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Chapter 18b

ETA Systems/Control Data

1984-1988

Life With ETA Systems

I was on board with ETA the 2nd week of December 1984 and Chris about a week later. We scoured Idaho Falls for suitable office space and decided on the old Rogers Hotel building.

We bought desks, chairs, and office supplies to get us going. It all went on my expense report ,and I was reimbursed by ETA. After we were set up we bought booze and invited friends at EG&G for an office warming and preview of ETA Systems computers. We were in full scale sales mode by Christmas.

Bob hired former Control Data salesmen for Chicago, Miami, and Houston. He also hired a non Control Data person in Washington DC. It was somebody I knew well, Ron Swartz. He was the DOE long range computer planning and budget manager when we were going through our upgrades at the INEL.

It was fun to work with Ron on the same side of the fence. He knew the ins and out's of government procurement. We made a joint presentation to his old group at DOE Headquarters that was fun. Cancer claimed him a couple of years later.

There was a lot of travel with our territory being the western states. There were also frequent meetings at Headquarters in St. Paul.

A sales call I enjoyed the most in early 1985 was to the huge NASA facility between New Orleans and Biloxi, Mississippi. Chris and I flew to New Orleans and met up with a Control Data analyst. He would introduce us to the NASA people.

He recommended we eat at Paul Prudhomme's famous restaurant, K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen in New Orleans. I had seen it featured on TV several times . It was a great experience.

We spent the day at NASA and that evening went to Biloxi to look around and

have dinner. It was fun for me as I spent 6 months in 1955 going to radio school at Keesler AFB in Biloxi.

Our most important prospect was Lawrence Livermore Lab in Livermore, California. It was a treat to call on people where I had worked in the late 1960's.

In late 1985 we were attending a sales meeting in St. Paul when Bob Robertson revealed what he had in mind for me. Chris had too much territory with all the western states.

Bob wanted me to become the salesman for the INEL in Idaho Falls, Hanford in Richland, Lawrence Livermore Lab and Sandia Lab in Livermore, and NASA Ames Research Center in Sunnyvale. I would work out of the Idaho Falls office the rest of 1995 and see how it worked. I

It was a chance to make a lot of money if I could pull off a \$20 million sale, and I agreed to it.

It didn't change much of what I had been doing except I would not be traveling with Chris. He would not be going to Livermore. I would be traveling to California at least every other week. I never understood why Chris accepted giving up these prime prospects, but it didn't seem to bother him.

The Foreign Friend Episode

The week before Christmas 1987, I had to be at Headquarters in St. Paul for meetings. I finished up and got on a plane in the afternoon.

I was upgraded to first class. We were delayed for departure and the flight attendant began serving drinks to the first-class passengers. We all started talking and the guy in front of me was really interesting.

He was English but lives in Zermatt, Switzerland. I asked him a few questions about Zermatt to see if he was being honest. His answers added up with what I knew.

The reason he was in the U.S is that he buys race horses for wealthy Saudi Arabians. He was on his way to Bay Meadows in the Bay Area. His name was Chris. *(my coworkers name is Chris,also. I will refer to him as CC for Chris Christopherson, so there is no confusion in the following)*

We finally took off and I could see we were not gaining altitude nor making any turns. The Captain announced that the hydraulic system had failed.

We would make a slow wide turn to return to the airport and make an emergency landing. "Do not be alarmed when fire trucks and ambulances chase us down the runway after we touchdown".

We landed and rolled to a stop in the middle of the runway at the far end with all the equipment around us. We were towed to a gate and got off to await further word.

I belonged to the Crown Room, so I invited new friend Chris to be my guest. He hit the free booze hard. Four hours later the aircraft was ready to go. When we got to Salt Lake I had missed the last flight to Idaho Falls. Chris was able to connect to a flight to Oakland and we parted.

Around 4pm a couple of days later CC and I were sitting in our office in Idaho Falls, and the phone rang. It was my new friend, Chris, and he was at the bus station in Idaho Falls. What a surprise that was.

I went to the bus station and he was there with only a small satchel. I thought that was strange. We went back to the office and I introduced Chris to CC, and we went down to the bar for a drink.

Chris explained that he had flown to Butte to see an old friend, but nobody was home. It was a short trip by bus, so he thought he would come to Idaho Falls.

Being polite I invited him for dinner. Brian, Kathleen, and Julie were home for Christmas as well as my folks. One more would not be a problem.

Chris ate very well and never turned down a drink. In fact, he was putting them down rather fast. We had a spare hide-a-bed in the basement, and I offered it to him for the night. He quickly accepted.

In the meantime CC called and asked if he and his wife, Diane, could stop in. He was impressed with Chris and wanted Diane to meet him. They were big in the Idaho Falls opera group. They invited Chris to attend the opera Christmas party the next night. They didn't invite us.

