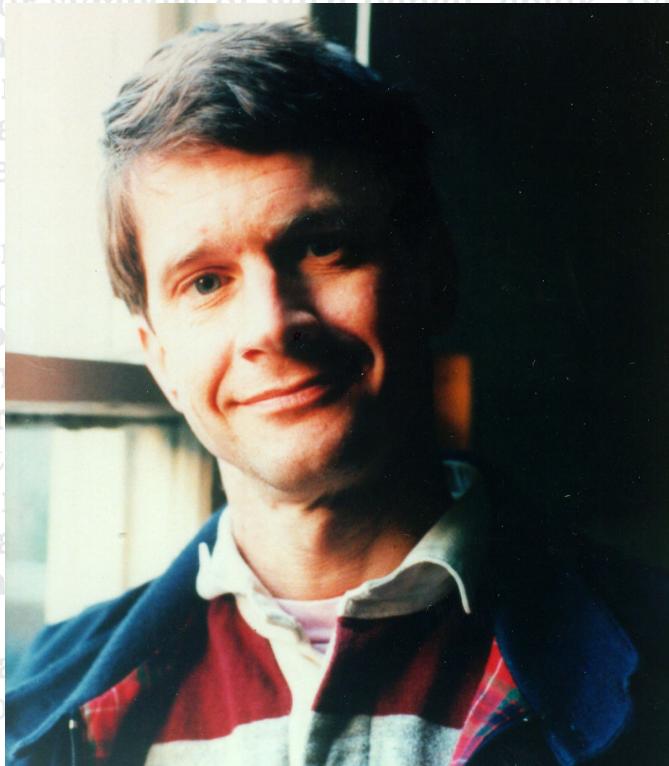


write (rit) *vt.* **wrote**, **writ'ten**, **writ'ing** [ME *writen* < OE *writan*, to scratch, engrave, write, akin to Ger *reissen*, to tear < IE base **wer-*, to tear off, scratch > Gr *rhinē*, a rasp] **1** *a*) to form or inscribe (words, letters, symbols, etc.) on a surface, as by cutting, carving, embossing, or, esp., marking with a pen or pencil *b*) to form the words, letters, or symbols of with pencil, chalk, typewriter, etc.; put down in a form to form or inscribe **2** to put into writing; compose **3** to spell (a name, word, etc.) correctly; pronounce well enough to be understood **4** to compose of (literary, musical, etc.) in a legal form **7** to put into writing **8** to communicate in writing; write to communicate with in writing **9** to go/ **10** to entitle **11** to communicate with in writing **12** to undergo or experience in memory or on a written record **13** to make signs, or evidence, of *vi.* **1** to form (a mark, etc.) on a surface, esp. by means of a pen or pencil in a cursive style: often used of literary matter; to be employed at written work, as a clerk, copyist, etc. **6** to produce writing of a specified kind *[to write legibly, a pen that writes scratchily]* **—write down** **1** to put into written form; write a record of **2** to dispense with; depreciate in writing **3** to write in a pointedly simple style, as by a writer **4** to cultivate; **—write in** **★**to vote for (someone not officially on the ballot) **—write off** **1** to remove from accounts (bad debts, claims, etc.) **2** to drop from consideration **3** **AMORTIZE** (sense 2) **—write out** **1** to put into writing **2** to write in full **3** to exhaust (oneself) of ideas **—write up** **1** to write a record or account of **2** to complete in writing **3** to praise or make much of in writing **4** to set down an excessive value for (an asset)



‘Words are my Life’

**Writings of
Mark Tyrrell**

1951-1997

writer (rit'ər) *n.* **1** a person whose work or occupation is writing; now, specif., an author, journalist, or the like **2** a solicitor or lawyer

writ'ərly (rit'ər lē) *adj.* **1** of or characteristic of a writer **2** characterized by the qualities of a writer's craft, esp. by those that reflect a self-conscious display of literary techniques



*Mark in Miss Prosser's
kindergarten class,
Mercer Crest
Elementary School,
1956, ...*

Here, prepared for the Gathering of Friends on Saturday, Sept. 20, 1997, at The Estate, is a collection of the writings of Mark Tyrrell, who died on July 14, 1997.

I do not intend for this booklet to be my own look at Mark's life. Rather, this is a vehicle for anyone to look back upon and enjoy Mark's life as told entirely by his unique voice.

Despite its length, this booklet is intended to be representative, as opposed to comprehensive. More time and reflection will allow the latter approach. For now, this booklet will hit some high points and prompt more than a few smiles.

Even though I have tried to provide needed context, some readers may find the details in some passages puzzling or obscure. In those cases, just keep reading, for the purpose of this chronological collection is less to document Mark's life than it is to display his humor, wordsmithing and insight.

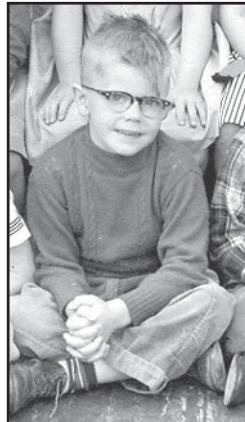
Many of these words you may have seen before, as Mark loved to share the results of his voracious writing, but some of these excerpts come from his private journals. I have tried to avoid selecting passages about people or topics that were sensitive to Mark or that would be sensitive to those who have survived him. Even so, there is much insight into his complexities to be found between the lines.

I am confident that Mark would not be ashamed or embarrassed by anything here. More likely he would be proud, in the sense that this collection reflects myriad aspects of his very full life that might evaporate eventually if not for his writings.

Mark was my lifelong friend. He often said, with knowing serenity, "Words are my life." I feel privileged to have compiled some of his best.

What's inside

- The 1950s 3-4
- The 1960s 5-11
- The 1970s 12-25
- The 1980s 26-45
- The 1990s 46-52



Clay

Clay Eals
4310-1/2 S.W. Raymond St.
Seattle, Washington 98136-1444
Phone: (206) 935-7515

*... and Clay Eals, from
the same class photo.*

The 1950s

[From Baby's First Years filled out by Mark's mother Midge.]

Mark Neling Tyrrell was born on Thursday, the 5th day of July, 1951, at 10:20 a.m. at The Doctors Hospital, 909 University St., Seattle, Washington.

Weight: 7# 9oz. Height: 20-1/2 inches.

Color of eyes: blue. Color of hair: reddish blond. Brows: light. Lashes: light. Complexion: Very fair.

Parents: Frank D. and Maywood M. Tyrrell. Brother: George Tyrrell.

Baptized Feb. 22, 1953, Church of the Epiphany, Seattle.

* * *

[Mid-1990s, information Mark obtained about his birth parents following a lengthy search.]

Stork Report

Name: Mark Neling Tyrrell

Date of Birth: July 5, 1951

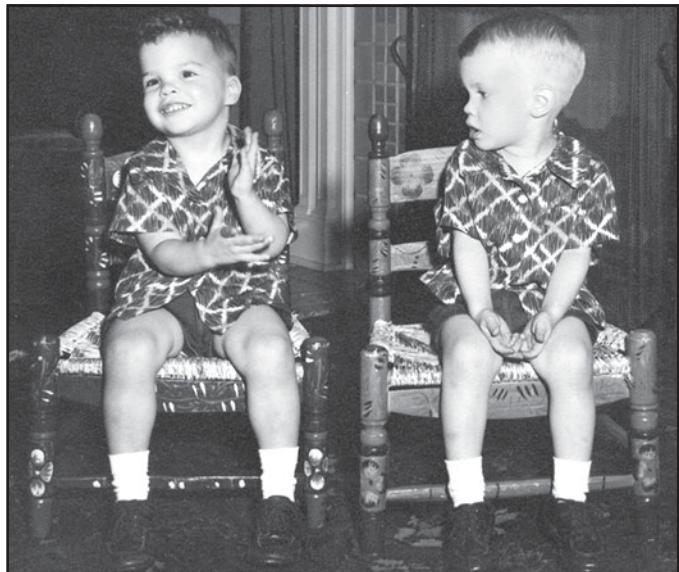
	<u>Womb mother</u>	<u>Sperm father</u>
Age at birth of child	19	30
Education	12th grade	12th grade
Health	Good	Good
Nationality/Race	Irish/French Canadian	Scandinavian
Occupation	Stenographer	Telephone repairman
Physical description	5'0", 108 lb., hazel eyes, brown hair, freckles	5'8", 145 lb., medium brown hair
Religious background	Catholic	Protestant
Special interests	None given	None given

* * *

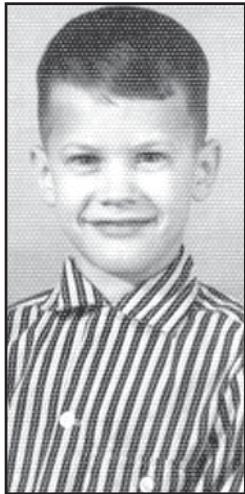
[November 1958, note to the tooth fairy.]

Fairy, last night when you tryed to get my tooth you did not put your hand under the pellow. But I did get 11¢. Your hand got inside of my pellow. My tooth is in this embelope. I lost 7 teeth. I lost this tooth in my toast. Mark.

* * *



George (left) and Mark Tyrrell, 1953.



Third grade, in Mrs.
Raney's class at Mercer
Crest Elementary
School.

[Nov. 10, 1958, writing assignment, accompanied by crayon drawing showing a toy train on a table, a "beer box" over to the side, and Mark shouting, "Dad! a wire's on fire come fast.".]

My Week-end news

Sunday I was playing with my electric train. Then a wire caught on fire! I called my father. And he put it out. I waited for a few minutes then I played with the trains some more. The end.

* * *

[December 1959, letter from 8-year-old Mark.]

Dear Santa,

Please don't send me what was on my last list. Mother sent it accidentally. This is what I really want:

No. 1183 of the Bon Marche Christmas book, \$2.98.
A three-coin register and bank.
A game of Bas-Ket.
And PLEASE, a surprise.

Thank you,
Mark Tyrrell

* * *

[Late 1950s.]

REMBER!

Birds are like planes.

Don't shoot down planes till war begins.
Don't shoot down birds till fall begins.

* * *

[Late 1950s, birthday card to Mark's father.]

Happy birthday daddy,
Nice ol' daddy dear,

Sience it is your birthday,
Please drink up this beer.
Burbon, Water, Wiskey,
Are you getting gay?
Too bad this can only happen
on a special day.

Hik! burp Glug gulp
From,
Mark

The 1960s

[Excerpts from The 89th Street News, Wednesday, April 10, 1961, produced by Mark Tyrrell.]

This paper is a sample for anyone on 89th Street who wants to subscribe. ... The paper comes out every other Wednesday. The cost for it is 10¢ per month. Mark, who makes the whole thing, would like the scores from any woman on 89th that is in league bowling, news from YOUR family, sports, etc. This paper is free, but if you buy a subscription, the papers will cost money. So what? It's only 10¢ a month!

TONIGHT'S TELEVISION PROGRAM IS ON THE AIR!: Hello folks, Jack Penny. Tonight we have a few special guests: Ted Smellivan, Jack Peer, J.P. Peaches, Ernie Model T Ford, Tablet Hunter, Loretta Old, Lucille Bomb, Dizzy Arnose, Bob Goings, Gary Less, Pink Skelton and Walt Fizz-nick. Well, good-bye, our hour show is over.

THE SIGN SAID "WET PAINT," SO THE DOG DID!!: The dogs on 89th and 90th are: Rex, Ferd, Sheba, Jake, Gypsy, Sandy, Sindey, Prince, Juliet, Sindy (again), Pat, Toto, Spotty, Susie, Maggie and Sock.

AFTER THE FIREMAN'S BALL: After the Fireman's ball, Mr. Neiman suggested we go to the Pizza Parlor. He had a 12-incher, Dr. Carlson had a 8-incher, Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Tyrrell didn't have any. They settled for coffee.

FLY-UP ALL OVER THE PLACE!!!! Basketballs are long forgotten, and baseballs are flying. Fly-up, "midget" baseball on the street, catch, work-up and a lot of other games with a baseball are seen and heard throughout 89th and 90s. A lot of people watch the Sunday Major League games. Most of the boys are playing baseball on teams. Some turned out for the Majors. GOOD LUCK!

* * *

[Excerpts from The 89th and 90th Street News, spring 1961.]

THANKS FOR THIS SUCCESS: This latest paper was a success because of You! Sixteen people have subscribed. After this big surprise, the staff will make this paper as good as ever! In fact, we are so happy that the paper is going to come out 2 times a month "with no extra charge." It will, therefore, come out the second week of the month. THANKS A LOT.

Last issue, the paper did not have the last line on er ... aa ... because we had too much news! Please excuse us for this.

* * *

[Excerpts from The 89th and 90th Street News, July 1961.]

WE ARE NOT BRAGGING: If you think that the staff is bragging, you are wrong. It is just that everyone thinks that it *should* be in the paper: The Tyrrells went up to Sekiu to go salmon fishing. They only had one fish in the three days they were up at the fishing town. That one fish was caught by Mark! It was a 25-pound King salmon.

CORRECTION: In the 89th and 90th Street News No. 2, Animal News, there was a goof. Mike Grant DIDN'T catch his squirrel, he bought it.

* * *



Fifth-grade, Mrs. Keller's class, Mercer Crest Elementary School.

Tonight we have a few special guests: Ted Smellivan, Jack Peer, J.P. Peaches, Ernie Model T Ford, Tablet Hunter, Loretta Old, Lucille Bomb, Dizzy Arnose, Bob Goings, Gary Less, Pink Skelton and Walt Fizznick.

The 89th Street News

ISSUE 1* VOLUME 1 * WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 1961 * 4032 89th S.E. * A.D. 2-5291*

THIS PAPER IS A SAMPLE - READ IT!!

* * * * *

This paper is a sample for anyone on 89th street who wants to subscribe. Subscribe by calling A.D. 2-5291 after May 10. The paper comes out every other Wednesday. The cost for it is 10¢ per month. Mark, who makes the whole thing, would like the scores from any women on 89th that is in league bowling, news from YOUR family, sports, etc. This paper is free, but if you buy a subscription, the papers will cost money. So what? It's only 10¢ a month!

THE JOKES FOR THIS WEDNSDAY ARE ON.....
All jokes out of BOYS LIFE.

* * * * *

Q: Why are the snowflakes dancing?
A: They are getting ready for the snowball. — Jay Williams, Tampa, Fla.

* * * * *

Daffyishon: Auctioneer; A man who looks forbidding. — Lawrence Schear, Trenton 9, New Jersey.

Do you know it takes five sheep to make one sweater?
I didn't even know they could knit.

ANIMAL NEWS

* * * * *

Get your bird feeder started now! The Tyrrells have a feeder that is occupied all year. Juncos are around 89th all winter. Another name is the Snowbird. Juncos are not around in the summer, for the coldness that they like is up in Canada. For the summer, Robins are always around here during summer. If you start you're feeder, remember, all they need is water and feed.

* * * * *

The dogs on 89th and 90th are: Rex, Ferd, Sheba, Jake, Gypsy, Sandy, Sindy, Prince, Juliet, Sindy (again), Pat, Toto, Spotty, Suzi.

FLY-UP ALL OVER THE PLACE!!!!

* * * * *

Basketballs are long forgotten, and baseballs are flying. Fly up, "midget" baseball on the street, catch, work up, and a lot of other games with a baseball are seen & heard throughout 89th and 90th. A lot of people watch the Sunday Major League games, A most of the boys are playing baseball on teams. Some turned out for the Majors. GOOD LUCK!

THE 89 TH STREET JYM

The 89th street jym is a jym that meets every weekday at a quarter to nine. It has push ups to do, standing up.

Top of the page of the first edition of *The 89th Street News*, April 10, 1961.

[Excerpts from *The Neighborhood News*, June 1962, produced by Mark Tyrrell.]

A NEWSPAPER CHANGE: There has been a change in the newspaper that you are reading that it needs very much. It has a new name. *The 89th and 90th Street News* is too long. In fact, it has 10 syllables to it. But *The Neighborhood News* has only 5. So don't worry, it's the same newspaper, and the same news.

* * *

[*Easter, early 1960s. Note to his mother.*]

The egg started out hard-boiled. After being hard-boiled, I started to put paper maché strips over it. After about five or six coatings, I did the same thing to the other egg. Then (that happened Friday morning), after hiding the two eggs on the top of the plate, cup, bowl, etc. cupboard, I called up Dad, saying that George had started to blab off to you about them. AND that you had seen "marshmallow" on the table. Dad said to put the eggs on his work bench. So while you watered flowers, I got one down. Then while you went to the bathroom, I got the other one down. When Dad got home, we went down. It was still wet. So we put it in the oven. (That's why you couldn't look!!) Saturday morning we cut the eggs open and took the hard-boiled out. (Jake liked it, too!) Then Dad "healed the cut" with Elmer's Glue. Then after the "cut healed," we put Sparkles on it. Then, after everyone washed their hands, I remembered that they haven't tied string to a paper clip and put the paper clip inside the egg so it would hang! So, we did that, and let it dry. Then I put it in the box, and here you are opening this, Easter Sunday!



On the front porch.

Mark

* * *

[Summer, early 1960s. At the time, the Boston Red Sox were the parent team for the minor-league Seattle Rainiers, and the reference is to an exhibition game.]

What I want for my birthday:

1. To go to the Seattle-Boston baseball game with the family and whoever else is visiting us at the time of the game.
2. A good wallet with lots of space for coins, bills, 2-1/2-inch-long, 3-3/4-inch-wide cards, pictures and any other things.

* * *

[November, early 1960s, probably fourth-grade school assignment.]

