MY ODYSSEY

relflections by David Zahrt

1997

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MY ODYSSEY

Zahrt 6/97

We returned from Kenya to Iowa to care for parents. I found myself a fish out of water. I discovered that I needed to be employable, had no employment record, and did not know how to get employed. I began the process of building my story. I share parts of that with you. I have yet to succeed in gaining and holding long-term employment.

MY NAME

My middle name is Ernest. It's after my uncle Ernest. I don't like the name. I never use it. I don't even put down my middle initial as E. I detest it so much. My wife said the other day that my name ought to be Frank and Ernest, because I am so preoccupied with being serious.

My first name is David. I remember being cornered by the Sunday School teacher in front of a 1st or 2nd grade class. She was insisting that I was named after David in the Old Testament. I protested for several reasons. First of all I didn't want to be named after David in the Old Testament. He probably carried too many expectations which would give others an unfair advantage in demanding what I should do and be. Second, I knew for a fact that my namesake was my father's college roommate, Dave. As a child I'm not certain how much I was aware of Dave's constitution. However, as I have grown older I have pondered whether or not there were some similarities. When I have discovered myself being morose, extremely cynical and, more often than not, depressed, I have wondered about the relationship between myself and my namesake.

My last name, Zahrt, is German. I'm not sure why I seem to concur with popular opinion and follow paternal lineage. I'm sure my mother's grandmother's, great-grandmother's, etc., lineage is as important as my paternal lineage. My mother had some German ancestry. My grandmother on my father's side was English.

The spelling is no longer used in Germany today. It seems to be a difficult name for people to use. Since the "H" is silent some have suggested to me that I get the "H" out!

The word means "tender, affectionate". I suppose it is a good name for me. I suppose too that the Frank and Ernest front which I so often wear is protection for the vulnerability that comes with my tender and affectionate nature.

EARLY ENCOUNTERS WITH THE CHURCH

I have only one memory of Sunday School in Iowa City. Then there are memories from Turin. I know we went to Sunday school regularly. I don't know how Mother got us to go. I think we didn't resist it. She went to Church and invited us to go to Church with her. There were times when there was a Sunday morning blizzard. We would walk the mile to the Church. On those times there were usually not enough people to hold a service. I didn't mind walking two miles in a blizzard. I was more delighted to go out in the blizzard than I was to go to church.

I think it was 5th grade when I took my Sunday school teacher's recommendation seriously. She said that everyone should read the Bible. She pointed out that it could be done if you faithfully read 5 or 10 minutes each night before you went to bed.

So, having no other criteria for selecting, I decided to start at the beginning—Genesis. I think I got through Genesis and somewhere into Exodus before it became so boring and confusing that I quit. I vividly remember the scripture standing out in 3 dimensions in Genesis. The first 11 chapters are what I would call pre-history. After the Tower of Babel in Chapter 11 the writers attempt to compile the family tree and the stories that go with it. The rest of Genesis is full of sex. Men taking women, barren wom giving their slave girls to their husbands etc. I suppose I was just beginning to be aware of myself as a male during this time. That made me realize that the Bible was trying to reflect real life. People had to deal with real desires, they had to make decisions that were not black and white, but shades of gray.

I realized at that point that I didn't fit in my class. The rest of my classmates hadn't read the story. They came to Sunday school to socialize. The lesson was of no consequence. They did not see the human drama in the lessons we read each week. I had a growing sense of alienation. I saw something significant in the lessons. I wanted to be able to share, discuss, and explore my insights and questions with others. There was no one in the class who was prepared to have conversation with me. I could not even share my insights with my teacher.

By 7th grade I began to attend less and less. I went to a Methodist Summer Camp at Lake Okiboji one week during the summer. I had a good time. Roger Bachman and I were the only boys. There were three girls; Bever Smith, Audrey Gerking, and another. There must have been a cabin proctor, but I've

forgotten who it was. The Chapels did get tedious. The morning quiet time were OK. The crafts were engrossing. I was confronted with the necessity to learn to swim.in order to get out to the float and diving board. I think I did it by the end of the week.

By 8th grade I ceased attending Sunday school. The summer after I graduated from 9th grade Reverend Pencook visited our house and told me that I had to become a member of the church. And that in order to have membership it was mandatory that I attend the membership training classes. I disagreed with him that I had to become a member, and refused to attend the training classes. When the classes were all over I think he invited me to join the rest of the class at the altar and become a member. I think I did.

I think it was Pencook who asked me while we were standing and waiting for a church supper to begin, "David, have you considered going into the ministry?" I didn't think the question over at all. I uttered an involuntary, "No."

AN AWAKENING

I think I quit Sunday school and started attending church when Reverend Metcalf came. He was a young minister. He preached sermons that made good sense. He made the Good News about life seem real. It seemed like it was a message for me. He was the minister when I started 9th grade in the fall of 1951. I was in choir and we were singing the Messiah for Christmas. I was assigned to stand beside Beverly Olson, a senior who sang tenor. She helped me get the part. But I also found myself with a crush on her. She was short and without much shape, and 4 years older than I. I didn't draw any attention to my predicament. I never asked her out. I never asked her to dance. She may have known it. But I have no way of knowing whether she did or not.

During Christmas of 1951 I was floating on a cloud. I can't tell whether it was the Messiah we were singing, or my crush on Beverly Olson, or, the sermons that Kenneth Metcalf was preaching. My perception is that is was a combination of all three. Not long after the 1st of the year (1952) Metcalf announced that he was being reappointed to another church. I realized that he had made some of the people in the church unhappy with his message. I knew that if I had to choose between version of the Good News and the local congregation's version that I would go with Metcalf's. It made me realize that I needed to find other company if I wanted to seriously explore the implications of the Good News for my life.

I began attending Pilgrim Youth Fellowship. It was a Congregational group in Onawa, 8 miles away, that met on Sunday evenings. It was attended by 5 other students in my high school class. They were all thinking people. The clergyman was willing to let us pursue our questions and have input on the curriculum. I never attended Sunday school again in Turin. I'm not sure about Sunday morning church service. There was no youth group in Turin. When I made the move to Onawa I opted for a group that I felt comfortable with rather than the Methodist Youth Fellowship in Onawa.

OFF TO COLLEGE

The summer I graduated from high school, 1955, I worked on the farm. One day late in July I was in Turin at Burke's Grocery store. Herb Johnston caught me in the checkout line and asked me "What are you doing this fall, David?" I told him that I wasn't sure yet. He said he would like to hire me to work for him. Terry Johnston, Herb's oldest son, was Christy's age. His other two brothers were younger than he. I had chummed around with Harold Johnson, their cousin. I felt comfortable with their cousin, Harold. I definitely did not feel even comfortable with the idea of visiting Terry and his brothers. There was something that Herb communicated nonverbally about being arbitrarily severe and impatient that frightened me about him.

Up until that time I had been equivocating about whether or not I would go to Iowa City to the University. The other option would have been to sign up for a heavy equipment training course and drive a turn-a-pull or a bulldozer. I would probably be rich now if I had done that. I knew that I would have difficulty persuading Mom and Dad to help me with the tuition for heavy equipment training. I chose the path of least resistance. I knew that Mom and Dad would help me figure out how to go to State University of Iowa (SUI). At that moment I decided that I was going to Iowa City in the fall.

As soon as I got to campus and went through the normal orientation activities I checked out the Wesley Foundation. I remember going to the 1st Methodist Church which was right across the alley from the Foundation. It was a good place to socialize. I was also still wanting to hear some Good News

Employment opportunities. The place was the Student Foundation for the Disciples of Christ. Lin was president and moderated the panel. I was still planning to apply to Med School. Even though I had an inkling that the Theological School had a stronger pull I didn't let myself or anyone else know it. My advisor was a University High School biologist. I was taking all of the sciences I needed for Med School. Then he talked me into making my electives the education courses that would give me a teachers certificate. That would give me science teaching as an option.on which to fall-back.

When I met Lin in the spring of '58 I had a strong feeling that she was the one I wanted to marry. In the fall of '58 I applied for admittance to the School of Medicine. My grade point average was about 2.3 on a 4.0 scale. It needed to be at least 3.0. Early in '59 I was informed that my application was denied. I pursued my back-up plan. I took practice teaching and prepared to get my teaching certificate. At that point I began to make known my desire to go to Theological School. The Christmas of 1958 Lin and I went to Hampton, IA and Turin, IA, to be introduced to each other's family.

The Religious Emphasis week in Spring of 59 featured Joe Mathews as guest speaker. We did the Daily Office every morning during that week! After he left we started a cadre which had Daily Office and breakfast together once a week. Steve Smith and Hilde Schneider (soon to become Hilde Smith, now Hilde Betonte) were in that cadre.

Lin thought she was making plans to marry a doctor and I switched directions. Now she was planning to marry a minister. In the back of her mind that was still alright. She had seriously considered being a missionary nurse.

From this perspective I have formed an opinion about why people choose a profession. Originally I adopted a common notion that the serving professions--teaching, medical doctor, nurse, psychiatrist, minister--were to be held in high esteem. This notion assumed that the motivation was selflessness.

My assessment is different now. There are undoubtedly mixed motivations. But the primary motivation is based on <u>personal need</u>. I realize that I seriously considered teaching because I *needed* the personal satisfaction of imparting something to others. Those who pursue medicine may have their eye on income, but the unspoken *need* is for intimacy with other human beings. Likewise a nurse *needs* intimacy and the opportunity to take care for someone who is very dependent. Now that I have had a chance to stand back and look at psychiatrists I realize that they go into psychiatry because they *need* to get their psyche under control. And so too, ministers go to theological school because they *need* to confirm the premise that all of life is good and their own particular life is approved as it is.

This observation is one of my own. Some would label it cynical. Perhaps it applies to no one else in the world. Even so, I use it to understand what I see when I meet a teacher, doctor, nurse, psychiatrist, or a minister.

I gave Lin a diamond necklace at New Years '59. We made plans to be married in June. I applied for admittance to Theological School. I was accepted. Lin had another year and a summer's worth of school before she would graduate. My advisor helped me get a job at the University High School.

When I graduated in May of '59 I was given a commission of 2nd Lt. in the Air Force. I applied for an educational extension to get a Masters in Science Education. It was quickly granted. I bought a house trailer. We put it in a park at the east side of Iowa City. I already had a bike that I used to get around campus. The summer we were married I got a used bike for Lin, and as much as possible we rode our bikes to school (4 mile round trip). Lin lost 15 pounds before we left Iowa City.

In the fall of 1959 I registered for a Biochemistry course. It was part of my obligation to pursue the Masters in Science Education. It was held at the Med School. The lectures were lifeless recitation of dull and uninteresting information. The labs were complex and confusing. I could not get engaged in the course. I found no personal contact or guidance. I got behind. I gave up. I did so shortly after it was too late to drop the course. I was beaten. I was not willing to work hard enough to overcome my handicap.

From this perspective I see that I did not want to become a doctor and so I failed to perform in such a way that would gain admittance to Med School. I also did not want to become a Science Educator. For that reason I was not willing to expend the energy needed to become one. That meant that I needed to revise my standing with the Air Force. I got an extension to go to theological school.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

I applied to Drew Theological School for two reasons. The first was my intrigue with Dr. Carl Michaelson. The second was we wanted to get away from the Midwest, and see the East.

Lin graduated from the School of Nursing in August of 1960. Grandpa Reese had purchased a trailer for us. I found a piece of angle iron in the shop and got the blacksmith to drill a hole for the hitch ball, and four holes so that I could bolt it to the bumper. We pulled it with a Morris Minor 1000 (40 hp). We pulled across the scale at the Turin Elevator as we left. The trailer weighted 1000 lb.–as much as the car!

I don't know how we made it to New Jersey. I do remember driving through an overnight campsite in Maryland. The road was like a roller coaster. Lin was driving and I could tell we were not going to have enough power to make the crest of the hill. And if we stalled on the hill we would be in trouble because first of all we would have to back down, and secondly once we backed down we would be stuck at the bottom of the hill. The motor was pulling down. We were going slower and slower. I made a split-second decision. I opened the door and jumped out, pushing the car up the hill. We barely made it but we were now on the crest of the hill. From now on we would get more of a run when we drove through the park.

When we got to Morristown, NJ we saw by the map that we were about 3 or 4 miles away from Madison, our destination. We drove on expecting to leave Morristown, go through the country, and arrive at Madison. We actually drove right past the Theological School and ended up in downtown Madison. We had our first experience of suburbia. It was solid town from Morristown to New York City.

Lin and I arrived at the Drew University Campus late one afternoon in the middle of September, 1960. We drove into what appeared to be the main parking lot and got out to stretch our legs. We had no idea where we were, and no idea where we needed to go. We decided to stop at the first big building and inquire. We chose an apartment-looking building. I stopped in the road blocking my lane of traffic. It was a blacktop strip which seemed to be laid right over the grass. There was no curb and there was no way to park without driving on the grass. The atmosphere was tranquil. I did not anticipate getting a traffic ticket. There was no traffic rush. I reasoned that even if I did block traffic they could simply go around me with little difficulty. Behind our Morris Minor station wagon was the trailer almost as big as the car. I had wrestled it all the way from Iowa. I was tired or wrestling it any longer.

I made my way up the sidewalk to the archway in the middle of the building. I stopped a resident who was coming out of the building. I intended to ask him if he knew where Wendell Hall was, but I stopped in the middle of forming the question. This was Stan Long! I said, "I know you, you gave me a ride home from Lawrence, Kansas in winter of.'57" He was startled, but he agreed that he had. Then we rehearsed that we had met on a later occasion at ISU. I told him that we were here because I had enrolled in the Theological School for the fall. He indicated that he had done the same. We marveled at the coincidence and he asked where we were staying. I said, "That's what we came up here to find out. Where's Wendell Hall?" "This is it", he said. We found the Clarence the caretaker, were directed to our apartment and given a key. We spent the rest of the evening settling in.

NEW JERSEY-ITES

Lin's mother, Miriam, had a good friend in Orange, NJ, Byrdice Tams Miriam told Byrdice that Lin was moving to NJ and would be looking for a job in Public Health Nursing. Byrdice set her up. No sooner had we arrived than Lin had a job at the Morris County Visiting Nurses in Morristown. The office was 5 miles away from our apartment.

I'm sure that it wasn't clear to me at the time that I was going to Theological School to find answers for myself. It is clear to me now that is what I was doing.

The first year I decided to stay away from field work. Field work is a job as an assistant minister on the weekends. I wanted to establish a solid academic foundation. Stan got a job as a youth minister. I took 14-15 semester hours of coursework. I was doing average in Greek, above average in all of my others but Philosophy of History. I was failing it. I didn't get it. No matter what I did I didn't get it. And the instructor couldn't or wouldn't help me understand what I needed to do to get it. It seemed as if he wanted me to fail.

I thought I was having a good time. But just as Christmas vacation started I went into a depression and paralysis. I had faced depression and paralysis before. The first time I remember was around Christmas time when I

was in 8th grade. That was the Christmas when I faced the fact that Santa Claus was a mythical figure, and I was no longer a child. All I remember is that I was depressed during a season when everyone was supposed to be merry.

