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Chapter 2b-2

My High School Years in Salmon (Class of 1954)

High school meant a daily bus ride to Challis, a round trip of 110 miles. My friend Richard was a year ahead of me and his parents elected to rent an apartment in Salmon. Richard and his mother lived there during the week. Then the McPheters bought a house and offered to let me stay with them. So, it was Salmon for high school. We would leave Patterson Sunday evening or early Monday morning and return on Friday evenings or Saturday morning. The roundtrip was 134 miles, but only once a week. In the winter it was a wonder we didn't end up in the Salmon River.

We were the kids from Patterson that nobody had seen before. Richard and I hung out together since I boarded with him and his mother. The house was the third house on the big rock wall after you cross the Salmon River bridge and head up the hill.

We liked another new student, Zenas Hartvigson. Zenas was a big farm kid that lived at Baker, up highway 28 towards Leadore. He went through grade school in Baker then drove to high school in Salmon. He didn't care for farm life (a dairy) and spent most of his time in town. He liked chess and taught us. We played a lot of chess and joined the chess club when it was formed. He also played the clarinet, so Richard took it up. I was his suffering audience when he practiced.

Zenas liked to hang out with us until he met a girl he liked, and they were inseparable. They married and went to Oregon to work in a lumber mill. He studied math in night school and earned a Phd in math at Oregon State. He became a professor at

Colorado and taught math and computer programming. He later became the department head. He died in 2012 and the new math building was named after him. Former students wrote glowing tributes for his funeral.

The Girl Encounter (1950)

We did a lot of ice skating on the city outdoor pond in the winter and hung out at the teen center that had a roller skating rink. There were no girls in our life in Salmon. I was seeing a girl, Glenna, in Patterson.

There was slight contact with a girl when I was a freshman in 1950-51. Richard and I were roller skating and there was a blonde girl with pig tails flying around the rink. She came up behind me and shoved me out of her way. By the time I got going again to get even she was long gone. I never saw her again at the roller rink. However, that brief encounter caused me to keep a lookout for her. *It* would change my life forever.

The Blond Freshman Girl (1954)

This happened near the end of my senior year while boarding with Olga and Clarence Smith. The last school prom was coming up May 8, 1954. Since I was a senior and the last prom I thought I should attend. However, there were no girls I knew available that I was interested in. I had been noticing a blonde freshman girl, LaRue Gibbs, walking from school through town and up the hill to where she lived, which was about two miles. I thought she might be the girl that shoved me on the roller rink when I was a freshman. However, she was much more mature looking, I thought it was understandable given the time that went by. I was

interested and wanted to get acquainted. Giving her a ride would work, but I didn't have a car.

One day Olga was quizzing me about going to the prom and we discussed various options for dates. I mentioned the blonde girl, LaRue, and she knew who she was. She said, "go call her". I wasn't very brave and kept putting it off. One day Olga said, "you know a girl should have two weeks to get ready, so you better call her today". I summoned the courage and did. She knew who I was and accepted with no hesitation. She sounded kind of excited about it. LaRue was among the oldest in her class at 15 and I was the youngest in my class at 17. I didn't feel I was robbing the cradle.

Shortly after making the prom date with LaRue I was riding around with Larry Fisher one evening. He had to go by the high school and pick up his girlfriend, Renee, after a school function. Renee and LaRue came out together. I gave up the front seat for Renee and got in the back seat. To my surprise LaRue got in with me. That was good as we had a couple of things to talk about. She confirmed she was the girl that shoved me on the roller rink. We discussed it and moved on to the prom date. She was outgoing and talkative, so it was easy to continue getting acquainted. We clicked and the ride turned into an impromptu double date. We continued to get together after that. Before this I was attending the prom with a girl I didn't know. Now she is my girlfriend. The prom date would be much more relaxed now.

Olga was pleased and Clarence razzed me about dating a freshman girl.

School

My freshman class was about 75 students and I didn't know anybody. Most of them had been going to school together for several years and were clickish. My first class was science and the teacher was Gilbert (Tommy) Farr. It was his first teaching job and his first class. He was small man and a bunch of us thought we could intimidate him and take over. Were we ever wrong. Mr. Farr took command instantly, put everyone in their place, and invited anyone who thought otherwise to meet him in the back room. There were no takers. Little did we know that he had been a tough combat pilot in WW2 providing close air support for the troops. in Europe. He became my favorite teacher and another hero of mine.

