

Chapter Eighteen: Enter and Exit, Disco Fast Eddie

One name says it all

Candidate subtitles for this chapter might exhaust even the most fertile imagination: “Sodom and Gomorrah Revisited,” “The Road Poorly Chosen,” “Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here,” “Regrets, I’ve Had a Few and I Can List Them,” and/or “The Blue Pill or The Red Pill? Ah Let’s Just Take ‘em Both” all come to mind. Oh, and the name change? We will get to that in good time. And, oh yeah, there’s one more: “It all Sort’ta Worked Out OK in the End.” However, the promises opening Chapter Seventeen remain in place: No person who could be harmed by appearing here is named; any who are named have given permission. This leaves out LOTS of “juicy” adventures, most of which I’m quite ashamed of having been involved in.

At the start, note that the Pullman/Moscow experience extended completion of a two-year Master’s degree into a four-year ordeal (plus an additional year at the back-end for good measure). If we kept track of the mistakes made during the Pullman/Moscow experience, as we did during Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen (and could have in Seventeen) those earlier chapters might seem like a walk in “Making the Right Decision Park.” In short, that I *survived* Pullman/Moscow is a wonder and a joy forever. That, in the end, my life was saved by the wisdom and love of a good woman was mostly undeserved, but deeply appreciated. I am forever grateful that Cheryl Lee Johnson intervened in my disaster movie before the curtain came down.

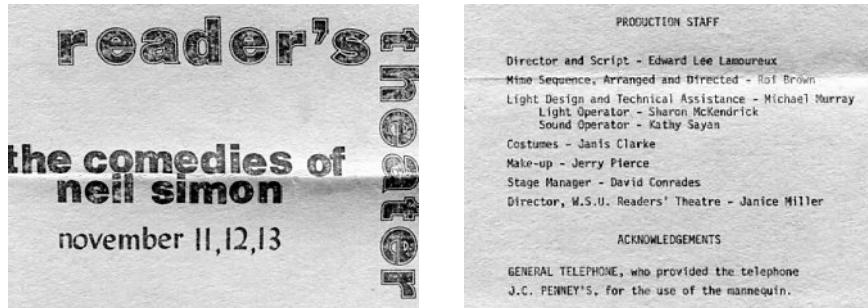
I began the academic program toward the Master’s degree in Speech Communication at Washington State University with the best intentions. I initially put significant amounts of interest, attention, and effort into graduate studies. I made friends among my graduate colleagues and I quickly became known and available to the faculty members in the department. At the time,

Speech-Communication at WSU was blessed with a superb faculty compliment. Robert Ivie and Joe Ayers often co-authored research about social interaction and were rising stars in the Speech Communication discipline. Robert Nofsinger served as my academic advisor and became nationally known in the sub-discipline of conversation analysis (the specialty I adopted for both Master's thesis and Ph.D. dissertation). David Strother was a well-respected historian of traditional rhetoric and Janice Miller was a highly regarded oral interpretation teacher and director. Tim Hopf was an interpersonal communication expert with a clinical psychology degree, certification and, with his wife, Bonnie, a large private counseling practice in Spokane. The WSU Speech Communication students, graduate and undergraduate, were in good hands.

Initially, there appeared to be only one fly in the graduate school ointment: a requirement for one course in graduate-level statistics. Given my poor showing in high school algebra and lack of a college math course, the requirement was worrisome. However, the terror soon subsided as I learned about, enrolled in and completed, Professor Takamini's "Educational Statistics" course (better known as "Bonehead Stats") offered by the College of Education. The course was a night class targeted at returning students; mostly secondary education teachers by day. Mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviations were the primary topics. I passed with a "B." Unfortunately, trouble with maths will re-emerge during the Ph.D. program I later entered in Eugene, Oregon.

Based on the single oral interpretation course I took in junior college, I was assigned to Janice Miller and became her primary oral interpretation graduate teaching assistant (G.T.A.). I was also expected to direct half of our Reader's Theatre programs and shows. We presented two major shows each year in the *Daggy Hall* Theatre. Additionally, I translated one of the shows

into a broadcast reminiscent of old-tyme radio. We ran that on WSU student radio, *KUGR*.



Speech Communication shared *Daggy Hall* with Theater Arts and Communications Disorders (CD) programs. CD also ran a Communications Disorders Clinic in the building. This disparate triumvirate constituted the “Speech Communication Department.” Each major offered undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The department chairman who recruited me was a Speech Communication veteran, Professor Ernest Etlitch. Dr. Etlitch had been in charge for longer than a decade but he retired after our spring interview, over the summer prior to my arrival. Reminiscent of the Reno-Coach Jensen affair, no? The parallel between the academic administrator who recruited me, at WSU, leaving before I arrived just as had the baseball coach at UNR did not strike me at the time. After all, Baseball and graduate school aren’t comparable, are they? I did not think that this was either a bad omen or proof of imminent failure. As we will see, it might well have been both as the new chairman turned out to be as toxic to my academic career as Coach Roper had been to my life on the baseball diamond.

I took up residence in on-campus (unmarried) graduate student housing. The complex featured a large number of “quads” each with four ground-level apartment/units arranged in semi-connected pairs with two units sharing a bathroom in between and two similar units “next door.” The units were studio-sized efficiency apartments: Each small room included a single bed with a fold-down storage unit hidden below a bolster along the length of the bed (such that a made bed became a sofa), a study desk and chair, storage closet and drawers for clothing, sink

and mirror, and a small fenced-in privacy patio with brick floor just outside the front window. The units were a short walk to classes; the dining hall was between the units and the main campus. Residents in these units were not allowed to cook food in their rooms. Outdoor cooking was tolerated by the administration so most residents used small barbecue units on their patios. And no—*not a single* graduate student snuck a hot pot, toaster, toaster oven, popcorn popper, or coffee pot into their rooms. I swear (sort of).

Meals could be taken in the dining complex. As is the case with most graduate students on traditional half-time teaching assistantships (“teach two, take two or three”), the standard remuneration covered the cost of tuition, housing, and the food contract with an exceedingly small monthly stipend left over. I used to joke that the leftover stipend money was just enough for a keg of beer a month, whether one wanted it or not. Some students reduced the food contract portion to one meal a day so they could collect extra cash. I took the full contract rather than trying to hash-out meals with limited access to appliances. The cash stipend that I received came in handy for gas, necessities, and fun. I would later learn that financial support stopped during the summer months so there wasn’t money for a trip home and there wasn’t much full-time work available over the summer in Pullman/Moscow. Summers were “financially thin” and the two only instances that I took out school loans.

“Suite-mates” were same-gender; mine was a student in the medical school program (WAMI) that was shared with the University of Washington (two years in Pullman, then the rest in Seattle). John studied a lot more than any human I’d previously met (even more than had Phil at UNR). He had a steady girlfriend at WSU and was good company when we ran into each other.

I settled into studies and survived receiving “D” on the first graduate school paper I turned in; Professor Ivie got my full attention with the initial returned assignment of the term. Nofsinger and I arranged my program of study for the two-year M.A. program. And then danger , in the form of self-aggrandizement reared its ugly head and I was not smart enough to turn away. Or rather, I was too full of myself to notice and take appropriate evasive action. Instead, I walked right into a mammoth, mostly self-induced, trap.

