



*Sepp's Epic Perils & Pitfalls*

Sepp Book #7



*Some*

*The **Sepp books** are works of fiction.*

*The names, characters, businesses, places, events, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to real living or dead persons is purely coincidental.*

*I used actual historical events to provide a time frame and appropriate settings for the series of Sepp books.*

*The character Sepp in the Sepp books is also entirely fictional.*

*My imagined Sepp does, however, abide by the known facts of the real Sepp's life, and with his permission, I have sometimes quoted from his works and poetry.*

**helmut s.** Author

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Due to the circumstances, Sepp was living on Dave's couch. Just recently Sepp's attorney friend, David McArthur, switched jobs and was working for the DA's office. As it happened, he was assigned an older but ongoing case which had to do with a German tourist couple. The man was murdered, she was raped and left for dead near a hiking trail. She was back in Munich, and healing and getting better. It had been three years since the horrifying, monstrous crime. She had been writing down whatever she was able to remember and submitted to the DA's office in her native tongue. Two suspects were in jail in Valletown, ready to stand trial. And because Sepp was fluent in several languages, German being one, the DA's office made use of him to translate on behalf of the victims.

During the four months while Sepp worked for the DA's office as a translator, Sepp got to visit the courthouse daily. At the courthouse and attorneys' offices, Sepp applied his skills of fluently speaking several languages. The pay was good, the hours not so good. Sepp reported to the courthouse every morning, but every so often only to be told "Mr. Schuster we need you to come back in the afternoon." or simply being dismissed for the day.

One day after arriving in Valletown, 27 miles from home, having nothing to do from 9 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon, plenty of time on his hands, strolling down Main street, Sepp noticed a 'Salesman Wanted' sign at a Famous-Vacuum-Cleaner Store. He went in, and by the time he left, he was hired as a part-time Famous-Vacuum-Cleaner (F-V-C) salesman and assigned several pieces of F-V-C equipment for demonstrations in people's homes. Using one of Dave's cars, an older Volvo station wagon, Sepp loaded his demo equipment into the back and off he went doing cold-calls with another F-V-C salesperson. His name was Phillip who had been top F-V-C salesperson for many months now. When Sepp mentioned to him, "Ja! Listen,



Phillip, I used to sell homes, but my license expired.” Phillip answered “I sold loans, but something happened, and I lost my license too. It’s okay, selling vacuum cleaners you can’t lose your license, but you can make good money.” Phillip talked a lot and smoked a few packs of cigarettes a day. His fingers and fingernails were all yellow from the nicotine. The first day of cold calls was to a low-income area, according to Phillip, “That’s where the money is. Most women here have kids, they are home and every woman who doesn’t have our F-V-C shampooer or vacuum yet, she needs one.”

To Sepp’s surprise every door they knocked and were let in, after doing a machine demo, shampooing a rug, vacuuming a room or two, Phillip sold a unit. He took a small down payment and had them sign a 24 or a 36-month contract. Phillip played ‘Mr. Niceguy’ by making sure the monthly payments were affordable and always below 50bucks. He even left envelopes for the payments suggesting they use money-orders to all those who didn’t have checking accounts. In this particular neighborhood, very few people had checking accounts. Nobody had a credit card. After each sale, back in the car,

Phillip lit up a cigarette. He needed to smoke after each sale. For Phillip every sale was exciting. Sepp's question "Ja! But are you sure these people can afford an expensive 1000dollar Vacuum Cleaner?" Phillip answered with "They cannot afford not to buy a Vacuum Cleaner after any of my demos."

It was on the second day following Phillip around that Sepp learned an important rule "You noticed that I thank every person who closes their door in my face, without letting me in?" Sepp had taken notice of Phillip's routine "Ja! Yes, I see, you don't get annoyed, but always smiling I watched you saying 'thank you because your response is greatly appreciated.'" Phillip explained "You recognized the most important part. Always thank those who don't want to have anything to do with you, because the more often you get turned down, the closer you get to strike a deal." Sepp's "Ja? Say again!" had Phillip interpreting "See, Sepp, my lucky number is 13. In average out of thirteen cold calls, one is a sale. Therefore the faster I get to number 13 the faster I get to the next sale. With other words I thank everyone who says no, because the sooner I get to 13, the sooner I get a

signature on a contract of sale.” It took a moment, but Sepp understood and didn’t understand. He did one more day with Phillip, even if people said “We already have your F-V-C cleaning tools” he didn’t leave without a sale, like bags, belts, air freshener, you name it, he had it. Once let in a house Phillip always found a way to sell something. While Phillip thrived on talking people into buying something, Sepp felt bad as he wasn’t used to that kind of hard selling.

Sepp was still working as a waiter, depending on the business, every Friday and Saturday night, and whenever Mr. Lucky needed Sepp, he helped him with firewood deliveries on the weekend during the day as well. Sepp’s work on the floor waiting on tables was lately a lot of hit and miss, as a part-timer, the tips didn’t add up to much. Mr. Lucky paid well, each load of delivered firewood was an even hundred dollars cash for Sepp. However, without the steady income from translating Sepp would have been in real financial trouble.

During the weeks as a translator, while not needed to translate, Sepp did a good number of demos, shampooing and vacuuming people’s

homes, with little luck. He kept a record, and because of his non-pushy attitude, it took 48 cold calls before he sold one unit.

Then Sepp's work as a translator in Valleytown for the court system, a temporary assignment, was coming to an end. However during the week before the job at the DA's office ended, Sepp volunteered to demo the latest F-V-C floor-cleaning equipment, a tile scrubber, and polisher combo. During the week he did six demos and no sales. On Friday he planned to return the equipment to the Famous-Vacuum-Cleaner store. Somewhat disappointed about his latest career change Sepp had lunch at a newly opened Pizza parlor. It wasn't busy, and when the fellow behind the counter complained about the new tile floor, especially how difficult it was to clean the floor, Sepp brought his latest equipment in and did a demo in front of everybody. The person, obviously the manager liked what he saw. He did ask for the price, and when he mentioned that he would like to try the equipment, Sepp said "Ja! How about I leave it with you for the weekend? I check with you next Monday, if it works for you, you can buy it, if it doesn't work, I take it back to the store." The

fellow by the name of Mike said: "That's a deal!" They shook hands, and Sepp worry-free and happy went to his other work, the DA's office to pick up his last and final paycheck. It was a big cheque, 1800 dollars. Sepp went straight to the bank and with the cash in his pocket he felt rich.

On Saturday night, Sepp worked a small banquet at the Old House Restaurant, he made another 200 dollars. For the next week, there were no dinner shifts available. However, towards the end of the month, because of convention business, it looked already much different. When the manager asked Sepp: "Starting two week from now, can you work five nights a week?" Sepp was delighted because aside from the Vacuum Cleaner sales job, he had little going. Yet with all the cash in his pockets, he knew he was doing okay.

Those Famous-Vacuum-Cleaner sales just didn't happen for him. Looking back, he had spent much on gasoline and earned little from sales in those past eight weeks. Then again Sepp had to admit he had fun meeting people, chatting with them, and visiting a variety of homes in Hillcity, Baycity, and Valletown. He had not been able to upsell people who couldn't

afford to buy. Furthermore, he had been paid well for the work done as a translator for the court system in Valleytown. Sepp wasn't desperate to try hard enough to make a sale. On Monday morning, at the sales meeting at the Famous-Vacuum-Cleaner store, the store manager took inventory. Sepp had no paperwork, no sales contract, and Sepp didn't have his scrubber and polisher a 1500dollar set. In addition to being the least productive salesman the manager had ever seen, the manager was ripping Sepp a new one over the missing equipment. The manager not only buried Sepp under an avalanche of unkind words but accused Sepp of stealing from the store. He came on strong as he was throwing his weight around, with his hand on the phone, he warned Sepp: "You miserable s.o.b you better come up with the equipment right now, or pay for it before you leave my store. If not, I am going to call the police. And listen, smarty boy, I will file a theft report and get you arrested for stealing from my store! You hear, you thankless no-good-no-sales-fricken-one-of-a-kind!" It was a bad scene. However because Sepp had just been paid from the DA's office, he had money. Sepp paid for the equipment, after being accused of

being a thief, and threatened in many words by a totally freaked out store manager. As he gave the manager, 1600 dollars, for equipment and tax, Sepp felt horrible, because that was the money he needed to survive on, during the up-and-coming month. A very unhappy and depressed Sepp left the store, after returning all the other equipment, two vacuum cleaners, one shampooer and a box of bags, and soaps. The manager's goodbye words were "Don't you ever set foot again in my store. You are fired, you useless thieving son of a rat!"

Getting back to Dave's home, feeling dispirited, down in the dumps, and very pessimistic about how to survive with no money, Dave's wife handed Sepp a message from Mike, the fellow at the Pizza place. It said: "Please stop by ASAP, re the F-V-C tile cleaner set."

Sepp got in the car and went to see him. Sepp had sudden hopes that by returning the equipment he might get his money back. At the Pizza place, it turned out that Mike was the owner, and that this particular Pizza parlor was number twelve of a chain of Pizza businesses. Mike needed eleven more scrubber and polisher units. Sepp still had contracts in the car, he filled

one in and had Mike sign. The best part of the deal was that Mike gave Sepp a check in order to get the advertised reduced demo price for all 12 units.

Overjoyed by his good fortune, Sepp returned to Dave's place. Luckily Dave was already home. Sepp explained the situation he was in and Dave accepted the challenge to come along with Sepp to face the Famous-Vacuum-Cleaner company's store manager. It all went much easier than expected, once Dave handed the manager his business card, saying: "Mr. Sepp Schuster had some bad experience at your store. Before we file suit against you and your F-V-C company, here are some facts. Then Dave provided a copy of the contract between Sepp on behalf of the Famous-Vacuum-Cleaner company and the Pizza parlor franchise owner. He also provided a copy of Mike's check. The manager looked like he was going to choke. But then surprisingly all was going real smooth. The manager, now having his tail between his legs, was so friendly Sepp had never seen someone like it. Sepp started to feel bad as the 'slime-ball' kept on apologizing over and over. To offset having Sepp called a thief in front of everyone,



he made a sign saying 'Sepp Schuster F-V-C salesman of the month' right in front of them, and he hung it up in the store window. He also promised to dropship the equipment the same week to Mike's Pizza Parlor. And yes he also offered Sepp the job back. But all Sepp wanted, was getting his money back and getting paid for the 12 units sold. All worked out, in favor of everyone involved. Yes, Sepp paid Dave for his time, because without him it may not have been as easy.



Soon after, towards the end of March 1994, just before starting to work full-time five nights a week at the Old House Restaurant Sepp moved from Dave's couch up to the Italian Hill. Here Sepp rented the guest room from Val, sharing the bathroom and kitchen with Val and her husband in the Spaghetti Hill neighborhood. Now living in walking distance from work, Sepp had his car the 1953 Hudson Superwasp parked out back. This one had been a gift from Lily, an ex-lady-friend. Only because of Dave's good connections had Sepp been able to get the drive shaft repaired, after it failed. From the extra money made as the F-V-C salesman, Sepp paid

Dave the money owed for the parts and the repair. He was thinking about selling the Hudson Superwasp.

Val was in her early forties, blue eyes, always smiling, a well-proportioned body, medium tall. She liked to joke around, yet was very caring and understanding. Her husband was a HVAC mechanic. He was working on heating ventilation and air-conditioning units throughout the county. He was a big guy about 6.2 and 290 pounds. For a big fellow, he was soft spoken, a gentle person, who did anything to please his Val. About two weeks after moving to Spaghetti Hill, Sepp was making out with a woman he had met the same night, over drinks at a bar. Vikki was her name, and just like him, she was sexually overly anxious. Enjoying each other, bodily fit, energetic, they were passionate in pleasing their desires throughout the night. Both had forgotten their surroundings. A jolly soaring high time was had. In the morning after, Sepp was very much worried about being kicked out by Val because of Vikki being too noisy, never mind his actions and dis-quietness. As Sepp was brewing coffee, to serve Vikki, who was still under the covers, Val joined him in the kitchen.

She gladly accepted the fresh cup of coffee poured for her by Sepp. Grinning from ear to ear she said, "Keep it up, the sex at night. It keeps my hubby hard and strong, the way I like him best!" "Ja! Yes?" Sepp was truly surprised, coming to find out that his fear of having alienated Val was unfounded, and exactly the opposite was the case.

*Sepp • Eric • Mike • Mike*

After Vikki left, Sepp took time out for a nice long nap, and he was feeling on top of the world by the time he got ready for work.

At the Old House Restaurant, the first table he had was a middle-aged man in worn jeans, wearing a Grateful Dead t-shirt, open sandals no socks. With him a younger girl, wearing something like an oversized t-shirt, and red high heeled shoes. The second table a fellow in shorts, slippers, and a Hawaiian shirt. With him two women, one was most likely his wife, the other their daughter. Both women were elegantly dressed for dinner. The third table, was an Asian couple, both all dressed up. Sepp realized that fewer and fewer men dress up in suits when going out to a restaurant. Sepp was

getting the impression that dark suits, which used to be proper dinner attire, are nowadays reserved for graduation, weddings, and funerals. It was, therefore, a true pleasure for his eyes to see that the women had not changed as drastically. Sepp was looking at his customers' shoes. Footwear matching the color of the pants used to be the norm, not anymore. Corresponding colors were obviously less important than comfort. Sneakers and gym-shoes used to be a clear 'No-No!' at a fine dinner house. Lately, it was a common sight, so were slippers and sandals.

Hanging out in the kitchen and mentioning his observations about people and how they dress for dinner to the Chef de Cuisine, the same explained it as: "Once upon a time there used to be many rulers and rules in every country. Then man invented America. Ever since all rules have gone the way the titles went. The creation of a free world has changed people and behavior. Not only has the US-dollar changed the world's investment ideas, and the American-Fast-Food approach has invented a new 'Food Chain,' but also the American way of you-can-be-anybody-you-want-to-be does cancel out

much of the nonsense etiquettes from the dark ages.” Sepp nodded his head. He remembered the days when women in regular long pants were not allowed in the better establishments back in Germany. Never mind wearing hot-pants. Then the Chef de Cuisine pointed out: “However in fine dining, there are still a few places where jackets and ties are mandatory. Nevertheless, in California, many signs in restaurants tell their own story. Shirts and shoes required indicate California's current casual style.” It was a slow night at work. Sepp’s section got never busy. Aside from three ‘early bird dinner’ tables, Sepp had only one more single gentleman, a salesman for a boat supply company. As Sepp had plenty of time, they chatted about boating and equipment.

After work before dragging his tired body home, Sepp visited a nearby bar, to spend some time and money and to unwind. Yes, Sepp had a nice day, an okay shift and a nice mix of generous and lousy tippers. Sepp was telling himself: “Ja! I deserve a drink or two, to feel better! Oh ja!” Standing at the end of the bar at the Old-Firehouse-Taverne, Sepp ordered his drinks. Looking past the other patrons busy

talking about business, sports, and what-have-you, Sepp watched Vikki, the woman from the other night. She was in the company of two fellows, and snorting lines of coke using a rolled up banknote in front of the bartender. Sepp knew the bar-owner, who had been one of the early dealers, who had been and still was supplying the local market with the at the time fashionable stimulant made from coca plants. Here at the Old-Firehouse-Taverne, aside from selling liquor, the bartender did sell drugs as well. Vikki didn't notice Sepp, and if she did, she didn't acknowledge him. Sepp was standing about 15 feet to her left side, at the counter, hanging on to his double scotch, no ice, in one hand and a chaser of beer in the other. Sepp was contemplating going over to her. He watched the fellow to her right having his hand on her thigh and then visiting under her skirt. She giggled and went for another line of the white powder. The bartender, in plain sight of everyone, was handing the other guy two, no, three plastic vials with white powder. Between snorting lines, Vikki was kissing that guy, a waiter Sepp used to work with some time ago. This one was obviously doing quite well too, so Sepp noticed, watching him handing the

bartender a big note and then a second one and a third one, out of a bundle of large denomination dollar bills. Sepp having only those 3 Jackson's (\$20bills) in his pocket, felt small seeing that fellow showing off his Grants (\$50bills) and Franklins (\$100bills). As Sepp watched the trio, he felt lonely, and he wanted some of what those guys were getting ready to get, fretting he was, knowing he better get out of there. Sepp finished his drink, and visited two more bars, looking for company, looking to pick up a one-night stand, yet no luck! Realizing that he was running very low on cash, he remembered the vodka in his room, just what he needed, a night-cap!



While working the floor as a waiter, some night's during the week, Sepp worked with a young waitress. She knew more about drinks than many seasoned waiters. Her name was Julie. She was Delinda's daughter, the same Delinda, who owned Delinda's Café&Bar next to where Sepp used to operate a restaurant. Julie had the friendliest smile, and she genuinely cared about people. Sepp had never seen Julie with a hangover. In fact, he had never seen Julie

take a drink. Her attitude as to serving cocktails to drunken patrons was in strong contrast with other wait-people, including his own. Sepp served them as long as they could pay for it, anything they ordered. That night they worked together as a team. Aside from eight other tables, they also had one couple; a lady in her 50s, who loved her Jack Daniels, accompanied by her husband who was drinking Apollinaris sparkling water. Sepp noticed the woman's glass was empty. He also saw her signaling Julie, and ordering in a loud, drunk voice: "...fill it up, honey!" But Julie ignored the woman. Sepp asked Julie, "Ja! Why don't you bring her another drink?" A questioning look was on her face. Sepp sensed her measuring him from head to toe with her where-is-he-coming-from look, as she answered: "You do whatever you like. I will not serve her any more alcohol." Then Julie went and took care of another table, in need of attention. Sepp, not knowing any better, served a Jack Daniels to the woman. She was by now very grumpy. After all, she had waited over ten minutes for her drink. This lady ordered one more before feeling no pain. Getting up, she was not too steady on her feet. Her husband was quite aware of it as he helped her out the door.



In leaving, she was complaining about the horrible service, and Julie being the slowest cocktail waitress she had ever seen in all of her life. The woman was quite pickled. After helping his wife into their car, the husband came back. He apologized to Julie, thanked her for not serving his wife once she had enough, and he pressed some money into her hand. As the man left, he didn't give Sepp more than a glance, but the look he gave him, it was like he blamed Sepp for being married to such a dipsomaniac drunkard wife.

After work, that night Sepp felt a strong need for having a drink or two, at the Old-Firehouse-Taverne up the street. He was looking forward to visit the longest bar-counter in town, the bar where one could enjoy drinks or buy a variety of drugs, without the need of a prescription, however cash was mandatory.



The next four weeks were busy, car shows were in town, and Sepp worked extra shifts. To survive double shifts, he had to cut bar hopping totally out of his routine. The result was that he felt physically better than he had in a long time.

He made good money working lunch and dinner shifts.

Then he had three days off. He joined Val in her kitchen. Sepp had promised to show her how to make 'Rouladen,' beef roulade his way. Val's sister was visiting and offered to help. She introduced herself as: "I am Lola, Val's silly sister!" Lola had long naturally curly brown hair and was about Sepp's age. Lola would have been rather pretty if she had dressed a little better. In her frayed, threadbare, dirty jeans, the tie-dyed, shabby oversized t-shirt with stains which resembled dried ketchup and mustard, Sepp categorized her as very unimaginative and somewhat trashy. Only later he found out that he was wrong.

Sepp had been shopping earlier. He had gotten top sirloin beef, three onions, a jar of kosher pickles, and Dijon mustard, as well as a handful of toothpicks. Sepp unpacked the top sirloin and sliced it. He also cut two large onions into wedges and a number of pickles lengthwise into spears. He showed Val how to give the meat a nice layer of mustard, and to add a pickle spear, onion wedge, and bacon, before rolling it

all up and tying it all together with two toothpicks for each roulade.

Sepp had bought enough meat for 12 rouladen, knowing that even cold sliced on German bread it's a nice snack. He placed the rouladen in a deep pan, with water, red wine, salt and pepper, and a quartered onion. Then added the two semi-wilted carrots from the refrigerator, where he had found the bacon. It all went into the oven to be finished off. Lola left Val and Sepp after she announced: "Val I better visit the little girl's room before I spring a leak here in your kitchen!"

It was at least two months since Sepp brought Vikki to his room. Did Val, or did she not, see him checking out her sister? It was then that Val told him about her sister. "Lola's husband left her. She is never-ever planning of going back to him. Their Vegas marriage is over. Lola is going to get it annulled!" Lola returning from the bathroom added: "I was high and drunk out-of-my-f\*cken-mind to marry that bag of tricks!" Val made sure Sepp didn't get the wrong idea. In front of her sister, Val made it quite clear that Lola was no virgin: "My sis is crazy about screwing bikers since her high

school years! Not just one, she loved every guy in the club. Sis has been around the block more than once!" Lola, taking it as a compliment added: "Just having fun, nothing beats a good fricken-ride. What d'you think Josi?" Sepp being put on the spot, answered "Ja! I like fun too!" Sepp was getting the gist: Val wanted her sister to be occupied, and she obviously wanted to do him a big favor too. Val knew Sepp's yearnings and needs. Looking at Lola, Sepp got turned on. Therefore he was looking for ways to impress her.

Then Val's phone rang, it was the manager from the Old House Restaurant, one of the scheduled waiters had gotten in a car accident, another had called in sick, "Sepp can you please come in, we need you!" "Ja! I'll be there in twenty minutes!" Sepp replied. He turned to Val: "Ja! Don't forget to take the rouladen out in about 20 minutes, and let them cool off, don't throw the juice out! I shall make a sauce with it when I come back." She acknowledged and suggested "Don't worry! Shall we plan on having your rouladen tomorrow? You are off tomorrow! Aren't you?" With a, "Ja! Yes, I am not working tomorrow, come hell or high

water!” and having thoughts about Lola and getting to know her better, Sepp got dressed. As he walked to work, Lola’s words were ringing in his ears. She had said “Bye Josi, I shall be waiting for you.”

*Sepp's Life: A Novel*

Yes, that night Sepp arrived in one of the best of his best moods at the restaurant. Sepp was pleasantly surprised because looking at next week’s schedule he had five nights, and two of them were wedding parties, with guaranteed sizeable tips.

He also anticipated an exceptional good income tonight because of the section and the tables assigned to him. Sepp worked outside. His station was the red brick paved patio area. He had seven tables. If just seated once, assuming only \$20 in tips per table as average, he was going to do okay. Any table seated twice was going to be a bonus.

And they had another one of those VIP bus-tour groups. The one they had two weeks earlier was a bus full of cranky older people who were hard to please. Sepp was sure this time will be a better dinner-crowd. Lucky enough those folks

had all booked inside, leaving the outdoor tables open for walk-ins. A layer of fog cooled the air after an unusual warm 75-degree day. Soon it was down to a comfortable sixty degrees. The outdoor propane heat lamps were all lit, set to low. These heaters circulated plenty of heat within a radius of six feet. The orange, red and blue flames in the wishing-well-look-a-like open gas-fireplaces were licking away on the humid air. Tonight's bus-group was a larger than expected tour group, and a four-top spilled over into Sepp's outdoors section. These were four lovely older ladies. The hostess was seating them, despite their protest, at the best table available, next to the fireplace in Sepp's station. After having run out of space indoors, management relied on Sepp to take good care of the somewhat unhappy four-top. Those ladies stopped complaining when they noticed the comfortable warmth of the heaters. All four showed the best intentions to give in and have an enjoyable dinner. Sepp had not gotten busy yet and was giving them all his attention.

Sepp told himself that these four were not like some other bus tourists, who were rather pushy, picky, arrogant and lousy tippers. Sepp

bit his tongue when one of these ladies told him that they had been on the road all day and therefore expected him to provide prompt service. Sepp acknowledged in his mind that these ladies were just a little worn out from a long day of traveling on a bus. They were unquestionably special patrons. Sepp planned to do his best to make their meal a memorable one. He brought them their drinks, one iced tea, and three coffees, right away. After explaining the 'specials of the day,' Sepp took their orders. Two of the ladies complained that they got too much to eat on their California tour. Still, they ordered appetizers and salads. Getting to the main course, nothing on the menu appealed to them at least in its initial menu description. So they told him exactly how they wanted their orders prepared. Each lady knew in detail, how her food needed to be cooked. Everyone wanted something to be left off and another item to be added on. Sepp realized that their French chef might not appreciate being told how to cook his food so it may please those guests' palate: "...no Pernod in the Pernod sauce. I don't want much sauce anyhow with my shrimp."

“...bring the sauce on the side for my filet, and I don’t want wild mushrooms, but I’ll take some pasta with my meat.”

“...no. No beans. I hate beans and none of this mint sauce with my lamb chops. I want mint jelly and mustard instead. Tell the chef to cook mine medium-rare. Would you?”

Sepp waited for the last one. This lady in front of him was stuffing her face with bread and lots of butter on it as if she hadn't eaten in days. She washed it all down with a gulp of iced tea. She looked up at Sepp and then asked for no eggs or dairy products in her food. She wanted the Pasta Primavera. Sepp pointed at the menu where it said egg-noodles. Sure, she wanted spaghetti noodles instead. As Sepp walked away, she called him back and asked for more butter. Sepp said, “Ja! Yes, ma’am!”

Sepp was shaking his head as he took the orders to the kitchen. Sepp was correct in thinking that the chef didn’t like these orders, but out of the goodness of his heart, he allowed for all the changes and substitutions as requested by those four ladies. Sepp stayed out of the kitchen and out of the chef’s way as much



as he could. He served their appetizers, four prawn cocktails. He brought them small Caesar salads, thinking full-size salads would be much too much for them. They complained about the skimpy salads. Sepp ignored their comments, and he was right, they did not even finish the half-orders.

Sepp's tables started to fill, and he was somewhat busy when it came time to pick up the four ladies' food. The chef did an excellent job. All the dinner plates were piping hot. The food looked good, and the sauces were either on the side or absent, just as they requested. Sepp took the food to their table and served it from the tray, one dish at a time. By now he did expect to hear: "That looks good. Thank you. I like it." Or anything along these lines could have done.

They did, however, surprise him with "You know, waiter, bring me some of that Pernod sauce—I want to try it."

"Maybe I should have some mint sauce with the lamb?"

"Waiter! I think I want some mushrooms too." Sepp got them what they asked for.

And he made a couple of trips since the one with the lamb needed it cooked more. She wanted it crispy well-done, but all she says is "Could you please ask the chef to cook it a little more?" The one with the filet asked him twice for more mushrooms. Sepp was lucky to get from the kitchen what these ladies wanted. However, Sepp also heard from the chef exactly what the same thought about him and his four ladies. The Chef didn't bother to go easy on Sepp because by now the Chef was getting close to being very pissed off. Sepp so far handled the stress well, yet he too was getting close to losing his cool.

His other tables needed attention too, and he stayed away from his four ladies until it was time for dessert. Here they were again: "What sauce comes with it?" one asked. "Ja! Crème Anglaise." Sepp answered. "I want my sauce on the side." was her request. The next one asked, "Can I have my chocolate decadence without raspberry sauce and nuts?" Sepp was turning away, so they didn't see him grinding his teeth. Then all smiles he answered, "Ja! Ladies, please let me check with the chef first." Sepp did not waste his time asking the chef, but waited about

ten minutes before he returned to them with a "Ja! No, ladies. The desserts are only served as the menu specifies. The chef is at this time too busy to attend to any more special requests, at least for tonight." They didn't mind. Sepp served the desserts and more coffee, and they sat and chatted for another two hours. They were in no hurry anymore. Sepp listened to the four ladies on the way out. They praised the service and the good food and the ambiance. All four of these lovely people promised if they are ever again in the area, to come back and haunt him. On their way to line up for the bathroom, one of the ladies pressed a single dollar bill into Sepp's hand, thanking him for putting up with them. Sepp answered, "Ja! That's great! That's great!" He was thinking to himself, "Ja! Please don't come back! If you ever do, please don't sit in my station."

Later when he counted all his tips, two of those other tables had been unstinting. The rest was average, not counting the \$1 tip on a \$160 dinner-bill from those four lovely ladies. Sepp knew: "Ja! In the end, it all evens out!" Sepp left work and was thinking about going to have a drink. But as tips had been all in all below

expectations that night, he decided to go home instead.



Getting home to Val's place, Sepp remembered that he was going to add flour and create a sauce for the roulade. He got sidetracked. Following her sister's suggestion, instead of sleeping by herself in the other small bedroom, the one with the single bed, and used for storage, Lola surprised Sepp. He found her in his bed. "Surprise, Josi!" she enunciated. "Val was saying; you will not mind, do you?" Lola was exploring her options. To give him something to look at, she wiggled out from under his sheets. Sepp discovered that Lola was sporting the same size freckles she had on her cheeks, as well on her buttocks. Considering his bed was king size, he didn't complain about the added value and most pleasing amenities and features, rendered by her presence.

The next day Sepp made his au jus, using the juices of the baked rouladen, he added flour, a smidgen of salt, a hint of pepper and a shot of brandy. Because Val said, she had never tried 'green potato dumplings' Sepp made some from

fresh potatoes as well. In the refrigerator he found a head of red cabbage, Sepp turned it into a perfect addition to their meal. He used some butter, the chopped cabbage, apples, and brown sugar and cooked it all in with vinegar and water. He also added a clove and a pinch of salt as well as a sprinkle of pepper for aromatic flavor and a nuance of spiciness.

They all got to savor a German-style 'Rouladen in Weinbrand Soße, Rotkohl and Grüne Kartoffel Klösse' luncheon. Val's hubby said, "I can't pronounce the names of the food, but it's good, very tasty." Val and Lola agreed. To Val's surprise, Lola offered to wash the dishes. Again it was Val who reminded Sepp that she and her husband were working on making a baby. Therefore she very much appreciated to hear him making out, in the room next door to their bedroom. "...don't have to hold back!" Val said "...make her scream like you did this Vikki woman! Don't have to hold back!" Val added: "...my hubby and I, we know my sis. She is like a rabbit when it comes to f\*cking!"

Lola heard part of it and asked: "Vikki what? Who?" Val quickly answered: "Ficken we talked about ficken! Did we not Sepp?" "Josi, ficken

who? What is ficken?" Lola wanted to know. Sepp assured her: "Ja! I show you after you are done in the kitchen!" And he did as promised.

*Sepp & Lola's Bedtime*

Sepp got used to Lola being in his bed when he got home from work. Lola's warm body was not only a delightful bed warmer, very cuddly she was too. Lola didn't work but liked money so she could spend it on shopping for lipsticks, hair coloring, and secondhand clothing. Aside from her looks, what she had going for herself was her freaky appetite for intimate activities: "Josi, please make me feel good, yah know I like to feel you!" she used to say while running her hand over his butt, thighs and wherever else. Sepp didn't mind her calling him lovingly Josi.