During the first semester (fall 1955) at the University of Iowa I found myself helpless to gain an understanding of Western Civilization (history). The class was probably 1000 in size. There was a lecture twice a week. Dr. Weber, who was from Germany and spoke with a thick German accent, was the lecturer. He enjoyed lecturing. I didn't understand what to listen for. When I took notes I invariably got lost; buried under a mountain of insignificant trivia, and always dubious about the key issues. I didn't know anyone else in the class that I could discuss the subject with. I suppose some of my roommates or dorm friends were in the class. I didn't even know what to discuss in order to comprehend it.

There was a discussion group twice a week. If I didn't fail Western Civ the 1st semester I don't know why. I think I did better 2nd semester, but I don't know why. I do remember reading Brave New World and 1984. I didn't take them seriously, but I now see how prophetic they were.

I experienced paralysis and some depression again when I started Quantitative Analysis. The lectures were tolerable but the problems were, for me, unsolvable. I was failing the course. I could not solve the problems, I could not talk the problem out, or work it through, and turn language into a mathematical problem which could then be solved. As I look back I now identify them as proportion problems. In desperation I asked my lab instructor for help. He spent extra time with me. It was a do or die situation. I needed a good grade in order to keep the prospect of applying to Med School alive. I did manage to pass the course with a C; a major victory. But that was not enough to keep me competitive for Med School. That was the first semester of my 3rd year. My bid for Med School was really over at that point.

I ran into another paralysis with Biochemistry (fall 1959) one which I've mentioned earlier.

The next depression I remember is the one at Drew at Christmas of 1960. I went to pick Lin up from work the Friday before Christmas. The depression had been growing on me that week. She had to leave her agency car at the office over the vacation. When she got in the car she started talking a mile a minute. I said "Be quiet! I need to talk!" This was unusual. Unusual for me to be so direct with Lin. Unusual for me to indicate that I needed to talk. I started talking about the fact that I couldn't do anything. I couldn't study. I couldn't do anything enjoyable. I couldn't carry on a conversation. Everything seemed to have no purpose--no meaning. Nothing seemed worth doing. I felt like sleeping to get away from everything but that also left me with the recurrent feeling or worthlessness. I did get some satisfaction from smoking my pipe but I did that so compulsively until I burnt my tongue and lips so badly that it was uncomfortable to smoke.

I was overwhelmed with a feeling of futility. I was paralyzed. I didn't know what was causing it. I didn't know how to alleviate it. I didn't know where it came from or how long it would stay or how to dispense with it.

Only in retrospect has it occurred to me that I was finally facing my vocational issue head on. I had chosen to come to theological school. That was different than following a track of pre-med suggested by my parents, or science education suggested by my advisor. pre-med didn't work it was my parents' fault. If science education didn't work it was my advisor's fault. Now I was faced with the consequences of my own decision. What if I couldn't make it through theological school? What if I failed and was not allowed to continue? What would I do then? The prospect of facing the consequences of my own actions seemed sobering, maybe even paralyzing.

We did talk with the Longs over the Christmas holidays. The one thing I remember from that conversation was that Stan had similar experiences and recommended that I try reading some science fiction. He loaned me 2 or 3 of his Asimov books.

We also visited the Imler's. Bill was taking a rest from 10 or 12 years in the parish. He returned to Drew to take a job as assistant to the Dean of the Theological School. Donna Lou was a sister to the wife of the Campus Minister we had in Iowa City. That's how we had been referred tothem. They had 5 children. The oldest was 12, the youngest was 3 or 4. We had been to their house and were welcomed as a part of their family for both Thanksgiving and Christmas. It was nice to be a part of a family when so far from home. When they found that I was doing a depression they suggested

that we come over later during the vacation and 'put a jigsaw puzzle together'. Something therapeutic about jigsaw puzzles! I don't remember any releif from the depression but I do remember that it was good to have friends who simply honored my situation at the time.

We invited Dr. Carl Michaelson and his wife over for dinner shortly after the new year. Dr. Michaelson was the major reason why I was attracted to Drew. My lasting impression of the evening was that I kept trying to get Michaelson to tell me how to "fix" my depression. He kept telling me what great prospects were in store for me--that something wonderful was bound to come out of my situation.

THROUGH THE DARKNESS

I did come out of my paralysis in time to take my tests in mid-January. I didn't come out in time to do a thorough job of studying. At midterm I had expected to get above average grades. I got average final grades in everything but Philosophy of History. I flunked it! I was now on academic probation. I had to do better. I found a way to start and maintain a significant dialogue with the Philosophy of History instructor. I took my studies down to the lounge. It was unused during the day. I build a podium that sat on a table. I put the podium on the table and studied while standing up. It was an effective way to keep from falling asleep at my studies.

During second semester I also started a study group. I get a lot of mileage out of the sharing that can take place in a small group. I suggested we study the book New Life in the Church by Robert Raines. We lived in Wendell Hall. It had four blocks of apartments and was three stories high. We lived in D-102. I invited next-door neighbors in D-101, Tom and Ellen Walker to join us. I also invited Don and Pat Kline in section C to join us. We rotated from one apartment to another during the semester. At the end of the semester the study was finished and the group did not elect to continue. I was disappointed.

SPRING 61

Lin and I did go into NYC periodically to see musicals and visit museums, or take tours of historical buildings. Sometimes we went with a group, sometimes with another couple, and sometimes by ourselves. Once or twice we drove in NYC. We finally found it far easier to drive through the tunnel, park in the Port of Authority Terminal, and take public transportation--bus or subway--throughout the city.

I began to anticipate the summer. The first thing I did was consider church-related employment. I discovered that Bill Parsons was serving as chaplain to the Morris County Jail. He was graduating and going into military service in June of 1961. I accompanied him on his visitations and his Sunday morning preaching. Bill wore a black suit and a clerical collar. It was a uniform that everyone expected the clergyman to wear. I started wearing a clerical collar. That was something to which I was not accustomed. I decided that I would take the job. I worked my way into the job that spring.

METHODIST CONFERENCE MEMBERSHIP

I thought I was called to be what the 'church' needed. Without knowing how, I believed that I could be a part of what was needed. I was, however, hesitant to jump immediately into something as mundane and practical as an assistant pastorship. During the first year on campus the Bishop of the Iowa Conference visited the Drew campus. All of the theological students who were from Iowa were invited to a luncheon. At the luncheon the Bishop spoke. He was a competent administrator. The import of his message was that if you came from the Iowa Conference, you were expected to return to the Iowa Conference. He had come to keep tabs on 'his boys'. In fact he not only indicated that we were expected to return to Iowa. He told us that we had to come back to Iowa; that we had no other alternative.

There were a number of us, Stan and I included, who had come from Iowa because we had wanted to see and experience world beyond the confines of the Midwest. We had either shifted our conference membership, or were planning to shift our conference membership. When serving as a pastor or an associate for three to four years while going to theological school it made sense to have close ties with the conference where you were serving.

I made a request of the Northern New Jersey Conference to transfer from Iowa. I remember sitting at the end of a long table in conference room on first floor of the Drew University Administration building. The Conference Committee that guided aspiring young ministers was hearing my request. At one point in the interview I was asked why I wanted to join the New Jersey Conference. I remember saying, "Because Bishop Ensley said

I have to stay in Iowa." I don't have a tape recording of the interview, but I have the lasting impression of that being my exact response. From the viewpoint of an administrator, that seems like grounds enough to refuse to take me. They did, however, put me under the supervision of a minister of the conference who served in Morristown, and had been a former Navy Chaplain. This seemed a logical choice since I had an Air Force Commission, and anticipated that I would need to serve as a chaplain. He was also closely related to the Morristown Council of Churches, and the Chaplaincy at the Morristown Jail. He ran a tight ship!

ANTICIPATING SUMMER 61

In the Spring of 61 I also looked in the papers for camp jobs. I had experience at the Des Moines Y Camp (summers 56-58) and Iowa City Recreation Department (summer 59). I answered an ad for Hartley Farm. The Farm was just north of Towaco, NJ. I had to go into NYC to Hartley House to interview. It was a kind of Jewish community "YMCA". I got the job pending my satisfactory completion of a senior life savers certificate. I found that the course was being offered on campus at Drew University. I signed up for the course hardly believing that I was doing so. I had grown up on the farm. On the farm summer is not for taking swimming lessons. I had learned to swim, but only by swimming occasionally when I had the chance to swim. Because I was large boned and large muscled I did not float well.

I remember that I had difficulty keeping up with the course. I had to swim 8-10 laps for exercise each session. I had a hard time keeping my rhythm. When I came up for a breath I found myself swallowing and choking.

I was an excellent subject for rescue. I would go to the middle of the deep end, take a lung full of air, and sink to the bottom. There I could wait for at least 45 seconds for someone to come and retrieve me. I was heavy, and I was on the bottom of the pool. They had to swim to the bottom of the pool (12-15 feet), catch me underneath the chin with their palm, put their arm over my chest and shoulder, pull me to the surface, and pull me on my back, face up, to the side of the pool.

For the final exam in my life saving course at Drew I had to swim a mile. I remember thinking I was going to have to drop out because I was going to swallow the whole pool before I finished. Then at about one-half mile I suddenly got a second wind. From that point on it seemed like I floated to the finish. I got my Senior Life Savers Certificate.

While I had arranged to take over the Chaplaincy beginning in the summer of '61, Stan had decided to take a full-time parish assignment. He had established a relationship with the New Jersey Conference and was given an assignment to Tranquility. Tranquility was a parish in New Jersey, not a state of being. It was 11 miles north of Hackettstown, NJ, and 45 miles away from campus. Stan arranged his classes to fill the middle of the week. He maximized the number of classes he took when he made the trip in from Tranquility, and minimized the number of days he was on campus.From then on we saw less of Stan and Glenda than we had the first year.

SUMMER 61

I took the job at Harley Farm. We gave up D-102 for the summer. They couldn't guarantee that we would get it in the fall. We moved some of our things downstairs, and took some of them with us to Harley Farm. In the fall we were given the mirror image of D-102; we were assigned to A-102.

Lin kept her job as a Visiting Nurse. She had a '58 VW from the agency. Her office was in Morristown, but her territory was north of Morristown in and around Whippany, Parsippany, and Towaco. I spent the week as a camp counselor. My memory is vague. I know I did life guarding. I think I supervised some arts and crafts. On Saturday afternoon I drove to Morristown and did visitation at the Jail. On Sunday morning I went back and conducted the worship service at the Jail.

We lived on the edge of the campgrounds at Hartley Farm. We were upstairs in a two story building. The downstairs was a storage garage. The building sat on the edge of a clearing. We were the only people in camp at our location. Down the hill at the bottom of the clearing was a privy, and a cold-water shower. Even in the summer the showers never got very warm. I think it was so uncomfortable that Lin has no memory of the summer at all.

That summer I bought a used Lambretta 150cc motor scooter. It had 4 speed shift in the handle bar. It was extremely dependable and lots of fun. If the weather was good I rode to the Jail and back on it.

In the fall of 1961 Smiths and Flynns arrived from Texas. Steve had been attending Austin Theological Seminary. Both the Smiths and the Flynns had been involved in Faith and Life Community. We immediately formed a Cadre of theological students who were interested in the renewal of the church. The cadre served to keep us alive spiritually. It helped us maintain our sense of expectancy that something new could happen in the local congregation. The members included the Steve and Hilde Smith, Jim and Elizabeth Flynn, Stan and Glenda Long, David and Lin Zahrt. There were others on the periphery of the cadre. We arranged to meet weekly for a 2-3 hour period of worship, study, and discipline. Our meeting place rotated so occasionally we would have our meeting at the parsonage in Tranquility.

SUMMER 62

During the summer of 62 I maintained the Jail Chaplaincy and commuted to Trenton for Clinical Pastoral Training at the State Mental Hospital. I commuted on the Lambretta. That was the summer Jay was born. He was born on a weekend when I was home. I immediately came down with a severe sinus head cold.

SUMMER 63: JOHNSONBURG/WALNUT VALLEY

At the end of the third year of school I had enough of Jail Chaplaincy. I too requested an assignment to a parish. The time for parish assignments and the end of the academic school year coincided. In June 63 we were assigned to a two-point charge; Johnsonburg-Walnut Valley. When we looked at the map to see where we were to go we discovered that Johnsonburg was 5 miles beyond Tranquility and 10 miles from Hope. Not only was that it's geographical location, that's how it felt!

The parsonage had not been lived in for 5 to 10 years. There was running water in the house, a room designated as the bathroom, but no septic tank or drain field for the toilet. There were a few windows to replace. That was simple enough. However, there was no heating system. That was not a problem in June. It would soon become a problem in the fall. We had a one year old child, and were expecting a second by the end of October in '63.

What a quandary. The pastoral relations committee meeting was friendly and amenable. The committee all agreed that something ought to be done about the parsonage. They just couldn't agree on what should be done, how it should be done, who would do it, or how it would get paid for. Our lease for student housing on campus expired in June. We did not want to extend the lease. We wanted to take advantage of the parsonage which was rent free. So we were faced with a decision about how we should relate to Johnsonburg.

Some counseled that we maintain our dignity and insist that we would not move in until it was a respectable place to live. Others said that we should establish some minimal criteria that would have to be met before we moved in so that the congregation would respect us, and see that they had a responsibility to maintain the parsonage. Still others insisted that such a stance would be presenting a false sense of pride, and that we should take the congregation as it is. We should move in the way things are, pitch in to clean the place up, and entice them by example in the process of readying the parsonage. We did the latter, more as a matter of economic consideration than as a matter of equanimity toward the congregation.

We spent a year and one-half in Johnsonburg. Even though the members of the cadre were in dispersion we still maintained a monthly meeting. While we were in Johnsonburg we had a good many opportunities to spend time with the Longs. Bridge became the game of choice. We began to learn by playing. It was not unusual for 5 to 10 minutes to go by between the opening bid and the 2nd bid, or between the next to the last bid and the closing bid. We were not rabid bridge players. We used bridge as a vehicle to get us sitting down around the same table, and then played it when it suited us, and conversed when it better served our purpose.

In June of 1964 we said "Goodbye" to the Longs. They were re-assigned to Nutley, NJ. It was central suburban NJ. It was actually metropolitan New York City. We did not miss them for long. In January of 1965 we were assigned to Upper Saddle River, NJ. It was one hour's commuting distance from Manhattan Island. It was also 40 minutes from Nutley. Once again we continued the collegial friendship we had come to appreciate.

UPROAR

The Longs and the Zahrts alternated invitations for dinner and conversation or bridge, or an evening in NYC at a Broadway production. On the evening in question we had invited the Longs to our house for dinner and Bridge. Bridge was another way of avoiding

the pitfall of "shop talk". We allowed a certain amount of it, so that each of us would have a chance to communicate her/his own particular journey. We tried to bracket "shop talk". It had a tendency to work in the congregation. We were alert to times when cynicism, resentment, or bitterness began to dominate the mood of the conversation. When it did so, we made sure we changed the topic.