I organized our 50-year class reunion. I contacted him in Bellevue, Idaho to invite him to the reunion and speak. He accepted and rode his motorcycle to Salmon at the age of 83. He told me the pay was so poor teaching school that he left after four years and went to the Forest Service in Ketchum and retired there. We happened to run into him while getting onto a ski lift at Sun Valley around 1976. He remembered both of us.

Another favorite teacher my first year was Harry McCarty. He taught Algebra and I did good in it. I was always drawing airplanes, rocket ships, and dreaming of going to the moon, so he nicknamed me "Supersonic". He also wrote in my yearbook, "may you build a better rocket ship". He was a smoke jumper in the summer and I thought that was something I would like to do. It was his influence that moved me towards math and statistics in the future.

I also took Latin that first year as I was thinking about being a doctor and our family doctor and friend, Dr Goggins, recommended it. It was nice that the teacher was the best looking young female teacher in the school. I also took English but that was a different story. Everything was confrontational in that class. I also took elective 4th year English from her and earned an A in class work. However, my report card came out with an F because of deportment. We negotiated a B afterwards. Her name was Mrs. Gwartney and I never liked her. I also took// typing along with several other guys because the teacher was an attractive female. In my later years I was thankful that I knew how to type.

It was in the spring of my freshman year when a tragic event occurred. I was with a friend, Jimmy Pike, and we were drinking a coke in a small stand across the street from the Main Theater. We were adjacent to the Roxy Theater (now named the River Theater) as Salmon had two movie houses. We saw a lot of smoke coming out of the Main. Two bodies were removed and one was the step father of my friend Jimmy. He was a volunteer fireman and got trapped in the smoke in the basement and perished. Jimmy and his mother moved to Idaho Falls at the end of the school year. He wrote in my freshman year book, "Roses are red, violets are blue, some people stink, but I I like you. Lots of Luck, Jimmy Pike". He later went to BYU and formed and headlined a group called "The Letterman", and became famous. His picture in my year book looks nothing like his picture on "The Lettermen" albums. In later years he lost his voice and sold his rights to the group. His voice came back later and he started a new group called "The Legends". We caught a performance in Idaho Falls and visited with him. I couldn't recognize him with white hair as it was black in high school. I tried to get him to

attend our 50-year class reunion but he couldn't make it. Well, he could make it if I would organize a concert and guarantee \$25,000. I checked with the Salmon Arts Council and the Rotary Club to see if it was possible, and it wasn't.

After my freshman year I was nominated often for class officer positions but would lose to one of the locals. With one exception, I was elected class secretary my junior year. I guess they were beginning to accept that kid from Patterson.

A big event occurred May 17, 1952 when my sister was born. Mom and Teddy Miller were due around the same time, so they went to Salmon and stayed in a motel to be near the doctor and the new hospital. I was home for the weekend by myself when the word came that I had a sister. Richard and I got the only package of pork chops out of the freezer and went to one of our camps for a cookout.

I was seeing a new girl in town named Beverly. I recommended the name and it became the name of my sister.

My Work Experience During High School

After my freshman year in high school Jack Bradley gave permission for me to work at the mine during the summer. The locals grumbled because their kids could not work at the mine, but the boss's kid could. Rank has its privileges, and that is the way it was.

I worked until my pay equaled what the income tax deduction was for dependants. It took about 6 weeks. The bookkeeper would track it, so I wouldn't exceed that amount. He would let me go

over and I would end up working for free for about a week. When I was done the folks could still claim me as a dependent. In those days it gave me enough disposable income on top of my weekly allowance to easily get through the school year. I would have enough left to buy new gloves and new boots to go back to work. I had my own bank account and check book, so I was right up town among my peers.

I worked on the surface of the mine and stacked lumber and straightened logs when they came on a truck from Sawmill Canyon. When that was done I usually cut brush. The canyon was very brushy and it was a goal to clear it for a trailer park for the miners. It was a tough hot job. A perk was that it was behind the cook house and the cook would have a big slice of pie and kool aid for me in the afternoon. She would call me in for my treat and my boss, Bus Miller, would drop by to see how things were going. I think it was on purpose to get a piece of pie. He would sort of frown and grumble, "sure need to get all this brush out of here". I really didn't care. Fire me and I'll go to Yellowstone Park and work.

Another job was to smooth out the widened part of the gravel county road that was the airfield. I would go up and down all day picking, throwing rocks, and filling holes. I would come back the next day and it seemed like a new batch of rocks had sprung up. It was a never ending job that was a filler when I was caught up with other things. There was no shade, so it was miserable.