Sepp tried to live up to Val's expectations, and after a few nights, he had Lola figured out. Now he was able to play her G-Spot, getting her to have various orgasms, and scream while losing control just like Vikki did. Lola sported a well-developed body, short and plump, not overweight, and full-size, firm knockers. Lola seldom wore underwear, and only put on a bra when being told to do so by her sister. Lola was

warm-hearted, raunchy and easy going. She overused sexually explicit language and was fluent in describing in colorful words female and male genitals alike. She didn't show much sense of responsibility and duty. Yes, Lola was an original in every sense. Then one night she wasn't waiting in his bed, and it wasn't until the next morning that he found out from Val that Lola had left the previous evening with her biker husband.

*Sepp's Erotic Memoirs*

A month or was it two after Lola moving on, Sepp's world started shaking. His mind was concentrated on the games and politics, which were just so common these days between his two ears while working on the creation of his very own, very selfish me-me-me world. Sepp was busy with no time to spare and no time to care about anybody or anything aside from making money. Since Lola had moved back with her husband, the nights were lonely. On the other hand, he was happy she had left his life. For the first week, she was an adventure, and the second week was fun too. During the third week, it all became a routine, and the fourth week pleasing her turned into work, he had to

try very hard because now he had to live up to her and Val's expectations. "Josi, you okay, I do something wrong?" She asked if he didn't attend to Lola as anticipated by her. Lola had no job. She was always waiting for him to hand over his tips, the little money he made, so she had some spending money while visiting old friends and any of her old hangouts. He didn't want to admit, but he missed Lola, and her laughter, giggling, and all she was about. Sepp knew he needed to find some company for after work, so he didn't have to sleep every night alone.

Sepp's brain was crammed full with the important stuff, filled with a long must-do-list, "Ja! I must make money! I must pay bills! I must do grocery shopping after work! I must call that woman I had talked with the other night! I must do laundry! I must invite that one crazy brunette for a weekend trip to Vegas! I must make more money! I must buy a used, but newer car! I must buy new clothes. I must, must...!" Sepp looked at his watch; it was seven minutes past five. He knew: "Ja! By six o'clock the restaurant opens its doors to the public!" Sepp was telling himself: "Ja! It is going to be a good night. We have a full house, and I am going to make big bucks tonight.



I must hurry. I must finish the station set up, and I need to get ice. I must do this now. I must be-e-e-e re-re-re-re-ready!"

Without any warning the world around Sepp was shaking and so was he. A never before known awareness to every nanosecond set in. Sepp listened to a roaring rumble, a giant caterpillar, or was it an invasion of tanks, or heavy equipment rolling through town. Without second thought Sepp jumped into the doorway. The floor vibrated, and furniture rattled like the hatch-cover above the engine compartment of an old fishing boat. The two chandeliers did their waltz. A giant foot kicked the rock bed beneath. Sepp's world was rattled by seismic powers. Sepp watched a heavy table doing a dance. The 200year old building cried and ached, but it held together. A large metal light fixture, hanging on an iron chain from the in agony creaking hand hewn aged redwood beam, near the entrance jumped, before going back to swaying uncontrolled. The bottles and glasses on the worn oak shelves at the end of the room were performing their dance. The huge chandeliers in the dining room were in motion like monkeys swinging on them, but there were no monkeys.

As sudden as the earthquake activity had started, it all stopped. Sepp listened to breaking glass, as the contents of those shelves, which minutes ago were holding bottles and glasses, following gravity were finishing their dance. Fine crystal was exploding on impact, glass bottles cracking, their contents spilling all over the Spanish floor tiles.

“Ja! Oh shit! Oh! No!” One step, two, three steps, and Sepp was outside the building. The shaking of the ground had stopped. Then there was another short, strong trembler. “May the Gods have mercy!” one of the cooks prayed. The plants look windswept, but there was not the slightest breeze whatsoever. Flowerpots were knocking against each other, as if to answer the manager’s question “Is that the Big One?”

Sepp caught himself uttering one of his foxhole prayers, cockeyed, one eye to the trembling ground the other up to the blue skies. The shaking had stopped. It was still, more still than ever before. Sepp was fully aware of being singled out by dead silence, painful silence. Sepp felt very lonely. He knew it was only an earthquake, yet it was as scary as they come. Nanoseconds felt like minutes. Time stood still,

until car- and business-alarms ended the seconds of soundlessness. Sepp's state of mind changed with the loud noises. Alarm bells were ringing, horns blowing, sirens blasting. Sepp watched Police cars and Fire engines as they came down the road, heading someplace, but where? All other traffic was at a standstill. Sepp pinched himself, looked around and counted his blessings. He was alive. He was unharmed. The bubble of Sepp's me-me-world had burst, and his perspective changed a hundred and eighty degrees. The Earthquake changed many lives at a moment's notice, including Sepp's. An earth moving experience it was. Obviously, it was needed to readjust Sepp's clock and put him back on world time. As aftershocks traveled through, Sepp came to grips with reality. Together with the rest of the employees, he waited for an hour at the restaurant. The phones were no longer working. There was no electricity. All the local radio stations were off the air. The manager was asking the staff to go home. He said what they all knew: "The restaurant is not going to open tonight!"

What was so overly important a little earlier to Sepp, had no meaning now. Just to be,

to be alive and well, was all he wanted, and he was okay. Sepp got a ride from one of the chefs. They drove down empty streets while passing closed gas stations. Looking at the gas gage, a quarter tank, yes there was enough to get them home. All bars were closed. Sepp didn't have any alcoholic beverages at home. He had planned to stock up but hadn't gotten to it. It was a miserable night. Sepp desperately missed the company of a good-sized drink and all the comfort coming with it.

The day after the earthquake Sepp went to Delinda's place. He surely needed a drink. Sepp knew Delinda, Julie's mother quite well. They were friends, since the olden days when he owned the Olde-Yellow-House restaurant, just up the street from her. When he got back to Val and his room, Lola and her husband, a biker with tattoos on arms, neck, and face, were there. They needed a place to stay. Their place up north had gotten damaged in the earthquake. Val had no choice but to take them in. Val's hubby wasn't too happy with the arrangement as they were emptying the fridge, and asked him to get more beer as they had run out of it. It was Sepp who had bought a bottle of vodka and a

six-pack of Mickey's malt liqueur after leaving Delinda, at the liquor store down the street. He donated it to the cause in an attempt to act as a peacekeeper. Unsure where to sleep, Sepp went back to Delinda's place. He explained his situation to her, as "Ja! I survived the Big One, but I am not sure if I can stay much longer at Val's place." Sepp explained "Ja! I have a strong feeling that Lola's hubby doesn't like me. I know he knows something or maybe it's just that he doesn't like my face." It made Delinda laugh. Delinda poured him a drink. She also showed him to a room upstairs, an unused bedroom, which she was willing to let him have for the time being. Sleeping at Delinda's place he heard her voice in his dreams: "We barkeeps have always been lonely creatures." Delinda had made her point by saying, "I give drunks all the advice they can handle, but none of them ever listens to me." Without giving it much thought, Sepp had promised her "Ja! I am always going to listen to you."

Delinda didn't say it then, but she wished more than anything else that Sepp would stop drinking so much booze, maybe even not drink any alcohol at all. He stayed for a couple of days

at Delinda's before going back to Val's place as he needed some clothing. By this time, Lola and her husband had left. Her biker-hubby had an ugly fight with Val's hubby, who now sported black eyes and a broken nose. The same day the manager from the Old House Restaurant called, to let Sepp know that the restaurant is reopening the next day. The building had been inspected, and no structural problems found.



About a week later, two dozen waitresses and waiters from numerous local restaurants were waiting for "The Baycity Waiter's Race" to start.

The coordinator explained to the participants the route to be taken. The starting point was where a sun-tanned lady in a red outfit was playing with her sunglasses, being at the southeast corner of the Pacific Street famous for its Memory Gardens, and the corner of Del Monte Street.

All waiters and waitresses, who had signed up for the race, were asked to follow the coordinator along their race-and-obstacle-course-to-be. The start was at "The Path of

History" and heading away from the DoubleTree Hotel toward the bay, along the Pacific House's full length, and past its northeast corner. Here they had to take the steps down onto the Plaza. The competitors were expected to follow the whitewashed stone wall heading north-north-east before turning into the garden area. The waiters'-race-course then was passing through the Custom House's gardens before re-joining the historic path leading back from the Custom's house, to the starting point at the southeast corner of the Pacific House. The last stretch was a slalom course in and out between those Gingko trees planted along the path from the Plaza to the "The Path of History."

It was a warm sunny day, not much wind, but here and there a light breeze from the bay. Back at the starting line, the race-coordinator addressed the runners: "The objective is to carry a tray, with a half-filled water pitcher and two glasses, and a napkin and silverware, through the course." The organizer instructions were: "Each of you will run by himself. The one who does the best job shall be the winner." It sounded simple. The first a tall young waiter took off to a fast run. At the steps leading onto

the Plaza, the wind blew the napkin and silverware off his tray. He had to stop to collect the lost silverware at the foot of the steps. He was agile and fast. As he passed through the gardens of the Custom House, his water pitcher fell over. He kept on running. Cheered on by his friends and coworkers he finished the course in a record-setting time. His white waiter's jacket was soaked with water. He wasn't the only victim of the tipping water pitcher. One at a time the race-participants got wet as the pitcher on the tray tipped over in the attempt to beat the first runner's time. A wet chest here, a wet back there, spilled water kept running off the tray and dripping from white shirt sleeves. More than a dozen running wait people had so far attempted to get the better time. One waitress even put the napkin, silverware and the two glasses into the water pitcher. Pitcher in one hand, the tray in the other on fast Nike running shoes she did a remarkable fast lap of the course, faster than anyone before her. Some onlookers thought she had cheated. One participant's tray blew off his hand, as his speed plus wind set it airborne.

Now it was #9's turn. He rolled the silver into the provided napkin, placed the water



pitcher into the middle of his tray, the two glasses next to it with the napkin between glassware and pitcher. As he walked over the starting line, he raised the tray above his shoulder. And all the way the tray followed him like a shadow balanced on three fingers. He walked fast. Down the steps, he had to go slow. The tray vibrated in the wind. Turning left into the gardens, he walked faster. Reappearing from the Custom-House garden, it looked like he was tempted to run. But he did not. He walked steady and fast. As the air lifted the tray of his fingertips, he slowed down. The plastic pitcher with water stopped dancing. The plastic glasses were leaning against the pitcher. The corners of the napkin were waving in the wind. But the weight of the silverware kept it all in place. #9 walked fast, as fast as possible, without spilling anything on his tray. He did a perfect slalom between the alley of trees. He did not miss one obstacle on the zigzag-course. #9 got to the finishing line. He knew he was much slower than any of the previous runners. He looked at his tray and proudly showed the judges that not one drop of water had been spilled and every item was exactly where he had put it at the starting point. "Why didn't you run?" someone asked.

"Ja! It was either run and spill or don't run and don't spill a drop!" he replied. The competition was now, after #9, divided into two groups. Some ran, they did not care about spilled water. The others were more careful attempting not to spill any water.

Sweat pearls ran of a broadcaster's face as he put the news of the Waiter's race life onto the air. The event reached its peak with the handing out of the prizes. #9 got the first prize. It was a vacation package for four nights for two in San Francisco, staying at a first-class hotel, including breakfast and dinner. Asked if he knew that he had won by the time he reached the finish line, #9 answered "Ja! No, I had no idea, but I was happy with myself that I didn't spill any water on my tray!"

The lady in red got all his attention as she was saying, "How true! A good waiter never runs!" It turned out she was from a magazine and was going to write about the event. Asking #9 for his name, he answered: "Ja! I am Sepp, waiter at the Old House Restaurant!"

The same day Sepp went to see Delinda, and he invited her to join him for the weekend

in the city. Yes, he felt that Delinda deserved a break, and he knew he owed her big time for all she had done for him over the years. She didn't mind when he explained that the Gift Certificate excluded wine and bar beverages.

Two weeks later, Delinda drove on their trip to the city, as they made use of the 'Waiter's Race Gift Certificate.' He had to admit he dearly enjoyed every minute with her. They stayed at a fancy hotel overlooking Union Square with a view at the Cheese Cake Factory. Sepp knew some of Delinda's history. He knew about her mother and that she was from Silesia. But now she opened up and told him more about herself. Delinda had been married six times, and Julie was the daughter she had with number 4 or was it 2? After number 4 had left, number 2 came back to her for a month or so! She wasn't sure. It could have been husband number 5. The one Julie remembers as her dad was number 6. Delinda was telling Sepp much about the days when the canneries were busy, and the men were streaming into her mother's bar, now hers. Yes, about those girls upstairs, she knew them all, nice women, they took care of the men, and they knew how to handle them. Delinda's

mother was the madam of the place when it was a bordello. She grew up at a different time, in a different world, yet she was not going anywhere else, her bar, west of the railroad track was home for her.

Delinda laughed and joked about the architectural phallus-shape of the Coit Tower as they visited there. They had plans to see the city and the bay from high above. But the Tower was closed. Later, from a distance and looking up Telegraph Hill, Sepp told Delinda all the tales he had heard from DR, about a lady named Lillie Hitchcock C. and her love for firemen.

They visited the opera, several galleries, and two museums and yes they did see Beach Blanket Babylon. Delinda turned out to be a lovely romantic who had not been to the city for over twenty years. She had never been to an opera in all her life. The last museum Delinda remembered visiting was in her high school years. She had not taken more than one day off, once every six months or so, in more than twenty years. The three-day vacation meant a lot to her. On the second day she started to worry, and on the third, she was talking about the need to return to her business soon. Yes,

Sepp got to know Julie's mother well. She was a beautiful person whose motivator was an endless tape playing work-work-work, work-work, and work-work-work. Delinda told him: "I am so proud of Julie. At one time I thought I had lost her to drugs and alcohol." She added: "Yes she beat the devil and has found a path to a happier, much better life!" On several occasions, Sepp had been confessing to Delinda segments of his life story too. He didn't leave out much when he talked about the various geographical relocations, and the complications caused by partying too much, too many drinks, on too many occasions, in too many places. Delinda suggested: "Sepp, please listen, you know my Julie, you need to do the same!" Delinda was a good person. He would never forget her telling him: "In the end: What you are, is what you have!" and not "What you have, is who you are!" Again she urged him to listen to her Julie's story, "Because of Julie's experiences, because after all my Julie went through, my daughter gathered strength, to do the right thing. And because if my Julie can do it, you can do it too!"

It was Delinda who reminded Sepp about trends. "Trend is when the norm becomes the

‘it-used-to-be,’ as the normal, the standards, and the rules are changing just the same as labels do. Much changes, people do change too, however, some people who don’t change, they die a lonely death.” He didn’t understand first, but when Delinda talked more about cigarette flavors, about the hidden powers of opium, hashish, cocaine, and about alcoholic beverages, them all being trendy at some time, and then they become an addiction, it started to make some sense.



A few days after they returned from the city, Sepp visited Delinda’s place, and here Delinda’s daughter surprised him. Julie asked: “Sepp are you still interested in hearing my views about drunks?” Sepp, willing to listen: “Ja! Yes sure, I am!” That’s when Delinda left the room, as she had to run some errands.

Happy, sober and with a winning smile, looking straight into his eyes Julie said: “I am an alcoholic, addict ..., ...a recovering alcoholic, addict!” She added: “I just want you to know where I am coming from.” At twenty-four years of age, she had been around bars and drinks for

twenty. Sepp asked her about her father. "My mother's last husband, the one I call dad was a bartender for many years! Now he is the advertising manager for a radio station." Julie had these beautiful sparkling eyes. Mentioning her father, her face changed. Sepp recognized her sadness. She looked down at the floor while she talked about him. Sepp noticed her eyes getting watery. "He is gone, mother owns the bar and restaurant outright!"

Julie grew up in a small apartment above her mother's bar. Officially, she was not allowed in the bar when she was little. But, attracted by the dimmed lights, the bar's smoky interior, and the beautiful bottles, Julie spent many hours in her mother's bar. She always liked to read the labels. Here and there she got a little taste of one or the other of these foreign-named and temptingly smelling liquors. "Jägermeister, it's the latest craze among young people now," she said. She had liked it ten years ago, but it was not much in demand back then and added "It is a dark liquid, which looks much different than what I thought it would taste like." Julie was hooked on it for some time. Ouzo and Pernod were once her favorites too; both made with

anise. Vodka, a distilled grain spirit, labeled with a building covered by an onion-shaped roof came from somewhere in Russia. Bagpipers in skirts on whisky bottles meant it was refined overseas, and the bottle with the turkey on the label was the American whiskey. Certain bottles were more decorative than others. Her mother had explained it as: "Women and liquor, the more expensively dressed, the more attractively packaged, they both want the average Joe to think that they are better than some other plain-looking ones."

Julie had learned how to count in the bar, and she never forgot the numbers she learned as a little girl. "Twenty-four, two dozens, ten + ten + four bottles are in the well." The more expensive back bar held between seventy-two and eighty-eight different bottles. Julie also knew from an early age that there were two different types of iced tea. One was to quench the thirst. The other was bad news. It was the kind that made her daddy crazy. That is why he was not allowed to live with her mother anymore. "One too many Long Island Iced Teas and too many drunken brawls." is what Julie



recalled her mother used to say referring to Julie's dad.

Julie talked about being sent to live with her grandparents in Florida. "They spoiled me rotten." She got in trouble with the law. Police busted her and another young woman in a van. Both girls were slightly drunk and pretended not to know what they were doing. Just an hour or two earlier, both had allowed this one guy some 'favors.' In return, he showed them how to shoot up. Alfonso was his name. He was a small-time drug pusher and social outcast. Julie had begun to like him a lot. "It was not his Boston bankroll." She was attracted to him because he was willing to teach her everything nobody else had ever taken the time to show and to explain her. Alfonso was an outlaw. He was in his late twenties, hung out along the beach, had no steady job, but women flocked to him, and nothing seemed to be forbidden territory for Alfonso. Julie still feels most fortunate to have had him as a teacher. The incident in the van was nothing but the first attempt to experience what heroin was all about. Julie did not remember much about anything, except being at the police station, and her grandpa had to come

and get her. The officer stated that they had found her in a stolen vehicle parked in a sparsely lit side street one block from the movie theater. That's where she had said she was going. The guy she had been with had slipped away. The police report mentioned drugs and paraphernalia. She did not deny a thing but repeatedly pointed out, "It was not my fault, that the van was stolen."

Turning fifteen, she returned to California. It was good to be home. She was happy to be with her mother, who worked every night to pay the bills. After a few weeks of exceptionally good behavior, Julie started to sneak herself drinks from the bar. From a sip once in a while she advanced quickly to imbibing as much as half a bottle a day, and she was hiding alcohol in her room. Some nights when her mother worked late she lay in bed, slowly getting drunk. She drank to alter her surroundings, to dream of faraway places. She dreamed of being with Alfonso, about his gentle touch and stroke, his kisses, and how he made her feel so special. She dreamed about his elating words, to hear him telling her how beautiful she is, over and over. At times, she went down to the ocean and

shared her treasured bottle with one of the homeless people. It made her feel like she was doing something good, sharing and caring. Those disappearing bottles did not go unnoticed, and when questioned by her mother she denied any wrongdoing. When caught in the act, an intoxicated Julie quarreled with her mother. "Not knowing what else to do, I accused her of spying on me. My mother's words were, 'Julie you are going downhill fast!' My mother begged me, urged me, to stop lying. Go back to school, to be a good young lady!"

Being asked to appreciate how hard her mother had been working all these years, just for her, fell on deaf ears. Then her mother threatened to call her father, and even to talk to the youth authorities. Julie knew very well what she had to do. She had to get clean and sober. But she didn't want to know! She was looking for an easy way out of her problems. Julie recalled being angry, "I was going to show her that I was not a little kid no more." and after a final fierce argument, she decided to make her move. "Without saying goodbye, I just walked out on her."

"I took a bus to the train station. I planned to board the train. At the Amtrak station, I changed my mind. There were only ten dollars in my purse. I walked along the well-lit frontage road parallel to the railroad tracks. Scared by the looks of a bunch of street people, with a cottony mouth and an overpowering desire for a drink, I told some Latinos in a low-rider: 'Go f\*ck yourself!' But minutes later I accepted a ride from a friendly looking Caucasian fellow. I did not think twice when he asked 'How much you charge tonight, pretty one?' I said to him 'Got to have something to drink first...'"

"He was a delightful man, married too." He was my first date on a long road traveled. After a drink, all was easier, much easier." Julie explained "Guys are generous if they are happy." There was no shame, no fear about what Sepp may think, in her voice. "Alfonso was right. This man, a first on my trip, as he wanted variety, he was willing to open his wallet. That's all." She described selling herself for some booze and twenty dollars, as if it had happened to someone else.

"Back on the street before dawn, one understanding fellow, a truck driver with a thick

southern accent picked me up. That was my second date. We had breakfast at a truck stop in Nevada. After giving him what he wanted, I told him that I wanted to get to the East Coast. I did not tell him why. I did not tell him that I was running away from home. He did not want to know. He was only interested in me making him happy. I did.”

Julie talked about the next ten days. Five truck drivers later she was in New York. And every man she met hitchhiking believed her when she said “I am 19, or I am 21!” but maybe they didn’t care? Or did they? She did her best to act grown up, because it made her feel like she was old enough to do as she pleased. Julie knew that she had an excellent body. She received an older man's help. Of all places, she met him at the fish market. But, such is the irony. “His name was Marco, and he asked me for a date. Nowhere to go, knowing no one in town, I eagerly accepted. He wined and dined me and then he made love to me in a hotel room. Marco was an exceptional lover. He was also the smoothest-talking man I had ever met since Alfonso, my Cuban friend back in Florida.”

Julie loved to be praised. Even more, she loved to soak up the drink and attain euphoric states of inebriation. She got both from Marco, compliments and as many drinks as she could handle. Her new friend was about her father's age but unable to invite her to his house. He did not want her to meet his family, his wife, or his children. He talked about them all the time to her. He did introduce her however to some acquaintances. One of them found her an apartment. These Big Apple men provided her with easy money. "I'm short on cash never reached a deaf ear in my new circle of admirers. Men were telling me that they loved my refreshingly funny, carelessly childish behavior. Men thought I was great whenever a little tipsy."

Her naiveté was lavishly praised while generously hugging, touching and kissing her current admirer, whoever it was. She felt she knew it all. Truly, she was more experienced than her years. In her lover's eyes, she was twenty-something-years-old. Julie reasoned her men would appreciate her sophistication. So she acted according to what she imagined men wanted her to be. Julie had learned a lot in Florida.

Julie admitted “All men wanted something in return as payment for allowing me to feel like I belonged, something as payment for the alcohol and drugs they provided me with. Sexual favors were always appreciated. At one party I was asked to have sex with another woman, just for fun. Men were watching us. But it wasn't much fun. I like guys, not girls.”

But it had been Julie's doings. She had worked hard to become famous as ‘the fastest tongue in town.’ Her male friends called her ‘GILFY!’ Back in Florida, the weather had been much better. But she had never made any money there, nor asked for any. In New York, she got cash. Julie had always thrived on the flattery, and naturally, she loved money. She wanted to be the center of attention. For money, she did any and everything to make her men happy.

“I was quite ready and willing to seduce any man who catered to my needs for alcohol and love. To be called eccentric or erotic after a couple of drinks was an affirmation of appreciation. They loved me. Whenever I had no date, I went to wild parties where I could dance all night. Seeking out party places and action

spots became an obsession. There I could act out some of my fantasies. There I found connections for drugs. There I got alcohol and felt safe, for I knew that if needed I could always crash on someone's couch, a bed, or on the floor."

Julie had made herself six years older. She had a photo idea belonging to some other girl, who looked similar, but six years her age. Julie had found it in a purse in a bathroom at a private party. She had always been taller and better developed than other girls her age. The drinking and street life made her look twenty-two or older.

"I was just sixteen. I did whatever it took to enjoy an easy life in the fast lane. Many of the days with my dates were occupied with sightseeing, shopping, movie and theater visits. My new friends treated me like royalty. I did not mind being Marco's 'Lolita,' and I was there for his friends too, when asked. I met many influential people this way. Money and gifts were coming my way, and I thought I was happy."



Julie talked about the time she spent in an euphoric state. She was a child who had gotten all her wishes granted. She took trips by plane and trips by boat. Many of these she did not even remember. A 'Bennie' for breakfast, champagne for lunch, cocaine with dinner and cannabis at night became the daily routine. Some of the men's faces she was with, she still sees in her dreams. At least some of them, from her first year in the City she remembers. She toyed with those men friends. She also had become their toy.

She said "They gave me money, jewelry, clothing, anything I wanted. Wealthy older men had become my livelihood. I had no problem extracting money from these men. It was Marco who paid for my luxurious apartment. I did not know any better. I thought I had it made."

Julie stopped and had a sip of water, offering Sepp coffee or soda, he decided on coffee. "The change came suddenly." She said "It started out with a visit to the doctor, early one day. A night that I did not want to remember which was soon followed by days, I don't remember. I knew something was wrong, so I had gone to a gynecologist. 'Warts. Genital

warts!' was his diagnosis. I told Marco what the doctor had said. High on booze, low on energy, exhausted from a bad day, tanked-up, I talked. That's all Marco, and I did that night, talk, smoke, and drink. Drunk and high on dope, I then had started to brag about my true age. Out of my rightful mind, I overlooked for a moment that my friend had much more to lose besides his marriage. He left in the morning without his usual 'Ciao, cara mia.' Doing the town with a minor was a shortcut to prison. By nightfall, Marco's friends knew about my age and the cunt-warts."

She said to Sepp "They dropped me like a stinking rotten mackerel." Looking back, Julie was sure that the thought that she was younger than Marco's daughters must have caused him great pain. She was convinced that after finding out how young she was, he hated himself. Marco was a churchgoer, a good man. He didn't like to visit prostitutes but felt that having a girlfriend on the side was acceptable. She knew too that Marco was afraid of what he might catch from her and bring home to his unsuspecting wife. The damage done by her mouth running wild was irreversible. To

overcome the devastating feelings surrounding her being dumped, Julie got into more alcohol and drugs. She was evicted from her studio apartment. To make the nightly rent for a motel room, she was stealing, begging and tricking men into paying her advances. She promised them anything but seldom delivered. She needed the cash. She took it and left. It was easy. All she did was take the up-front money and assured the sucker she would be right back with her most awesomely-endowed Puerto Rican girlfriend for a threesome he would never forget. But she didn't have a girlfriend, and she didn't come back.

“It was not long after that I moved in with an older girl who was supporting herself on and off the streets. ‘Cherie was cool.’ Doing anything and everything and staying out of jail was the goal. Cherie taught me the ropes. We made good money. Guided by Cherie, I was posing for nude pictures, worked as a call girl and delivered ‘packages.’ For almost six months, I did not drink one drop and was doing very well. I had some money saved up and had big plans to go and visit my mother. Then one night, for no apparent

reason, I bought a liter of vodka and finished it off all by myself. I do not know why.”

She became depressed, and from here on drinking became more important than working. It made her unhappier. Staying drunk for days at a time, the money she had saved ran through her fingers. She used uppers and downers to counteract the booze effects of the alcohol. Her roommate, Cherie, who had no sympathy for Julie's alcohol addiction, kicked Julie out. Adding to her problems, she also took money from Cherie, not much, a few hundred dollars. Soon, Julie's tolerance level for alcohol started to play games with her. Some days a liter was not enough to put her to sleep, on other days two drinks got her off. Drinking alcohol turned into a scary experience now, for she never knew, once she started drinking, how it would end and where. She had a couple of glasses of vodka with a hint of cranberry juice at a bar early in the evening. Followed by waking up in a motel room alone the next morning, or was it two mornings later, was not new to her. But not remembering how she got to the motel, not knowing with whom was a bit frightening. Seeing the signs everywhere used condoms and empty beer cans

and liquor bottles indicated that there must have been quite a party. Her body ached. While worshipping the porcelain throne, either throwing up or trying to throw up but with nothing coming out beside a trickle of saliva, her brain tried to recall something about the bygone nights. Names, dates, and places often were foggy. Looking back, Julie was thankful for her temporary loss of memory. There was plenty she would not want to remember.

She said, "I know I lost a week, a whole week in a mental blackout once. I started out in New Jersey. Then I found myself in a big house in Pittsburgh with a bundle of c-notes in my purse! How they got there, I don't even know. I never kept any money for more than a couple of days, maybe a week. It went as fast as it came in. Somewhere, somehow along the path I took, my income had been reduced precipitously, or maybe it was just that my habit was getting too expensive. At times I was barely able to make enough money to pay for a cheap motel room, a meal at a coffee shop, and a bottle of vodka. It was hard work."

Julie remembered the days she was almost always broke now. Julie recalled her wanting

nothing more than to get out of New York. Julie had set out to make enough money to buy a bus ticket to travel back home. But whenever she had sufficient money in her pocket, she postponed her trip to California and got high or drunk or both instead. She tried to control her drinking by going to church. It worked. She did not drink for over a hundred days. Life looked much better. Then she got kicked out of the women's shelter where she had been staying. At the time, she was using a stolen I.D. card belonging to her former roommate and called herself Cherie. She was thrown out of the shelter on a winter day, after being caught selling a lid of marijuana. Julie walked away up the street. She wanted to die. Looking down at the snow and mud, she dumped the black plastic bag with her clothing. It had gotten too heavy. Once more she had nowhere to go. It started to snow.

“I saw a van coming my way. The van stopped. The driver asked for directions. When he asked me if she would show him around town, I did not hesitate. I climbed into the van just to get out of the cold. The driver was not alone, two other young men were with him.

They were friendly enough. They talked about the small town they came from and joked around. I accepted an invitation to stay with them at their motel. I met yet another man at their motel room. Cold, empty, depressed, seventeen years young, I was feeling a hundred years old. The face in the mirror belonged to a worthless, no good, slutty bitch, one without any future. My brain warned me, was telling me that this was not the right way to live, that I was going down into the gutter fast. Thinking of those guys, they were an opportunity to make a few bucks and stay warm and dry. I didn't even care that they had not much money to spend on me."

Then Julie talked about her clutching a small bag with one change of clothing and the twenty dollars from selling her stash. She remembered the feeling of being less worthy than any other lonely soul lost in the vastness of the big city. Julie had been cold but warmed up fast. From her fuzzy point of view, she classified the strong and healthy young men as rich. They were agreeable. The need for fun and amusement, to play games and be entertaining came to her mind. What better place to be than

in a warm and cozy motel room with some clean-cut, well-nourished, and shy young men while it was snowing outside? It all changed the next day. Julie knew very well she should not drink. Alcohol had stopped working for her. In fact, it had been causing her plenty of problems. Regardless, it was Julie who insisted on getting a bottle of cheap brandy. One guy had some marijuana, enough for a joint. It was cheap Mexican grass. Julie just had to have a taste of some hard liquor. But, then she could not stop with just a small taste of the brandy. She was not going to drink the whole bottle, but a little more would warm her up, or so she thought. After sharing a sip or two with her friends, she had been drinking at least half a bottle and instantly she became the life of the party. In the late morning, she woke up, alone. These jerks had stiffed her with the bill too, which she could not pay. It was not the money.

