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Your neighbors

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*Our*

# *Neighborhoods*

Everybody has a story...



# Editor's Notes

## Inside Our Neighborhoods

Welcome to the Spring edition of Our Neighborhoods (ON). The opening segment is a theme, Travel. First we have a transition from the Winter edition about immigration, going from the travels of the two Saams ending in becoming American citizens. They still have enough Aussie to put it on their license plates.

The other stories are a range of travels.

Mary Kay Rotert relates an adventure she and her husband had in flying to the Arctic in their air plane with a group on a guided tour. It's actually two travel stories – one covering the cross-country flights going to the take-off site and then the actual tour of the northland.

The Hitchhikers Guide, John Dickman's story, as told by his wife, Celeste Helm, captures the hippie culture of the '60's complete with all the references of the era – the people, the music, and the Cause. It also touches on the down side of the life style

Loretta Horvath's story is the memories of a journey to Tibet. These memories of the mountains and the villages of Tibet are packed in the photo albums that Loretta cherishes to relive the adventure.

Even what might seem to be a routine tour of the Bay has a hitch. In Lost and Found Bob Coles outlines the mystery, but wonders if there is a real solution.

Rounding out the issue is a long-awaited story by Harriet Dawson on the poker games of RWC. She has extensive reporting of the games played by men and by women. What's the difference? Read on.

Finally, ON has an exclusive. Bob Street reports the actual beginning of his Roommate story! It's complicated.

## My Memorable Roomie By Bob Street



Back in I think it was 1989, the day before my birthday, my wife Pat gave me a "pre-birthday gift". It was an issue of The National Inquirer. This was given with-

out explanation other than it would become apparent the next day. On my birthday, she gave me a small light blue and white parakeet in a standard-appearing cage. The paper use was immediately obvious. I named the little guy "Ernie", it just looked like an Ernie.

A few weeks passed, Ernie seemed to be doing OK but I thought he might be lonely and I purchased "Doris" to keep Ernie happy. In the meantime, Pat wanted to get an African gray parrot, and she picked a young one that looked like a "Perdue Oven Stuffer". She wanted a male, was told to look for one with a flat head and she named it Moses, rather than Otis which was my first choice. We got a large cage for Mo, about 24 cubic feet which I referred to as a "condo" not to offend Mo as to being in a cage but rather "air real estate." It occurred to me that Ernie and Doris would like a larger condo as well and I got them a similar sized condo with closer bars. Time marched on, Mo grew feathers and no longer needed to be fed powdered millet with a syringe. I kept the parakeet condo in my home office and Mo's condo was in the eating area in the kitchen. When Ernie laid five eggs which produced five new chicks, I had to rethink bird names and decided to switch names. Nee Doris became Ernie and Nee Ernie became Doris. At that time, we were not too concerned about pronouns and neither of the birds displayed any concerns either. The offspring were given to other families as I did not want to experience any birds trying to pick up chicks at a family get-together. There was a lot of room in the condo so I went out and got Bubba and Peggy Sue. They were ordinary-looking green parakeets, none of the flair that Doris and Ernie had. As I said, the condo was in my office, it was located out in the middle of the room in front of my desk, between my office manager and project



*Moses*

manager desks.

As it turned out, Bubba had eyes only for Doris, and Doris, the little hussy, swooned over Bubba. It was like the theme of Love Story was running 24-7. Poor Ernie stood on a stick and watched the two of them day after day, making parakeets. Peggy Sue did not seem to care one way or another and Ernie finally (we think) committed suicide. Doris showed no concern; Peggy Sue stood in the corner and the happy couple just could not get enough of each other. About three years passed, and Doris finally died peacefully, hopefully in her

sleep. I wanted to give her a proper burial in the flower beds, but it was mid-winter with snow and frozen ground. My project manager suggested a burial at sea, but I could not even think of doing that to her. My solution was cryogenic maintenance and for weeks Pat would remind me that Doris was in the Sub Zero.

Spring came and she (Doris, not my wife) received a proper burial in the flower bed outside the kitchen window. At that point, I gave the remaining two and their condo to friends. It was probably another ten years before I realized that we had also mis-

gendered Moses. As it turned out,

she had only eyes for me and though she was OK with Pat, she did not want any other women to get near me. Some thought that a name change was in order and "Mosetta" was suggested by friends, but we did not wish to create any more conflict in her psyche. The subject of pronouns never came up. To this day, Mo does not like to have any women around and considers them all competition.