My Thanksgiving Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for all of the good times I've had, and all my clothes and food. I also thank you for helping me – please find my hidden faults so I can correct them.

by Mark Tyrrell

* * *

[September 5-11, 1965, letter to Teen Opinion column in Channel magazine, a local TV Guide-like publication distributed free at drugstores.]

Dear P.J.: All of the adults who knock shows like *Shindig* and *Hullabaloo* should look at the facts:

Each weekday you can view 4 hours, 25 minutes of kiddy shows; 4 hours, 55 minutes of serials; and 6 hours of games. Multiply this by five weekdays, and for each week you have 22-1/2 hours of kiddy shows for children, 24-1/2 hours of serials for the housewife. And all evening long there is entertainment for the family. But what about the teenagers? *Shindig* and *Hullabaloo* total 2 hours a week. Throw all of the other minor shows along this line together and you get 6-1/4 hours weekly.

So, adults, you have your shows! Let us keep what little we have to enjoy!

– Mark Tyrrell [sic],
Mercer Island, Wash.

The Channel staff has just named you Mathematician of the Year!

* * *

[January 10, 1967, from 10th-grade English paper, Mercer Island High School. Teacher's grade A-/B+.]

Jack was lying in bed daydreaming that Saturday morning. ...

“You’ve never been to dances before, have you? ... No? ... Then how’d you get to dance so good, Jack?”

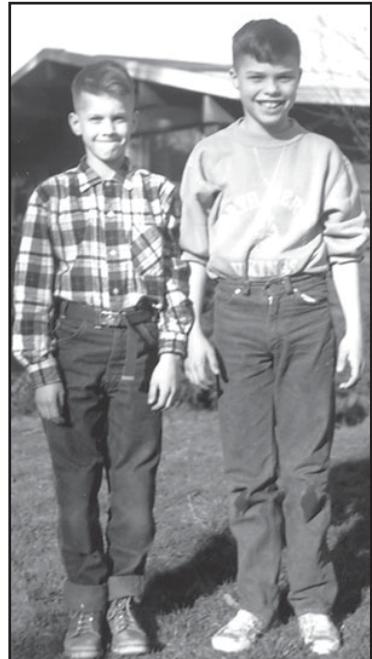
“Oh, you know – I watch a lot of television.”

“Tee-hee-hee-hee – oh, Jack!” ...

Jack violently threw the mirror. It came to a whacking halt as the wall interrupted its flight. The shattered mirror seemed to hang onto the wall for a moment. Then small slivers of glass dropped to the floor, shimmering in the morning sun, followed by the misshaped frame.



During a family fishing trip.



With George, junior-high age.

Jack, breathing hard, looked at the dent in the wall and the shattered remains on the floor. After staring for half a minute, his heavy breathing slackened off. Then he cranked the head of his hospital bed up, and his powerful arms reached over his broad shoulders. He grabbed at the sturdy, polished-steel ladder that ran parallel to the ceiling it hung down from. He swung from rung to rung and eased into his wheelchair. Jack then tucked his shriveled, droopy little legs back, and slowly wheeled out of his bedroom.

* * *

[Fall 1967, from 11th-grade English paper. Teacher's grade A/A.]

Heroism in *All Quiet on the Western Front*

He grabbed his pen and WHAP slammed it down near the top of his desk. WE WE WE WE WE WE WE WOO ... TINK. It raced down the desk and with a miniature crash fell to the floor.

Life is very short. It can be very full, depending upon what is done with it. It can be happy. I want to enjoy my life and get the most out of it.

I just don't want to take away other people's lives. I don't want to live with death. I don't want to see my friends die. I don't want to see repulsive death spectacles. I don't want to have in my mind all that has happened. I don't want these thoughts to haunt me. I don't want to live knowing that I have prevented another human from living also. I don't want to be a cripple or an amputee for the rest of my life. I don't want to die; especially in an unjust war.

I have only one life. I want to continue to live it. I want to improve it, enjoy it, get a meaning out of it.

I don't want to go to war. I don't want to go to Viet Nam.

* * *

[Nov. 14, 1967, paper for English class, 11th grade, Mercer Island High School. Teacher's grade A/A.]

The Unfinished Assignment

He tried hard to concentrate ... to really think. He groped around in the inner catacombs of his mind. The door was closing on the outer world. An idea was beginning to come into focus. LAPLAP. A book dropped. The idea vanished.

He angrily returned to hopeless thinking. He grabbed his pen and WHAP slammed it down near the top of his desk. WE WE WE WE WE WOO ... TINK. It raced down the desk and with a miniature crash fell to the floor.

CUR ... EEEEEK. He leaned over in his desk and snatched the pen. Squeezing it in his hand, he tried to think once more. He rested his other hand on his chin, and thrust his little finger into his mouth. Instantly his tongue rebelled at the putrid taste left on the finger after it slid across the spaghetti on its way to the milk carton during lunch.

An "office girl" swept by his desk, spreading an atmosphere of asphyxiating super-sweet perfume behind her. He exhaled quickly as the odor invaded his nose, rolled his eyes, and lifted his head. The over-bright radiance of the old-fashioned lights started at him, causing him to blink.

THAP ... thap ... thap. The door closed behind the girl. He looked up over the door. CA-TIC! The clock warned him that there were only five minutes left.

His hand had become sweaty from the pen he was still squeezing. He dropped it on his paper and wiped his hand over the uneven texture of his Levis thin-wale corduroy pants.

In a desperate last attempt at thought, he buried his head in his arms. The shuffling of books and clicking of binders told him that the other students were preparing to leave. Slowly his gaze traveled from the darkness of his arms to the clock on the wall.

CA-TIC! ... GEEEEEEEEEEENG!

* * *

[Dec. 1, 1967, paper for English class, 11th grade, Mercer Island High School. Teacher's grade A/A.]

Count Your Revised Blessings

Sure, there are many Thanksgiving blessings to be thankful for – enough food, shelter and countless others – but those are all regular, run-of-the-mill, every-year Thanksgiving blessings. After over 200 Thanksgivings, the blessings being counted sound like a broken record.

It's 1967 now. Most of the country wallows in a pocket of prosperity, especially Mercer Island, home of the original "Affluent Society." It's time for a new set of blessings for the person who has "everything" to count. Here, then, are the revised blessings for the modern Mercer Islander:

The Mercer Islander gives thanks for the nearby King County Multi-Purpose All-Weather Domed Stadium, and the American League "Seattle Evergreens" that play baseball there.

The Mercer Islander gives thanks for the Teen Center, which has reduced teen-age crime on the Island by 95 percent.

He is thankful for the ample money that allows every average Island teenager to have enough "pot" to smoke at the Island Plaza.

The Mercer Islander gives thanks for the blessing of having not one, but two great newspapers – the conservative, mild-mannered *P.I.* and the timely, informative and factual *Reporter* – to inform, entertain and advise them.

An important, highly efficient police force warrants the thankfulness of the Mercer Islander. Likewise, the reports of their valuable efforts found in the "Police Blotter" column of the *Reporter*, is also a blessing.

Finally, he is thankful just for the privilege of living on Mercer Island – with its exclusively "pioneer" atmosphere of unspoiled, thickly wooded lots; quiet, refreshing, clean air; peaceful surroundings; and the beautiful, undirtied, crystal-clear lake that surrounds it.

Truly the Mercer Islander is blessed.

* * *

[Spring 1969, scribbled note, Mercer Island High School.]

FILM IDEA – driving down beach with no car.

* * *

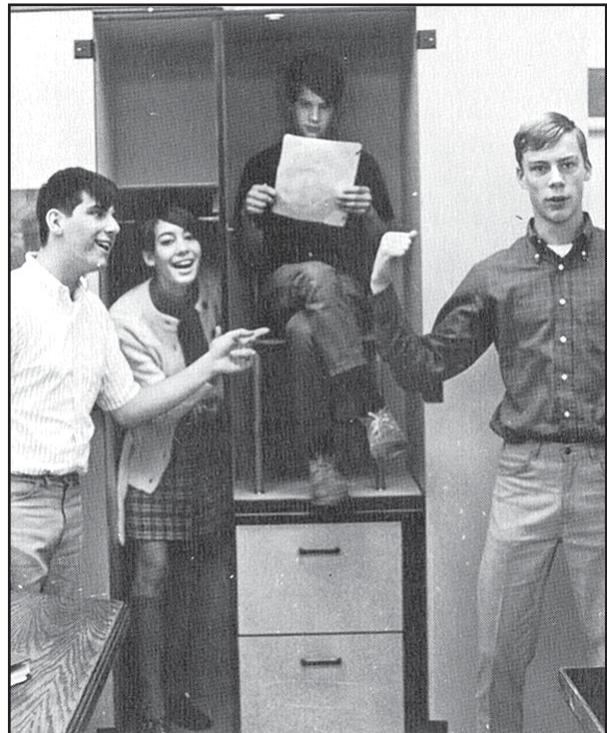
[Winter 1969, status report on unsuccessful contacts with potential advertisers in the Mercer Hi-Times, student newspaper at Mercer Island High School.]

EXCUSES

C lampitts Island Cleaners – "Maybe later in the spring."

Lakeside Drugs – "Well, I think I'll pass this time."

Islandia Furniture – "I don't think I'd be interested this time."



The caption for this photo from the 1969 Isla, the Mercer Island High School yearbook, reads: "Copy Editor Mark Tyrrell almost found a quiet place to read his copy until Editor Neil Fligstein, Elaine Kraft and Mark Marontate discovered him."

Admundsen Insurance – “I think I’ll pass, actually.”
 Moshier’s Cabinet Shop – “I’m sorry, no.”
 Northwest Chrysler-Plymouth – “Contact our Los Angeles office.”
 Milk Barn – “We’re not doing much advertising right now.”
 Hines Bottling Company – “I can’t get home office approval. They’ve turned me down several times.”
 Dick’s – “We’re pretty much committed; we did most of our advertising for high schools in the fall.”
 Zales – “Son, I’m sorry, but we just don’t have enough money allotted at this time.”
 Abby’s and Rosemary’s Shop of Etc. – “We’re not taking any ads on until we can pay the bills. Business is a little slow right now.”
 Quench – “We’ll be setting up a budget a little later in the spring.”
 Trident – “We’ve been contacted by so many high schools this year we’ve decided not to advertise in any of them.”
 Southcenter Mode O’Day – “Not able to advertise right now.”
 Florsheim Shoes Southcenter – “We have our schedule figured out until April.”

* * *

[June 5, 1969, story in Mercer Hi Times reviewing the three high school years of the class of 1969.]

Sophomore

Gosh – wasn’t it fun? We were all grown up now. We had six classes instead of seven, a real study hall, and we got out at 2:20 instead of 2:25. Boys could grow their hair long, and they could actually HOLD HANDS with their girlfriends! ...

Junior

Human Rights Day, the all-day assembly, came up with a real novelty item for Mercer Islanders: “Negroes.” As a result of one Negro’s appearance on the Island, he was thrown in jail. Kent Carlos, one of the speakers, got his ideas across in an unorthodox method and was jailed because he was corrupting our impressionable minds. Instantly we became “involved.” There was going to be a big protest march from Safeway to the administration building. Wouldn’t that be fun? A real march, just like real protesters! Maybe even with signs! But he was released when the police realized that he had been asked to say what he said. The march never came off, and after a few weeks, all these heavily involved people who cared so much about Carlos didn’t even know where he was. ...

The teenage population of Mercer Island was exposed to the nation in an article published in *Life* magazine. It was revealed that, among other things, every Island teenager spent his time at the Island Plaza Coffeehouse using drugs. Nonsense – there are plenty of other places besides the Island Plaza.

Senior

In October, a new state law required that the pledge of allegiance had to be recited once a week in the public schools. After the first week, most teachers forgot all about it (although the students certainly didn’t), and didn’t make their classes salute the flag. This must mean the faculty members of Mercer Island High School are fascists. Of course, many rooms didn’t have flags, but if you’re going to pick on every little detail ...

* * *

[October 20, 1969, journal.]

I got my hair cut in the HUB barber shop today. I am very pleased to say that I will never have to worry about having haircuts I can't stand, because today's is the last bad haircut I will ever have.

* * *

[Wednesday, October 22, 1969, journal.]

My whole life right now is just a big, fat waste. I just submit to classes I don't like, and I never have any time, what with this speed reading waste. I go to school each day and see the same face of the stranger who couldn't care less, all 33,000 of him, and I couldn't care less about him, except the ones I want to, and they won't care about me anyway, and I'M the one who gets hit in the face with the handball, and I'M the one who gets the Mickey Mouse haircut, and I just sit there in my rut, and I NEVER get out of it.

I fool myself and say I am out and I am making all sorts of accomplishments because I sit on my bed and write down my ideas which are worthless and change nothing. But I act the same the rest of the time, and my groove is a big tunnel, and I'm not going to get out.

* * *

[Saturday, October 25, 1969, journal.]

I had a dream last night. It was about the third time I've had a dream like that. It was a happy dream – a very happy one. Try to guess what it was about. I'm not going to talk about it. Dreams are over in the morning, and they don't help.

* * *

[October 30, 1969, journal.]

I don't like living all the time with a perpetual gloomy feeling, a depression. I want to be happy. I want to smile. AND mean it. Then the problems don't mean as much. I want to be at peace. When?

* * *

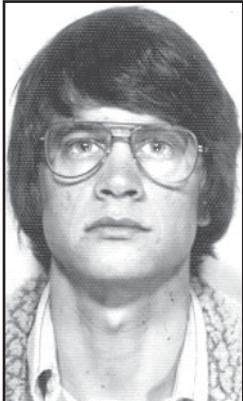
[December 24, 1969, journal.]

Just everything seems so stale and monotonous like so many endless overcast days and so many curves on East Mercer Way. ... And girls. Girls who I figured to be the single factor in my life to make everything perfect and complete. Sitting on my bed now at 4:05 I could care less. ...

All the times I've been with a girl – ALL the times – I've always been worried about the immediate time and how fast it was going because all the time I've been with a girl it's always been with some cloudy thought and ever-present knowledge that this is so important and it should be sacred and I've always tried so hard and it's all so pointless because here I am. Just once I could approach the whole thing like I am an equal. Just once the girl could, too. It just seems like a waste to keep trying and searching for all the answers in one, like the Mason Williams poem says. It just makes me tired. It's foolish. I've gotten nowhere except farther through time. I want to forget everything and just quit, but of course I can't.



In his room at home on his day of graduation from Mercer Island High School, June 11, 1969.



As a college student.

The 1970s

[Winter 1970, paper for University of Washington English class.]

CONFessions of a MUSIC FREAK

I started as many others have, with a tinny little transistor radio. I was nine or ten at the time. KJR was King and Pat O'Day was God, and I listened constantly. I even carried my radio with me on my bicycle. ...

The feeling is hard to describe to people who have never felt it. It's being able to lie back and let the sound take over. It's feeling it – getting carried away with it, getting into it. ...

The only way to really get my point across is to try, somehow, to describe a musical experience. This particular excursion is side two of *Abbey Road* by the Beatles. It is, in my humble opinion, the best side of an album ever produced by anybody on earth – at the moment. ...

("Sun King") is a slow, deliberate, harmonic song. It is a hymn worshipping the sun and more pleasures of life that accompany it. ... It is floating music. All I can do is listen, and be awed by the music and the overpowering glory of the Sun King. ...

The music moves and builds up to the peak of the album, where the singer warns, "Oh, look out!" and the Beatles in a harmonic, perfectly controlled yell, sing, "She came in through the bathroom window –" Right here is the best musical feeling I have ever had. ...

I have probably listened to *Abbey Road* 50 or 75 times. ... With the changing of songs it can change me from one strong mood to a completely different but equally as strong feeling. I just can't help but submit to the album. The term "together" has never been more appropriate than to describe this album. The Beatles have turned rock music into an art form.

That's what a music experience is all about. The addict always wants to get other people involved. So do I. Try it. Feel it. It's legal.

* * *

[Sunday, February 15, 1970, journal.]

My mind, with its strange sense of commitment, always feels ill at ease when I have something pending, something to do that isn't done yet. ... Everybody else had the same assignment. Everybody else did the same assignment. And if they didn't, they probably didn't feel so bad about it. That's one thing about me. I can't even be wrong right. I feel bad about missing a paper. That doesn't mean I still do it. It just means I don't do it like the others who don't do it, but they don't care. There's a big difference.

* * *

[Tuesday, February 24, 1970, journal.]

Today, when I was eating lunch by myself, I sat next to some boob. And he was probably saying the same thing about me. Then he began some schoolwork. A page of numbers and symbols. No. No. No. Calculus, engineering, math, whatever it was. How could anybody do that. It's so impersonal. How could ANYONE do that all day? All quarter, or all their life?

That's why all I can do is English. It lives. It breathes. It has personality. And then it occurs to me that in the number problems, a mistake blows it, and in English one mistake doesn't ruin everything. ... A halfway measure in writing is still a "C" or something. ...

When I was a P-I paperboy, I watched the dogs frolicking every morning and wished I was a dog. Now I wish I was a paperboy.

* * *

[Thursday, February 26, 1970, journal.]

All through school this year I've just been dragging myself, head-down through mud. That's how it feels like. *That* seems clear to me. Whoever else reads this probably won't understand what I'm saying. But someone has tied a rope to my neck and pulled me through a big, thick mud puddle for two quarters! ...

I'll be *glad* when things are better, glad that it did happen. But it's so much harder for things to be better. Because that takes TIME. And I just can't stand waiting. I *hate* time. It's too long when I wait. It was too short while it was good.

* * *

[Winter 1970, paper for University of Washington English class.]