CC and Diane went home and everyone drifted off to bed. It was down to me Chris. I was showing him where his bed was when he said he was short of money, and asked for a loan of \$500. I told him that we could talk about it in the morning.

He insisted on the money now and wouldn't accept wait until morning. That was it for me and told him I was taking him to a hotel. He said he had no money for a hotel.

Then we will go to the bus station. The bus station was closed. The next option is the freeway, and he can hitchhike.

It was 20 below zero. I didn't care at that point. Maybe the airport terminal would be open. It was, and I dropped in off with his little satchel in hand.

The next morning everyone was asking, "Where's Chris", and I told the story.

Mom thought it was pretty dumb and dangerous hauling Chris around late at night and alone.

I was glad I got rid of him as I was having doubts before he even asked for money. It didn't make sense that he absolutely needed the money that night.

I decided to go to the airport and see if he caught a flight. He was still there. He asked again for money so he could buy a ticket. I was not about to give him any.

Then he needed eight dollars so he would have enough for a bus ticket. He had several rolls of 35mm film and wanted me to buy the lot. I bought two rolls for ten dollars, and dropped him at the bus station.

I called CC and told him what had taken place. He worried that Chris would show up at their place to attend the opera party that evening.

I never heard from Chris again. The film turned out to be expired and no good.

Climbing Mt Borah – 1st Try

On September 12, 1985 I towed the trailer to the foot of Mt Borah and parked beside the earthquake scarf. I spent the night and returned early the next morning to work. LaRue and I returned that Friday evening.

My climbing partners, Ron Raymond and Pat Rafferty arrived later and set up their camp. I was surprised that Pat had his 10 year old daughter with him. She was going to make the climb also.

We were up early Saturday morning . It was cloudy, cold, and threatening snow. I had cold weather Gortex gear. Ron and Pat only had light coats and no gloves. Pat's daughter didn't have a coat. LaRue gave her a coat and said she would walk up the primitive road to the trail head with us. On the way up LaRue talked the daughter into staying with her in the trailer.

We headed up the trail and Pat took off. Ron was not in good shape, so I paced myself with him.

By the time we got to the tree line it was snowing hard. We could not see Pat on the exposed parts of trail going up the mountain.

I was concerned about Ron and told him to head back to camp while I try to catch Pat. I thought we should abort the climb. T

he tree line was about 10,000 feet and I was to 11,000 ft when I caught up to Pat. He had stopped at chicken out ridge as he didn't see a way to continue. This is the most dangerous part of the climb.

It was snowing hard with about six inches of new snow. I convinced him that we were going down the mountain. We got down to tree line and Ron was there freezing to death.

I had directed him to go down. He felt he should stay in case we needed a rescue. It was not a good scenario but we got back to camp ok.

Pat and his daughter headed back to Idaho Falls and Ron stayed to camp with us for the night. Ron and I were rather shook as the day could have very easily ended in disaster due to Pat's recklessness.

Ron, LaRue, and I went to Mackay for a steak and quite a few drinks.

Ron and I made a pact to try again next year.

Climbing Mt Borah – Success #1

We scheduled the 2nd try to climb Mt Borah for August 19, 1986 on my 50th birthday. Joining me would be Ron Raymond, Pat Rafferty, and Lynn Hower from EG&G. Larry Cook my ETA Systems coworker based in Seattle flew over for the climb.

Larry and I hooked up the trailer early Friday August 18 and went to the Mackay Dam to set up camp. Ron and Pat would drive up in the afternoon. Lynn would fly up in his Cessna 185. He would buzz us and land at a ranchers private landing strip at Dickie where we would pick him up. The rancher had a hand painted sign on the highway pointing to "Dickie International Airport".

We had camp set up and Lynn flew over about 100 feet off the deck to let us know he had arrived. We went to pick him up and he invited us to get in. We would fly up and over Mt Borah to scout it out.

We jumped in and away we went. His Cessna 185 is a powerful back country plane that he uses on his 2nd job as a bush pilot in Alaska. We went straight up the mountain checking the trail and circled the top. The summit looked small .

I didn't see how we could all stand on it at the same time. Chicken Out ridge looked impossible. I thought of backing out of the climb.

(Note Lynn Hower and I had something in common. He lived in Stibnite while his dad worked there in the late 1940's. He still has a cabin at Big Creek about 30 miles from Yellow Pine. He got stranded in Big Creek a year after our climb. He had flown in and there was a large snowfall and he couldn't take off. There was nothing available to plow the landing strip, so he caught a ride to Yellow Pine. He found an old guy with a homemade steam powered snow plow. They fired up the boiler and drove it to Big Creek and plowed a strip for Lynn to take off. The summer of 2019 we saw the old snowplow parked in Yellow Pine.)*

We were up at 4am and at the trail head at 5am. I wanted to hit the trail at first light.