I also hauled garbage, and on rainy days worked in the diesel generator shack wiping oil off the diesel engines and the floor. I also loaded lumber on the skip, went up the mountain with it, and unloaded it at the mine portal. While up there I would crimp

detonating caps on a length of fuse and poke it into sticks of dynamite for the miners to use on the evening shift. I envisioned blowing myself up even though I was told it was safe as long as no sparks or fire were nearby.

One day I was riding the skip down. It was pulled by a cable attached to a hoist at the top and went up and down on rails. The rails were on a 6 to 10 foot high wooden trestle above shale rock. I was coming down, the skip derailed, and went over the side of the trestle. I jumped as far as I could and luckily hit in small shale rock. I tumbled downhill to get out of the way. I hiked down and the two carpenters in the framing shed below had been watching. They were having a big laugh at my expense. They said I put on a good show. After that I never liked riding that thing and was always ready to jump.

I ate lunch in the cook house with a few night shift single miners and we were fed really well family style. A dollar or maybe two dollars a week would be held out of my paycheck. I was always trying to gain weight for football and I ate enough for two miners. After dinner at home I would go to the cafe in the new recreation hall after it was built and have a milkshake to try to gain weight. I would walk slow so I didn't work it off, but it didn't seem to work.

I hauled in the dirt and planted the lawn for the new recreation hall when it was built about my junior year. Today it is the LDS Church for the whole valley. My lawn is still there.

We worked ten days on and four days off at the mine. It was a long stretch. I was ready to go Salmon after ten days. Harry Blessinger, a young miner, had a new 1954 yellow and white two door hard top Buick. He was single and I would ride to Salmon

with him. All he wanted to do was party for four days and did not need a car in Salmon to do it. He would give me the Buick and I would go impress LaRue with it. I would pick him up Sunday evening and drive him all hung over to Patterson.

After I was done working at the mine I would go to Uncle Donald and Aunt Mary's (Mom's sister) who managed a ranch on the Oregon Slope between Ontario, Oregon and Weiser, Idaho. There was no pay involved there. I would haul hay bales and cut thistles. It was something my cousin Raymond and I had been doing when we were much younger and it became a tradition. The pay was an occasional soft ice cream sunday at the Dairy Queen in Weiser. Then a pack trip and fishing in the high mountain lakes north of McCall before the start of school.

Uncle Donald would load the horses and supplies in his stock truck and us kids would ride with the horses on a platform behind the cab. We had a rodeo or two on those trips. One time I was riding at the rear and the pack horses and everyone was ahead of me. A bear spooked the pack horses and they wheeled and were coming at me with packs flying. My horse wheeled around and took off. I was trying to bail off to the side, but the horse kept running under me. I finally hit the dirt just before I smacked a tree. After that I elected to walk and it was all day in steep country. We saw a cougar and bears spooked the horses nearly every night. It was good fishing though.

My Football Experience at Salmon High School

We did not have organized sports in Patterson Grade School and there was no TV at the time. I had never seen a football game

before high school and only weighed 110 pounds so did not go out for football as a Freshman. Also, I had never played basketball or seen a basketball game so that was out also. By my sophomore year I had grown a little and went out for football. Since I was sort of quick Coach Golden Welch made me a right guard. They pulled and lead nearly every play in the single wing offense. My sophomore and junior years Salmon High had an outstanding football team, so I hardly played. Four players and Coach Welch made the Idaho all star team my junior year. Those players graduated so in my senior year I had a big role to fill as a 160 pound right guard on offense and defense. Our specialty was end sweeps and reverses and I had to pull and lead nearly every play. After a few sweeps I would plead for a run over my hole so I could get a rest. In a home game against Rigby our fullback gained four yards in a cloud of dust over my hole. I told the quarterback to keep calling it. He kept calling the play and we went 80 yards and scored. Coach Welch was yelling and looking mighty perplexed on the sideline. We ignored him. The reason for the cloud of dust is that the field was alkali dirt.

Stan Allen was a cowboy and was the right tackle next to me. Nobody could run through our side of the line when we were on defense. By the fourth quarter I was worn out playing offense and defense. Coach Welch would move me to the other side of the line to left tackle. A couple of the games we had a lead but the opposition would go through my old spot and score to beat us.