Not long after arriving on campus and perusing the latest graduate catalog, I learned that the Department offered a concurrent Master’s and Ph.D. curricula. I approached Nofsinger for his opinion and we agreed that I should sign-up for the dual option. I made new plans to complete more coursework than usual rather than spending time and credits writing a Master’s thesis. I figured I would continue straight through for the Ph.D. and write only the required dissertation, skipping the MA thesis.

WSU had a “test only” option for the Master’s degree that dispensed with the thesis, opting instead for extra coursework and an examination. By joining the concurrent program, I might, at some point along the way, have the extra coursework in hand for taking the Master’s exam if we decided that I’d not continue to the Ph.D. Most concurrent students used their Master’s thesis as their Ph.D. dissertation proposal document, thereby grabbing the Master’s degree along the way to the Ph.D. I decided in favor of the former strategy and made no Master’s thesis plans. Joining the concurrent program seemed like an excellent idea. In the end, it was not. But since presenting myself as a Ph.D. student seemed (to me) to be more prestigious than being a mere Master’s student I opted for the riskier course of action. Later events turned this plan into a full-scale disaster.

The first year in Pullman went along fairly well. I learned a lot, enjoyed the coursework, and began to distinguish myself as an able student of graduate-level Speech Communication studies. On the social side of things, I dated more than I was used to and even developed a serious relationship with an older graduate student who was just finishing her Ph.D. in psychology.

Early in my studies I became friends with William Earl (Bill) Boyd (Jr.). Bill was a University of Washington alum working on his Master's degree in the Mass Communication program at Washington State. At that time, Mass Communication and Speech Communication were separate degree-granting departments at WSU and only Speech offered the Ph.D.

Bill was a year ahead of me but we took coursework together from both Ivie and Nofsinger and developed a fast friendship. I made many trips to Seattle to visit Bill's family on Queen Ann Hill during my years in Pullman/Moscow.

One semester, I took notes in the introductory "Communication Theory" class that Bill taught. WSU ran a note-taking service that enabled undergraduates to purchase class notes developed by advanced students. Graduate students often served as note-takers in order to supplement their income. The class was taught in the *Edward R. Murrow Communication Building*, home to the Mass Communication Department. The building also held two radio stations: WSU's *NPR* affiliate *KWSU* as well as a student-operated radio station, *KUGR*.

Given my continued interest in sports journalism, and the voluntary nature of the student staff at *KUGR*, I soon found



Ed with KUGR station manager Rebecca Kelly, 1976

myself working there. I “jocked” a weekly music show and prepared and presented a daily, 5-minute, sports-news-commentary broadcast. I made many friends at *KUGR*: All were undergraduates so at least a year younger than me and some took the Oral Interpretation course I was teaching. Efforts at *KUGR* provided both distractions from my graduate studies as well as experiences and connections that eventually proved useful to my survival.

One of the drawbacks of accepting a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA) was the lack of support over the summer. At WSU, one was welcome to pay to stay in the graduate student housing units. However, the GTA didn’t pay any money over the summer. Having re-entered sports journalism with the sports radio show on *KUGR*, I approached WSU sports information director Rod Commons to see if he had any work for me over the summer. Fortunately, Sports Information needed a writer who could also create lay-outs for print materials. The staffer who was supposed to produce the women’s sports program booklet for the coming year left the department suddenly; they were without a replacement and needed the publication completed over the summer. Since I had helped lay out the SAHS yearbook one year and wrote many sports articles for the Long Beach paper, Mr. Commons and I worked out a reasonable contract that enabled me to pay my room and board costs over the summer while getting experience as a writer and sports journalist. I also signed on as a weekly sports columnist at the summer student newspaper (gratis).

During my time as a graduate teaching assistant at WSU, I held true to one hard and fast ethical/moral standard: I did not date women when they were a student in my class. In a couple of cases, the hot pursuit began immediately after the final grades were turned in. Once however, I carried on an extended involvement with a current student.

Ha! Made you look! However, it wasn't what you might have been thinking.

Scott Joseph was a local Pullman native majoring in Mechanical Engineering when he took my "Oral Interpretation" class in Spring, 1976. We were surprised to see him, given that Engineering students did not flock to oral performance courses. For one of his assignments, he knocked *Casey at the Bat* right out of the park. During our discussion of his oral recitation I mentioned my former, short-circuited, baseball career. Not long thereafter, he approached me about playing for a local team. Mr. Joseph was a member of a long-standing slow-pitch softball team. The team needed a second baseman so he asked if I would like to join them at a practice. Although I had only played a smattering of pickup games since leaving Reno I agreed. Quite a bit of my upcoming summer was soon booked after spending many hours in practice during that Spring term.

The team was filled with experienced players who'd had success over the years. Our team played well and won many local tournaments. We also traveled around Central and Eastern Washington for regional tournaments and did so well that we were invited to the annual State Softball Championship held that year in Ellensburg, Washington. We did not win the tournament although we won a couple of games and had a really good time. Scott, along with another teammate—Mike—and I spent a lot of time, that summer, working out together. I probably got into the best shape of my life as the result of running up and down the stairs in the WSU football stadium in the summer heat.

Mr. Joseph and I also spent time, together, making music (separately). I was still hacking away with the guitar but continued to make little progress as a player; nevertheless, I loved to sing and play. Scott was even worse at the guitar then was I (that could not be said about very

many people who had not stopped playing in disgust). Further, his singing voice/style was a lot less melodious than mine and, again, that's clearly damning both of us with faint praise. I continued utilizing what little musical skill I had in pursuit of young women. Around the time Scott first heard me play, I had written two or three songs dedicated and directed to a particular coed.

Scott and I often got together to play tunes and soon found ourselves in a unique and creative competition. One day he decided that he would write a song but he would only play it for me if I promised to write one, then played for him, in return. Soon, we were exchanging original tunes about once a week. Few of them were good music although couple passed the “ick” test. It had been a long time since I had written and played music other than when attempting to impress women. I enjoyed the time that I spent with Mr. Joseph singing, playing, and writing. And having Mike as a teammate also, soon-enough, came in very handy.

Another highlight of that summer was a visit from Ann Raney. After I graduated from CSULB and went to Pullman/Moscow, Ann and I drifted part and dated other people. Not “going steady” at a distance had always seemed the reasonable thing to do given our tenuous hold on the long-distance relationship and its uncertain future. Nevertheless, we continued writing to each other. Ann was on a summer vacation leading up to her senior year at St. Olaf. She went out of her way to make the side trip and I went out of my way to make sure that we didn’t run into anyone that I was dating while she was in Pullman. The short visit re-kindled our interest and restarted our relationship. Not long after Ann’s visit, SAHS classmates, Tom and Toni Crotty, by then married, also went out of their way to make a visit, diverting to Pullman on their return to San Jose from a summer vacation/camping trip.