The meal was hot. We had just seated ourselves, offered thanks, and had begun passing the food around the table.

Glenda initiated the conversation by asking, "Well, David, how are things going?". I often respond to those kinds of questions with real answers. I did so in this case. "Well, I've been encouraged by the trend in Sunday morning worship. Maybe its just the honeymoon period. There were approximately 50 people coming to Sunday morning worship before we arrived. In the first 4 months the average attendance went up. It peaked somewhere between 85 and 95 about a month ago. I've created several sermon series and that had led to a sustained interest in returning the next Sunday. I've tried to make it a 'tune in again for the next exciting episode' experience."

"The youth group has been enjoyable. We started by singing some church camp songs. Our repertoire has expanded to include some folk songs, and even some of the popular social protest songs. Its an enthusiastic youth group. I think that may be the reason why the confirmation class is record size."

"I've introduced the new communion service that the church has come out with, and suggested that we have communion once a month. And I'm suggesting that we take a serious look at the Church School Curriculum that is published by our denomination."

"But there are some difficulties. The latest sermon series on the parables. I made the point that these are secular stories used to emphasize a point which helps us search for the religious significance in life. These stories then ask us to make some decisions for ourselves about what is right and wrong. This has aggravated a small group of people who are attached to what they regard to be fundamentals of their faith. They have even begun to boycott Sunday morning worship and suggest to others that they do the same. And I have introduced a good deal of consternation with the communion service. The new denominational service is too new. I have met resistance to the suggestion that we should not have communion once a month. The basis for the reluctance is that we might 'wear it out'. we had it so often. So Sunday morning attendance has dropped lately."

"The same group of people are upset with the emphasis I am placing on Christian education. The confirmation class is allowing the youth to present the real questions they have. The fundamental group is insisting that I am putting doubts in the teenagers heads. The Church School curriculum has been buying non-denominational curriculum for the past 20 years. Its based on wrote memory of Bible stories and verses. I think its pabulum. I'm suggesting that we look at the new denominational curriculum. That has raised the question about the Sunday School Superintendency. John, who is a life-long bachelor, has been serving as superintendent for the past 20 years. I'm suggesting that we institute a system of rotation so that everyone has a chance to take leadership in the Church School."

One of the things I always enjoyed about Glenda is that she had a way of being congenially candid, Her response was, "David, why do you always have your church in an uproar?" This was obviously a real life example which was later used in the Christ Lecture.

PILOTS LICENSE

I have actively pursued flying. It was an irrepressible URGE. I never asked the question when I was in High School, "Can I fly." One of my cousins had his pilot's license while he was in high school. The airstrip and the plane were in my home town. The opportunity was staring me in the face. Also I never asked the question, "May I fly." I was afraid. Afraid to ask the question for fear I would receive a, "No"?. Afraid that I might fail? Afraid that I wasn't ready? I don't know why I assumed that I had no right to ask the question.

I asked the question when I got to college and I saw the opportunity to take lessons. I asked my parents and received a "No". Strange that I asked, for I could have simply done it and said nothing. I was actually in charge of my own life and my own finances. I guess I was asking for funding. And when I didn't get it the issue was closed.

I entered ROTC when I enrolled in university in order to postpone the question of military service to a later date. Because of my

intrigue for flying I enrolled in Air Force Reserve Officers Training (AFROTC). I discovered that the Air Force wanted me to fly. They wanted me to be a fighter pilot. I had better than normal eyesight. They enticed me with the prospect of giving me a pilot's license in exchange for 5 years of my life as a fighter pilot. I don't know why that didn't seem attractive, but I declined. So I asked dad for financial help to get a pilot's license in university but he said, "No". The Air Force wanted to give me a pilot's license if I would sign up for 5 years of service. I said, "No".

While serving the Johnsonburg/Walnut Valley parish in rural New Jersey. George, one of my parishioners owned and managed a lake front and an airport. Flying lessons were available within the parish . They were convenient, and at a reasonable cost. George recommended an instructor named Tim, from Easton, Pa. Tim was a dentist whose hobby was flying. He liked to get out of Easton. He charged me $4/hour for instruction. I could rent a Piper J-3 Cub or an Aeronca Champ for $8/hour. Instruction for a total of $12 per hour.

I could not resist. I started flying lessons. It was a bargain for more than one reason. My instructor flew because he enjoyed flying. He had no children, and seemed to regard me as he might have regarded a son. He was not interested in the income he would make from giving instruction so the cost was minimal.

I took lessons at the Lake Club. I was approximately half way to having all of the flying time needed for a license when the Conference asked us to move to Upper Saddle River. That disrupted my plans to obtain a pilot's license. I had two completely new congregations to get used to with a series of new responsibilities to which I must adapt. In addition to that the nearest airport was 40 miles away. Teterboro was the closest place where I could obtain instruction. It was not only more difficult to get to the airport, it was more costly to rent a plane– $24/hour with instructor and access to and from the airport was radio controlled. That was something to which I was completely unaccustomed.

Initially I dropped the idea of completing my pilot's license. That lasted until I began to discover that I was not well equipped to handle the job of pastor. The more difficulty I had in keeping the congregations happy the more I needed something outside of the parish with which to maintain my sense of self and self-worth. The more distraught the congregations became with me, the more worthless I felt. There seemed to be no exit from the situation.

One of my parishioners, a United Airlines pilot, asked me if I had considered becoming an airline pilot. He was close to the point of retirement and knew that United was looking for a new class of pilots-in-training. I suspect that he was trying to tell me about my pastoring ability. I seized upon the prospect as an option in a situation that seemed like a dead end.

I went to Teterboro and began lessons. I logged all of the time required to qualify for a pilot's license. I purchased a home study book and did Ground School on my own.

I sat for the written test in May of '66. By then it was clear that we would be moving in June. The Conference had questions about my administrative ability, was not going to ordain me Elder, and had no parish assignment for me. I arranged to have the results of the test telegrammed to me. I got them the day before we moved! I had passed my written exam! Now for the flight exam.

We decided to go to Chicago for the summer. What came after that was uncertain. Perhaps I would become an airline pilot. I determined that I could find a Flight Examiner in State College Pennsylvania so I planned our itinerary to pass through State College

We camped as near to State College as we could get. The nearest State Park was 25 miles south of State College. After we pitched our camp and settled in, I made the trip into State College and scheduled a Flight Examination for the next day. That evening after we had cooked dinner and washed the dishes I studied the chart. I knew that the final piece of the exam was finding my bearings from a chart when I was ostensibly lost. I dreaded this piece of the exam because I was on completely unfamiliar territory. The following day I took the examination. The instructor's final test was to put the hood on me and got me lost. When he presumed that I no longer had any remaining sense of bearing he asked me to take it off and identify our location on the chart. I removed the hood, and began to survey the ground below. I worked hard to prevent panic. Within 2 minutes I found our location on the chart. I had passed the flight exam, now I had my pilots license! It had seemed as if all possible forces had converged

on me to prevent me from getting my pilot's license. In spite of that I had systematically overcome every obstacle with which I had been confronted. I was now a pilot.

During the first week of Summer '66, in Chicago, I began an application to United Airlines. When I came to the line at the top of the third page, "Reason for leaving last job", I was devastated. We were taking Religious Studies I Pedagogy during the daytime. In answer to that question this phase echoed in my head: "When the external situation presents you with an internal crisis that makes you desire to flee; there the question of God is raised".

I did not make application to United Airlines. There was more than one reason. First of all I suspected that becoming an airline pilot was in fact fleeing from myself. In addition to that I also began to realize that an airline pilot is a glorified bus driver. Undoubtedly glorified by a bounteous salary, but still a bus driver. And finally, I had a dream in the Spring about becoming an airline pilot. I dreamed that I tried to become an airline pilot and failed. It was what seemed to be one in a series of failures; inability to gain acceptance to the College of Medicine, inability to live with a commission in the chaplaincy, inability to pastor a 2-point charge. The dream had a lasting effect on my resolve to pursue the application.

I looked for a way to use my pilot's license. If I could find a work-related use for it I could afford to fly. If I couldn't find such an opportunity there was no possibility of flying. It was an expensive hobby. I found no such opportunity. Gradually I let the prospect of becoming an experienced pilot wither. The older I got the more unlikely it would be that I would ever use the pilot's license.

In 1977, I attempted to bring my pilot's status up to date. I spent a week in Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia. I was thrilled with the opportunity to fly, but disappointed that it took me 12 hours to get my skills back. Even after 12 hours of dual flight my instructor was not ready to let me solo. I ran out of time that week. My efforts had to be continued later.

I flew once again when in Mill Shoals, Illinois in 1979. I inquired about getting a commercial license and discovered that the licensing process is heavily subsidized by the Federal Government. It is so heavily subsidized that after a pilot is 39 years old they have determined that they have no prospect of getting their money back. I had already passed that age. I was not eligible for a commercial license; I was over the hill.

3444 W. CONGRESS PARKWAY

We spent a year as interns at 3444 W. Congress Parkway. My story was that I was getting trained to return to the parish. When the year was up we elected to take the second year. The West Side of Chicago burned, April 5, 1968 I remember clearly what I grabbed when we were informed that we had to leave. I grabbed Jay, a metal file box with all of our valuable papers, and my grandmother's guitar. Lin grabbed Heidi. I don't know what else she brought. Grist for the detachment workshop in the Odyssey!

THE RELIGIOUS HOUSE

We felt like pioneers in covered wagons when we left 3444 for Boston in September of 1969: Marshalls, Zahrts, and Erskines. In December 1969, when Gene left to attend Council in Chicago, I was designated 'in charge' of the Boston House. I promptly came down with severe sinus cold. I had severe sinus colds previously, but had never seen the obvious connection between my sinus cold and the way I handled stress.

When the Marshalls left to attend Summer 69 in May it was clear that I was permanently 'in charge'. Realizing that I needed a symbol of the transition I purchased a new outfit. It consisted of leather boots, bell bottom trousers, and a green sports jacket.

Zahrt 6/97

BOSTON SUMMER PROGRAM-SUMMER 1969

In May the staff of the Religious House met with 6 Metro Coordinators of the Boston Region. We entertained the question about what activities we would plan in the summer. We created a rationale for 3 major activities: the Odyssey, the Local Church Formulation Week, and the Local Church Lab.

We had invented and done three Odysseys already, so we had some notion of what it would take to do one. The other two programs we would have to invent as we did the Odyssey.

I took the plan that the Metro Coordinators had suggested back to the Religious House (16 adults and 8 children living in intentional community). I was responsible to see that this team executed the plan for the summer, carrying the brunt of the workload involved in the plan. The first thing we did was to overcome the sense of impossibility in having one more Odyssey. We created a story that the only reasonable time to have it was the 4th of July weekend, because it was a holiday which had for all practical purposes lost its meaning. So we were offering people a genuine opportunity to celebrate.

The Odyssey was a challenge. It was a Spiritual Retreat designed so that the participant was able to experience three days in two! It would examine Meditation, Contemplation, and Prayer, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience and involve the participants experientially in those topics. After we had a story of possibility for the Odyssey we created a recruitment list. We divided the Region up geographically and brainstormed prospects for each unit. We created a 3-ring notebook with the prospects arranged by geography. Each page had prospect information and a chart on which to write a compelling reason for them to want to come, and a place to record their response. We created a structured phone conversation which was designed with a presumptive close, and put that at the front of the notebook. Then we did some role-play practice-phoning. We did not allow the person being called to say "No". We registered their reservations, and told them we wanted them to think about what it would take for them to come and we would call them back. In the interim between the first and second call we figured out how their reluctance could be the basis for a good reason for them to come. Thbe we called them back for a second conversation. We rotated the calling on a time schedule. Each caller kept careful notes so that the next person calling would be able to pick up where the conversation left off. When people said "Yes". we mailed them a confirmation letter with details about when they should arrive, what they should bring, when the Odyssey would be over, and how to get to the Religious House.

The next step was inventory. We inventoried all the materials needed in an Odyssey and compared it against the list of things we needed for the one upcoming: workbook inserts, montage workshop materials, pictures, glue, scissors, Poverty workshop materials, Obedience activity materials, decor for the main room and the three seminar rooms, participant garb, envelopes, postage, stationery, and music for the opening and closing feasts, and daily wakeup.

Then we made a list of the things which we would have to create, gather, and practice. To create: a menu, additional workshop materials, faculty procedures manual for the entire Odyssey, team assignments for the participants and the faculty, room assignments for the participants, Odyssey enablement and teaching assignments, House cleaning and preparation assignments.

To gather: workshop materials, music, beds, groceries, printing of manuals, decor, garb, registration record.

To practice: registration procedures, opening feast and ritual, wakeup procedures, workshops, obediences, breakfast and dinner fasts, Brother Lawrence style of enablement (invisibility), closing feast and ritual, and presentations.

We successfully recruited 42 people, a number larger than any previous Odyssey. Given the fact that we had already recruited our prime prospects through the first three Odysseys, and that we were scheduling this for the 4th of July, we were delighted with the turnout. The team worked superbly together and we began the summer with a tremendous victory.

We also conducted 3 Local Church Formulation Weeks, and a one week, in residence, Local Church Lab.

INKINDING FOR SUMMER '72

We were living and working in a Seminary building on the West Side of Chicago which the Church of the Brethren abandoned.

We had out grown it and just inherited an office building on the North Side which the Kemper Insurance Company moved out of when they moved their headquarters to the suburbs. It was 1/4 of a city block of floor space, and 8 stories high. It was all office building. It was ours by January of 1972. We sent staff to camp out in it starting in March. In May we made the decision to have our month-long summer program for 1000 people in the Kemper Building. We mounted a campaign to be able to accomplish this feat. It would mean turning 6 floors of office space into residential space. My assignment was to head up a team of 6 people to begin cost-savings by in-kinding material that we needed for the summer program.

I began by conducting a brainstorm with the 150 staff who were gathered to prepare for the summer. From that list I created a list of materials which I presumed each task force would need. I then went to each task force and got their response to the list. I made revisions according to their assessment. I got from them an estimation of the amounts of materials they would be using and a cost figure if they could give it. With this data I then compiled a list of the most needed items and the most costly items that we would use in the summer program. From that point I divided the 6 team members into teams and assigned them to get in-kind the items which would help us realize the greatest cost reduction.

My assignment was to get 1000 single beds to put in the Kemper Building. I began by making a list of all the possible sources that I could find in my imagination. From there I found the phone numbers and addresses for all of my initial contacts. The Yellow Pages were very helpful. There I usually found new sources which I added to my list.

I kept these names, addresses, and phone numbers in a notebook with a space in which to record the contact person and comments that were worth noting. I created a short concise story about who I represented, and what special need I was trying to fulfill. In each call I made sure to ask for additional suggestions about where I could find beds. This allowed me to continue to build my prospect list as I went. I also used as an operating principle the power of statistical probability. I relied upon the fact that 1 out of 10 tries would lead me to my goal.

