

Born Under a [†] Lucky Star

The Story of
Peter Nathan

Chapter 1



From Offenbach to Manila – The Nathans
Venture to the South East



The container arrives from Frankfurt to Manila 1936

My story is somewhat unusual mainly because of where I was born, where I lived, studied in, worked at, and where I eventually settled down. The story is expansive, spanning numerous continents, eras and cultures. From Manila — the alluring capital of the Philippines, to New York City — the beating heart of the Western world; from Montreal to the holy city of Jerusalem; from Switzerland to Borneo.

But every story must start at the beginning, and my tale begins in the small town of Offenbach, Germany, nestled on the banks of the River Main, close to Frankfurt. Offenbach is a town known for its leather-making, and both my father and mother's families were indeed in the leather business.

The Nathans, a family of shoemakers of modest means, who lived in a small Offenbach apartment, had eight children – five girls and three boys. Karl Nathan, my father – born on June 27th, 1913, was the youngest of the Nathan clan. Just like your everyday German young-man, he enjoyed soccer and skiing, and was a member of the German Boy Scouts.



However, my mother, Margot Gumb, born November 4th, 1914, was from a well-to-do family and lived in an upscale house in Offenbach. She had one sibling, her older brother Alex. She was well-educated, traveled extensively, and spoke perfect English and some French. Her family frequently traveled around Europe and vacationed in ski resorts, such as St. Moritz.

Her brother, Alex, had moved early to London and successfully started the family's leather business. He eventually settled there and the Nathan family would visit him at least every other year, since the two siblings remained close throughout their lives. He in London and she in Offenbach and then in Manila, Alex and Margot maintained close correspondence, writing to each other in both English and German.



Karl and Margot, two high-school sweethearts, found themselves facing a difficult decision: the year was 1933 and the tensions in Germany intensified, especially for the local Jewish population. At the age of 19 — having only just

graduated high school — Karl had very little work or education prospects, since at that time, German Jews were no longer permitted to attend University, and the job market was steadily closing before them. One of Karl's Jewish friends had a cousin, Doctor Eulau, who lived and worked in a faraway place of which Karl had never even heard, let alone visited — the Philippines. The Doctor assured Karl that he would help him secure a job in no-time, since he was well-connected within the foreign community living in Manila, and could guarantee that a young, hardworking European man such as Karl, would be sought-after professionally.

Karl and his friend boarded a ship in late 1933, sailing through the Suez Canal all the way to the Philippines and finally arriving in Manila in early April of 1934, while Margot stayed behind in Germany.

The Philippines, situated in the western Pacific Ocean is an archipelago that consists of about 7,640 islands, and is one of the world's longest coastlines, covering a total of around 300,000 square kilometers. It is bordered by the Philippine Sea to the east, the South China Sea to the west and the Celebes Sea to the south. The island of Borneo is located a few hundred kilometers southwest between the Philippines and Indonesia, and Taiwan is located directly to the north. Sulawesi is located to the southwest and Palau is located to the east of the islands. Both these places will feature later in my life story.

The Philippine Islands were discovered by Magellen in 1521 and claimed by Spain. Spain ruled the Philippines until the Americans defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in 1898. The American period ended when Japan attacked the Philippines on December 8th, and the last American/Filipino stronghold fell in May 1942. The full-scale war to regain the Philippines began on October 20 1944 when general MacArthur landed in Leyte in October 1944. The Japanese surrendered in September 1945. Much of Manila was destroyed.

After Warsaw, Manila was the most destroyed city in world war II. It is estimated that one million Filipinos lost their lives in the war.

In July 1946, the Philippine Islands became the independent Republic of the Philippines.



Manila's destruction in 1945

When Karl had first arrived in Manila in April of 1934, he spoke neither English nor Spanish (which was still more widely spoken than English in the 1930s). To begin with, Doctor Eulau had arranged a position for him at a candy factory up in the provinces, and Karl had no choice but to learn English, since hardly anyone spoke German – with the exception of the small German expatriate community that had settled there.

Karl's work at the candy factory would prove to be short-lived. In 1936, Karl returned to Manila and began working for an American motion picture distribution company, distributing movies all across the Philippines. He continued this role until the war when the Japanese confiscated all American films. Luckily, Karl had a good friend, Harry Taira, an American born Japanese, who was fluent in both languages. Taira succeeded in persuading the Japanese to let Karl show "neutral" American films (ones not mentioning Japan) in the Gaiety – the only movie theater operating in Manila during the war.

After the war, in the late forties, Karl befriended a German-speaking Jew, Robert Frieder, who was born in Budapest and grew up in Vienna, then migrated, like Karl, to the Philippines with his parents. Frieder and his father were in the European lumber business and wanted to continue doing what they knew best in the Philippines too. Karl and Frieder became partners and established their company, General Enterprises, which marketed and transported lumber from the Philippines to Japan, Europe, and South Africa. Their company collaborated with local Filipino loggers who cut down the huge mahogany trees in the Philippines – mainly in Mindanao and in the north of Luzon. The huge logs would then be floated downriver to a nearby bay, and Karl and Robert would arrange the pickup and delivery after having coordinated shipment to the final destination. Harry Taira who had moved to Japan and also married Nobuko, then joined as their partner, operating from Tokyo and coordinating the work with the Japanese shipping companies that distributed the logs globally.

The company, General Enterprises, continued its contact with the movie business and built the Globe – a movie theater in Manila. Initially Karl was in charge of this part of the business, and traveled all over the Far East as a

distributor for Hollywood movies. The Globe theater hosted the “Harlem Globetroters” when they came to Manila in the 50’s. They came not only to play basketball but also because their movie was showing at the Globe. I went with some of my friends to welcome them at the entrance to the theater together with many Filipinos. Basketball is the most popular sport in the P.I. (Philippine Islands) and they are very good but unfortunately are not very tall.



People standing in line at the Globe Theater

In 1936, Karl had already spent two years in the Philippines, and was at the first stages of growing what would later become a successful business venture. He wrote to Margot to let her know that he was establishing his business and able to afford his first rented home in Manila. Karl asked if she was still interested in building a life together.

Needless to say, Margot's response was more than enthusiastic, and she too embarked on the long sea voyage to the Philippines. Joining her on this trip was Gerda, Doctor Eulau's bride. They both arrived in Manila in 1936 and not long after their arrival, were happily wed in a double wedding ceremony – the first wedding in the first and only newly-constructed Synagogue in Manila and the P.I.