*Final resting place for Doris*

What I learned from the women:

The women meet once a month and have on a regular basis since 2014. They came together as lady golfers from Piankatank. They are not an RWC group, but RWC resident, Carol Sennott, loves the game and allowed this editor to interview members of her women's poker group. The women rotate from home to home and always have a meal if not a party. They have played as far away as Myrtle Beach and most women interviewed declared that was the most interesting place they ever played. (Could be another story lurking here!)



The components of the women's games are pretty much like the men's.... they use chips instead of coins representing nickel, dime and quarter bets. The women won more money per game (interesting!) with one lady winning \$31.50 in one game! They too play an impressive number of games within their schedule...thirty to forty per get together.

The women also do "dealer's" choice and tend to use "wild cards." Their favorite games include Guts, Baseball, and Follow the Queen. Least favorite games include Pass the Trash, Indian, and "whenever I lose!" My interview notes also reference a "Screw Your Neighbor" game but I could not decide if that was a favorite or a least favorite!!

These women are creative in their stories, and in their "identification" as the "Poker Divas." They registered themselves as the Poker Divas in the annual Urbanna Christmas parade...of course there was a bit of a

misunderstanding. This was realized when they were asked if they had their own music when dancing the "polka!!" These women travel together, dine together, support one another and take great pride in their long-term relationships and their love of poker. All learned the game from friends, and all loved the addition of the "wild cards"...they may still use "cheat sheets" but most feel confident in their knowledge of the games they play and the ability to learn new games.

In summary, the game "poker" offers games for everyone. Played usually with at least four players, both the men and women have played with as many as seven. The stories of the women revolve around this close-knit group formed in

2014. The men reflect upon stories experienced with other groups and travels across the country playing at business meetings in Chicago, as an employee at Yosemite National Park, and the Elks Club in Oxnard, California. The women reference one another as the most interesting people with whom they have ever played while the men reference the father of a US Senator, and friends from other locations. However, Don Grabar got a shout out as being the most interesting player at RWC...way to go Don!

Both the men and women say it's the people and the cards that bring them to the table. From this editor's perspective for the men, it's more about the game and for the women, it's more about the people. Although one lady did say, "you can't win unless you get the cards" ...and she's the one who won \$31.50! And on that note, "I'm out!"



One more thought: Carol Sennott would welcome the opportunity to help a group of women start a poker group at RWC...just give her a call!

# Travel? Yes, Plus Immigration

By Peter & Jenny Saam

If the accent doesn't give it away, the license plates – GDAYM8-1 and GDAYMA8-2 – will. Yes, we still have a lot of Aussie in us, even though we have been US citizens since the mid-nineties. We came to America on a two-year assignment in 1978, but as an immigration story, there are a lot more turns in this tale.

I (Peter) was actually born in Germany during WW2. I emigrated with my family to Australia as a thirteen-year-old. My early childhood was marred by the war and its aftermath when playgrounds were mostly bombed-out buildings. I remember the "Ami" as the good guys. The first orange I had ever seen or smelled was tossed to me by a GI from a Jeep on a street corner. Who would have thought – the Northern Neck, seventy-plus years later?

What drove the kitchen-table discussion at that time? ... the notion of a better life, the cloud of the Soviet threat and a spirit of adventure. Well, that last one really resounded with the youngster. Australia ... where is that? .... on the other side of the world .... who'd ever heard of kangaroos? I'd never seen an ocean or a desert. Mother packed our finest china. Six crates held our treasures. The vessel, Anna Salen, was a rebuilt cargo ship with multiple open spaces in her holds, cramped with triple decker bunks and segregated by gender. We traveled out into the North Sea, around Gibraltar, through the Suez Canal and ever onward, south-southeast. I vividly remembers seeing flying fish while crossing the Indian Ocean. After some five weeks, they disembarked in Melbourne.

The family settled in Sydney. I took to the beaches and the easy-going Aussie way like a duck to water. Three years of English back in Germany, made for a smooth transition. I eventually learned another language - programming computers. This was at a time when most computers took up a whole office building floor, and it took him to Tasmania (one of the six Australian

states), where I met Jenny. Jenny grew up on the land. Her father, a boyhood immigrant from England, after WW1, had become self-sufficient with the fruits of his labor, gradually building up a small apple orchard. Life was frugal, but happy. Her fondest memories are summer holidays at St. Helens, on the East Coast. Even today, Tasmania is still unique: - it

## TASMANIA



is an island state with a relationship to the "Mainland" somewhat akin to Hawaii and CONUS. It is beautifully rural with almost a quarter designated a Wilderness area. It also shows its English heritage more than the other Australian states.