The scrap metal and used furniture dealers were no help because they had an occasional odd assortment of beds for which they wanted exorbitant prices. But they did lead me to the Great Lakes Naval Training Base on the North Shore of Chicago. Initially I had uncovered the lead through the scrap metal dealers who would bid on the scrap metal once a week a the great Lakes scrap metal depot. The depot had rigorous policies about who was eligible to buy. In addition to that their beds came sporadically and in poor physical condition. In looking for another entree to the Base I discovered that we had conducted some course work with the Navy Chaplains two or three years earlier. I called the Office of the Chaplaincy to investigate. It happened that the Greek Orthodox Chaplain had been in one of our courses. Through him I learned that they were in the process of bulldozing several barracks to the ground, and they were not bothering to remove the bunk beds.

When I discovered this I arranged to enter the Base and collect the bunks from the barracks before they were razed. The Chaplain gave permission for me to pick up a truck load of bunks. I realized that one truck would only hold 1/5 of the bunks in the barracks, and by the time we loaded, traveled back to the Kemper Building, unloaded, and returned to the Base we would be lucky to get a second load. Furthermore the Chaplain had only arranged for one entry. And the following day the barracks would be razed. So I requested 15 people and a requisition to rent 5 trucks. We arrived on schedule. When we were cleared through the gates by an escort vehicle we drove 5 trucks through the gates and had the barracks empty before noon.

We only got 400 bunks, so in order to accomplish my objective I needed to find another 100 bunks. As soon as we returned to the Kemper Building I called the Chaplain, told him that we had gotten all of the bunks in the barracks, and asked him if he knew of any other place where we could get bunks! He was astounded. He could not believe we had gotten 400 bunks that morning, and that I was serious about getting another 100 bunks. He indicated that he had used up all his favors. However within another day or two he returned my call and said that he had found another 75 bunks. I did not accompany the crew that returned to the base to get the 75 bunks. Someone on the crew decided to take the Captain's ping pong table out of storage along with the 75 bunks.

When I was notified by the Chaplain I got the impression that he could press charges on me. In conversation with Phil Townley I arranged to have the ping pong table, plus a fine wooden desk we inherited from Kemper, at the freight dock the next day. That satisfied the Captain, and kept me out of jail!

By using some of the bunks we had in our current center we were able to provide bedding for 1000 people during the Summer of '72.

There seemed to be something magical about the summer. Shortly before the summer program began I in-kinded 2 tons of grits. Later on during the summer program I inkinded 50,000 napkins, and a railroad freight car load of green beans.

WHO'S YOUR OOOH AND AHHH CROWD?
DENVER 1974

I was dressed in suit in and tie. I had learned how to wear such attire and look quite presentable even though I detested it. It seemed like a straight jacket to me.

The reason for the dress? I was on a fund-raising campaign. As the regional director of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) office in Denver I was responsible to do what we called 'development' once a quarter. 'Development' meant developing financial support. As a non-profit organization we were continually dependent on soliciting funds for our program. On a regular basis an ICA member from Chicago, our central office, would visit, help design the campaign, and accompany us on our fund raising visits.

We went in teams of two. We found it important for a number of reasons. It gave us the opportunity to hold accountability for our intentions. Not everyone enjoyed fund raising. The team helped those of us who had an aversion to such activity to keep our nerve. It provided the opportunity for periodic evaluation so that it was possible to monitor progress and maintain a steady flow of appointment making, visitation and presentation, and follow-up. It also gave us greater objectivity. A post-call evaluation gave us a chance to share observations from more than one point of view.

Sarah and I had an appointment with Gary at one of the downtown banks. We arrived ahead of time and announced ourselves to the secretary. We were invited into Gary's office. Gary was a vice-president of the bank. A glance out the window confirmed that we were on the top floor of one of Denver's highest downtown buildings. The office was uncluttered, the furniture lines were straight. The chairs were neatly placed across the large 4' by 8' glass covered desktop.

We always made a plan before we went in. We expected to take the lead from the outset. Usually the local representative introduced the team, and turned the presentation over to the visiting ICA staff member who would give a contextual overview of the ICA and its purpose and tell an inspirational story about some specific work we were currently doing somewhere on the globe. At this point the other team member would usually close with a request for money.

Gary listened carefully to our story. When we were through with the presentation he indicated that he could not make a decision about the request and immediately, and began to tell us a story.

He had begun his career in banking during the height of the Great Depression. His first job was foreclosing on farmers who were not able to keep making payments on their land.

He indicated that it was one of the most difficult jobs that he had ever been assigned. His boss told him that he would need to have a way to get to the farmers and that it would probably be difficult to break the news. It was during his tour of duty delivering foreclosure notices that he learned the art of clod-flicking. As he began telling this unsolicited story he did not indicate the purpose of this story, but I deduced that he was sending us a message.

He related that he developed his technique quite by accident. He arrived at his client's farmstead unannounced, sometime mid-morning or mid-afternoon. He would hope to find the man of the family in the field. He would make his presence known at the house and get directions out to the field. He would then mosy out to the field and wait at the end of a row. When the farmer arrived at the end of the row he would usually stop his field work and the conversation would ensue.

Gary would begin by introducing himself and making some comment about the weather. As the conversation continued on the level of social niceties the farmer would normally look about for a stick or a heavy stem of weed and crouch on his haunches.

The conversation drifted from one topic to another. As the conversation drifted the farmer would select a clod, and use the stick to

fuss around with it. Once he had the clod isolated from the rest of the soil he placed the stick firmly behind the clod. The he gave the clod a flick and watch with interest to see how far it would go. Often the clod flicking served to emphasize or punctuate a point in the conversation.

Gary learned to relax and follow the drift of the conversation. He also found that it was helpful to find a stick, crouch, and join the farmer. Although he was a novice at it, he followed the lead and began to flick a clod now and then. The conversation would inevitably get around to the crops. Eventually the financial feasibility of the farming operation was the topic of discussion. Finally he would break the news that he had come to deliver the news that the bank was foreclosing on the farm.

For some reason it seemed to be easier to break the news while flicking clods. Not only was it easier for him to break the news, it seemed apparent to him that it was easier for the farmer to take the news while he was crouched there in the field flicking clods.

It was an interesting and an amusing story. As soon as he had told it he asked us, "Who's your Ooooh and Aaaah crowd?" We were baffled. We had no idea what an Ooooh and Aaaah crowd was.

He continued by telling us that when he got back, the staff in the office marveled at what he had accomplished. Upon returning from his assignment he recounted the details of his encounter and without fail they would interrupt and say, "Ooooh." As he continued to relate the remainder of the episode they would interrupt once more and say, "Aaaah."

Who's your Ooooh and Aaaah crowd?

NUNGI-OOMBULGURRI 1977

I was swimming in a pool at the foot of the cliffs of the Jump-up. The name of the place was Nungi. Two weeks ago it had been a crater of dust and stone, 8 to 12 foot deep and 30 to 50 feet in diameter. The wet season had come and the rains had begun to fall as regularly as clockwork every afternoon at 2 pm. It was a welcome relief for the temperatures were well above 100° F during the day, and didn't drop below 90° F. at night. We lived and worked in the village with no climate control.

The Jump-up rose a dramatic 100 to 150 feet directly up from the rambling flood plains of the Forrest River. The hills, which the Jump-up announced, became the water shed for the fresh water that flowed into the Forrest River as a result of the 3-month wet season. For 9 months of the year these hills lived on the 30 inches of rainfall that occurred within a 3 month period. There was an initial flourishing of flora and fauna when the wet season arrived, and then a period of dormancy during the long dry season. As if by magic there were fish in a small pond where there had been but a dust bowl 2 months earlier.

The wet season was coming to an end. The daytime and night-time temperatures had moderated. The water was inviting. It was refreshing. It was cool. It was envigorating. It was soothing. It was natural. It was comforting. It was nourishing. It was harboring. It was protecting.

My colleagues made the one-half hour walk to Nungi. We changed to our swimming suits, played, talked, relaxed and relished the water that hot afternoon. As we relished the refreshing cool, one by one, we began to anticipate the responsibilities which were waiting for us as the afternoon wore on. We knew we would emerge from the comfort of the water, replace our swim suits with our clothes, and return to work in the harsh wet season climate. It seemed natural that I did not want to leave the water. But more astounding to me had the sense of remembering...remembering what the whale must have considered when s/he decided that s/he would not leave the water and attempt life on the land, but instead remain within the comfort and protection of the water. Suddenly I had the sense that the whole evolutionary process is recapitulated within the cells of my body, and therefore available to me as a part of my memory.

POST ACADEMY BIKE RIDE FROM ST. LOUIS TO MEMPHIS-MAY 1981

It was presumed that Academy staff would not have time for physical exercise, but I packed my bike so I could take it with me when I left Memphis for 8 weeks of the Global Academy in Chicago. I put it on the train in Memphis, and got a taxi to stuff it in the trunk when I got to Chicago. The Academy was mostly sitting at tables and discussing. I scheduled every block of discontinuous time for riding. I could ride up and down the lake shore which was 4 blocks away from the Academy. I rode for two hours the first chance I had to ride. That was enought to get some sore muscles.

Because I had some muscles that were sore from bike riding, I discovered that the muscles that I used to climb the stairs and to ride are the same muscles. The Academy was being held on the 4th floor of an 8 story building. So I began a routine of daily training just before I went to bed every evening. I began to walk from the 1st to the 8th floors. I started with 4 times a day and scheduled an increase every week until I got up to 20 times a day. I maintained that exercise daily and went on longer and longer rides up and down the lake shore. I left the Academy early for a U.C.C. Annual Conference near St Louis. I packed all of my luggage and the bike and took the bus. When I reached St. Louis I discovered that the bike had been shipped on to the next stop. I filed for it, but I feared that I would never get it back. The conference was 40 miles outside of St. Louis in a small college town.

I continued my daily stair climbing exercise while attending the conference. The bike arrived. On Saturday I arranged to get a ride to Washington, Mo.which was on my way. I stayed overnight with the people who had given me a ride, and began my bicycle trip about 8am Sunday morning. It was overcast and before long began showering. I stopped and put on my rainsuit. It was plastic and so it was very hot. I took it off and put it on all morning. The countryside was the foot of the Ozark Mountains, so it was very hilly. By 4 pm I found myself exhausted. I pulled into Delogue, Mo. and asked a man on a bicycle where could camp out. He looked me over, and said, "Follow me". I followed him and he led me to his home. He invited me in and asked me to stay. It was Sunday night and they apparently had the practice of having no Sunday evening meal. I was starving. They were also going to Sunday evening prayer meeting and invited me to come along. I declined on the basis that I was tired. Shortly they asked again if I wouldn't like to go; this time more urgently. I finally realized that they were definitely going to Sunday night prayer service, and they couldn't bring themselves to leave a total stranger in the house. I volunteered to go. I considered it my payment for a night's lodging. Later on in the evening he asked me a number of questions about touring. He had gone on an 80 mile bike ride the summer before, and was interested in knowing what it would take for him to do a longer ride.I arose early the next morning. He cooked me breakfast and took me to the edge of town. It was a cool, clear day with cotton-ball clouds in the sky. The hills were far more rolling than the day before. I made good time and had no rain to contend with. The sun was fast becoming my enemy. I was getting a little sunburn and found myself very dry in the mouth. At the end of the day I had traveled 90 miles. I looked for a place to stay in and around Oran, Mo. but I found nothing until I happened upon an abandoned Cat Litter Manufacturing Plant along the road. I stayed in the managers office which has a concrete floor, and an solid roof; the floor was covered with clay dust. I woke at 5 am the next morning to rain. I quickly packed and began to ride. I rode for an hour in heavy rain. I was very cold at first, but by the time I had ridden 12 miles to Sikeston, Mo. I had worked up a sweat. It took me 15 minutes of riding to find a cafe for breakfast. When I went in I discovered that the cafe had the airconditioning on, and I immediately began to shiver because my clothes were completely wet from the rain and the sweat. I ordered a huge stack of pancakes, drownd them in syrup, drank 6 cups of hot coffee and shaved in the restroom. I was ready to continue riding, but the rain had only slackened. I discovered that I had a wind advantage. I was traveling southeast, and the wind was blowing out of the northeast. It gave me a slight push, but it also filled my right tennis shoe full of water. I found the rain presented me with only two alternatives: ride or shiver. I chose to ride. By noon time the rain had lessened to thundershowers, and they came intermittently all the rest of the afternoon. By evening I had ridden 140 miles. I was elated.

My search for a camping spot was fruitless again, but at dusk I found an abandoned tennant shanty in a wheat field on the outskirts of Osceola, AR. I was on the road early the next morning because I had only 40 miles left to ride. The sun was out, there was a strong north wind, and I made it home to Memphis by 10:30 am, in time for morning coffee. The people who had brought the balance of my luggage from the Conference back to Memphis said, "You don't look exhausted, you look glowing!"

KENYA-WATER CATCHMENT TANKS
APRIL 1986

I had been in Kenya for 3 months, living in the village of Mugumoini. I was

given the assignment to build watertanks with no more explanation than "Karoki has built some in Maragua Ridgewith a grant that we administered".

I arranged to have myself assigned to go to Maragua Ridge with one of our Kenyan staff to talk with Karoki about building a demonstration tank on the site of the training center where we lived. I spent one/half day touring Maragua Ridge to inspect the existing tanks constructed in the village. I asked him to detail the equipment and materials that must be on-site to ensure the orderly and timely completion of the tank. I arranged with him to have the Maragua Ridge Women's Group supply the sticks and the expertise to weave them into the basket that would be used as the skeleton for the tank.

Then I organized the work into phases and related and prioritized them so that completion of a tank seemed manageable. I did a cost estimate of the materials that would have to be purchased and created a budget. I orchestrated the logistics required to hold an in-residence Village Leaders Conference at which a tank would be completed from start to finish. That required delegating responsibility for recruitment, facility preparation for housing approximately 40 village leaders for two days. I submitted the budget to our office in Nairobi (90 kilometers away by bus), got an OK to build the tank, but was advised to arrange for credit in order to get the materials. I borrowed a pickup truck, negotiated the credit with near strangers, collected all the local materials, tools, and material from the hardware store. I supervised the creation of a curriculum that would involve the 40 village leaders in the construction of the tank so that they would be able to duplicate it in their own village. I created a rationale which showed that we (Institute of Cultural Affairs) would provide the half of the cost of the tank which was hardware, and they would provide the half of the cost which was local materials and labor.

We had a sucessful 2-day conference, and subsequently built 13 more tanks in the following 9 months. When I left (10th month) there were 4 Kenyans who were capable of supervising the construction of a water-catchment tank. Within a year of theconstruction of the first tank, there were more were 96 built.

KENYA-CREATING A FUNDING DATA BASE-AUG 1986

I managed to sneak the computer through customs when I went to Kenya and I wanted to introduce it to our staff. It seemed be a Non-issue to everyone.