Margot arriving in Manila 1936



Double wedding, Margot and Karl Nathan and Gerda and Dr. Eulau at the new
and only synagogue in Manila 1936



Double wedding in Manila 1936

At the time, foreigners were not permitted to own property, as only Filipinos and Americans had the right to do so. Therefore, for the four decades (1934-1972) that the Nathans lived in Manila, they were never allowed to own property, but rather only to rent.

After the war, as Karl expanded his business in both the logging and film distribution sectors, Margot was busy running the Nathan household and overseeing their “help”: maids, cooks, launderers (called lavanderas), gardeners, drivers and nannies (called amas) – all employed by the Nathans. Having many people employed by the family was customary for households in the Philippines. The Nathans stayed in close contact with the staff they employed at their home long after they left the Philippines, and continued helping them financially throughout their lives.



Making waffles with Theodoro the cook

After the war, running her household was not the only thing keeping Margot busy. The Jewish community was very small, maybe at most 200 families, but the women had a club, the Jewish Auxiliary Club, and Margot was an active member, eventually being appointed its president. As well as overseeing its annual charity bazaar, fundraiser and art exhibit, she was also in charge of publishing the annual cookbook – a collection of Jewish recipes from all corners of the world, intended to help raise funds. From dozens of variations of Gefilte Fish to local and traditional Jewish delicacies, the cookbook featured recipes from Lebanon, Syria, Germany and the United States, to name a few.

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Recipes Around the World book published by the Women Jewish Club in Manila in the late 50's, co-edited by Margot

However, Margot's most loved pastime was spending the weekends at the Polo Club. The Nathans would frequent the Polo Club every weekend, where they enjoyed the day swimming in the pool and playing tennis, bowling and badminton, as well as watching polo games. Both Karl and Margot became avid golfers – although they had never played the sport in their native home of Germany, they both picked it up shortly after arriving in the Philippines, and enjoyed it immensely.



First house in Manila

The Polo Club was not the only establishment with which the Nathans were associated. Karl was also an active member of the German Club in Manila from his arrival in 1934. However, as the 1930s reached their end, the mounting tension of the war managed to reach even as far as the Philippines. During the German Ambassador's visit of the German Club in 1939, he insisted that the club hang up a Nazi Swastika flag. That was where Karl drew the line – he was indeed a German, but he was also a Jew. Thus, he immediately withdrew his membership from the club. His German friends in

Manila, tried to pacify him by saying that this was just a passing fad, a ridiculous craze that would soon blow over. Little did they know that a deadly and tragic war was about to ravage the world for the following five years.

As life in Germany for the Jews became more and more difficult and dangerous, both the Nathans and the Gumbs started arranging safe passage to other countries. The Gumbs, Margot's parents, traveled to London and joined their son Alex – now an established businessman and a British citizen, who was able to easily arrange travel visas for both his parents, and to make sure that they were well out of harm's way before things took a turn for the worst in 1939. The Nathans, Karl's parents, however, waited till the very last minute. They were able to secure travel visas to the United States and left only in March, 1939, in order to reunite with most of their children, who had already migrated there – with the exception of their daughter Lina, a Zionist, who had moved to Palestine in 1933; and Tilda, the oldest of the eight children, who was married to Paul Nickelsberg, and their 2 daughters aged 2 and 4, who were all waiting to receive their American visas.

The Nickelsbergs departed by boat together with another Nathan sister, Erna, to Manila arriving on May 15, 1939 where they were received by Karl and Margot with whom they stayed until they got their American visas in October 1939 just after I was born. They departed immediately across the Pacific to the USA together with Erna.

And the last Nathan to leave Germany was Karl's sister Selma. She refused to leave Germany and stayed until the war had begun, by which time the rest of her family were already settled in New York, yet they were unable to secure her a visa due to the war. Selma somehow managed to get on a boat to the Philippines, eventually joining us in Manila. She had been a teacher back in Germany, and in Manila worked as a private tutor. She stayed with us until the

end of the war in 1945 then sailed to the United States where she reunited with her parents and the rest of her siblings in New York City.

Aunt Selma was in fact the only member of the extended family that I would meet up to the age of seven – when my parents and I traveled to the United States for the first time to visit the Nathans in 1947.

Chapter 2



Childhood in Manila and a Year in NYC

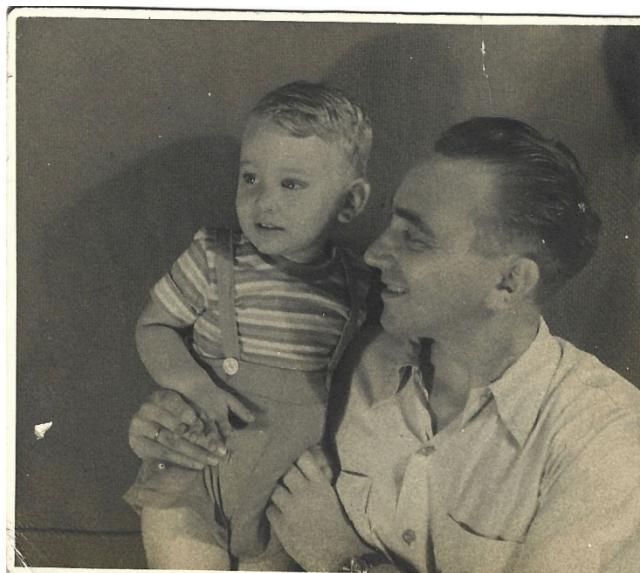
Born on October 5th 1939, I was Karl and Margot's only child, and would remain so for nine years, until the birth of my brother, Leonard, on October 2nd 1948.



10 months old 1940



1941



Several months before I was born, on March 1939, the Philippines president, Manuel Quezon, welcomed over 1,200 Jews from Germany and Austria to Manila. These Jews escaped Hitler's growing oppression and terror. The old-timer Jews in Manila like my parents helped the refugees that left their country with close to nothing. One of the children that arrived on this boat, 9 years old Frank Ephraim, wrote, in 2003, a book called "Escape to Manila", recounting his time in Manila during the war from 1939-1946. He also interviewed many old-timer Jews in the Philippines; including my father, about their experience during the war.

During World War II, in 1942, Imperial Japanese forces occupied Manila. The occupation continued for 3.5 years. In 1945, Filipino and American troops under the command of United States Army General Douglas MacArthur, Philippine Commonwealth Army, and Philippine Constabulary, with help from recognized guerrilla units, liberated Manila in a few months.

In 1943-44 our family, like many others, were expelled by the Japanese from our house on Romero Salas street, near Dewey Boulevard in Manila. The family, including my aunt Selma who was staying with us, decided to drive to Baguio — a town in the mountains 5 hours away from Manila. We stayed there until late 1944 when the American forces were already back in the Philippines and advancing to Manila. Hoping that the liberation would be soon, we returned to Manila, which was completely wrecked. We ended up in a bombed out garage with several other families. We had water from rain and from a well at a large home opposite the garage. A young Filipino who helped us, went to the well every day to bring water. Although the well was near by, fetching water was dangerous as there was shooting and bombing all day long. One day he didn't return and someone who dared went to look for him and found him lying dead near the well.