Julie said to Sepp, "I knew they can't take from me what I don't have. I was angry with myself. It was the crumbling of the built-up hope and expectations within, that's what hurt the most. Looking back now, I think the guys had spent all their money on me and, unable to pay



the bill, they skipped out quietly and quickly. But the worst was yet to come. I offered to help in the kitchen instead of paying the bill. As a result, I stayed with one of the cooks from the restaurant for a few days. After that, I found a carpet layer. I do not know why I did not continue to stay with him. He had a clean two-bedroom apartment, a car, a job, and a two-year-old son. His wife had left him, and I could easily have slipped into the role of homemaker. Except that the urge to hit the pavement, the urge to find excitement in alcohol and drugs was greater than my willpower.”

Then Julie confessed that she reached a point when she desperately needed a ‘fix’ and a roof over her head. She had no money, no friends, and nowhere to go. She went to the one whom she feared most. Sam was an ill-mannered, bad-tempered drug dealer, but he always had money. He was big and strong with many scars from fighting on the streets. He had asked her a few times when she had paid for a quick fix with favors instead of money: “Babe, work for me?” Julie would never have considered him a friend. His being close and his touching her had always frightened her. There

was nothing lovable or caring about him. He was a brute in every sense of the word. But she had no choice. She needed drugs. Now she begged him for drugs and offered to work for him, looking forward to having a place to crash. Sam said, "Okay bitch." And he made sure that she understood that she belonged to him now.

By this time, she had been on her own for more than two years. For over a year, she had been on the streets. She had seen a lot. But now she learned what fear was about, the fear of not getting her fix when she needed it most. She needed Sam and his drugs. She had reached a point where alcohol was not potent enough to give her the needed effect. Trembling, sweats and hot flashes accompanied the craving for a fix at times now, followed by cold fever spells. Drinking intensified her uncontrollable urges for a better high, a stronger medication. There was nothing too degrading, nothing she would not have done, to reach the high, that level of euphoria, which of late was so difficult to achieve. Sam, sadistic as he was, used her and her weaknesses to his advantage as he felt like. He used and abused her. If she tried to argue with him, he beat her. It happened in private

first. Soon enough he mistreated and insulted her in front of others. She let it happen. Whatever Sam wanted her to do, she would do. She hated and loved him at the same time.

“Insanity, what else would you call it, if one stays in a sick relationship like this?” she asked Sepp, shaking her head. “He had me to dance and strip in front of several dozen men on the bridge of a South American registered ship,” Julie recalled. “It had something to do with the freighter waiting for the right time to pick up stolen cars for export after successfully importing illegals into the states. I was cold, although it was a hot and humid summer day in New York. I started to get dressed again after my striptease act ended. The men did not like me ending the show. Sam had told them that I was theirs during their stay in the harbor. They had paid Sam well, who had supplied two other older women, as well. Those were professional street-whores paid to entertain the sailors.”

Julie remembered some of her stay aboard the freighter. She talked about still seeing in her dreams much of what had happened then. Julie was the youngest of the trio and drunk and crazy, trying to outdo those other two, smarter

women. She enjoyed the brandy and cocaine. It numbed her body but was not enough to switch her brain off. She was able to feel each man who was using her. She saw the faces she kissed.

“Sam left me there for three days and then I was sick and bled for days. After all the cocaine, I could not sleep. I tried alcohol to pass out. I took downers. Nothing worked. I experienced the unpleasant torture of insomnia. It was not new to me, going for days without sleep, but never had it been as bad as after getting off that boat. I noticed that my so far indestructible youthful body was hurting badly from those latest abuses.”

Julie admitted that her pimp had one hundred percent control over her. She had become an empty shell, who could not function without a boost from alcohol and drugs. However, she had to work, for without that, there was no money, and without money, there was no high. She was getting more depressed and scared, realizing her inability to break out of the vicious cycle of her alcohol and drug dependency. She was not yet eighteen but looking in the mirror she was scared of getting old. Now, it was not uncommon for potential

'tricks' to turn her down. It hurt to be told: "Listen, you are sure you are all right? You look sick to me." At a bachelor party in a hotel suite, the men send her away with a: "Put your drawers back on and go see a doctor, you look too scary, you're all bruised skin and bones."

Julie was shaking her head, claiming, "I was lucky. I did not know where my trip down the road into the dark abyss would lead me. I knew it wasn't getting better. I had lost all hope long ago. Yes, I had to hit my bottom first." She then explained how police saved her during a drug raid. Sam had dropped her off on the job. "Somewhere, in a hotel with room service, in bed, the police had to untie me before they could put handcuffs on me."

Shaking her head, Julie said "Someone 'up there' was watching out for me. I don't remember much except being scared, finding myself tied to the bed by my ankles and wrists, fully clothed, unable to make any move from the bed. Later, I found out the customer was wanted by Interpol," she said, looking up at the ceiling. "There were some other men there too."

"The judge offered me a way out, which was full cooperation and drug treatment. I was furious at the time, wished I could kill that Sam." Julie disclosed, "Sam had sold me to a trick, but he wasn't a normal trick, he was a murderer known for making snuff movies. I was just turning eighteen then. That's when my new life started at the doorstep to death."

Julie voiced her opinion "Alcohol is good for many purposes. However, my body just can't handle it. I used to think of alcoholism as a weakness. That is not true. Knowing that I am an alcoholic gives me the strength to concentrate on all other aspects of life and to stay clean and sober. I wish my dad could understand what I'm talking about."

In a whispered voice Julie admitted "These past six clean and sober years I have been trying to find my God, a caring, forgiving, and good God. I found him. I found my God." Julie was looking deep in Sepp's eyes "My God, he has no sword, and he doesn't punish people, he guides me, and I talk to him. He is my best friend."

Then Julie stated "Listen, Sepp; you too can live a good happy life. You don't have to get

drunk every so often, it leads to nothing but suffering, for everyone!" With this, Julie gave him a big hug and excused herself as she had still to go to a meeting, and she offered him "If you feel like it, come along, it's an open AA meeting." Seeing Sepp shaking his head, she left.

*Sepp's Life Before & After*

Julie's "Someone 'up there' was watching out for me," as well as her story hit home. Sepp did recognize that he just like Julie had been in denial for many years. He also realized that yes, recovery is possible, and starts out with admitting being powerless over alcohol and that ones life had become unmanageable! He knew, what he didn't want to acknowledge, namely there is a proven way to live a good life, as an alcoholic and he knew he was one. Yes, he admitted to his innermost self, that his life had become absolutely unmanageable as soon as he got started to drink alcoholic beverages. Listening to Julie sharing her experience, strength and hope with Sepp hit home. Hadn't he as well been close to dying, hadn't he as well thanks to the power above and his Guardian Angel made it past his expiration date several times now. Sepp was recalling not only the

accidents he survived, but also the failed suicide attempts. Sepp was willing to do something about his addiction, his alcohol dependency, but not yet. He simply postponed dealing with his state of being enslaved to his habits, mainly because its cessation may cause severe trauma. Sepp was somewhat willing to deal with it sooner or later.

All changed the same week, as a lost letter, mailed to his old, very old Shady-Creek address showed up. His mother had passed away. Erika's funeral had been seven months ago. Sepp cried, and he cried some more. Sepp knew he had to change his way of life, not only for Erika's sake but also for his very own good. Self-pity and guilt and shame had been on Sepp's mind when he was thinking about getting help for his inability to deal with his drinking problems.

Yes, for quite some time, Sepp was used to having a few drinks, and then before going to bed a nightcap being a big gulp from a cheap bottle of vodka. That usually allowed him to sleep. Since the letter, telling him about his mother's funeral, the vodka didn't do the trick, never mind how much alcohol he poured into himself. Getting scared, Sepp checked into a



30day recovery program, all compliments of the Old House Restaurant's medical insurance.

Hera, a lady friend, he hadn't seen for a while, she had heard from David's wife that Sepp was in a drug treatment facility. She had never been in one, and as she was concerned, she visited him. Several of his co-workers came by too, and they all approved of his choice to turn his life around by dealing with his alcohol addiction. Coming to find out they all knew that he had some kind of alcohol use disorder, because after a few drinks, as they said, he wasn't the same guy they knew and liked so much. They all preferred the Sepp without the alcohol.



Sepp met a number of good people, at the recovery place. One was a Police Officer, who later occasionally came by the Old House Restaurant, just to say high, hello and bye. He had, on duty, shot a bank robber who turned out to be a friend of his family, and, as he couldn't handle the pain, he had been attempting to kill his sorrows and himself with alcohol. He later

moved away from the Baycity and happily lived in the Big Valley, clean and sober.

Then there was an elderly lady with prescription drug issues, her life had changed since she was taking too many prescription drugs, and it started with her having a broken leg, about ten years earlier. She took painkillers. She fell and broke her arm, and needed more painkillers, and soon she couldn't live life without painkillers. Because she wasn't able to move around much, she gained weight and with it came high blood pressure and got medication for it. The cholesterol went up, so she took also statins. As she had joint and muscle pains she took another type of painkillers, then a doctor prescribed her arthritis medicine. As she started to have new problems additional drugs were added, like sleeping aids as she had problems sleeping. To counteract problems caused by medications, she was using opiates, sedatives, antidepressants uppers and downers, and vodka as well. It was a miracle that her liver was still working. And no wonder lately she wasn't able to do much aside from sleeping, eating, and taking her medications. She was hooked, on prescription drugs, compliments of her

insurance and the greed of doctors, keeping on prescribing more than what was good for her. Sepp couldn't believe it first, but according to her, she was taking 2-dozen different meds. Her life was reduced to being housebound. Yes, she loved to blend her handful of medications with a little vodka and orange juice too. At the recovery place now, under supervision of a doctor, she was trying to apply the twelve steps of a recovery plan to get her life back.

Then there was a young woman maybe 30 years young, a crack addict. She had gotten into crack. At the time it was the latest and newest drug, crack cocaine. For her, the bottom came up in a hurry, and it hit her within a short time. She lost her job. She sold herself to get her crack. She stole to get her crack. She got very sick and went to the Emergency Room. And here now she was trying to get her life back too, by applying those same twelve steps, Sepp was using.

A young man was strung out on Meth, and another young man in his early 20s was a Heroin addict. They all had in common that their drug of choice had been causing them serious problems in their lives. Some of Sepp's new friends used

illegal substances, others used legal ones, all with the same result. It didn't make a difference, their age, their background, their sex, because it landed them all in the very same spot. At some point they became addicted, yet were not able to take responsibility for it, and unwilling and unable to make the needed changes. They all wanted to live, to have a sober, serene life, just like Sepp.

Sepp was willing to do whatever it takes, and do anything. However, he was not ready to give up smoking cigarettes, or the sleeping around. Sepp needed the occasional sex, which he liked so much, on a regular basis. He was fully aware of his habit to smoke and having a drink with it, and he knew that to get it on with any drunken woman, he too had to have a drink or two first. And after sex, to relax with a cigarette was the routine ever since he was a young man. Sepp's solution was to refrain from picking up women in bars, and he liked the concept.

Sepp reached a point where he was going to try anything to live easy, sober and being the best he could be, in his field of work, in daily life, any place. The day after leaving the rehab, Sepp's journey to change started with visiting his

attorney friend David McArthur. He was very grateful for all Dave and his wife had done for him since he had gotten back into town. Sepp owed them big time, yet they hadn't asked him to pay up. To make up for what he owed and thank them he had two gifts for Dave, the heavy gold ring, the one with the Onyx stone. The one he had bought from tips way back when he was an apprentice in the Hansestadt. This one had once been Sepp's prized possession. He knew that David would like the ring; he was sure of it. Because he had said so, the few times, he saw Sepp wearing it. Yes, Dave had mentioned he would love to find a ring as thick and solid made of gold like that one. So Sepp did give the ring to David, wished him good fortune and thanked him for letting him sleep on his couch for those past months. Also, he gave Dave an envelope with the pink slip for the Hudson Superwasp, a rebuilt 1953 beauty, and the keys. As he had parked the Hudson outside, he did ask Dave to give him a ride back to Val's place, to Sepp's room. So Dave did, and he accepted the gifts because he knew that Sepp wanted him to have both. The Hudson was a gift from Lily. It was time for Sepp to let her go too. About the heavy gold man's ring, somehow Sepp knew the ring

was bad luck for him. Some inner-voice told him to let go of it.

Dave was leaving town before the end of the month. He had accepted a job offer in Los Angeles, Mr. Lucky his friend had already made two trips with his dump truck down south. As Dave gave Sepp a ride back up to Val's place, he reminded Sepp of the boxes with notebooks and folders stored beneath his house, Sepp's diaries. Next day Sepp retrieved the crates with handwritten notes, the spiral-note-books, the many notepads, books and the folder with the envelope containing Walter van Russbourgs paternity test papers, the envelope Sepp hadn't checked out yet.

*Sepp's Eric's Memoirs*

Sepp hadn't worked for over a month, no work – no income. Looking at his overall financial picture, it wasn't too bad. Therefore Sepp sold the few items he had been hanging on to, like his stamp collection, and a promissory note for 5000 dollars. The note turned out worthless. The stamp collection being all first day covers was hard to sell. Sepp sold his Stamp Collection, once valued at over 15Gs, for 1400

bucks of cash to a well-known stamp dealer. Sepp desperately needed the money. With the money he paid bills he owed, and provided he worked at least three shifts a week at the Old House Restaurant, he expected to do okay.

However before things got better for him, they first got worse. Business had slowed down at the Old House Restaurant. Sepp was not on the schedule the coming week, and thereafter had only one dinner shift the next week. He was on call 3 nights a week. The likelihood to be called in was nil.

Sepp had been able to pay Val the money for the four weeks he had been in rehab. All bills were paid, but without income, he could no longer afford the rented room up on the hill, the one with Val. True, Val was willing to wait for the rent until times got better. On the other hand, she and her hubby needed the income from renting the room out. Aside from everything else Val was pregnant and going through mood swings. She was suggesting to Sepp: "Why don't you live with my sis?" adding "Lola would make a good waitress, she is smart, and you can train her?" Val offered to call her sister to come back. Val was truly convinced that

he and Lola would make a nice couple. She even went so far that she said: "I have never seen my sis happier, than the time while she was sleeping with you, Sepp!" For Sepp that was a scary thought. Outside of the bed, Sepp didn't have much in common with Lola, if anything.

A few days later, Sepp went to a noon meeting, careless he put his last dollar note into the basket. It was a good meeting. That was at the old Alano Club, a converted bar, used by several recovery groups. Here, after the meeting, Sepp was sitting alone at the large round table in the corner, sipping on a cup of coffee. He had paid for the coffee with the last two quarters left in his pockets. Sepp was broke, not a dollar left. No income for the next few days, no place to go, now what?

Sepp was at his wit's end. No work, no money, where would he sleep tonight, what about food? "Ja! Oh my God what do you want me to do?" he asked not expecting an answer. An older Italian lady noticed his pain. Later when looking back, Sepp remembers her as an angel. He was desperate, he needed help, he prayed, and she showed up. As this woman joined him, on first sight, she knew he had problems. When



she asked, “What’s wrong?” Sepp confessed, told her about his situation, and all in all he admitted that his life had become unmanageable in every aspect. She looked at him and said: “My name is Nelle! Honey, listen I have a couch. Don’t worry about money. You can sleep on my couch tonight.”

The tonight turned into weeks. It was fourteen days later that work picked up for Sepp, and he was able to pay for rent, food, and necessities. By then Nelle had cleaned out her guest room and offered it to Sepp for a small weekly amount. About Nelle, she was of medium height, full-figured, in her late 60s. She had a square face, grey-green eyes, and white hair. Nelle was very active in the recovery field, a strong lady, practical, crafty, tolerant and energetic, and she had been clean and sober for over 27 years at the time she met Sepp. Nelle, had the right answers when he had no answers. She showed him a way to live a better life. Nelle listened to Sepp’s worries and fears, and she assured him: “Don’t you worry, there are some steps you can take, and you too will never have to pick up another drink, and all will be okay!”

It was Nelle who gave him rides to work and back, who took him to recovery meetings, and gave him directions when he didn't know what to do, because of monetary debts. Her "Honey, don't you worry about those creditors. It's not your problem that their investment didn't pay off!" made sense to Sepp who all irritated opened a collection agency letter. "Young man, your job is to learn how to live life sober..., ...that's all you can do, and this we do, one day at a time!"

These days the newspapers were busy with the OJ Simpson trial, and domestic terrorisms in Oklahoma City and Timothy McVeigh. That was also the year Windows 95 was being launched, Sony introduced a Plasmatron flatscreen display, and MacDonald's opened its first restaurant in Moscow. It was also the year when over 460 people were killed and more than 2,130 wounded by Bosnian Serb snipers and artillery shells in the besieged capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Autumn of 1995 a local magazine showed Sepp with a short haircut and a mustache on the cover as the waiter of the year. Mr. Lucky stopped by at the restaurant. He was back in

Baycity. Lucretos had moved in a small rental house on the hillside of Hillcity. Mr. Lucky told Sepp “David and his wife relocated to a nice neighborhood in Los Angeles.” According to Mr. Lucky, “They are very happy, they like the big city.”

*Sepp's Life Before & After*

Sepp lately stayed busy, and he was never without a job. At the Old House, Sepp worked 5 to 6 nights as a waiter, for some private lunch parties he helped out as a chef, and he was in demand as a banquet server. Whatever it took to make a living, Sepp did. As the winter arrived and business slowed down to next to nothing, Sepp, in jeans and boots and his old sailing sweater, worked in the firewood business with his old friend Mr. Lucky. Being clean and sober, never hungover, Sepp had so much more energy it even amazed him.

However, Nelle was telling him “Young man, remember your main job is to learn a better way to live, a new way to pass the time, to be happy in any situation while being sober and serene.” According to her, the goal was no longer to make tons of money, for any price.

Instead, the finding inner peace was more important, and to learn how to live life. Sepp was ready for an uncomplicated love affair with life. Nelle didn't smoke, and not to offend her, Sepp did not smoke at Nelle's place or in her presence. It was hard for him, as he was used to smoke a couple of packs a day. Sepp who had several dry periods, as much as more than two years of not drinking alcohol, he was worried, that sooner or later he was going to fall back into his old routine. Nelle's answer was "You go to meetings and don't drink in-between, and you will never get drunk again." Sepp questioned her simplified solution by saying "Ja! But if I get the urge to have a drink?" She said, "Go to a meeting, and don't drink!"

Nelle had a plan for him. However, she didn't tell him first, what she had in mind. When they first met, she took him to meetings and talked with him about recovery in general, as well as dividing up the first 164 pages of the big blue book into 12 steps. On New Year's day of 1996, she insisted that he started to write down all those moments when his life was unmanageable going back as far as he remembered. Sepp got started with the

assignment. After all, he had all his diaries stored in her garage. Nelle seeing that he had so much on notes and daily entries, said: "Write only down what you remember, all the big happenings, it doesn't have to be day by day since you started diaries." Then she asked, "But say, oh boy, when did you start writing diaries?" Sepp answered, "Ja! With age 13, I didn't have a camera, so I wrote down what I saw." and Nelle was just shaking her head saying "Oh boy, oh boy!"

As February arrived, Nelle, asked Sepp to have a look at those notes from the other month. She also asked him to see if certain happenings had been repeating themselves. She asked him to look for the kind which caused pain and suffering in the first place. She wanted to know where he was doing things over and over and expecting a different outcome. Nelle assured Sepp that he is not insane, "Never mind that doing the same over and over and expecting a different outcome is known as being insane, my boy, all you are is being stupid. You are stupid that's all!" One day Nelle told him about her ex-husband, who had hit her with a two by four. The same husband who as he found

her drunk and passed out at home, had delivered her to an insane asylum, not once but three times. Every time as she sobered up she was okay, and all the doctor said to her was: "Nelle, sweetheart, don't be so stupid to drink more than what you can handle, and about your husband, divorce him, he is no good to you, you can do better."

In the month of March Nelle sat down with Sepp and explained how she sees God working in her life and other people's life. She told him why she knows that Sepp has a God, but tries to ignore his God-given qualities. "Honey when you ignore God, he doesn't mind, he is there when you need him!" Then Nelle wanted to know if he was willing to get a little smarter, to let his God lead the way. What else could Sepp say but "Ja! Yes, sure!"

It was still March that Nelle got him started to write about his life especially all that he could remember without his diaries. She said: "Now Sepp, honey, get ready and write down your story." End of April she asked him "Young man, how's the writing coming along?" He showed her a stack of paper. When she counted the pages, she stopped at page number 270, and

there were more to go. “You aren’t kidding me, honey, that’s no bullshit.”

In May Nelle set two days aside to listen to Sepp’s story, most of what he had written about was still new to her because it was mainly all the sins he had been able to remember since being a little boy. There were stories about Sepp as a kid playing with matches, and the times he stole money out of his dad’s wallet. He talked about harvesting fruits from other peoples’ cherry trees and stealing a sword. Nelle listened, and towards the end was making sure he understood that God had long forgiven him for whatever wrong he had done. She said “Honey, the big deal is that you, Sepp, forgive yourself. It’s not that you are supposed to forget, which may happen anyhow, it is that you are acknowledging that you learned from the past. Forgive yourself for the past and with God’s help be a better Sepp. And honey, I know, God wants you to be a less stupid boy.”

In June Nelle, she encouraged Sepp to pray and meditate. In prayer, she urged him to ask God for willingness to let go of all the character defects in the way of being a better person.

In July Nelle asked Sepp this month you pray every day, and you ask God to remove all your shortcomings. She also said "Honey! No! Don't make a list of your shortcomings. God knows what should go, and what must stay. You don't know. Remember you are stupid."

August came, and Nelle asked Sepp to write and make a list of all people he had caused harm one way or the other. "Young man whatever names come to your mind, write them all down. Honey, never think or say I am not willing to make amends to such and such, because of whatever reason he, she, it doesn't deserve to be on the list."

September came around, and Nelle reminded Sepp, that it is very important to make amends, but more important to discuss any amends before getting ready to make them with at least two sober people and God. She did impress on him "Amends has something to do with fixing what's broken, and not to break something that doesn't need fixing, just because you want to feel better." Sepp didn't get it until she pointed out that step 9 reads: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible,



except when to do so would injure them or others.”

October it was when Nelle talked about daily inventories, and to recognize where he is failing to grow in understanding and usefulness. She also showed him where it states in the book that “If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame.”

November became the month where Sepp learned more about “His will be done!” And she talked a lot about the meaning of God’s will. Then she pointed out that the book talks about “After all God gave us brains!” She said, “Time to use your brains, why don’t you get some college education?”

In December Nelle said “Honey, now you are ready to 12 step others, but start with yourself, by promising me that you do what we just did this first year, concentrate on one step a month, look at it and apply it to your life. If you ever feel unwilling, always pray for willingness. And Honey, most important there is no way that you can do any of those twelve steps wrong if you do them in order, 1 in January, 2 in

February, 3 in March, 4 in April and so on...! You got it?"

In the years which followed, every month Nelle asked: "Honey, what step are you on?" She kept on telling him over and over, that he will never become a Saint, but using the steps, and those simple rules as found in the 12 principles she knew he would have a very good life. According to Nelle: "Honey, once you learn to use Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Brotherly love, Justice, Perseverance, Spirituality and be of Service, I can promise you shall have a happy, joyous and free life."



While staying at Nelle's place Sepp was working a lot. From all the work he did, what he enjoyed the most was to wait on tables. No night at work was ever the same.

That night he had quite a variety of folks. One of his tables was getting louder and louder. They had already three rounds of drinks so far, and Sepp was waiting for their food to come up. These were eight full-size well-nourished businessmen from Northern California in their

forties and fifties who had been playing golf all day. After settling the money part of their bets and finishing their talk about scores, one had started with politics. Next thing, Sepp heard them arguing about the politically correct way to deal with all those immigrants coming into the United States. One asked the question: "Should or shouldn't we allow any more of those illegal immigrants into our country?" "It's not only the illegals who cause the problems." Another man said. "Immigrants, they work for less than Union wages, and everybody hires them for they provide cheap labor, everybody hires them." "Even the governor did hire some 'wetbacks,' didn't he?" "He blames his wife." "Bull!" Someone shouted. "As long as they are available as cheap labor, people will hire them!"

The one who had started the conversation said: "So let's close the borders, built a wall!" "Yes! Kick them all out." Another said, "Send them all back to where they belong!" "It's them, these illegal s.o.b.s who use and abuse our welfare system isn't it?" One man added. "...like rats and we have to pay for their babies." "We pay for everything, hospital delivery, medical bills, schooling, welfare and

social security." "They clog our streets and drive without insurance." "They are no good for our economy, sending all their money home." "They are the nation's real problem. All these mother f.....s should stay home. We do not need any more of these . . . " was the opinion of one of the men.

Having a discussion was okay, but this group of men was getting too loud. The whole dining room was hearing their debate. Every customer at every table in the restaurant was listening now. Sepp was not too keen to go and tell them to keep the voices down. Nevertheless, he knew he had to do something before other guests started to complain, or worse leave. Slowly Sepp walked toward the 8-top. Sepp was thinking about the right words, to calm them down and not to offend anyone. His first choice was: "Ja! Please, gentlemen can you keep your voices somewhat down?" On second thought he realized he had to tell them to refrain from cussing as there were ladies in the room. Before Sepp got to say anything, a frail-looking older lady was stepping into his path, and all were hearing her angry voice, "Young men, you should be ashamed of yourself. How can you

talk like this about us immigrants?"

Eight big mouths were popping open, many pairs of eyes and as many sets of ears were focusing on the tall simple dressed but authoritative acting lady. She had everybody's attention, it was quiet at the golfer's round table, as a matter of fact, silence had replaced all noise in Sepp's section of the restaurant. Everybody wanted to hear what this gutsy lady had to say and she did say what she needed to say: "I am an immigrant. I came here seventy-five years ago. If they hadn't allowed me into this free country, I too would be dead. Like the rest of my family who stayed behind in the Old Country!" She gave each man a quick glance. "Look at yourself! None of you looks to me like a Native American. Your parents or grandparents must have been immigrants at one point. Just like me! Where would you be if they wouldn't have allowed your forefathers into this country? Ask yourself where would you be today?" She relaxed. With a forgiving smile on her face she said, "Never mind boys! Today is my eighty-fifth birthday, and I am thankful. It's all by the grace of God and this great country we are allowed to live in. Please listen to me! Let us keep the doors

open for all the new arrivals. Because it's them who make our country such a great country."

Sepp helped her with her chair as she quietly sat down. The guests applauded her, including the table of eight golfers. Sepp took good care of her table and served her a special dessert with a birthday candle. The eight golfers stopped by and each one apologized. They then ordered for the 'birthday girl' a flower-bottle of Champagne to take home.

She was all smiles. At the 8-top the subject had changed. They were arguing now about cars. Is CHEVY, FORD or DODGE the better truck? After excluding any and all foreign companies, because their trucks were all made in non-American factories, and were causing American workers to lose their jobs. It was quite a debate because 2 of the men had Toyota trucks, 1 had a Datsun, 1 owned a Mercedes all wheel truck. The rest had RAM Power wagons, GMC Sycloones, and FORD 150s, 350s and Supper Duty models. And it sounded for a moment like FORD was winning. However in leaving all agreed that the GMC Sycclone was, when first sold in 1991, the fastest stock pickup truck ever produced any place on the planet.



In spring of 1997, Sepp took Nalle's recommendation and enrolled in Business Skills Classes at the local Community College. While going to classes during the day, he also worked full-time six dinner shifts waiting-on-tables at the Old House Restaurant.

At the college he started out with software classes, WordPerfect to be more exact. His days were filled with learning something new, and he was changing his routine without noticing the changes as he changed. Sepp got himself a used word processor and started to put his diaries on floppy disks. It was a slow process, but he reduced the stack of diaries he had been hanging on to for many years.

Sepp found the private folder the one with his name in big prints on the outside, the folder he had shipped from South Africa. He opened it, just to see what it was. He looked at the content which included the envelope with a blood test, the one Mr. Walter van Russbourg had told him to do. Sepp looked in the manila envelope from the Lagoonstaad Clinic. It contained several papers and a copy of the bill. The total bill was

shown as 0.00ZAR, and that's all he looked at. Sepp stuffed the papers back into the envelope. He was too busy with saving his diaries on floppies. Sepp was ready to toss the envelope, but for whatever reason decided to put the envelope with the clinic report back into one of his folders, the one marked SEPP.

After learning WordPerfect a new Office suite had come out, it was called Microsoft Office. After that, Sepp took every computer class offered at the college, including programming and networking. Sepp wanted to learn and therefore made time to learn, never mind his busy schedule. With waiting on tables in the evenings, he made rent. Sepp kept a few dollars in his pocket as spending money, the rest of his tips he dropped right after work into the night deposit at a nearby bank. Sepp was living from day to day, and he wasn't unhappy. True, he had no car, no wife, no furniture, only a small slowly growing bank account, no credit cards, a few sets of clothing, and two pairs of work shoes. But he was happy, because he was sober, and he was learning something new and exciting every day.



One night Nelle had a heart attack, he heard her, he called 911, and it was Sepp's presence and quick actions what saved Nelle's life. At least that's what Nelle's doctor said when he came to see her, a few weeks later.

*Sepp + Elle + Petra & Nalle*

About sex, during his stay at Nelle's place Sepp was able to be for a few months without sex, but then he was horny and was not too picky at all. And he said so! He never lied about it. Nelle said about his sex drive: "Young man, you go do what you have to do. Just don't drink, don't get drunk! And honey listen, just don't get any of those girls pregnant either!"

Nelle, she had quite a pair of mammillae, well not as big as Petra, who had some huge ones and matching size nipples. Occasionally now he banged Petra. Just like him, Petra too was craving sex. They both liked to get it on! Did they love each other? Sepp didn't even remember that Petra ever said to him I love you. They just joked around and teased each other. It was usually her taking her pants off and playing with herself until he did her.

Sepp had met Petra at a meeting. She had asked him if he was available and willing to come to her home to help her with some work, the kind that needs a man's strength. He said yes because it was a Sunday, and he wasn't working. It sounded like a nice change from his daily routines, and he had high hopes that she may be interested in a sexual affair. He got the idea because of the way she hugged him. Petra knew she was turning him on. Once she noticed the effects she had on him, just by hugging and holding him, Petra felt he was what she wanted.