We were short on funds and decided to do something called "The Industrial Blitz". We made a geographical grid of the Industrial area of Nairobi, made a daily assignment of teams to specific segments geography, and had the teams go from door to door to tell our story and ask for donations. It seemed like a last ditch effort, but it mobilized a large group of staff, and it began to generate cash flow. I was responsible to see that the group reported to each other daily, handed in the contributions, created a thankyou letter, and posted it with a receipt. By the second week there was so much follow-up that it was becoming difficult to continue to do breakopen work. It was also difficult to keep track of who had been visited by whom, whether or not they had given, what they said, and when we should re-contact them. In response to this need I created the structure for a computerized database which closely resembled the card filing system we were currently using. I took approximately 250 contacts and entered them into the data base, and printed the data out so that each te had an alphabetical listing of their contacts and a record of the prescribed next step.

Then I facilitated a weekly planning session in which each team reported its results from the past week and projected its targets for the next week. In addition to that I conducted a workshop which took the teams through the existing card file to add previously contacted prospects to the computerized data base. When these prospects had been selected, I trained the Kenyan members of the fund raising team to begin to use the computer. We began with Typing Tutor to familiarize them with the keyboard, and moved to data base entry procedures.

When the Annual Fund Raiser came up I created a printout of every donor and prospect and gave it to the Project Director. He was the only person who had been fundraising in Nairobi for the past 4 years, and subsequently was the only one who was throroughly familiar with the donors. I asked him to make the list comprehensive. He did and then I printed out a working chart. We had a workshop with all the data in front of in which we targeted specific amounts for eachl prospective donor, and assigned team responsibility for each prospective donor.

This provided group ownership for the fund raising effort which had never been possible before. I entered the data and printed out the list which we put on the wall to mark our progress.

THE BARGE-OOMBULGURRI 1977

INTRODUCTION

The people of the village had named the barge, DADDAWAY. The 17 tonne barge was the lifeline to the village. The village was located 50 miles up the Forrest River. The Forrest River emptied into the Cambridge Gulf, at the northern edge of West Australia. Both the river and the gulf were tidal. At neap tide, the tide rose and fell approximately 25 to 30 feet.

The village was land-locked so the barge was the only major source of supply for transportation of people, foodstuffs, fuel, and all the equipment needed to keep a village alive and functioning.

At the outset the inhabitants of the village had returned to their village with the help of and Non Governmental Organization, The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA). They began with ten to fifteen people. They traveled in and out with a motor launch . Eventually the village grew to 200 people.

It was possible to have people and a limited amount of goods air-taxied into the village. However, that was only possible in the dry season, and it was very expensive to do so. The dry season began the end of March. There was no rain worth mentioning from the 1st of April to the middle of December. On the 1st of April the airstrip was still recovering from the effects of the wet season. It covered with water, and water fowl frequented it.

So, during the wet season the barge was the only main supply of transportation and supplies. It was also the most economical. Foodstuffs were purchased from Perth by the seatainer load. The goods arrived in port at Wyndham. The seatainers were offloaded and kept in storage until they could be delivered up the river to the village. When supplies were needed at KITCO, the village grocery store, the seatainers were loaded on the DADDAWAY and barged to the village.

The barge, DADDAWAY, was one of the first pieces of equipment purchased as a result of a grant from outside funding of the project. There were times when the DADDAWAY was out of commission. When that happened, and the airstrip was a duck pond, there was another alternative. The alternative was finding a barge for hire. Joe was the only resident seaman in Wyndham for hire. He was a frontier entrepreneur. He had a barge which he used for fishing, for salvage work, and for cartage. If it could be arranged he was hired to bring goods and supplies to the village.

The village with the barge named DADDAWAY was established because of a dream. It was a dream of the local Australian Aboriginal people. They had been twice misplaced. In the 1920's they had been the victims of a massacre. The massacre had created social havoc upon them. Most of the survivors of the massacre were children. Few of the adults survived. The Church of England collected them, and took them to a site on the Forrest River, where they had established a Mission Station. The Mission dissolved in 1968 when a massive change in Commonwealth policy toward the Aborigine took place. It created a social upheaval that the Forrest River Mission was unable to survive. The Mission was abandoned. All of the Aborigine residents left. Most drifted to the fringes of Wyndham. All of them lived in poverty. Some lived in poverty and squalor.

The dream originated with a small group of elders now living on the fringe of Wyndham. They knew the difference between living on the land and living at the fringe of a white settlement. They yearned for the opportunity to return to their land. They did not feel confident to make the move by themselves.

With the help of the Social Welfare Department of West Australia, they were put in touch with the ICA, an organization that might help them make their return to the land. The ICA's staff members were volunteers. These volunteers were from all walks of life, but most represented service professions. There were teachers, ministers, nurses, social workers, with a sprinkling of medical doctors, farmers, and veterinarians on the staff, to name a few. The staff members of the ICA regularly accepted assignments to specific projects. Once assigned, the staff traveled to the project, and then sought out employment to support themselves while on location.

When the staff of the ICA arrived in Wyndham they immediately met with the Aborigines. It was clear that there were some major obstacles to returning to the land. The first obstacle was that there was no capital to launch it. The ICA staff suggested that those who wanted to return to the land could pool their Social Welfare income. This they did.

With their initial capital they purchased a small motor launch and some foodstuffs. Then they set out for the site of the abandoned Forrest River Mission.

When they arrived they discovered that the infrastructure of the former Forrest River Mission had been gutted. The electrical generator and wiring had been stolen. The water system had been torn out: pump and pipe. Everything that had the slightest salvage value had been taken.

As soon as the project was underway, the staff of the ICA began to search for substantial sources of start-up funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Department of Social Welfare.

Simultaneously with the decision to return land, the Aborigine people made the decision to re-name their settlement. They were not returning to the Forrest River Mission. They chose to call themselves the OOMBULGURRI people, in keeping with Aboriginal mythology which described their origins as a people. So the village site was named Oombulgurri.

Assistance seemed slow in coming. Some thought it improbable that anyone could return to the site of the Forrest River Mission and survive. Still others thought it impossible. The chosen few who elected to return to the site and name it Oombulgurri, had neither taken counsel from those who those who thought it improbable, nor those who thought it impossible.

The impossibility of the project was one of the aspects which intrigued the ICA staff. They were dubious about any top-down approach to community assistance. They specialized in capitalizing on local initiative. They were intent on rolling up their sleeves and working shoulder to shoulder with a village that wanted to do something for itself. They were convinced that a community that wanted change, could make it happen far more effectively from the bottom up, than from the top down.

Nevertheless there were some factors remaining which made the project seem impossible. The first of these was the climate. The climate in Northern Australia was harsh. There was a seven to eight month dry season. It usually extended from early April to mid December. There was no rainfall during The Dry. During this time of the year the temperatures in the daytime could reach into the 90's, but during June and July the evening temperature would drop into the 50's.

The Wet season normally began in earnest in January and subsided by late March. During The Wet, it was not uncommon for temperature to top out over 100 degrees F. during the daytime. And temperatures often remained in the 90's overnight. That, coupled with the fact that this kind of heat regularly developed a thundershower in the afternoon made the heat and humidity oppressive. Those who chose to re-inhabit Oombulgurri would, for all practical purposes, be living in the out-of-doors.

They would be able to find buildings which would provide a roof over their head. These buildings would protect from rain and the merciless rays of the daytime sun. However, there would be no protection from the heat, the cold, and the humidity.

All of Australia regarded the Northland as uninhabitable. Wyndham and Kunnunara, like other towns above 15 degrees latitude, were primarily government towns. Except in cases where there were mining operations, the State of West Australia, and the Commonwealth of Australia were the major employers.

A government employee working in Wyndham not only drew a regular salary, he or she also drew hardship pay. It was compensation for living in the frontier of the Northland. Public education was provided up to the 6th grade. Beyond that a parents were expected to send their children south, to school back in civilization

But the climate was only one of the aspects of the return to Oombulgurri that cause to be judged impossible. The village site, itself, presented some problems.

The Aborigines, emboldened by the assistance from the staff of the ICA, established a beachhead on the site of the old mission station. They named the settlement, Oombulgurri. It was a settlement that was, well and truly, out-bush. The isolation of the village was one of the reasons it was generally regarded as impossible to re-settle the village site.

Only those in the best of health were encouraged to make the pilgrimage. The primary access to the outside world was by by tidal river. The village was 40 miles upstream from the Cambridge Gulf. Initially all of the foodstuff, equipment, material, and supply, needed to maintain life support system was brought in and out by motor launch. If a need

had been overlooked, or a tool was required, it was every bit of a week before the need could be met or the tool acquired. The same was true of a message that needed to be delivered.

Because the river was tidal, the launch only left on the receding tide. If it left on an incoming tide, one of two things would happen. At full throttle in a gentle tide, the launch would maintain its original position on the river. If it were neap tide the launch, headed downstream at full throttle, would gradually drift upstream. The tide came and went on a 12 hour and 5 minute cycle. And even with a full moon, it was not advisable to make the trip at night. The current was strong. There were crocodiles in the river. An accidental spill could be fatal. So the schedule for departure from the village was strictly regulated by mother nature.

PETER

Peter, and ICA staff member, was assigned to river transportation. He had no experience on the sea. He had grit! He took the readily took the assignment.

When a trip to Wyndham was needed, he took the motor launch in. If there was an outgoing tide, the trip to Wyndham took four to five hours. Once in Wyndham, he was the 'go-fer'. There was no guarantee that he could find the materials, supplies, or tools needed in Wyndham. Sometimes it was necessary to go shopping in Kununnara, 60 miles east of Wyndham. Often the item in demand would have to be ordered from Perth, 1,800 miles away. Even if the trip were successful, there was no returning for Oombulgurri in the same 24-hour period because that tide would be in darkness. The difficulty in procuring supplies, and the arbitrariness of the tide meant that a procurement trip meant at least one overnight stay.

There were constant changes that had to be dealt with. The shopping list had to be altered because of what was actually available in Wyndham. The needs occurring in the village changed. Often a shopping trip would run into two or three days. By that time a completely new set of demands was placed on Peter. Even so, there was no place for Peter to stay overnight in Wyndham. He made an off-the-record arrangement with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) to occupy a storage building on the outskirts of the Aboriginal fringe dwelling.

All the while Peter was making trips in and out of Oombulgurri, there were a number of tasks essential to long-term inhabitation of the village. Some needed to be dealt with immediately. Some could be handled later on. Communication and potable water and were the issues which needed immediate attention.

To establish communication with the outside world, Oombulgurri acquired a two-way radio. One radio was placed in the office in Oombulgurri. The other radio was placed in the storage shed which Peter used for overnight accommodation in Wyndham This was satisfactory in the evening, and first thing in the morning, because Peter was usually in residence. But he was usually incommunicado during the day because he was out shopping or doing errands.

Peter's past was a mystery. He made no claim to a particular trade, vocation, or profession. He was normally quiet. He was a hard worker and he was inquisitive. When he accepted an assignment he exhibited unlimited determination to succeed at his work.

There was rumor that Peter had 9 lives. It was never clear from where the stories that fed this rumor came. One rumor had it that Peter had been involved in a massive traffic accident while on assignment in Zambia. He was riding a Vespa motor scooter and driving closely behind a lorry (18 wheeler). Four to five automobiles and the lorry were involved in a traffic accident. The most popular version of the story was that Peter laid the Vespa down on its side and slid under the trailer of the 18 wheeler. By the time the dust cleared Peter had taken the motor scooter to the Vespa dealer nearby, and in-kinded its repair. By the time the police arrived on the scene to investigate the accident, the motor scooter was repaired, and he had gone.

NECESSITIES

There was no one among the Aborigines who was capable of taking charge of transportation and procurement. Peter was needed in Oombulgurri to help with restoration of the village infrastructure. But he was also needed as a 'go-fer'--he was needed to transport people, goods, and supplies in and out of Oombulgurri. When in Wyndham he was to round up all of the goods, supplies, get them to the dock, get them loaded, and return as quickly as possible.

It seemed as if the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was reluctant to provide any funding for the project. Perhaps it was simply that funding moved slowly through the bureaucracy. The Department of Social

Welfare either had less bureaucracy, or a more sympathetic ear. Funds were quickly forthcoming for the initiation of the project.

The motor launch, for transportation in and out of the village, was one of the first items purchased with funding from the Department of Social Welfare. But in addition to a motor launch and a 2-way radio, much more was needed to make Oombulgurri inhabitable.

A water supply was high on the list of priorities. The only supply of potable water was a half day's journey on foot over the jump-up. The escarpment of the jump-up rose out of the flood plains immediately to the west of the village. It was a 100 foot climb from the flood plain to the jump-up plateau. It was 10 kilometers to a place called Camera Pool. The Forrest River wound its way through the jump-up to billabong called Camera Pool. Here the river was beyond the salt water influence of the Cambridge Gulf. The surface of the pool was motionless. The water was crystal-clear, and was full to overflowing year round. The Aborigines insisted that it was bottomless. Those who dared to swim in it found that three feet below the surface the temperature of the water was bone-chilling.

The old pipeline, through which water could be brought to the village, remained on the jump-up. There was also an old cistern at the top of the jump-up which supplied the village's water pressure. Although both the pipe and the cistern were in place, they were in need of repair.

By design, the migration back to Oombulgurri was initiated at the beginning of the Wet. For almost three months in the wet season, water could be collected from roof tops and kept in water-catchment tanks. This gave the village a chance to repair the water supply before the dry season arrived. But once the Dry set in Camera Pool was the only supply of potable water. The pipeline must be repaired or replaced. With a minimum amount of repair the water system could be put in place.

Ken and Marv estimated that they could have the water system working in a couple of weeks. It actually took them two and one half months. They had not accounted for the fact that every unforeseen tool or part would take a week to obtain. They had not reckoned on breakdowns that might require a week or more to get replacement parts.

Ken and Marv were assigned to get the water system in working order. The pipeline needed minor repair. There were ten kilometers of pipeline. They turned their attention to the pipeline first. After a week of work on repair of the pipe they realized the mistake. There was no way to test the pipe repair until there was water running through the pipeline. So they turned their attention to the pump. They decided against a stationary pump and power supply. The mounting would require equipment that they could not provide. Even if they had been able to provide it, it was doubtful that they could get it over the jump-up to Camera Pool. And eventually the pump or power supply would be in need of repair. A stationary unit would be difficult to retrieve.

So they chose a pump that could be mounted on a small 4-wheeled, Ferguson, 3-cylinder, diesel tractor. It was one thing to decide on the pump and power supply. It was yet another to navigate through the bureaucracy using a two-way radio as the main source of communication and find funding. The Department of Social Welfare provided the funding. When the funding had been secured, the tractor and pump were purchased. The unit was shipped from Perth a month before it arrived in Wyndham. Once in Wyndham Peter loaded it onto the Daddaway for transport to the village of Oombulgurri.

When the equipment finally arrived in Oombulgurri, it was yet another thing to put the Ferguson and pump in place. The road to the Camera pool was barely navigable. At the outset the road leaving the village was made of large boulders. It was difficult to negotiate by foot. It was treacherous and precipitous for any kind of machinery. The road consisted of large, uneven, rocks. It was a pathway of tire-bruising rocks. At the other end of the road the descent from the plateau of the jump-up down to the Camera Pool was every bit as dangerous as the ascent.