After several days, out of nowhere, 3 American soldiers appeared and told everyone to pickup their things and go behind the garage and over the bombed remains to their trucks, which would take everyone to already liberated areas. I remember that one of the soldiers picked me up and gave me a chocolate Hershey bar. We all raised our hands with the "V" sign as we rode happily to the liberated area.



Karl and Margot after liberation in 1945

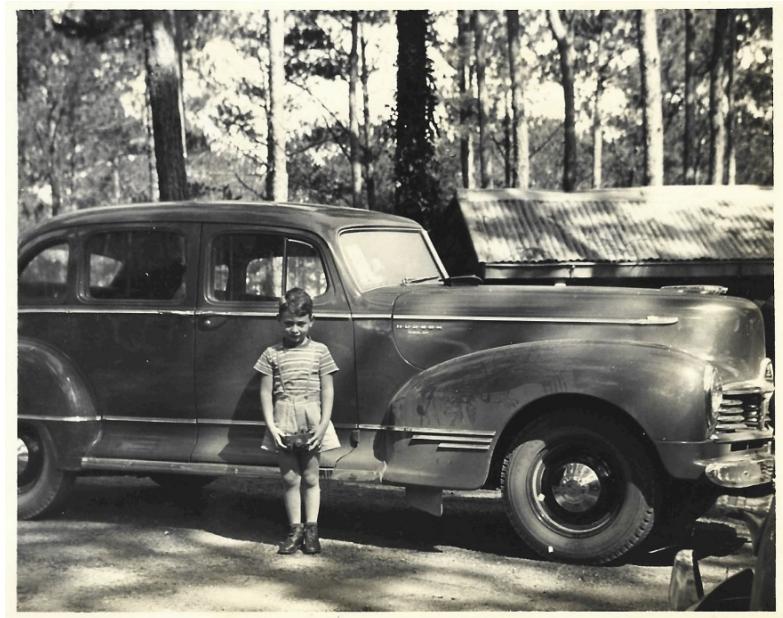
My family had experienced the effects of the occupation also close to home. The Japanese took Americans and other civilian foreigners that had any sort of ties to the Americans to an internment camp, in what used to be a large University, Santo Thomas, for the entire duration of their occupation of the Philippines – January 1942 until March 1945. Only civilian foreigners from neutral countries such as Switzerland and Germany were not arrested. So, all

members of my family were relatively safe, all but my aunt Selma. In 1943, Japanese soldiers arrested Selma under suspicion of aiding and abetting American spies. She herself was not under suspicion of espionage but nonetheless, she was arrested and sent to a Japanese prison, and subsequently, to a Japanese concentration camp for a period of three months where she was interrogated and tortured. When she was finally released, she recuperated at our home until the war was over. At the end of the war she went to New York and reunited with the rest of the Nathan clan. Selma was not the only one close to the Nathan's that suffered at the hands of the Japanese. Harry Taira, my father's business partner and close friend, lived under constant threat that he would be picked up by the Japanese police under suspicion of espionage, since he was a Japanese-American and spoke fluent English. Luckily, no harm ever came to Harry, but the years under Japanese rule were nerve-wracking for him nonetheless.

The war ended and the Philippines gradually pieced itself together after the Japanese occupation, World War II, and under the newly instituted American regime. We also found a way to return to some sort of a normal life. The first place we lived in was on the second floor of a Chinese family home in the Santa Mesa part of Manila. We hosted American soldiers, mainly Jewish ones, whenever we could. In Frank Ephraim's book "Escape to Manila", Frank writes that at the end of the war, during 1945, everyone was looking for work. My aunt Selma, who had been a teacher in Germany, found work as a tutor and among the children she taught was Frank Ephraim. Frank also writes that his first paid job at the age of 15 was to look after me and my friend Pauli.



1946 Baguio. Left: Butch Gaberman, Peter and Mike Goldman



1946 first car
(Hudson)

Feeling that we were now more secure financially and professionally, my parents couldn't resist going to visit both the Nathans in the United States and the Gumb family in England. So in 1947, when I was 8, we crossed the Pacific by ship and reached San Francisco, where we visited my parents' best friends, the Traugotts, who had left Baguio in 1945 and moved to Palo Alto. We visited Hollywood where my father had connections because of his work

as a film distributor in South East Asia. And naturally, especially for me, we had to see the famous cowboy, Roy Rogers and his wife, Dale Evans, and his horse, Trigger. We have a picture with them but without Trigger.



Visit Hollywood 1947 with Mon and Dad, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans

After visiting Hollywood we rented a car and headed east to Las Vegas. Las Vegas was still in its infancy, far from what it is now.

After Las Vegas we went to one of the of the places I was so much looking forward to visit but alas could not enjoy. We drove to a ski resort in Sun Valley, Idaho. I wanted so much to see snow for the first time in my life and learn to ski, but fate would interject upon our arrival there. I fell ill with the Measles and had to stay isolated in a cabin for the entire week as my parents looked in

from outside. My parents, on the other hand, both avid skiers who had grown up skiing in Germany, enjoyed their time and skied.

At the end of the week we continued our journey to NYC by train, where we reunited with the Nathan clan — whom my parents hadn't seen in years. I got to meet all the family for the first time: Omma and Oppa - my grandparents, aunts and uncles, and most importantly for me, my 8 cousins who lived in NYC!



1947 First visit to USA after the war

We stayed in New York for about a month, during which I got a taste of everything the United States had to offer – Dodger baseball games, American television shows (The Lone Ranger, The Ed Sullivan Show) and candy. Since

we were staying for an extended period of time, my parents decided to enroll me in a 'Children's Hotel', luckily for me and for them, it was only for a month.



During the summer of 1947 on the trip to NYC my parents thought I would enjoy being with other kids in this "Children Hotel". Here we are posing as soldiers. I stand in the upper row second from right not happy at all

At the end of our visit, as we headed back east to the Philippines, we stopped in London where we visited my mother's side of the family: Alex, my mother's brother and wife Ruth, and 2 children, Joanna and Johnny, (my third cousin Sally was not yet born). And for the first time, I got to meet my Granny - my grandmother from my mother's side of the family.



Jo, Peter and Johnny in England

From London, flying east, we stopped in Israel, where the 8th Nathan sibling, Lina, and family lived in Jerusalem. I met 2 more cousins, twins Rili and Rachel, exactly my age as they were born in October, 1939 in Israel.