We met when a common friend got engaged. Still at Teacher's College, this was bound to take some time. In fact, by the time they got engaged, I had already taken up a new job, all the way in the State of Queensland while Jenny was teaching

primary school in Mole Creek (almost as remote as it sounds), Tasmania. She loved the children's bond with nature - the simple life, and even had some part-time work in the Leatherwood honey production, unique to the area. We got married in 1969.

By 1973, we had relocated to Sydney, when Jenny spotted an advertisement from an American company. Kepner Tregoe, was seeking to add staff in South East Asia. Here is the final link of this journey.

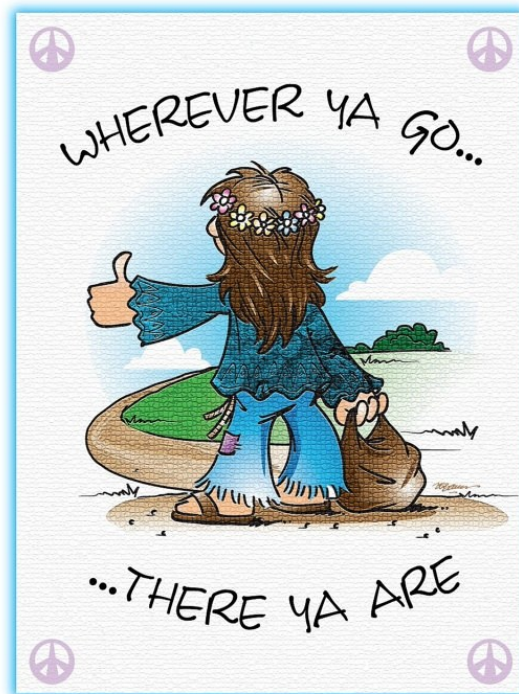
Jenny was teaching primary students in a Sydney suburb, while I attended clients throughout Australia and South-East Asia. In 1974 we had a son and a second in 1975. The call from America in 1978 – while I was at a papermill in the Philippines came out of the blue: "We would like you to go to the States for a two year assignment". The move to Princeton NJ was as smooth as silk. We had legal resources easily available, "home-leave" once a year, spoke the same language (almost – we still say rubbish rather than

trash), and even brought a considerable amount of furniture. Determined to experience as much as possible on the way back from Down-Under, we would stop off on the West Coast to visit as many national parks as possible. We wanted to take it all in.

In 1987, I went into partnership in a small, private consulting business, an early adopter of "work from home". One year led to the next. In time, our sons, 3 and 4 when we arrived, were immersed in their college education. Grandchildren (five now) would inevitably be American and we ourselves became US citizens.

Finally, looking around all the housing developments that had supplanted the corn fields around Princeton, we decided a move was in order. We've lived in the Northern Neck for almost twenty-four years, retiring shortly after coming here. We love the serenity, the people and the natural beauty.

So, there you have it. A kaleidoscope of cultures, habits, customs and traditions from three continents. We follow Duke basketball and Michigan football, cheer Bayern Muenchen in the European Champions League, unapologetically root for any Aussie in the tennis majors and gleefully watch the USA medal count in the Olympics. And we have settled in well at RWC. Thanks a million, to the staff that care for us, and to the new friends we are making here.



## The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Summer of Love As told to Celeste Helm

I was born into a military family. When I entered the scene, we already had four generations that served going back to the Union Army in the Civil War. Three generations graduated from West Point, including my father, Major General, Joseph L. Dickman. My older brother went on to serve as a B-52 pilot in Vietnam.

That's a lot of pressure for a kid hitting his teens in the 1960's. Due to my dad's career, I attended thirteen schools before I graduated from high school. I was always behind, either going over material I had studied in the last school or jumping ahead to topics with no previous foundation. I never had a chance to make friends. Throughout my childhood, I felt, in Dylan's words, like a "complete unknown, like a rolling stone."