As the summer drew to an end and the time for Ann to head from Keokuk to Northfield approached, I drove the woman I had been seeing to her new job in Colorado. We knew that since she was happy to have landed a good first position she might stay there for more than the couple of years I would need to complete the Ph.D. at WSU.. I did not know where I would go after I completed studies in Pullman but signing up for the joint M.A./Ph.D. program meant that I would not be able to leave town for at least three more years. Additionally, I did not think that Colorado was to my liking and I was sure that I did not want to be involved in a second long-distance relationship in the meantime. So, when I dropped her off, we parted ways. And then there was the matter of Ann Raney.

Instead of heading back to Pullman, I drove to Keokuk to further clarify our situation. Ann was soon due in Northfield for practice with the St. Olaf Choir, weeks before fall classes began. After a short and intense visit, we decided to make a verbal commitment that we called our “engagement.” However, we did not announce this arrangement to our families and only told a few close friends. In the fall Ann continued at St. Olaf as did I in Pullman/Moscow.

In addition to taking and teaching classes, I became increasingly involved in student radio. Adding to the daily sports program, I became the color voice for *KUGR*-radio’s broadcasts of the men’s junior varsity basketball team. Neither the softball nor radio gigs appeared to threaten my academic work, although both provided significant distractions in time and effort.

Early 1977 provided high and low points for the Pullman/Moscow years. On the plus side, Ann, having qualified for membership in one of the premier vocal ensembles in American colleges—the St. Olaf Choir—found herself on a long national tour and I was able to drive to the Bay Area and see the group in concert at a small Catholic Church in San Jose and in the grand

Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption in San Francisco. Ann and I spent most of one day walking around San Francisco. It was clear that our decision to become engaged was the right one and we began discussing the future, especially what Ann would do after graduating from St. Olaf. Softball teammate, Mike, provided a place to sleep, at one of Stanford's fraternities, one night of that visit. Tom and Toni Crotty provided another night at their home in San Jose.

On the negative side, late in the fall, the Washington state legislature began cost-cutting at the state's institutions of higher education. Apparently, all programs were under review and faced potential reductions. Important meetings were held over the 1976-77 winter break. At this point, the earlier change in departmental leadership, from a Speech person to a Communication Disorders specialist, led to a very troublesome outcome. The new Department chairman was primarily interested in protecting his Communication Disorders clinic and failed to adequately argue in favor of the Speech Communication program. He was neither the first or last "COM" guy I worked with who neither understood nor appreciated the value of education in Speech Communication. University leaders decided to drop the Ph.D. from Speech since it duplicated the Speech Ph.D. available at the "more appropriate Research I" University of Washington.

The Dean of the College proposed the following solution for students in the Speech Communication Ph.D. program: The College would stay committed to any student who had an approved Ph.D. program proposal on file. Unfortunately, although I was signed-up in a concurrent program, I had not filed the formal Ph.D. program application. Therefore, the Dean decided that he would not remain committed to my Ph.D. matriculation, but rather, would only allow me to complete work toward the Master's degree and that I must do so in year two of my GTA: the following spring. That edict presented a number of related problems.

Because I was working under the assumption that I was in the concurrent program—in fact, at that point I was only four classes short of completing the coursework for the Ph.D.—I had not taken some of the specific classes required for testing-out of the M.A. without writing a thesis. I also put off writing the Masters thesis—one doesn’t start writing a dissertation proposal until after taking “preliminary examinations” for the Ph.D. program. Topping it off, the Dean refused to provide a third year of financial support for Master’s students. There would not be a GTA beyond the normal two-year time frame for completion of the Master’s degree.

In short, at the end of my second year in Pullman/Moscow, I had no financial support, had to vacate graduate student housing so had no place to live, had not earned the Master’s degree, and had no idea what to do next. At the end of the spring term, I packed my stuff into the green-boxy-Fiat and drove “home” to Long Beach where I hunkered down in true desperation over the first part of the summer. I wasn’t as miserable as when I returned from Reno: that time I was not on good terms with Dad and Mom. This time I simply had to adjust to failure and uncertainty. I returned to nightly janitorial work at the *Signal Companies* and fussed about my very unclear future.

Halfway through the summer I received a phone call from Bob Ivie. Before coming to WSU, Bob taught at the University of Idaho, where he had once been an undergraduate student. One of the professors there suffered a heart attack early in the summer and nearly died; although she would eventually return, she was unable to teach in the coming year. Bob recommended me as a potential replacement and was calling to ask if I was interested. Bob knew that I only had the BA but also that I’d been a successful teacher of a speech class that I self-taught, with faculty supervision, independent of faculty participation. He had briefed the people at the University of

Idaho and they were desperate enough to take the risk. I quickly agreed and contacted the Department in Idaho by phone. Soon I was making plans to return to Pullman so that I could teach Speech for a year ***on the faculty*** at the University of Idaho—with only a bachelor's degree and some graduate coursework in hand!

Needing a place to live in Pullman/Moscow, I contacted one of my friends and colleagues at *KUGR*. Frank Shiers had been assistant station manager when I started there and was general manager at *KUGR* during his last year at WSU. I knew that Frank had moved out of the dorms at the end of the school year; Frank worked as a disc jockey at the rock and rock station in Moscow so stayed in Pullman/Moscow after his graduation. I called him and wondered if he might take on a roommate. Gratefully, he was living alone in a basement apartment in Pullman and agreed. With a place to live and a job, I packed my stuff and headed back to Pullman.

While I was sorting out my situation, Ann injected a new feature into her life, post-graduation. Rather than go to graduate school, Ann signed on as the director of a residence hall at St. Olaf. The position was full-time and provided housing, attached to the dormitory, as well as an ample stipend. Ann took a couple of graduate courses as a way to sample the counseling curricula beginning to interest her while remaining in Northfield. Both of us found ourselves in holding patterns during the 1977–1978 academic year, temporarily employed in short-term situations.

We planned to move our relationship beyond engagement, toward marriage. I visited Northfield over Ann's Thanksgiving break and we shopped for and purchased a custom-made engagement ring from Northfield's local goldsmith (I took out a three-year loan for that one). We were happy together and were serious about finding ways to make our relationship work. I

applied to the Ph.D. programs at three Big Ten schools: The University of Iowa, the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and the University of Minnesota. I visited the department at Minnesota while in Northfield and interviewed with departmental faculty. However, my lousy undergraduate GPA (remember that I noted the 2.99999 GPA would bite me) and the unfinished M.A. resulted in rejections at all three schools. Unclear as to how we would get into the same time zone, we decided to defer making a formal engagement announcement to friends or family. Deep down, I think we both knew that we were hedging. And for good reason: The details simply weren't meshing and our future seemed very unclear.

On the one hand, our love and mutual commitment were growing. On the other hand, neither ruled out dating other people as our future was just too unsure for us to fully commit from such a distance. I got involved in more relationships than did Ann. Worse, I almost always used the relationship with Ann as a reason (excuse) to break up with the woman I was dating when things headed in the direction of "serious." Something about the arrangement was simply not right. We attributed the trouble to the distance and continued looking for ways to live in closer proximity.