Back in the Philippines Then Back to New York

In 1946, I was enrolled in a Filipino school for my first year of elementary school, which I did not enjoy in the slightest. So, in 1947, for my second year of elementary school, I was transferred to the American School. The American School and the friends I met there, would become the focal point of my

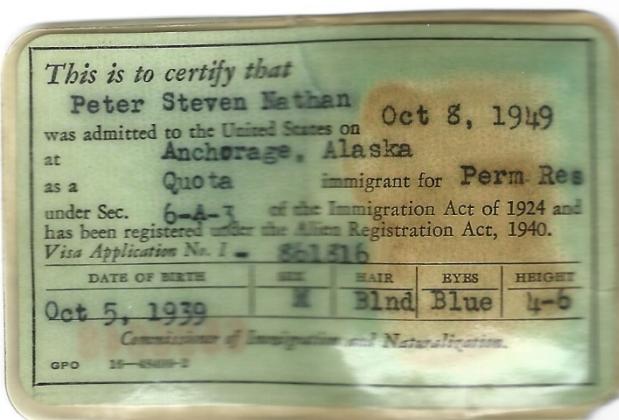
childhood and young adulthood in Manila, the whole center of my life – friends, first loves, playing sports, and many more “extracurricular” activities.

At that time we lived in a compound with six homes. Our neighbors included a Swiss family and an American family, both new arrivals to the Philippines, and both with kids who were my age, Verenali Peters and Doward Dousma, who both also went to the American School.



I was very happy in my new school and my friends but not for long. In 1949, as my father's businesses grew after the war and the Japanese occupation, my parents decided they would try their luck in New York for a year. My mother, my little brother Leonard (born Oct 02, 1948) and I, would live there while my father would remain in Manila and visit us every month for a few

days. In 1950 we made the long journey to the United States by plane (I think via Anchorage). We lived in Jamaica, Queens (part of NYC). I was enrolled in a public elementary school, PS-117 in Queens, and hated every minute of it. I just wanted to go back to Manila and to the life I had grown accustomed to and loved.



Immigration card
 to the USA



Luckily, after one year we went back to the Philippines and I went back to the American School!

When we returned to the Philippines we moved into a new home, located in a large compound in Quezon City, the house I lived in until I graduated from high school in 1957. The compound only had two homes, one was ours and

the other belonged to a Jewish American family. My father's business partner, Robert Frieder and his wife Tina, lived opposite our compound, and just 100 meters up the street, lived Dr. Eulau family, with two sons, Edwin, my age, and Frank, two years older. All of us attended the American School and would drive there and back together. Some additional kids (Dennis Savage and family) who attended the American School and lived in the same area would usually join us, occasionally as many as seven children rode in one car...



Our car inside the gate to our house in the 50s



Polo Club
in 1955

The daily rides were usually a nice start of the school day but not always. Every year the Philippines was hit (and is still hit today) by violent typhoons with huge amounts of rain and raging stormy winds. Manila was often in the path of the typhoon, which meant floods. Sometimes, as we rode in the car to

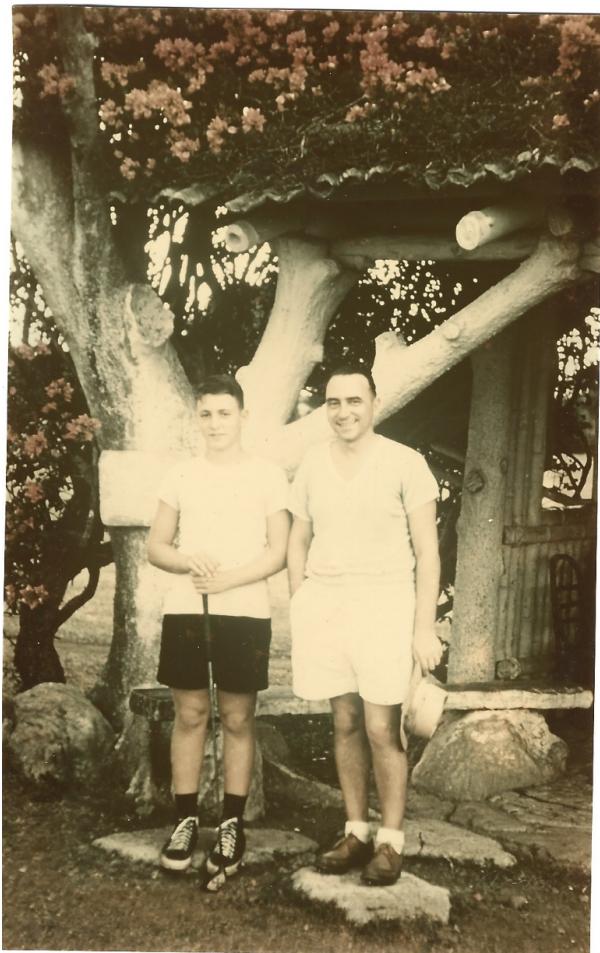
school, the water in the flooded streets got higher and higher until Francisco, our driver, had to turn around and usually it took a few days until we could go back to school. One time after five days of floods, when I went back to school and opened my desk, a frog jumped out and the desk was full of small fish. Another time, when we were living in the compound of six houses, a typhoon with fierce winds blew one corner of our house's roof up and down. We all, with help from neighbors, somehow got a rope onto the roof and pulled it down and tied it and were lucky that it held.



Doris Kaufman's birthday party 1954

Back row: Bill Donnelly, Peter Nathan, Butch Gaberman, Lee Smith, Lucas Adamson, Sammy Helis, Johnny Baker, Erwin Ackerman,, Edwin Eulau
Middle row:, Elsbeth Graeminger,, Doris Kaufman,, Thea Crovat
Floor row: Sandra Butler,, Ellen Kaufman

The American School was located in the Center of Manila. The building was relatively new before the war and, of course, not operational at all during the war. But by 1947, when I was enrolled there, the school was up and running again. It was very close to the Rizal Memorial Stadium, with a top-of-the line Gymnasium within walking distance from the school. Every day after school, from age 12, the swimming team and coach Rene Amabuyok, and I would walk over there for one and a half hour training. We enjoyed the huge 50-meter Olympic swimming pool, with all the diving boards a child could dream of: three meter, five meter and ten meter diving platforms. We all dared one another to jump off the ten-meter platform. I think my classmate Olaf Harken was the first to jump from this very high platform. While I was a very good swimmer, I also played soccer, baseball, and basketball, the most popular sport in the Philippines, and was also a member of our high school track and field team. Outside of school I played tennis, badminton, bowling in Manila, and golf in Baguio in summer vacations. In my last two years in high school I spent all my time after school swimming and participating in almost any kind of sport the school had to offer. I returned home only in the evening when I was picked up by Francisco, our driver. I also went quite often to the Army and Navy club where we were members. There I would play tennis and pool (billiards) with one of my best friends and classmate, Enrique (Tigoy) Abraham.