The first hour or more of climbing to the tree line is a tough scramble and tiring. It was a short break at tree line and we continued on fairly good trail through shale for another hour to a flat spot where we took a break.

This was the spot two or three climbers were killed by lightning several years earlier. Then it was on up to chicken out ridge. Pat behaved himself on this climb.

I paced myself with him, Ron, and Lynn while Larry went out ahead.

We got to chicken out ridge and Larry was spread eagled on the knifelike ridge about 50 ft up. He was afraid to go any further.

I climbed up to give moral support. We crawled along looking down about 1,000 ft on the left of us. We got to a safe spot and Lynn yelled he found a better route on the right side of the ridge.

I watched Lynn, Pat, and Ron casually stroll up that route and join us. They said it was easy except for a ledge and a step across blue sky to the other side.

The rest of chicken out ridge was a scramble. It ends with a 15 ft drop onto a snowfield that that we had to cross.

If you slip on the snowfield it is a 2,000 ft slide into the rocks at the bottom of a canyon. A climber a year or so later slid to his death on it.

From there it was an easy traverse across a bowl to the final 800 ft or so vertical scramble to the top.

The scramble was fine scree and straight up and was tough going. I ventured off to the right and found easier going around boulders but on solid shale. I looked straight down on the upper Pahsimeroi. That was a better route but everyone seems to fight the scree.

I was the first to the summit and welcomed the others. Lynn handed me a beer and that was the last thing I wanted. Food didn't taste good either at 12,655 ft.

Ron brought a flag with my name and "Climb for 50" on it. We took some pictures.

It was a beautiful sunny day and we had a 360 degree view. We spent an hour on top and headed down.

Our climb was 5 hours up and 3 ½ hours down. We got to the bottom and Larry started showing us the rocks he collected. He had about 30 pounds of rock in his backpack.

Climbing Mt Borah – Success #2

The next Mt Borah climb was for my 53rd birthday in August 1989. This time it was me, Ron Raymond, and his girl friend Cindy. I pulled the trailer to Mackay Dam on August 17 and they arrived and put up a tent.

We hit the trail at daybreak August 18. Cindy was about 20 years younger than Ron and had no trouble keeping pace.

I found the easy route through chicken out ridge and we were on the summit in 4 hours 25 minutes.

It was a cool day and we spent an hour on top. Coming down was 3 hours 15 minutes. We could see lightning in the valley and moving towards us as we were descending.

I thought about the two aluminum canteens I had in my backpack. We met two guys coming up and one had a metal golf club sticking out of his backpack. I complimented him on his lightning rod he had sticking in the air. We had rain the last 30 minutes coming down.

This made one aborted climb and two successful climbs of Mt Borah.

Climbing Mt Borah – Success #3

The next climb was around my 58th birthday in 1994. Gary Slette wanted to go as well as our Salmon friend, Grant Havemann. Gary had a banker friend, Bill Babcock, who would go also.

Bill had a house in Mackay where we could spend the night. The Havemann's had a daughter that lived in Hailey so she would drive to Hailey and LaRue and Kathleen would go to the condo in Sun Valley. We would all meet at the condo for dinner after we climbed Mt Borah. I met Gary and Bill in Mackay and Grant flew from Salmon to Mackay in his twin engine Piper Navajo.

I trained hard for the climb. I would do my morning run then run up and down the stadium steps at Idaho Falls High School for 10 reps. I was probably in the best shape in my life.

We hit the trail at daybreak and didn't stop until the tree line. Two guys were in

their sleeping bags. We talked to them briefly and headed on up the mountain.

I looked back and they had packed up in hurry and were trying to overtake us. We got to chicken out ridge and I found the slot to the right for the easy way through. Chicken out ridge had the two guys behind us stymied and we left them far behind.

Bill Babcock complained most of the way up that I was trying to kill everyone.

The only break we took was after we traversed the bowl and stopped in the saddle before the last 800 ft vertical to the top.

The top was in the clouds when we got there and there was no view to enjoy. We headed down and met the other two guys coming up.

We hit the saddle and while traversing across the bowl we met a large group of climbers from Boise. Gary knew them so we stopped to visit and give advice.

By then the summit had cleared of fog and clouds so they would have a great view. Nobody in our group wanted to go back up and enjoy the view that we had missed.

We got to the Suburban and were enjoying a beer . Grant pulled out a giant round loaf of bread from his pack that he had baked. It must have weighed 10 pounds . He packed it up and all the way down before he thought to get it out. The beer and bread hit the spot.

