we cannot overcome such failings, humankind will not evolve. Those who claim to have the answer for betterment of humankind use these human failings in their rhetoric, dogma and practice. Proclaiming they will make the world a better place for everyone and, because they are caught in the web of these human failings as well, they are no better than potential Oprichniki who would be destined to become more oppressive and cruel than those they strive to supplant.

Human needs must be put ahead of economic expediency. The expectations that people learn to have about relationships are linked into economic need, not human need.

The epitome of relationships in modern culture is marriage, but look at the history of marriage. Just within the last few hundred years, marriage was used by patriarchal societies to amass wealth and power; women and children were mere chattel. The reality is that marriage is not about love; it is about what's best for the socio-economic system. Marriage is an archaic institution that should be abolished. Marriage attempts to force you into a mutually exclusive relationship with underlying dynamics of ownership of one's partner. To expect one person to meet all (or even a majority) of the physical and emotional needs of another is an exacting demand and there are few people capable of this. One may find that having a small number of stable, on-going non-primary relationships of a platonic and/or sexual nature would replace or eliminate the need for a primary relationship.

The essence of politics is how we treat each other and tactics in politics is politics, if your tactics are suspect than your politics are suspect, as well, and everything you do is tainted, in other words, the end does not justify the means.

The idea is firmly entrenched in the left political spectrum that changing the political system will change the social structure of society for the better. Have they forgotten their dialectics? Perhaps, it will happen in the reverse manner.

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The most current version of "The Zen Iconoclasts' Credo" may be found at:  
<http://webspaces.webring.com/people/sl/leocentaur/>

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