We were not used to hearing praise from Coach Welch. In my senior year he said he liked my blocking and tackling and, "way to go knocking down the defensive end on those end runs". I would get the end and then go after the linebacker. After the game at Firth, which we won, I was rewarded with a steak and the rest of

the team got hamburgers at the North Highway Café in Idaho Falls. I remember hitting the quarterback when he was passing and the ball landed in the hands of Stan Allen and he ran for a touchdown. Man, we were a team.

We played Challis at Challis and Mom came to the game. Two Patterson boys, Gussie Popejoy and David Arehart were playing for Challis. Arehart was a halfback and fast and we were told he would run all over us, and we were worried. I had a great day tackling Arehart at the line of scrimmage or behind it. Porkey Gonder, our quarterback, was tackled out of bounds in the rocks and gravel and knocked out cold just before half time. He came to and thought he was at a rodeo. He watched the rodeo from the sidelines the rest of the game. In spite of that we won easily. I rode home after the game with Mom and she gave me heck for being a mean bully to my Patterson friends.

I thought I might be contacted to play football at a college, but nothing happened. I guess 160 pound linemen were not anything they wanted. I played against a 160 lb defensive back at Rigby, Larry Wilson. He went on to play the free safety position at Utah and in the NFL. He became famous and all NFL.

My Life Boarding in Salmon

The McPheters sold their house in Salmon in 1952. Richard and I then boarded in a rooming house operated by Clarence (Smitty) and Olga Smith. We had a room upstairs in their house and had our meals with them. Richard was there one year before going to college, and I was there two years. Richard by then had a 1949 Chevrolet and we went to Patterson on weekends.

For my last year they moved me downstairs into their son Bill's room since he was away in the Marine Corp, and their daughter Joanne was away to college. They treated me as family, and I had free reign to do as I wish. I was careful to come in quietly late at night or early morning, but Smitty was aware of everything. I did not go home a lot of week ends that last year since I did not have car. I went to the movie every time it changed, which was two or three times a week. I also spent a lot of time at the Rexall Drug Store soda fountain. A small fountain coke was five cents and a bunch of us would try cokes with all kinds of flavors added. I kind of liked a chocolate coke. On a Saturday several of us would be there all afternoon. I'll bet we drove the owners crazy. The Rexall also had the greatest milk shakes around. I think the price was 25 cents. My favorite was chocolate banana with chocolate ice cream. If we won our football game we would get one on the house, but we didn't win a lot of games my last year with a team lacking experience.

I finally got brave enough to invite a junior classmate, Sharon Noh, to the Junior Prom. She had been the steady girl friend of LaRue's brother, Val, but he graduated and was gone. The date was ok but did not lead to any other dates as she was never available. At least not for me. At our 50-year reunion she said she had a cowboyin Challis that she was after at the time. They got married and settled in Arco. She was a teller in the Wells Fargo Bank in Arco when we had the DK Motel (1995-2002) and we often had a chance to visit. Val came to visit us and wanted to go to the bank and surprise his old girlfriend, Sharon. She had no clue who he was but when told she said, "gee, I used to be able to reach completely around you".

A pastime in the evenings was cruising main street going back and forth with u-turns at each end. My friend, Denny Hawley, would get his dad's old Chevrolet sedan and we would cruise. During my Senior year we would have a little beer to spice up the evening. George Benson's parents owned the Motel Deluxe and the Smokehouse Bar and Café. He had ready access to cash for the evening. I would walk in the front door of the pool hall, drop the money on the bar, pick up a case of beer, and exit through the back door. We would stash the case of beer on the hill behind the cemetery, and get a few bottles when we needed them. One night the case of beer was not there. It was a mystery until 2014 when I was telling the story to former classmate, Vaughn Ziegler, and he started laughing. The property belonged to his father and he had observed us coming and going. The mystery was solved over 60 years later.

We did not get into trouble as long as we kept the speed down and were not reckless. The sheriff and city cop left us alone.

We had a big scare. I was in my senior year when we decided to go to the state basketball tournament in Pocatello. We needed sleeping bags, so we could bunk up with friends going to college at Idaho State. A classmate said he had a few that we could borrow. We asked why he had so many nice sleeping bags. He sort of rolled his eyes at us. and shrugged his shoulders. We loaded up Larry Fisher's Pontiac and took off.