We made it to the summit in 4 hours and the descent was 3 hours. The time at the top was about 30 minutes as it was cold and miserable.

Climbing Mt Borah – 5th Try

The next attempt was a totally different experience. It was around the summer of 2000 when we were in the motel in Arco.

We had two Idaho Power guests every year that hauled fish from the hatchery in Hagerman to the hatchery by Ellis on the Salmon River. We talked about climbing Mt Borah and one of them had a brother who wanted to try the backside. I had always heard that it had not been climbed.

The geologist had also discovered Idaho's only glacier on the backside when he was a student at Idaho State. He was on a weekend trip exploring geology and

came back to school and told his professors who thought he was crazy. He took the professors and they confirmed that it was a glacier that nobody knew about.

The geologist would go with us and show us the glacier if we climbed the backside.

We departed the motel very early and drove to Mackay and over Double Springs Pass at Dickey. Then it was a turn south through the Horse Heaven Hills and a right at Mahogany Creek to the end of the primitive road.

We then bushwacked south until we came to a long meadow heading west and upwards towards the mountain. We saw two of the biggest bull elk a trophy hunter would die for. They were just standing and watching us.

At the end of the meadow it was a scramble up to a ridge running north south and parallel to Mt Borah. We went down the other side of the ridge and up to where we could see the glacier.

Then we climbed back up the ridge and it was a steady gain in elevation to where the ridge curved to Mt Borah. At that point I could see Marion Lake and Pass Lake to the south. We were about a 1,000 ft below the summit of Mt Borah.

We could not see any way to the summit from where we were unless we had ropes and climbing gear. Everyone was shot and it was time for a rest. I decided to continue up the ridge for a closer look at the summit and to assess the difficulty.

I confirmed it was straight up vertical rock. I could see people on the summit looking down and probably wondering about those fools down there.

We rested a while and began the long trek back to the trucks. It was a long day, but the scenery was worth the trip.

Our Life – 1986

Chris and I were frequent flyers on Western Airlines and on a first name basis at the check-in counters. In March 1986 Western Airlines gave both of us complimentary first-class tickets for two to any destination in Mexico.

Chris said that he and Dianne would go to Mazatlan. We decided to be different and go to Puerto Vallarta in April.

I had credits for free stays at Sheraton hotels as I always stayed at the Sheraton Midway in Minnesota and the Sheraton Pleasanton in California. We would use credits and stay free at the Sheraton Baganvilia in Puerto Vallarta for three nights.

We caught the Friday morning flight from Idaho Falls to Salt Lake and then on down with a short stop in Los Angeles.

Western Airlines was promoting Mexico and had just started their highest level of service. In first class it was called "Royal" on their Hawaii and Mexico flights.

Lunch started with four large prawns and cocktail sauce. Then we chose filet mignon that was restaurant quality, and then a nice dessert. All service was with glassware and china. The booze and wine was high quality also.

There was hardly anyone in first class. I was all over videotaping with my new Sony camcorder. We were on a roll when we got to Puerto Vallarta.

We checked in and I went out on the balcony to look out over the pool and the ocean. I came back in and LaRue was standing there with black all over her hands and white pants. She had been working on the toilet. The water kept running so she took the lid of the tank and adjusted the float. That was the end of her toilet fixing. We had dinner at the pool side restaurant.

I went for a run the next morning towards the city center. I got to the Malecon and there was a fish market and small boats unloading their morning catch.

I stopped to look and a guy named Carlos invited me to a timeshare presentation. I had read about timeshares and no way was I interested. Carlos said we would get a free breakfast and it would take just one hour for the presentation. The taxi would be paid both ways. I thought "what the heck - might as well get a free breakfast" and agreed to go.

We went to the Villa del Mar resort and had a nice breakfast. We sat through the presentation and told the interviewer no thanks.

Then a more senior person sat down and it was no thanks again. Then another person arrived with special deals. A one bedroom condo for a fixed week per year for 25 years was around \$4,000. The week in Puerto Vallarta could be traded for a week in any resort in the world that is listed with Interval International. Financing

was instantly available with a qualified credit card and small down payment.

It was getting interesting. People were buying and there would be applause. We got caught up in the moment and signed on the line.

We were invited to the Mexican Fiesta that evening as guests of the sales manager and his wife. We could move to the Villa del Mar and stay for something like \$10 per night. We hurried back to the Sheraton, packed up, and moved.

The Fiesta was a lively with free drinks, food, and entertainment all evening. We made it to our room and woke up in the morning with a severe case of “buyer’s remorse”. This was the dumbest thing we had ever done.

I hurried down to the office to back out of the deal only to find that there is no backing out in Mexico. We bought a timeshare. We made the most of the rest of our time in Puerto Vallarta, had a good time, and flew home wondering whether to tell anyone what we had done.