A Significant Experience

Mercer Hi Times was my favorite class, because it wasn't a class. It was a group of friends, with a teacher who was a friend. We put out a paper once in awhile, too. That's where I played my role the greatest. Without knowing it was a role, I was the Mercer Hi Times Resident Cute Little Person. I played it well. ...

First loves are almost always destined for a short run. ... What happened in the three-and-a-half-month depression and the one-and-a-half-month happiness had never happened to me before. The end result was what took years for other people. ... It was written of Vincent Van Gogh that "through his suffering he saw the suffering of others." In my case, this happened – in a watered-down version. But after the depression I began to sense the Negro dilemma – the same me that had spent the day in study hall during Human Rights Day because I didn't care. I began to realize that songs *do* have words and the words *do* have meanings. I began to understand things about people, and human nature. I realized how small I really was. ... (It) was a late start in the participation in life.

* * *

[Early 1970s, instructions for fill-in workers at Look's Pharmacy.]

IMPORTANT – Don't be caught short of basic school supplies when the semester changes in the public schools. This is sometime in January, and it is like a mini-Back to School. Plan ahead! ...

DIARIES – We get one- and five-year diaries from Zellerbach; also scrapbooks. These go in the Hallmark section. Have plenty of diaries around New Year's.

* * *

[Winter 1970, from English paper, University of Washington. Teacher's comment: "Extremely well done."]

The New World can be seen as being much like Listerine – you hate it, but you use it. The only recourse one has is to become a nostalgia freak. Nostalgia freaks are people who are forever remembering "the good old days." They are protected by the present and



EVER SINCE THE 50's, we've been LOOKING out for you at LOOK'S MERCER ISLAND PHARMACY. We've got it all together at 2465 76th Ave. S.E., 232-2222. Standing, l. to r., Beverly Olson, Louise Alsop, Mary Timson, Mary Ames, (seated) Bennett Anderson, Mark Tyrrell.

Look's Pharmacy ad,
July 4, 1974, Mercer
Island Reporter.

I began to realize that songs do have words and the words do have meanings. I began to understand things about people, and human nature. I realized how small I really was.

the future, for the old days will never live again, except as fond memories. Were there ever any *bad* old days?

The Good Old Days that are currently in vogue are the days of the 30's and 40's – days that are available to me only in the pages of old *Life* magazines. Ah, what days they must

have been. I can browse through old magazines for hours, and pretty soon I can *feel* like 1942. But I'll leave the 30's and 40's to those who knew them, for I have my own nostalgia. Imagine that – only twenty years old, but already steeped with memories of how things "used to be." That's wonderful. Should I live to be 100, I'll have a full 80 years of life in a rear-view mirror. ...

Remember when you had to open cereal boxes with a knife, before the "easy opening" packages with their little tabs and

slots? Remember when Coke came in green bottles that you could return for money? Remember when you had to use a "can opener," and a "bottle opener," before you could do all that by hand? Remember when radios had to "warm up"? That's when they had tubes. ... Remember 4-cent stamps? Remember Pat O'Day? Wristwatches that could only tell you the time, and not the date? Remember when little kids had crew cuts? Remember when you didn't throw your pen away when it ran out of ink? Remember when bicycles had only one speed, and balloon tires? Remember when the Fourth of July was celebrated on the fourth of July? Remember cigarette ads on television? Remember John Glenn? Mickey Mantle? The Seattle Rainiers? How about Nehru shirts? Or the Hula Hoop? Beatle wigs? Remember the beatniks? How about the fringies? Flower power? Mono records? High-top tennis shoes? Remember fallout shelters? Pinky Lee, Captain Puget, Wunda Wunda? Five-cent candy bars? Love beads?

Playing Frisbee golf at Seattle's Woodland Park.

Remember when little kids had crew cuts?

Remember when you didn't throw your pen away when it ran out of ink? Remember when bicycles had only one speed, and balloon tires?

Those were the days – the good old days. We can be assured of an abundance of nostalgia to come, for as Carly Simon says in her song "Anticipation," THESE are the good old days. I can hardly wait until 1980 comes, so I can enjoy them.

* * *

[Spring 1971, letter to Columbia Record club.]

Dear Sirs: Enclosed please find payment of \$7.84 for my shipment of records received today.

There has been a mistake in the billing. I have been billed \$4.98 for #176636, *Peter, Paul and Mary*. What I had ordered, and what I received, was #1766362, *Peter, Paul and Mommy*, on special for 99¢ from page 12 of magazine volume 71-5. I have therefore subtracted the difference of \$3.99 from my \$11.83 bill, leaving a balance of \$7.84.

If there are any problems regarding this matter, please notify me. Since I ordered and received #1766362, but was billed for #176636, the mistake could only have happened in the billing department. Rest assured that I am not trying to rip off the Columbia Record Club.

Sincerely, L388087

* * *

[June 25, 1971, post card to Look's Pharmacy from the City Center Motel, "The Shelton Hilton," Shelton, Washington.]

Notice the motel. This is where I am. Notice the room. This is where I'm staying. Notice the blue sky. The sky is not blue here.

Mark

* * *

[Sunday, September 26, 1971, journal.]

This summer has been a better one than any I can remember, because I had gotten over the girl fixation and lived more for myself than for someone else who was never there. ... I rode my bicycle to the ocean. ...

The bike ride was something I hated every minute of, sort of, but when I was done I knew I'd do it again. There was the four hours of rain. Well, maybe three. From outside Gorst to Shelton. I can't remember being more miserable. But because of it, I could appreciate things, little things, that I always take for granted. There was the broken-down old shack; it probably used to be a roadside stand. Half of it, lengthwise, had the roof missing, but there was the dry part. The bike and I were dry, and I could take the poncho off and stand in the dry. And I had a meat sandwich. It was a salvation. And the candy bar I happened to buy at the ferry terminal became a joy.



On a ride in the Northwest.

And finally I made Shelton and bought food. My hands were so numb I could hardly sign the motel form. And I sat in my underwear and watched TV for twelve hours. The next day I only got about six drops of rain. ... The sun was even out for most of the trip. The only trouble was the wind – a wind blowing all day *from* the ocean, as I was riding *toward* the ocean. ... There were a couple of moments when I felt an easing. Pedaling became very easy. The wind had stopped for a moment. By the time I would realize all this, the wind would have started again.

But the whole thing was worth it. Traveling the entire route, foot by foot. Being on my own, and knowing it was up to me to make it, so I would make it. The back roads and the little towns – McCleary, Whites, Elma, Satsop (before it was famous). The long uphills – they all were. The ride through the cool, shaded and not windy tree farm. Drinking the orange juice. The food stops, eating the sandwiches I made. Drinking gallons of water. The newly paved roads so smooth. The old highways – so empty, so small. The triumph of doing it. Doing it.

* * *

[Early and late summer, early 1970s, readerboard copy for Look's Pharmacy.]

CYCLEMATES II CAN DO!
CYCLING TO WASHINGTON D.C.
LEAVE NMJH
FRIDAY 8:00 A.M.

THEY DID IT
CYCLEMATES II RETURN
AUGUST 20 4:45
NORTH MERCER JUNIOR HIGH

* * *

There was the broken-down old shack; it probably used to be a roadside stand. Half of it, lengthwise, had the roof missing, but there was the dry part. The bike and I were dry, and I could take the poncho off and stand in the dry.

[Early 1970s. In-store advertising signs at Look's Pharmacy, composed by Mark.]

COME CLEAN! MR CLEAN w/ LEMON 75¢
PLENTY of JOY AT LOOK'S / JOY LIQUID 2 BOTTLES SPECIAL \$1.29

ADVENT CALENDARS 1/2 PRICE / IT WOULD BE
“ADVENTAGEOUS” TO BUY THEM NOW.

PURR-FECT FOR YOUR CAT! TABBY TASTY
DINNERS. 6 POUCHES. BEEF & KIDNEY OR TREAT
BLEND. 39¢

DRAMATIC PROOF! GRO-LUX LIGHTS WORK!
THE BUSHY COLEUS PLANT AT THE RIGHT:
ORIGINALLY THE SAME SIZE AS THE ONE AT THE
LEFT ... BEFORE LESS THAN 3 MONTHS OF GRO-
LUX!!

* * *

[Early 1970s, notes at Look's Pharmacy.]

PET NAMES

You could name your snail “space.” Bison “tennial.” Donkey “Hotee.” Van “Morrison.” Hamster “Dam.” Gopher “It.” Salmon “Ella.” Ram “Bunctious.” Ewe “Betcha” or “Phoria.” Toad “the Line.” Bear “with It.”

* * *

[February 8, 1972, from English paper, Bellevue Community College.]

The First Girl I Loved

I don't think I ever went on a “date” with her. Every trip to the park, every movie and every basketball game was really a confidence-building excursion.

She had a soft, rounded face, and brown eyes. Her black hair wasn't long, but it wasn't short. It was just the way it should have been. [She] was uncommon, quiet beauty. She had the first dimple that I was ever aware of, and it showed when I made her smile. She wasn't loud. She carried herself quietly, and when she talked, it was worth listening to. She was my goddess.

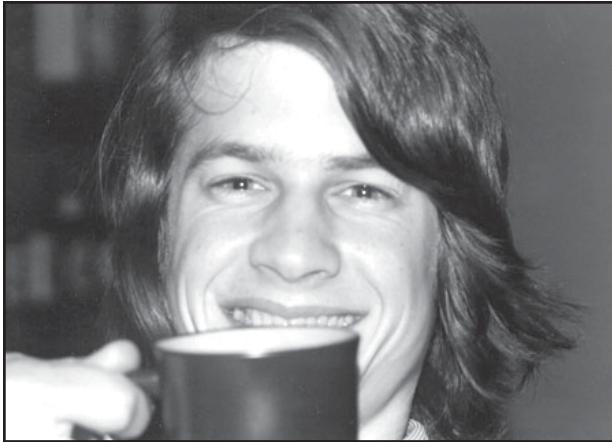
[She] knew me completely. She understood me. She stayed with me, and helped me out of my self-imprisonment. I don't think I ever went on a “date” with her. Every trip to the park, every movie and every basketball game was really a confidence-building excursion. I had found happiness, and security, someone to care for, and peace of mind. She showed me that the world is a nice place, after all. There was no need to broaden myself and find new people, as [she] told me I should.

First Love is always destined for a short run. ... [She's] getting married. She's going to send me an invitation to the wedding. I'm happy for her, and for [him]. He's going to have one extraordinary girl for a wife. I'm one of the very few who knows, JUST how extraordinary.

* * *

[February 10, 1972, journal.]

The only time I can become myself is here in the journal, because that's when I can think like me. But is this me? Not too impressive, really. Is me the quiet one at school? The cheerful one at Look's Pharmacy? The one who won't get involved? The one who still wants to? The one who does, and tires of it? The one who wants to be put in his place? To



At Look's Pharmacy,
1975.

always strive, knowing I'll never get there? Who can only find myself as the most compatible? The one who gets bored by himself? The one who writes a lot of things down.

Ha. Just see me tomorrow. You won't get a thing out of me. But I'll be OK at work.

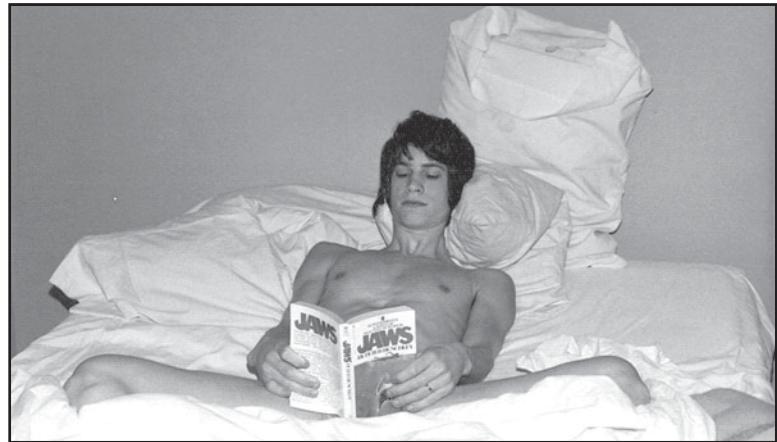
* * *

[Early 1970s.]

Drug store artichokes

Con Stipation, Hal Itosis, Kay O'Pectate, May Lox, Lana Cane, Ann Acin, Cass Teroil, Aunti Biotic.

And minny others: Har Don, Jim Dandy, Archie Bald, Jean Pool, Cubby Hole, Ali Mony, Penny Ante, Paula Tic, Mack Truck, Dan DeLion, Dewey Decimal, Rhoda Dendron, Chris Anthemum, Del Pickles, Phil Lupino, Adele Tree, Chris Co, Renee Gade, Elmo Rocco, Lou Au, Brandon Iron, Noah Vail, Gail Iberation, Norman Invasion, Diane Tomeecha, Shirley U. Geste, Linda Hand, Nick Raphelia, Cat S. Trophic, Matt Rimony, Anna Gram, C. Nick Drive, Desi Cration, Cissie Bar, Jim Shorts, Lon Chair, Scott Free, Hazel Nut, Frank Lee, Matt Amorphous, Mary O'Net, Lillie Putian, Harry Karry, Clarence Sale, Peter Principal, Rosetta Stone, Darrell Licht, Dee Bosch, Ron Amuck, Penny Pyncher, Mel Odious, Ruth Less, Ophelia Up, Wanda Fuca, Buck Shot, Al E. Cat, Stu Fowler, Percy Nell, N.E. Wetalk, Ginger Snap, Ginger Bread, Mac Aroon, Chuck Letchip, Hap Hazard, Will Dicker.



Reading on the road.

* * *

[April 25, 1972, journal.]

To keep in mind a goal, such as I can now remember having awhile back. It was when thinking of an idea or trying to tell someone about something, I would always see myself as a teacher, explaining it to some class in such a way that they understood it, and had as much excitement as I conveyed to them. Such little daydreams are what subconsciously push people to consciously achieve a goal, such as mine was, to be a teacher. Ever since the sixth grade, when I had Mr. Bowers, I wanted to be a teacher so I could be like him.

* * *

[May 26, 1972, from Music term paper, Bellevue Community College.]

“**B**ridge over Troubled Water” is a very tender song of a person telling another that “when times get rough/and friends just can't be found” he will be there to comfort and help. But the editor of the local paper in Monroe, Iowa, had read a pamphlet that said that “silvergirl” was a hypodermic needle, and she didn't want that kind of song used in a graduation ceremony. She was also worried about “ease your mind.”

I would always see myself as a teacher, explaining it to some class in such a way that they understood it, and had as much excitement as I conveyed to them.

School officials accepted the song anyway, and if it matters at all, the reference was to Paul Simon's wife Peggy, who was despondent about a couple of grey hairs. The point here is that the issue of drug-oriented song lyrics is largely overstated. Drug messages can be found in just about any song, if you choose to twist them around a little. How about "America"? Doesn't "purple mountains' majesty" conjure up some psychedelic hallucination?

Although the physics seem improbable, if you start riding on East Mercer Way, all the hills go down, while on the official bike route, the hills are uphill.

[Early 1970s, conversation with customer trying to use Look's Pharmacy parking lot but not shop at Look's.]

“Well, I'm going in awhile. I'm going to the drug store first, and then to the restaurant.”

“I'm sorry ...”

“Well, the last time I was here, the owner gave me permission to park here, if it wasn't too crowded.”

“I'm sorry, but ...”

“Well, that's a \$20 deal you lost there.”

“I'm sorry, but ...”

“Well, if that's the way it is, (SLAM).”

* * *

[Mid-1972 through 1973, notes and draft text for proposed book, "Bicycling on Mercer Island."]

Front cover quotation: "Body in motion is better than body not in motion." Maybe a picture or stylized drawing of a bicycle.

A four-star hill is one that makes the eyes water.

Describe riding around island in both directions.

Still an occasional raccoon on the side of the road. ...

One of Mercer Island's assets are the Mercer Ways – East, West and North. With one minor diversion, they form a continual road that outlines the island, with no stop signs and a minimum of traffic. ... First, though, a glaring discrepancy becomes apparent. Although the route is clearly marked with BIKE ROUTE signs, the bike route runs in the *wrong direction!* The official route begins on the east side (heading south), but the most natural route starts on the west side. Although the physics seem improbable, if you start riding on East Mercer Way, all the hills go down, while on the official bike route, the hills are uphill.

The Mercer Island bicycle rider owes it to himself to take at least one ride around the island in the fall. ... Once fall sets in, the night rider will find that suddenly he owns the island again. Riding along West and East Mercer Ways, his world is light mist or fog. Very quiet, solitude, darker than summer and no other bike riders or cars.

Riding on snow is a rare treat. Best is East Mercer Way and West Mercer Way. No worry of cars sliding thru intersection. Very still, quiet. Bike wins over car. Pass many cars parked on road, cars in ditch. Zero traffic usually, except for tow trucks. Valleys, hills seem bigger.

Gradually watch the weather get better around March and April. Watch spring happen. That "first night" without the coat. The first tee-shirt night.

Across floating bridge – carbon and monoxide, the ole Detroit perfume.



At home, March 31, 1974.

* * *

[Sept. 27, 1972, satirical letter published in the Mercer Island Reporter.]

It's high time that we stop behaving like a second-class city from the 50's and meet the 70's head on. The voice of the people spoke loud and clear on the 19th when we voted down the Open Space proposal. We won't have those bleeding-heart ecologists to worry about any more, so let's get with it and turn our unproductive trees and ferns into useful land.

* * *

[March 1973, from letter published in the Mercer Island Reporter, responding to reversible-lane car-crash in which victim was someone with whom Mark was acquainted.]