Once Ken and Marv got the equipment in place, and a fuel supply hooked up they started the pump. As soon as the system began to pump it was obvious where the pipeline needed repair. There were numerous leaky joints and pinholes in the pipeline. From the time the pump started until there was water in the village there was a 5 hour time lag. It was not entirely due to leaks in the pipeline. The pump did not supply water pressure to the village. It simply pumped water to a cistern at the top of the jump-up, overlooking the village. Only when there was a substantial amount of water in the cistern did the village begin to receive water. It had taken four and

one-half months to repair the water system. It was not installed and running before the dry season began. However it was operational before the tanks storing rainwater were finally empty.

It was common knowledge in Wyndham, W.A. that the return to Oombulgurri was impossible. The Aboriginal people were were dispossessed and totally dependent. The ICA, in responding to the Aborigines' request for help, was responding to a social need. It was the need to establish an alternative to the squalor of fringe dwelling in Wyndham. It was the need to establish a human environment for a people who were dispossessed and totally dependent.

This dispossession and dependence had taken place over a period of time. Originally, when the continent of Australia was theirs, they were dependent on the land. They managed this dependence carefully. They managed it so carefully that they were self-sufficient. They had no desire to live on the fringe of Wyndham. That was an accident of history. It was a result of a series of events that began when the white population overran the land and dispossessed the Aborigines. When the whites claimed the land there were violent confrontations. These confrontations resulted in massacres of Aboriginal people. In the pub, it was possible to overhear those who talked with nostalgia about the days when they used to go hunting Abo.

The Anglican Church established a Mission Station as a safe haven for the Aborigines. But this safe haven shifted their dependence on the land to dependence on the Mission Station. When the Mission Station closed the Aboriginal people were helplessly dependent on the Mission. Without the Mission they were helpless.

Five months had passed. The staff of the ICA had been decisive. They had uncovered the real name for the village site: Oombulgurri. They had convinced those who wanted to make the pilgrimage to pool their Social Security checks. With the resultant capital, they purchased a motor launch and ferried the pilgrims back to the village site. Once on site they began a daily community meal program. They had secured funding for some major supplies--a two-way radio, a 17 tonne barge, a water system. And they had upgraded the skeleton of the old water system so that it was, once again, operative. They had accomplished their short range goal to re-establish residency in Oombulgurri.

However, up to now, they had done nothing to deal with the issue of dependence. In the long range the ICA expected to use residence in the village as a source of motivation to encourage a renewed sense of self-sufficiency. Those who inhabited the village ate breakfast together and spent some time each day creating a shared vision for the renovation of the village. Once the village site was inhabited each ICA staff member was assigned an Aboriginal who would shadow his or her activities. The staff of the ICA were described by the local Australians as 'do gooders'. Perhaps that was an accurate description. They were certainly doing some good. They were aware that they had done nothing to correct the underlying problem of helplessness and dependence. However, they had not planned to tackle that issue at the outset. They saw no way for that issue to be dealt with until the Oombulgurri people could escape the soul-destroying fringe dwelling in Wyndham. They had accomplished that goal. But, only a select few had returned to Oombulgurri. It was hoped that they could demonstrate self-sufficiency and become a magnet for those who, initially, lacked the courage to make the journey. The staff of the ICA were optimistic that their long range goal could be reached. Whether or not it could be done remained to be seen. But they evidenced no doubts. They acted as if it self-sufficiency was a realistic possibility.

Peter rolled out of his sleeping bag at sun up. The sleeping bag was on the floor. It took up floor space. In this one room hut every bit of floor space was valuable. As he rose he folded the bag twice and scooted it to the corner with his foot. He had just stored his bedroll under a two-foot counter that was waist high, and ran the length of the east wall of the hut. He automatically reached for the 2-way radio on the counter in the corner, and turned it on. His hut adjoined the building which was used as a Health Center for the Aboriginal fringe dwellers of Wyndham, W.A. It was not suited for inhabitation. There was no running water in the building. There was an outside spigot and a privy nearby. The window openings were covered with hardware cloth.

Often he was the sole inhabitant of the hut. However, yesterday noon Russell had come in on the bus from Kununnura. He was on his way to join the other ICA staffers in

Oombulgurri. Russell was stretched out on the floor not far from Peter. Peter began his morning routine. He did not plan to waken Russell. He had slept only in his undershorts. He reached under the counter and grabbed his T-shirt and stubbies (short work shorts with elastic waist band and no fly) and put them on. Then he slipped into his thongs and went to the kitchen area at the far end of the room. He checked the pan used for heating water. It had a small amount of water used in making last evening's tea. He removed the lid to the teapot and inspected. The pot was soggy with tea leaves. He emptied the pan in the teapot. Then he swirled the pot and pitched the contents through the window. The only covering for the window was hardware cloth. Most of the contents went through the window. Instantly there was a squawking and fluttering of wings. Chickens who had been busy cleaning up the scraps of last nights meal. He went to the Jerry can and poured water for morning tea. He put it on the camp stove and took a box of Redhead matches. He slid the box open, removed a match stick, struck it against the side of the box, and tried the camp stove. He was hoping that it had maintained enough pressure overnight to start this morning. The match burned itself out. He shut the valve, put the match box down and pumped the fuel tank full of pressure. When he opened the valve a small puddle of petrol dripped into the pan under the burner. When the pan was full he closed the valve. Once again he struck a match. This time the stove responded with a "whoof". The petrol in the heating pan ignited and began the process of vaporizing the fuel in the line. When the petrol was almost gone Peter opened the valve and the stove began to sputter with a combination of liquid petrol and vapor, until it finally generated enough heat to vaporize the fuel. Then it began a low roar. Peter returned the pan of water to the burner. While the water was heating he found 2 cups that were badly stained with tannic acid. One by one he swished them around and emptied them out the window. He opened the door of the cabinet beneath the counter where the stove sat. There sat a box of tea leaves, a can of whole milk powder, and a box of Wheet Bix. He placed them all on the counter next to the stove. When the water began to boil he shut the fire off. He poured out a palm full of tea leaves and dropped them into the teapot, poured the pot full of boiling water, and set it aside to steep.

PREPARATION FOR THE TRIP

While the tea was steeping, Peter rummaged around in the pots, pans, plates and cutlery on the counter top. He found a box of Wheet Bix and set it in a clear spot on the counter top. He continued his search and found two cups, two bowls, and two dessert spoons.

Peter's clothes were work-a-day. They were not always clean. They were never pressed. Sometimes they were torn or frayed. But he was fastidious in the kitchen. He didn't have any difficulty cleaning up after himself. He had more difficulty storing everything he used on a single counter top. He had only cold water. He believed that soap cleaned things. He regularly cleaned up after a meal. He washed his dishes in so much soap that his wash water was a mountain of soap bubbles. He was certain that it made the dishes cleaner. His rinse water quickly became as soapy as the wash water, but he never bothered to change it. As a result the dishes, pots, pans, and cutlery always tasted of soap.

While he was rummaging he also found an open tin of dried whole milk. He pried the lid off, let it fall to the counter with a clatter, and set it along side of the Wheet Bix. When the tea had steeped properly he poured a cupful through a strainer. As he laced the te with sugar and stirred in some milk powder he announced to Russell, "Brekki if you want it."

Russell stirred. The aroma of freshly brewed tea was inviting. He sat up and pushed his sleeping bag back. He stood on his sleeping bag and recovered his clothes from a pile where he had left them the night before. Peter observed Russell as he put on his clothes. It was obvious that Russell was a newcomer to the Northland. He had long pants, a T-shirt, a long-sleeved shirt, and sneakers. When Russell had finished dressing Peter said, "Push your sleeping bag under the counter." Peter was short with words. It wasn't entirely clear to Russell why he should be doing that, but since he was a guest in the hut he promptly obeyed. "Where's the Biffy?", asked Russell. "Outside and around back." When Russell returned he joined Peter in breakfast. When they had finished breakfast Peter put all the dishes in the dish pan, soaked them with some water from the Gerry can, and added an enormous amount of soap.

The radio blared something that was not intelligible to Russell. Peter immediately left the dishes, picked up the mike and responded. It was a message from the staff in Oombulgurri.

There was so little room in the hut, that there was no good place to sit down. Russell stepped out and sat down on the stairway. He had been slightly chilly when he had awakened a little less than an hour ago. Already there was a bead of sweat on his forehead. He had wanted to make the transition from Sydney, New South Wales, to Oombulgurri, West Australia an opportunity to leave his cigarettes behind. However he wasn't living easily with all of the stress of the move. He had purchased a packett of Winfield Greens the evening before. He was oblivious of the need to do the breakfast dishes. So,while Peter completed his communication on the radio with the staff in Oombulgurri, Russell lit up one of his cigarettes. He found it hard to believe that the temperature had changed so rapidly. He had been almost chilly when he woke. He hadn't even begun to exert himself, and now he was beginning to be uncomfortably warm.

Once Peter had completed his radio communication with Oombulgurri he finished washing the rest of the breakfast dishes and appeared on the front doorstep. "Ready?" asked Peter. "What's up?" replied Russell. "Oombulgurri wants the sea-tainers that came in this week. They need the supplies in the store, and there's a meeting in Darwin for most of the staff." "So what's next?" "We'll have to take the lorry, go down to the Port, and get them to off-load our sea-tainers. Then we'll have to find Joe and see if he can get his crane down to the dock and transfer them from the lorry to the barge. It'd be just our luck that Joe is out fishing. But, first we'd better check the tide to see if he can do it when the tide is receding. He won't do it at low tide."

Peter left a great deal unsaid. As they headed for the lorry, a 7 tonne Bedford flatbed straight truck, Peter began to mull the entire situation over in his mind. He was operating the barge without a Pilot's Ticket. That was equivalent to driving a motor vehicle without a license. He was doing it right under the Harbor Master's nose, and yet the Harbor Master had said nothing. Obviously, the Harbor Master had decided to look the other way. Peter felt he didn't have the time to study and sit for the examination. He had learned for himself how to operate the barge. He thought of the the requirement to have a Pilot's Ticket as unnecessary red tape

That was beside the point at the moment. But he had recently undergone a survey of the barge. The barge had four air-tight compartments, and an engine compartment. For him, it was an enormous nuisance. He had to take the hatches off from all four of the compartments. Each hatch was 2 feet in diameter. It was fastened with thirty six studs. That meant he had to remove one hundred and forty four rusty nuts. Once he had removed the hatches the inspector found the barge was overdue for repair. The interior the hatches was rusting, scaling and blistering. In addition, the cover to the engine room had been temporarily removed for service of the engine and never replaced.

The findings of the inspector were an aggravation to Peter. First of all he had spent time opening the barge up for inspection when he should have been making a trip to Oombulgurri with supplies. Next, he would now have to spend time repairing the barge so that it would be in compliance. The report the inspector gave him indicated that he had 6 months to bring the barge up to standard. This would require extra work on his part, and he had his hands full being the liaison for Oombulgurri, in Wyndham. He could not see how he would be able to do both jobs at once.

This very moment he was faced with the decision about how to handle the conflicting demands that both of these issues were placing on him. Oombulgurri needed supplies now. By rights, all four of the hatches should be put back in place, with adequate seals, and all one hundred and forty four bolts tightened down before the barge was seaworthy. But he reckoned that he would not be able to get the supplies to Oombulgurri on the next tide if he spent the time required to tighten the hatches. He wouldn't worry about the engine compartment. There was no good way to service the motor when that hatch was in place..

Peter drove to the jetty without saying a word. When they arrived at the jetty he parked got out. Russell wasn't sure what to do. He started to get out and remembered that he had made his way into the cab up a series of carefully placed steps. He carefully retraced his steps. He was relieved to find that he had made it from the cab to the ground without mishap. From Peter's actions is appeared that they would spend a little time there. Peter had already gone over to the shoreline. He was looking at the waterline. After careful examination of the waterline he looked skyward. He searched the sky. "What are you

looking for?", asked Russell. "The moon.", responded Peter.

Peter was short on explanations. He normally said as little as possible. It was clear to him that Russell was new to Wyndham; and to the sea. He probably didn't know that Peter was judging where the tide was, whether it was headed in or out, and when it would be high tide. But Peter didn't want to stop to explain it all to him. "Looks like it will be high tide about half past two this afternoon. Lets go see if we can find Joe." He left unsaid that the tide would be just right. He could load this afternoon, anchor in the harbor overnight, leave port tomorrow morning and be at the mouth of the Forrest River when the tide starts coming in late tomorrow morning.

As he as speaking Kit appeared, and greeted them, "Hoy.". It appeared as if he had been sleeping somewhere in the mangrove thicket along the shoreline, and had just wakened. Kit appeared shorter than he actually was because he was standing with rounded shoulders and bent neck. His clothes didn't fit him. He weighted 50 kilo (110 lb). His T shirt was so large that two of him could have fit into it. It needed to have been laundered several weeks ago. He had the tail of his shirt tucked in under his belt line. His belt was a piece of sisal which he had tied through two belt loops. The excess waistline bulged out to one side like an extra pocket. One of his pant legs was rolled half way up his shin. It revealed a spindly leg, a shin that was full of scabs, and a foot that shod with a thong. The other pant leg had fallen down. His toes were all that shown from underneath the pant leg.

Peter replied, "Hoy." He did not bother to introduce Russell. Russell stood by and observed the interchange, and made no move to introduce himself. The sudden appearance of this man startled Russell. As he observed fright was replace with revulsion. Kit's face was wrinkled and sunburnt. He had three to four days growth of beard. In addition to being unshaven, every pore of his skin seemed to be filled with grime and grit.

By his own admission Kit was an alcoholic. He had lost everything because of alcohol. He had been a mechanic. He had recently received permission from the Oombulgurri Council to live in Oombulguri in exchange for his work as a mechanic. Apparently he had sought refuge in Oombulgurri because it was a dry, land locked, community. However, in contradiction to his own resolve, he occasionally made a trip out of Oombulgurri. When he did he became a practicing alcoholic again. That meant a thr to four day drinking binge. When the binge was over and he recovered consciousness, he eventually found his way back to Oombulgurri.

By default Kit had temporarily stopped feeding his addiction to alcohol. His friends had spent everything they had. At the moment he felt a desperate need to feed another addiction. He needed a cigarette. Kit scratched around in his shirt pocket and found a roll-your-own cigarette butt. It was mostly yellow, and had saliva stains. He knew that Peter didn't smoke. Russell was a newcomer. He held his hand out to Russell. "Got a light?" Russell produced a box of Redheads from his pants pocket. He opened the box, placed the end of a match stick between his fore and middle fingers. Then he cupped his had, pressed his thumb against the match and struck it on the side of the box. The match burst into flame. Russell shielded the flame in the cup of his hand and extended it to Kit. Kit reached out and held Russell's hand. Presumably, he had done so to steady Russell's hand. Actually, Russell served to steady Kit's hand. The cigarette butt was short. Kit simply held charcoal end in the flame until it glowed. As he withdrew his hand, put it in his mouth and took a drag on it. The drag appeared to have caught in his throat. He suddenly stopped inhaling and began a fit of coughing. There was a rattle in his cough. When he finished coughing he tried another drag on his butt. It caught in his throat again. Again, he had a fit of coughing. This time he cleared his lungs of some phlegm, turned to one side and spit.