A year went by and we returned in April 1987 to use our fixed week. Julie was on spring break and came with us.

I had a lot of frequent flyer miles and we flew First Class again. The nice thing about Western Airlines is that you accumulated miles even if you were using them to fly. The net result was that you gained almost as many as you used.

When we checked into the Villa del Mar they requested that we attend a presentation to get an update on what was going on at the resort. Might as well get updated and get a free breakfast also.

The next morning Julie slept in and LaRue and I went to the presentation. We went through the “no thanks” routine a couple of times. Then special offers were produced. We ended up upgrading to a two bedroom unit with the fixed week in October. We thought that another \$2,000 or so was worth having two bedrooms in the event we had guests.

They threw in some bonus weeks also, and they came in handy in 1988. In reality the value of the bonus weeks was worth more than we spent for the upgrade.

Julie couldn’t believe what we had done, and we didn’t either. We had a great week in Puerto Vallarta ,and took a tour every day.

The next year the Villa del Mar owners bought the property next to them and the Villa Del Palmar was built. We could access both properties.

(It turns out that the timeshare worked very well for us. It made us think about a vacation every year. We traded a couple of times for the Bahamas and Mazatlan and rented once in Cabo San Lucas. We liked Puerto Vallarta the best and never traded again. We returned every year and sometimes twice a year by renting a week. The contract ended after 25 years and we continued renting every October. The timeshare was worth every penny. We still see people that have been coming for years.)

On March 27, 1986 I was driving by Smith Chevrolet. We had our 1978 Suburban for almost 8 years so I thought I would stop and look.

They had just received a new 1986 Suburban that was dark grey on the top and bottom and black in the center with red striping. It was ready to go with running boards and everything. The list price was \$21,091 and they offered \$6,291 for the 1978 that we bought for \$8,500. We now had a new 1986 Suburban.

Julie had been driving the Dodge Colt as she had a job at Scotties. I had acquired a used 1983 Oldsmobile Omega a couple of years earlier for my transportation. It had belonged to Dr. Arbon who smoked big cigars. It took about a year to get rid of the cigar smoke.

Kathleen was teaching at Kimberly High for a couple of years after graduating from Boise State. She was living in an apartment in Twin Falls and dating Gary Slette. We didn't meet Gary until we all met at Redfish Lake August 2.

That was our introduction and the infamous verbal interchange between Gary and Julie. Gary greeted Julie with something like, "You must be the spoiled brat that gets everything". Julie shot back, "You must be the ...hole from Minnesota". It about floored us all. It didn't take long to get acquainted.

Brian was also a graduate of Boise State and was working for a finance company in Boise. He had met Tina at Boise State and it looked like things were getting serious.

Julie would be starting her second year at BYU in the fall.

The Job - 1986

With me being a salesman Bob Robertson thought we needed an analyst in the bay area for sales support. An ex Control Data analyst, Mike, had been pestering ETA Systems for a job and he lived in San Mateo, California. He said he had close contact with people in my accounts, and especially at Lawrence Livermore Lab. Bob hired him based on his word and resume.

I was not happy when I discovered who it was. I knew Mike to be a lazy opportunist. However, I was stuck with him. He would continue to live in San Mateo.. We found an office for him to work out of, and where I could hang my hat when I was in the area.

I took him with me to Livermore and discovered they barely knew of him. He was a bust as far as I was concerned. He did know a couple of people at NASA Ames Research Center in Sunnyvale, so that was of some help.

I continued to press for an additional analyst that knew the Livermore Lab as well as the INEL. The analyst was Larry Cook in the Control Data Seattle office.

He had also been a customer engineer at Lawrence Livermore on the Star computer in the early 1970's. He made the Shark Club for that effort the same year as I made the Shark Club. When I was at EG&G he would accompany the Control Data salesmen when he came to Idaho Falls. Larry was an avid runner and coached me when I took up running. Eventually he was hired, and I had an analyst who was an asset.

I set up a corporate visit for Lawrence Livermore Lab management. The date was January 28, 1986, and we were meeting in the board room at ETA Systems. I was in the midst of my presentation when someone stuck their head in the door and announced the space shuttle Challenger had blown up after launch. That sucked the air out of the room and the disaster took over the meeting. I am not sure they took away much after that.

Larry and I took them to dinner at the special Swiss restaurant in Stillwater that everyone liked. We did the whole nine yards with cigars (for them) and rounds of cognac after dinner. I submitted the tab on my expense report and later got a call from Bob's secretary. She asked, "Are you sure there wasn't a couple more people at the dinner"? Being quick on my feet I came up with two more names and all was well. I called the two people to make sure they were in the loop.