Automobiles, and freeways, are the effluence of our affluence. We are our own enemy, and we deserve every traffic jam, fender-bender and, yes, every fatality. We brought it upon ourselves. We really have a perverted sense of priority, driving more and more cars and planning for more and more roads, when the only logical solution to our transportation needs is a good rapid transit system, and public acceptance of same.

But first things first. For the immediate future, and the present, we need the new I-90. ... Anyone who has taken the time to go to the library and study the I-90 Design can see that we will get an extraordinary freeway, something that, quite literally, can "only happen on Mercer Island."



With the bicycle that lasted through the 1970s and 1980s.

* * *

[August 2, 1973, journal.]

Now, I can see that I don't want to do things alone. I don't want to be by myself like I used to. It's not as fun or memorable or necessary to do things like a long bike ride by myself. Or anything else, for that matter. I need people.

And I only had to ride 190 miles to George, Washington, to discover it.

* * *

[Tuesday, Sept. 4, 1973, journal.]

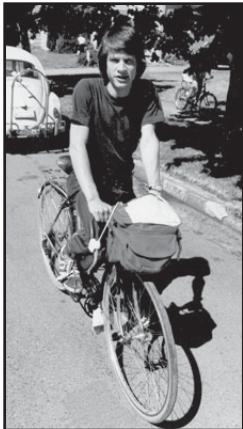
Here's my memory in the shower. I was trying to guess how I would feel and what I will be doing when I become 30 years old. I remembered what my generalized concept of my future was in high school. The only picture I really had was of me leaving for work, kissing my wife good-bye. The security of having a wife enabled me to stay happy all day until I came back home. Good lord. A wife who stayed home. And did what?

* * *

[Saturday, October 6, 1973, journal, two weeks after starting at Western Washington State College in Bellingham, and two weeks before dropping out.]

I'll reserve judgment on school until I get more involved with it. So far, it's – well, that wouldn't be reserving judgment.

We really have a perverted sense of priority, driving more and more cars and planning for more and more roads, when the only logical solution to our transportation needs is a good rapid transit system, and public acceptance of same.



Ready to ride the Willamette River bicycle paths, Eugene, 1977.

* * *

[July 30, 1974, post card from Astoria, to Look's Pharmacy.]

We were ...

Walking the streets of Astoria, Looking for fame and glory-a.
But it's a pretty dull story-a, So we're not going to bore ya.

We stopped for a while in Coos Bay, To shop for tomorrow, Tuesday.
Today we've been driving mostly, Enjoying the scenic Oregon coast-ly.

We'll be in the Redwoods tomorrow, By Wednesday we'll be in San Fran.
I'll pick up another post card, And go through this foolishness again.

* * *

[Mid-1970s, text from a 1 x 5" "Drug Store of the Week" ad in Channel magazine, written by the "boy with the broom."]

Iwould like to nominate Look's Mercer Island Pharmacy as "Drugstore of the Week." The pharmacists, Bob Look and Bennett Anderson, are always courteous and helpful, and everyone from the girls at the cash register to the boy with the broom makes the customers at Look's feel right at home.

Mark Tyrrell, Mercer Island, Wn.

* * *

[Mid-1970s, jokes.]

“Old trucks never die. They just get a new Peterbilt."

"Oh, no! The box of toothpaste tumbled off the shelf!" he said, crestfallen.

* * *

[Sept. 21, 1975, letter.]

Remember the magic? That great feeling when you meet someone, and everything "clicks"? ... It's the greatest feeling in the world, and it can't realistically last for very long. What you're left with is a pair of individuals living together, trying to get along. ...

I don't know. It's really hard to live with somebody sometimes, but it beats living alone. There aren't any easy solutions, just things that you try to work out through the years. It is not really that great living alone.

* * *

[Feb. 26, 1976, letter.]

Write if you can. Tell me the Answer to the Problem of this insane life we all lead. Does it ever get better? Can it get worse? I'll keep on living if you will.

* * *

[August 6, 1976, journal of July 29-Aug. 7 car trip to Wisconsin and back.]

BUG OFF!!! Yes, it's BUG OFF! The Official South Dakota State Game. Fun and easy to play! Here's how:

1. Stop the car anywhere along the road in South Dakota, and open the door.
2. Within minutes, you'll have about ten flies in your car. They're the State Bird.
3. Now, drive at 55, with the passenger window open just enough to create a suction.

4. Guide the flies out with your hands!
Lift them on the garbage box toward the window!
Whenever a bug is sucked out, you've scored a point!!! Bug off!!!!

* * *



[November 20, 1976,
conclusion of Communications paper, University of Washington. Professor's grade, "A/100."]

Richard Nixon and the Media: 1948-1968

In 1968, when Watergate was still just a hotel, President-elect Richard Nixon was at the height of his glory. He reached the summit through his skillful use of the media. It was as if he were saying, "They've got me exactly where I want them."

* * *

[March 13, 1977, from final English exam, University of Washington. Professor's grade A+.]

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Welcome to Vashon Island. We've rented this meeting hall here for our seminar on American Poets. Today's subject is Ralph Waldo Emerson. I would like to introduce our audience to the five distinguished poets who will talk about Emerson's poetic philosophies. We have Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Walt Whitman – where's Walt Whitman? And Emily Dickinson?

LONGFELLOW: Gee, I don't know. We were all together on the ferry. You don't suppose they –

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: No. I can't imagine it. Not Emily –

POE: Not Walt, either, for that matter. ... It figures that Whitman would be late. What a troublemaker. Where is he, anyway?

WHITMAN: "Be not too certain but I am now with you."

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Walt! Finally! What happened to you? Why are you so late?

WHITMAN: Well, there I was, on the ferry, "a great crowd, and I in the middle," and I sort of got involved with it all, and stayed on the ferry for another round trip. You see, I used to do this in Brooklyn –

POE: Good thing he didn't take the ferry to Canada. ...

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Well, just go over and hang your coat in the closet.

WHITMAN: I can't.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Why not?

WHITMAN: Emily's in there.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Oh! So *there's* the old Debauchee of Dew. Emily! Come on out of there. What were you doing in the closet?

DICKINSON: "The soul selects her own society."

WHITMAN: "I believe in you my soul." ...

*Taking advantage of
Bicycle Sunday on the
Express Lanes,
Interstate 5, Seattle,
June 1978.*

*Yes, it's BUG
OFF! The Official
South Dakota
State Game. Fun
and easy to play!*

POE: "I have ... the most sovereign contempt" for you "metaphysical poets." You and Emerson, in love with your bodies, and Dickinson, too, with that silly emphasis on the self. Don't you understand? None of it is real. "All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream." You don't want to capture the world, you want to ESCAPE it. Am I right, Walt?



*Riding into a snowdrift,
Hurricane Ridge, 1979.*

This relaxation is new to me, and I am enjoying the leisurely pace. Looks like I had to come halfway across the world to learn to relax.

WHITMAN: "All truths wait in all things."

POE: Yaaaah! How can I *argue* with him? I'm going to KILL this guy! ...

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Come on, Poe, control yourself. Now, will this type of outbreak happen again?

POE: "Nevermore." ...

* * *

[Thursday, August 25, 1977, journal, United Kingdom bike trip.]

Before too long I began to get the hang of riding in England. Still looked a little odd to see cars driving in the left-side lanes. Learned fairly quickly to stay to the extreme LEFT – not right – and to always check traffic behind me by glancing over my RIGHT – not left – shoulder.

Learned to negotiate the ROUNDABOUTS. They are simple and ingenious ways in which highways intersect. ...without the USA's cloverleafs or four-way stops. Any vehicle entering the roundabout simply yields to any vehicle already in the circle. Easy.

[Friday, August 26, 1977, journal, England.]

Talked with a nice lady from California – straight blonde hair, of course – who is also riding by herself, and enjoys it. Doing much like what I'm doing, riding by herself, no set schedule. She enjoys the freedom of being on her own. A lesson for me, there. ...

I've developed a routine when leaving my bike for awhile when on the road, or when leaving my hotel room. Six things I always take with me – wallet, plane ticket, passport, hostel pass and two packs of traveler's checks. Plus the camera, lens and strobe unit. All in the gray pack.

This relaxation is new to me, and I am enjoying the leisurely pace. Looks like I had to come halfway across the world to learn to relax. I haven't read a book I didn't "have to" since graduation, and I can't remember when I last read for pleasure.

[Sunday, August 28, 1977, journal, Bath, England.]

The trauma of aloneness which hit me so hard at first has now subsided. I'm enjoying cruising around by myself and have been able to take many more pictures than if I were with someone else. I am constantly stopping, taking the pack off, getting the camera and taking a picture. The routine tires me sometime, but I'll be glad later that I took the trouble, because it may be a long time before I ever get over here again.

[Tuesday, August 30, 1977, journal, England.]

I'm almost ashamed to admit that I stopped at the Gloucester Kentucky Fried Chicken for lunch. Oh, well.

[Thursday, September 1, 1977, journal, Cork, Ireland.]

I've decided that despite the danger, I'll go to Belfast. Another British soldier killed yesterday. But at Dublin, the ferry only goes to Liverpool, and to get to Scotland, I'll have to go as far north as Belfast. Besides, there's something romantic about being in such a troubled city, a danger zone. Hope those aren't "famous last words."

[Sunday, September 4, 1977, journal, Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.]

The road to Enniskillen took a left at Blacklion, and I realized that I had crossed the border into Northern Ireland when I rode past a sandbagged garrison containing a British soldier with a very evident machine gun. He said, "Hello." I said, "Hello."

Just around the corner was the customs station. Again, I was waved on by. Note to potential terrorists – it's easy to snuggle up to 40 lb. of explosives if you simply conceal them in bicycle saddlebags. ...

A good part of downtown is barricaded to traffic. Whether or not this has anything to do with the political situation I don't know, but the effect was unsettling and eerie as I rode through streets that were completely empty – no cars, no people, no noise, and all the shops and stores closed.

[Monday, September 12, 1977, journal, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.]

I was off to Rotterdam, riding now on the right side of the road. But there wasn't much road to ride on. It was mostly trails. Yes, Holland is Bicycle Riders' Heaven. Bike paths everywhere – in the cities, on the side of the highways (separated by trees), bike lanes everywhere. And everything is FLAT! And the wind was at my back. A dream come true. They even have separate traffic lights for bikes – red, yellow and green outlines of bicycles. And separate road signs for bikes, too. What a place. ...

I got the riding out of my system. ... What finally did it was a couple of things. One was reading the letters from all the people I haven't seen in so long. The other was being in Holland. ... This really is a foreign country, and I don't feel too at ease here, not being able to understand the language. ... Here I really feel the need to have a companion.

* * *

[Sept. 1, 1977, post card from Cork, Ireland, to parents.]

Took this ferry on all-night trip from Wales to Ireland. Hope to ride to Limerick tomorrow. ... Took train from Gloucester to Swansea, Wales. Will have lots of pictures to show. May use trains more often. Could be home by the end of the month. Seem unable to write complete sentence. ...

I've done a lot of riding and relaxing and have started reading my second book. Just like a vacation, huh?

Love, Mark



Flying a Frisbee over a Bainbridge Island rock quarry, 1978.

Just around the corner was the customs station. Again, I was waved on by. Note to potential terrorists – it's easy to snuggle up to 40 lb. of explosives if you simply conceal them in bicycle saddlebags.

* * *

[Late 1977, Pan-A-Flyer newsletter story, reworked from journal entry.]

When you visit the United Kingdom for the first time, you may be surprised to discover that English can be a foreign language. ... You'll quickly discover you're not taking a vacation, but you're "on holiday." ... Your engine will be under the "bonnet" and the spare tire will be in the "boot." ... When entering the "motorway" (freeway) you won't yield, but you will "give way." ... If you find yourself behind a "caravan" (car and trailer) on a "single track" (one lane) road with a "no overtaking" (no passing) sign, it could cause "tailbacks" (congestion), leading you to seek a "diversion" (detour). If all this gives you a headache, you'll find that there are not drug stores in the UK, but plenty of "chemists." ...

If you tell a Londoner that you need to go to the bathroom, you're saying that you want to take a bath. More likely, you want to go to the "toilet," "water closet" or "loo." There are no public restrooms, but don't fear – you can use the public "convenience." Be careful, though, about telling someone that you'll meet them "at their convenience." ...

Despite these differences in language, you won't really feel like a foreigner in the United Kingdom, even with your heavy American accent. It's just a matter of getting some of those strange new words "sussed" (figured) out.

* * *

[Late 1970s, story in Pan-A-Flyer, by its editor, on how the company newsletter is put together.]

It starts with words. Every two weeks, on a bi weekly basis, Editor James "Jimmy" Olson

("Semantics is my life") strings a bunch of them together to form sentences and – sometimes – coherent thoughts.

The editor is careful to follow the standard rules of writing good. A passive sentence should never be used. Good punctuation, is important. A preposition is something to never end a sentence with. He should never use hyperbole not one writer in a million can use it effectively. Sentence fragments. Sometimes OK. Avoid clichés like the plague. Don't never use no double negatives – not never. Avoid repeating repetitive redundancies.

* * *

[Undated index card.]

IS IT TRUE HERE THAT PEOPLE TAKE THE PEN RIGHT OUT OF

* * *

[June 23, 1979, post card from Tahiti to parents. Photo is of tanned woman dressed only in briefs made of flowers.]

How do you like my friend? She's kind of shy, but she has very fragrant flowers. This really is a paradise. Wish I was still here.

Mark.

* * *

[Summer 1979, from two stories for the Pan-A-Flyer newsletter on the second annual Pan Am International Softball Tournament held June 10-17 in Papeete, Tahiti. Mark had organized the participation of the Trident Support Project. The team was surprised by being stranded there through June 24 due to airline restrictions.]

In a gesture of goodwill, the Tahitian team presented the Pan Am/Seattle players with their team tee shirts to compensate for our missing uniforms. These shirts became one of the more meaningful souvenirs from Tahiti. We in turn presented the Tahitians with the only matching things we had, and as a result there are about a dozen Olympia Beer caps proudly being worn in Tahiti. ...

With no softball tournaments to interfere, life during the second week in Tahiti fell into a comfortable routine. The toughest decision to make was whether to sit by the pool, walk down to the beach or head into town. ...

Paradise though Tahiti was, Bremerton actually began to look good to some of us who missed wages and loved ones. You could tell we were getting homesick when the conversation turned to Big Macs, rain, milk and driving one's automobile.

* * *

[Dec. 4, 1979, post card to parents from Honolulu, Hawaii. Photo is of tanned woman covered only slightly by red towel.]

Remember my friend from Tahiti? Well, I was walking down the beach here, and there she was again. But I couldn't get her to leave, so she's all wet, because it's been rainy and windy since I arrived here. Warm rain, though. ... Hope it's cold in Wash.

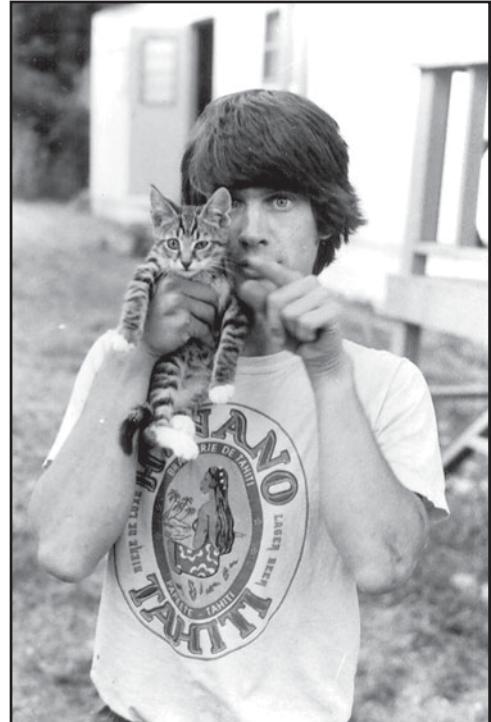
Mark

* * *

[Late 1979, from draft of story for Pan-A-Flyer about the Dec. 7 Honolulu Marathon, Mark's first.]

It is Honolulu's Big Event, like the hydroplane races used to be in Seattle. ... Honolulu's Channel 9 ran a 90-minute special that evening, making television stars out of three of the Pan Am runners ... [including] Mark Tyrrell, with the back of his Moosehead Beer tee-shirt ("Loose as a Moose") the subject of a one-second close-up. ...

For the entire race, except at the very front or the very back of the pack, there was no "loneliness of the long-distance runner" in Honolulu. They were everywhere. ... Everybody who finished was a winner. Some people just won sooner than others.



At his mobile home, with kitty, on Nels Nelson Road in Silverdale, July 1979.

The 1980s

[Summer 1980, cross-country bicycle trip journal.]

Restaurant ratings, breakfast. Maximum points: bacon 4, eggs 2, toast 2, hash browns 3, tea 2, intangibles 7, for a total of 20. [Total of 48 such breakfast ratings over the course of the trip. Ratings ranged from 5 to 16.]

*From the distance
— which way? —
we heard a train
whistle, which
meant ... oh-oh.*

[June 14, 1980, journal, first day, Westport, Washington.]

After an hour of opening day ceremonies at the ocean, we began our ride across the country. My first thought, after about 3/10 mile, was that the bicycle felt like I was on a long trip again. Another bicycle trip. A little longer than usual, this time.

There's [Mount St. Helens] ash all over my saddlebags. Well, not "all over." Sort of a light dusting, actually.

[June 15, 1980, journal, before Stevens Pass.]