Sepp called her from Nelle's place, and Petra confirmed that she was impatiently waiting for his arrival. Sepp got on the bus and within the hour arrived at her place. Petra was wearing a light dress, cut low enough to display her chest size to the fullest, and the stiff dark nipples were standing in attention. Once he was able to look at the rest, her bare feet, pearls of liquids and foam-bubbles running down her inner right leg, he was trying to guess what next. He would have never guessed right, yet Petra helped him. She hugged and kissed him, and lifting her dress. She was wearing no underwear.

As he admired the spring of the foamy flow, she explained: "I used half a bottle of this new birth-control-spray, it just doesn't want to stay in. But let's see how it feels to you!" And that's how Sepp got introduced to Petra's soggy curly hair and vulva.

After that, every so often they got together. First once or twice a month, then every couple of months or so, Petra got in touch with him and asked him out. Petra was tallish, plump, in her 40s, with a round face, beautiful eyes, and reddish blond hair. She was broad-minded, aggressive, crafty, friendly and stubbornly selfish. She had a car, which he didn't have anymore. In most cases, Petra picked Sepp up, and they went to her place. On several occasions, they went south on the Cabrillo Highway, and had sexual encounters in the redwoods, on the beach, and on rocks above the Sea Lions. For her, everything she hadn't done before was a turn on, and she had a long bucket list when it came to unfulfilled scenarios, positions and places to have sex at. When the place was right, she took her clothes off in expectation, and he didn't disappoint her, but

did it with her, because he too enjoyed sexercising, kissing, petting and f\*cking.

Then one day Petra told him that she was pregnant. Sepp thought it must have been him. His world was instantly changing but was it for the better or worse, and when Sepp talked with Nelle about the news. Nelle cautioning him, she said, "Honey, now wait a moment!" Because she didn't think it was Sepp's doing. Nelle had heard something different from three men, who were going out with Petra on a more regular basis than what Sepp did. According to Nelle, Petra had been telling the same, namely that she is pregnant to each of these other guys too, a month before talking to Sepp. After that Sepp did not see Petra for over a year. When he asked Petra what happened and if she had a baby? Petra said she had a miscarriage. However as they had sex again on two occasions, the scar Sepp saw, reminded him of a cesarean cut. Sepp's guess was. If she had a child with him, she certainly didn't feel like having him around her child. Whatever the truth, Sepp was sure Petra had her reasons. Then not to forget, Petra had inherited aside from her mother's home, some other properties too. Sepp had not much.

He had very little to offer her, aside from those occasional sexual escapades.



While living at Nelle's place, yes, true, there was so much Sepp didn't have, yet instead of being depressed and unhappy, Sepp was happy. He had quite obviously no visible wealth, yet he felt healthy, was okay in his skin. He had no worries and responsibilities other than to get up, enjoy the day, be grateful for every meal, be thankful for work and income, go to classes and AA meetings and go to sleep. For Sepp, the use of computers and the sheer unlimited potential of the World Wide Web created an anticipation of up and coming adventures in learning, more exciting than anything he had ever been looking forward to.

Sober Sepp had many qualities, and much of his past learning and experience came in handy now. He was during his 2<sup>nd</sup> year at Nelle's place, when Sepp using his saved tips bought a car. This one was a used Mustang II, V8. Having wheels again, he drove by several of the places where he used to hang out at. He also went to Delinda's-Bar&Café. It was closed. The Delinda's-

Bar&Café sign was nowhere to be seen. The building was getting a paint job.



For over two years, Sepp called Nelle's guest room his home. After all, it was where he got to start over, one day at a time. Then Sepp moved out of Nelle's guestroom, and he moved into a cute little cottage, in Baycity, while still being involved and volunteering at recovery meetings on a daily basis.

Sepp fell in lust with a young, Japanese-Scottish lass, fresh out of rehab. Chika had knee-long black hair. She was short, with a beautiful figure, an oval face with a short nose and long eyelashes over dark eyes. After a recovery meeting, they went to a coffee shop, and they talked. They had much in common. Both had living issues because of substance abuse. For both making love clean and sober was a much appealing new experience. They cuddled together. They slept together, and they even worked together at times. Sepp helped her as she worked the floor at her mother's Japanese restaurant, right behind City Hall.

During school holidays and weekends, Sepp worked some luncheons with Chika at her mother's restaurant. In the evenings, he did his dinner shifts at the Old House Restaurant. They had fun times together. Sepp was not ready. He was still not ready for a committed relationship. Chika, however, wanted to get married as soon as possible. Chika had been through treatment for cocaine use. Sepp shared his experience strength and hope with her, and she shared her stories with him. Chika and Sepp both also shared their stories at Rotary Club meetings. Sepp helped her to get a CA (Cocaine Anonymous) meeting going. Her meetings went well for about six months. Then for whatever reason, police vehicles were parked in sight of the entrance of the meeting room. As this was happening quite regularly, fewer and fewer people showed up, and her meeting dissipated.

Because she needed transportation, Sepp bought Chika a newly restored Volkswagen. Yes, he was in love, not just lust but genuine love, so he thought once she left him. Yes, he did tell her that she sucks like a professional. She had talked about being a cocaine whore. Her clientele had been wealthy playboy types. He was hurt when

she left him. He was blaming himself for her decision. It took time for Sepp to realize that they had not been true to each other because he knew she lied to him, and Sepp also lied to her, he knew, when he knew. They were attracted because the sex was good. They laughed a lot together. They had common interests. They both enjoyed each other.

She broke Sepp's heart when she took off with a friend of his. The same, an artist, had painted her in watercolors and oil. Sepp knew about her sitting for him as a model. Sepp had gotten the two together because his friend needed a nude model. Yes, it all was very painful, yet: "Thus too shall pass! But why did it take so long to stop hurting?" Her running off with Sepp's friend, or Sepp's friend running off with her to another state, did make Sepp think. "He wasn't Sepp's friend anymore! Or was he still Sepp's friend?" All the turmoil the friend situation had created, however, made Sepp work those steps, the 12 steps people in recovery use as their rules in life if they want to have a happy and enjoyable life. Chika helped him to become a believer in the power of the 12 steps, which contain the answers to any



problem Sepp may ever have to struggle with in the future.



Using some of his saved tips, Sepp bought a computer kit. He built his first PC, an 80286 which had a 16bit processor and soon he got a dial-up connection with Net Zero and email with Juno going.

Yes, Nelle had been the one who had stomped into his life while he was sick and tired, sitting at the big round table at the Alano Club in Baycity. Nelle, this feisty Italian lady, she had taken Sepp in, when all wheels fell off his apple cart. It was Nelle who had introduced him to those principles. The ones he had avoided most of his life: Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Brotherly love, Justice, Perseverance, Spirituality, and Service. It was so different to the standards he grew up with namely “Des kleinen Mannes Sonnenschein ist Ficken und Besoffenschein.” The meaning being “Sex and drunkenness is the little guy’s sunshine.” In Sepp’s mind the richer you are, the more you get of both, sexual pleasures and

more expensive alcoholic beverages. Well it all had changed, over the past few years.

Whenever Sepp didn't feel happy because of people, places and things not going his way, Nelle used to tell him: "You poor unhappy thing, you better make a list of what you are grateful for!"

When he was in self-pity, telling her his "poor-me-stories" because he was feeling sorry for himself, Nelle's answer was: "Listen my boy, there up on the hill, somewhere is a beautiful looking outhouse, with a pity pot. There is a long line of those wanting to sit on the warm seat. Get in line, and when you get to sit on the pity pot, make it short. Remember there are many more waiting in line who want to sit on it too!" Sepp knew she saved his life. Sepp believed in angels. In his mind, Nelle must have been sent to save him.

Nelle had several ABCs. One of them was:

A)"You can't be a waiter forever!"

B)"Change is the only constant!"

C)"You must pray for the willingness to change!"

Nelle constantly reminded him: “Honey, be careful what you wish for, because you will get it, sometimes in your time, sometimes in God’s time!”



At the Old House Restaurant, Sepp worked with a lovely woman, about his age, give or take ten years. Yes, she was a little older than him. Jeanette was tall, pear-shaped, wide around the hips, small in the middle and a little wider at the shoulders with an average chest. When Jeanette found out that he had his very own place, she visited him. They did have a few things in common. She had moved out from Texas to the Baycity. She was divorced, so was he. Jeanette did not drink or smoke, neither was he. She was looking for a date, and so was he. Jeanette was a hardworking waitress. He was a hard working waiter. She was friendly and caring, so was he. Jeanette brought him some housewarming gifts too, and then at her 3<sup>rd</sup> visit, she stayed for the night.

Sepp enjoyed what he was doing. He greatly appreciated being able to go to classes and learn new things during the day and to

make some money waiting on tables in the evenings. Clean and sober he was working the floor with a different attitude and outlook on life. That one night, one of Sepp's tables was a family of four. They were seated at a table in the privacy of an alcove. The parents were in their late fifties. The young lady in jeans and sweater was their daughter. The young man was not her brother, as Sepp first thought because they looked very much alike. He was her boyfriend. The younger couple was in their late twenties. The father ordered a bottle of champagne, a bottle of white Burgundy, and a bottle of Bordeaux wine. He wanted all three to be served simultaneously. Sepp opened one bottle after the other, handed each bottle's cork to the host and poured him a little sip. The daughter was questioning her parents "Where were you when I grew up?" "Don't give me this! Who do you think paid for your schooling and traveling?" the mother answered. "Some private schools were okay, considering the problems in public schools." "Did you read today's newspaper? Guns in a high school!" "That's nothing. 911 calls and unscheduled police and ambulance visits to school grounds are not uncommon anymore." "We all have to specialize," said the father to the

young man. He smelled each cork, checked each wine for color, took a breather from the first glass, put it down and had a sip of water. He looked once more through the glass at the fine pearling bubbles of the champagne and nodded his head. Then he tasted the white Burgundy, swirling the wine in his mouth, he took his time to taste this one, followed by the Bordeaux. He said to the young man in his late twenties, wearing suit and tie: "After the bar exam, as an attorney, you can probably support your wife and kids in a reasonably proper fashion?" "What kids?" The daughter shouted: "Shouldn't you ask me, too?" The father rinsed his mouth with water, had a piece of bread and tried the champagne. All this time he ignored Sepp standing in waiting. He finally approved with a "Go ahead, pour them whatever they like." Three had champagne. It's the mother who preferred the French Chardonnay. The young man wanted some Bordeaux poured too, but his opinion was that it should be decanted and allowed to breathe. Sepp disagreed, knowing that it was nothing but a waste of time; still, he did not offer any unwanted advice. Sepp had to take care of another table before he returned with a crystal decanter and a candle. The young

man wanted to see the decanter. He inspected it and rejected this one on the grounds of it being lead crystal. Sepp got a regular wine carafe instead and slowly poured the wine from the bottle into the glass carafe. There was no sediment, none at all.

“Sex outside marriage is a deadly sin?” the daughter questioned her mother’s remark about marriage and affairs. “Sex, sinfully good. Just use condoms.” The daughter voiced her opinion, and put her friend on the spot as she pinched his upper leg asking “What about sex?” He started blushing and her “Speak up love. Let’s hear your expert opinion.” did not help him in front of her parents. The daughter turned to Sepp. “You look reasonably intelligent. What’s your opinion on sex, children, and marriage?” Sepp did not hesitate one second. He heard her loud and clear, but answered, “Ja! I’m sorry, but I did not listen. The wine is now decanted.” He looked straight into her sparkling eyes and said, “Ja! Allow me to put the carafe on your table.” With a “Ja! I shall be back in a few minutes for your order,” Sepp left their table and took care of his other customers. The four in the alcove were having a lengthy meal. As their wine

consumption increased so did the volume of their voices. At first, he noticed the parents' discomfort with their daughter's outspokenness and downright rude remarks. They did not agree with their daughter's standpoints on parenting. They insisted on grandchildren, but the daughter argued: "Why should I get married? There is no incentive for that. Kids? Why would I want to sacrifice my career and my freedom? Why would I want to give up my great figure for a crying, thankless, little monster?" "You ask why...?" the mother disagreed with some of her daughter's statements.

After a bottle of wine each, they all started getting along with each other. After eight bottles in total, they termed Sepp, their very best friend. The father tried now to explain the crookedness of politicians to Sepp, while the stepson-to-be assured the mother that they would set a wedding date soon, real soon, and plan on grandchildren. The daughter took her sweater off. She wore a sports-bra type top, made from flexible material in dark blue. She was hot and in rare form now, proposing Shea and Tyrone as names for her two children. She

just knew she was going to have both a boy and a girl.

Sepp caught himself spending much more time with this table than any of his other three. One of these other tables was getting impatient, and rightfully so. Sepp heard fingers snapping. He did not like it, but he attended to these guests at once. They were waiting for their check. Sepp produced it and apologized for keeping them waiting too long. Sepp's table in the alcove was the last one to leave. He heard the father arguing with his wife "Sweetheart, I drive. You are not drunk enough to drive." The younger man, feeling no pain, offered to drive. Sepp called a cab, and as he walked his customers to the door he announced to them: "Ja! I took the liberty of calling you a taxi to take you to your hotel." They looked at him. "Ja! I strongly suggest you get your car tomorrow." Sepp added firmly. The younger man's tie was askew; his shirt collar unbuttoned. Sepp knew that sober he would understand. He sounded angry, and he questioned him, "What d'you mean? Who are you to tell me that I cannot drive?" Sepp had to calm him down. And he did so with a "Ja! By no means Sir. A friend of mine



just called me, to let me know that there is a sobriety checkpoint on the route to your hotel." Addressing all of them Sepp added, "Ja! I don't want you to have to go through the trouble and expense of getting stopped and having to go through a sobriety test." "You sure?" the young man asked, now less agitated. "Ja! I know you are okay to drive, yet I don't think the police knows this, and they will not be asking my opinion," Sepp said, trying to persuade him to agree to the use of a cab.

"Ja! The local police use the rule of 'anything over two drinks is too much.' It's their interpretation of California Law." Sepp added. The young man agreed. Neither of the women cared who drives. The father thanked Sepp for looking out for them, and they got into their cab. Sepp stood in the door and watched the taxi drive off. Sepp was glad they listened to him. There was no sobriety checkpoint as far as Sepp knew anywhere in town, but he forgave himself for lying as it served a useful purpose, keeping another drunk driver off the road.

*Sepp's Side Stories & Poems*

It had been Nelle's words that had pushed Sepp along and made him look at himself. Her "You have to change only one thing, and that's everything." Kept ringing in his ears. Sepp was willing to embrace change. Over time he changed, finally getting it, understanding that change is the only constant.

One of Nelle's other ABCs, the one relating to change was...

- A) I can't
- B) God can
- C) I let him change me.

To change, he needed to apply Nelle's ABCs. She said, "The ABCs summarize all I ever learned about the AA program." Nelle also insisted on "Sepp my young man, you do not need to know why it all works, all you have to know is that it works." Seeing his face, Nelle added: "Just fake it, till you make it!" And mainly because it had worked for Nelle all these years, Sepp stuck with it. In Sepp's case, change included going back to college and learning about technology. While doing so, it was the

faith that he was doing the right thing what kept him changing.

Sepp's was getting hooked on computer science projects. That was one of the changes, and more, much more was still in store for Sepp and soon to come. As part of getting his hands dirty with the new technologies, Sepp built his second Personal Computer. It was an 80386 PC, with two floppy drives, one for 3.5 the other for 5.25 diskettes. It was a fast 32-bit machine. It had 16 MB of RAM and a huge 408 MB hard drive. This one replaced the 80286 which had a 16bit processor. He was able to use the modem from his old computer and was able to use his Juno e-mail account and Net-Zero to get to the internet and connect to other computer users.

Online with a dial-up connection he looked and found addresses of women who were looking for men. Sepp enjoyed the freedom, which came with the Internet and dating-online. One Octavia answered Sepp, from New York. She planned on visiting the area, and she had plans to move out to California. She turned out to be a very sweet lady from South America. Octavia also had several friends and relatives in Northern California. Yes, Octavia was quite a

woman, much traveled, medium height and a little on the pudgy, plump side. She was slightly older than Sepp, had a beautiful round face, with bright brown eyes, and wavy shoulder length reddish colored hair. She had never been married, yet had had many boyfriends and as Sepp talked about his past without shyness, so did she. Octavia called Sepp: "My little boy!"

It took very little kissing, and she was fired up and hot. Sepp was doing it with her usually just before going to sleep, and she did comment on it, as she was used to getting it on, anytime, not just at bedtime. They dated quite loosely. When Octavia had time, she spent a night or two with him. As Sepp understood, she had a couple of dates in the area. All in all, she was shopping for the right man to settle down with.

Another night on his way home from work Sepp was thinking about the people he had waited on, night after night. He had left the Old House Restaurant just before midnight. Instead of driving home, a less than five-minute drive, he took a drive along the scenic waterfront. Very few of his guests, in the right frame of mind, would want to spend a great deal of money for some mediocre service and a so-so meal. It takes

no special reason other than the need to eat, to go to any low-priced restaurant. "Ja! To spend over 100 dollars per person, or more, per meal, however, needs a good reason. Pleasure is a good reason. Perfection is another." Sepp said to himself. That was where the waitperson's expertise and salesmanship were needed to create that extraordinary dining experience worth the money spent. Yes, Sepp's skills helped to create those fond memories, which justified an above-average-guest-check-total. In addition to the mood set by the lighting, the music, the decor, and good vibes, it was up to the waiter to coach the guest along. The ideal restaurant situation would have been one wherein every menu item appealed directly to all of the customer's senses without exception, in a perfect setting and served accordingly.

Sepp drove his little Ford Mustang through a nearly full moon night along the Ocean Blvd. He was stopping here and there, the window rolled down, listening to the relaxing sounds of the waves gently coming ashore. There was very little traffic, within an hour he hadn't counted more than three cars along Ocean Blvd. Sepp decided to take the time and drive by Delinda's-

Bar&Café again. The name in the window had changed to "T&I Ice Cream Parlor." Sepp said to himself "Ja! So she sold out and retired! Good for her!" still being in disbelief that his friend Delinda had given up her place, her business.

Sepp arrived home, and sweaty he was, so he showered. By now it was already past 1 in the morning. He heard a knock at the door. It was Jeanette. Since the first one-nighter, she had stopped in once every other week because she needed someone to talk with. At least that's what she said, and by now Sepp knew, what she needed and wanted.

Some kissing followed, and when she quite anxious inquired "...you can't leave me just like this, all stoked, can you?" and she laughed "Sepp you can't do this to me!" He asked "Ja! Why don't you decide on staying with me tonight?" Her answer was "I just did!" and she was taking her clothes off and headed towards the bed. Sepp didn't have to undress, wearing a towel, first of all, it was not hiding much, and second, it took little time to drop it. She could see that Sepp was reacting very favorably and was awakened by her tempting him. Sepp surely was happy to see her. Sex was a refreshing exercise

for both. It took them to a different planet. Forgotten were any worries, and forgotten was any plan or goal, while they both were trying their best to satisfy each other. Exhausted they slept in each other's arms.

Next morning, Jeanette left after breakfast. Sepp had no classes to go to that day, all he had was his dinner-shift at the Old House. He was scheduled for 4 in the afternoon. Looking at the fridge, time to do some shopping. Sepp drove over to Safeway and bought German Bauernbrot, eggs, milk, crème cheese, a carton of cigarettes, and a variety of fresh fruit. As he left the store, a young lady was handing out complimentary copies of the local newspaper with a signup sheet for home delivery. Sepp thanked her for the free copy and complimented her on the pretty outfit and her million dollar smile. At home after putting the groceries away, Sepp scanned the paper. He wasn't looking for anything in particular. But he found an article about Bucky, Nicole's husband in the newspaper. It was about the same Nicole he used to work with and for in South Africa. Sepp had to read the article a couple of times: "A man accused of plotting the murder of his wealthy in-

laws pleaded no contest Monday and was immediately sentenced to two consecutive terms of 26 years to life in prison.” According to the article, he had offered the two killers each \$750,000 to kill Nicole’s mother and her new husband to be. Yes, Nicole’s husband had hired two Israeli citizens to do the dirty deed. Both suspects in the case had then left for Israel. Nicole and her husband had an ironclad alibi for the time of the murder. The two suspects as well had alibis saying they were out of state during the time of the killings. Their alibi fell apart when one of the killer’s jilted girlfriends confessed that she had seen both not far away from the actual murder site. She had as well as others at the time, believed the two suspects’ story of being on duty for the Mossad, Israel’s intelligence agency. Aside from the thirty witnesses, it was the confession of one of the killers and Nicole’s statements, which put her husband away, until the end of his life. The authorities said they knew that Nicole knew about the plot, yet had no active role in the shootings. For her statements, she was promised immunity. Both killers were arrested in Tel Aviv. And they were sentenced to life in



prison in Israel because the country does not extradite its citizens.

And yeah, Sepp had heard about the case from Pat the Sherriff at David McArthur's home some time back. Then he didn't have the details, and nobody was arrested or sentenced. So it was Nicole's Bucky, who did the dirty deed.

Sepp remembered Nicole saying way back while being on a road trip with her in South Afrika, and making out on a knoll in the Tsitsikama Forest: "My mother only got her hands on my dad's money, because she betrayed him. That's what got him killed!" Sepp started to wonder if this peculiarity was a family trait. He questioned himself as to what about Nicole's daughter Shirley, was she going to inherit the same character attributes?

*Sepp's Eric Nicole's Bucky*

Sepp enjoyed his work at the Old House Restaurant. One of his co-workers was Maria Cruzeiro. It was a sunny day with temperatures in the seventies. Sepp undoubtedly felt lazy. It was a Friday, and he had spent only 4 hours at the college, learning desktop publishing and hands on UNIX networking. Sepp finished getting

dressed for work as a waiter. The phone rang. Sepp didn't want to answer. He was on his way out to go to work. It rang again. He picked it up. It was Maria, "I need a ride!" Sepp offered "Ja! Where are you? I will come and get you." she answered. "I have bus money. But I will be late. The next bus comes in 45 minutes," Sepp insisted "Ja! Never mind the bus fare. I shall be by in a few minutes." Sepp wrote her address down and out the door he went. Arriving at her street, he recognized her from a distance. She waited on the sidewalk, leaning against the stop sign, at the corner, below the apartment building where she and her husband lived. Today she sported a pleated black skirt to go with her regular white blouse and the friendly-looking flower tie that was a part of her uniform. "Ja! Nice legs," Sepp commented as she climbed aboard his Ford Mustang. "I bought the skirt at the Goodwill Store," so she said, ignoring Sepp's remark.

He parked the car at the city-owned parking garage, and they walked together downhill the three blocks to work. Both arrived a few minutes early. "Michael is causing me some headaches lately!" She mentioned to Sepp on the way to

work. "Ja! Who?" An absent-minded Sepp asked. Maria added, "My husband."

Now, she was looking forward to a perfect night at the Old House Restaurant. Sepp said to Maria: "Ja! Perfection in dining is a dream worth striving for. It is as close as the fabulous pot of gold at the end of the rainbow much talked about but never found." She insisted. "But I am ready for a perfect night!" One of the other waiters, Angelo, was telling all, that he had quite a day. Twice he had to call a tow truck to get his car started. Then he had to call a locksmith. All of his keys had been locked inside his car. Finally, he broke down and took a taxi. Angelo was talking about how much money he had spent, just to get ready and come to work. Angelo summed it up with: "This was an expensive day! I need to make some money." Angelo added "We better have a good crowd tonight!" as he was going to set up his station. Sepp was ready. He was looking forward to the evening. He was used to counting his tips at the end of the shift. "Because one never knew, until one knew."

The doors for dinner were going to open at six. This Friday night was the start of a long

weekend. Paul, a tired-looking waiter, hung out next to the 'eighty-six board,' prominently displayed on the kitchen's wall. The large green old-fashioned chalkboard was used to communicate menu items that were no longer available. The yawning waiter studied the word 'bouillabaisse' before reaching for a piece of chalk. He used the white chalk to edit some of the dark spots from his shirt's cuffs. It worked. Some of the worst stains were now hidden beneath chalk marks. The white chalk created a sharp contrast to the once white, now yellow-gray material. His shirt, untouched by bleach and soap for a number of workdays, it looked in dire need of TLC. He looked tired too.

Distinct sounds could be heard. Cling-clang, glass was tumbling. Ping-bong-bam, more glasses were falling. Crash, bang! The breaking noise announced 'the end' for some expensive glassware. The origin of this crepitation was the lower main dining room. It was the distinct sound of Austrian crystal falling, breaking, and bursting into countless pieces. The manager was all ears. Today, as always, he blamed his shortage of hair on the job's stress. He ran his hand over his head. Framed by a small border of

thinning hair was a high, glossily polished plateau. Still searching for hair where there was none, he headed in the direction of audible glass fragmentation.

The kitchen air was filled with layers of delicate fragrances. The gamut of essences from sweet garlic to sour vinegar floated in the air near the cold-kitchen side. A few steps further, smells of Marsala wine and mint wafted through the air, their origin the sauce section of the hot line. A whiff of freshly baked bread was arising from the ovens to the left. All now overshadowed by the robust flavors from the fish section, where the fish cook had just opened a large can of scallops.

Just past the kitchen, next to the employee changing area, Maria stood in line waiting to use the bathroom. A cocktail waitress had locked herself inside. She had love-problems. Insensitive to her coworkers' needs, she did her crying behind the locked door. Her timing was poor. Somebody called the bartender, who to persuade his cocktail waitress gave her two choices: "Tina, come out and go to work or come out and go home!" He tried a second time, less gently: "Tina! Get your little buns out here, right

now!" She needed her job, more than anything. Tina got off the pity-pot so that the others may use the 'potty' too. Her eyes were red. She was blowing her nose. Tina, the cocktail waitress, had everybody's sympathy. "How did she get hooked up with that married guy in the first place?" some voice asked. No one answered.

In the front of the house, at the lectern-style antique standup desk near the carved entry door, the hostess was making last minute changes in the reservation book. The phone never stopped ringing. She sat down on the barstool behind the raised desk. Her hips were mightier than her skirt's closing-device. Marlisa, the hostess, was taking reservations and erasing cancellations. She stapled new information onto two of the waiters' function-sheets. These were changes the wait staff had to be aware of. One she handed Sepp. The person-count for Sepp's party had gone up by three. She waved and smiled at the manager as he rushed by on one of his duty calls. Absentmindedly, he acknowledged her by nodding his head. Sepp watched Marlisa. Between answering phone calls, she was trying to fix her skirt. She had told Sepp only a week ago that she was going off her diet. In

connection with no eating, she had experienced fainting spells while driving her car. "Better fat than dead," she had told him. On the telephone, she was polite and friendly. Off the phone, Marlisa was cursing the now ripped-open and stuck zipper. She was cursing at whoever made this zipper, and his mother, and finally the inventor of the impractical, unpredictable, unreliable, ungood, undone, uncooperative double row of dark plastic teeth. After one more attempt, half unzipped, she got mad. She grabbed the stapler and with a click-clack, click-clack she fixed her problem. The phone was ringing and ringing. Marlisa picked up the phone and with a "This is Marlisa, sorry to keep you waiting, how may I help you?" she returned to her job routine.

Sepp went looking for Maria. He found her back in the kitchen, talking with one of the line cooks. Sepp watched Allen the saucier, whipping egg yolk into the warm clarified butter at a steady pace, not too fast and not too slow, and he remembered his days in the kitchen back in the Hansestadt. The chef announced: "One minute to six o'clock, ladies and gentlemen, on

your stations!" Sepp left the kitchen with Maria following him.

In the dining room, the grouchy manager urged a sweating waiter: "Hurry up!" It was Tom, the waiter, frantically finishing up the vacuuming of the floor and attempting to find all the tiny fragments of the shattered crystal glasses. Finished, he dragged the vacuum cleaner to the housekeeping closet. The manager's thumbs-up signal told Marlisa that it was now time to unlock the front door. The night's feeding of the rich and famous was to begin. The main players for the dinner act were ready to enter the stage.

Sepp mentioned to Maria that they needed to add three settings for their party. They had plenty of time. Nearly an hour was to go till the party's planned arrival. Their group had a three-course meal. The food was a sampler appetizer plate, followed by Duck Confit, and finished with cheesecake on raspberry coulis. All came out from the kitchen properly timed, with no delays. Some guests had a glass of blush-wine, others had water or ice tea. The party of 34 ate and left for after dinner dance and drinks to a ballroom at the convention center. They had a good



evening. Maria was happy about the big check, their 20% tip, as well as a side tip of \$100. As there were no buses running late at night and her husband wasn't picking her up, Sepp dropped Maria off at her apartment. "You see Sepp, that was a perfect night tonight!" Sepp agreed "Ja! You are right. Good Night Maria." As he was driving home, he recalled the day he met her and her husband first. He also remembered taking the couple out sailing on Lily's boat, back in the days when he worked as Food & Beverage manager for the SCMountain-Inn.

*Sepp's Side Partner's Profile*

Octavia was spending another weekend with him, and they talked about education. Sepp mentioned his fear of taking classes at the college, and she laughed when he acknowledged how scared and worried he was on his first day of going back to school. All Sepp wanted at the time, was to learn how to put his many books full of diaries dating back to age 13 on floppy disks. He had just one goal. It was to get rid of all the paper and to stop schlepping those many diaries around. Sepp professed about being accepted with open arms by several of the teachers. He revealed to Octavia how surprised

he was that those teachers truly took great interest in his learning, and they taught him the right way. Sepp commented on how they made him learn word processing page by page, both books. Not one of those teachers' let Sepp get away with shortcuts.

Octavia didn't mind listening to him, as he elaborated about getting good grades, which made learning so much more interesting. "Ja! Yes, once I got an A, and another A, I was hooked." Sepp admitted, "I am most grateful for the fact that those teachers' efforts created interest, they influenced and guided me to become involved in technology." Sepp was smiling when he said "Then one day, because I spent many hours in the classroom, helping others, I was told to sign up as a student worker. And I got paid for being there, helping students and teachers alike." Sepp described to Octavia the feeling fortunate making money while working nights waiting on tables at the Old House Restaurant, and getting challenged and praised during the daytime hours spent in the classroom. Between going classes, the hours he had nothing to do Sepp volunteered as a student

worker. The reason was that he had no place to go anyway.

Then one day one of his teachers suggested to Sepp: “Why don’t you get an Associate in Science Degree?” A surprised Sepp had to admit that he had no idea why he should do so. All he was doing was learning about computers. Sepp just wanted to know how they work, and how to make the new technology work for him. He had not come to classes to become a teacher, or technology specialist. In his mind his profession was hospitality.