Change Is In the Air – 1986

Late summer of 1986 Bob Robertson decided I needed to be in Livermore full time, and asked me to move. The company was depending on an order from the lab for an ETA-10.

The problem was that the first working production model had been slipping and was still two years away. It is difficult to sell something you don't have. The Lab was satisfied with their Cray computers and looking forward to Seymour Cray's new Cray-2. I went through all this with Bob and said I would give it a year in Livermore if the company rented a house and furniture. If things started looking better we would move. He agreed.

LaRue gave notice at the bank and we prepared for California. We flew to Oakland in September to find a place to rent. We settled on a townhouse in Pleasanton and found a place to rent furniture.

It also had a fenced lot where we could park the trailer. We flew home and I drove the Olds down with a few household items. I worked a couple of weeks and left the car at the Oakland airport and flew back to Idaho Falls.

On October 7, 1986 we loaded the trailer with living essentials, two bicycles, and headed to California. Julie was beginning her second year at BYU, so it was just the two of us. Our new address was 1531 Calle Santiago, Pleasanton. It was a 930 sq ft townhouse with 2 bedrooms and 2 baths.

It was fun coming back to the area we lived from December 1965 until we moved to Richland the fall of 1971. Our old Livermore neighbors were still around and my aunt and uncle were still in Livermore.

I rented an office in the Sunset Office Plaza in Livermore. It was a few blocks from where we had lived. It was about four miles from Pleasanton. I purchased office furniture on the company, and I was in business.

I took vacation days in conjunction with Christmas 1986 and we drove to Idaho Falls. Everything was fine with the house and we enjoyed our visit.

On the way back to California we stopped at Lake Tahoe and skied Squaw Valley. It was good skiing, but too many people. Leaving Squaw Valley we hit a bad

snowstorm that had traffic stopped for a couple of hours.

Loa and Max were expecting us that evening in Grass Valley. We had no way of letting them know, but they heard it on the news.

Julie enrolled in the 2nd semester at BYU Hawaii. We put her on the plane in San Francisco and away she went on a flight to Honolulu.

We flew over a couple of months later for a visit and see how she was doing. This would be our second visit to Hawaii within about four months.

Just after we arrived in Pleasanton we flew to Maui and spent a week with Max and Loa. They had been in Maui for a couple of weeks and had a rental car. They toured us around the island. We went to the Sheraton for Sunday brunch and ran into Loa and Max's neighbors when they lived in Walnut Creek. Small world.

It just so happened on this trip to see Julie that Bev and Tom were attending a corporate event in Honolulu.

They would be catching a plane home a couple of hours after we arrived. We had a great flight in first class and was on a roll when we deplaned in Honolulu.

Julie was there with a friend that gave her a ride to the airport. Tom and Bev was also at the gate to greet us. Julie introduced us to her friend, Matt, and he departed to go back to the campus.

We saw Bev and Tom off and picked up a rental car. We had a motel for two nights near the campus and then two nights at the Outrigger on Waikiki Beach.

The Polynesian Cultural Center was next to the campus. We spent an afternoon and evening with Julie touring the center and attending the performances. Julie knew a lot of the people working and performing. We didn't see Matt again.

When we checked in at the Outrigger for the last two days the desk clerk said our room was not ready. However, she would upgrade us to a one bedroom suite.

The suite was huge and on the corner with two balconys. The side balcony had a view of Diamondhead and the front balcony looked down and over Waikiki Beach. We really lucked out. However, it rained for two days.

LaRue's Idaho Falls bank friend, Carol and her husband, were also in Honolulu. They came by for a visit and were duly impressed.

When we got back to Pleasanton LaRue talked to Bev on the phone. They both had a feeling that Matt may become more than Julie's friend.

Big Change – 1987

The merger of Western Airlines into Delta Airlines was finalized on April 1, 1987. We would now be flying Delta. We noticed the first class service to Puerto Vallarta was not as good as Western Airlines but still good. We were on a flight to Puerto Vallarta in April and told the former Western flight attendant that we missed Western Airlines. She gave us a china coffee cup with the Western Airlines logo as they were phasing them out.

In early 1987 there was an important sales/marketing meeting at Headquarters. It was announced that Bob Robertson was gone and replaced with an ex IBM executive. We were dumfounded.

The new guy didn't come across well. His standard response to sales/marketing strategy questions was, "That dog don't hunt". In other words we didn't know anything.

My friends at EG&G Idaho let me know that approval had been granted to issue an RFP for a new computer to replace the Cyber 176. It was at full capacity and obsolete after nearly 8 years service. They were looking for a Cray class computer.