We were in Pocatello about two days when Frank Sorenson's parents showed up and told us there was a problem with the sleeping bags we borrowed. They had been stolen from the BLM warehouse. Did we know anything about it? We didn't, but we had our suspicions. Would that implicate us? The sheriff thought

he knew who did it, but was not saying who. We were mighty scared and headed back to Salmon. We thought the sheriff would be waiting for us, so we sneaked into Salmon on the back road from Lemhi. We laid low for a day then figured we better go see the sheriff and turn ourselves in. We were absolved but our friend who loaned us the sleeping bags was in the hot seat.

I went home the next weekend and did not tell my folks about it. We were sitting around the living room and low and behold the sheriff knocked on the door. I thought I was going to be arrested and about had a heart attack. He was there for another matter and never said a word about the sleeping bag heist. I decided I better be up front with my parents.

The guy that stole the sleeping bags got off lightly with probation. He joined the Navy later and while in Florida he and a buddy robbed a bank. They got away cleanly and returned to their motel. Someone walking by their open window heard them dividing up the money and called the cops. He did time on that one. No one saw him until he came to our 50 year class reunion. We didn't discuss those incidents. I write about this now since he passed away shortly after our reunion.

My Army National Guard Experience

I joined the Army National Guard the beginning of my senior year. The unit had just been formed and seventeen year olds could sign up. The unit was Company B, 882nd Aviation Engineer Battalion and built airfields, roads, and such. Our unit was mainly Korean War veterans and high school seniors.

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I was made the demolition guy since I had handled dynamite and caps at the mine. We had war surplus army uniforms and combat boots that we had to spit polish. We had lots of weapons that we got to fire. I especially liked the "grease gun". We spent many hours cleaning cosmoline out of M-1's, carbines, and sub machine guns that had been stored since the Koren War. I loved it all and got a quick promotion to PFC then Corporal in one year.

I went to Guard Camp the summer of 1954 for two weeks after I graduated. During the day we trained out on the desert towards Mountain Home. I was given a jeep and a trailer loaded with dynamite, caps, fuses, and small barrels of TNT known as cratering charges, and told to head to point x in the desert. A Sgt met me out there and we blew things up, We nearly blew up the field mess one day. The plan was to dig a hole and put a cratering charge in it and set it off to see what it would do. The only problem was the field mess arrived and set up nearby for lunch. The officers arrived first and filled up their mess kits and scattered about to eat. The Sgt said not to worry and told me to set it off. Dirt and rocks flew really high and the blast was deafening. The officers were diving under trucks and equipment to get out of harms way. I don't know how we got away with it, but nothing was said. Maybe they thought it was a war simulation thing. Can you imagine a 17 year old (18 in a month) with all of that dangerous stuff? Later I went around the desert and set off dynamite just to get rid of it. The rest of the guys drove road graders, bull dozers, and dump trucks.

The Prom

My folks thought I should have a car for the prom. They came to Salmon for the night. I think their motive was to meet my date and pass judgement. I went to pick up LaRue in the Oldsmobile "Green Hornet" that was a company car.. She was not ready and I was invited in. That could have been a scary situation as her dad was rather gruff. Bby now I knew him and it was normal. A couple was there visiting and everybody gave me a hard time until she came out. We then went to introduce her to my folks and Olga and Clarence. I could tell everyone liked her.

We had a great evening. We liked each other and would continue getting together through the summer.

Graduation

Graduation came, and I graduated in a gown and baby blue suit that my parents bought for me at McPhersons. They could not attend graduation as Jack Bradley had a big trip planned for them to Hawaii. It was a big deal and I felt they should go. The Boise paper even published a photo of them boarding the plane.

After graduation we all went to the Salmon Hot Springs for a while and LaRue came with me. Afterwards an all night party was planned at Jim Schafer's house. LaRue could not be out all night, so I took her home early. I drank coke graduation night as LaRue would not allow anything stronger. I didn't seem to mind the sacrifice.

Summer 1954

I worked at the mine that summer until I reached the cutoff point for income tax deductions. I was going to the University of Idaho in the fall so the folks bought a used 1953 Chevrolet 210 four door sedan for me. It was white with a red top and stood out. Every weekend I would be in Salmon to see LaRue and would stay with Smitty and Olga like I was part of the family. LaRue came to Patterson that summer with a couple of friends for my 18th birthday. I toured them around and that was the end of seeing my Patterson friend, Glenna.

A would be competitor surfaced that summer. He came to LaRue's house late one evening. It was strange as he was my friend and had a steady girlfriend he was totally committed to. He got nowhere. We continued on as usual, and he eventually married his girlfriend

End chapter 2b-2