Octavia kept on listening to him. She always had an open ear for him. At least this time it was about his achievements in school. At other times he had spilled his guts, not holding back as he divulged his immoral adventures and his past lifestyle as it had happened, without making it sound worse or better, but just as it was. Octavia too had not been without a past life. She had revealed much about her growing up in a poor neighborhood in Colombia, being sold and traded to men, until she got to Miami. Octavia had confessed much of her intimate dreams, and about the realities which come with being a woman in a man’s world. Octavia’s travels

through life included being used. She was forced to become sexually experienced at a young age. She had learned that looks, the abilities to please, and knowledge about when to be quiet are basic survival skills.

Two weeks after moving out to the West Coast, Octavia started to work again. Aside from her 8-5 job Octavia was spending much time with some friends in the San Jose area. Octavia had been a federal government employee on the East Coast. Therefore she had no problems to get hired here on the West Coast. She even had the same position and got the same federal pay and benefits.

On Saturday during the day, before going to work, and Sunday all day, as Sepp was off-duty, he showed Octavia the nearby tourist spots, including the Redwoods Park.

*Sepp & Maria's Media*

About a month since they had worked a station together, Sepp was again teamed up with Maria. He liked to work with her for many reasons aside them being friends since the days he was living and sailing with her friend Lily. Maria was still new to fine dining. It was her

second year working as a waitress and first year of fine dining. "You used to be a restaurant owner, and then a manager. What do you like about working as a waiter?" Maria wanted to know. "Ja! I am a waiter. I like people. I get along with people. I earn my upkeep by waiting on tables. Most of all, it's because of the tips, the gratifications."

Maria and Sepp were sharing a large station this night. Soon they got somewhat busy. Sepp gave her one table of six. At this time he had already five deuces and a four-top going, Maria had just two tables of two each. Still, as Sepp had extra time on his hands, he was serving drinks to his and her tables. Maria got another two tables seated. She handed Sepp a tray-full of drinks for the six-top and says: "The sherry is for the lady with the glasses. The champagne goes to the gray-haired gentleman. Gibson is for the lady in red, and a Martini for her husband. The two whiskies are for the couple next to them." Maria was getting busy now. She put her food orders in, while Sepp was serving her aperitifs. At her table, all guests wore glasses, while studying the menu. All the men but one, who was bald, had gray hair. All the ladies had

some red included in their outfits. Sepp felt uncomfortable asking, as he interrupted their conversation, "Could you please help me? Who ordered what?"

They were exceptionally nice people, and Sepp had no problem serving all the drinks. However, later when he helped Maria with the food, Sepp asked Maria, "Who is position one at your six top?" "The guy who pays," she answered. "Which one gets the check?" Sepp asked. Maria's lost look was enough of an answer. Sepp took care of his tables and glanced over at her six-top, where she was now sweating and trying to figure out who had what. They ordered four courses. It was a good table, two Japanese and one American couple. While serving wine, Sepp found out that it was a business dinner, and they were part of a Convention-Center group. Soon Sepp's tables were getting their food, and Maria helped him.

He put a piece of paper on the tray, showing by numbers who gets served what. "Guest #1 is the first person to your left when you get to the table. Everybody else is numbered clockwise starting at #1," he explained to Maria. They worked well together.

Maria cleared her plates, and he reset the silver, as needed, a fork here, a knife there. It was a good rush. Then it was over. "Ja! The best time to make money is when we have customers!" he said. Maria agreed. In the next seating, they had just two tables of late diners. "I like the way you use Arabic numbers for your guests on your notepad as you take the order. Clockwise, makes sense, may I use it too?" Maria asked. Sepp answered "Ja! Sure please do. To be honest around the world that is the way we professional waiters take the order and it allows us to hand tables off to anybody, without having to explain much. Also, wherever you see Roman numerals, like I, II, III, those stand for the order in which courses have to be served." Maria was truly happy to have learned something new. For Sepp, it was basic, minimum knowledge. Sepp wondered why nobody else had shown her how to take orders the right way, at any size table.

After being employed at the Old House Restaurant for some time, Sepp had not forgotten to be most grateful to the owners for providing medical insurance when he needed help. They had provided the employee insurance, which had allowed Sepp to grab the

opportunity and check into a 30day recovery program. Back then thanks to his employer, Sepp had been given a chance to get 30days of sobriety while being in a closed environment. It truly helped Sepp to break up with his good old friend in the bottle. 30days had given him enough of a distance to his last drink and had allowed him to make new friends. After that Sepp had been able to find his way back to recovery via the Alano Club in Baycity, and his sponsor Nelle. It all happened a few years back. Still, Sepp was trying to show his gratitude daily, and he worked hard to perform at his fullest and best for the sake of the Old House Restaurant. He wanted them to be proud of him. Then the Old House Restaurant closed its doors. Sepp helped the owners pack up for their move back to Florida. Here too he was being paid generously. The money-providing owner was a good man. He used to smuggle plane loads of cocaine into Florida before he moved out to California. He still liked his stimulating white powder as much as those younger women. He also used to sideswipe parked cars with his Lincoln Continental, at least once a month. Yes, he was an original in every way and Sepp was proud of knowing him.



Almost all the employees talked about going to get unemployment checks. Sepp, however, planned to go job hunting. On the very same day when Sepp résumé in hand was on his way to look for a job, he was asked to be part of the opening crew for a new restaurant, by the newly hired chef. It was the Casa Vecchio on rails to open as a fine restaurant in an old schoolhouse in Artichoville. Sepp said "Ja! Yes!" Here Sepp helped to recruit and train the wait-staff. From opening day on Sepp worked Saturday and Sunday lunch and dinner shift, usually taking a nap in the car or on the nearby beach from 3 to 4 in the afternoons. During the week, Sepp had classes during the day. He arrived at 4:30 and left by 10:30 at night. The Casa Vecchio offered a fine Italian menu, had an excellent chef, and well-trained wait-staff. Sepp provided professional know-how and experience and made sure that all was up to his high hospitality standards. Sepp was at the right time at the right place. There was a need for an upscale restaurant in the small town of Artichoville. Business was good from day one. The Casa Vecchio had local support as well as a steady flow of customers from the various

surrounding gated neighborhoods with luxury homes.

Sepp had become good friends with two of the waitresses. Those two he had stolen from an Italian restaurant near the boat-launch facility up north. At their old place of work, the longtime chef and owner had the odd habits of treating waitresses as his girls and lovingly he called them his whores. He was known to pimp them out, sending waitresses home with paying patrons as well. Sepp knew about it, from other fellows who had made use of the service. Sepp didn't tell those two waitresses that because of the word on the street, he had a few years earlier, enjoyed a dinner and drinks there with a friend, and taken one of the waitresses 'to go!' as well.

Yes, the Italian restaurant chef-owner's hiring practice was simple straightforward. He never advertised. He hired only women who needed a job. Because of his location, facing on one side the public boat ramps and the other the busy main road, he got every size and type of female knocking at the door for work. His job interview consisted of: "You wanna make money?" If the answer was: "Yes!" Next, he

wanted to know "What can you do?" and "Would put out for money when asked to?" If the answer was "No!" he would ask her to try another place. If the new girl's answer was "Yes, to make money, sure, why not?" and he was in the mood, and he, usually, was. The chef asked her to show what she had to offer and 'test rode' her in his kitchen over the butcher block.

Because of the location, the money was good, on and off the job, so nobody complained about the chef-owner's ways of running his business. About the two waitresses, Sepp had hired away from him, they both had kids, and both needed the income desperately. Both were caring nice ladies. They both wanted to be treated right, work hard and get paid as professional waitresses. They didn't want to be known as common street sluts, and when Sepp promised them a good income at the Casa Vecchio and an excellent work environment they left their old boss for the new position and life. They both turned out to be the most reliable, hardworking waitresses, who made above average tips just by being on time and being teachable.

About a year into it, there was a change in ownership at the Casa Vecchio. The new owner had a meeting with the wait staff. He was talking about making it mandatory that all waiters and waitresses tip out 50% to the house. Those 50 percent he was going to use, to provide a bonus for the salaried staff, including management, host person, and kitchen staff. Sepp didn't like the idea. He always tipped out to the people who helped him, by his choice. With a "That's not fair, I don't work this way." Sepp handed the new owner his apron and quit his job in Artichoville. Driving home, he was considering getting student loans. Because without working as a waiter, he needed help to pay for rent, food, and classes. The same day he stopped by at the Custom-House-Restaurant. Sepp was greeted by the owner, a Mr. Theo, and as he asked: "What are you doing now, Sepp, where are you these days?" Sepp answered, "Just finished my job in Artichoville, am planning to look for work here in Baycity." that's when Mr. Theo instructed Ned, the manager, "Put Sepp on the schedule, he is hired." Sepp didn't even a chance to do any other job search at all.

Sepp's Columbian friend Octavia kept a non-committing loose relationship with Sepp going, mainly for the purpose to escape her world. But also to be able to talk to someone who listened without judging her. Once or twice every few months she called before stopping by and they spent some talk and play time together.

Octavia had worked at her new job in the city for over a year when thieves broke into her new car and stole her radio. She bought a new radio, yet this one was removable. Now, whenever she parked her car, same place as before, same parking structure, same floor, same spot, she took the radio out and carried it in her large bag along to her downtown office. These days Octavia also had the hots for a co-worker from her department. Leaving with him, all worked up and in no condition to wait any longer, they did their kissing and some petting. That usually happened in the privacy of the parking structure, up on the fourth floor. If he wanted to, she gladly let him go all the way. Octavia truly liked the extra excitement of public sex. "Chase is a big, strong fellow!" Octavia confided to Sepp one weekend while staying

with him. "I don't know what his plans are for me, but he turns me on! He makes me shiver, you know?!" Octavia also disclosed: "You know, I did have the feeling of being watched lately on several occasions!" Sepp asked "Ja! What do you say, being watched," and she explained: "When doing it with Chase in the parking garage!"

Sepp wasn't working that weekend. It was during a school break. Sepp took Octavia on a tour of the Redwoods-Park on one day, and on an outing on horseback the next day at Olaf's place. During the trip to the Redwoods-Park they went to the hot baths, and after asking twice "Really! No bathing suits?" and "Nude?" Octavia enjoyed the hot baths and got to listen to Sepp's stories of visiting here before with several lady friends. At Olaf's ranch because she asked, he told her about the outing with Hera who had never before been on horseback, and the fun they all had. Octavia was not afraid of horses, to the contrary. On the East-Coast, she had an affair with a married man, whose wife hated horses. He took Octavia along to horse jumping competitions and some form of steeplechase. He, her boss, introduced her to all his friends as his secretary, which was kind of true. But during

the time with him, she learned to love being in the company of horses. For Octavia horses were some special creatures, in her words “Horses are more trustworthy than people.” Shortly after Sepp and Octavia’s arrival, Olaf had to leave for the city, on business. Therefore he asked Sepp, to feel at home, and later to return the horses to Joseppe his ranch help.

Sepp and Octavia had a nice visit in the adjoining State Park. Riding over a grassy knoll down the other side, they got to face a mountain lion feeding on its prey. Sepp’s horse up on its hind hoofs chased the scared wild animal away. As the mountain lion disappeared in the brush, behind young trees and shrubs, Sepp slipped from the saddle and landed next to what may have been once a rabbit, bloody bones, skin and meat, the lion’s meal. Sepp’s horse galloped back to its stable. Octavia was in tears, laughing and laughing, it must have been too funny seeing Sepp falling off his high horse. Octavia offered to share her saddle with him. Sepp gladly accepted, and they rode back. Squeezing against her buttocks, his arms around her body, his hands on her breast, not only he was getting all turned on when she encouraged

the horse to gallop through the pasture. They came to a halt near the spot at the river; the same Sepp had shown her earlier, the same place Olaf, Hera and he had enjoyed a good time.

When Joseppe came looking for them because Sepp's riderless horse came home Joseppe found the two, near the little brook, in the grass making out. He heard her "Oh my boy, my naughty boy, oh boy, oh boy, ohhh, yes my boy, oh yes, yes, yes, yeaaaahhhh!"

Octavia's horse enjoyed some of the grass next to the willow tree it was tied up at. Joseppe tied Sepp's horse next to hers and rode off back to the ranch. He had seen enough to know that these two, Olaf's friends were okay and able to take care of themselves, not needing his intervention. That time was the first time they Octavia and Sepp, had sexual pleasures before bedtime. Octavia liked it a lot, and so did he.



It was only a week after their rolling in the grass at in the State Park, behind Olaf's place. On a Monday a public holiday, Octavia was spending another day with him. She arrived in



the late morning. They talked about having fun in the grass and the hours in the hot baths. They had lunch together, and then Octavia started to talk about something that was more current and on her mind. "Sepp, remember me telling you about Chase, my office-date?" Sepp nodded his head and answered "Ja! When are you going to marry the guy?" Octavia said "No! I would if he just could make his mind up." Shaking her head, she said, "But let me tell you what happened last week, it was crazy, maybe not?"

Octavia was talking about her and Chase leaving work together, in the past months. "I wasn't sure about being watched. But I had the feeling that at times, someone was eyeing us." Octavia and her office-date didn't do much aside from having a quickie, on and off in the garage, before he went on where he was going. Yes! Octavia was waiting for him to invite her to his home. As long as such didn't happen, she went on to where she was sleeping the very night, and some weekends it was Sepp's place. "Then last Wednesday, as I was leaving work, Chase followed me. It was the same routine. We kissed, some touching, all in the parking structure, behind his truck, hidden from view of

any passing car. Same place we had been doing our quickies so often before. I was ready for him. I wanted him so badly. Then Chase, this jerk, he left me standing there. He had to get to some store.” Octavia shaking her head with a serious look on her face said “I was getting mad at him. All turned on, my panties soaking wet. Yes, that Chase dared to drive off in his truck! Oh was I livid.” Then Octavia talked at length about keeping her London Fog coat open to get some fresh air, as she walked over to her car. Octavia explained “I was all turned on. After all, we had been doing some hanky-panky touch and go in the print room, before leaving work. Sepp, I was so man-crazy, horny, that I planned to stop at the next phone booth near the gas station, about half a mile from the garage. I knew I needed a man badly, so I didn’t have to do myself by hand. As you know, Sepp, I have phone numbers, and I knew there had to be one man I could kidnap for an hour.”

Still laughing Octavia got to the story, the happenings she needed to share with someone. That part was so crazy, insanely nuts, in every way including the people, the place, and the timing. She said “At my car, just around the

corner from where Chase usually parks his car, I was digging in my large shoulder bag for the car keys when I noticed I was no longer alone." Octavia, found herself surrounded by a group of youngsters. By her first guess, those were all under 21. "Sepp I looked at six, no, seven young Latinos, boys. With them two heavily tattooed butch looking women in their early thirties. I was surrounded by a gang of street kids."

"One of the boys demanded the radio, and that's when I knew, those were the car stereo thieves." She responded with: "I left it at the office!" It was true. "Leaving work in a hurry, because of my man Chase, I had left it there." But then she was telling those kids that they should find work and become responsible. Octavia asked them what their mothers would be thinking if they knew that they were holding up a Latina lady. She confronted the young men in front of her. "Who of you thieves stole my radio?" She noticed that the tallest boy had gotten hold of her bag. She had put it down on the car's hood. He acknowledged that there was no radio in the bag. Without her noticing, he may have been the one who emptied her wallet. Octavia was backing up against her car. The

shorter one of the two tough looking women waving a 2-foot steel rod in her hand ordered the kid she called Freckles "You Freckles, check her out. What's she hiding under her coat Freckles?" Then she told the chubby kid next to Octavia: "Baby Face go help Freckles. Search her!"

Hands went under Octavia's London Fog coat. Hands went under her dress too. Octavia did not fight any of it, and she didn't fight as she was pushed back onto her car. Hands lifted her by her legs and pushed her butt and shoulders on the hood of her car. She heard both women's laughter and their joking and talking real tough shit, while offering the young men an lucky chance to show off their manly talents.

As told, the boys' hands grabbed her arms and held her in place spread out atop her car's hood. Once she lost her footings she had a hunch, they were possible up to more than just stealing a car radio. These were some naughty ones, and Octavia told them so, in no uncertain words. With her buttocks just above the right front wheel, and her arms stretched and hands held in place from the opposite side by several hands, she did get a good look at the garage's

concrete ceiling above. She couldn't see the boys' faces but feel the salacious, lecherous actions, they were enticed to engage in by the women's suggestive voices.

Octavia's "Aren't you ashamed of yourself, don't forget I could be your mother!" didn't get her out of the situation. Neither did her cussing at them. Searching hands lifted her big oversized boobs out of their cups, making remarks about her dairy factory, and she felt fingers playing with her breast and squeezing her nipples.

"Baby Face, move! Let's see!" the woman's voice said. Then the other woman's demanding voice could be heard. "Here Bull, there Lil Loco, hold her legs!" Legs spread, fingers ripped her nylons. Undies moved aside. Someone fingered her. The other woman was talking dirty. Using selective words, she was telling the boys that all those who can, may do the puta, the same one they had watched being done by the big guy with the truck. She also told the young man to do her every so often, as much as they want. And she didn't forget to point out that all those still little boys, not man yet, better go now to play in playgrounds next door. And Octavia

heard the women laugh, it was catching on, some boys laughed as well.

Octavia made something quite clear “Sepp, let me tell you, the fingers I felt, that wasn’t one of the boys it was one of the mannish ‘dykes,’ the way she ran her fingertips, oh yes, she knew what she was doing, and she had me vibrating, her hitting the spots reverberated throughout my body. When she stopped doing what she was doing, under any other condition, I would have begged her for more.” That ‘dyke’ told everyone who listened, about her success and my G-spot, and my favorable reactions. “I heard the women laughing. Then one of them was ordering one boy, “You Baby Face! You said you are a man already! Let me see you do that puta!” Apparently, she was referring to Octavia. Then the other woman told two other boys, one called Bull and the other Lil Loco. As the first was done, they one by one those two followed her request. The women made jokes about another kid who couldn’t control himself and lost his strength before getting to do anything.

Octavia said “Sepp, see, when they raped me, it was not funny. But it wasn’t like real rape. Not like before in Colombia when I was young,

first when I was not even fourteen, and again a year later. The same happened when I first lived in Miami.” Octavia told Sepp in a matter of fact voice, about the incident. “Sepp, see, these mischievous kids were not beating me bloody, not threaten to carve me up, not ripping my hair out, and not threaten to kill me. They didn’t strangle me either. These kids were simply having unprotected sex, several, one after the other, all following the orders of those two ‘dykes,’ who got their kicks from watching the boys doing their best to impress their two leaders.” Octavia defended the kids’ actions, by saying they did as told by those two lesbians. All they did was in and out, and in and out, and none of these lasted more than a few minutes. Sepp had to laugh when Octavia said: “Sepp, I must tell you, I was feeling sorry for Freckles because he couldn’t get it up, and those two lesbians were making fun of him, what made it worse.” Sepp asked “Ja! Really?” Octavia said, “Yes, the other boys then too were joking and laughing about Freckles inability to get a hard-on.” Sepp wondered “Ja! So what happened!” Octavia replied “Sepp if I had my hands free I would have helped Freckles, but I couldn’t get my hands free. “Ja! So what happened to

Freckles?” Sepp wanted to know as he put his hand on her thighs. Some other boy “With a let me show you how it’s done,” and some typical male attitude was stepping in when Freckles couldn’t do it. “Ja! What about the two women?” He asked “After allowing the boys playtime, and having seen enough, as they had shown up from virtually nowhere, they went the same way. When I slid off my car and put both feet on the ground, I saw them running out a side door, leaving the parking garage, into the bushes of the park-like property next to it.”

“Ja! Did you report them to the police?” Sepp asked. “No, no, that would have been too embarrassing. I can tell you, but tell police, and tell the judge! No, no, then everybody knows, at work too! No, I can’t do this!” was her reaction. She moved closer to him. After kissing Sepp, she was taking a breath, “Yes, those gangbangers were leaving me in a state of disbelief and euphoria, those boys. Well, yes! They did take my cash too, 40 dollars.” Octavia stated as a matter of fact, “I have paid more for worse!” as she cuddled up to Sepp. The two had sex; the best they had since on the grass in the State Park after Sepp fell from his horse. And again it



was before bedtime. Octavia stayed with Sepp till early morning, when she rushed off to get to work in time. Then after this, he didn't hear from her for several weeks.

He also hadn't gotten her e-mails, because he was replacing the motherboard of his 80386. He upgraded the PC, and it became a more powerful 486. Soon it was running fast, real fast at 27 MIPS, millions of instructions per second! It was about a month later Octavia called and let Sepp know that she was being treated for Gardnerella, and asked Sepp to do the same, get treated as well, and let anyone else he was with, as well know, about it too. Sepp went to his doctor who told him that men usually don't get Bacterial Vaginosis, and that's what Gardnerella is. But just in case he sent him to do a blood test for all kinds of STDs.

*Sepp's Epic Poetic Journey*

Sepp's days were still filled with going to classes, and 5 out of 7 nights a week, he worked the floor as a waiter. Being able to go to classes and to work at night had become a most enjoyable learning adventure, thanks to being clean and sober. After about six months at the

Custom-House-Restaurant, and being used to the manager Ned, the same went on vacation. They had a new Hostess, Angela, a hot and wild Italian woman. She was good looking. Sepp's guess was, that's why she had gotten the job in the first place. She knew a lot of people in town. Her family was of Sicilian origin. They were fishermen. Now lately they lived from rental property income, and they did own quite a few apartments as well. Angela had work experience at several restaurants. She had worked the front desk of a local motel, yet had not been gainfully employed for the past year or two. All had changed for her after an extended weekend with the restaurant's owner Mr. Theo. He had taken her on a three-day cruise. Mr. Theo made sure she got hired and put to work. Angela was fun to have around. She was outspoken and straightforward, and she had no problems to charm anyone of the customers with her stories about the town and the history of her family. Sepp enjoyed Angela and her bold personality. She was not diplomatic at all, yet her smile and her body language always won.

That night Angela seated a young couple in Sepp's station. Those two had been following

Sepp for several years. He had first met the young couple in a late seating at the Old House Restaurant. Back then, some years ago, they acted reserved not to say, shy when it came to the menu's food selection. As Sepp started to mention specials, they both started to shake their heads. Sepp's "Ja! Our Chef de Cuisine creates daily specials, aside from the many house specialties, you see on the menu." was interrupted by her telling him, "We never eat anything we don't know." Her husband without any further look at the menu ordered: "Waiter, get us two salads with French dressing, two steaks, pink on the inside and a large order of French fries, and don't forget the A1 steak sauce and Heinz ketchup." With it, they each had a glass of white wine. Sepp took their order, and during the course of their dinner he checked in with them. Sepp got to find out that they were from the Big Valley, on a road trip to the Coast. A few months later, as they were visiting Baycity, again Sepp was their waiter. Both drew him into a conversation about the redwoods, the bay, and about an author by the name of Steinbeck. Somehow they got to talk about frogging. As it happened at the Old House, the Chef had frog-legs as a special and Sepp talked

them into trying one. Both were curious but uncertain if they would like the flavor. In his description, Sepp compared the frog-legs with tender chicken legs. After he had brought them one half-order, as taste, they went ahead and ordered the special. Sepp watched them enjoying their orders of frog-legs Provençale, and they thoroughly loved it. He brought them each a glass of Chardonnay, and they were happily enjoying something they thought they would never like. On their next visits, they left it up to him to bring them whatever he felt they should try. This time they had sautéed snails, dandelion salad, and Duck Confit. Six months later they had their very first Abalone. Then the Old House Restaurant closed, and he worked at the Casa Vecchio. They found him there, and he served them Squid the Italian style served with linguine and they loved it. The other day at the Casa Vecchio, they looked for Sepp, and he wasn't there. But one nice waitress, who had high respect for Sepp, had told them about his new workplace. That's why they made their reservation with the explicit request of having Sepp as their waiter.

Talking to Angela, the lady was praising

Sepp "I love it when the waiter can awaken not only my interest but the urge to try whatever specials his chef creates." Later Sepp listened to her husband raving about a young man who had waited on them up north, "He was wonderful. He illustrated the venison and rabbit specials in such colorful language that we didn't look at the menu but ate whatever he brought, because of your taking good care of us, we trusted him too." Seeing that couple developing a taste for the unusual, reinforced Sepp's belief "Ja! There is a thrill-seeker hidden in even the bluntest personality."

This time Sepp sold them freshly caught Monterey Bay Spot Prawns and Roe, and Angela told them all she knew about the Sicilian Fishermen who had been fishing the bay for many years. Getting his customers excited about the new, confirmed Sepp's theory, namely that a wait person's job does not have to be dull and boring. Waiting on tables was not limited to taking orders and carry drinks and plates. There was more to it than "Ja! You ready to order?" and "Ja! Enjoy your meal!" as well as "Ja! Here is your check!" in being a waiter.

As Ned the manager returned from his vacation, Angela left to work at one of Mr. Theo's hotels. At the Custom-House-Restaurant some customers arrived twenty minutes early, others forty-five minutes late. All early or late arrivals had the potential of causing havoc to the well-planned evening at the restaurant. Sepp will never forget working that one race-weekend and frantically trying to rearrange much of the seating. Last minute reservations made during the afternoon, filled every table available. Everyone got ready for the evening's expected dinner madness. The reservations made days ahead of time included a table of fourteen, a table of eight, a table of twelve and a ten-top. It all got set up. Two off-duty waitresses were called in. The four large groups, were all race fans attending the Indi 500 car races at the nearby raceway. These four large tables were for seven thirty. However, none of the four tables arrived by eight o'clock. By then they had already turned away dozens of walk-in customers, not counting all the calls for reservations they were not able to accommodate. By eight thirty not one of the big tables had shown up. Now, it was getting too late to sell the still reserved seats to anybody.

The two waitresses, who had interrupted their personal plans to come in and help out, left understandably unhappy. Their presence was no longer needed.

Three of the four reservations for those no-show-tables had been made using phone numbers from local hotels. Ned, the manager, left messages at the hotels for the people under whose names the reservations were made. By ten-thirty, Sepp and the team knew more: The group of fourteen had by then had an enjoyable dinner at a steakhouse. The eight-top had dined downtown. And the twelve-top had decided to eat at a Chinese restaurant. Two of the 'no-shows' had been Sepp's tables. Sepp got to talk to the lady who made the reservation for the twelve-top. She was not only very polite and friendly but talkative, bubbly on the phone as well. Sepp still unhappy about the wasted night could not help it but instantly liked her voice and her straightforward attitude. Listening to her, melted much of Sepp's negative thoughts about her 'the-no-show-host,' like margarine exposed to the sunshine.

This woman admitted freely: "Yes, each of us, every couple, had made one reservation, all

at different places." When it was time to eat, they were able to pick from a medley of truly fine restaurants. Quoting her "We had a Smorgasbord of restaurant menus. We had French, American, California, Japanese, Thai, German, Italian, Greek and some more!" Uneasy in his skin, Sepp asked as friendly as possible: "Ja! Why would you want to make all these reservations?" She explained that the year before they had no reservation at all. After the races, her group was unable to find any place to eat, except a hamburger joint. Therefore, this time they were prepared. Sepp was trying to put himself into her shoes said, "Ja! Yes, ma'am, you have a point there." Then she told Sepp, "Yes this time we had choices..." and "...yet regardless, as time came to eat dinner, nobody in my party liked the existing selection of restaurants." She explained that seeing the sign for a Chinese Restaurant they spontaneously decided for a variety of Szechwan and Mandarin cooking. It was excellent. This lady obviously liked the food. She described not only the enormous number of dishes brought to their table but also in detail each item the twelve had ordered by name, taste, texture, and price. Her portrayal of dining at the Chinese-place made



Sepp's mouth water. She certainly left no detail out. The woman even mentioned the leftovers which she and her friends planned to share the next day at the racetrack.

Sepp patiently listened to her waterfall of words. His ears were burning. All he heard were positive happenings for her. How could he be angry with her? That woman was all the way upbeat praising this area, the car-races, the scenery, the weather and everything. Sepp listened. His station had been empty all night, except a deuce he had picked up. Sepp also took notice of his gut feeling which told him that this lady on the other side of the phone was genuinely telling him how great a day and dinner she had had. He waited to hear the full scoop on the potential guests' story. When she took a break talking, Sepp asked her, "Ja! Why did nobody call us to cancel?" She assured Sepp that one man in their group did call from his cellular phone. And she was very sorry if he did not call the Custom-House-Restaurant. She apologized many times. "We had such a long list of restaurants to call. Maybe he overlooked one? Maybe the phone was busy? Maybe he dialed a wrong number?" Therefore she, the lady Sepp

talked to, promised to make up for any inconvenience. She asked Sepp "What do you want me to do?" But how could she make up for all the missed business of the night? What was he going to tell her? There was nothing Sepp could do but say, "Ja! Next time, you are in town call me, let me take care of your reservation." He added to it, "Ja! And please if you cannot make it, would you give me a jingle?"

Sepp thanked her for telling him what had happened and wished her: "Ja! Enjoy your stay in town and have a most beautiful time at the races!" Sepp was deep down still a little angry, not so much at her but the whole situation. Going home from work with empty pockets is no fun. But what good would it have been to let her know such? On the other phone poor Ned, the restaurant manager found out similar facts about the other reservations, and he was getting very upset. Sepp heard him yelling into the phone with one of the no-show-customers on the end of the line "Don't you dare to talk to me this way. If I could, I would be suing you now...!"

These things happen sometimes. The number of incidents where guests made reservations all over town without showing up

taught management and local restaurant owners a lesson. Soon after on busy weekends visitors were getting used to being asked for a credit card or cash deposit to hold tables for parties of six and more. The security deposit for such tables did wonders. It helped on busy nights. Instead of waiting for customers unsuccessfully, the wait-staff were able to concentrate on waiting on full stations.

Getting back to the lady who had talked Sepp's ear off that night with the no-shows, she surprised him. She happened to keep her word. Six months later she had a wedding rehearsal dinner at Custom-House-Restaurant. Over the following year, she booked a good number of tables with Sepp. What Sepp did not know when he talked first with her, was that she had an influential job at a law firm in San Francisco and many friends in the immediate surrounding of the Custom-House-Restaurant. Thinking back, Sepp clearly remembers that he was tempted to interrupt her flow of words. At one time, he had wanted her to listen to his bottled up bad mood and frustration about wasting just another night with waiting and not getting paid. Lucky for him, Sepp was biting his tongue, and listening to her

point of view. And yes his restraint of tongue, paid off many times over.



Then one evening Maria called, Michael Cruzeo's wife. Sepp had not seen her since the Old House Restaurant where they had worked together. Maria sounded desperate and drunk too. Sepp went to the bar where she was drinking and took her home.