The teaching job at the University of Idaho went very well. Rather than teaching oral interpretation I was tasked with the Basic Speech class; at Idaho, "Public Speaking." I was more than capable of presenting a competent "Public Speaking" class at the basic college level and this experience served me better, down the road, than if I had only taught oral interpretation prior to entering a Ph.D. program. The UI public speaking class produced an interesting detail. I was forced to put in an unexpected constraint on visual aids used during speeches: I banned firearms after one of my students brought his rifle to illustrate his "demonstration speech."

During my year teaching at Idaho, I attempted a non-traditional route toward a Ph.D. at WSU. The Speech Department faculty was, understandably, disappointed and somewhat angered by the loss of their Ph.D. program and sought alternative approaches in support of graduate students like me. They began a joint Ph.D. venture with the American Studies program. Professor Ivie was willing to promote my efforts to engage in what eventually became a joint Speech/American Studies Ph.D. program. However, I was the first student to try that approach and, at that time, the program was not yet fully in place or approved by the administration. Later students completed the program successfully.

I took two classes in American Studies at WSU while I was teaching at the University of Idaho; the schools had tuition waiver programs for employees at each other's institution that enabled me to take the coursework at very low cost. I took one class in structural linguistics and a second class in "Great English Novels." The coursework was interesting and I did quite well in the English class; not so much linguistics. Unfortunately, we were unable to structure a Ph.D. curriculum that utilized the hours I had already acquired in Speech Communication. I was unwilling to start over from scratch in American Studies and so we eventually dropped the plan and took no more American Studies coursework at WSU.

I knew that the teaching gig at UI was only going to last one academic year; then I would be unemployed without a way to pay even shared rent. Before the end of the summer, Frank and I brought Bill Boyd into our living situation; not long thereafter Bill and I gave Frank the heave-ho: he refused to conform with our sense of order. Although Frank eventually forgave us for throwing him out, he teased us for it: "you guys threw me out of *my own* apartment!" He was

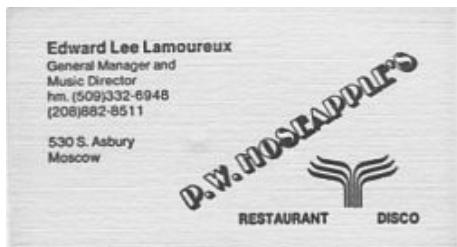
headed home to Seattle for jobs-searches anyway.

Not only was I going to be out of work at the end of the year but Bill, having earned the M.A., was leaving Pullman to enter the Mass Communication Ph.D. program at the University of Washington in his hometown, Seattle. I would soon be out of work, without roommates to lower costs, and unable to pay for an apartment. I quickly began to develop alternatives.

First, I auditioned for a job as a DJ at a new operation in Moscow Idaho. Two entrepreneurs—an ex-husband/wife pair with deep experience in local restaurants—were opening a trendy new restaurant/bar/disco operation, *P. W. Hoseapples*. They were looking for disc jockeys. I had recent radio



Bill Boyd outside the underground, basement, apartment in Pullman. The icky green Fiat parked at street level. The place was a dump.



*Somewhere in our basement or closets, there is a rolled-up, sepia-toned poster featuring pictures of the DJs at Hoseapples. "Disco Fast Eddie" is named and depicted there. While **Edward Lee Lamoureux**, **General Manager and Music Director** is more distinguished, nevertheless, for three years I was, mostly, **Disco Fast Eddie**. Friends from that era usually still call me "Fast Eddie."*

experience and enjoyed showing off, so I auditioned. While others played only disco music—this was after all 1978—I mixed some danceable rock into my set and the proprietors thought that mine was the best audition (especially when I played Bob Seger's "Old Time Rock and Roll"). Before the end of the spring term, I found myself teaching at the University of Idaho during the day and playing records on Thursday nights at the disco. When the Idaho teaching job ended I began waiting lunch tables at the restaurant and by the time summer rolled around, I was also the featured jock on Friday and Saturday nights.

Second, I pursued an unexpected opportunity based on an activity from my high school days. I had taken the basic *Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics* course in Long Beach. I was, or at least at one time had been, a speed-reader. Over the years (almost a decade), my skills had faded considerably. Nevertheless, when I spied a newspaper advertisement soliciting an *Evelyn Wood* training program targeted at developing teachers in the Pullman/Moscow area, I made immediate contact. The earlier speed-reading experience combined with my recent university teaching to secure the position. I was quickly invited for a week-long training session at the West Coast headquarters, conveniently enough, in the University District in Seattle. I made the trip, visited Bill and his family, completed the training, and returned to Pullman a certified *Evelyn Wood* speed-reading instructor.

After the training, I conducted courses on campus at WSU, at the University of Idaho, and on the reservation of the Spokane Indian tribe, just out of town in the foothills north of Cheney, Washington. Years later I taught for EWRD out of their Northwest regional office in Seattle and at the University of Oregon.

Unfortunately, just prior to the end of the spring, things with Ann went south; well, sort of south by northeast. Ann wrote describing a potential new direction for her studies and future. Her time at St. Olaf had piqued her curiosity about education and counseling so she'd decided to apply to graduate "pastoral counseling" programs at Princeton Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago Divinity School. I went ballistic at the news. I did not understand the definitions or implications of the terms "pastoral counseling," "Theological Seminary," or "Divinity School": they seemed too far out of line with my status as a nearly-full-blown, fallen-

away-Catholic. Further, I'd just spent the better part of a year trying to find ways to move to the Midwest; recall the summer spent living in Keokuk while Ann stayed in Northfield and my unsuccessful applications at Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. In my view, I was doing everything I could to transition toward her geographic location and there she was, making application for a school on the East coast. I was shocked and angered that Ann would even consider such a thing, especially without discussing it with, or explaining it to, me first. If I had given her a chance to explain and if I had reacted less destructively, I might have learned that she wasn't planning to become a cleric (that the term "pastoral" referred to a school of thought about/approach to counseling rather than the Protestant priesthood) and that heading east was only one of a number of possibilities. At the time, I wasn't interested in hearing her explanations.

Rather than do the reasonable thing and ask for more discussion and that Ann reconsider, I decided (on the spot) to end the relationship. Irrevocably. During a heated phone call, I said that her even considering such a thing showed that she didn't really care enough about me for us to continue the relationship. I told her that I didn't want to hear from her again and that I'd not answer or take her calls. I instructed Bill to not put any of Ann's subsequently-frantic calls through to me. I put the Raney-family-ring, that she had given me for the engagement, in a box and returned it to her. And just like that, after eight years, I was no longer traveling down the road that leads back to Ann Raney. The break-up did not improve my life; in fact, my downward spiral accelerated for a couple more years. Eventually, gratefully, an entry-ramp to the Road with Ann re-appeared, in a different form than earlier adventures. But for now, we were done.

The third job adjustment happened just after breaking up with Ann when I contacted the largest local realty agency in Pullman and applied as an apartment manager, a gig I landed. As a result, before the end of the teaching job—spring semester—and the first month of the summer, I moved into the manager’s space in the 64-unit *Valley View Apartments*. Bill joined me and we lived there through the early part of the summer, after which he headed off for the Ph.D. in Communication Studies at his BA alma mater UW and home in Seattle. I lived (mostly) alone in the apartment and worked at *PWs*.