"Can I bum a smoke?", Kit asked Russell. Since Russell had matches Kit was counting on him having cigarettes. Russell had a packet of Winfield Greens. He took the cigarettes out of his shirt pocket and shook the packet until several cigarettes rose from the opening in the top. Kit reached out and held Russell's wrist with one hand while he took three cigarettes with the other. He stuffed two of them into his shirt pocket and put the third in his mouth. He held the butt to the cigarette and took several puffs on the cigarette. There was still an ember in the butt, and it transferred itself to the ready-made.

He did not have trouble smoking the ready-made. As he took a long drag he exhal through his nose. When he had finished his drag on the cigarette he inhaled deeply and

held his breath. As soon as he exhaled again, Kit asked Peter, "When you leaving for Oombulgurri?" Peter was deliberately vague. "Probably tomorrow morning.", said Peter. Russell observed that Kit was shaking. He interpreted this to mean that he was eager to get back to Oombulgurri. He didn't realize that Kit had the shakes from overconsumption of alcohol, and undernourishment.

Kit was fishing around for a way to be useful. He wanted to be able to help Peter load the Daddaway. He also wanted to be sure that he was on the Daddaway when it left for Oombulgurri. Peter knew that Kit had been vagrant and inebriated for at least two or three days. He also knew the recovery pattern. Kit would volunteer to help and expect to receive food and lodging, or both. Kit was so frail and exhausted that he was virtually no help. He was really a liability.

"We're going to see if Joe can load us this afternoon.", Peter volunteered. "If he can then we'll anchor the barge in the harbor and leave for Oombulgurri sometime in the morning.

Peter had told Kit all that he knew for the moment. He motioned to Russell and mounted the steps to the cab of the lorry. Russell scrambled to get in. Peter turned the key, hit the starter button, the starter whined, and engine the roared to life. He put the transmission into low gear, leaned out the window and bade Kit farewell, "Ta" he said. As he did so he dropped the clutch and the lorry lurched off. He had intended to leave without including Kit. He had done so. Kit stood for a moment in the dust, watched them depart, then he disappeared into the bush.

"Where are we headed?", asked Russell. "We'll go down to the port to check and see how much freight we have. Bob told me on the radio this morning that we have four seatainers that they need in Oombulgurri. I want to be sure that we can pick them up.

The road from the jetty back to the main road from Wyndham to the port was surfaced with crushed rock. There was no traffic on the road and Peter drove down the middle of the road. When they reached the main road Peter slowed, looked both ways, made a left turn and pulled out on to the main road. When he did so he guided the lorry to the left side of the road. Russell involuntarily sat forward in his seat. Before he said anything he realized that he was still having a hard time getting used to driving a vehicle on the left side of the road. He seemed to have the most difficulty just after turning a corner.

As they entered the port office, Peter went to the counter and announced their presence, "Gudday". The secretary responded in kind with, "Gudday mate". "Are you here to pick up your freight?", asked the secretary. "Yes thanks.", said Peter. "We want to pick up four seatainers. Do we have anything else on the dock?" "I'll check.", said the secretary, "Have a seat." They took a seat and waited while a secretary shuffled papers. After 15 minutes the secretary called them back to the counter. "The seatainers are all you have. Do you want to pick up all four of them?" "Yes.", replied Peter. "Sign here.", said the secretary. "You can pick them up at the dock anytime today."

Peter signed, took his copy of the papers, said, "Ta.", turned on his heel and left. Russell had said nothing the whole time. He simply followed Peter. As they left the office the secretary followed them to the door and locked the door. It was shortly after noon. Wyndham, WA was approximately 15 degrees from equator. It was the custom to close shops and businesses from 12 noon to 3 pm every day.

When they were in the cab of the lorry Russell asked again, "What now?" "We need to find Joe to see if he can load the seatainers on the barge this afternoon. "When do we eat?", asked Russell. "Well, we might as well get something to eat right now. Its going to be hard to find anyone for the next hour or so." Peter was driven by a work ethic that had no respect for tropical heat. He saw no reason to stop work during midday. But it was futile to try to do business when all of society was taking a siesta. They returned to the hut. Peter offered Russell the fixings for a peanut butter and vegemite sandwich, and made a pot of tea. Russell had come to enjoy vegemite. It was a dark paste that looked and spread like axle grease. It was made from beef bouillon and yeast extracts. It was very salty. It went nicely with peanut butter. It also provided extra salt which was needed in the tropical heat. Russell also found it strange to be drinking hot tea during the middle of the day. He quizzed Peter, "Why hot tea when its so hot outside?" Peter response was curt, "Its your air-conditioning. It'll make you sweat. That's the only way you're going to keep cool around here."

When they finished lunch Peter left the hut beckoning, "C'mon". Russell had shed his

long sleeved shirt long ago. He had been sitting still in the hut. When he stepped outside the sun momentarily blinded him. He felt himself being burned right through his T shirt. However, the movement of walking caused a slight breeze and gave him some relief from the heat. Peter mounted the cab and got in right hand door of the lorry. Russell paused. For a moment it looked to him as if Peter was intending for him to drive. He stood only for a moment, because the heat coming from the ground through his sneakers became uncomfortable. He circled around the cab and mounted the left hand side of the cab. He lingered to long on the way up. The hand holds seemed as hot as the naked handle of a frying pan on the fire.

Once in the cab he realized that the steering wheel was on the right hand side of the vehicle. The inside of the cab was sweltering. He was relieved when Peter drove off because the lorry created a breeze. Peter had been mute about the afternoon's plans. "What now?" Russell queried. "We probably need some petrol, so we'll stop at the filling station. We'll probably have to ask around to find out where Joe is. We'll start there and work our way down to his shop."

While the tank was filling with petrol, Peter inquired of Joe's whereabouts. No one at the filling station had seen him. Once they had filled up, Peter drove to the hardware store which also doubled as a bus stop. No sign of Joe. So he drove to the grocery store. Once again there was no report of Joe. Peter determined that Joe was either out fishing, or down at his shop. He drove straight to Joe's shop which was near the jetty.

They found Joe in his shop rebuilding a diesel engine. Peter introduced Russell. "This is Russell, Joe. He's an addition to our staff in Oombulgurri." As they shook hands Russell was aware of the heavy callouses on Joe' hands. He always took that as a sign of a man who was accustomed to heavy physical labor. Joe was quiet spoken. He observed Russell for a moment, and then said, "Gudday mate, how you runnin'?" Russell responded, "Gudday, Joe, good to meet you." Joe dropped Russell's and turned to Peter. Joe said as little as Peter so a conversation between Joe and Peter was usually short.

Joe was not more than 5' 8" tall. He wore his hair short. It was white. His skin was tanned far beneath the surface. His face, arms, and hands were wrinkled and leathery from years of exposure to the sun. When he moved he moved slowly. He never seemed to be in a hurry. Those who were acquainted with die engines knew that Joe never ran his engines at more than 1200 rpm. Not even in an emergency. His reasoning was simple. His engines lasted longer. It was rumored that his heart rate was probably no more that 55 beats per minute.

As they stood in the entrance of Joe's shop, Russell recalled to mind Peter's description of Joe. Joe was an entrepreneur. He took advantage of every business opportunity he recognized. He knew that the price of goods and services in the outback was governed by supply and demand. And in a town the size of Wyndham everything had a limited demand. When he saw a demand that he could fill, he proceeded to set up a corner on the supply so that he could name his price, and let the customer take it or leave it. He was a business opportunist. He seemed to know which markets he could corner. He did name his price. And he did let the customer take it or leave it.

Joe was a self-made machinist, mechanic, and handy man. He did welding and metal fabricating when it was called for. He rebuilt diesel engines. He had a huge trailer for dry docking vessels. He had pneumatic equipment for removing barnacles and rust from the outside shell of his vessels. He owned a barge and a boat. He used them for fishing almost year round. If he was not fishing himself, he hired someone to fish. Barramundi were plentiful in the coastal tidal rivers and streams. Some suspected that the fishing was a cover for finding and selling Aboriginal artifacts.

The whereabouts of artifacts was legendary. It was common to hear stories about caches of buried treasure. The stories flourished. Especially in the pub. It was indeed buried treasure. It represented no material wealth. Its value was in its cultural and archaeological significance. It was illegal to disturb a site and collect or sell the artifacts. But it was not uncommon to hear of fortune hunters who had come to the northwest to prospect in the outback. There were virtually no roads to the outback. The skein of tiny creeks and streams that flowed out of the jumpup into the Cambridge Gulf provided excellent access to an enormous amount of la area. This network of waterways also made it virtually impossible to police the area for

illegal prospecting. There was no evidence that a prospector would be caught. It was doubtful that Joe engaged in such activity. But some of the help he hired occasionally boasted of their finds.

Joe's fishing boat doubled as a barge on which he could haul freight. There had been a time when the Daddaway's engine needed major repair. Joe was the only mechanic in town who would work on it. While it was being fixed Joe was the only source of freight transport to and from Oombulgurri. And when there were large items to be transferred from the flatbed lorry to the barge Joe was the only one in town with a portable crane that could transfer the freight from shoreline to barge. Now and then a vessel anchored in the harbor would break its mooring. When it set adrift it was public property. Anyone securing the vessel in tow was due a salvage charge. Joe always had his eye on the harbor so that he could take advantage of just such an occurrence.

Russell was still reviewing the story Peter had given him about Joe when Joe broke the silence. "Right you are now. What are you blokes on about?" Peter responded. "We need some seatainers lifted from the lorry to the Daddaway. Can you do it this afternoon?" Joe did not speak, but stepped from the shade of the shop and scanned the sky. The first quarter of the moon was in the four o'clock position. "Fair dinkum!", responded Joe. "We can do it this afternoon. But we'd better move right along. How long will it take you to get them?" "I can have them in half to three quarters of an hour.", replied Peter. "Right oh," said Joe, "I'll stand by, mate. You get back here as soon as you can.

THE TRIP

Peter and Russell left Joe's shop and sped to the harbor freight storage. Peter presented the papers and picked up 4 seatainers. He then returned immediately to Joe's shop to let him know that he had the seatainers, and went down to the jetty.

When they arrived at the jetty Peter went to the shoreline and got the line to the dingy. The jetty was a series of poured concrete slabs about 12 feet wide, linked together, that ran from a point shortly above the shoreline down into water. It was 50 to 60 feet long. There was a difference of 25 feet.between high tide and low tide in Wyndham. The jetty was long enough so that it was accessible at the highest of tides, and was still usable at the lowest of tides. The dingy had been tied to the jetty so that it would not swamp at high tide. Since then, the tide had gone out. It was returning, but it had still not reached the dingy. The shoreline was wet, slimy mud. So Peter lifted it, turned it, and pulled it through the mud to the water line. Russell had gotten out of the lorry when they arrived at the jetty, but he had stood by and watched Peter at work.

Peter had reached the water line. He was bent over the dingy, pushing it backwards into the water. With both hands on the dingy he beckoned to Russell with his head, "Get in." "Where are we going?" asked Russell. "Out to get the barge." replied Peter. Russell was wearing sneakers and he didn't like the idea of getting them wet. Peter held the dingy so that he could step in without getting his feet wet. "Hang onto both sides of the boat," said Peter, "and get in the back seat.

Peter was wearing flip flops. He gathered up the line, walked into the water, pushed the dingy until it floated free of the jetty and jumped in. He grabbed the oars and made his way to the barge, which was anchored in the harbor.

Once they reached the barge they boarded and tied the dingy. Peter started the engine, engaged the propeller, and taxied the barge into the shoreline. He taxied over to the spot along the shoreline that Joe used as a dock. His fishing boat was out at the moment, so Peter eased the barge into the dock. "Grab that line and tie the barge to that piling." Peter yelled over the purr of the engine. Russell tied the bow of the barge to a piling. Peter then steered the stern into shore and left the engine idling while he fastened the stern to the dock.

Peter said nothing to Russell. He disappeared. The lorry was no more than 200 meters away. Shortly, Peter drove up with the lorry. And Joe arrived with his crane. Once Joe got the crane in position he noticed that Peter had all 4 hatch lids open. "You going to put those lids back on before you go?" asked Joe. "I dunno." replied Peter with a disinterested tone "You better!" said Joe. He said no more, but simply loaded the seatainers. He place them next to each other so that the four of them formed a rectangle in the center of the barge deck.

Once the barge was loaded Joe presented Peter with an invoice to sign. After Peter had signed, and taken his copy Joe departed. Peter jumped on the barge and motioned to Russell.

"Get the bow untied and we'll take it back out to anchor.

It did not take long to load the seatainers. When Joe finished loading them he said

Once the seatainers were on the barge Peter said, "I'll move the truck, you get the stern untied and then mind the line at the bow. We'll cast off and put the barge out to anchor in the harbor until tomorrow." Peter moved the lorry and Russell made his way down to the dock and boarded the barge.

By the time Peter had returned Kit appeared from the bush. He didn't see Peter. "You taking the barge out?", he asked Russell. "I think so," replied Russell. "You need to talk to Peter.", he said, motioning in the direction from which Peter was coming. Anyone who observed Peter would have known that he was a 'Yank'. It was almost half past 3 in the afternoon, and he was walking at a brisk pace. As brisk as his thongs would allow. His thongs announced his arrival: fil-lip, fil-lop, fil-lip, fil-lop. No sensible Wyndhamite would use so much energy so early in the afternoon.

When Peter arrived at the dock Kit repeated his question. He whined when he talked. His voice was thin and nasal. "The barge goin' out now?" "Right-oh!", said Peter. Kit continued, "I'm plannin' to go back to Oombulgurri with you. It'd be alright if I could go out with you now?" It was half question, half statement. "I could stand guard on the barge overnight."

There was little need for someone to stand guard. The seatainers were sealed and locked. It was not likely that someone would steal the barge. If someone planned to steal the barge there would be little Kit could do about it. Peter knew that Kit was recovering from a severe hangover, was at the end of his cash, and was hoping to get back to Oombulgurri so he could go sober up again. He also knew that one more night spent on shore might find Kit's resolve to sober up weaken. And he might not be in any kind of shape to return to Oombulgurri when it was actually time for the barge to leave. Because of this Peter said, "Fair dinkum. Hop on."

Russell had untied the stern and was now standing at the bow. Peter boarded and went to the engine room. Kit said, "I'll get my swag," and disappeared into the bush and reappeared with a crumpled duffel bag. Peter had already started the engine and had turned the rudder so that stern was beginning to ease away from the dock. "You can untie the bow, but keep a loop of line around the pylon there," said Peter. The bow pivoted around pylon as the stern gradually moved out into the harbor. Kit boarded the barge. Russell looked to Peter for an OK. Peter nodded his head and motioned with his arm for Russell to flip the loop of line over the pylon and set the barge free. Kit saw that Russell wasn't sure of himself. "Ere you go, mate," he said. He grabbed the line and freed it from the pylon. Peter slowly backed the barge into the harbor until it had gone ten meters and then spun the rudder so that the barge headed out into the bay. It turned slowly. As it came broadside to the waves headed for the shoreline the barge listed from side to side. Peter hurried to head the barge directly into the waves. Once he did so the barge seemed like a water-borne teeter-totter. The movement frightened Russell. It seemed to him that it would not take much more motion to capsize the barge. Since this was his first time on the barge he said nothing.