Poor Maria, as she had gotten home, outside their apartment her husband Michael had told her that he is filing for divorce. As she entered their apartment, Michael had moved all his stuff out of the apartment. She asked him, and he confirmed that he had moved in with the woman manager of the apartment complex. Yes, her Michael and the lady manager had teamed up. Maria had been wondering as she expressed by saying: "My Michael was always helping her the-f\*cken-bitch-of-a-manager whenever she needed something done, right then and there." Sepp got to find out that they had reduced rent because her husband was offering to do maintenance work as needed. Maria said: "I knew something was going on between them,

right from the day we moved from the North Coast into Baycity.” Somehow Maria thought: “Thus too shall pass.” And yes, that’s why Maria got drunk and then called Sepp.

Sepp had desires for her for a long time. After offering her his bed, she undressed, and he joined her. Did he seduce her, or she him? Unclear, yet surely both enjoyed each other’s bodies tremendously. Stupid Sepp, because it was her, who had set out to screw and do him, to get even with her estranged husband, Michael. He had worked with her over the years. Somehow Sepp wasn’t smart when it came to sexual temptations. He loved it to be tempted. He was always on the lookout for temptations. It didn’t take much time that Sepp got used to having Maria around. Having Maria staying with him, he got to listen to her life story.

Yes, Maria did have an interesting history, to say the least. Her mother, a seasonal field worker, had dropped her off with a relative, at a Mexican family’s home in Watsonville, when she was real-little.

At age 15 Maria ran away from her uncle's home. Next, she worked as a maid for a small

motel, doing it on a regular basis with the motel owner, a married Indian fellow, who was very careful not to get her pregnant. He paid her in cash, like any of the other Mexican workers and never asked for any papers, as he assumed she had none. She got to sleep in an old camper in the parking lot.

That fellow, the motel owner, was much into gambling and horse breeding. Quite often he talked about horses and how using only the best available stock allows a breeder to breed the finest horses. "Nobody wants anything but the finest; that's people's nature." So he, a Mr. Singh told her over and over. About then Maria had started to envision, to have kids. And yes, she wanted only the best looking kids. As she left Mr. Singh's place, being just 18 she was obsessed with having kids. "If I can't provide them with the best education, at least I can provide them with good looks," became Maria's motto. Over the years to come, Maria hand-picked the guys she wanted to father her kids; tall blond men preferred. That coming from a short, stocky Mexican gal was quite a choice. And she had kids. Each she gave up for adoption after giving birth. Maria explained her actions:

“All I could do was bake em. As they came out of the oven because I had no place to raise them, no skills, and no income at the time, I had to let others do the rest!” Maria pointed out to Sepp: “I am proud to have produced real pretty children!” To let others, who could afford it, raise those kids, was quite okay with her. After all, her mother had dropped her off with strangers when she was still a baby.

When Maria was having her fifth baby, her welfare caseworkers made her an offer. The deal was to have her tubes tied, and by not having any additional babies, they promised her a couple of hundred dollars, which sounded like a lot of money to her at the time. After the delivery of her last baby, a beautiful big boy, the doctor who tied her tubes and stitched her up, whom she had told her life story, he had been promising that her vagina would be as good as new and better. The doctor also assured her that she would be sexually pleasing as long as she wanted to have sex. She didn't fully understand, but he was the one who had given her the snapping pussy, allowing her muscles to contract within the vagina whenever she wanted. That particular muscle control made her unique,

compared to any other woman Sepp ever had sex with, in Germany, Spain, on the African continent, in South America or North America. After close to a month living with Sepp, Maria left. She went back to her Michael.

Another month went by, and Maria Cruzeiro was visiting. This time finally, Maria did admit to Sepp that the reason she had been seeking him out, was to get even with Michael, getting even for him screwing Lily while she was their houseguest. Yes, after Sepp and Lily returned from Mexico, Sepp had spent time in the county detox while Lily had detoxed in Maria's apartment.

Maria told Sepp, "Michael confessed that he and Lily, had been getting it on every minute they could, whenever I was out of the house. I knew it all the way, but I needed to hear it from him." About Lily, Maria said: "I still like Lily, I feel like being so much like her." After that Maria kept on visiting Sepp on and off, for about a month. That was until Sepp introduced her to an old friend of another Mary. His name was James, a self-employed carpenter, who lived in a neighboring town. Sepp brought Maria along when he had a dinner get together with James



and Mary. James mentioned that he was looking for someone to pick up after him and clean up at a job site. It was a bigger home remodeling job with custom cabinetry throughout a five-bedroom house. Maria needed work and asked if she could get the job. James glad to have found help at such short notice said “Yes Maria! That’s perfect.” Not even a week later, James let Sepp know, that Maria had moved in with him.



After a full day at college, a Java class, a Public Speaking class, a Poetry class, and a Networking class, Sepp’s head was somewhat spinning. Working as a waiter, however, was taking his mind of any of it, at times it was hard work. The beauty of being busy, of working, didn’t leave much time if any for loneliness or being depressed, something Sepp heard some people in meetings complain about.

Sepp enjoyed the waiting on tables, and at times it was incredibly funny. Like when Sepp helped a wealthy lady and showed her how to break a lobster claw. Sepp explained to her in detail how to suck the meat and juices out of the legs of a fresh cooked Maine lobster. She

listened to his instructions. Her eyes were amused, and her teeth were smiling. As Sepp explained the utensils, she looked at the lobster-pliers (at the Custom-House-Restaurant they used nutcrackers). Somewhat bewildered, she asked, "Whose nuts am I supposed to crack with these?" Sepp promised to show her.

Sepp put the lobster bib around her diamond-decorated neck. It also was hiding the well-developed twins within her very low-cut dress. She sipped on a dry Pinot Blanc as he arrived with the crustacean, a nice looking 2-½ pounder. She had ordered Pinot, for he had said it was fresh, light, and excellent with any seafood. It sounded good, even to Sepp. "What am I going to do with him?" she asked as her artistic decorated porcelain fingernails click-clickety-clack playfully clackety-click drummed on the red lobster's shell. Sepp noticed that she enjoyed his full attention. Overbearing, like most knowledgeable waiters, Sepp explained every step she should take to get the maximum enjoyment from her succulent-white-nutty-slightly-sweet-soft-to-the-touch-soothing-most-nourishing delicate food boxed in its natural shell, waiting to be cracked open and savored.

Sepp showed her with words and gestures how to break the legs and claws and to eat from the outside in, finishing the pleasurable feast by consuming the lobster tail last. She laughed and agreed to try it Sepp's way. He watched her tear a leg from the red and whitish body. He saw her cracking the same and breaking it into pieces and lifting a short leg piece up to her painted mouth. Her teeth barely touched the red shell. She slipped it partially into her mouth. Sepp glanced at the lobster-red shell between her cherry-red lips. He knew his method worked. Her mouth was forming an 'O' which closed over the leg piece. Indents on both her cheeks suggested the amount of suction applied. Her eyes were getting bigger as she showed that she was trying her best 'ffffh-ssst-blop.' Her blood circulation was working. Red in the face, she placed the empty shell on her bread plate. Sepp encouraged her to try the next one. The claws were too big for her. Sepp helped her with cracking one of them. She ate part of the meat. Uncomfortable with the lobster bib, she took it off while telling him: "That's for babies." Sepp was off and busy with another table. He got drinks from the bar and explained the daily specials. On his way to the kitchen, he scanned

the room and zoomed in on this lady without her lobster bib. Sepp watched her try another leg piece. This time the whitish fluid was running over her chin, moistening the bare skin on her chest as it dripped and ran into her bra. She stopped sucking and looked disgusted down on herself as more of the sticky stuff was dripping from the lobster's hollow leg straight into her baskets filled with very ripe nipple fruits. Sepp watched her blushing. He noticed her angry face as she carefully put the leg piece onto the bread plate. She now pushed the dinner plate far away from her. Then she used the napkin to cover her chest while her hand, hidden from view, attempted to clean herself with an embroidered handkerchief.

Sepp rushed to the bar to get some soda water and a clean napkin, and he was right back at her table. Glad for Sepp's attention, she said, "I never liked it." Then she instructed Sepp: "Just stay right there, for a moment, would you please?" She obviously wanted him to stay between her and the other diners while she cleaned her skin of the sticky stuff. With the napkin soaked in soda water, she washed as much as she could of the whitish shellfish-fluids

from her skin. Sepp's eyes were getting ready to jump from their sockets as she got to the sticky stains at the material of her breast-lifting device. She cleaned on top, the sides, and the nipples and under her breasts, which were now both out in the open. Done, she shoved them back into their baskets and attended to the spots on her dress. She surely forgot that Sepp was a man, as he had turned into a screen, providing her with privacy. After making sure that everything was in its place. She looked up at Sepp and handed him the remaining soda and the napkin. "Ja! Is there anything else you may need at this moment," Sepp asked.

"Thank you, no!" she said with the most charming voice. It was time for Sepp to get back to his other tables. After taking the order at two tables and serving another table, Sepp went back to check on his lobster lady. Before he could say a word, she let him know, "Young man, that's too much hassle." and "Please take it away?" "Ja! Yes." "Also, bring me a large Bourbon with a splash of soda; make it a double, the Bourbon, not the soda, will you?" Sepp got the double to her on the double.

“Ja! Ma’am, what do you want me to do with your lobster, may I wrap it up for you to take home?” Sepp inquired. She raised her gold laden hands to shoulder height. Sepp saw the life and heart lines in her hands crossing her fate line. This gesture indicated that she did not want to sit much longer at the same table with the red-multi-legged-critter in front of her. She told him in no uncertain way “Please! Get rid of it!” Then she suggested: “You know how to eat it, so why don’t you? I don’t mind paying for it. I got to play with it. See, it reminds me of my late husband. He wanted me to do it, too. Now he is dead, and I still don’t like the smell and touch of it either.” Sepp should not have, but he said something to the effect of “Ja! Lobster is considered a culinary delicacy!” Too late, because Sepp got an answer from her: “So are ants and grasshoppers and all slimy snails. Believe me. I am not hungry enough to fight with the legs of something which is and looks much like a crossbreed of a giant tarantula and a scorpion.” Sepp felt the need to laugh, but he kept a straight face. After another drink, she ordered a prawn cocktail with extra horseradish and Sepp had to assure her that the shrimps were headless and out of their shells.

Getting a whole lobster back, sans two legs and one claw, was a first. Over the years, Sepp got requests from diners who asked him to remove certain parts from their dinner before they were willing to eat it. The most common requests were to take the heads and feelers off fried scampi. Other customers had asked Sepp to cut the head from trout, and other fish served as a whole. Some guests were not able to eat any food that was still looking at them, while they attempted to dig into it. Sepp also got those families where the kids would only eat chicken. He could bring anything. As long as Sepp called it chicken, the kids ate it.

Yes, being a waiter Sepp got to meet a wide variety of people, he would most likely have never met any other way.

*Sepp's Life: A Memoir by Helmut S. Sepp*

Sepp was still going to college. All in all, things were going very well for Sepp. A coworker had sold Sepp another Ford Mustang II. It was the four-cylinder model. Soon after, Sepp sold both his two Ford Mustang cars and bought a nice looking Cadillac Eldorado. He liked that one a lot. It was big outside, spacious inside with

very comfortable leather seats. It also had an eight-track-player, and with it came a case full of cassettes. Sepp had a few Cadillacs before at an earlier stage of his life. Since the day he drove his first Cadillac he always liked the comfort. Then on a Monday morning early, Nelle called him because she had a plane to catch in San Jose, she was flying to Atlanta. The person who had offered to drive her had gotten sick. It didn't take Sepp more than 15 minutes to get to her place and introduce her to his new Cadillac. It was a fine car, and a real pleasure to chauffeur Nelle to the airport. Sepp promised to pick her up, on her return a week later. Sepp didn't tell Nelle that he had skipped classes at college because she was more important to him than anything else.

The next weekend Sepp was home on Sunday, taking a day off. That week he worked Tuesday through Saturday night. Sepp had plans for catching up on schoolwork, and a stroll along the beach. Then Maria called. The buses were running on a limited Sunday schedule, and Maria needed a ride back to James's place. Sepp had at some point, way back, promised to give her a ride anytime. So he told her: "Watch out for a



two-tone gold-and-brown Eldorado because that's what I am driving these days!" Sepp had to drive 30 miles to get to the bedroom community where she was visiting. Here Sepp didn't have to wait long, for her to appear from an apartment complex. Maria greeted him smiling, saying, "Thanks for coming. I need to get back to James' place. I tell you, while waiting for you, I enjoyed an early 'nooner' here, got some from my friends." Sepp popped an 8track cassette into the Cadillac's player. The Three Dog Night band played Mama Told Me Not To Come.

Just down the block at the stop sign, Maria leaned back against the door on her side. As she put her left leg on the leather-seat-bench, she put her left foot on Sepp's right knee, while raising her skirt. Maria was not wearing underwear, what wasn't unusual for her. Sepp turned the volume for the speakers down, to do a visual examination of her dripping vulva vestibule. Maria inquired: "You have some tissue papers?" Well, it was quite some flow. "Ja! What for?" He asked, and Maria answered, "I don't want to get your new leather seats all wet." As nonchalant as Sepp could be, he let her know

that that's the very best moisturizer leather seats can ever get, "Ja! So let it flow, let it flow, Maria, it's quite okay!" Teasing he asked her: "Ja! It looks like you did it with the whole neighborhood?" In a silly way and half-jokingly Maria replied, "It started all as I was looking outside, bending over Bobby's desk, the one in front of his window!" and "See, Bobby and his brother told me they thought it was the greatest turn on they ever had. The watching Marty and his two friends who found me to be erotic suggestive, looking up my skirt checking out my twat." Maria laughed "I could feel their eyes staring at my coño. I was thinking of Lily, what would Lily have done with a handful of horny guys? But before I could officially invite them, Bobby told the guys 'go do her, that's what she is waiting for!' He and his brother had gotten it all night." Maria looked at Sepp, "Wasn't that Lily's style too, wasn't it?" Maria asked and added, "It was the guys' goodbye gift, and then you arrived."

Sepp turned the volume of the 8track player up as he took Mary home to James' home. James wasn't there yet. According to Maria, her James was up in the city. There he

had stayed overnight, yet she expected him back anytime soon.

Getting home, Sepp, who had planned on being this Sunday evening off duty, got a call, he was asked to work. At his job, he smiled, thinking about Maria, giving her a ride, and the patina on the seat-bench. He realized that she reminded him of his x-girlfriend Lily, at times, only at certain times. Sepp was asking himself, why did she call him? Did none of the guys she was with have a running car? Or was it that she was afraid that if James sees her with some new guy, he wouldn't like it? Or what was the reason? He didn't get an answer. The leather seat-bench in his car, and not only the passenger side, would never be the same again.

As Nelle returned from Atlanta, Sepp picked her up. On the way to her home, she told him that she made plans to move to the Georgia, to Atlanta within the next coming months.

Sepp had been trained to be an international hospitality professional, and yes he was a European trained waiter too. So it came as no surprise that aside from winning twice the local waiters' race, Sepp received write-ups as a

waiter in several Hospitality Magazines. He did work long hours at night, and during the day he was back in school, taking classes. He even wrote poetry. On his souped-up 80486PC, he wrote poems, including napkin poetry.

*Sippin' & Drinkin' with the Poets*

Tickle  
my pride  
says the  
embroidered  
napkin  
being  
manipulated  
by eager  
fingers  
giving  
pleasure  
to the

diners

sight.

Napkin Poetry, by helmut s.

It all had started with finishing those six courses of WordPerfect, as well as six courses of Microsoft Office before he concentrated on hardware and operating systems. He took every software class taught, before getting in to Programming and Networking. School was going good. He had been getting A's in most of the tests. He was happy. Sepp was an eager learner, and he enjoyed going to school and learning new technologies, and it showed.

While keeping on working, learning and living a sober life he changed, slowly, but surely.

Waiting on tables, Sepp took great pleasure in what he was doing, he always had fun on the floor, because he appreciated his customers, and he was selling them the best, only the very best, the house had to offer.

Some of the French wine products sold better in one country and others in another. Sepp hardly sold any Pouilly Fuisse while waiting

on tables in Germany, Spain, or in South Africa. There it was the Chablis or the Meursault, which, usually, got ordered with oysters or shellfish. Here in California, it turned out to be very different. In America, the name Chablis had for many guests the connotation of cheap American bulk wine, produced under the name of Chablis. Meursault was well known to the sophisticated crowd, but the preferred white Burgundy was Pouilly Fuisse at the time. Mentioning the word Pouilly Fuisse (never mind how it was pronounced) always got someone's attention.

Giggles, blushes, or smiles commonly rewarded the one who repeated the name slowly. At The Custom-House-Restaurant, they had a wine list organized by the grape variety used. Therefore, under Chardonnay one found both California and French-made wines. Many a guest asked, "Which one is drier?" Sepp answered. "Ja! Always the French Chardonnays," Time after time he had customers who pointed at the Pouilly Fuisse and ask, "How is that one, and where is it from?" Sepp gladly explained, "Ja! The Pouilly Fuisse, generally speaking, is a white Burgundy. More precisely, this wine is

from a hilly area. It is from the Maconaise, north of Beaujolais and south of the Cote d'Or." By that time, few guests were listening. Almost everyone was trying to say the two words "Pouilly Fuisse" their way. Sepp was quite sure the French did not intend them to make fun of the words. For the sake of advertisement and name recognition, it was Sepp's guess the French may forgive Sepp and the American clientele as they enjoyed their Pouilly Fuisse while calling it anything, but by its actual name. The wine list said Pouilly Fuisse, a lady cracking up said Fully P-u-s-s-y, and her neighbor with tears in her eyes repeated Poultry F-u-s-s-y and the fellow across the table answered "Fussy Hussey."

Sepp did emphasize the qualities of the wine whenever guest looked for a nice dry French white wine: "Ja! The Pouilly Fuisse is one of the best wines from the Maconaise. Comparable to those world famous white Burgundy wines as Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, and Chablis, the Pouilly Fuisse is certainly a fine dry French Chardonnay." American women were never too shy to express their viewpoints, whatever those were.

Nonetheless, any label that caused as much fun as the Pouilly Fuisse sold itself. It was quite common for the host of a party to say: "Bring me this Pouilly, I have to try it." Asking anyone why he or she ordered the Fussy wine, the answer, usually, was: "Any wine that gets everybody worked up like this one deserves further investigation."



Maria, was still staying with James, at least that's what she said, as she stopped by the Custom-House-Restaurant. Lately, her modus operandi was not wearing underwear. Showing her pussy off in public, for Sepp it was, to say the least: "Ja! Quite irritating!" Maria went like this also to The Club, and according to her, nightly she picked up guys, calling herself a free spirit, and just having fun.

That very night Maria came back to the restaurant at closing time and left together with the Chef de Cuisine. After work walking down to the wharf, Sepp savored the Vista. Countless stars were twinkling in the sky. The moon was one-quarter-empty. La Luna bathed the city and the bay in its cold light. Platinum brushed onto



the Pacific Ocean by the moon's powers, faded into misty gray before achieving total blackness at the distant horizon. Squid boats illuminated the waters with their strong lights. In contrast to the lit-up waters, these fishing boats were dark shadows of floating islands in jade green circles on an otherwise silvery bay.

The sparkling rows of cubic zirconia stones in an expensive-looking tennis bracelet were the streetlights on the other side of the bay. It was a clear night. Across the water, Hillcity was decked out lustrously much like a grove of festively decorated Christmas trees. Strings of glow points, some blinking some not, were running from side to side and up and down the slopes. Sepp looked at thousands of little white glimmering spots and here and there some green and red lights. Seemingly placed carelessly in different spots were yellow blinking lights too. Sepp watched a flashing blue beacon climb the trunk of what looked like one of several dozens of decorated Christmas trees. A police car was driving up the hill on Broadway. It had been a good day, a very good day, and Sepp felt some serenity. He had accomplished all he could for the day and had no reason to complain.

Aside the working nights as a waiter, most days Sepp spent at school now. Here at the local Community College some fine people helped Sepp, they directed him, and he was happy. They all made Sepp feel like he was worth something and aside from having plenty of A's to show off with, he felt wonderful about the education handed him. Teachers who cared, they all pushed him, and some of the brightest teachers put up with him and allowed him to be, and to become somebody. Sepp was very excited about the potential of a free Internet, of people around the world being able to communicate without political borders and intervention.

Thinking about the Sudetenland, thinking about the lack of communication, how much different would it have been if they had had the Internet in 1945? The idea of a borderless planet was like an impossible dream, yet it was happening as Sepp created websites, learned about applications and did programming too. Information Technology was a brand-new field for most people, getting in as it started to take off, was the start of an incredible journey worth

every hour Sepp spent there. Sepp found in his diaries the notes he made when Nicole took him to Madame Rosalie back in the 70s, to the fortune teller in Port Elizabeth.

Sepp's read his notes. And it was all true what Madam Rosalie had said twenty some years earlier.

1.)The lady you came with (Nicole) is not your wife, and you shall not be the ones who spend much time together! *"It was true!"*

2.)She also predicted Sepp's divorce, *"It happened!"* and that he shall find happiness with a woman with dark eyes. *"Not yet happened!"*

3.)Madame Rosalie was quite sure about Sepp's stay in South Africa to be very short. She also told him that he would travel to America, soon, to visit first and then to move there. *"It happened!"*

4.)Madame Rosalie did talk about lessons in life, and a horrible accident, which shall be the start to a changed life for all involved. *"And it happened."*

5.)She talked about Sepp going to a big place filled with books. She added that Sepp shall be changing professions and finding his calling by learning a 'world-changing science of technology' still too new, to be known and or understood by most people including herself at the time. *"And she was right with it! He went to college and got into a new field of work IT!"*

Yes, at the time, in the late 1970s when Madam Rosalie predicted his future, very few people had any clue about Information Technology and its importance in the very near future. Madame Rosalie also predicted a bright and happy old age for Sepp. Would she be right with such too? Sepp wondered, and planned to live to see.

Sepp's new life financially was not an easy road. Sepp never missed a meal, always paid his rent, and always had gas for his car. Tips were somewhat covering the cost of living. During the 'Off-Season' Sepp was living day to day; the paycheck barely paid the tax he needed to pay on tips received. The biggest problem was that those tips could be as little as nothing for a shift and as much as several hundred dollars. He never knew until after each shift.

Another six months passed until Sepp met Maria again, at a late-night AA meeting. She was going downhill fast. According to her stories, she was now sleeping on and off in abandoned buildings, and she was living from handouts. After the meeting, Sepp looked for her, but she had slipped away into the darkness of the night.

The next day, still thinking about Maria, while working at the Custom-House-Restaurant, his friend Lucretor aka Mr. Lucky came by with Dave who was visiting from LA. The two had individual orders of Fillet Wellington. Dave was telling Sepp that someone had turned Gloria in, to the Feds, because of her very high bank balance. Gloria was the jobless single woman, ex-waitress, and ex-bartender, drug-lady. Mr. Lucky explained: "She had no reasonable good explanation as to from where she had gotten the over 1 million dollars she had deposited in cash over the past eight years into her checking account." Dave added "They knew she was dealing in drugs. I'm pretty sure, long before they looked at her bank account, the Feds they knew it already!"

Gloria was an old friend of Mr. Lucky. She had decided to get out from working in

hospitality and make big bucks selling dope. Big bucks she had deposited in all cash, into her name in her bank account over the years. Mr. Lucky reminded Sepp, "Remember Passiano? Remember Gloria had all that money at home. She lost it when she got robbed of several hundred thousand dollars by that Passiano guy." Mr. Lucky added: "This time she was smarter! So she wouldn't get robbed, she trusted a bank! Now see what happened, that's why I don't trust banks." Dave confirmed it "Yes, the money is gone again, and she is under investigation as to how she had earned her money." Sepp asked Mr. Lucky: "Ja! What about Passiano, ever heard from him again? Did Gloria's boyfriend, the policeman, ever catch up with Passiano and the other fellow?" Lucretor had no answer.

Sepp told him about having met a close friend of the police chief that Kelly Big, the one that Gloria used to date. "Ja! About the law enforcement official, this Kelly Big, or whatever his name was. Remember the one who had promised to catch up with those two guys, those guys who had robbed his Gloria. What I heard may have nothing to do with anything!" Sepp repeated what Mr. Lucky had told Sepp, namely

that Gloria had been robbed of a sum of cash between 300 and 400 thousand dollars. Then Sepp added: "Ja! See, about six months after the robbery he, the police chief bought property out of state and paid down over 300 thousand dollars in cash!" "What a coincident?" Mr. Lucky asked. Sepp answered: "Ja! I was told that the police chief had a winning streak gambling at a casino about 3 to 4 months after the robbery!" "Interesting!" Dave said. As their food was ready, the two had their dinner. After dinner, Mr. Lucky said to Sepp "Listen I haven't had a drink or used drugs for over a year now, it works, if you work it!" Then Dave asked. "Did you know the old Firehouse Bar, they got closed down by ABC, their liquor license gone and he the owner is looking at jail-time for selling cocaine to minors, in his bar?" Sepp remembered he used to hang out there but since he didn't need a drink after work he hadn't been there. "Ja! I didn't know. I haven't been there lately." Dave said with a smiling face. "I understand!"

Even as he didn't have plenty of money, Sepp paid for his friends' dinner. When they were leaving, Mr. Lucky handed Sepp a paper

sack with the words “Before I forget it. Here is your share from the sale of well-aged oak-fire-wood we harvested, split, and stored at Olaf’s ranch. It’s all sold now!” The cash from Mr. Lucky came real handy as the Custom-House-Restaurant was closing its doors. The property owner had big plans to transform the lot into stores and condos.

During the final weeks of the Custom-House-Restaurant operation, before the restaurant closed for good, Sepp was able to get Jacobus, the Sous-Chef from the Custom-House-Restaurant a good job with an International Company. They were looking for a chef for their cafeteria, to feed about two hundred employees at their Baycity branch office building. Mrs. Carole, the President of the International Publishing Company, who had been visiting the Custom-House-Restaurant on a regular basis for several years, had become quite fond of the much above average food quality. Mrs. Carole loved the soufflés, one of Jacobus specialties.

Hearing about the restaurant’s closure, Mrs. Carole had asked Sepp “Is there anything I can do for you?” She was thinking more in the line of being and providing a positive reference.



When Sepp asked her to hire Jacobus, Mrs. Carole considered it as an excellent idea, and she did. Yes, this Jacobus he had been brought in by his parents who were seasonal workers from Mexico. Jacobus was born in Mexico. His parents left him in the care of the original Custom-House-Restaurant owner, eight years ago. They dropped him off when he turned 14 and ever since he had been working there. He had started out with washing dishes, cleaning, prepping, cooking, and he was a fast learner. Jacobus had been learning from some of the best chefs and knew a lot of recipes too. He still had no papers, aside from his Mexican birth certificate and a Social Security number the previous restaurant owner had gotten him. He had learned to drive a car, yet because he was unable to get a California driver's license, he used the bus and his bicycle, to get around.

Jacobus story reminded Sepp a little of his own, namely being dropped into a world of adults at a young age. Jacobus was at a disadvantage because of his 'illegal' status. He did not have the required papers needed to be selective in his job search. Sepp also found a guarantor for Jacobus' green card. Jacobus' new

boss, Mrs. Carole offered to assist him with the citizenship papers as well. Yeah, yes Sepp was glad for Jacobus' sake, so he was. The closing of the Custom-House-Restaurant was opening up new doors and provided otherwise hidden opportunities for all.

*Sepp's Life With His Mother*

It wasn't till the Custom-House-Restaurant closed its doors that Sepp went full-time to College. He took out student loans and only worked banquettes on the weekends or whenever needed at one or the other of several hotels and restaurants throughout town. Naturally, he had no benefits, like medical or dental, vacation pay and whatever. So most important for him, was not to get sick.

His friend Octavia got married to her friend Chase. She invited Sepp to her wedding party. He didn't go, not that he didn't want to. It was on a Saturday, and he had been scheduled for a luncheon banquette at one place, and a dinner banquette at another, and he needed the money, to make rent.

After years of going to college, and having taken every computer science class offered, a

position opened for an IT technician on campus, and his teachers urged him to apply. Sepp would never have done so otherwise. The great support and gentle pressure of his teachers made him do so. Sepp had never thought about becoming an IT specialist.

However, a long time back, when he was going to basic school in Germany, his mother had told him “Son I had a dream, you are going to become an engineer.” Now after having those two Associate in Computer Sciences, one in software and the other in networking, he did get the job he applied for, at the college’s IT department. By now Sepp semi-retired from hospitality work, without getting any retirement pay for the 37 years of working in hospitality. The knowledge he had gained, and the fond memories, those were worth the hours invested in serving others. Well, yes, he didn’t give hospitality-work totally up. Here and there he worked a banquette, just for ‘old-times-sake.’

During the days of the Y2K disaster which never happened. 50 years young, Sepp was 5’ 7” tall and weighing 175 lbs. In jeans and white shirt and a leather-vest with many pockets and proper shoes, Sepp reported for work at the

College's IT department. At the turn of the century, these were the days when California's Community Colleges had plenty of money. A constant demand for knowledge, to keep up with the fast-changing technology, was the driving force for ongoing education for all IT professionals. Back then none of the classes were taught online. The head of the IT department offered to pay for any technology class, Sepp was willing to take. The college also paid mileage and \$25 a day for food, aside from the hotel and the cost for the class. One didn't have to ask Sepp twice. He went for it. Sepp greatly appreciated that his boss was willing to invest such a great deal of money in him.

While Sepp just didn't understand that some of his co-workers in IT had little or no desires to go out of town for classes, he was going to IT-training every so often. Those classes were held in San Diego, San Francisco, Sacramento and Las Vegas. And every 90 days he went to the one or the other IT training boot camp in Silicon Valley. It wasn't that his coworkers had already reached the level of knowledge, which made learning unnecessary.

Some just didn't care to be away from their family and gone a week every so often.

Sepp simply was hooked on learning as much as he could get and digest. Like a dry sponge, he was sucking up technology know-how wherever he went. Sepp did learn much about the then present operating system platforms and software, as well as networking, applications, and programming. Sepp didn't prefer one technology over the next one. He wanted to know as much as possible about the variety of technologies available so he could compare and decide for himself. Unix, as well as Windows had their good sides and their flaws. One never heard Sepp taking sides. Soon Google joined in and gave Microsoft and Apple a run for their money, at first on the browser side, long before they offered the Linux based Android OS.