Despite my success at *Hoseapples*, these were not good times. I was dating desperately and unhappily. Although I did not drink too much, I drank too often. I became assistant manager of the *Hoseapples* operation, as well as its music director and continued waiting tables at lunch. As a result, I was at the restaurant long hours. There was usually a cold beer after lunch, a glass of wine with dinner, maybe one or two drinks over the course of the four-hour DJ set, and then a beer or mixed drink after work. I was never drunk, but since I was still smoking pot (though not at work) I was seldom 100% sober.

Many of the best times in the *Hoseapples* period were spent in the company of fellow *Hoseapples* DJ Carlos (Charlie) DelValle and his girlfriend, Kathi Goertzen. We shared many weekend nights at after-parties, lasting from our 1:00 am closing until dawn: dancing, playing backgammon, smoking pot, and pairing off were on the menu at the best after-parties. Charlie and Kathi were a steady couple; I used the parties to troll for women but the three of us most often ended up sitting on a Palouse hill watching the sun rise over wheat fields; Charlie with his girl, me with a glass of wine. After short naps, we’d meet with other friends for brunch at

Hoseapples' sister restaurant in Moscow, *Biscuitroot Park*. Some of the crowd used Bloody Marys to re-start the cycle but I seldom joined in that lunacy.

Before we all left town, I played an important part in Kathi's legacy. I was the featured talent in her senior video project, completed just prior to her in 1980 graduation at WSU. Charlie interviewed me about disco and we brought a couple dancers over to illustrate some moves. Carlos later became a prominent sports reporter, first in Tacoma, then Seattle and finally in Los Angeles where he added work as a media producer in addition to a couple of credits for brief film appearances. Kathi Goertzen served, for decades, as the leading news anchor in the Seattle television market before suffering a tragic early death from cancer.

I made around \$800 a month as assistant manager, lead disc jockey, and music director at *Hoseapples*. I also enjoyed free rent and a \$200.00 a month stipend from the apartment managing gig. I appeared to be a very successful young guy, yet I was miserable. The parties, dancing, booze, pot, and dating scene were not fulfilling. In fact, they came close to killing me.

Very soon, this story gets to the part where Cheryl Johnson enters and saves my life. But just prior to that praise-worthy event and outcome, I got thrown in jail. The experience turned out much better than it might have. The night that I got thrown in jail was not the lowest point in the Pullman/Moscow experience, but it could have been. Instead, the event left me with a good story that serves as a cautionary tale and marked a turning point. The evening was dangerously close to the most toxic night I ever had. I was very fortunate to suffer less than the full brunt of the harm's way I traveled.

I was holding forth in the disco on a late Friday night, while also serving as assistant manager, when two local police officers entered the establishment and inquired "who's in

charge?" The place was jammed with dancers, drinkers, and late-night dinner guests; the music was loud and we were all sweaty, especially the guy up in the Plexiglas-enclosed disco booth. I looked around to see if one of the owners or the general manager were present but quickly ascertained that they were not in the house and so informed the officers that, indeed, I was the highest-ranking administrative functionary in the place at the time. ***Big Shot Me!*** They instructed me to climb down because I was under arrest for allowing a minor into our nightclub.

Hoseapples participated in a "work-to-learn" program in cooperation with the local high school. One of the students in that program was tasked, that evening as usual, with checking IDs at the door. Now, *P.W. Hoseapples* was a full-service operation with a sit-down restaurant, a traditional bar, and a disco with a metal dance floor and the proper accouterment including strobe lights, mirror ball, mirrors on all the walls, and lots of booths with intimate seating arrangements. Because *PWs* was a full-service restaurant, the operation maintained a license that enabled us to permit entry to patrons of any age. We were simply required to not serve alcohol to underage customers. However, since our customers often attended one of two local colleges, to be on the safe side, we maintained a *Hoseapples* policy of allowing minors into only the restaurant area; we checked IDs at the door, then split the traffic to prevent under-aged customers from entering either the bar or the disco.

This particular evening, our high-school-student-doorman turned away some of his friends when they tried to enter the disco. Angry with him, our door-monitor's friends called the police complaining that "there is a minor inside the door at the disco." Unfortunately, when the Moscow police called the local state liquor control agent, that person was on vacation so was unavailable to take the call and/or make a ruling. As a result, the Moscow police called the liquor

control agent in the county next to ours (in Lewiston, Idaho); that person was unfamiliar with our operation, its layout, and our licensing, heard that we had a minor inside the liquor side of the house, and told the police to “book ‘em Dano.” When they came to get me I simply didn’t think to take them into the office behind the kitchen to see our license; I was a little disoriented and plenty frightened by the arrest. As we headed out the front door toward the squad car, an already scary arrest headed toward terrifying.

Just before leaving, I asked for permission to retrieve my shoulder bag because it held my wallet and driver’s license. I knew that I would need those at the jail. Had I thought things through, I would have taken the officers with me to the office where I retrieved my bag; our license hung on the wall of that room. I also forgot about the social event I’d planned after work. You see, there was this woman who was *very* popular at the disco, *extremely popular*; so popular that perhaps I was the only living, breathing, heterosexual male at the club who had not spent quality time with her. In fact, there were rumors that she was also really good friends with some of the homosexual males who frequented the club. I’d arranged to correct the lacunae in our dance cards at the end of the evening’s festivities and as part of that arrangement I scored a small container of high-quality marijuana as a sign of my earnest intentions toward her, not to mention in efforts to grease the skids for our budding relationship. I quite forgot that the container was in my bag when I retrieved it. That fact dawned on me when I hit the back seat of the squad car on the way to the station.

The small amount of pot that I had might have been judged insignificant. In Pullman, Washington in 1978, less than 2 ounces would generally garner little more than a misdemeanor citation. However, recent events in Moscow, Idaho caused me deep concern. Less than a month

earlier, the student body president at the University of Idaho had been sent to the state prison for two years as the result of an arrest for possession of less than 4 ounces of marijuana. I suppose that the system was making a model case of him. But gee, here I was—the featured local disc jockey. I assumed that that they would want to make at least as big an example of a guy like me.

I developed a plan on the fly and told the officers in the squad car that I had been working in the box at the disco for a couple of hours and had not visited a bathroom recently so I would need to use the facilities as soon as we got to the station. I looked a little desperate and that may have contributed to their buying my story. As soon as we arrived at the station one of the officers pointed to the back of the cellblock where the only toilet stood. I quickly headed for the dark room, semi-closed the cell door behind me, and before long did a little extra flushing than would normally be required (but I was careful to not overdo it). I returned to the front desk and handed over my bag as I checked in. The police had not taken it away before I went to the jail-cell-toilet and they did not search it when I turned it over. I was fingerprinted, photographed, and placed into the cell. I waited almost two hours before one of my co-workers tracked down our corporate lawyer. Trust me, the local jail in Moscow, Idaho did not feature luxury accommodations and is not a place that you would like to book for your next after-party.