Golf 1955 at Wack Wack
Club, Manila

In Quzon City
House 1956



BAMBOO TELEGRAPH

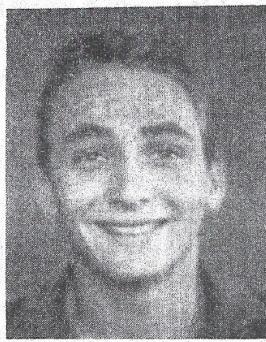
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-:Senior Sensations:-

by Thea Crovat



Peter Nathan

This week's sensation is a boy who is well known to all of us (especially the girls!). Peter Steven Nathan was born on October 5, 1939, right here in Manila. Pete first entered the American School in first grade and we have been blessed with his presence ever since.

Heading Pete's list of likes: girls! They seem to be the first and major item. It seems as though he is a member of the Girlwatcher's Club (Dick W. being the president) whose chief subject is any girl. As far as favorite food goes, Pete has nothing special; just the mention of food will make him drool. Pete's favorite expres-

sion seems to be "Ah, Shoot!" (We have heard different at times, Pete). The sensation's favorite drink is the "creeper." Just what that is I couldn't tell you but it sounds potent enough to put you flat on your face at the first sip. Right now his favorite pastime is water-skiing.

This senior has the shortest list of dislikes I have known. Being kept waiting while his date eats her dinner is it. Pete, you must be very easy to please.

I then asked Pete his opinion of the school and the kids. About the school, "Since it is the only high school I have ever been to I can't compare it to any other school, but I wouldn't change it for the world." About the kids, "I like each and every one of them."

Pete keeps himself busy with extra curricular activities: captain of the soccer team, a member of the varsity swimming team, business manager for the B.T., sports editor for the *Kawayan*, and there are a lot more on the list, but they would take the whole rest of article to name all of them.

As far as plans for the future go, Pete is not too definite. After graduation he plans to go to Switzerland for five or six months to study German and then on to either the States (Cornell) or Canada for college. We all wish you the very best of luck in the future, Pete.

Published in Bamboo Telegraph the American School newspaper

December 1956

Another of my exceedingly exhilarating activities mainly during weekends and vacations, was water skiing with my friends. Sometime in 1956, my father had built a 25-foot motorboat with a powerful inboard engine, which we anchored at the Yacht club on Dewey Boulevard on Manila Bay, (and became members of the club). We named it *Carlos Primero*, partly because my father's name was Karl and also because of the Spanish brandy which we all liked. From that moment on, in addition to weekend family outings to various beaches, I would very often, usually every week, together with my next door neighbor and good friend, Dick Waters, take the boat out for water-skiing in Manila Bay.

Ideally, it was in the early morning when the bay was calm. So often on Friday nights after some party, we would go to the Yacht club, get on to the *Carlos Primero*, and sleep on it and go out water- skiing early morning. In the calm sea I almost never fell which was very important since even in those days the bay was full of “brown fish”. By 7:00-8:00 in the morning we would be tired and hungry and would return to the yacht club for breakfast.



Karlos Primero

High School Fun and Shenanigans

My young adult life in Manila proved to be nothing short of a tropical wonderland. If Manila was referred to as the “Pearl of the Orient”, my friends and I at the American School, who would stay in close contact for the rest of our lives, were really eating the oysters.

In the summer of 1955, between junior and senior years of high school, me and some friends found ourselves in a world of trouble. One night, together with a group of classmates including Malcolm Smiley and three or four other guys, I drove around Manila shooting out streetlights with BB guns. Little did we know that those same nights, a group of seniors, also from the American School, were also driving around causing all kinds of damage, mainly damaging storefront windows. Later that summer, while our family was vacationing in Italy, my father received an urgent message from Robert Frieder, his business partner in Manila, about a big scandal that was in all the Manila newspapers; the students of the American school had done something terrible. As it turned out, what had been reported was not so much the streetlights that were shot out, but the damaging of storefront windows by the high school seniors.

And while we Nathans were out one day strolling around the streets of Rome, we bumped into the Florence family, friends from the Philippines. They were Spanish, and Francis “Franny” Florence, was two years older than me and had just graduated from the American School (he was the star of the high school basketball team). I pulled Franny to the side and warned him that news had broken about him and his friends, and he better be prepared because his father was probably going to find out very soon.

But it turned out I also had to pay for the damage we did. The following school year, when school resumed and I began my junior year of high school, I was called into the headmaster - Mr. Malach’s office. I immediately confessed to my participation in the events that unfolded over the summer and expressed my sincerest regrets and apology. My good friend, Malcolm Smiley, who had a sharp tongue, was also called into the headmaster’s office. Malcolm had a

way of offending people sometimes and perhaps did not express regrets and apologize to Mr. Malach. He was expelled and didn't finish school- he left Manila thereafter, and moved to somewhere in the States. I was very lucky not to be expelled, but lost all access to any extracurricular activities for the first six months of that year: no swimming, no basketball, no nothing. I could attend school every morning but had to leave school grounds promptly at the end of the school day (12.30 or 13.00) without proceeding to the gymnasium for any afternoon practices or activities.

Thinking of shenanigans, I just now remembered one of my most incredible ones in Manila. Manila was very influenced by the Spaniards that ruled the Philippines for three hundred years. One thing in particular that occasionally occurred was bullfights. In my junior year there was one, not Spanish but Portuguese .The only difference, I think, is that the Spaniards kill the bull at the end of each fight but the Portuguese do not. Many of us “manly”, heroic American school boys decided to compete in the sixth and last fight (there are always fights with six different bulls). This last bull had cash money tied between his padded horns and whoever wanted to try and grab it could enter the ring. Maybe about 10 of us from the American school went into the ring together with some 20 or more others from the crowd. From far away I didn't realize how big, strong and fast the bull was. My plan was to stand still and when he would charge me I would put out my hand and grab the cash envelope and spin out of his way. The only problem was he came so fast that I immediately turned around and ran for my life but he caught me and threw me up above him. The other people in the ring distracted the bull so when I landed, lucky as usual, I could run to be safe behind the fence. The cash was finally grabbed by someone who simply stood behind the fence and reached

over when the bull was near. I think I heard my mother screaming when the bull threw me up...