My salvation during these years was the developing music scene. Mainstream folk music became a talisman that anchored my psyche. It provided a message that seemed to give some purpose, something to inspire and hang onto. I listened to Bob Dylan, The Kingston Trio, Joan Baez and up and coming sounds from The Byrds, Buffalo Springfield, Jefferson Airplane, and The Lovin' Spoonful. And then there was the rise of pure rock and roll, exciting and new – the birth of something unique in the history of music. Still in high school, I picked up an acoustic guitar and began to play.

I became good enough to strum with a couple of fellow students forming a folk group, and later I joined a rock and roll band called The Villagers. We became a popular local band around Colorado Springs, where I graduated from high school in 1967.

The Vietnam war was raging, and America's young people largely fell into two camps. One was made up of young men drafted or volunteering to serve in Vietnam. The other gave rise to the hippie movement, the "flower children" advocating peace and love. I fell squarely into the latter group and could not wait to escape the suffocation of a military base.

Although my dad couldn't relate, he was aware that I was unsuited to carry on the family tradition. After I registered for the draft, I slung my guitar and a sleeping bag over my shoulder, and

## What Brings Them to the Table? By Harriet Dawson

The assignment was to investigate if there are differences between male groups of poker players and female groups. I took the assignment...for absolutely no pay, I might add, because, quite frankly, I thought the answer was a resounding "DUH!" Yes, it seemed like a simple enough task until I discovered there are over 100 types of poker games that even the experts can't agree on the various categories of games, and then you add "mixed" and you have a foreign language that sent me home from the poker nights with staggering headaches. But I must admit, I was intrigued...not to the point of wanting to play (oh no!), but intrigued by their reasons for playing and if indeed there were differences in their reasons for playing? Here's what I learned from the men:

This men's group at RWC was formed on May 5, 2015...Gerald Hoskins knows this to be a fact because that was the day he came to RWC and he wanted to play poker. Today, four of the original group still reside at RWC: Bill Wright (considered to be the "founder,") Don Grabar, Gerald Hoskins, and John Roberts. Three of these continue to play today.

When playing, the men are intense. Very little horse playing and little to no trash talking! (This was a shock! In fact, I was so shocked I asked Bob Woods to observe a night of poker. I stayed by the door outside to note any differences...there was a bit more trash talking, but Bob and I both agreed, these

men wanted to play poker!). They play fast, as many as fifty to sixty games in a two and a half-hour period. Although with some games, members had to be reminded of the rules, I was amazed at how many games of poker the men knew and how well they knew the rules and procedures of each (with very few exceptions). The men's training for the game varied - one player learned the game as a child from his maternal grandmother while two others learned from their fathers' poker groups when they were kids. Others learned from fraternity brothers or friends.

You don't get rich playing poker. The men's games are restricted to nickel, dime, and quarter bets with a three-raise max. The men use chips to represent the coins. The most money ever won at a game (as recorded by the seven men interviewed for this article) was \$26.

Each man takes a turn identifying the game to be played. If you select the game, you deal the cards. Each man also takes a turn at shuffling the cards. It's all very organized. There is a "facilitator" for lack of a better word, who keeps the bets flowing with terms like check/pass, or bid and he can occasionally be heard saying, "Thank you, Edna." (I explored that comment as far as I felt comfortable and it has something to do with luck and Edna fronting the funds!)

Favorite games include Five Card Stud, Seven Card Stud, High Low, Declare, Low Chicago, Follow the Queen, and least favorites also include Five-Card Stud, Six Card No Wild, and Dead Man.

After hours of observing these six or seven men playing "poker" for several Wednesday nights, and without meaning to be, I was impressed by these men and these games. I'm still not sure if they are playing because of a love of the cards or because they enjoy getting together as a social group. They certainly all seem to like each other, but I think they really enjoy the game!



weeks' worth of emergency provisions and water – AND a shotgun! Charles and I had removed our back seat to accommodate the extra gear. Two fellow pilots, flying together, had loaded up their cargo space with huge amounts of trail mix and M & M's – their idea of "emergency provisions!" The RCMP warned us that, if we went down anywhere in the Yukon, they would make an attempt to find us, but it might take as long as two weeks!