By the time I was bailed out, the proposed meeting time for that hot date was long past. I drove over to the young woman's dark house/address, quickly gave up, and drove home to Pullman, temporarily disappointed. In retrospect, it's easy to realize that at the height of the herpes era, and just entering the sad destruction that AIDS would bring to the world and the disco scene, I was fortunate to miss that date. In no small measure, being thrown in jail that night was more than likely a lifesaver.

Even more so was the fact that the very next week marked the first time that I danced with Cheryl Lee Johnson.

Before my case came before the judge, our lawyer contacted the Moscow area liquor control agent and clarified our licensing and the inappropriate nature of the arrest. I then sat in the back of the courtroom as the lawyer and the judge discussed the matter. The judge dismissed the charge, labeled the event a “false arrest,” and instructed the local police to immediately expunge the arrest from my record. Unfortunately, that immediate expungement took over three years. To my benefit, Cheryl Johnson’s sister, Margaret, was on the police force in nearby Lewiston, Idaho and was able to keep tabs on the Moscow force’s lack of action. Margaret encouraged the eventual closure of that case and the promised expungement.

I’ve never had a problem telling people “I picked my wife up at the disco.” The phrase always gets a reaction and then I’m able to tell a good story, the one I am about to recount.

The first night we danced was not the first time I spotted Cheryl Johnson. A full year earlier, I was working in the box and saw her across the floor dancing with Mike Jones. Mike was one of the original *Hoseapples* disc jockeys but he had moved on to work as a spinner at a small bar/nightclub eight miles to the west in Pullman. There he worked with my friend and co-worker (later, employee) at *Hoseapples*, Charlie/Carlos; Charlie worked as a spinner at both places. Given that the rest of our social behavior was downright despicable it’s amazing that we maintained one of the primary features of “the guys’ code”: we did not chase each other’s girlfriends. So, when I saw Cheryl at the club, I kept my distance for fear that she was still dating Mr. Jones.

About a week after my evening in Moscow's lock-up, I again noticed Cheryl in the club. That night, Charlie was close at hand and he recognized my interest. He poked me in the ribs with an "Oh so you like her huh?" leer and smile. I asked him about Cheryl and was surprised and pleased when he reported that Michael and Cheryl had never actually been an item: the date that I witnessed was a one-time, not-at-all-serious event. I quickly hopped down out of the box and headed across the floor toward her.

We now interrupt this romantic story for a lesson in humility. There wasn't much in life that caused me to feel humble in those days as I was still pretty full of myself and it was easy for me to ignore any circumstances suggesting the contrary. However, one set of events occurred regularly at the disco and reminded me of my reduced status among otherwise exalted human beings. The event went as follows: I was working in the box, dancing to the records, switching the lights, quaffing a beverage, spinning around, and in general showing off. Across the room I spied an appealing female. I caught her eye with a "come hither" glance; she returned my look with interest marking obvious desire. Crossing the dance floor, she approached the opening of the box, stood on her tiptoes, smiled, looked longingly up into my eyes, and shouted an invitation for us to dance (she would rather have whispered in my ear but I stood too high on the platform for her to reach me). Inevitably I was busy at the time so raised an index finger asking for just a moment after which I fiddled with something as a way to further cement my status as the wizard in the box. Finally, I climbed down off the platform; it was at that point that the look on her face changed from awe to regret, from eager anticipation to obviously questioning her judgment, perhaps even her sanity. For, as my feet hit the floor, the top of my head evened out somewhere around her chest. As good as that view often was as I looked up into her eyes I saw, I believe it

was, total and complete rejection. This happened a lot. A nice thick piece of humble pie followed as immediately thereafter she'd turn and bolt after we shared the one dance that she really didn't want to have with me after all.

Gratefully, Cheryl was seated across the dance floor so I didn't risk coming up short when stepping down out of the box. Even better, she is a couple of inches shorter than me. I asked her if we could dance after I'd put on a longer record; she agreed and when I returned we danced and chatted over an interminably long and terribly repetitive disco ode. It was sometimes a good thing that disco records could go on (and on and on) for up to 12 minutes. I asked if I could buy her a drink and when she told me that she would like "single-malt scotch, straight up" I knew that I was probably on to someone special. After the song, the dance, and putting on another song, I instructed our bartender to pour a double shot of our best single-malt scotch and quickly delivered it to Cheryl's table. She was impressed with that one and finished it so quickly that I immediately ordered another and sent it over for her enjoyment. Before the night was through I asked her if we could go out on a date. Maybe it was because she thought that those top-shelf doubles would keep on coming or maybe it was because she'd had two; whatever the reason, she agreed.

A week later we went to dinner at one of the best Mexican restaurants in the state of Washington, *Alex's Mexican Restaurante* in Pullman. I enjoyed the way she ate the food she ordered rather than picking daintily around the edges. We took in the movie playing down the street at Pullman's only theatre, *Saturday Night Fever*, ironically enough. The next day I went straight to a jewelry store (located smack between *Alex's* and the movie theatre) in Pullman and purchased a small brooch with an enameled rainbow inlay and took it to her at her place of

employment, *Dodson's Jewelers* on Main Street in Moscow. I thanked her for the lovely evening and wondered if perhaps we might go out again. She was impressed and agreed.



From then on, we dated exclusively and soon Cheryl confronted me with two choices. Choice number one was that I would radically modify a lifestyle focused on pot, relatively indiscriminate sex, and rock 'n roll. For the time being, she would allow the rock 'n roll part; after all, I made my living at the disco. The other two items had to go. Choice number two was that I could hit the road. I enthusiastically went straight for door number one. And that, my friends, is how Cheryl Johnson saved my life.

Not long after we began dating, I was asked to take over the *Hoseapples* operation as general manager. Both my pay and the hours that I spent at work nearly doubled. Since I wasn't partying it up any longer, I was able to manage the increased hours while Cheryl and I embraced the fun provided by the extra money.

Cheryl and I enjoyed each other's exclusive company and quickly came to realize that we had met our match. Within a few months, I called Roger and Evangeline in Long Beach and told them that they were going to have a make a trip north, to San Francisco, so that I could bring this amazing woman over for them to meet. I had written, to my folks, about Cheryl and talked to them on the phone often enough that they realized I was not only serious about her but was also well within my good senses, so they agreed to the meet-up.

The trip to San Francisco produced four memorable events; two while in the Bay Area and two more on the way back to Pullman/Moscow. First, Roger and Evangeline fell in love with Cheryl even faster than I had. Both discerned her kind heart and good judgment and appreciated

her down-to-earth demeanor. Roger was particularly drawn to her attractiveness and features that reminded him of his sister, Bernadette. Second, Cheryl got to experience her first earthquake. While I sat on the side of the bed the morning we were to leave S.F., she said “Edward, stop shaking the bed.” I turned and said “welcome to California; that’s not me it’s an earthquake!” Roger was in a room, down the hall, likely telling Evangeline to “relax and enjoy it.” Devout Roman Catholics or not, my folks never confronted me about the fact that Cheryl and I shared a hotel room on that visit. They liked her.