Horse-drawn carriages called Caramatas or Caratelas in the streets of Manila





American School Celebration 1956: From right: Mary Jane Brooks, Peter, Melba Vines, Jackie Rodriguez. At end, standing and trying to kiss Art Hudson. On the left, after girl, Dick waters, Niki Perepletikov and last but not least, Verney Vines.

During summer between Junior and Senior years of high school, I was out one night with friends, this time we weren't shooting out streetlights. We had learned our lesson. Instead, one night we were driving around Luneta Park. As the night progressed, after a few too many San Miguel beers, I was sitting on the hood of the car along with one of my friends, with our feet dangling below, right in front of the driver's window. Suddenly, another car came driving opposite us, and while my friend hopped off the car to safety, I was sure I stayed on board thinking I could stop the oncoming car with my foot... The cars (going very slowly) crashed into each other, with nothing but my foot in

the middle. When I finally hopped off the hood of the car there was a sharp pain in my leg, and my friends rushed me over to the hospital. The doctors confirmed that my leg was in fact broken and I was ordered to return the next day so they could set the leg in a cast. My dreams of joining the basketball team for the senior year were squashed. I lost my place in the basketball team but on the other hand (leg), I had been cast in our senior play as a grandfather. We were doing an 18th century British comedy by Oliver Goldsmith, "She Stoops to Conquer". Luckily for me, my cast fit perfectly for the part of the grandfather, who had Gout, and who was originally supposed to be in a wheelchair or with a walking cane.

In these days in Manila, money paid to the right person, could solve some problems. One night, when I was back in Manila during my summer university vacation in 1961, while rushing late to a date with Valerie Larson of the American School, I was speeding down the Boulevard and at an accelerated speed. Suddenly I heard a police motorcycle siren blaring and I was pulled over to the side of the road. Having grown up in Manila all my life, I knew I should always keep some cash in my wallet near the driver's license, just in case. But this time I forgot to put the cash with the license so quickly in the dark I added an amount (too large). When the policeman saw the amount of money I gave him, he asked why I was speeding. I replied that I was late for my date. Without further ado, the policeman told me to follow him, turned on his siren, and he escorted me all the way along the Boulevard to the front steps of Valerie's home, where she was waiting for me outside. Now "THAT" is the way to make an entrance, and an unbelievable impression.

Speaking of girls, for our Senior Graduation Show, me and my two best friends, Ed Schwesinger, also the son of German parents, and Dick Waters, an American, who only lived in Manila for that one year, in the same compound as we Nathans, performed one of the biggest pop hits of that year, 1956, “Standing On the Corner” (Watching All The Girls Go By) by “The Four Lads”. Ed, Dick and I might’ve only been three lads, but nonetheless, our rendition of the song was such a hit that it was even mentioned in the Bamboo Telegraph, the newspaper produced by the American School. Rumor has it, that we really excelled at “watching all the girls go by” both on and off the stage.

STANDING ON THE CORNER by The Four Lads 1956

Standing on the corner

Watching all the girls go by

Standing on the corner

Watching all the girls go by

Brother, you don't know

A nicer occupation

Matter of fact

Neither do I

Than standing on the corner

Watching all the girls

Watching all the girls

Watching all the girls go by

I'm the cat

That got the cream

Haven't got a girl

But I can dream

Haven't got a girl

But I can wish

So I'll take me

Down to Main Street

And that's where I

Select my imaginary dish

Standing on the corner

Watching all the girls go by

Standing on the corner giving

All the girls the eye

Brother, if you've

Got a rich imagination

Give it a whirl

Give it a try

Try standing on the corner

Watching all the girls

Watching all the girls

Watching all the girls go by

Saturday, and I'm so broke

Haven't got a girl

And that's no joke

Still, I'm living

Like a millionaire

When I take me down

To Main Street and I review

The harem parading for me there

Standing on the corner

Watching all the girls go by
Standing on the corner
Underneath the springtime sky

Brother, you can't
Go to jail for
What you're thinking
Or for that woo

Look in your eye
You'll be standing on the corner

Watching all the girls
Watching all the girls
Watching all the girls go by

As my raucous years of high school came to a close, it was time for me and my friends to prepare for the next phase of our young adulthood. We applied to universities across the globe, and luckily for me, my grades might not have been on par with that of any of the Ivy League schools, but my extracurricular activities made up for it in spades: I was captain of the soccer team, member of the swim team, member of track and field team, throwing the discus and many more. Luckily, I was accepted to McGill University in Montreal and would soon trade my water skis for a pair of snow skis, and swap the hot, humid tropical weather for snow and sleet. I would bid farewell to my beloved “Pearl of the Orient” and head to the “Paris of North America”.

Chapter 3



Switzerland and Canada

I graduated from the American School in April 1957, and still had six months before I could start first year at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. My parents thought it would be best to send me to a well-known school in Switzerland where I could increase my knowledge of German, and see what the world was like, outside of the Philippines where I had lived the life of a king. But most importantly, they wanted to keep me out of trouble and off the streets of Manila and away from Guernica's bar.

Although my parents spoke only English between them, they wanted me to learn German. My brother Leonard and I only spoke English and some Spanish that we had learned in school and picked up from growing up in the Philippines.

Switzerland

I arrived at the International School in St. Gallen, (the Institut auf dem Rosenberg) a city situated in the northeastern part of Switzerland in a valley about 700 meters above sea level. As one of the highest cities in Switzerland it receives abundant winter snow. The city lies between Lake Constance and the mountains of the Appenzell Alps, and is home to the Abbey of St. Gall, a monastery of various architectural styles including baroque, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Abbey's renowned library contains books from the 9th century, a rich collection of ancient books and a twin-towered cathedral. The language of St. Gallen is German and the local variant of the Alemannic Swiss German dialect.

Institute Auf Dem
Rosenberg St. Gallen 1957



Zurich 1957 visiting
from St. Gallen



I shared a dormitory learn-language room with two German brothers from Munich who came a little later to study Italian and French. I was also engaged in variety of other sports, including discuss throwing, where I was surprised to place 3rd in the local regional competition.

Often in the evening, I and my two dorm mates would climb out of our window at night, and walk to the town center just 10 minutes away from the Institut to a local bar (this was definitely prohibited by the school rules, and it was known or called a “Schwartz ausgang” meaning a Black Exit). We spoke a mixture of German and English, drank beer and became good friends.

The months went by, and although my German greatly improved, it was time to continue west, to Canada.