I considered my commitment to Bob Robertson, which was for a year in Livermore, no longer in effect since he was gone. With the procurement activity at the INEL and nothing happening in Livermore I decided we should return to Idaho Falls.

The rent on the townhouse in Pleasanton was month to month so that was not a problem. We packed up the trailer and departed Pleasanton on April 30, 1987, I left the Olds at the Oakland airport for whenever I was in the bay area. I would alternate weeks between Livermore and Idaho Falls.

EG&G issued the RFP for the new computer shortly after we got back to Idaho Falls. A tough benchmark demonstration would be required in the early fall.

The specifications were for a Cray class computer. My inside informants told me that it would be a problem as the budget was only \$3.5 million and a new Cray computer was over \$10 million.

This was good news for me as the ETA Piper air cooled system was to have the performance of a Cray-1 and would cost around \$1 million.

We should win easily if we could demonstrate good performance on the benchmark demonstration. That was a big if. The hardware was looking good but the operating system was in limbo.

The early decision to use the Control Data Cyber 205 operating system was not accepted by potential buyers and had recently been abandoned. This is exactly what we in the ETA sales force were saying from the beginning. UNIX was now being developed but it was another year away. We had essentially lost over two years.

I could only hope that it all would come together in time for the benchmark demonstration. I had two analysts work on the benchmark all summer. They had to use a Cyber 205 as there was no working ETA model.

I worked with corporate proposal writers and we wrote the proposal. We were a couple of weeks from demonstration time ,and we wouldn't make it. I had to cancel the demonstration and could not submit a proposal. I could only hope that the bids would be too high and be rejected with another try in the future.

My old friend, Chuck Breckinridge, who was the Control Data salesman when I was in Livermore, was the salesman for Cray on this procurement. Chuck did his homework and submitted a bid of \$3.5 million which was exactly what was in the budget.

Chuck knew how to get inside information also. It was the winning bid as no other vendor responded to the RFP, However, it was a used Cray-1 and obsolete. It was a disappointment for the guys at EG&G. But it was a Cray computer for the INEL.

The decision was driven by the computer center people. The user community was not on board with it. It was a problem that I would inherit. More on that later.

Our Life 1987-1988

We had Thanksgiving in 1987 for everyone in Idaho Falls. Mom and Dad came down from Salmon. Julie brought her boyfriend, Matt, and they came from Provo. Brian and Tina came from Boise, and Kathleen and Gary came from Twin Falls. In the course of the holiday everyone was getting along well as a family. We all went for a walk one evening and we are thinking this is probably the way the family is going to look. We had been expecting Brian and Tina would have an announcement to make as they had been together since college.

We were all sitting around in the family room after dinner. I thought I would make an announcement that maybe would speed things up. I announced that whoever gets married first gets two first class tickets to Puerto Vallarta and a week at the Villa del Mar condo. Nobody said a word. I guess it didn't go over well, as I heard about it later.

Engagements

It was not long after and I was staying at the Sheraton Pleasanton while doing sales work in Livermore. I was back from my morning run and cooling off in the recliner and the phone rang. That was unusual at 7am .

I was apprehensive about answering. It was Matt Redd and he asked for my permission to marry Julie. What a surprise that was. Of course, I gave permission.

Days later I got another call. Gary Slette asked for permission to marry Kathleen.

Brian finally got the hint and proposed to Tina.

All three of our kids planned weddings starting in May 1988 within a span of five weeks.

I had enough airline frequent flyer miles and bonus weeks for our condo in Puerto Vallarta to accommodate everyone . Within a week I had first class flight reservations and resort reservations for all. It was amazing how it worked out. We put all three engagements in the same Sunday paper. That caused a stir among our friends. We couldn't believe it either.

1988 Weddings

Three weddings in five weeks was a great experience. Matt and Julie were first.

The day before the wedding Matt's parents hosted a luncheon at the Westbank.

They were married the next day in the Idaho Falls Temple May 7, 1988. We had a reception later at the Elks Lodge with food, refreshments, and dancing. They departed Idaho Falls the next morning for their week at the Villa del Mar in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Gary and Kathleen's wedding was next in Twin Falls and they did all the wedding arrangements. Gary's brother worked for Winnebago and drove the Slette's out from Minnesota in a Winnebago motor home. We took our trailer and stayed at the KOA Campground on Highway 93.

My folks were supposed to be at the wedding, but Dad was having a health problem and they couldn't make it.

The evening before the wedding there was a catered dinner at the Turf Club. The wedding ceremony June 11, 1988 was in a beautiful open area of the Blue Lakes Country Club at the bottom of the Snake River canyon.

A reception followed at their house where they had two large tents erected in the side yard. It was a great reception with food, refreshments, and music. Gary's sheep rancher friend had a grill going and grilled lamb all afternoon.