Joel and Clay and I took a break at a Railroad Bridge, I believe over the BNRR River. It was above an old bridge support. ... We drank a couple of Moosehead Beers as we sat on the bridge and amused ourselves by tossing rocks through holes in the girders. From the distance — which way? — we heard a train whistle, which meant ... oh-oh. "It's coming from — THAT WAY!" Clay remembers me saying, as we grabbed the things we brought with us and began to run to the other side of the bridge as the headlight grew larger and a freight train whooshed past us three feet away at 60 mph at least, as we all hugged the railing tightly and watched. What a suction — it pulled most of the beer out of Joel's bottle, onto my shirt. Quite the rush, quite the adventure. We had probably less than five seconds to do all that. A life-and-death situation which became another adventure. The engineer must have seen our bicycles alongside the



*Writing the nightly
journal entry by
campfire light, east of
Helena, Montana,
cross-country bicycle
trip, July 1980.*

track. Otherwise he might not have blown the whistle, and would have surprised us.

[June 18, 1980, journal, Eastern Washington.]

After Orondo, the next great hill. Six miles of uphill, first gear, in the beating heat. Great. Step by step again, telling myself once again, "It's easy to pedal a bicycle up a mountain." With a few added adjectives this time.

[July 1, 1980, journal, Rockies, mid-Montana.]

Some exceptional riding. By this point, I've stopped trying to decide which day has had the "best" riding. There have been so many good ones.

[July 2, 1980, journal, Rockies, mid-Montana.]

Up the pass, through the Big Belt Mountains. ... A long downhill, with those tailwinds. The winds weren't what was noticeable pushing me along. Rather, it was the lack of air resistance ahead. While moving forward, it felt like standing still, and thus, I finally did it – reached the Big Five-Zero. 50 mph, a personal land speed record. Smooth. Wonderful.

[July 5, 1980, journal, southeastern Montana, starting at Uptown Motel.]

My 29th birthday today. Began my day with Therma Sol Steam Bath Option B – "A cold shower after your steam bath will refresh and give you that 'Ready to Go Feeling' for that big day or night."

[July 8, 1980, journal, southeastern Montana.]

Those headwinds – words cannot adequately describe how little I enjoy them, although I used a lot of inadequate words as I addressed the winds directly.

[July 10, 1980, journal, Black Hills, South Dakota.]

George, Thomas, Theodore and Abe watched me struggle up. Then, as Clay stopped to take in the scene, I continued 3 miles to the campground. It was full. I waited off the road, saw a camper truck leave, and rode to the site in front of a station wagon which had the same idea. A little assertiveness on my part. It would be a lot easier for the car to get to another campground. I wasn't leaving.

[July 20, 1980, journal, western Minnesota.]

I had an interesting, unexpected mechanical inconsistency today. The frame of the bicycle broke, right where the support for the rack and fender connects on the left side, in the back. This could be trouble, I thought, but I fixed it pretty easily by wiring the rack and fender supports to the frame. With my 1968 P-I wire, from my old paperboy days. All these years, ever since I started riding again in 1970, I've carried that wire in my tool kit. Finally it came of use and saved me from serious trouble. My bicycle is now held together by baling wire. It's a temporary repair which could last a long time.

[July 21, 1980, journal, western Minnesota.]

Wore my helmet all day, as I did yesterday when the rain began. First time in quite awhile, since it got hot. If I get in an accident, I hope it's on a cloudy day, because I just won't wear that sweat-producing device on a 90-degree day. Actually, it has proven effective, absorbing some of the blow when I went down on the muddy highway near Belle Fourche [northwestern South Dakota], as a mud spot proved. If my head had been attached to the back of the bicycle, I would have been protected.

[August 1, 1980, journal, northern Wisconsin.]

Rode past countless cottages, cabins, resorts and lodges. Faded painted signs advertising these places, several at each lake. Every one of those lakes must be somebody's "The Lake," the lake they've gone to for two weeks every summer since 1948. A real cottage industry.



Heading (where else?) east on U.S. Highway 2, eastern Washington, cross-country bike trip, June 1980.

My bicycle is now held together by baling wire. It's a temporary repair which could last a long time.

[August 4, 1980, journal, upper peninsula, Michigan, regarding listening to a transistor radio while riding.]

It sometimes helps my pace to concentrate on the music. Disco is more productive cycling music than MOR. Actually, all of the music is "SOR." I could get hit by a car in the middle.

[August 11, 1980, journal, western Ohio.]

We've been riding south since the Upper Peninsula for about a week. Tomorrow we head east for Boston. Indeed, a psychological milestone. Another passerby repeated what I've heard so often after telling him my destination: "You've got a long way to go." Well, that's one way of looking at it. The way I see it, I'm nearing the end. I've COME a long way.

[August 15, 1980, journal, northwestern Pennsylvania.]

Four busloads of kids passed me in Edinboro. Just obnoxious teenagers. Well, except for the fourth bus, which had teenage girls in it, who stuck their heads out of the window and made nice comments about my shirtless body. I loved it.

[August 24, 1980, journal, Boston.]

I dumped my little vial of Pacific Ocean into Boston harbor, and that was that.

* * *

[August 1980, post card from Wisconsin to Publications Department, Pan-Am, Trident Nuclear Submarine Base, Bangor. It's a cartoon of fisherman on a dock leering at a woman in a bathing suit.]

Rare extant example of archaic pre-Awareness sexist humor found in a small northern Wisconsin town. Examples of this type of thinking can still be found in isolated pockets of the country.

* * *

[Late 1980, from Epilogue to cross-country bike trip journal.]

Hundreds of short stretches of road, scores of rivers, hundreds of rest stops, all come back, one by one, usually when I'm not even expecting them. The subliminal mileage.

Life was simple for me, for ten weeks. I rode, I rested, I ate. ... Riding, of course, was the best adventure. ... Hundreds of short stretches of road, scores of rivers, hundreds of rest stops, all come back, one by one, usually when I'm not even expecting them. The subliminal mileage. A thousand vignettes played against a backdrop of routine. The routine parts fall out of the memory, the vignettes remain, and a legend is born. A simple life with a lot of highlights. ...

We met a lot of good people across the country; people whose acts of kindness made things a little easier for us; people whose good deeds showed that for all of the disinterested, misunderstanding, adventureless, mediocrity-addled people I saw in America, there were also open, generous, caring people. ...

Once the ride ended, there was not a great feeling of triumph. ... The essence of a big accomplishment, its value, is not found in the moment of accomplishment, of completion of the task. The performance of the task becomes an ordinary thing. It doesn't seem at all spectacular to just ride a bicycle a lot. The essence of the adventure was not riding across the country; it was being ABLE to do it. It was assumed that I would be physically able to do the trip; the moral of the trip was that I went out and DID it, that I was able to let go of the things that held me back. ...



Spilling Pacific Ocean water into the Atlantic, end of cross-country bike trip, Boston Harbor, Aug. 24, 1980.

And thus, the ride was successfully completed, a joint effort between two riders, which felt somewhere between unplanned and planned, and felt like something between Just Another Ride and a romanticized epic. But the legend cannot be denied. ... Adventures, I learned, are easy to come by. Finishing that adventure left me ready for another one.

* * *

[Early 1980s, jokes.]

PALINDROME: A slut nixes sex in Tulsa.

OXYMORA: jumbo shrimp, light heavyweight, military intelligence, civil war, student athlete, constructive criticism, full limited warranty, original copy, halftime entertainment, nuclear survivability, genuine replica, holy war, death benefits, trust me, luxury apartment, mobile home, office party, clean dirt, even odds, considerate smoker, grand child, clearly confused, baseball action, Bremerton lifestyle, ferry service, war game, guest host, spend thrift, recreational vehicle, nonworking mother, sweet sorrow (Shakespeare).

What's the difference between a tribe of pygmies and a women's track team? The pygmies are cunning runts.

What's the difference between a poor marksman and a constipated owl? The poor marksman shoots and shoots and never hits. ...

What's the difference between an epileptic oyster shucker and a prostitute with diarrhea? The oyster shucker has fits between shucks.

* * *

[July 1982, journal, before and during trip to Russia and Finland.]

July 10: Yesterday – Scrambling at work to tie up loose ends before my trip as Susan exercises, aerobics, then scrambles herself. Like eggs, I suppose. ... I read in the paper last week about this large gathering of people in Oregon, people who were followers of some white-haired Indian guru-swami type. Thousands of them, descending upon some tiny rural Oregon town. ... Leave work at lunchtime, back home, 1:00 ferry to Seattle, drive to Joel's, pick him up, over to Mom's, good-bye Mom, drive to airport, drink several drinks, go over to the boarding area, sit down, not too many people yet, then LOOK! Red People. More and more of them. Streaming in, filling up the waiting area. Hundreds and hundreds of them, no lie. All the followers of this guru person. All of these cult followers. Mostly young, all of them wearing RED. Red pants, red shirts, red dresses, some of them red shoes. All of them wooden beaded necklaces, with a picture of their guru person. Hundreds of them. Hundreds. From all over Europe. Many languages. ... All with confirmed seats. ... and the plane flies out full. Without us. Because of all these RED PERSONS. Bumped. ...

July 14: ... "Bonanza" on Helsinki TV on Monday night. The only choice. In English, with subtitles. ... A train. First train in five years, since my British Isles trip. I enjoy trains, the clackety-clackety of rail travel, rolling along past houses, farms and fields again.

* * *

[July 14, 1982, post card, to parents.]

Here we are in Leningrad. Things are very old here, sort of crumbling. Makes one appreciate USA modern. Helsinki is very modern and nice. It's sunny at 4 a.m., still light at 11 p.m. Soon I'll be RUSSIAN toward the FINNISH line at the Marathon.

Love,
Mark and Susan

* * *

The legend cannot be denied. ... Adventures, I learned, are easy to come by.



Passport photo for trip to Soviet Union, 1983.

[March 1983, collection of humorous headlines and text excerpts contributed by Mark to the Pan-A-Flyer.]

Board of Directors? Vote for New Ones!
A Fast Pitch for Slowpitch

Good Cod! Holy Mackerel! It's the Pan Am Salmon Derby!

Rome Wasn't Toured in a Day

Fill a Plane to the Philippines

Take Your Sweetie to Tahiti

New Zealand – 'Down Under' (and a Little to the Right)

... The dress will be semi-formal (half a tuxedo?). ...

Rome Wasn't Toured in a Day
Fill a Plane to the Philippines

... TSP [Trident Support Project] is courting two teams in this year's SUBASE basketball league.

* * *

[Early 1980s, jokes.]

What do you call a guy with no arms and no legs, and he ...
Sits on a pile of leaves? Russell.

Hangs on your wall? Art.

Water skies? Skip.

Sits on your doorstep? Matt. ...

What do you call four guys with no arms and no legs and they play musical instruments?
Stump the Band.

* * *

[Monday, July 11, 1983, journal, two months after leaving Pan Am for Puget Sound National Bank in Tacoma.]

No more bullshit like, "I'll just write procedures and get some new experience and that will be OK." How about, "I'll get a job as an editor and try working at a job that I'll ENJOY."

WORK IN SEATTLE! LIVE IN SEATTLE! ENJOY MY WORK! NO MORE BREMERTON! NO MORE FERRY! NO MORE TACOMA! NO MORE BANK! NO MORE PROCEDURES!

* * *

[July 28, 1983, letter.]

In Tacoma, in Point Defiance Park, you can run for miles through trails in the woods. With giant evergreens and green forest floor, up and down, quietly on the hard-packed dirt, through tunnels of green vegetation eight feet high, and no car noise. This is an amazing park. There's a 4.4 mile loop I run (asphalt) with dozens of amazing views. This is the second-largest urban park in the United States. Guess where the first-largest urban park is?

And dammitt, I'm tired of working for less money than I'm worth, too. Easy Mark. ... Sharon Sharealike. And of course there's the Ho family. You know, Don Ho, the Hawaiian singer? He has an Oriental brother, Gung. And a nautical brother, Yo Ho. Another brother, Westward, is an explorer, and none of my fellow writers [at the bank] is very much into word stuff.

* * *

[Aug. 23, 1983, journal, from Aug. 20-25 trip through Eastern Washington and Idaho.]

Car camping. It means a lot of clothes and groceries and a cooler to change the ice in every day and milk that keeps overnight and cold wine. Real rough stuff. Still, it's easy. Easy to get away. In 1983 it is still possible to find a place to be away from intrusions. ...

Our kindling wood is 51-year-old siding from Roosevelt Field in Bremerton. A WPA project, it served the city well – softball, football. Now I use it to start fires in campgrounds that may have been developed as WPA projects. Lots of them were. A social experiment that affects my life 50 years later. I run past a WPA bridge in Point Defiance Park. It's everywhere, if you just look.

* * *

[September 19, 1983, journal, four days into new job at InteGram in Bellevue.]

“**G**ood-bye. See you in 13 hours.” My farewell to Susan. This phase, the 13-hour day phase, may be ultimately more strange than the Bank and Tacoma phase. At least this is for a good cause. Naive optimism? I feel that this position is my Big Break. Entry into the field. New wave technology. Current stuff. I can command higher salaries. I’ll have a technical skill. I’ll be able to learn a lot here, in my position as rookie, hanging around the Edge of the Action as a writer. A good vantage point. I’ve got the creative skill. Now I’ll learn the technical skills. I’ll be the rare writer who is good at both.

No more feeling dumb. No more outsider, watching others in their DP world, talking their DP language. It starts here. THEN, I can bail out if I want to, and go back to creative writing or editing. But stick around for a year, for more. These years will count.

* * *

[November 1983, journal.]

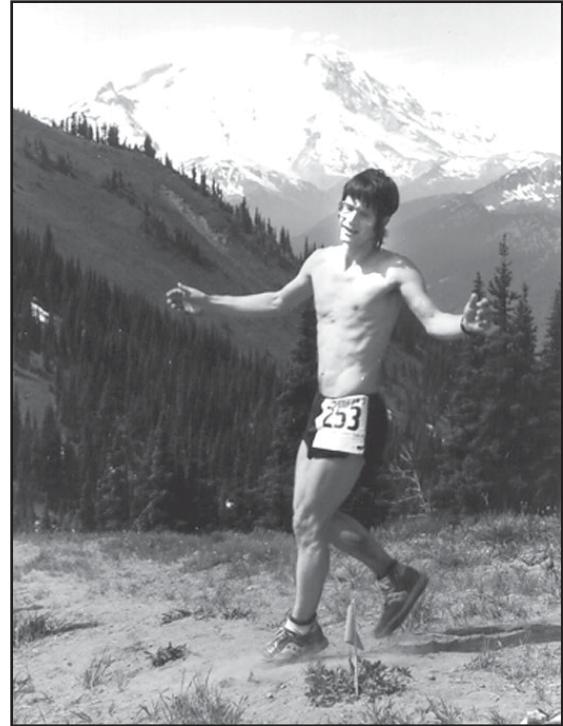
Just made the 5:00 ferry. Dark, rainy, a stalled car on 520; but I made it in and past the Space Needle, past KIRO, through the next light, crest the hill, and – traffic jam. It was a goddamn-fucking-TRAIN! Take a left, under the viaduct, past the Pike Place Market, down the hill to the right, under the viaduct, and over the tracks, ahead of the train. The ferry was already loading. This is enjoyable.

* * *

[November 28, 1983, journal.]

The end of the InteGram Era. On this day I was laid off. I knew it could happen; I did not choose to prepare for it. ... Randy announced that they had worked all weekend on reorganizing the company and that they had to lay off workers. ... Randy handed out crudely drawn organization charts. My name was not on them. ... So I updated my resume on WordStar, changing “to present” to “December 1983” and removing the work phone number from my address.

* * *



Triumphant during the Crystal Mountain Run, with Mount Rainier in the background.

I feel that this position is my Big Break. Entry into the field. New wave technology. Current stuff.

[Tuesday, 27 December, 1983, journal, first day with HL SynerTech.]

OK, here I go again. Another Day 1, another commute. Another \$76.80 commute book, another partially eaten breakfast. ... I'm back. There's no sense of triumph. I'm glad that I'll be working again. The relief is canceled by the return of the 13-hour day, the 4-hour-20-minute commute.

* * *

[July 31, 1984, memo to HL SynerTech, upon leaving technical writing job for a marketing support position at Honeywell.]



With kitty vision.

I feel that HL SynerTech has broken faith with me on the matter of smoking. I was told that our common work area would be a no-smoking area. That smokers would smoke in closed-door offices. This is not the case, and I am bitter about it. ...

This isn't just a minor inconvenience. This is a health problem. Working here has made me sick on more than one occasion. Most of my sick days were the result of smoke-related illnesses. Smokers, by their very act of smoking, reign with absolute tyranny over nonsmokers. This is not fair. So many objections: headaches, sore throats, smelly clothes. ...

Consider: Smoking is a privilege and breathing is a right. ... Ultimately, it is my number one reason for leaving. Career potential, nice workplace, job freedom, nice coworkers and potential salary increases don't mean anything to me if I have to work in an unhealthy, smoke-filled environment. ... I don't have to put up with this.

* * *

[Thursday, 9 August 1984, journal.]

The Successfulization of Mark has begun. What I am doing is nothing short of changing everything about me. Changing the way I have been for all of my life. Changing patterns that are 30 years old. Maybe older. Not the easiest thing to do, but I must.

* * *

[Sept. 20, 1984, journal.]

My dream, early Thursday morning: Killer dogs were on the loose. These were wiry dogs with "Gremlins" faces and sharp fangs, just like the movie. And they had to be killed, just like the movie.

There was only one way to kill these killer dogs – by urinating on them. I knew this because I watched as a man peed up a dog's back. As the stream of pee ran up the center of the dog's back, the skin split open, turned red and sizzled.