Canada

I arrived in Montreal in October 1957 to begin studies at McGill University. Having studied physics and chemistry in high school in the Philippines, I was planning on majoring in engineering at McGill. But after a few classes I realized I would have to devote all my time to studying and immediately switched majors to economics. But that too would prove to be too demanding academically and wouldn't leave enough time for socializing and sports so I ultimately settled on a degree in Liberal Arts. I studied German, which I now knew thanks to the six-month stint in Switzerland, and Spanish, which I had managed to pick up quite a bit of in Manila, and literature, mainly English literature. But academics were not the driving force behind my time at McGill. Ultimately, I would nearly fail every year, and barely get a pass mark in order to be admitted to the following academic year.

Upon arrival in Montreal, I headed straight to the gym at McGill University, still carrying my suitcases, and registered for classes along with all the incoming freshman students. After completing registration, I asked the staff where I should go, since I needed a place to live. I was handed a list of addresses. I started with the first name on the list, which also happened to be the closest to campus. I walked over to a two-story building on Peel street, where two young guys were sitting out front on the stairs. In answer to my question about a room they explained that there was a room available at the fraternity and I could stay a while, but if I wanted to remain there, I had to become a member of the fraternity. I knew nothing about fraternities and soon learned that this fraternity was called Z.B.T, Zeta Beta Tau, a Jewish Fraternity.

One of the fraternity's most notable alums was Leonard Cohen, the famous Canadian singer-songwriter and poet, who was not only president of the fraternity while I was there, but would also go on to perform at parties there. I

was a few years younger and remember him at our parties. I don't think he was famous then.

There were about 15 students living at the fraternity at that time and – all from outside of Montreal. During my first year at McGill we all became good friends. At least three of them were from Quebec City and all of them spoke fluent French. One of these students, from Quebec City, was Michael Kastner. Mike and I decided to rent an apartment off campus together for my sophomore year. We still frequented the fraternity, mostly for parties, but wanted to spread our wings and enjoy everything two young men could while living in Montreal. Another good friend I met that first year, who lived in Montreal but was not a member of any fraternity was Julian Melzack. We met in our Latin class and became very good friends but after finishing university I lost contact with him. However, in 1975 I met him by chance at Heathrow airport, while I was waiting for my flight. We were both happy to have met and we were both on the same flight to Zurich. I also met his lovely wife Liz. Liz and I had a common interest in swimming and water sports. In 1957, I joined the McGill water polo team. I had never played water polo before but when I was swimming in the McGill pool a coach saw me and asked if I could play polo. I told him no but he said I was fast enough and since I played sports like basketball and soccer I could easily become a player. I played for a few games until I decided not to continue. Liz and I also had a common acquaintance, a swimmer from Montreal called Cameron Grout. I knew him because he was also on the polo team. Liz told me that she had met him at the Rome Olympics in 1960 when she had won a bronze medal for diving. Apart from being a winner of an Olympic medal, Liz was also a Doctor of Medicine and when she retired she joined the International Olympic Committee as a medical advisor. Over the years, Miri and I became very friendly with Liz and one time after an Olympic meeting in Jordan she came to us in Jerusalem for a few days and I was her guide. We also met her in a later year in Villars in Switzerland where she

joined us when we were skiing there. And every time I came to London or just passing through on my way elsewhere, I would meet Julian and Liz.

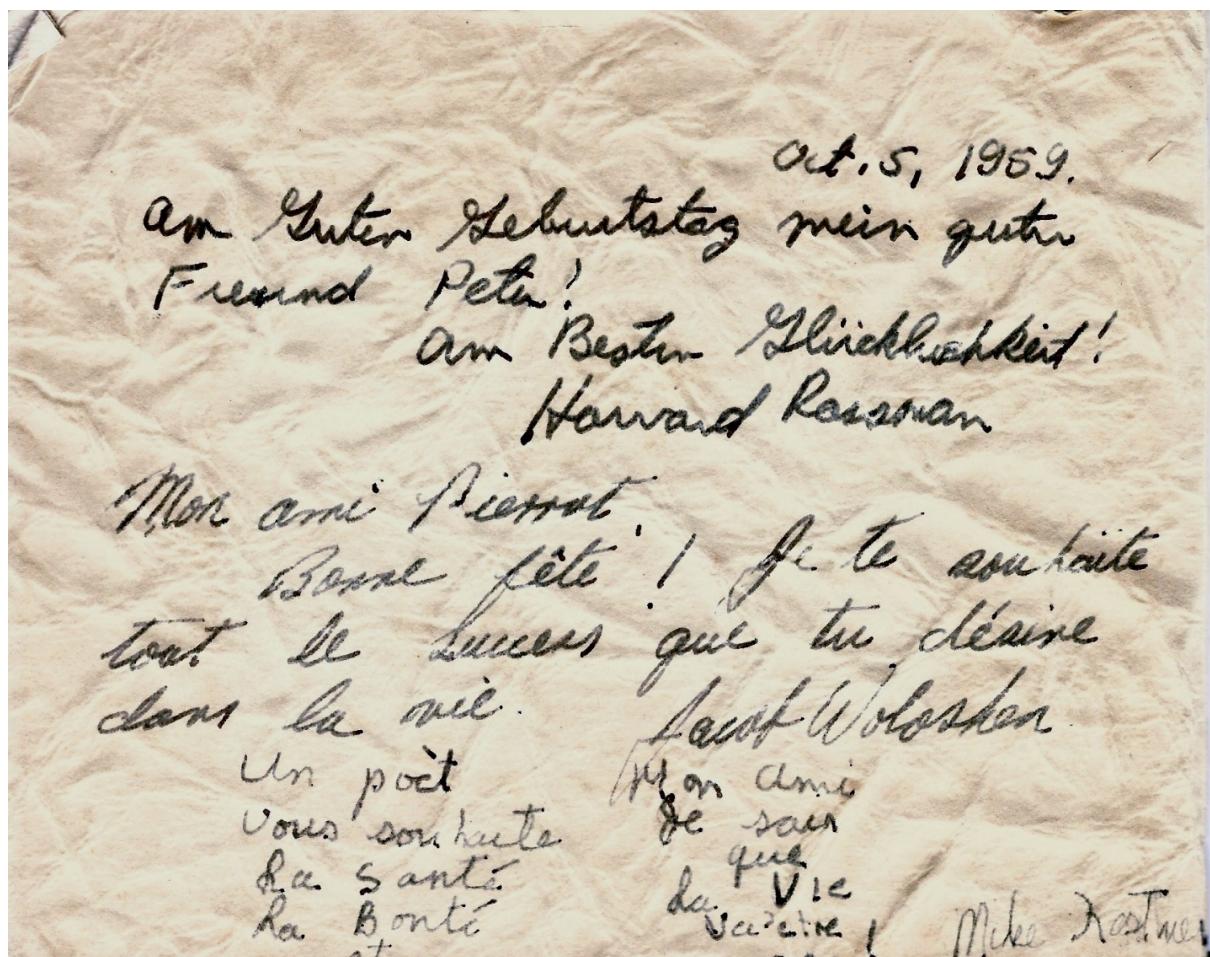


1958-59



Norm, Ed and Mike Kastner in front of the apartment we rented
1958-59 Montreal

From the right:
 Sitting at El Morocco
 cocktail lounge.
 Howard Rossman,
 Jake Woloshen, Mike
 Kastner (my room-
 mate) and I in 1959.
 All from ZBT
 fraternity house.