Third, I wanted to stop at Reno, Nevada on our way back to Pullman. I was eager to drive around town as I had not seen very much of it during my brief stay in 1971. On the way, we drove through Lake Tahoe so stopped there, at a casino, for lunch. After lunch, essentially on our way out the door, we made a quick stop in the gaming areas where I played blackjack while Cheryl pulled one-armed bandit handles. We agreed that we’d stop after 30 minutes and drive to Reno for a look around and an overnight stay, hopefully at a hotel we could afford.

Cheryl found me, down to my last couple chips, after she’d put in her nickels and won a few dollars more than she started with. I lost all but two or three of the chips I’d purchased when I sat down to play. Instead of spending time cashing in a few chips, I picked them up to keep them as a souvenir. However, there was a “Wheel of Fortune” placed strategically just inside the front door, so saying (exactly what casino management wanted me to say) “what the heck, we might as well leave these here” I put the chips down on a number and pressed the button to spin the wheel. Wouldn’t you know: **BAM! JACKPOT!** Right then and there we won more money than ever before or since at a casino: \$180 free and clear. The winnings paid for the lunch in Tahoe, for our hotel room at Reno’s Circus-Circus and dinner and a show at Harrah’s (with two

mandatory drinks each) featuring Gladys Knight and the Pips at their very best that evening. We had a smashing good time! The next night proved equally smashing, and memorable, in all the wrong ways.

The drive from Reno to Pullman/Moscow provided the fourth memorable event; labeling this a “highlight” is inappropriate. The driving time from Reno to Pullman/Moscow is almost 12 hours. Cheryl did not drive in those days; regardless, I planned making the haul in a single day. We got a good start in the morning and were well into Oregon as dusk approached; Pullman was within 3 or 4 hours. We hit a long stretch of highway construction but there were no active workers to be seen, just a lot of torn up land on both sides of the two-lane highway. It appeared that the work was preliminary to a major widening project. The trouble started slowly enough: as the first jackrabbit entered my lane I was able to avoid hitting the little creature. That was, however, the last bunny that I missed. Reminiscent of the climactic scene from *The Birds*, jackrabbits began crossing the road faster than we could wonder why. Apparently, the roadwork did significant damage to their habitat and sunset increased their activity, especially moving from one side of the roadway to the other. I slowed to a crawl, turned on my lights, honked my horn, blinked my lights, honked my horn more, and tried everything else I could think of to avoid murder and mayhem. All to no avail: thump, thump-thump, thump, thump-thump.

Soon we saw big rig trucks passing us, plowing through the bunny-laden highway like snowplows. We looked at each other and shrugged our shoulders admitting that if we were going to drive home we would have to continue moving forward among the carnage. Instead, we abandoned the drive, and our day’s goal, and stopped at the first roadside motel we could find.

The motel proved to be an antidote against further jackrabbit homicide, however, it provided us with an experience we'd rather not have had and won't ever forget. The motel was the single worst place that either of us had ever stayed. It would be longer than three decades before I stayed in a motel that was worse; the hotel I booked in Devils Lake North Dakota, while researching for this book, was almost beyond description. Suffice to say, we were more than happy to get back to our separate apartments and into our own beds, the next day, after an exciting and event-filled short vacation.

Returning to Pullman/Moscow, and to full-time work at *Hoseapples*, I put in long hours and handed a lot of money.

In its first year of operation, *Hoseapples*' unique status in the marketplace at the height of the disco era produced over a million dollars-worth of business, an almost unimaginable sum in an area as small as Moscow/Pullman in 1978-79. By the time I took over as general manager the income dropped as much as 40%; the place was still doing very well but management was in constant "change mode," trying to recover the magic and lost profits.

I worked at the disco four nights a week. The bar and disco closed at 1 a.m. so it was usually 2 a.m. by the time I made the eight-mile drive back to Pullman. I was back at work by 9 a.m. to count the previous day's take and balance the books. Lunch started at 11 a.m. and although I no longer waited tables I often served as daytime/lunch host. After a couple of hours off in the afternoon (too short a time to drive back-and-forth from home in Pullman), I was back for the dinner shift, then into the disco box four out of seven nights. Most of the nights that I didn't jock, I stayed on-hand until the dinner rush subsided and the bar/disco operations ran smoothly.

While counting the money one morning in late fall, I realized that my \$1,250 a month didn't strike me as adequate compensation for all the work. I'm sure that I took myself too seriously and thought too much of my role as featured disc jockey. It seemed to me that I was at least partially responsible for a lot of the money that came in and I wasn't taking much (of anything) out for my efforts. At that point, it dawned on me that the restaurant business wasn't for me, or for that matter, for anyone who didn't have an ownership stake. I told Cheryl that I was planning to leave the restaurant after the first of the year in order to return to school although I'd yet to fully make those arrangements. She concurred, although was concerned about the loss of income that would result from my leaving *Hoseapples*. However, I still managed the apartments so received free rent and a small stipend. I had saved some money and although I had to pay tuition at WSU to complete the Master's degree, I'd lived as a non-student in-state long enough that I'd was only charged in-state tuition for the three remaining, required, thesis hours.

In addition to deciding that I would leave the restaurant business and complete the MA, I suggested that Cheryl return to the University of Idaho and complete her B.S. Cheryl was only a couple courses short of attaining a Home Ec./Fabric Design degree. If (at that point, hypothetically) we left the Pullman/Moscow area after my Master's degree, perhaps for me to pursue a Ph.D., she would benefit from completing her degree before we moved. Although we had not yet agreed to leave together, she saw the wisdom in taking the classes and completing the degree.

And so, before Christmas rolled around, three important things happened: First, I proposed marriage (in the restaurant, after lunch, with the sounds of *The Second Time Around* and *Ain't No Stopping Us Now* playing from the box in the background); second, Cheryl accepted

(despite the corny musical themes and the lack of fancy/expensive engagement ring—I was still paying off the loan for the ring I'd given Ann that she did not return); and third, we both arranged to re-enter school in the spring. I gave a month's notice at *Hoseapples*. They quickly replaced me as lead DJ and promoted the assistant manager. However, before long they found their disco operation floundering in the absence of adequate planning and innovation. The bloom was well off the disco-music rose and the backlash was significant. Within 16 months, the place was in a downward spiral as they unsuccessfully tried to cater to both post-disco rap and 1980s grunge/new wave crowds. *Hoseapples* closed within three years due to changing musical tastes (NOT due to my absence).

Turning my attention to Pullman, not long after leaving *Hoseapples*, I reprised my role as a waiter at a casual dining/burger spot in Pullman, *Hannigan's*, to supplement my apartment manager's income. Additionally, we started making plans for the future under the assumption that I would finish the M.A. degree in a single semester. My eventual goal was to enter the Ph.D. program in the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Washington. The program was excellent and included Professor Gerry Philipsen, a communication ethnography and field research expert who would make a perfect dissertation advisor and Ph.D. committee chair for my work in conversation analysis/field research.