Having made it safely that far, we headed back into American territory when we crossed into Alaska. Alaska famously has only two seasons: Winter and the Fourth of July! BUT, their July is gorgeous, with wildflowers blooming everywhere. In Fairbanks, we booked some seaplanes to fly us down to Kodiak Island, the home of the Grizzly Bear! Before venturing on foot down to the waterfalls, where the salmon run upstream, we HAD to go to "Bear School," a two-hour audio-visual telling us what to do and what NOT to do if we had a bear encounter. We were advised to make as much noise as possible along the path, and were given jingle bells to wear on our wrists. Halfway down our trail, a HUGE male reared from the brush where we had awakened him. But, he was sated with salmon & quickly went back to sleep. In the Klondike, we visited the training facility for the Alaskan huskies which are used in the famous Iditarod Race. They are absolutely gorgeous animals, especially the young pups, who want to do nothing but run – anywhere, everywhere! In Skagway, we took an old train for a trek up one of the mountain peaks for more spectacular scenery. Skagway looks just like the filming site for one of our good ol' American western movies.

Before leaving the Fairbanks area, we took a flight around Mount Denali (now called Mount McKinley) in absolutely gorgeous weather! We had been told that it is obscured by clouds on most days. We were also allowed to stay in the old Denali Hotel, which is now closed to the public; all visitors have to leave the park before dark every day.



Anchorage is (or was) accessible only by boat or plane; there were no roads in 1999. We also flew for awhile over the famous Alcan highway, and the Alaska Pipeline. Our final air trek was to Barrow, the last point of land before the North Pole. True to its name, it is very "barren." Just a few Inuit cottages, and miles of frozen tundra. No Polar Bear sightings.

The trip had taken ten days, but now we faced ten more days of re-tracing our course, back to the United States. We left our new friends, some of whom became lifelong flying pals, in Helena, Montana, where we also devoured a fair amount of trail mix and M & M's! After some days of rest, Charles and I still faced three days of air time, flying over South Dakota, Minnesota, and Ohio. In South Dakota, we made an attempt to find the four Presidents' Memorial, carved into the side of one of the mountains. I am embarrassed to admit that, even with a navigational chart, showing its location, we NEVER found it – despite flying around that damn mountain several times! We did find the adjacent monument to the Indian chief Sitting Bull, which was in the process of being carved at that time.

Coming in on our final approach for a landing in Pierre, South Dakota, the Eustachian tube in my left ear suddenly popped open – it had been blocked for 5-6 weeks due to a bad head cold. I shrieked at the odd sensation into my head mic, which did NOT endear me to either the PIC nor the Traffic Controller who was guiding us in. That was the last memorable event of what had been an absolutely stunning and enjoyable trip. None of the eight aircraft had suffered any serious mechanical difficulties, and none of the flight crews had suffered anything other than minor illnesses.

At Hummel Field, as the PIC descended from N95983, he patted her and said "What a great adventure! Let's do something like it again!" Well, maybe.....

along with my high school friend, Mac King, we walked out to Colorado's route N25 and stuck out our thumbs. It was the summer of 1967, and our destination was Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco. We didn't know it then, but we were about to become part of a movement known as the Summer of Love.

It's 1,300 miles from Colorado Springs to San Francisco. Mac and I left with little money and less sense. We traveled through Colorado, Utah, and Nevada, safely arriving in California after several days of relying solely on strangers. We had no plan, nowhere to stay, and not enough funds to support ourselves. But we had a feel for adventure, the hippie vibe of the day to "drop out" of mainstream society, and our passion for music. Hitchhiking was still an acceptable and reasonably safe mode of transportation in the 60's. Our jeans, long hair in ponytails and our guitars were our calling cards as bona fide hippies. There was a sense of brotherhood and safety when hippies recognized like-minded others or those that were simply empathetic to this new movement. Ride after ride, we traveled through magnificent country and met kind people along the way.

It was illegal to hitchhike on the side of a highway. As long-haired teenagers, Mac and I had no interest in crossing paths with the law. We had to position ourselves before an on ramp to wait for a ride. Truckers never offered a ride and Lincolns and Caddies were not the vehicles stopping for us. Lifts were provided by folks driving 10-year old Chevy's and battered station wagons. Most hops were short, and we would get lifts for a couple of miles to 15 or 20 miles at a time. Mac and I had only one dangerous moment along the way. As we stood on the side of the road near Salt Lake City, we saw a pickup truck coming too fast down the highway. As it flew by, a couple of teens threw a bottle, just missing us. In response, we yelled obscenities at them. This turned out to be unwise. They turned their truck around and came after us. Mac and I took to the fields kicking up dust with our guitars in hand. The boys ran after us for a short time. It was our good luck that they weren't seriously interested in doing harm and gave up quickly. Not a life and death situation, but at that moment, it put a scare into us.