Not a pleasant sight, but it had to be done. And my job was to rally people to go urinate on the dogs. I was speaking to a crowd at a restaurant; I could see the gremlin-dogs through the windowpanes, on the sidewalk outside. I stood on the bar, preparing to announce to the well-dressed diners, to try to get them to believe the bizarre circumstances I had to tell them about. And to prepare them for their urination duties, I had ordered eight kegs of free beer for the diners.

And that's where the dream ended. Probably, I awoke and went to the bathroom.

* * *

Smokers, by their very act of smoking, reign with absolute tyranny over nonsmokers. This is not fair.

[Friday 16 November 1984, journal.]

I am not ready for ANY kind of relationship. Because I haven't changed at all. I'm still just the way I've always been.

* * *

[Wednesday 19 December 1984, journal.]

Shit. It's a "shit" morning. I haven't had one of these for awhile, which must be a sign of progress. But here it is. ... Classic symptoms. Burning up, irritation, dwelling on things I can't control. Reluctance. And I'm behind on this journal, and I get GODDAMN FUCKING IRRITATED at all this JOURNAL WRITING! What's the POINT? It's like RUNNING. It's like TRYING. WHY? WHY?

* * *

[Sunday 23 December 1984, journal.]

After thinking again, lately, that it is inevitable that I move from this expensive house ... I rented a house today. ... It's not as nice as this nice house on the Gold Coast [Leschi]. But it's not supposed to be. That's part of the plan. I'll have to work my way back up. Until then, this will be just fine for a single person. ...

ADVANTAGES: It's pretty cheap. There aren't that many houses listed for \$350. I'll be saving \$235 per month of what I'm paying now, which is pretty substantial. And it's a house. None of that apartment or duplex stuff (never). The neighborhood looks to be quiet; it's not on a major street. So I'll have the privacy and quiet, which is always number one on the priority list. It's got actual evergreen trees, and it's set back from the street. There's a back yard and a big patch of trees and Northwest Underbrush in the front, and the lot is defined by fences, which was required for Kitty.

DISADVANTAGES: It sure is small. Sort of like an apartment. It's a "cottage." Not much storage. Time to cut back on my personal belongings. There's no view. It's in the North End, in a slightly rundown, middle-class area. The North End. How ordinary. No parks nearby, probably not very good local running routes. No dishwasher – good lord, I'll have to do dishes by HAND again. No waster or dryer, although I can use my mini washer and dryer – but there's no space for them in the kitchen, really. Things are going to be really crowded there. No more fireplace. I'm going to miss fires. But these disadvantages are to be expected, as part of the step "down" in neighborhood and class and rent.

I'm sure I'll survive being ordinary. Yuppiedom is a ways off. Now I'll just be a North Ender. But I'll still be within city limits – another requirement – and a little closer to Mukilteo if I'm still working at Honeywell when their move comes.

It's a little house for Mark and the cat to live in. I think I could have done a lot worse. A quick decision. This was really easy.

* * *

[May 27, 1985, letter.]

There's always work. I am pleasantly surprised to find that I really enjoy my job at Honeywell. I like what I do. I have more chances to do "creative" writing than at any other job I've had. I'm doing a glossy, four-color brochure, I've done a couple of ads, and a video-tape script is in the future. I've helped out on a big proposal and done a couple of shorter two-day wonders on my own. I am the primary writer in the group. ...

Living with someone else seems as impossible as it is essential. Living with myself seems incomplete. I have experienced all of this before.

I'm sure I'll survive being ordinary. Yuppiedom is a ways off. Now I'll just be a North Ender. But I'll still be within city limits – another requirement.

* * *

[June 4, 1985, letter.]

Our Channel 9 volunteer recruited me to answer phones for their fund-raiser. So Seattle will be able to watch me answer phones again. It's fun. A nice way to meet some nice people from work. There was a Trivial Pursuit game going last time during the off-camera time. During one break we stood in the street on the campus in the dark and drank beer. Another volunteer and I considered grabbing a nearby baby and threatening to kill it on the air if viewers didn't contribute to Channel 9. ...

I felt old for the first time awhile ago. I had running injuries that didn't heal. My running pace has been so slow, two minutes per mile off my regular pace. I run four miles at a time, not eight. No longer invincible, no longer able to do things so easily. I had to drop out of the Emerald City Marathon at six miles with leg problems. Now I have to try, to work at exercise. To think about exercise for the sake of fitness. To think about mortality. I switched from bacon and eggs every morning – 14 eggs per week – to Grape Nuts and grapefruit. Now I wear my helmet when I ride my bicycle.

* * *

And classical music: in those days, Seattle had an AM classical station as well as KING-FM. Two to choose from in such a small market. Think of that.

[June 6, 1985, letter.]

You would have liked my car. 1959 Oldsmobile 98 two-door hardtop. Top of the line. ... This was a cruising machine. Lots of trips to California in the Oldsmobile. And the radio! The old-fashioned tube type. Great reception. At night, I could pick up everything: WCCO Minneapolis, WHO Des Moines, KOB Albuquerque, KOA Denver, KPI Los Angeles. The record distance was WOR New Orleans, from Capitol Hill in Seattle. ... And classical music: in those days, Seattle had an AM classical station as well as KING-FM. Two to choose from in such a small market. Think of that. ... Seattle was always a good radio market. ... It had good DJs. Pat O'Day (KJR) won lots of national awards. Back when there was only one station to listen to – KJR. Back before FM. Larry Lujack was a KJR DJ who is now one of the nation's highest-paid – something like \$300,000 a year at WSL in Chicago. I used to call him on "Homework Hall of Fame," a call-in program, when I was in junior high. My name was Billy Button, of the Naval Academy. Radio. Radio was always important. I don't like what's happened to radio. It has no heart. It has no soul. That was quite a radio I drove.

* * *

[Late 1980s, scraps of paper on Mark's bulletin board at Honeywell.]

Pro-life: A person willing to kill anything but a fetus. Pro-choice: A person willing to kill nothing but fetuses.

PUPPET, PAUPER, PIRATE, POET, PAWN, KING [Key words from chorus of "That's Life," popularized by Frank Sinatra.]

* * *

[Thursday 22 August 1985, journal, New York.]

We drove off in the darkness and the dawn. As Judy drove us out of town, I had one of those silent revelations that come to the fatigued, that the bridge tokens in the ashtray are the essential New York equivalent to the Kitsap County resident's ferry ticket book. ...

We stopped at a roadside Howard Johnson's. Howard Johnson's – a chain that's never existed in Seattle, or Washington state either, probably. But a name I knew from reading *Mad* magazine. (An early exposure to East Coast media bias – as a kid, I knew it was an

East Coast chain and wondered why *Mad* magazine didn't understand that not all of their readers had access to Howard Johnson's.)

The restaurant was part of another curious feature of East Coast highways – service clusters on each side of the road, pockets of free enterprise within the interstate, commercial rest stations. Do the employees have to pay road tolls just to get to work?

* * *

[Sunday 22 September 1985, journal.]

Good markers mixed in with the ennui of life alone as I've chosen to lead it for a lot of the time. So the thoughts turn to running. Running, the great analogy. It's been one year now, since I eased back on the intensity of my running and got slower. Maybe now it's time to find some intensity again. Start making slow daily and weekly progress again. Work my mileage up, week by week. Make a six-month training plan. Run six days a week. Turn running into a lifestyle instead of an obligation. Mostly, just make PROGRESS again. It's not enough to just maintain, right?

* * *

[Thursday 3 October 1985, journal.]

This is going to take some getting used to. This could change everything. Today I was told that I might have multiple sclerosis. ...

I stopped typing. It had been 30 minutes. Nonstop typing, keeping busy, telling the story. I had forgotten for awhile. I got up and walked across the room. I stopped. I said, "multiple sclerosis." I heard it. The first time I've said it. There was a certain amount of wonder in my voice.

How much will I be able to maintain? How much will I lose? What will I still be able to do?

And of course how am I going to handle it emotionally? How will I take the challenge to maintain a good demeanor?

And not plunge into despair. ...

How to handle it. If this really happens, if I really have the disease – is it a disease? – how to handle it will be paramount.

How to handle life. Always the big question. Now, how to handle it as a handicapped person?

* * *

[October 6, 1985, journal.]

Is at my keyboard Sunday evening. I spent 2-1/2 hours at the keyboard at work, editing and tidying up a report and writing a story about the last day's activities. And the machine dumped it. More than 20 pages. It's all gone. I reacted absolutely passively. Left a note of explanation and went to the copy machine to copy all of the class descriptions so I could begin a catalog edit. C4 was the message. The only copier available on a Sunday afternoon doesn't work. Again, totally impassive. I drove home.

Now both projects will be tight for time, but it doesn't matter. In light of what I'm facing, these things are insignificant. If I get bad news about my health and my future tomorrow, it's all going to be affected.



With Judy Haselhoefer.

This is going to take some getting used to. This could change everything.

Today I was told that I might have multiple sclerosis.

* * *

[Monday 7 October 1985, journal.]

“**F**or this relief much thanks.” (Hamlet I.i.8)

I got the word this morning. Yes, it's multiple sclerosis. But the symptoms will subside. There may be other “episodes,” but the chances are they may not happen for years. It's a mild form of the disease.

I asked questions, I got answers. I won't need to wear a brace. I won't be confined to a wheelchair. I'll be able to run. I'll be able to ride a bike. That information brought a great sense of relief. ...

I hadn't been playing the radio in the car the past couple of days. Couldn't pay attention. I couldn't read magazines in the waiting rooms. Couldn't read in bed. Couldn't concentrate. I was face to face with my mortality. And I got a break.

What an encompassing experience. I saw myself a lot differently. I thought of times when, as Bennett Anderson first diagnosed it years ago, I had SOL – Shitty Outlook on Life. Faced with the prospect of permanent handicap, all of my petty grievances seemed petty. This was a lesson in humanity. I saw what was really important; the rest was irrelevant. This will make me a better human being.

* * *

[Sunday 20 October 1985, journal.]

Tomorrow will be two weeks since I learned that I will not be crippled. This has been the best two weeks of my life. The feeling has been remarkable. I've learned how to live.

I feel great. The feeling is new. I like it. It took an incurable disease to make me feel so good. So this is how it feels to feel good about myself. I feel great about things. That's what I'm telling everybody. And I believe it. I feel it. ...

I've talked to more people, and done more things, and enjoyed more things, than ever before. And it's easy to do. It's made me more gregarious. I can't believe how I hid for so long. Now I seek things to do, and they're out there. It's so simple. Of course, it was the simple things that were always so hard to do. ... I feel like a new man. A victim no longer. Yup, an emotional roller coaster. But I enjoy these thoughts. Things have been so real these past couple of weeks. ... There's just so much potential. No more denying myself.

* * *

[October 22, 1985, letter.]

And without trying at all, I learned a lot of fundamental lessons. About what's important and what's not. About the insignificance of so much of what I used to concentrate on. About the value of human support. (I think that's called “friends.”) And I've taken it all to heart. I feel great about things. There's a new appreciation for the things I used to take for granted. A new optimism. There is nothing to worry about any more. It's made me more gregarious than I used to be. I quickly changed from Basic Hermit to People Person. (Remember *Harold and Maude*? Harold: “Maude, you're so good with people.” Maude: “Of course. They're my species.”)

* * *

[Mid-1985, on Mark's bulletin board at Honeywell.]

Vessels of Adversity

Loose lips sink ships. Verbal flubs sink subs. Random mutters scuttle cutters. Secret-fact-peepers capsize mine sweepers. Adverse bigots submerge frigates. Sonar pingies

damage dinghies. Oral forays founder dories. Secret remarks condemn SeaMARCs. Babbling boozers threaten cruisers. Confidence implorers menace destroyers. Illegal drugs endanger tugs. Unleased rancor can ruin your tanker. Mouth SNAFUs plunge canoes.

* * *

[Mid-1985, notes.]

REPETITIOUS RELATIVES

Pete and Repete. Mark and Remark. Joyce and Rejoyce. Kate and Duplicate. Grace and Disgrace. Denise, Denephew. Phil and Rephil. Lief and Relief. Cap and Recap.

* * *

[Tuesday, November 5, 1985, letter.]

I'm so much braver these days. ... You have to hear about the ... Halloween party at the studio that Emily joined recently. A bunch of artists in a downtown loft near the bus station. Fifty people or more, a keg, a live band.

I didn't have a costume and didn't want to wear my dad's war souvenirs anymore. but then, things being the way they are, things worked out, just like that. Stephanie gave me her entire costume, and I became Boy Mark. A Boy George outfit, and I was beautiful: a wig with braided hair and feathers and ribbons, a head scarf and neck scarf, a nice hat, a lovely kimono, her white sweats and white shoes. Emily did my makeup.

I was so pretty. And I attracted attention at the arty party. Emily said that two people asked her if I was a woman (honest!), and that two gay men made inquiries. ("You don't think he's want to go home with me?" "I don't think so.") Other men came up to say hello, to shake my hand. "Do you really want to hurt me?" I sang.

This was great stuff. I've never felt so desirable. The joy of androgyny.

* * *

[November 8, 1985, report to Honeywell on Advertising Age Creative Workshop held Aug. 25-28 in New York City.]

Remember those great old Volkswagen ads? They're American advertising classics, produced in the 1960s by Doyle Dane Bernbach. They set new standards for humor, understatement and tightly written copy. And they worked.

I used to collect these ads when I was a kid. I'd cut them out of *Life* and *Look* and *The Saturday Evening Post* and save them. I still remember lots of ad jingles from the Fifties and Sixties, too, the same way I remember popular music from the era. And for years, a friend of mine has never been able to understand how I can so easily lose interest in a football game on television, but perk right up when the commercials come on.

How come? Because commercials represent *popular culture*. On television, on the radio and in print, they can represent creativity and communication at its best. I've always "been into" commercials – long before I became a writer, before I understood what's called the Creative Process, even back in my earliest days, I always paid attention to the ads. ...

[The workshop] was dream stuff. I listened to the best advertising people. I looked at their best work. For 3-1/2 days, I was surrounded by the best in creativity, and it was an inspiring, heady experience. I want more.



'Boy Mark' hits a Halloween party, Oct. 31, 1985.

I was beautiful: a wig with braided hair and feathers and ribbons, a head scarf and neck scarf, a nice hat, a lovely kimono, ... white sweats and white shoes.

* * *

[Late December 1985, recounting of trip to see friends in California, journal, this excerpt stemming from Dec. 25 bus ride.]

The wine. Now, that was a good idea. Judy gave Mark a bottle of wine for Christmas, and the bus to Reno just seemed like the most appropriate place to drink it. On a



On the (marathon) run.

Greyhound bus on Christmas night on the way to Reno. ...

Now, to open the bottle. Mark and Debbie worked the problem. They needed a long, slender pointed object to push the cork in. Mark didn't have one. Instead, he cut away at the cork with his pocketknife. He handed the pieces to Debbie. The top half of the cork was gone. Mark began pushing. The conversation turned torrid.

"It's moving. It's starting to come. Oh, it's going to squish all over. Here, wrap these napkins around it. OK, you got it? Hold on. It's coming ... it's –" (Squish.)

Was it good for you? It was good for me. It was an enjoyable bottle of wine, and they hadn't even poured it yet.

* * *

[Wednesday 20 August 1986, journal.]

Summer. The Seattle secret. It rains all the time, of course. But today was the 36th day without rain in Seattle. Tomorrow it will cool down to the mid-70s. The nice weather will continue for awhile, it looks like. I treat each day as if it's the last sunny one, because one of these days it will be.

* * *

[Excerpts from 15-page account of late October 1986 New York City marathon.]

Shirt selection is important before a marathon. I mean, you don't wear a shirt from some 10K fun run when you're running a *marathon*. And when you're running in New York City, you want to show those people where you came from. I put on a long-sleeved shirt, my Seattle Marathon 1982. The shirt had a city design, good for a run through New York City, with a distinctive, upbeat, yet understated *Seattle* on the front to show them where I'm from.

I didn't study the course before the race, because I didn't want to know what I'd be missing if I couldn't finish. I was about to run my 14th marathon, and I hadn't run a good one in two-and-a-half years, not since my 9th. After that, every marathon I ran was a little slower than the one before it. I could still run, even with multiple sclerosis. But was I physically able to run a marathon anymore? ...

I was one runner among 20,000, taking part in the scene that looks so incredible on television – a traffic jam of runners filling the bridge from one end to the other. It's the stuff that posters are made of. ... Jogging with awe at the top of the span, I looked down upon thousands and thousands of bobbing heads. The second mile was all downhill. I was captivated by the magnitude of the human density before me. They didn't even look like they were moving forward. They just bobbed in a gentle undulation, for as far as I could see.

...

I was thriving on the psychic energy I picked up from the spectators. All those people! I made my way to the right side of the road and ran there for the rest of the race so I could be next to the spectators. Children held out their hands for a slap – I must have slapped 500 hands that day. People handed out orange slices and candy and water from their own aid stations. I could hear them cheering me on – “Go, Seattle!” I traded a high five with a black man – all right! I realized that this was the friendliest city I had ever run through. ...

I had a silly grin on my face and it wouldn’t go away. ... I found it hard to consider myself handicapped. ... A sob caught me by surprise. I choked it back. I hadn’t sobbed like that for six years. ...

Then I saw it: the FINISH banner. I followed the blue line, crossed the green 26 painted on the road, ran past 385 more yards of screaming bleachers, and for the first time ever, I raised my arms in triumph as I crossed the finish line. ... 224 of us finished during my particular point in time, 3:57. ...