Peter had not throttled the engine up. It was still slightly above an idle. There was a breeze from the north. The bow of the barge was coming into the breeze. As it did so it bounced on the waves. The waves hit the bottom of the barge in rhythm: lop-pah, lop-pah, lop-pah.

Kit was already at the bow getting ready to drop anchor. As they left the shore Peter simultaneously kept an eye out ahead of the barge, and an eye for the distance they had traveled from the shore. When he judged they were far enough from shore he cut the throttle and motioned for Kit to drop anchor. Then he went to the corner of the stern and reeled in the dingy. To Russell, he said, "Let's go." To Kit, he said, "We'll see you in the morning. I reckon we ought to leave about half past 9 at the latest." Peter knew that Kit didn't have to stay on the barge. But he would sooner have him stay on the barge than have to put him up in the hut. To begin with there was no room for one more sleeping bag on the floor. In addition to that, Kit didn't have a sleeping bag. Peter judged there was just enough food for he and Russell, and if they invited Kit he would help himself to everything they had. But worst of all, Kit had a habit of taking a bath once a fortnight whether he needed it or not. The hut was close quarters for two people. It would be unbearable with Kit as a third.

Russell had boarded the dingy and was in the back seat. Peter untied the dingy from

the barge, said, "Ta." to Kit, and boarded the dingy and manned the oars. He pulled the dingy around until it headed for shore. Looking across the harbor he picked up a clump of mangrove trees across the harbor as a reference point, and pulled for the shore. Kit replied, "Ta." grabbed his duffel, and went to the control room.

When they reached the shore Peter swung the bow of the dingy around so that Russell was near the jetty. Then he took an oar out of the lock and handed it to Russell. "Don't let the dingy hit the jetty." he said. "Use the oar to cushion the bow. Get in as close as you can, get out, and give me the oar. Then get the line. We'll lift it and carry it up about 10 foot. There'll be a high tide tonight. Want to keep it well above high tide."

After they had secured the dingy they got in the lorry and returned to the hut. While Peter opened a tin of canned meat he ask Russell to boil a pot of rice. As Russell was washing the rice he noticed little brown spots in the water. "Hey, what's this?" queried Russell. Peter glanced over from his preparation and said, "Oh, those are weevils. There's nothing you can do about them. There are always weevils in the food up here. They just add a little more protein to the food." Russell washed the rice several times, in spite of the fact that it would mean he would have to make another trip to the faucet outside to re-fill the water can.

Peter warmed up the tin meat, turned the fire out and waited for the rice to boil. He didn't time it, he just guessed when it would be ready. He took the lid off, dipped a spoon in and took a small sample. "Tea time." he announced. There was no water left in the jerry can. He waited on boiling water for tea. The food was hot. He served himself on a plastic plate and motioned to Russell to do the same.

Peter ate in silence. It was the kind of silence that challenged any conversation. Russell did not know what to say, so he said nothing. When Peter finished what was on his plate he helped himself to seconds and offered the rest to Russell. "Clean it up." he said. "We ain't got no Frigidaire." He finished his plate before Russell, and took the lead in gathering up the dirty dishes. He made an attempt to empty the jerry can into the rice pan. There was nothing there but a drip or two. He gave Russell a dirty look. It seemed an unspoken rule that the last person to empty the water can was to refill it. Russell finished the last of his meal, stacked his plate on the counter with Peter's, grabbed the jerry can and went outside to the spigot. When he returned with the water Peter had re-lit the stove burners. He filled the rice pan with water and another small pan with water for tea.

When the water in the rice pan began to warm up Peter added a handful of soap powder to the pan. He stirred it until it made mountain of suds and began to wash the dishes in the rice pan. The dishes came out of the pan covered with a thin film of soap. "You don't need that much soap!" exclaimed Russell. "Soap doesn't get the dishes clean. In fact with that much soap it probably gets them dirty. The soap on the dishes may actually give us diarrhea.. The soap just breaks the surface tension in the water so the water can get the dishes clean." "I've heard that before. I'm not sure its true." said Peter, as he continued to was the dishes in soap suds. No amount of explaining would convince Peter. Russell spread the dishes out so they could drain and dry.

By the time they had finished the dishes it was time to light the gas mantle lantern. As soon as it was lit moths, mosquitos, beetles, flying ants, and insects of all kinds swarmed to it. "I don't know which is worse." said Peter. "The bugs or the dark. When you get ready for bed we'll set it out on the porch for a minute before we turn it off. That may leave a few of the bugs out there."

Peter turned out the lamp. He had succeeded in luring all of the winged insects out on the porch except the mosquitos. And there were a few who had lost their wings that were crawling around on the floor. From time to time Russell identified what he suspected was the gnawing of either a large mouse or a small rat. Once the lights were out and they were in their sleeping bags, questions which Russell had been holding in finally presented themselves. "Does the barge really need to be guarded tonight?" "No." said Peter. "But you wouldn't want Kit in here. Where would we put him? You know what he smells like. And he'd eat us out of house and home. And every time he opens his mouth he has to winge about something. Its better that he's out there."

"What was Joe talking about when he said you'd better put those covers on?" "Oh, those are hatch covers. I took them off so the barge could be inspected. They say the inside of the compartments are rusting and scaling.

We're going to have to scrape and paint inside. I'd rather not go to all the work of putting the hatch covers on right now. I'll just have to take them off again when we get back from Oombulgurri. And that's a lot of work." Peter explained. "What are they for?" asked Russell. "Its a safety feature." replied Peter. "It keeps the barge afloat. Particularly if you were in high seas. It gives the barge four separate air tight compartments plus the engine room."

Russell's string of questions seemed endless. He had no difficulty staying awake. Peter, on the other hand, was annoyed by the questions. He was irritated by someone who couldn't, or wouldn't, just shut the light off and go to sleep. It was not long before Russell's questions fell on deaf ears. Shortly thereafter Peter began to snore.

Russell awoke to the sound of a flock of Gullahs overhead. They were on their way to an early morning feeding. He glanced over at Peter's sleeping bag. It was empty. He dozed off again. The next time he woke Peter was pumping up the camp stove and putting tea water on for breakfast. Peter had also turned on the short wave two way radio. It gave only static. The hum of the camp stove and the crackle of the radio static lulled Russell back into a light sleep.

"Breakky?", Peter queried. The question woke Russell. "Right-oh", replied Russell. His response was an indication that he was learning his Australian-isms. He climbed out of his sleeping bag, folded it, pushed it into the corner where it joined Peter's.

He joined Peter at the counter. Peter was already eating. He had a bowl of Weetbix, dusted with powdered milk, and drenched in water. He also had a cup of tea. Russell helped himself to the same.

"I talked with Oombulgurri on the two-way", Peter volunteered. "Oh", replied Russell. "Yes, they want you to stay here in Wyndham. I'll take the barge and make a trip in with the seatainers. If everything goes as it should I'll be back this evening." "What am I supposed to do?", asked Russell. "Well there isn't much to do. Don't you have a good book? You need a good book or two out here. You'll always find times when you have to wait for something or other". Russell continued with his line of questioning, "How do I get around?" "You'll have the lorry." replied Peter. "Do I have to drive that?" "Well, you don't have to drive it all the time. We have the Holden out there. But I would like to have you bring it back from the jetty.", was Peters response. "I'm not sure I know how to drive it.", Russell enjoined. "It won't take long for you to learn.", said Peter.

When they reached the jetty Eddie was there. Peter hadn't heard any news of Eddie in the two day he had been planning the trip out to Oombulgurri. Eddie was a middle aged Aborigine who had brothers and sisters in Oombulgurri, but he had no wife or children, and had not settled down anywhere. He was a good deck hand and Peter appreciated his company on the trips in and out of Oombulgurri. But he never knew when, or if, Eddie would appear. "You goin' to Oombulgurri?", asked Eddie. "Right you are.", responded Peter. Eddie said nothing but threw his swag in the dinghy, and untied it from the jetty, and waited for Peter. Russell watched. Peter grabbed a sack full of food and threw it in the dinghy. Then he and Eddie carried the dinghy down to the waterline. "I may not be back tonight. It depends on how the unloading goes. Russell watched them row out to the barge. Kit met them when they reached the barge. Peter handed him the sack of food. He immediately helped himself to the food. Eddie tied the dinghy to the stern. Peter started the engine and Eddie hoisted anchor. They moved slowly off into the middle of the Cambridge Gulf heading for the mouth of the Forrest River. If Peter had timed it properly they would reach the mouth of the river with time to spare before the tide started coming in. There was no point in attempting the river before the tide turned. If the tide was receding while the barge was headed upstream, the barge would simply flow downstream with the tide.

Peter settled down behind the wheel of the barge. It would be at least a 2 hour trip up the gulf to the mouth of the Forrest River. Only once did he glance back at the shoreline. When he did so he discovered that the lorry was gone. Russell must have been able to figure out how to drive it.

He headed from the port on a north westerly course. Before long it was possible to distinguish individual trees in the mangroves along the western shoreline of the gulf. The trip was uneventful. However, the weather was unusual. There were some large clouds developing north of the gulf. Along with the clouds a brisk wind picked up from the north. And there were sporadic gusts of wind. They were visible for a distance across the gulf. They raced to and fro. They were so ephemeral

that they seldom that lasted long enough to reach the barge. Only occasionally did one hit the barge. The first one to hit them sent shock waves throughout the barge. As quickly as it hit it was gone.

Peter, who normally left worrying to others, found himself alarmed. He had been piloting the barge now for 2 years and he had never seen anything like this. The squalls appeared from nowhere and then disappeared. There was no way to predict when the next one would come, or from which direction it would come. Actually the squalls did not present a problem if the surface of the gulf remained calm. The gulf was still calm, but the swells had begun to increase in size. Now, as they made their way up the gulf to the Forrest River the barge rode up and down on the swells as if it were riding a horse on a giant carousel.

From his position at the wheel he observed his crew. Kit had eaten his fill, and was taking a nap on the deck. He used his duffel for a pillow. Eddie had disappeared in front of a seatainer at the outset of the trip. He was probably sitting cross-legged in front of it observing the journey. Although he was alarmed felt no obligation to communicate his alarm with the rest of the crew. Things like this were best kept it to oneself.

By the time they reached the mouth of the Forrest River the swells in the gulf were larger, and the squalls were becoming more frequent. When they reached the place where the river emptied into the gulf, Peter idled the engine. Almost as if by magic Eddie appeared from in front of one of the seatainers and pointed to the anchor. Peter nodded. Eddie dropped the anchor. Kit still rested. He showed no evidence that he had noticed that they had reached the first stage of the journey. Once the anchor reached the end of the line the barge began to swing so that the bow faced into the wind. That allowed them to face the swells head on.

Without warning the water at the confluence of the river and the gulf seemed to boil. At the same moment a squall appeared out of thin air. It buffeted the barge. The barge shifted its position. It was no longer facing the swells. It would take the next swell from the starboard side. The barge seemed to be on an enormous teeter-totter. The next swell was giant. As it went by the barge lurched. Above the roar of the wind and the waves was the sound of metal on metal. The two seatainers on the starboard side had shifted across the deck to the middle of the barge. Up until now, Kit had appeared to be oblivious to the storm. Suddenly he awoke. Peter tried to yell above the storm, "Hoist the anchor." He could see that there was fear in Kit's eyes. Kit headed for the anchor line. In between swells the water around them boiled again. The barge began to list. As it listed the seatainers on the port side shifted further to port. Another giant swell arrived along with a strong gust of wind. The barge began to ship water through the rear port compartment. As the compartment filled with water, the barge started to roll over on its side. As it did the seatainers, and the crew were catapulted into the gulf.

It was morning tea time in Oombulgurri. It was going on four days since the barge had capsized. Ken, Bob, Phil, Tanya, and Jo, Peter's wife, were having tea in the dining room-living room of the staff house. Four days with no word on Peter's whereabouts left them all doubtful that he was alive. Ken had just been speculating on the possibility that Peter was still alive. He would have had to survive four days of exposure to the outback. He doubted that it was likely that he could do so. It would be no difficulty for a blackfellow; an Aborigine. But it would be an enormous feat for Peter; a whitefellow.

The Harbor Master, in Wyndham, had received a report from an incoming vessel that the barge had overturned. He sent a search and rescue party out to the site of the accident. Kit had been found dead along the shoreline on the bank of the gulf, up away from the mangroves. That was an indication that he had survived the catastrophe and had made it to shore. Otherwise his body would have washed into the mangroves and remained along the water line. There was no sign of Peter or Eddie. If they had drowned and washed up against the mangroves there was no assurance that their remains would be found. Wyndham's largest industry was a meat packing plant. They routinely dumped offal into the gulf, and that attracted crocodiles, and carnivorous fish. Carnivores were bountiful in the gulf. It was not uncommon to spot crocodiles ten foot long. If they had made it to shore with Kit they would have had been marooned. South of the spot where Kit was found, was impassable marshland. To the north was the Forrest River. Their only chance for survival would be to cross the Forrest River and make their way overland 30 miles to Oombulgurri. Even so there were salt marshes that were altogether

impassable at high tide that were quicksand at low tide.

The Aborigines in Oombulgurri always joked about the fact that a whitefellow out bush would starve to death while standing on tucker (edible food). The Aborigine was skilled at the art of survival in this arid terrain. He could find both food and water as if by magic. He was able to live off from the land. If Peter had survived the capsizing of the barge and made it to shore, his only hope was that Eddie had done the same. Eddie would not only know the direction to Oombulgurri, he would enable them to survive while making the journey overland to Oombulgurri.

Peter and Eddie arrived at the outskirts of Oombulgurri on the morning of the fourth day. When they entered the village the villagers stood back as if they had just witnessed a pair of ghosts. Eddie went to the hut where his people lived. Peter went on through the village to the Institute staff residence. He arrived at morning tea time. When he entered the residence he startled them. Peter showed signs that Ken's estimations were accurate. He was wearing cut-off washpants. His legs below the knees were covered with sunburn that had long since blistered. The blisters had broken. They were matted with brush and grass. He had thin blond hair and a hairline that had begun to recede. His scalp was an angry red. It too, had blistered and was beginning to peel. His face was burned through 5 days of unshaven beard. He had the remains of a pair of thongs on his feet. The rocks, roots, stumps, and stalks of canegrass had pulverized them to the point where they were barely recognizable. The tops of his feet were sunburned, the bottoms were bruised, blistered, and covered with lacerations.

Peter seemed to confirm suspicion that he was a ghost in the way he carried himself. In his eyes was a far-off look. He seemed to have arrived from another world. He said nothing, but went directly to the kitchen, got a cup, and returned to the dining room and poured himself a cup of tea.