There were, however, at least two major problems with my plan. First, due to not having finished the M.A. degree and a mediocre overall undergraduate GPA, I could no more expect to get into the University of Washington than I had been able to get into three Big Ten schools. Second, and more worrisome, was a rumor that the Chairman of the Speech Department at UW maintained a strong bias against candidates with advanced degrees from WSU.

While finishing at WSU I made a number of contacts with faculty members and students at “UW” and determined that two of the faculty members, Gerry Philipsen and John Stewart, would allow me to audit their courses. I would not receive credit but the in-state-student audit fee was very low, I’d learn the material and they’d see me in academic action. If I measured up, they’d write positive letters of recommendation. Hopefully, after moving to Seattle and impressing the faculty with audited coursework, they would accept me into the Ph.D. program. Both faculty members cautioned me about their chairman’s negative feelings about WSU grads, confirming the rumors but indicating that they would be willing to support my application after I completed the M.A. if my performance in their courses proved meritorious. I decided to risk it and started making plans to move to Seattle after graduation. Cheryl and I both applied for re-entry into our respective degree programs.

Bob Nofsinger was pleased that I had returned to school and was incredibly helpful toward my completing the necessary requirements. I had no additional coursework to take; I merely had to register for three hours of thesis credit, collect data in support of writing a Master’s thesis, then successfully author and defend the document.

We quickly planned an in-house research event that provided conversational data for analysis. I ran the event, collected the data, did the analysis, and wrote the thesis all in one semester, faster than I’d previously believed I could. I thereby qualified for the Master’s degree in time to walk in the upcoming May ceremony. I invited Evangeline and Roger to drive up and attend the graduation; of course, I’d bring Cheryl over from Moscow for the big day. Instead, the universe intervened.

Around 11am May 18, 1980, I looked out of my *Valley View Apartment* front window and noticed that the sky to the west was darkening. The local paper had not predicted stormy weather and the approaching clouds and sky seemed ominously black. Before noon, the sky over the entire Palouse was darkened and dirt descended from the sky like so much blizzard-grey snow. Radio and television broadcasts soon identified the culprit as ash fall from a massive eruption of Mount Saint Helens. Pullman received amounts between the four inches recorded at Yakima and the one-half inch recorded in Spokane.



I acquired this metallic brown Buick in a trade with Roger during the trip to S.F. When the ash hit, we had no idea if it would ruin car paint just by sitting on the surface so I rushed out and covered as much of the car as I could with newspaper



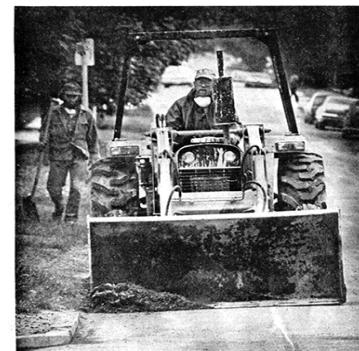
View from out my front window at the Valley View Apartments. Not exactly pure as the driven snow

While there was no mass panic there was massive confusion as it took days for scientific information to filter to the general population. Initially, experts were not sure about the composition of the ash or of its potential danger to humans or to physical systems such as machinery, automobiles, and plumbing/sewer systems.

I was very unclear as to my responsibilities as an apartment manager during this natural disaster. At one point on the first day, I donned a rolled-up handkerchief as a mask and safety glasses while attempting to remove the ash from our walkways (emulating my behavior after heavy snowfalls when I shoveled snow off the walks before the plows came by to clear the parking lot). The ash was about as easy to move as wet concrete; I quickly gave up. I called Cheryl as soon as the phone lines were open and we agreed that I would not attempt to drive to Moscow until we were better informed about the risks to driving cars in the undiagnosed muck.

I called Long Beach and told the folks that they should cancel their planned trip north. In the first place, we had no idea whether the school would go through with the graduation scheduled for the coming weekend. Further, no one knew when or whether the roads would be clear or what the travel advisories would recommend. We all hunkered down for a week's worth of scrutinizing available media for information about our situation. The eruption spread more than 500,000,000 tons of ash over more than 22,000 square miles of real estate and Pullman/Moscow were close enough to see significant amounts of ash.

Once the scientific community determined that the ash was not poison, would not damage vehicles, and posed health risks only to those with pre-existing respiratory ailments, WSU rescheduled the graduation ceremonies for one week later than originally planned. Officials at school and in Pullman worked feverishly to clean up as much of the mess as possible within the two-weeks-time between the eruption and the ceremonies. A lot of ash remained on the ground



ASH SHOVELING-
Moscow residents take another stab at cleaning up the city streets . . . this tractor was seen shoveling in front of Hoseapple's on 6th street.

as well as in most crevices and on every available surface; it took months to collect the material as thinning the stuff down was difficult. One was, after all, pushing around small rock particles. Trying to wash it away resulted in mounds of cement-like sludge while sweeping it raised great clouds of eye and throat-choking dust. When I headed for Seattle a month or so later, the ash still heavily covered most streets and farmland across the entire five and one-half-hour drive west, with the thickness increasing approaching the Cascade mountain range.

The WSU Master's degree graduation struck me as one of the most depressing and least "celebratory" events I ever attended. Because of the eruption, neither Cheryl nor my parents attended. Most graduates experienced similar loneliness as friends and family stayed off the roads and away from Pullman. Further, my future was cloudy as I had not yet been admitted to a Ph.D. program while knowing that having a Master's degree in Speech Communication would not get me very far in the academic world; for me, the Master's degree was transitional rather than terminal.

A week after the environmental calamity, I was still not clear as to how much more clean-up work I was responsible for. That turned out to be misplaced anxiety because large trucks and industrial crews soon took over the cleanup effort. Still, I was struggling with the logistics of moving to Seattle as well as concerns about leaving my new fiancé behind. I had more than four years of experience with a distant relationship (featuring two engagements) that had not ended well.

Gratefully, parts of the situation clarified relatively quickly. Bill called from Seattle reporting that his brother Bob and wife Sydney had decided to purchase a small house and move out of their apartment management situation. The apartment was located, conveniently enough

for me, in the UW “University District,” and was a very similar set up as the *Valley View* in Pullman. The *Etherington Apartments* had only forty-eight units, but the job provided free rent (with paid-for space in an underground parking structure—a real benefit in the “U” district) and a stipend that was bigger than the one I received in Pullman. The Boyds had spoken to the owner on my behalf and he had virtually agreed to give me the job if I would drive over and meet him. I made the drive to Seattle quickly on request. Mr. Etherington was a good guy and I soon gave notice at the two jobs in Pullman and prepared to move to Seattle. While there meeting Don Etherington, I applied for a job at another *Hannigan’s* (it was more of a transfer than a full application). I also contacted the Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics Pacific Northwest headquarters located, conveniently, in the U distract less than 1.5 miles from my new apartment. I made myself available for speed reading teaching assignments and was soon headed for the big city with a (free) place to live and three-half-jobs. I was more than adequately set up for my efforts to enter the University of Washington. Cheryl took a class each semester and completed an undergraduate degree from the University of Idaho. Natural disasters notwithstanding, life was looking up and ***Disco Fast Eddie left the building!***

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