Without him noticing much, Sepp kept on changing. He changed from the egotistical, know it all, superior, bossy and full of it me-me guy, to someone humbly admitting that he knew nothing, or maybe very little and was willing to learn to understand the many layers of systems which allow data processing, storage and sharing over networks. Yes, Sepp spent much time using

and working with and in Windows, Mac OS, and the UNIX world. For him, it was an adventure, a journey into 'Wonderland,' a trip to utopia, he got to see and work with what used to be Science Fiction as it became a reality. Humbled by the fact that he knew only so little within the field, Sepp acted his size. Through learning and working in the field of IS/IT Sepp became an expert in his field. He got his hands dirty working in the ditches as an IT technician and had an open mind while learning every day something new. In the years which followed, Sepp did his very best while working for the College, by learning every day, and showing his appreciation for the institution and the beautiful people who were willing to teach him and hold his hand when he needed to be steadied and guided. Sepp knew being grateful needed action, and therefore he worked the way he worked, never mind the tasks or the hours spent.

One day Sepp met Jeanette downtown, and she was now in a meaningful affair too, a lasting relationship according to her. Sepp was very happy for her.

During the summer, Sepp was house-sitting for Ria, his German lady friend, who was enjoying the summer months in Cabo San Lucas. While living at Ria's place, on non-school days Sepp was going for nice long walks to the beach and back. On these walks, he took notice of an Asian lady. Sepp said "Hallo!" and she looked the other way. They had seen each other on the beach or while walking there and back more than a dozen times. Lately, she laughed when she saw him but didn't say a word when he greeted her. By now Sepp had already found out that she lived with Ria's neighbors, and that she was not married. Sepp created some food items, a variety of courses consisting of fish, vegetables, meat, and fruit and delivered the same to the neighbors for her. And she sent food back to him, delivered by the neighbor's wife, and Sepp was most delighted by the delicious gifts. The food exchange went on for several weeks, and finally, they talked. She thanked him for the food. He thanked her for the food while they were sitting in the sand atop one of the dunes watching the fishing boats in the bay.

After having started to talk, they did talk more, and she told him that she had been divorced for nearly ten years. She told him about her coming to the States from Seoul with a serviceman, and she told him that she was afraid of men, because her husband had been drinking too much and he beat her, and she ended up in the hospital. They had lunch together, and he told her his story, which included that he doesn't drink alcohol anymore because it's not good for him and or anyone around him. Her name was TH. She was 5 feet tall and about 130 lbs. TH's dark eyes complimented her dark hair. Sepp wondered "Is she the one Madam Rosalie had talked about?"

TH and Sepp discussed the merits of living together, to see if they can get along with each other, and to try it out for a year. The idea was to see if the two of them could get along with each other twenty-four hours a day. If so, marriage would be on the horizon. A year to the day, after TH had moved in, she reminded him: "You said we get married after one year together!" Sepp had forgotten, for they had a good time every day. He remembered. They got married.



Sepp had many motives. The main reasons were: Sepp trusted her, and he knew she was a real friend. Sepp also did know that she was true to her word, and did not lie for anyone. Most important he was finally ready to give up the old life and be a partner in a healthy relationship, as a husband. At such point, Sepp gave up womanizing, and he was rewarded with a truly wonderful, uncomplicated life and marriage. Together they both became citizens of the United States and were thankful for being allowed to work, vote and live in this, the very best country they had ever lived in.

Sepp was very pleased with his family life. He was happy with his job at the College. He still went to classes, in Silicon Valley, San Diego, Sacramento, San Francisco, Las Vegas, and Seattle. By obtaining new knowledge, he steadily improved his IT skills. He also did see Maria again. She was clean and sober and part of an in-home-care program and helping an older neighbor with bathing and cleaning. Sepp was happy to know she was doing okay. She looked much better than last time he saw her. She had gained quite a few pounds, and best of all, she sounded happy.

Sepp's accepting Nelle's advice, and going to college paid off big time. Not only that he graduated with two Computer Science degrees in software and networking, but he also had found a new lifestyle. It was Nelle who had said to him: "Honey, you need to change only one thing, and that's everything!" And she was right.

Anything that had to do with Information Technology was at the time a much sought after skill. Sepp was in high demand, making new friends and being able to assist people who were struggling while attempting to get along with their computers, printers, and networks.

Working for the Community College included excellent health insurance, which he never had before since arrival in the United States, except at one employer, the Old House Restaurant. Sepp made use of his health insurance by going for checkups once a year. His wife was still working, and she as well had excellent medical insurance coverage. Then because of their excellent insurance, their family doctor was taking more than good care of both. TH at a regular checkup had an EKG. Based on the same their doctor sent her over to one of his friends. Sepp got a call from a heart specialist's

office asking him to come in and see the doctor regarding his wife's PFO heart defect. Same day Sepp saw the doctor. That Dr.Herz then told him that because his wife TH had a congenital defect in the heart septum, a Patent Foramen Ovale, he suggested that TH should have a procedure done at a hospital, up in the City, where he was teaching. What a shock for Sepp, he hadn't talked to a heart doctor since last when chatting with Christiaan Barnard, the fellow from the Groote Schuur hospital, and that was not about heart disease, but had to do with Barnard's sweetheart, a young girl, way back 1976 in South Africa. Because of the nature of the issue, and the urgency, he Dr.Herz assured Sepp: "I have checked with your insurance company. Combining your wife's and your insurances will cover the procedure! Mr. Schuster and how lucky for you, I was able to reserve a room for your wife at the hospital two weeks from today."

Sepp was speechless. Not knowing what to do, he prayed. Sepp was asking for God's will, and the ability to understand. TH was feeling ok. She was energetic like ever, not sick. As it had to happen, TH met in her church, another Asian

woman who had seen the same heart specialist and was telling TH about some bad experiences, including health issues. She told TH about all the prescription drugs she is taking now after having followed the same well-known heart specialist's advice.

Confused, and in dire need for a second opinion, Sepp set up an appointment with one of the area's best-known heart specialists in Valleytown. Here TH had an Echocardiogram and a Stress Test. The doctor was shaking his head while acknowledging that the procedure as suggested by Dr. Herz was not only unnecessary but most likely would cause more problems than doing TH any good. He even went so far to admit that his colleague may be driven by monetary motives, disrespecting a patient's actual needs. That episode opened Sepp's eyes as to the realities of life. The need to making a buck is part of the capitalistic system, just like he as a waiter had often suggested the more expensive items on the menu and wine list.

To those who obviously could afford it, this doctor chose to suggest the most expensive solution for TH. Because of their 'Cadillac Insurance,' he knew they could afford it. Sepp

realized while having no health insurance he didn't have the issues, which came now with having plenty of insurance coverage. Sepp tried to understand the need for some health professionals to make as much money as possible, because life and their living standard may require a good size income stream.

Sepp used to think it was because his doctor liked him, that he was getting samples of new drugs. Every visit, there was a new prescription to try. His doctor said, "Those will prevent future issues." or "They will make you feel more energetic!" or "Those take care of any pain!" Sepp wasn't feeling sick. His total cholesterol was at 145, his Blood Pressure at 120 over 78 and his A1C at just below 6. By checking on possible side effects of the medications provided, Sepp lost trust in the nice fellow, their family doctor, the one they had for several years as their family doctor.

After spending some time lucky for him Sepp found a family doctor who wasn't into volumes of prescriptions, but medical care and monitoring instead, and Sepp thanked the Higher Power who was watching over him.

Sepp had changed so much over these past few years. He was still changing. Sepp replaced old thinking like the 'If it makes me feel better, I better take it' with the thought of 'at what price does it make me feel better?' And Sepp put in place of old pastimes new thoughts and hobbies such as technology every step of the way. It felt like it was a long time ago, that there used to be DOS days and UNIX days. From 8bit operating systems it soon went to 16bit, then 32bit and by the time Sepp retired from his College IT job 64bit was the norm. Wireless was still a luxury when Sepp started. At his retirement date, he like many others had a Smartphone and Wi-Fi in his car.

"Ja! Wouldn't it have been nice to have modern technology during the DR boat-delivery?" he asked himself as he was thinking back to the days when he did boat deliveries, especially the one from Brisbane to Puerto Vallarta, for his boss and friend DR.

Sepp got to experience the beginning of the Internet, and it becoming international. Soon after, everybody was using the Internet, just like

it had always been there. Sepp got into the IT business using IPv4 and learned IPv6. Phones had once been used to make phone calls, and everybody had a home-phone, at home. By Sepp's retirement date, almost everyone had a cell phone, smart enough and more powerful than those computers of the last century. There used to be 'Pay Phones' on every street corner in the cities. By the time Sepp retired almost all those pay phones had disappeared. Yes true, a few people still had a home-phone, one of those dinosaur apparatus at home.

"How different would it all have been if his grandparents, and their kids, had had smartphones back then in Sudetenland?" Sepp asked himself.

Sepp remembered not too long ago, everyone had one of those Sony recorders, and music boxes, and the Sony Walkman. He recalled having an eight-track-player in his Cadillac Eldorado. Then iPod's took over, and by his retirement, all you needed was one smartphone, used to take video and photos for music, listen to the radio, for Internet browsing, and able to select and install programs from a selection of several hundred thousand apps. Sepp had seen

the beginning of the tablet market when some Windows-based tablets became available. He got one. He loved it, back then just past the turn of the century. Somehow they faded away.

Not every day was sunshine; some days there was rain, and hail, thunder, and lightning. Almost all the people Sepp had to deal with were just like him, were nice people, and some didn't feel good, and others were those know-it-alls. He had changed. These days Sepp had less of the issues he used to have, and he realized that most of the time in the past he had created his very own problems.

Sepp made some bad decision, like buying a used car from a real good honest looking and serious talking used car salesman. The car was a Jeep Wagoneer, a good-looking SUV. Sepp was told that it had a few little problems, which were easily fixed. The salesman even took \$1000 off the asking price, because of an oil leak. The SUV became a nightmare of a 4-wheel drive, and after paying dearly Sepp was happy to trade it in, getting next to nothing for the Wagoneer. TH talked him into buying a new reliable vehicle, a Nissan van, and she was right. It allowed them to go on trips without maxing out their AAA



membership card while worrying: “Ja! Where is the next garage and how long will it take, for the tow truck to get here?”

Time went fast while Sepp had a good time clean and sober. Aside from the travel to classes all over California, and many short day trips throughout the years, in 2010 they, Sepp and his wife, went on an extended road trip. Then Sepp was still working at the College, and he asked for time off instead of getting cash for the accumulated overtime worked. Vacation and overtime added up to eight weeks. That year in the summer they headed to San Antonio. They left Baycity in the middle of June and arrived back home in the middle of August. It was their first long trip so-far. By now they also had a new car, a used Escalade, to which they had traded up from the van.

Sepp started his days with a: “Ja! God yes we shall take you up on the offer of a new day, and we shall make the best out of it, out of every minute, that's the plan, such it is, it actually is, it is!”

Sitting at the table at 4:30 in the morning Sepp was waiting for TH and get going by 5. They

did leave a few minutes later than planned, yet still arrived in time at their suite in Lake Havasu. Leaving Interstate 40 and getting onto Hwy 95 leading to Havasu, the temperature showed as 120 degrees at 3 in the afternoon. Quite warm, it was the first time that they were in 120-degree heat. The warmest either one of them could remember, was in Death Valley with 111-degree heat a year earlier. They did okay. Both weathered the heatwave quite well. Drinking plenty of water and slurping ice cream. They went to see the bridge that fellow had brought over from London, nothing special, just a London Bridge. An excellent idea, as it had become quite a tourist attraction.

What a huge difference in temperatures, leaving Lake Havasu it was 96-degrees early in the morning. Getting to the Sky City Casino Hotel & Restaurant, they were back to normal temperatures. Sepp considered 76-degree Fahrenheit normal for the time of the year. Both were looking forward to the next day, to see and explore one of the oldest settlements in the area, to visit the Acoma Pueblo up on the hill. After breakfast at the Sky City Casino Hotel & Restaurant, they enjoyed the nice ride up to the

Acoma Pueblo. From the visitor center, they took the first guided tour available. Their tour guide was a native woman, living at Acoma Pueblo. She started the tour with a “The Pueblo was established by or before 1100.” and she talked about her people and the history of Acoma. “In 1598, a certain Spanish conquistador by the name of Don Juan De Oñate, under orders from the Crown of Spain, conquered the area in search for gold.” Sepp was amazed, to say the least by the rich history of the Pueblo of Acoma. He admired the big church building, which was built by the Spanish. “The beams for the church ceilings were hand carried from a mountain about 40 miles away.” Their guide talked about the hardships and the delivery of those wooden beams to the Pueblo, “It’s furthermore quite understandable that the natives were willing to do so, as they got motivated by the Spaniards, by cutting legs or hands off, of those who didn’t do as told.” As there is no written record at least on the Natives’ side, and no video recordings from the Spanish Invasion on the land, all we know was handed down according to Acoma oral traditions from generation to generation. However, there are written records on the Spanish side, as Sepp

found out at a later time. The guide at the Pueblo talked about that the Spaniards also brought with them attack dogs, fed human flesh and trained to eat humans alive. The guide's explanation of the name 'Acoma' its origin, was from the Keres Pueblo Language and made up of two words for the People of the White Rock. "Whereby aa'ku has the meaning white rock, and meh stands for people." She talked about the Battle of Acoma: "When the Acoma people put up a fight, they lost the 'Battle of Acoma. The indigenous population of the pueblo, which had been about 2,000 people before the Spanish attacked, was reduced to approximately 250 survivors. Women, children, and elders were killed by the Spaniards in that battle as well." She pointed out "After the lost battle, survivors were herded to Santo Domingo Pueblo. All the surviving children under the age of 12 were taken from their parents and given to Spanish missionaries to be raised. Most of them and the other survivors were sold into slavery. Of the few dozen Acoma men of fighting age still alive after the battle. Oñate ordered the right foot chopped off, of each one." Sepp couldn't help it but asked "Ja! What happened to Oñate?" She had an answer "Oñate was later tried and

convicted of cruelty to Indians and colonists, and was banished from New Mexico.” She added, “However, Oñate was cleared of all charges on appeal and lived out the rest of his life in Spain.”

Sepp could see it, this Oñate fellow had some sort of a mean streak, or maybe he had a different way to convince people by using ‘his sword diplomacy.’ He asked the tour-guide: “What was Oñate’s goal? Was he trying to make believers out of the natives, and introducing Christianity by the sword, as Charlemagne did in Europe? Or was it about finding treasures such as gold?” She didn’t know that answer.

After the Acoma tour, they visited the El Malpais National Monument, an ancient volcanic environment of the Bandero Volcano and they chilled out in the Ice Cave.

Back at the hotel, TH went to do some gambling, trying her luck, while Sepp went to the truck stop next to the Sky City Casino Hotel & Restaurant. Here he filled up the gas tank. When Sepp was leaving the pumps, the truck in front of him had problems starting. As it was a battery issue, Sepp helped a young man in his early 30s to start his truck. It was an easy job, as

Sepp carried an extra battery-starter-unit. Put on the cables, push the button, and the fellow's truck started right up. The young fellow did introduce himself and thanked Sepp many times over. Sepp had forgotten his name by the time he returned to the hotel and had dinner with his wife.

In the morning, ready to leave the Sky City Casino Hotel & Restaurant, to get an early start Sepp and TH went downstairs for breakfast at 6:30. Here they found out that the regular breakfast started at 7:30, and the all-day-buffet was going to ready after 9. Having time on their hands, TH played slot machines, while Sepp went and got their luggage. He checked out and loaded their luggage on their SUV.

The same fellow he had met the evening before, it was the one he had helped to start his truck, he greeted Sepp: "You are German? By the way, man. I still want to thank you for getting me back on the road yesterday." Sepp answered "Ja! No problem, it's my pleasure. Ja! Yes, I am German.". The fellow whose name Sepp didn't remember was telling Sepp about his most recent Germany trip, the two weeks he and his brother had spent over in Germany.

They had been to Hamburg, to Berlin, to Frankfurt, to Heidelberg and they had the very best time in their life. Sepp said to him "Ja! Germany is a great place to visit, but to live and work is at least as good or even better over here in the States."

His new friend was shaking his head and answered, "We don't have buffet's like you have in Germany, your selections are so-far-out." Sepp tried to convince him that many places in the US have buffets and selections as good as any place back in Germany. "Ja! Just take the Rio in Las Vegas, I don't know of any place in Germany who has a better variety at a similar price." Sepp's new friend shook his head "Not food, no man, what's on your mind? No! Pussy-Buffets, one price, f\*ck as much as you want, all night, all day. That's what I am talking about." Sepp listened and said, "I left Germany before that latest form of fast service bordellos opened, but I heard of them." Sepp listened more to the young man, and he fully understood his excitement. Sepp understood that they enjoyed German Beer and the wide variety of an International pussy selection under the name of Pussy-Buffer. When Sepp asked, "Ja! Did you

and your brother see Rothenburg ob der Tauber as well, it's close to Heidelberg? How did you like the castle in Heidelberg?" The young man looked at Sepp, was thinking and answered "Oh man, Heidelberg, I didn't notice a castle, but that's where they had every kind of women, Turkish, French, Italian, Asian, Ghana, Indian, Bolivian, Moroccan, and some other Arab girls too. Man, we lived it up there, our eyes were bigger than our dicks, I tell you. I went back for more, went back at least twice, my brother the monster went back four times. No! A castle, I remember no castle, but the women." Sepp laughing said "Ja! It sounds like you guys had a good time. It was nice to meet you. I have to go and find my wife." As Sepp walked back into the Sky City Casino, Hotel & Restaurant, he smiled, a few years earlier that would have been him. All that counted back then was to have a good time with alcohol and sex.

Sepp found TH she had just won 800 smackers, and put 300 back into the slot machine after breakfast.



Their ride to Albuquerque was a very pleasant one. From here Sepp took US-route 285 to Carlsbad, on the road they traveled through two small towns which each looked very much deserted, like people had moved on, left very recently, ghost towns in the making. TH reminded him that their two ice-chests without wheels were quite heavy.

Sepp had the answer: "Ja! At the next hardware store, I shall get a dolly, to make it easier on my back. Yeah!" In Roswell (the UFO town) they stopped to get a hand truck, at two hardware stores. They needed a dolly to make it easy to move their two coolers in and out of hotel rooms. Maybe the UFO visitors had bought any and all dollies from the hardware stores, as they had sold out both places. Sepp drove on, to their hotel in Carlsbad. On the way to the hotel, Sepp noticed a Walmart and tried his luck there. They had what Sepp was looking for, and he purchased the much-needed hand truck.

The next morning after breakfast at the hotel, by 8:30, Sepp and TH arrived at the Carlsbad Caverns. Sepp carried the backpack, with flashlight, spare sweater and water as they entered the large caverns on the 'natural way.' It

was impressive, that surely was the biggest and most spacious cavern Sepp had ever visited. They did several guided tours the same day including the Big Room and the King's Palace tour. It was quite something, and as long as they were on the move they stayed warm, yet sitting down and standing around, it felt cold, was cold.

It was in the Big Room that Sepp was saying a prayer because he just felt like praying for those who had looked after him when he was not able to do so. Yes, he prayed in the room with the high ceilings and looking up something dripped on his head. "Quite an answer!" he said to himself, wiping the blessings off his forehead. Both TH and Sepp were tired as they returned by late afternoon to their hotel. A refreshing dip in the Jacuzzi was in order.

After having been to Acoma and having seen the Carlsbad Caverns, they were looking forward to discover San Antonio next. It was an 8-hour trip to San Antonio in the great State of Texas. Sepp was told that's where everything is bigger and better. It was hot, at least outside, a nice 71 degrees inside the Escalade truck. Both were talking about ice-cream sundaes. TH spotted, in the middle of nowhere a Dairy

Queen and they stopped in and had Blizzards, chocolate for him, strawberry for her. And the world was perfect, and all was just as good as it ever could be.



At their arrival in San Antonio, it was hot, better than 100 degrees. The weather report, however, promised a 50% or better chance of precipitation for the coming week. Sepp headed to San Antonio as he planned to attend the big meetings at the 75<sup>th</sup> International Convention of AA. En route TH had asked him the question: “Who is in charge in AA?” She was somewhat surprised to hear that there is no boss. No president, yes only a Higher Power, most people call it God and the individual AA groups of which there are many, they are in charge.

Their plans, at least for those up and coming days before and after the Convention in San Antonio included sightseeing. The first full day in town started out with rain, a light drizzle and it was muggy-warm. They toured the Alamo. Sepp had heard much about the place, yet was surprised how small it was. According to the stories about the Alamo he had expected a

much bigger fortress-like setting. Then they browsed and viewed the Buckhorn Saloon and the Texas Rangers museums as well, an amazing place, and truly unique acquisitions. To mention one, it was the collection of rattlesnake rattlers. Sepp, himself a pack rat, was impressed, by the assortment and number of items worth seeing, the Friedrich family had gathered. Lunch they had at the Menger. Coming to find out that the Menger Hotel was built about 20 or so years after the fight at the Alamo. A fellow by the name of William Menger from Germany who came to America in 1847 built it. Eventually, he and his wife became San Antonio's most prestigious business entrepreneurs of the time. Aside from knowing how to run a restaurant and a hotel, he was a brewer who brought beer to San Antonio. Sepp had to admit that lunch was not just very good. It was excellent, both service and food were up to first class.

The next day ready for the tour of the town by bus, they had to wait for a second bus, as too many people had booked the same tour, well guess better overbooked than under-booked. As it started to rain again, a light drizzle only, the boat tour was taken of the itinerary, the reason

none of the boats were running during the rain. The bus headed out to the Japanese Tea Gardens, a serene place, indeed a beauty. According to the tour guide, it had been renamed Chinese Tea Garden during the WWII years. Sepp was impressed by the simple yet majestic layout of the Japanese style paradise, with coy ponds and an abundance of lush vegetation and a stone gazebo. From here the bus took them to a number of missions, leftovers from the days when Spanish missionaries and explorers, used San Antonio as their base to bring Christianity to the new world and to gather up gold for the Spanish Crown. It was still raining, just a little, a few sprinkles here and there.

TH and Sepp visited the Mission Conception, which was established in 1716 as Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de los Hainais in East Texas. This mission was moved in 1731 to San Antonio. Next stop was the Mission San Jose, which was established in 1720. Here it was raining so hard that no one left the bus. Then the Mission San Juan, this one was established in 1716 as Misión San Jose de los Nazonis in East Texas. This mission was renamed

and moved in 1731 to San Antonio. By now the rain had taken a break. And finally the Mission San Francisco, it was established in 1690 as San Francisco de los Tejas near present-day Augusta and it was renamed San Francisco de los Neches in 1721. This mission was moved in 1731 to San Antonio and given its current name.

All those large Mission compounds were made up of massive walls and buildings. Each Mission was different in its very own way. Sepp couldn't get an answer to his questions: "Ja! Why are those Missions each looking the way they look, namely run down, in need of maintenance?" And "Ja! They are witnesses of a past, fortresses or prisons, artifacts of times long gone. But why are there so many next to each other?" Sepp wondered "Ja! Which one of them had been the final destination for the native people taken from Acoma Pueblo?" He did ask the tour guide questions, but none of his questions got a satisfying answer. Towards the end of the daylong tour, yes actual at the end, Sepp and TH got to visit the Farmer's Market, which was nothing more than a souvenir and restaurant zone. From what they had seen so

far, both agreed on coming back to San Antonio, one of these days, on a clear day.

The next day they spent on their own and checked out the Riverwalk, a Museum next to the River, the Rivercenter Mall, and had a late lunch next to the River. Day three in town was Convention opening night, TH went along with Sepp to the Alamo dome and were seated, between a good size assembly of South American visitors and a French-speaking group. They watched the place filling up, later they found out that there were more than 55000 visitors. It was a big crowd, a real big crowd. The flag parade was very exciting with over 100 nations attending. The three speakers, on opening night were very inspiring. However for Sepp most impressive was praying together with a stadium full of friends. What a feeling, quite a high and Sepp couldn't help it but he had tears of joy rolling from his eyes.

Day four they were at the Convention. At one of the meetings, Sepp heard some fellow say: "We are people who in general don't mix, we are individuals with our very own ideas, and we are loners, most of us! We are those people who quietly can endure the pain until we find

our very own way to cure us...!" Sepp was saying to himself: "Ja! Yes indeed. That's me. Oh well, very well, life is, it is a very, very precious commodity, and often enough we do forget such, we do, I do. Somehow this guy is right!" Sepp went to two other meetings one about Anonymity. And the other one was about the Internet. Both meetings had much in common. Being present and see and listen to people of all walks of life and many nationalities was a very inspiring moment in Sepp's time. And so were the following days. The San Antonio Convention provided for some most enjoyable moments, all filling the heart and mind with good thoughts. Sepp was grateful for being allowed to be part of it.

While reflecting on his life, everything had changed radically when Sepp stopped depending on alcohol to cheer him up, to loosen him up, to make him feel good, to allow him to sleep and to dream. It took a lot of time for all those new changes to make any sense to him. Sepp gave up alcohol, gave up on visiting the barstool he had been sitting on, at times night after night, and he did no longer go to the liquor aisle first when entering a store, under the pretense of doing



grocery shopping. He did no longer keep alcohol ready for consumption in the car, well this was solved during the years when he had no car anymore. Sepp kept no more alcohol at home, hidden, a reserve just for in case, yes just in case, this changed once he had no home to go to. Sepp lived a sober life because he had run out of options.

But did Sepp from the start like all these changes? Not really, not at all, yet there was little of an option left if he wanted to live. Then later over time the real changes happened as Sepp started to learn to pray for a sober life, it happened as his existence was threatened by bankruptcy, divorce, jail, and job changes. Sepp was starting to comprehend to live day by day and was following instructions by those who had gone the same path before him, and somehow everything changed. He suddenly understood. By realizing his shortcoming, no longer blaming others for misfortune and problems, his outlook on life changed drastically. Not one of the character defects he loved dearly disappeared overnight.

After their stay in San Antonio, they visited Fritzburg as Sepp called it. TH corrected him "It's

Fredericksburg, is it not?" He answered "Ja! You are right." Sepp wanted to see what a German town in Texas looks like. He had seen German towns in foreign land, like in SW Africa, in Namibia. It was interesting, and there were lots of stores, a war museum, and several vineyards. The stories Sepp had heard included that the founders of Fritzburg had made a contract with the native tribes and that this particular treaty is the only treaty between white men and natives in the United States which has not yet been broken. Sepp was thinking about visiting the LJB ranch nearby, and maybe Luckenbach, but then decided on getting back on the road.



Next Sepp drove to Silver City, in New Mexico. During their time here they visited the Gila National Forest. In the Wilderness and Mountains, they got to admire the Gila Cliff Dwellings.

From here they headed back into the heat, to Phoenix, stayed three nights and did a one-day trip along the famous Apache Trail. That was once a stagecoach road, winding, unpaved, dusty, through canyons and past rivers and

lakes. They made several stops including for lunch at Tortilla Flats, wallpapered with dollar bills. They parked at the Tonto National Monument Visitor Center and climbed to the Salado Lower Cliff Dwellings. Those ancient archeological sites, impressive fortress like homes were built into niches high up in the mountain, for Sepp and TH, they provided a glance back into North American history, with a view over the valley in front. They reminded Sepp much of those medieval castles in Europe. The biggest difference to Europe's castles; none of these Cliff Dwellings was heavily fortified. Did this mean that the people here were smarter and more peaceful than their European counterparts?

Before leaving the 100-degree weather of Phoenix, they visited Miami and the Copper-and Gold-mine.

Driving north, both agreed the next stop was promising to be a very interesting one. They had rented a home up on the hill in Sedona for a week, and their plans called for trips to Green Valley, Jericho, and various historical places, including Montezuma Lake and Montezuma Castle. They found the dwelling. The view was

spectacular, down at the Red Rock Church and over to Cathedral Rock. The cleanliness of the place, floors, bathroom, sheets, you name it, left room for improvement. Sepp went and stocked up on food and water and after finding clean sheets changed the bed. Next day after a shower and breakfast they left for Jerome.

At Jerome, they enjoyed hamburgers served on salad instead of burger buns. It was different but overall very enjoyable. They visited Clarksdale and Cottonwood, and in the evening they watched the sun setting and the night arriving at their rented home. TH was washing some clothes. The washer and dryer combo looked beat, but the washing machine worked just fine, the dryer did not. TH was looking for a way to string a clothesline. In the half-dark, Sepp watched some critter on the living room carpet, once it got on the kitchen floor and into the light, he recognized a small less than 2-inch long scorpion visiting. He scooped it up with a newspaper and flung it out the door. TH had found some rope and Sepp helped her to string the same between the posts at the carport. Sepp's wife, TH, was not going to go to sleep until the laundry was done, and hung out to dry.

Next day, back to Cottonwood they went on the Green Valley Train Ride. Day three TH and Sepp went to the Cliff Castle Casino, Lake Montezuma, and the Montezuma Castle. Upon returning home, their laundry was dry, Sepp found two more scorpions, which had walked through the gap of at least a quarter inch under the front door. This time he was less friendly and stepped on them before throwing them out. TH discovered a mayor plumbing problem in the bathroom, and when Sepp said, let's pack up and go to a hotel his wife's face expressed nothing but happiness. So they did, and lucky enough they found a standard hotel room, at a Best Western, and both were happy. Here they stayed three more nights and did excursions to the surrounding, including the Tuzigoot National Monument.

Then after their Sedona adventure, Sepp drove up the hill, and they visited the Grand Canyon, this time in the summer heat. Last time they had visited here was in the winter, on a day with a light snowfall.

*Sepp's Side Stories & Helmut*

From here they headed to Lake Mead, before driving into Las Vegas, to spend a few nights grazing on luxurious buffets, seeing some shows, and strolling down or up the strip. In one of the big Casinos, Sepp watched Mr. Walter van Russbourg and DR's Dick sitting next to each other, playing roulette, with large stacks of chips in front of them. Reflecting back on both, Sepp trying to understand what may have brought those two together. Mr. Walter van Russbourg, a rich arms dealer, had been the one who had introduced Sepp in South Africa to DR, the same DR Sepp had worked for. And Dick, now in van Russbourg's company, he used to be DR's sidekick. Now since DR had passed on into the afterlife, it looked like Dick and Walter had become buddies. Somehow first of all Sepp had no business to interrupt their game. Second, Sepp still had as much a dislike for Dick, as he had high respect and admiration for Mr. Walter van Russbourg, who had always been like a father figure to him. Sepp steered TH towards the Casino exit and to the Casino next door. He felt somewhat guilty because he could have said 'hello' to the guys. Then somehow felt better by simply avoiding both of these fellows.

From Las Vegas, Sepp drove to Death Valley and through the same, onto 395 and over Tioga Pass, they entered Yosemite, their favorite National Park. After two nights at the Ahwahnee, it was time to drive home, to return to the coast. Arriving at home TH was unpacking, while Sepp was busy with updating his calendar. First of all, he had to check in with the College, and all he got to hear was “Are we happy you are back!” and “Please Sepp, don’t do this again, eight weeks gone, we all missed you.”