When we arrived in Haight-Ashbury, we had the ultimate experience of living one day at a time. On rough nights we slept on park benches and in alleyways. The fading facades of the turn-of-the-century brownstones provided covered porches for refuge, and Mac and I often met other

folks staying at various houses. We were always moving around, one place after another. For a short period of time, we stayed at Janis Joplin's house. She opened her home to people like us when she was away on tour.

And the magic of the music was everywhere, local parks, clubs, street corners, homes. It was powerful and soothing at the same time. Everyone was your brother or sister, and everyone knew someone that could help you or just enjoy the shared experience while passing through. We spent a lot of time in both the Golden Gate and Panhandle parks and were happy to hear artists such as the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, and Country Joe and the Fish.



Ever short of funds, Mac and I took odd jobs, including traveling to northern California to pick fruit so we could buy food. On at least one occasion I donated blood. I think by the end of our time there, I had sold my guitar.

Summer was fading and my funds and stamina were fizzling out. My dad wasn't warm and fuzzy, but he never closed the door on me. He arranged for an airline ticket, and I flew back to Colorado. After a few months, to keep me out of harm's way – mostly from myself – he shipped me off to Thule Air Base in Greenland. I spent a year working at the military installation 750 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Talk about a 180 in terms of life experience!

In 1969, I joined over 400,000 fans at Woodstock, where 32 bands performed outdoors with the theme of peace and music. This was the pinnacle of the counterculture movement. In the 70's, both the flower children and the Vietnam war were left behind. Sadly, the outcome for many on both sides was heavy drug use, alcohol abuse, and chronic homelessness. It was a prevailing disillusionment that had heavy consequences. A few years after I left Mac in San Francisco, I learned he succumbed to drug use and took his own life.

It was slow progress, but I wanted a better future – a productive life. With the unfailing support of my mom and dad, I navigated the rough patches and came out ahead. I survived and thrived. I kept traveling on and didn't think twice, it was all right.

## Lost and Found: A cruise with a hitch

### By Bill Cole



It was summer in the late 1970s and a group of six was aboard a 40-foot sail boat for a six day cruise of the Chesapeake organized by my friend and sailor Van Slaymaker on his boat. It was a roomy boat that Van kept docked at Deale, Maryland.

We spent the first hot night in the bay behind Tilgman's Island, then visited St. Michael's and sailed as far south as, I think, Tangier Island. We sailed up the Potomac to Colonial Beach to visit Van's son's girl friend.

As we came to the end of the cruise, and we were docked at Soloman's Island with a view of pushing up the bay to the dock at Deale. It was mid-August and hot – 80 degrees at 7 a.m.-- with virtually no wind.

At about 8:30, just as we were about to turn north, we lost power. The engine was running well and there was plenty of gas, maybe the propeller was fouled. Van jumped over board to check it out. He came up, looking stressed, and announced that we had lost the propeller. It was going to be a long day – and night. At last the dock was ahead and the berth empty. We tied up and had no trouble falling asleep.

Early the next morning, Van was in the water, determined to find a clue to how we lost the propeller. He surfaced and with a wry smile and held up the propeller.

How the propeller managed to stay with the boat is a mystery. I had a couple of theories that I ran past folks who know about boats and both were shot down.

Oh well. We had a few beers and then headed home.



Loretta Horvath on her Tibetan adventure

## Exploring Tibet with Loretta

### By Jay Walker

At the turn of the century Loretta Horvath and her husband Ralph – retired from their winery business and in their 70's – decided to go on a voyage to Tibet with their neighbors, a doctor in Warrenton, Virginia. Why Tibet, I wondered.

First, some background: The Horvaths had previously traveled to Alaska with their neighbors aboard the doctor's aircraft. That's when Loretta started to photograph her travels, eventually filling several albums from other trips, including Tibet. The doctor suggested Tibet, adding that they should bring along enough food for a three-week stay that essentially meant, pack snacks. (They expected to find bottled water.) They flew to Tibet from New York, by way of Nepal.

When they finally entered Tibet, the trip was not exactly a guided luxury tour. First, they had to bring three weeks of American food that the doctor advised. In addition, Loretta had a load of film. And, there were very limited hotel accommodations so most of the time they camped out. The guides were the men who carried their baggage. Fortunately, the guide/carriers spoke English. The mountain roads were tricky, at one point they had to walk around a landslide on a narrow wall, then picked up another car on the other side. Again, the guides were there to help avoid a fall down the mountain.