Later in the day a few people jumped in the swimming pool clothes and all. The next morning was a hosted breakfast at the Depot Grill. Gary and Kathleen's trip to Puerto Vallarta was scheduled the week following Brian and Tina's wedding the next week.

We wrapped up the wedding in Twin Falls and hooked up the trailer and moved to the KOA Campground in Ketchum. We were in site #16 for \$14.99 per night. The folks were able to come and stayed in site #17 in their Alpenlite 5th wheel.

We hosted a catered BBQ by Mutt's of Ketchum at the Hailey park.

Brian and Tina were married June 18, 1988 in the Hailey Catholic church. A reception was held at a wedding reception center with the food and refreshments provided by Louie's Italian Restaurant of Ketchum. Louie was a long time family friend and catered the gourmet food in person.

Tina's father, Joe Macarillo, was a musician and his trio played the main dining

room at the Sun Valley Lodge. Joe was the 2nd generation of the trio performing at the lodge. His partner on the piano was Joe Foss. He played throughout the reception. It was a great reception.

Gary and Kathleen departed the next day for their week in Puerto Vallarta. Brian and Tina went a week later, and they overlapped one night in our two bedroom condo at the Villa del Mar.

The Slette family hosted a reception in Minnesota for Kathleen and Gary after they returned from Puerto Vallarta.

I had enough air miles, hotel, and rental car credits to cover the trip for them and for us. We flew first class to Minneapolis, picked up a Hertz rental car, and stayed overnight at the Sheraton Midway in St. Paul.

The next day we drove to Walter in the southern end of the state. It was good to see where Gary was born and raised on the family farm. They had a very nice reception in their church meeting hall.

The weddings and honeymoons to Puerto Vallarta came off without a hitch. It was a summer to remember.

1988 Job Happenings

The summer of 1988 all sales and marketing people were summoned to Headquarters for an announcement.

The announcement was earth shattering. All ETA sales and marketing people were being transferred to Control Data.

ETA systems would only design and manufacture computers. I was devastated as I didn't want to work for Control Data again. I told the new management that when I left Control Data I was not eligible for rehire. They hurried off to check it out.

They came back that everything was fine. I was now a Control Data employee and would report to the sales office in Sunnyvale, California. I hoped all along that I would be rejected. However, I was still employed, and it gave me time to plan an exit. I was not going to work for Control Data.

(Note* Control Data closed the doors on ETA Systems in April 17, 1989. A few systems had shipped with limited success. The remaining inventory was given to universities for research.

Control Data was out of the computer business and defunct by 1992.)

Former ETA sales and marketing now had the task of training a large number of Control Data people. I gave a sales training class and my old nemesis, Walt Chase, who was my boss at CERN, was in the class. Walt was now a salesman in New Hampshire, and I was his trainer. I enjoyed the role reversal. We talked at coffee breaks a few times but not about what happened at CERN.

Following my return to Pleasanton I checked in with the Control Data Sunnyvale office. My new boss was Brian Jones, who I had never met. He was in his late 20's with very little experience.

It didn't matter since his father was Boyd Jones, who had been the Western Region Sales Manager. He retired and had evidently set his son up.

I was advised that the ETA sales offices would be closed when the leases were up. I could work out of my Livermore office until the end of the lease in October, 1988. Then I would have to work out of the CDC office in Sunnyvale.

I decided to find a job with EG&G in Idaho Falls. It wouldn't be easy as my old boss, Dick French, was no longer there.

I asked my friend, Ron Raymond, to check around. He came back later with an internal job posting. It was for a sales and marketing oriented person in the newly formed Technology Transfer Office. The mission was to license technology developed at the INEL with the private sector and collect royalties. The job was to be filled from within EG&G.

Ron talked to the manager, Jane Welch, and told her I was a good fit and interested in the job. We eventually connected by telephone. Jane said she would see what she could do after the posting period was over. She could hire from outside if not satisfied with the internal applicants. The General Manager, Jim Zane, would have to sign off on it. I had good rapport with Jim, and thought I had a good chance if it got that far.

I met in person with Jane Welch. As soon as the required job posting was satisfied

she would go through the approval process of getting me hired.

Jim Zane signed off. I received a job offer and accepted. I would start with EG&G mid August, 1988. I gave two weeks notice to Control Data.

(Cheis Christopherson resigned and joined his old boss, Tom Odle. Tom was now the sales manager of a company selling plug compatible peripheral equipment for IBM computers. This allowed Chris to continue living in Idaho Falls. Things eventually soured and he went on his own selling personal computers out of a small office downtown. He had no experience with PC's but he tried. Chris and Diane divorced and he went to live with his brother in Ohio. He passed away in August, 2017 at the age of 83.)

End of chapter 18b