One year later on their next long road trip, Sepp and TH had some wonderful times. They were visiting Astoria. Here they stayed right at the railroad track, overlooking the Columbia River, and as they walked along the waterfront, Sepp was thinking about the options, where to live in retirement. It wasn't just the beauty of the West Coast. It was simply the fact that he had lived much longer than expected, and now all these gifts, the present of every new day he started sober and serene. While in Astoria, Sepp did consider Astoria as a good place to retire at. He was considering the town as the place to spend his final days. That was one of many

choices to make. The reason he fell in love with Astoria, it reminded him of the Hansestadt in Northern Germany where he had lived during his apprenticeships. Talking with some locals, Sepp was told that Astoria was the place the Astor family made their first millions. It was by buying beaver skins, and any other valuable pelt from hunters, natives and trappers, and paying very little. So a local by the name of Randy told Sepp. Randy knew everything about Astoria's past. Talking about his grand-grandparents, he said: "She was an Indian squaw and my grand-grandfather a French trapper." According to Randy "The pelt-buyers for the Astor family did provide women, alcohol and cheap goods, to trade for furs." Naturally, as shiploads of women from Europe's jails arrived in New York, it was not difficult to convince some of those to adventure to the West Coast, to Astoria. Barrels of cheap alcohol were also easy to get in the New Amsterdam harbor. Adding to their shipments cheap gifts, pots, pans and tools, easily bought on the East Coast, ships set out, around the Horn of South America, and after a long grueling trip, they had their rendezvous with the 'Westerners' along the Columbia River. Here they loaded up the pelt. By having set up



trading points with the express written permission of the US government, the Astor family had the fur market cornered. From here they shipped the fur to China and back to New Amsterdam with valuable china, silk, spices and more. Yes, as soon as they returned to New York, riches were stacking up with every trip taken. That was Randy's story about the name of Astoria and the Astor Fur Trading Company.

From Astoria Sepp and TH followed the Columbia River, and stayed the night in Spokane. The hotel upgraded their room, to a room with a Jacuzzi, and they both enjoyed the treat and got refreshed. The next day they drove up into and through wooded mountains to Yellowstone. Here they stayed at the Old Faithful Inn the next six nights, and it was again quite something. It was truly a once in a lifetime adventure. There was so much to see, so much to do and all worth seeing. There were elk, deer, bears, bison, and more, all living in the large volcano, geysers everywhere, hot springs, steam vents, mud pools you name it and lakes, and waterfalls. Not to forget the leftover snow from the last blizzard, about three weeks earlier. An amazing place this Yellowstone National Park, and those

six nights, yeah, yes they were nothing less than an eternity in 'Wonderland.' It was beautiful, most beautiful it was, it was. Including the warm sunny July day, when blue skies changed to cloudy, and it was snowing. All followed by plenty of sunshine.

They visited the Grand Tetons, so they did. The mountains reminded Sepp of the Alps. As they were leaving, homewards they used back roads en route to Logan Utah. Here they spent another night. Next day, past Salt Lake City, they headed for Las Vegas. Both enjoyed another three nights at The Palms. They had a suite with a Jacuzzi, just because they had Jacuzzis in some of the hotels before and they started to like the idea of a private hot tub. Both had started to enjoy living life in luxury, not spending money on booze and cigarettes, DUIs, attorney fees and court-fines and other misfortunes, but rewarding themselves with "Princess Camping" being a good hotel, king size bed, and a Jacuzzi if available.

The idea of savoring life, the being happy and being nice to others because life is what it is, just a short vacation on planet earth, worked well for both Sepp and TH. After getting to know

Las Vegas just as it was at the time, and the hustle and bustle, which came with it, it was time to head home. They were leaving at around 6 in the morning. On the way out, TH was dropping a hundred dollar bill in her favorite slot machine and hit a minor jackpot. They had to delay the departure for another half an hour, that's what it took to sign off and get paid. The world was in order. TH was happy and smiling. As they headed toward Death Valley, it was hot there, yet they just passed through the same, with occasional stops, and via Hwy 395 arrived at Tioga Road, climbing to past 9000 feet into Yosemite. Here through Tuolumne Meadows, down into the valley and up Hwy 41, they left the Yosemite National Park at the Oakhurst exit. Both were looking forward to the dinner buffet, and another couple of nights sleep away from home at one of their favorite Hotel Casinos Resorts. Did Sepp miss the bars, drinks, smoke-filled rooms, and 'sexy' companionship? Not one bit! Rewarded by the serenity of the natural surroundings Sepp felt happy. He was able to enjoy Mother Nature's compliments every day. Living and traveling in TH's company was fun. Every day these days was much more enjoyable than what life ever used to be like before.

Sepp, ever so grateful was looking back at his youth in Frankenland. He recalled his travels and having worked in various places around the world. Sepp would never have been able to imagine it is possible to live life and enjoy happiness as he did now. He realized that it was all the result of work, and achieving a new lifestyle by introducing some old principles into daily living namely "Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Brotherly love, Justice, Perseverance, Spirituality and being of Service." Just like Nelle had predicted, before leaving for Atlanta, Georgia, to live with her relatives. Yes, Nelle had been right, and Sepp's life had become the most beautiful living experience he ever knew.

Now when not learning about new technology, or visiting his recovery group meetings, Sepp and his wife TH enjoyed their travels throughout their country of choice, the United States, by car. There was so much to see, so much to enjoy and so they did. The biggest change was that Sepp interests had changed dramatically, where before when planning a trip it included knowing what liquor stores, bars, and

night-life were nearby, now such was no longer of any interest at all.

Sepp's interests had changed. Nowadays he was into visiting National Parks, historical places, and getting to know the country and the people. Sepp and TH's road trips included the Badlands, Bryce Canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, Crater Lake, Death Valley, Grand Canyon, Grand Tetons, Joshua Tree, Mesa Verde, Petrified Forest, Pinnacles, Redwoods Hwy, Rocky Mountain, Sequoias, Wind Cave, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Zion, The Pinnacles, as well as many local and national monuments along the roads travelled.



While learning and working at the College, Sepp had acquired a great number of friends in need of his help. He provided after work, and on the weekend, holidays and school holidays help with information technology related issues. Aside from those, he created websites and an online-store from where he sold on CDs courses in 'Table Settings,' 'Napkin Folding' as well as 'Waiting on Tables.' To make sure that the income from his after work enterprise did not mix with his College employment and paycheck,

Sepp formed a Corporation outside of California and used it to separate employment from other income. While his friends were taking off, evenings and weekends to go to concerts and ball games, Sepp was on the road assisting his new friends and clientele. He never advertised but the number on the list of friends kept on growing.

Aside from the many old friends on the list there were also two new clients. At first, he was tempted to send them to the competition, then decided he had enough time to add the one or the other to his schedule. One of these newest clients' was the Tarronteno family.

A Sal Tarronteno had called and asked Sepp to come by and set up a wireless network for them. When he got to the Tarronteno home and rang the doorbell, nobody else but the Julie he used to work with, she answered the door. He was thrilled to see Delinda's, Julie. She was happily married now. Sepp asked, "Ja! How is your mother?" Julie answered, "She passed away shortly after my wedding!"

It was soon after helping the Tarronteno family with setting up WiFi, that Sepp retired

from his College job. He had a long list of clients, friends and more were trying to have him as their consultant when it came to computer questions. After six months of being retired from the College and working by himself, in his own IT enterprise, being a consultant, the repairman, the networking guy and whatever more, Sepp dealt with the challenge to decide whom to serve and who do drop from his ever-growing-long-client-friends list. An act of chance provided the answer. One of Sepp's friends, a well-known attorney was downscaling and retiring. His plans included vacating his large elegant office, the one he had for over 35 years, and only use the much smaller, private office, back at his home. Yes, and he was taking just his friends as clients with him. He showed Sepp his notepad, split in the middle with a right and a left column. On the right, he had written the names of those who had been ordinary and problem clients. On the left, he had added the names of his most valued clients and friends. Done, he was going to sell the client list to the right to a new young attorney, yet those from the left column of his notepad he planned to take care of by himself. How much more simple could it be! Using the same method Sepp started a notepad, and he

put those who caused him unneeded headaches on the right, just because, so he did.

On first sight, not too many fitted the category to the right, yet, for example, one so-called 'nonprofit organization' he had been supporting for several years, had hired him, as their technician on call, on the day he retired from the College. They had issues, which they needed to have dealt with, yet they did drag their feet with giving him access, where he needed access. The operations manager supposedly was keeping her boss informed. She didn't. Sepp's reports were not read, his questions not answered. He was told we trust you, yet the next thing was that he was asked to sign a gag order. Sepp had seen almost all they had on their server, and their computers. He had taken notice of some strange donations, all smelling much like bribes asking for favors. But none of it was Sepp's business. When he realized their mistrust he decided "Enough b.s.! I don't need it!" Too many headaches were accompanying the job, and yeah, yes this was the first client he added to the right side of the notepad. Done, it felt very good. No more sleepless night, and no more nightmares. Sepp



added other non-conforming clients to the right side of his notepad, and once sure they belonged to the right, they got dropped as well. They were not worth the money they paid, compared to the time and thoughts Sepp had to invest to be of service to them. There were some big name people who, simply because they had fame, plenty of money, and pull, they thought he would put up with any nonsense they came up with. No, sorry to say, but Sepp was not impressed by what they had to offer, including their money. They too went onto the right side of his notepad. He knew he hadn't seen it all, yet he knew he had seen plenty of them guys all full of an exaggerated self-opinion and wealth, throughout his travels.

Looking at the left side, the number of friends still grew. Yes, what a concept, the idea of being able to choose, to make a choice what company to keep and which ones to let others be happy with? "Why didn't he do so earlier in life? Why didn't he know to make the right choices, at many a time before?" He wondered.

*Sepp's Side of the World*

By his retirement date, Sepp was using iPads, the replacement for those Windows tablets, and was using them for shopping, research, writing, video and voice recording and had it translating and reading books to him. Video cameras once only used in Casinos and some high-security areas had become so common that many homes used them as baby cams, or simply to monitor their homes and properties from any place with Internet access via their smartphones.

And Sepp asked himself "Ja! Would some people have behaved differently at the end of WW II in Sudetenland, if there had been video recording devices of this kind? Would it have changed the outcome of the war? No! Yes? It may have limited the crime and cruelties, as applied from all sides by the forces of hate and evil!"

Then again, as the technology has advanced does it make the planet Earth a better place to live? Lately, we see real-time video of horrible events, war, the bombing of civilians, drowning of refugees, and other disrespect for life of fellow mankind. Does seeing the immoral, destructive, hateful acts make any changes to

how we react to our friends and neighbors?  
Does it really?

There was a time when everyone wanted to have a PC because that was the computer of choice. By Sepp's retirement date, the computer everybody wanted was an Apple. The computers used in many colleges and universities were now Chromebooks, or simply Chrome browsers. To back up important data, people had once upon a time been using very expensive external hard drives and 5-inch floppies, and tape drives. Then we had the 3.5inch floppies, to be replaced by CD's and DVD's, all followed by USB sticks. Sepp at retirement date backed all his data up to the cloud and downloaded it as needed from wherever he went, using any device capable of accessing the Internet. Yes, he had a Smartphone, and when he asked his phone a question, Siri answered him. His phone took pictures, did video recording, and allowed face-to-face conversations to any place with Internet access.

By Sepp's retirement date, the most widely used Smartphone operating system was Android by Google. The Korean Samsung company had the biggest market share by numbers of devices

sold. At the same time Sepp's car keys, his car, his various electronics were now equipped with GPS locating signaling devices. If he wanted to know where any of his locatable items were, all he needed to do was to push a button on his iPhone. On any device, with Internet access, he was shown the exact location on a Google map as to where the item he was looking for had last been recorded.

The newest Internet-based technologies were still in its baby stages. By now he had worked in the trenches of technology for over 20 years. Sepp had gotten the hands-on training and opportunities to learn what many technology experts never got, by fixing, building and rebuilding computers for years. He also had been taking a large variety of classes to keep up with the new technology.

Sepp had learned to enjoy the reliability of Mac's and got to use and like Google applications, aside from being up to date with Microsoft's ever-changing applications and platforms. During his years of working and learning in IT, Sepp had earned more than two dozen valuable certifications by hands-on work, and theory from books and tests taken in his

new field of work. His skill level had reached a point that he felt quite comfortable to teach others. Aside from gaining knowledge he also had gained weight. By retirement age, he had reached a weight of 220 lbs. Therefore he started daily workouts and slowly got down to a better manageable 190 lbs.

Yes, Sepp retired with a wealth of knowledge in his new field, and what he learned was that he doesn't know much, because of the constant change. Sepp treasured the knowledge and the advantages of the new technologies, and he credited the same with unlimited potential to improve communications and overall knowledge about the world and the space we all live in.

After retirement to have something to do Sepp enjoyed his newest hobby, namely information technology, as well as travel and National Parks. The cooking he left to his wife. They had found a compromise, namely: "For him to stay out of the kitchen, for her to stay out of his computer related work." TH was a better cook than him anyhow. She was a naturally talented cook.

Sepp's hobby resulted in his very own small Consulting and Repair business. Here Sepp was doing a great deal of teaching, tutoring and preparing people for the use of technology, and most of it, at his friends' and clients' homes. Sepp recalled how disappointed his mother was, but she never said it, when she didn't see Sepp becoming what she wanted him to be, namely an engineer. Sepp was telling himself. "Ja! What if she could see me now? Maybe she does! I am sure she will be proud of me." With several dozen certificates from Software and Hardware companies and a few hundred clients and friends keeping him busy, Sepp was sure Erika might approve of what had become of him after all.

Sepp's thoughts were now more directed at helping people, than quick riches. Sepp always liked the idea to be able to do a job, a good job. The idea of sharing his knowledge and providing skills he had, instead of just taking, because he was needy and greedy, this was the new Sepp. As he was doing his work in the field of computer technology, he did well, very well. As the demand was growing, he was forced to make the decision, become an employer, and

hire people and increase the business, or scale back. Sepp decided to do just what he can do by himself and enjoy working with others, as well as living the retired life. Sepp decided on staying small, avoid the stress and high price tag of competing with other local businesses.

*Sepp's Life Before & After*

Good health and the powers above rewarded Sepp with many road trips and enhanced Sepp's life which once was incomplete, complicated, empty, a torture at times. So many days he had looked forward to pleasing himself by getting drunk and having sexual adventures, only to come up empty, depressed at the end.

Those occasional road trips took him and his wife to fun-places like Lake Tahoe, Elko, Salt Lake City, Rawlins, Mount Rushmore, The Great Lakes, Akron, Niagara Falls, Maryland, Washington DC, Delaware, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and back. Not to forget, the trips they took to Chinle, Farmington, Durango, and Silverton and Mesa Verde.

It was during their visit to the Casino in Niagara Falls that Sepp watched his x-lady friend Lily and Carlos the Mexican fellow from the Puerto Vallarta Trimaran hand in hand leaving the building. Sepp didn't see any reason why not to say 'hello.' He followed them, and as he caught up with the couple, was it Lily first or Carlos, who turned the back on him and rushed towards a waiting car? Sepp just stood there and watched them leaving in a white Bentley with B.C. License plates. Sepp's mind was going overtime, and he vividly remembered: "Ja! Lily did leave the boat in Puerto Vallarta after they found the safe hidden in DR's cabin. And didn't she then run down the dock in the direction of Carlos' Trimaran? She knew about the hiding place of the money, DR's safe on the MY-Seefahrt? Didn't she?" Sepp was asking himself: "Ja! Did those two possibly have something to do with DR's missing millions and his girlfriend's death?" And if, it wasn't his business, and with a "Ja! God's will be done!" He went looking for TH who was playing and having fun at one of the Casino's slot machines.

That same summer, they did visit Farmington N.M., and stayed there for a week,



and made day trips to Aztec and Bloomfield as well as the Chaco Canyon. They explored Salmon Creek and the nearby surroundings. The next day they spent most of the day at the Chaco Culture World Heritage site. Both TH and Sepp noticed the recent changes to the landscape since their last trip to Farmington, a couple of years earlier, while en route to Mesa Verde. What once was Mother Nature's, all undisturbed land in the Native Reservations and federal lands, was now dotted with fracking activities. Sepp met two locals at the Walmart Supercenter, while T.H. was shopping for snacks and dinner. They had watched him parking his truck and were curious about the meaning of the letters on his California license plate. After explaining that it is his company name, Sepp asked: "Ja! Tell me! We noticed all those wells, along 550, and a good number of tanker trucks. What is this all about?" Sepp had asked the right question. Both sounded very upset and concerned about the future of the Navajo ancestral lands and people. One was Fred, a farmer, and the other had introduced himself as Herold, a local businessman. "Nobody here is happy with the way the BLM Farmington field office has handed out permits for over 100 wells

lately!” Herold said. Fred added: “There’s nothing good about fracking, it creates a billion gallons of toxic wastewater and tons of air pollution.” Herold said “And can you believe it, they use billions of gallons of fresh water, while we are still in a drought,” and obviously, he didn’t like it. Fred was sure there were more problems all thanks to the BLM’s decisions “You must know, they have degraded in the past ten years at least 10,000 acres of good land.” Neither Fred nor Herold were in favor of the fracking activities, but somebody must like the idea. Otherwise, it wouldn’t be happening. Sepp was unsure as to what to think about local politics, yet was concerned that fracking might cause seismic activities, similar as seen in other areas where fracking had been allowed.

From Farmington, Sepp and his wife made a two-day trip up to Silverton Colorado, via Durango. They parked their truck in Durango and took the train up to Silverton. Here they stayed for a night at an old Victorian hotel. The air at 9300 feet was clear and dry, aside from the shower they got when a passing cloud opened up, while they were strolling down Main Street. That area was once one of the

homelands given by the government to the Ute tribe, yet when gold was found in 1871, all changed. For just over a hundred years, prospectors were looking for riches. Investors had been pouring money in and created holes in the mountains. Those miners were coming up with always new ideas to access those mines, high up in the mountains. Finally realizing that the boom was a bust, mining came to a halt at the end of the last century. Now some of the mines are tourist attractions. And ever since the tourist dollars arrive, things are looking up.

TH and Sepp visited the Old Hundred Gold Mine located at 10000 feet and did an open 4x4 tour of the area. As their guides, the one at the mine, and the fellow who was driving them, were pointing out, that what had started as a most promising investment in mines had never paid off. Both guides agreed, "However, since we get tourists by the trainload, to pay for mine tours, mines like the Old Hundred Gold Mine, are making money, which they never did before."

On the ride back down to Durango, about three hours, Sepp and TH sat on the riverside in an open railroad car of the narrow gauge train

looking down at the Animas River from above, from the train tracks cut into the canyon walls.

Sepp was very upbeat that he was allowed to do so. Sepp was thanking his makers, every day, for the present, the gifts included with each day. Any trip, sober through nature, with open eyes, ears, and nose was so much more energizing, so much more rewarding, than even those great trips he had taken with Holger way back when they did bar-hopping and picked up one-nighters in the Hansestadt. For too many years Sepp had thought: “Sex and booze that’s what it’s all about!”

For the latest road trips, Sepp had gotten for his wife and himself the Apple Watch, which provided maps and weather reports, as well as the correct time in any time zone. What a marvelous idea and they both enjoyed the at that time latest technology.

*Sepp & Erle Mulla & Mulla*

Sepp and his wife TH did a 5 week trip up to Montana, passing through the Glacier National Park, staying in Waterton Lakes National Park, and on to Calgary. From here they visited the Banff National Park and after that the Jasper

National Park, including the Icefields. They returned via Hwy 1 Canada to BC, and then down the coast back home to California.

Shortly after, they booked three nights at their favorite High Sierra Casino Resort Hotel. Here they had a good night's rest and spent the next day visiting the Sequoia National Park and the Crystal Cave. In the evening they had a nice dinner at the Table Mountain Resort & Casino. Getting ready to leave, Sepp ran into Dick, the Dick who used to work with DR's Nicole in South Africa. It was the same Dick, who had been part of DR's boat-trip down south. The very same Dick, Sepp had seen at an earlier time in Mr. Walter van Russbourg's company.

Dick noticed Sepp and waved him over, he acted relieved and happy to see Sepp. Dick greeted Sepp with: "Oh Mr. Schuster, Sepp, it's so good to see you. How are you doing?" As Sepp couldn't escape, he ended up exchanging niceties trying to keep the conversation limited to the weather and feeling good. No luck, Dick spilled it all out "Sepp I am sure you know what happened to my buddy DR, then DR's x-wife got murdered too, and now my good friend Walter

van Russbourg was killed when his car blew up driving over a landmine.”

Totally taken by surprise, Sepp was barely able to talk, when he asked “Ja! What? Walter? Where? When?” Dick answered “In the Middle-East!” and added “I was supposed to meet him at the airport in Vegas last week, he was not on the plane, so I called his home in South Africa. Alexis, his wife, was sobbing on the phone as she shared the news with me. Just ten days ago. Isn’t it sad, all our friends being murdered? And you must know, Walter talked a lot about you.” Dick was nodding his head then handed Sepp his card saying, “Sepp let’s keep in touch. But first I need to find my wife before she gambles all my money away!” A stunned Sepp watched Dick walking into the busy underbelly of the casino’s slot world.

As Sepp’s walked over to the elevators, where the wife was waiting, it was obvious that he was sad. She wanted to know “What happened, what’s wrong?” Sepp with a grieving voice told her: “My South African friend, a very good friend, got killed in the Middle East!” Sepp was in tears, TH was looking at him but didn’t ask for details.

They returned to their home away from home, at the Casino Resort Hotel. Sepp was feeling sad. "Ja! Why did this have to happen to Walter?" Finally, Sepp was telling himself over and over "Nothing in God's world happens without reason!" Here they did an hour of gambling before going to bed. Sepp was dreaming all night about Walter van Russbourg, because this Walter was a very special person, a good man, and yes he never really got to know him.

Sepp didn't know that just a month earlier Walter van Russbourg had set up a Trust Fund in Nevada with a lawyer in Carson City. In to the trust fund, Walter had put his American assets, and made Sepp the heir in the event that something would happen to him.

The second day they visited Yosemite Valley and Hetch Hetchy, the main water supply for San Francisco. It was followed by a nice dinner back at their Casino Resort Hotel, and a little playing. Sepp did slots, TH played cards. Too bad, Sheriff's deputies ruined their playtime this night. They were asking everyone to leave. Another Casino visitor, who most likely had spent a great deal of time at the Casino's bar,

somewhat drunk said: "I know the drunken Indian Chief, is home, laying on his oversized leather couch amidst a layer or two, of hundred dollar bills, and he doesn't care about us poor losers!" If so, Sepp didn't feel one bit sorry for the guy, yet he felt sorry for the fellow reeking of alcohol and still planning to drive home since they all were kicked out. Yes, the casino upon the hill, for many years had been Sepp's favorite retreat. Sepp was thinking: "Ja! How well I know it. Wherever alcohol and money run the show, problems may arise."

On second thought, the Chief may have a good reason to be drunk because his greedy friends from the opposing faction had been attempting to get in total control of the casino. Armed so-called 'Tribal-Policemen' had stormed the Casino and arrested all Security personnel at gunpoint before the Sherriff's deputies showed up. As soon as Sheriff's deputies arrived, alarmed about an armed gang storming the casino, those added more guns to the already tense situation. Sepp and his wife, as well as all other non-involved parties to the tribal warfare, were rushed out of the casino. Quite irritated Sepp was not able to cash his slot machine



winnings, and TH also couldn't retrieve her chips from the table where she had a nice bet going. They too had their possessions in their rooms but were not able to get to them till much later in the same night.

Sepp said to his wife, "Let's forget about coming back here!" as they left the Casino Resort Hotel in the early morning hours, after being allowed back into their hotel room. Driving home they counted their blessings, and all was okay, no shots fired, and none of the guests harmed as the High Sierra Casino Resort and Hotel closed its doors. Somehow, for a moment Sepp was pissed off, about the incident at the Casino Hotel, but then he let it go. It wasn't worth spending much more thought on the Casino Hotel and the tribe's troubles. Sepp was ready, able and willing to live and learn and enjoy. Sepp was happy with what he got. He did no longer need his neighbor's wife, bank account, car or house to feel good. He had no longer use for being seen with people of fame, or status so that he could say I know so and so. Whatever money they had left at the Casino, was written off.

Lately, Sepp was okay with looking in the mirror and saying “Ja! Hallo! Have a most beautiful day!” to himself. Sepp knew that he could plan, but someone else was in charge of the outcome. Knowing that there was always someone higher up, he didn’t need to be the best, the only, the unique, a perfect person. Being himself felt quite okay now. So he planned, and he dreamed, and he dreamed big. The visions he had, those dreams and plans, they were worth dreaming.



At the end of each road trip, they were heading back towards the Baycity, so they did, they did. Seeing the blue waters of the bay, Sepp and TH, they knew they were home, to what they called home these days. Yes, each road trip was a trip of a lifetime, enjoyed one day at a time. It was one of the rewards of living a clean and sober life! What a concept? Sepp said to his wife, “Ja! There is nothing wrong with feeling good, not just bodily but also spiritually while enjoying the journey!” TH fully agreed. “So much to do, so much to see, so much freedom, still waiting to be experienced in our lifetime.”

Sepp was very pleased. That evening, he was tired from the latest trip he had taken with his wife TH. Sepp laid his head on the pillow, dreaming he was, or was he not, as it became so clear to him that after the miserable downfall of creating a German World Power by greedy politicians, what was left in 1945 was the people power, and thus consisted nearly exclusively of women. They were the ones who cleared the rubble in the bombed-out cities; they were the ones who took the brunt of the rage and anger and whatever else confronted by the victorious allies. Women, they fed and cared for the worn out fatigued sons, husbands, fathers as they arrived back from the war and POW camps. He, in his dreams, realized that he too was wrong, so wrong in many of his thoughts and actions because for yes for so long he saw women as sex objects here to please men. He realized that women had taken care of him and guided him, had been teaching him, and provided food and shelter, and much more. They were Angels, and in his dreams, he saw his 'Guardian Angel' smiling, and he saw Nelle taking him by the hand and leading him out of the maze of additictions into a better life. Without the women in his life, he wouldn't be, would not have become a man.

And now he knew, that he knew, what he knew, and deep-sleep arrived graciously.

It was about six weeks since Sepp had talked with Dick, at the Table Mountain Casino. The day they returned home on a Sunday evening, from a short road trip up to Oregon, that Sepp decided to trash some of his old papers.

Next day, on Monday morning TH was emptying the suitcases and filling up the laundry-bin, and Sepp was getting rid of old files, binders, documents and whatever-have-you old papers, knowing that the Green Waste Disposal garbage truck was due the next day. The garbage-man always came on Tuesday.

Within the papers to be discarded was the manila envelope from the hospital in Lagoonstaad in South Africa. Before tossing it, Sepp ripped it open, and behind the bill were two more pieces of paper. Sepp had to read it twice. The heading was in Afrikaans. But underneath it was in English as well. It said Paternity Test. Sepp read, "Ja! That couldn't be right! It's a 'crock of shit!" he said in a loud voice. He dropped those papers. Then he picked

the paternity-test-certificating documentation up from the floor, and read it again and read it again. It couldn't be true. It made no sense until he read it the fourth or fifth time. Sepp realized that from the clinic, Walter had been informed, that his and Sepp's blood matched, and according to the papers Walter was Sepp's birth father. But how could that be, how was that possible?

Sepp didn't know that Erika was the first woman a Russian soldier by the name of Walter had intercourse with, in front of a group of accomplices, at a train station from where she was being deported from her homeland, the Sudetenland. Sepp also had no idea that Walter had wished with all his might that by impregnating the German Frau, a Jewish-Russian-German child would be the result, preferably a boy. Walter didn't want to admit, but he felt surprisingly good about being the first, and his sperm might outrun all others who raped the poor woman after that, and there were several others.

Sepp was stunned by the paternity test results and the explaining letter, which highly suggested, or better it said that: "Dear Meneer

Walter van Russbourg. It's very unlikely that Sepp is not your son based on the tested samples." But why had Walter not talked to him? Sepp couldn't ask Erika, his mother. She too had passed on.

Sepp was glad that his wife was busy, because he had a lot of praying to do, and sitting back meditating, listening, the answers came. "Let it be!" and "Turn it over, go on!" and "Live life and take it easy!" Being quite sure that with the death of both mother and father the case was closed, nothing more to come, Sepp finally tossed the papers into the garbage pile. He was done with it.

However on the next day, Tuesday morning, Sepp watched from the balcony, as the Green Waste Disposal garbage truck pulled up. He observed, while quietly saying a prayer, as his garbage can was emptied onto the truck, and within, deep down, he didn't feel okay. Somehow he wished now he had kept those important papers. He regretted what he had done because once those papers arrived at the dump, he had no longer proof that he was Walter van Russbourg's offspring. The uneasy

feeling left, slowly very slowly, as Sepp was praying "Ja! ...thy will be done."

The Green Waste Disposal garbage truck left, Sepp watched it until it rounded the corner at the next crossing and disappeared from his sight. Sepp settled in finally. He had given up chasing after the garbage truck. He knew that he was done with the Walter van Russbourg chapter, was done with thanking Walter for getting him the job with DR, for thanking him who had provided a helping hand while Sepp worked in South Africa. And yes now Sepp understood why Walter kept taps on his whereabouts ever since. Still, because Walter didn't get out his thoughts, was there, now more than ever. Sepp prayed for nothing but only "God's will to be done."

Then there was that knock at the apartment door. Sepp's wife opened it. It was a special delivery. TH called him. Sepp had to sign for it. It was a heavy letter from an Attorney's Firm in Carson City, Nevada, addressed to Sepp Schuster. Not aware of any legal problems, still apprehensive, uncertain he ripped the envelope open. It was a letter from an Estate Planning

Lawyer, and attached was a copy of Walter van Russbourg's 'Last will.'

That Walter, who Sepp thought had just left his life via the garbage truck, had returned into Sepp's life, using a registered special delivery letter.

For a brief moment Sepp was stunned, and then he did thank his makers. Yes, somehow he was ready to accept whatever amends Walter was making. Because Sepp was hoping that all the amends he had made and was still going to make will be accepted as well. "Ja! Isn't that the way it all is supposed to work?"



*...the carpenter...*

With this Oh yes does he recall his be-  
ing well. Her working on Jack's cabin. Oh love.

She helps Jack remodeling. While her lust

waits in the rumble seat he easily

sinks nails and money into wood. Jack let

it go, to the lender, so he can live

and be himself again. Jack he has learned

being owned by property in one's life

equals jailed by payments. Going through hell

Jack and the tramp within prefer a life

of love and he with her visits the heav'ns.

He waits and goes wherever go she shall.

helmut s.