One high point in the mountains was viewing the impressive home of the Dalai Lama. In the villages, Loretta was also impressed by the elaborate rituals of praying. She also has many photos of life in the villages, even including a view of a "third world" bath room.

What was the lure of Tibet? "It was *the adventure*", says Loretta. "I have saved the adventure in my photo albums and love to relive it in the pictures. The mountains were my favorites."

(Side bar.) Loretta on Skates

At an earlier time, Loretta was famous for being an award-winning roller skater.

She has several medals marking wins from both regional and national competitions. Her parents introduced her to roller skates rather than ice skates.

"I preferred roller skates," she recalls, "because I didn't like the cold of ice skating."

## One of Life's Greatest Adventures: Flying a Single-Engine Airplane to the Arctic Circle

### By Mary Kay Rotert

Just before the Millenium (AND before the common usage of GPS and cellular telephones), my late husband, Charles Rotert, "decided" that we should take a long trip in our single-engine Cessna 182. I was used to his "adventurous hi-jinks," so I absent-mindedly agreed. "Are you nuts?" I screeched later, when he presented me with the upcoming itinerary.

The booking came from a travel outfitter called "Northern Adventures," a husband-and-wife team of experienced pilots, who organized small-plane excursions from Montana up to the Arctic Circle and back. Participants came from all over the United States, but we were the only travelers from the East Coast of the US.

You might ask "How were we two qualified, and approved, for such an experience?" Charles himself was an experienced twin-engine pilot of many years; he had a sea-plane rating, as well, and had been a Flight Instructor for many years. So, he was the "Pilot-in-Command" (PIC). I myself had taken flying lessons, including aerial navigation, and had learned how to do emergency landings. I was not eligible for a pilot's license, and not allowed to fly solo, due to a problem with vertigo. Therefore, I flew "right seat," and handled the radios and the navigation charts. I also relieved the PIC for short bursts of rest, when flying conditions permitted it.

Therefore, in early June of 1999, Charles and I flew, alone, for three days, crossing most of the United States, from Virginia to Helena, Montana, near the Canadian border, in absolutely beautiful flying conditions. One of my most favorite memories is flying over Montana and following the Bozeman River, which is fairly straight in its course to the West. Charles needed some rest, so he handed the controls over to me and said, "Just follow the river; hold the altitude and keep the wings straight and level." I sat there for two hours in utter bliss, just reveling in the beauty and serenity of it all, while our little Cessna N59839 carried us safely into Helena, Montana. There, we joined our two guides and the

flight crews of seven other airplanes. Together, we became a "Flight – of - Eight," with only the guides' aircraft being allowed to talk to Flight Controllers, etc. The slowest plane in the fleet took off first, followed by the second-slowest, etc. the fastest plane brought up the rear. That way, we (hopefully) all landed at our destination about the same time!



We all flew almost every day – in daylight hours only. On

occasion, we stayed over for 2-3 days in places of interest: the "Calgary Stampede," for instance. The routine NEVER changed. There was always a breakfast meeting, in which we were given that day's schedule, flight conditions, instructions, and navigational charts – from which none of us were EVER allowed to deviate. The first day's destination was to Calgary, in the southern province of Alberta, staying over for their famous "Stampede," a fabulous rodeo. Canada is second to Russia in total land area, but 90% of its population resides in a 100-mile swath of land on the US boundary. It is the only area with enough agricultural and industrial activities to support a human population. The rest is mostly frozen tundra and mountains/lakes/ rivers.

I don't have the Flight Logbook any longer, so I don't remember the itinerary completely. But we spent the next few days flying, always together in a sort-of-formation, over the northeastern corner of British Columbia, with the entire line of the Canadian Rockies as a backdrop on our western side, finally crossing them somewhere in the Yukon. We stayed at or under an altitude of 10,000 feet, so that we did not have to worry about a loss of cabin pressure – or icing on the wings! The days were long, with a lot of territory to cover, but the territory beneath us was breathtakingly beautiful....We would usually land in late afternoon in small or mid-sized towns, with small airports and hotels/restaurants nearby. Before crossing into the Yukon, we had been mandated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to prepare our aircrafts with at least two