A woman walked up to me, put her arm around my shoulder, and asked me, “How are you feeling?” ... What a loaded question. I took her hand, and gazed into her eyes, and smiled. “Just fine,” I told her. ... What a profound answer. And I knew she understood every word of it. I could see it in her eyes. The woman was my hugger. Huggers are the volunteers who checked out each runner at the finish line to monitor those vital signs. Female huggers greeted the male runners. Male huggers greeted the female runners. I was not aware of any further demographic breakdown. ...

Another hugger in the next chute stopped and asked me if I was OK. I gathered my composure and stopped my sobbing. I nodded my head and smiled. I did it. With MS. I did it, with MS.

* * *

[December 1986, from a Christmas letter to several friends, accompanying a Nylons tape.]

Ever hear of the Nylons? They’re a four-man group from Canada, three white guys and one black, and they’re just about all I’ve listened to for the past six months. As a Persuasions fan for 15 years, I was surprised at how quickly I came to like this variation on a capella. The Nylons do “rockapella,” which is a capella with percussion, a lot of it synthesized. ...

I haven’t been this caught up in a group since the Beatles. ... Just about every morning, I wake up with a Nylons song rolling through my head. Every week or two I have a new favorite. ... People get hooked. The Nylons are like that. ... This is happy music.

* * *

[Dec. 29, 1986, post card from Virgin Islands National Park, St. John, to parents.]

We have our own private beach for skinny dipping and snorkeling – sort of like swimming in a giant tank of tropical fish. They call it American Paradise here – there’s no place like the tropics. I’m not coming back home.

Mark

* * *

[June 8, 1987, letter, regarding final payoff on house he had been trying to sell since 1983.]

I had to write ... about the Bremerton house. It’s hard to play off the word manna. My manna went sour. My manna was a banana; it slipped away. Manna from heaven? There’s no heaven in Bremerton. I should have known that. The hope and joy were short-lived.

* * *

Female huggers greeted the male runners. Male huggers greeted the female runners. I was not aware of any further demographic breakdown.

[June 11, 1987, journal.]

I learned today that my next-door neighbor is a cantankerous old fart. He came over today and threatened to kill my cat. To kill Kitty.

Seems Kitty's been killing his wife's robins. I guess she has a bird feeder, which Kitty uses as a Kitty feeder. ... Cats will be cats. Now my kitty's threatened. Imagine keeping her in this little house 24 hours a day. She wouldn't be the only one to go crazy.

What a poor, unhappy old man. He's lived in Northgate for 40 years, since it was all woods, since before there was a Northgate. He's watched it all change. And now here's this renter next door whose cat kills his wife's birds. Life can be unfair when you're 80 years old.

I could not calm this man down to talk to him. ... So I called the police. This has to rate pretty low on the law-enforcement excitement scale. Three officers, two cars. I explained to them. They went next door and talked to him. I could hear the old man through the trees, sputtering away. It took awhile for them to calm him down. Then one officer came back. He told me that the guy won't kill my cat. That he told him he'd go to jail if he did. I'll keep kitty inside when I'm not home (something I tried to reason with the old man). I can let her out when it's dark – "when the birds roost." The law, of course, says that Kitty can't be loose. I can be fined \$100 for something or other.

It's a warm evening. My door and windows are open. And as I typed the last paragraph I realized that Kitty wasn't here. Kitty. Is she lined up in the scope of a deer rifle? Pinned down to a butcher block? I walked out the front door. Kitty? Kitty? No kitty. I went inside. I went back outside. Kitty? I heard a close-range "brrrrrp?" There was Kitty on the roof, three feet from my head, looking down at me.

Could you imagine anybody harming this cat?

* * *

[Tuesday, 22 June, 1987, journal.]

Kitty's gone. I am alone.

As I let her out of the house Friday evening, I realized that it was the first time I've ever been worried about her. You see, Kitty and I made this agreement when she adopted me. She comes and goes as she pleases; she's on her own. If she's out when I leave, she stays out. If she's in when I leave, she stays in. She takes care of herself. If she doesn't come home, she will the next day. She's always come back.

And our arrangement was threatened. I let her out Saturday morning. The Police came as I was doing the dishes. My kitty had trespassed. Reluctantly, sadly, I took Kitty to my parents'. Before I got there, I had already decided that this is just a loan, that they're only borrowing her until I can find another place to live. All I want is some peace and quiet for me and my cat. ...

Kitty has been my constant companion for eight years, and now there's no Kitty on my bed when I got to sleep, no little head parting the living-room drapes as I drive in. No brrrrps. ... I sat on the back step in the sunshine, looking at the thick green shrubbery, the nice back yard, the canopy of green leaves. Only I couldn't enjoy it any more. Paradise Lost. My little house in the woods: I don't belong here any more. It's the end of another era.

* * *

[July 5, 1987, letter.]

My crotchety old neighbor came by again a couple of days ago. He was much calmer and rational this time, and friendly. He told me that my cat was in his yard again. No,

my cat is with my parents on Mercer Island and I'm going to move, I told him.

We went over to his place, and there was this cat. Not Kitty, of course, but one I've seen before, a friendly young purring roll-on-its-back cat just like mine. THIS was the cat that was bothering them, not mine. It was a case of mistaken identity. Well, just bring my cat right on back, he told me. I don't have to move, he said. Will they give me any trouble if my cat is on their property? Oh, no no: they LIKE my cat. They've had it inside their house before. ...

I don't understand. These friendly old folks were the same antagonistic, outraged people of just three weeks ago? So it's Paradise Regained, sort of. My kitty is back and I'm sure glad I don't have to move. ... What a strange little episode.

* * *

[Saturday 29 August 1987, memo for Honeywell.]



Mark and Kitty.

MS RESOLUTIONS

No more denial – accept that MS is slowly increasing its hold on me.

Reduce stress – downsize my goals (work, running, Real Life) – but DON'T GIVE UP GOALS! Keep trying, but be realistic.

Realize that big jobs at work may be too much for my energy level. Consider this BEFORE a big job begins, not midway when I crash out. Save myself for jobs I can handle with energy and confidence. Don't blame myself. It's not my fault. Be easier on myself! ... With realistic expectations, I can concentrate on my strengths instead of dwelling on my shortcomings. Dammit, I'm still a GOOD WRITER!

* * *

[23 May 1988, memo for Honeywell.]

At work, at home, at all times, I consider every activity in terms of my personal EEO (energy-expenditure obligation). This energy-management focus is more realistic than the old technique of go-for-broke and crash-and-burn. I crash less frequently now; I manage my time to accommodate my energy levels. I work a few extra hours when I have the energy; I take this time as comp time (or vacation time) when I need to rest. But when I really do crash, I use sick leave, because I no longer pretend that I'm not sick sometimes. ...

My Standard Crashout Unit of Measure, or SCUM, seems to be 2-1/2 hours. I take my Cylert every day and it keeps me going. I still have to crash out on occasion – you can't fool Mother Nature with drugs. And, of course, the fatigue is still there – a prescription won't make a neurological disorder disappear. But with this medication, and with diligent energy-management, I got back something that I had lost: my future. ...

I joined an MS support group, and my exposure to other MS people led to a most significant benefit: the understanding of just how lucky I am. Lucky: these symptoms could be so much worse. Lucky: I don't have to face the additional stress of having a bad job. Lucky: I don't have to face the additional emotional burden of maintaining a close personal relationship. Lucky: I have coworkers and management who understand.

I have come to terms with this disease and I'm learning to live with chronic fatigue. I'm not pushing myself as hard as I used to. I don't make as many plans as I used to. I quit running, which eliminated a lot of stress caused by unrealistic expectations. ...

Save myself for jobs I can handle with energy and confidence. Don't blame myself. It's not my fault. Be easier on myself!

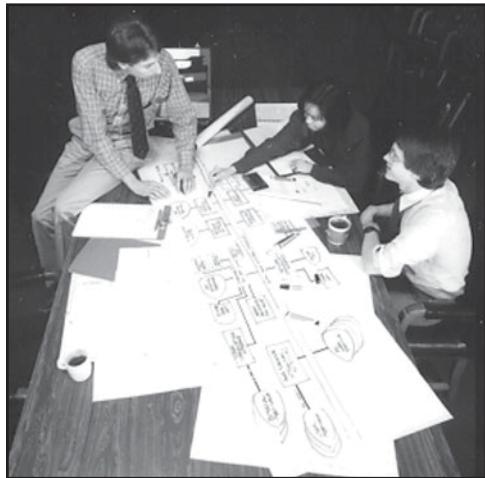
In ten years as a writer, I never felt successful because I was never where I wanted to be. Now I look back at all that I've done, and it confirms a very significant discovery: I always knew I was good, but I never believed it. Now I believe it.

The same thing applies to my running. I always thought that when I had to stop, I would look back in sorrow and dismay at what I can no longer do. But just the opposite happened. Only now, now that I'm not pushing so hard, can I appreciate the scope of what I've done.

My God – 14 marathons! And those ultramarathons – I once ran a 46-mile race! ... I'm glad I did all that stuff. ...

It made perfect sense to get out of my rut, to find a new scene, to make a move. So I moved. And those five acres have changed my life. Sure, it's a mobile home, but it's so much better organized and more efficient than that Real House I had in Northgate – it makes my life easier. And it's better lit – something I had never considered until I realized that after I moved, all of my many miscellaneous creative projects at home were *taking off* again.

Those five acres, the big yard, those deep woods? It's a little slice of Northwest paradise. This is my haven. It's quiet and secluded – no neighbors. I like it like that. I walk around a lot, just looking at things. I sit on my deck and enjoy the scenery. This is a big part of my newfound relaxation. ... I must hold on to this forever.



Mark (right) working as part of Honeywell team.

[19 July 1988, memo for Honeywell.]

Those five acres, the big yard, those deep woods? It's a little slice of Northwest paradise. This is my haven.

How many people can you fit into a BMW (Bitch-Moan-Whine)? ... I have to deal with a fine line when I talk about this disease. I was bitching and moaning about work, but here's the difference, fellow BMWers: the bitching wasn't because I didn't *want* to do it all, it's because the disease wouldn't *let* me do it all. ...

Work hard, do good. I don't know – maybe it was the way I was raised. I've always been such a good little employee, always so conscientious, always so loyal (even when I was a paperboy). Loyalty: my job at the drug store lasted eight years, from my senior year in high school through my eventual graduation from college.

Always the organization man. Seems I always try to work with the organization rather than trying to make it fit into my personal agenda. That's just part of working for The Man – we're all just units in a big machine.

* * *

[October 9, 1988, letter.]

Up, 1987 sucked. But 1988 blew. (All right, what's the opposite of "suck"? The term, I learned, may have come from the 1960s phrase "go with the flow." If something didn't "flow," it "sucked.")

* * *

[16 February 1989, memo for Honeywell.]

This is my first incurable disease, and I'm still learning how to handle it. The trick is to handle it with dignity and grace. "Lighten up" ... became my two-word resolution for life in general in 1989. ...

"Without hope, I'm hopeless." My words exactly. You can quote me. That's one of my first profound conclusions, reached late in 1987 and developed in 1988. I'm reading a book these days called *Love, Medicine and Miracles*, and it has verified so many things for me.

Love, medicine and miracles: I've found some of each in my life. It started with the medicine. The love came next, first for myself and then for others. And there have been more than a few miracles during this process. The book's about self-healing, and about the power of that gray matter up there in our heads, and it's the first book I've ever unconditionally recommended to anybody who will listen. Runaway #1 Bestseller. Now available in paperback.

* * *

[20 March 1989, memo for Honeywell.]

Job Options to Explore

I'll continue to write, but I'll no longer take on the big writing projects. Smaller writing projects play to my strength as a writer without placing as great a demand on my energy. ... It's sort of like being a short-order cook instead of a master chef – at least I'm still cooking.

* * *

[22 March 1989, memo for Honeywell.]

“Motor trend,” I'll call it, until I can come up with a better term. These are the motor difficulties that caused those new and unusual and frightening symptoms ... that Prednisone (the anti-inflammatory steroids) brought under control. Motor trend was characterized by increased spasticity. ...

Easier this year to approach it with dignity and grace, to let go, to go home and rest, to feel like I'm taking care of myself instead of feeling like I'm simply an abject failure because I can't perform like a healthy person. (“Denial? I don't want to talk about it.”) ...

The minor loss of prestige and ego, the loss of being primary writer, is more than compensated by the gain of *balance* in my life – to be able to simply go to work and do my job and not worry about extending myself so much, and then to return to a quality of life that just gets better. And I'll still be “doing words.”

The minor loss of prestige and ego, the loss of being primary writer, is more than compensated by the gain of balance in my life.

* * *

[3 July 1989, memo for Honeywell.]

Last month I completed the Job Raising Program, a ten-week program designed for unemployed MS people who want to return to work and for employed MS people who want to retain their jobs as they live with multiple sclerosis. ... “Support” is another word for it.

* * *

[13 August 1989, outline presented to support group.]

THE MS VIDEO – A Few Ideas

Message: There is life after MS. And in many ways, life begins after MS. Format: ... little vignettes. Just like real life. ... Sources: Us guys. We all have stories. “Why, just today ...” Approach: Humorous. A mixture of determination and irreverence, intensity and lightening up. Just like us.

Documentary: a cross-country journey. The story: An MS person, who once rode his bicycle across the country, does it again. This time, he does it with the support of other MS people. As they make their way across the country, they raise funds for the MS Society.

* * *

[September 1989, "Mark My Words" column for the Emissary MS newsletter.]

Cycling for the Cause: An MS Person Rides the MS 150



Ooze kitty, with Joel Ecob at The Estate.

[October, 1989, annual self-assessment memo for Honeywell.]

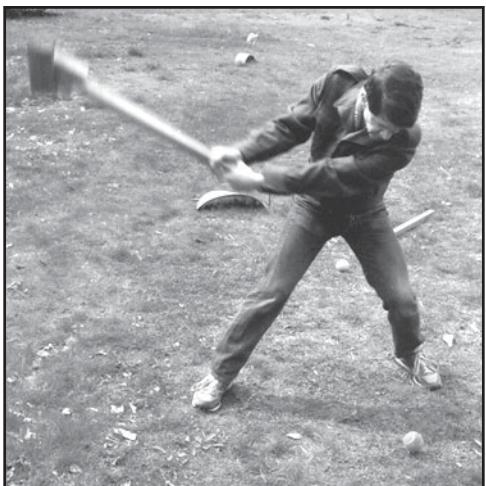
Four years ago, I thought I'd be in a wheelchair by now. Instead, I have more control. Right now, I'm feeling better, up there in my head, than I've ever felt in my life. ...

I feel like a walking pharmacopoeia these days. But for now, I don't want to change anything. This combination of synthetic medications, naturalistic healing, exercise, and a mind-set that relates everything to the act of healing – well, it's all just part of my good feelings these days. ...

That bicycle is my salvation. I ride it with an eagerness and enjoyment I never felt as a runner. And every ride, even a little five-miler, is an act of healing. I really believe that. It does my body good.

* * *

[Wednesday 25 October 1989, 2 a.m., memo for Honeywell.]



Lawn golf.

It starts right now. ... Whatever. Whatever happens, happens. Letting go. It makes things easy. I don't have to do a thing. I just let it happen. Whatever happens, I know I'll be OK.

Going part-time, another step in the disease process. Last year it would have meant losing a little bit more control. This year, it means whatever.

"I have to prepare for the inevitable – if that's what's going to happen," I said once in a spontaneous burst of redundant profundity. ... And the words of wisdom that explained to me my move to Snohomish County: "Where you live is where you are, and there you are." And the understanding that followed as I started letting go and opening up: "Who you love is who you know, and there you go." ...

Nancy Reagan was close, but she didn't get it quite right. It's not a matter of "just say no," it's simply a matter of "just let go." Just let go. It's easy. Put that body on autopilot and let it happen. Whatever.

[15 November 1989, addendum.]

That voice in my head told me that I needed to take a medical leave. ... On the fifth day of medical leave, I took a walk in the woods, listened to a tape I made that turned out to be quite autobiographical, listened to that voice, and decided to stop working.

* * *

[4 November, 1989, transcript of outgoing message on answering machine.]

“Hi, this is Mark –”

“Hi, Mark, how ya doing?”

“Just fine! How about you?”

“Oh, I’ve been feeling a little redundant lately, these days.”

“I can’t come to the phone right now –”

“Right now, WHEN?”

“Well, it’s today. Saturday. November fourth.”

“What time is it?”

“You mean now?”

“Huh?”

“Gotcha. I’m here, just outside. I’ll check the phone every few minutes and get right back to you –”

“You WHO?”

“– so just say, ‘Yoo-hoo,’ leave a message, and –”

“And it beeps now, doesn’t it? I like this part. Come on, beep! Here it comes.”

* * *

[Late 1989, from draft “Mark My Words” column.]

Initial keyboard-babble from the Brave New World of the unemployed, the disabled. A great sense of freedom. As if I had set myself free. ... The more control I’ve lost, the more control I’ve gained. Go figure. ...

When I stopped running a couple of years ago, I also stopped exercising. But I bought a nice, ergonomic, efficient 21-speed bicycle this year, and I’m exercising again. I can make my body move fast again (without falling down), and bike riding is a whole lot easier, and a whole lot less intense, than running was. (“Fun run” had become an oxymoron.) Every bicycle ride I take is an act of healing (I use my toes, actually), and as long as I keep on riding I know I’m going to stay healthy. ...

Meanwhile, I continue to live in my little slice of Northwest paradise: the estate and Mobile Living Unit. Five acres at the top of a hill. Peace and quiet. Privacy (my nearest neighbors are three horses). A wood-burning stove. A 1910-vintage log cabin for aesthetic firewood storage. Big lawns. And woods. The rest is all woods. This place is good for my head. And that’s good for my body.

Every bicycle ride I take is an act of healing (I use my toes, actually), and as long as I keep on riding I know I’m going to stay healthy.



Wearing a shirt made of Nylon(s).

The 1990s

[January 1990, from "Mark My Words" column for the Emissary MS newsletter.]

I heard a voice. I heard the word. And it was *logorrhea* ... the condition of "excessive and often incoherent talkativeness or wordiness" that MS had bestowed upon me. ...

Then I heard a voice. Again. This time, the voice belonged to Loretta, our *Emissary* editor. She had exciting news about BLAH, a new program sponsored by the MS Society. BLAH is a three-part program that will help me conquer this communicative disease. It starts with Basic Logorrhea Abatement Help (BLAH), then deals with logorrhea By Learning and Healing (BLAH-BLAH), leading to the desired result: Babbling Laboriously and Haltingly (BLAH-BLAH-BLAH).

* * *

[Undated, Mark's own entry in his series, "The First Concert."]

Who: The Beatles
Where: Seattle Center Coliseum

When: 1964

What: During their first North American tour. The day after I punched my arm through a window and had 14 stitches. The summer between 7th and 8th grade. Mostly girls; much screaming. I saw Ricki Sidel and Debbie Haney there. I found out 25 years later that Jan Gunn was there, too, although this was not her first concert.

* * *

[Early 1990s, notes.]

KITTY TRICKS

Flip Kitty, Ooze Kitty, Strangle Cat, Balance Cat, Attach Cat, Transfer Cat, Fall On Kitty, Brppp Kitty, Dance Cat.

* * *

[January 20, 1990, letter.]

Mojuana is a remarkable woman. It's scary, the way we "clicked" immediately. She is so smart. She's the first woman who has ever been able to match me in my silliness and my word play and punning. She throws it right back at me. We go back and forth, back and forth, until she's laughing so much she can't talk, or until I just get too tired from the word play, or until we both call a truce. We're like Burns and Allen.

* * *

[February 13, 1990, letter.]

Attention, K-Mart shoppers, we have a blue-light special in Aisle 10, valuable lessons in life, now available in the popular, user-friendly *forgiveness* configuration, all lessons in life, now half-price, until the end of the year, as we clear the clutter on the shelves, to make room for the all-new 1990s line.

* * *



Outside, at The Estate.

[November 1990, "Mark My Words" column for the *Emissary* MS newsletter.]

This one sounds like it came from a Hollywood movie, I rated MS. Boy meets girl at six-week program for people newly diagnosed with MS. Boy and girl go their separate ways, learning their separate lessons. Two years later, boy begins writing bimonthly column for *Emissary*. Girl reads column, sends post card to boy. Boy and girl meet, fall in love, get married, live happily ever after.

But we'll have to call off the casting call. Yes, I am getting married. ... Was it fate that brought us together? No, it was the Nylons. They're a four-man a capella singing group that I've found to be a tremendous source of psychic energy. They came to Seattle last December, and I went both nights. Front row. We're talking major Nylons fan here. I needed a last-minute replacement for one of my six tickets for the Saturday show. I found my roster from that MS group and called Mojuana. She said she remembered me.

It's funny, the way things work out when you're not trying. We discovered that we have more in common than just a disease. Same initials (MT). Birthdays just three days apart. Same pre-MS intensity. ... Same work history. Same salary. And within one month of each other, we had decided to just slow down, let go, stop working and start living on long-term disability and Social Security.

We also have the same marital record: married, divorced, remarried, redivorced. And we both felt that if it ever happened again – the M word – this time it would work, because of the lessons we've learned from MS.

We found that MS means *Mutual Support*. It stands for another "S-word," too, and we found that it's OK to give a ration of "S" to each other. "Safe anger" – a sign of true love. Which makes everything else, such as ethnicity, irrelevant (one of us is of another race).

With its "invisible handicap," our story (*Mark and Mojuana – Just a Couple of MTs with MS*) lacks the commercial viability to make it in the movies. But I'll take it anyway. Well, maybe it'll be a made-for-TV movie.

* * *

[Early 1990s, draft of paper.]

Thrasher Curriculum: History

The Interurban Railway: The Klondike gold rush of 1897 had nearly doubled Seattle's 1890 population; the city's 80,000 residents were beginning to spread out. No Interstate 5 yet, no Highway 99. The cities around Puget Sound were connected to Seattle by the Interurban Railway. As early as 1902, an electric railway began in King County, heading north. By 1910, daily runs between Seattle and Everett. ...

In the 1930s, interurban rail lines all over the country stopped operating as more highways were built and new bus lines offered better service and more people started driving their own cars. ... Highway 99 was the new lifeline that connected Seattle with its outlying communities. ... But the Interurban kept running, for another decade. The final train, from Everett to Seattle in 1939, was one of the last of its kind in the nation. ...

And now the voters ... are being asked to approve a new light-rail line that will connect Seattle with its outlying communities. What goes around, comes around.



Mark and Mojuana, with Neener (left) and Bosco, in the Studio at The Estate.

It's funny, the way things work out when you're not trying. We discovered that we have more in common than just a disease.



Wedding in New York City, 1990.

You're lucky we're not vigilantes ... because vigilantes can get really pissed off when you park in their spaces.

[Early 1990s, musical trivia lists.]

Singing groups or entertainers with parts of the body in their names: Little Feat, Spooky Tooth, Talking Heads, Heartbreakers, Roy Head, Gordon Lightfoot, Heart, Small Faces, Joe Cocker, Joan Armatrading, Louis Armstrong, Captain Beefheart.

Musical entertainers with mammals in their names: Cat Stevens, Three Dog Night, Elephant's Memory, Crazy Elephant, Cat Mother and the All-Night Newsboys, Buffalo Springfield, Crazy Horse, Bubble Puppy.

Conveyance entertainers: The Cars, Brian Ferry, Tennessee Ernie Ford, the Edsels, the GTO's, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, REO Speedwagon, Junior Cadillac.

Entertainers you can wear: The Nylons, James Cotton.

Authority figures: King Crimson, Queen, Prince, Marshall Tucker Band.

Musical entertainers with insects (etc.) in their names: Buddy Holly & the Crickets, the Beatles, Adam Ant, Scorpions.

[January 15, 1991, letter to New York book editor, pitching an idea.]

Once you've digested this hunka hunka burning data, yes, let's storm our brains.

* * *

[Mid-1991, letter, on Hawaii trip.]

We enjoyed a beautiful view of Turtle Bay, overlooking the main swimming pool and sundeck area. One magical night, we sat on our lanai and listened to a sidestream serenade, for free, by an authentic Hawaiian singer. Playing an electric guitar and singing amplified poolside schlock, he filled the hearts of a hundred representatives from Harvest Insurance as they filled their plates from the buffet. We never got his name. Don Ha, perhaps.

I whelmed with warmth as Don elegantly segued into Contemporary American Classics and started singing "Under the Boardwalk." Whelmed became overwhelmed as I eagerly anticipated a climax of my own making: the grunt. You know, that part of the song where a grunt just – *belongs* – and Don was getting closer and closer:

*Under the boardwalk, out of the sun (Oh, I'm gonna grunt.)
Under the boardwalk, we'll be having some fun (It's coming.)
Under the boardwalk, people walking above (I am ready.)
Under the boardwalk, we'll be making love (This is it!)
Under the boardwalk ("Uhhhhh!" boardwalk.*

* * *

[6 March 1991, text to computer-created custom clip-art cards, with the address for the state Department of Licensing on the back of each card.]

Calling Cards for the Rambo in Us All

Just keep parking in spaces like this without a permit. May I help you remove your car? Because of your rudeness, a disabled person – with a permit – could not park in this space. [Graphic shows person in a wheelchair about to fire a cannon.]

You're lucky we're not vigilantes ... because vigilantes can get really pissed off when you park in their spaces. [Graphic shows person in wheelchair aiming a rifle.]

* * *

Musical entertainers with units of water in their names: Brook Benton, Johnny Rivers, Joan Rivers, Billy Ocean, Muddy Waters, Emerson Lake and Palmer, Linda Waterfall, Dire Straits.

* * *

[March 16, 1992, letter to New York book editor, continuing to pitch book idea.]

I'm developing a book about my life with MS. It's a first-person account based on this premise: Shit happens. But sometimes *good* shit happens, too.

* * *

[March 16, 1992, from sample chapter of proposed book, "Less is More, More or Less: The Continuing Adventures of Life with MS."]

As a leisure-time activity, running didn't really appeal to me that much. I did like the races, with their interesting courses and their large number of generally friendly people who held similar interests. But I was a *runner*, not a jogger, and I pushed myself for a faster pace with every race. I wasn't running for the fun of it – I was doing it for the *achievement*. Of goals. Just like at work. ...

Ah, yes, the marathon. That dipstick of my self-esteem. The more I pushed, the more I let those marathons pull me in. The buildup. The training, by the week and by the month, by the spaces between the races. The goals. The anticipation. There was always so much at stake.

* * *

[October 5, 1992, "personal statement" on Medical Directive form, also known as a living will.]

I do not believe in the Right to Plant Life, and I do not want to live in a vegetative state.

* * *

[January 13, 1993, from letter to birth mother, partly in search of information about possible family history of MS.]

Iwent to a good home. Mom was 31 and Dad was 36 when they adopted me. Mother had gone through five or six miscarriages before they decided to adopt, and I received unconditional love from the very beginning. She carried her next pregnancy to term (although premature), so I grew up with a brother who is only 47 days older than me. My parents understand and support me in my genetic search. ...

I'm spiritual but not religious. I've always gotten along well with cats and dogs. I'm primarily right-brained; I have little logic. ...

As antithetical as it may sound, I never thought very highly of myself until after I became disabled by multiple sclerosis. My life had been a combination of high achievement and low self-esteem. The concept of forgiveness is still new in my life, and I've taken a circuitous path to get there. ... I'm healing. I've been able to understand the love my mother has given me from the start, the love I couldn't feel until the miracle of multiple sclerosis led me to love *myself*.

I went to a good home ... I received unconditional love from the very beginning.



George, Frank, Midge and Mark Tyrrell, 1995.

* * *

[December 20, 1995, "press release" to friends.]

My bone marrow isn't cranking out enough red blood cells, and those it produces are immature. Once or twice a week, I've been getting transfusions of red blood cells and platelets. I was diagnosed in September with myelodysplastic syndrome.

This illness is usually found in people who are elderly and frail. It develops after they take immunosuppressants for years so that their bodies won't reject a transplanted organ. I took immunosuppressants for six years, along with those quarterly injections of steroids, as part of my aggressive treatment for MS. ... By choosing aggressive treatments for multiple sclerosis, I refused to stand by idly while MS ravaged my body. I maintained control. I did it my way. I ravaged my body myself. ...



A sign of irony.

[Myelodysplasia] progresses to acute leukemia, although death often occurs before this develops. The approximate median survival time for my classification of myelodysplastic syndrome is 11 months. But a bone-marrow transplant can cure me of this disease, because I am 44 years old, an athlete/marathoner with 10 years of MS, relatively stable over the slow decline. ...

We're waiting for the "Hutch" to call. And then I'll become one of the 400 people who will receive bone-marrow transplants there in 1996. The process will take from 1 to 4 months to complete. ...

When Mojuana makes fun of my immature marrow, I whine like a little baby. When she said, "What's the marrow with Mark?" I had to respond with the song from *Annie*: "Tomorrow, tomorrow ..."

This is another major event in my life, and I'm approaching it with confidence, because after ten years with MS it's nice to have a problem they can fix. People come to Fred Hutch from all over the world, and for me it's just a 30-minute drive.

* * *

[January 28, 1996, letter.]

By choosing aggressive treatments for multiple sclerosis, I refused to stand by idly while MS ravaged my body.

I maintained control. I did it my way. I ravaged my body myself.

I amused myself last year by totaling up some of the statistics from my past lives. I rode my bicycle 17,925 miles. I ran 6,190 miles. As an airline employee, I took 27 flights in 42 months. Been there, done that.

* * *

[Jan. 30, 1996, lists.]

Things I collect (or used to): automobile nameplates, old magazines, hotel soap, license plates, newspapers from other cities, buttons, cardboard six-pack carriers, political bumper stickers, newspapers reporting historical events, old sporting event programs, college class notes, high school newspapers and class notes, Doonesbury comic strips, Bicentennial rip-off memorabilia, my old calendars, Mercer Island and Seattle historical information and pictures, bicycle riding information, old tape song lists, job search information, old car magazine ads, collected funny things, interesting newspaper articles, memorable comic strips, brewery memorabilia and articles, wine bottle corks, post cards, cardboard beer coasters, automobile steering wheel caps, engraved bottle and can openers, keys, airline in-flight magazines, airplane emergency cards, hotel towels, old cigar boxes, old prescription containers, tokens, US Mint bags, worldwide sand and dirt, old cans, old boxes, old bottles, beer cans, beer bottles, old Pee-Chee portfolios, footrace tee-shirts,

footrace programs and results, footrace running numbers, matchbook covers, swizzle sticks, bottle caps, wine-bottle labels, old 78 rpm records, record albums and singles, radio and TV commercials, tea-bag tags and packages, road maps, buttons, voters' pamphlets, campaign posters, porcelain Jim Beam decanters, fruit box labels, ticket stubs, hotel stationery, old imprinted pencils, old car nameplates and steering-wheel covers.

Things I collect (stamps, USA):
commemoratives, regular issues, airmail,
duplicates, first day covers, oddments, plate blocks, big blocks, airmail plate blocks.

Things I collect (coins, USA): Indian head cents, Lincoln cents, key pennies, two-cent pieces, three-cent pieces, Liberty head nickels, buffalo nickels, Jefferson nickels, key nickels, barber dimes, mercury dimes, Roosevelt dimes, key dimes, barber quarters, standing Liberty quarters, Washington quarters, Liberty walking half-dollars, Franklin half-dollars, Kennedy half-dollars, key dollars, Morgan dollars, peace dollars, currency, proof sets, special items.

Things I collect: The Good Book: acronymphomania, alliteration, cartoons for word people, clean signs of illiteracy, eat it and weep, English as Second Language, famous first drafts, funny names, geographical situations, Good Book one-pagers, graffiti, headlines that don't match copy, "How's that, again?", how to spell sounds, how to say you're leaving, how to write good, "ize" words, last words, limericks, little-used opposites, marriages of convenience, miscellania, misplaced modifiers, mixed metaphors, new words, newspaper boo-boos, not all there, noun stacks, onewords, oxymora, palindromes, photos and captions, phrases to not take literally, profound lyrics, puns, reads leads and saves raves, reduplication, redundancies, same differences, scrambled clichés, short declarative roadside, spin-offs of popular events, Swifties, trivial lists, typical entries, words to live by, writing so bad that it's good, Yogi Berra-isms.

* * *

[March 31, 1997, from Marrow Memo newsletter, describing Mark's 1996 bone-marrow transplant..]

The one hand: My transplant by The Hutch came off without a hitch. ... Doctors and nurses at The Hutch told me that my transplant was one of the best they've seen, especially because I am not related to my donor. ...

The other hand: Imagine my surprise. I entered The Hutch under my own power, walking with my cane. I left The Hutch in a wheelchair. I've lost the use of my legs. I can no longer walk or support myself. Why? A couple of MRI scans and a spinal tap show that it isn't an MS thing. The probable cause was the total-body radiation and mega-dosage of chemotherapy they gave me before my transplant. Normally healthy people can experience a year of chronic, profound fatigue, they told me. This must be what happens when I start out with 11 years of profound, chronic, MS fatigue. We do not know what will become of me. ...

Modem, shmodem. Internet, shminternet. Not gonna do it.

* * *



Displaying his catheter following bone marrow transplant at Hutchinson Center, summer 1996.

I can no longer walk or support myself. ... This must be what happens when I start out with 11 years of profound, chronic, MS fatigue. We do not know what will become of me.



[July 7, 1997, from Mark's Marrow Matters, focusing on the nursing home he was transferred to twice in the summer of 1996 following his Hutchinson Center bone marrow transplant and inpatient treatment at Swedish.]

Phoenix Rehabilitation Center: Putting the “hell” into your health care

So this was managed health care? These were my people? After a lifetime of private health care, I found myself living in a brave new world of public health care.

I jokingly called the residents “inmates,” until a nurse told me that most of them really were. She said this is where Harborview sends their drug addicts for rehabilitation. A Seattle Police officer sat at a desk in the lobby.

This place was noisy. The doors were metal. They slammed every door there. It sounded like a drug bust on “Cops.” Even when they dispensed paper towels in my room: Thwaka! Thwaka! Thwaka! Thwaka! THWAK! ...

What a drag for the nurses: so many patients, so many medications, so many prescription changes. ... I use a Groshong catheter. Addicts do, too. ... I asked my physical therapist if anybody used their catheter for street drugs. She told me that’s how two of her clients died. How convenient. How easy. ...

The workers in the hallways were yelling to each other. The noise woke me up. It was 5:30 a.m. I pressed my page button. A CNA appeared. “Your yelling woke me up!” I said. “Ha, ha, ha,” she replied, leaving the room.

* * *

[1980s, a favorite lyric excerpt from “Rise Up” by the Nylons.]

“**R**ise up and show your power. Spirit’s time has come.”

* * *

[April 23, 1972, letter.]

Sincerely yours,
 Yours truly,
 Your
 Your friend,
 Rock On
 Keep the Faith,
 Jesus loves you

Mark