A birthday card from Howard Rossman, Jake Woloshen and Mike Kastner for Peter's birthday.



From right: Mike
Kastner and Sonny Mass



From left: Mike Kastner
and Sonny Mass



Montreal February 1959

Skiing

One of the main high points of my going to college in Montreal was skiing. I had never skied before in my life. Having grown up in the tropical weather of the Philippines, the only skiing I had done until that point was waterskiing (and plenty of that). But when my good friend and roommate Mike Kastner asked if I wanted to learn how to ski, I replied that I had never skied in my life. Mike reassured me and said: “But you waterski? And you’re athletic, I’ll teach you”. So the two of us ventured north of Montreal to one of the neighboring mountains, rented a pair of skis for me and took the chairlift to the top. As we both stood there perched on the edge of the snowy mountain, with nothing but snow and slopes for miles, I asked: “You want me to go down?” Mike, who had been skiing since he was a child, replied: “Just follow me and watch what I do”. During that first year, I would often visit either Mont-Tremblant or St. Agathe and hone my skiing skills. There were lots of falls, and I even broke five (!) pairs of skis but luckily never broke anything else (The skis were still of wood then). Five pairs of skis in one winter might be a record but never again in my life. I would watch good skiers and try to copy them. And when I would pass a group of beginners with their ski instructor, I was proud until I heard him say “you see? That is exactly what I mean not to do”. And so my life-long love and obsession with skiing was born atop those mountains of Quebec state with Mike Kastner.



Montreal Winter 1957-58 Starting to ski

I would later, in Switzerland, teach our children how to ski starting at young ages. The youngest, Yael, I would carry on my back at the age of two while I skied down the slopes. She loved it and would sing all the way down. All three started skiing on their own by the time they were four years old. Eventually, they would wiz right by me down the slopes. Later, my two older children taught their kids, my grandchildren, skiing.

Unusual Roommates – Squirrel Monkey and Crocodile

The apartment that Mike and I rented during my sophomore year at McGill, was in a fancy building with a doorman, located on top of a hill at the end of an impressive driveway. We two young guys felt the need to spice things up a bit, since the apartment was quite a change from our average college-dorm. We ended up adopting two pets, not what you would typically find in an urban apartment, a dog or cat, but something more unusual: a tiny monkey with a long tail, called a squirrel monkey and a pet crocodile. I brought the crocodile with me on a plane from New York in a shoebox when he was still very small...

While the monkey was free to roam around the apartment, the crocodile would spend most of its time in the bathtub. I would take it out once a day to walk around a bit in the apartment, but roommate Mike was afraid of it. Every morning when Mike would wake up and before he would put his feet on the floor, he would ask where the croc was... He'd also always comment on how big the crocodile was getting. Together we eventually made a trip to the University's biology department to inquire as to the size the crocodile might eventually grow to. The professor, who never imagined that the crocodile was in our apartment, asked: "Where do you keep it? Because the amount of space is something that really influences how big and how fast it will grow". Mike immediately insisted on getting a small aquarium for the croc. However, after seven months in our apartment, we realized we would need to find some other living arrangement for our crocodile roommate and transported it to the building's nearest sewage opening and hastily set our reptilian friend free in the cold Canadian sewage.

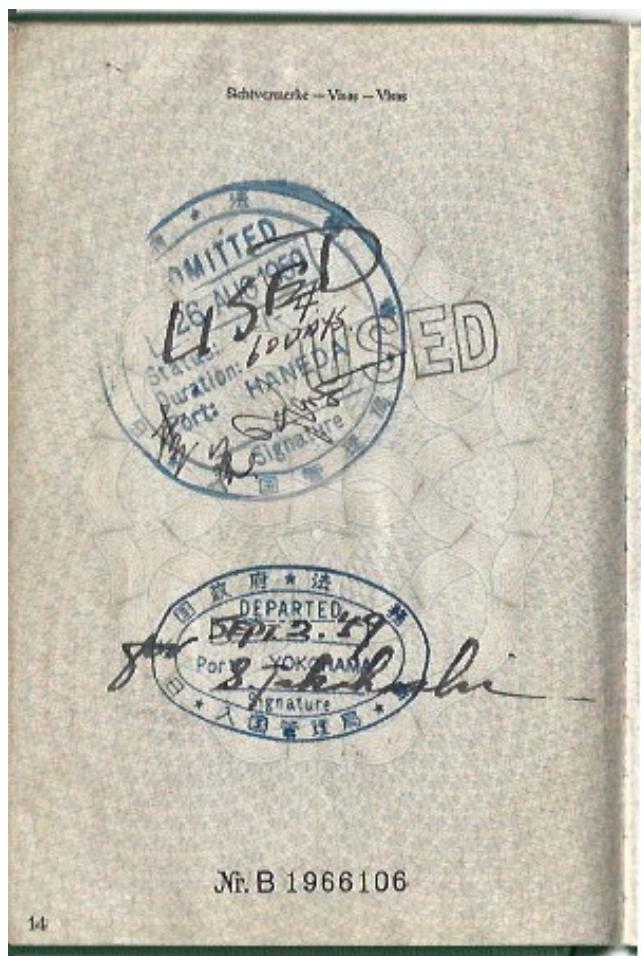
The squirrel monkey on the other hand, who was free to roam the apartment at will, would get himself into all kinds of mischief. One night, Mike was hard at work, sitting at his desk and typing away (on a typewriter, of course) at one of

his final papers that he needed to hand in the following morning. Every time he'd finish typing a page, he'd drop it at his feet below him. Little did he know that the monkey was waiting right there, and every time he'd drop the piece of paper, the monkey would grab it, crumple it up and stick it in his mouth. When I walked in and witnessed the comedic sketch in real time, I found it too funny to say anything to Mike and pretended not to have noticed.

As my sophomore year came to a close, Mike went back to Quebec City where his parents lived and I flew back to Manila. We found a new home for our pet monkey at the ZBT fraternity, which was large and roomy and always had people around. By the time next fall rolled around, and I returned to Montreal for school, our former pet monkey was still happily living at the fraternity.

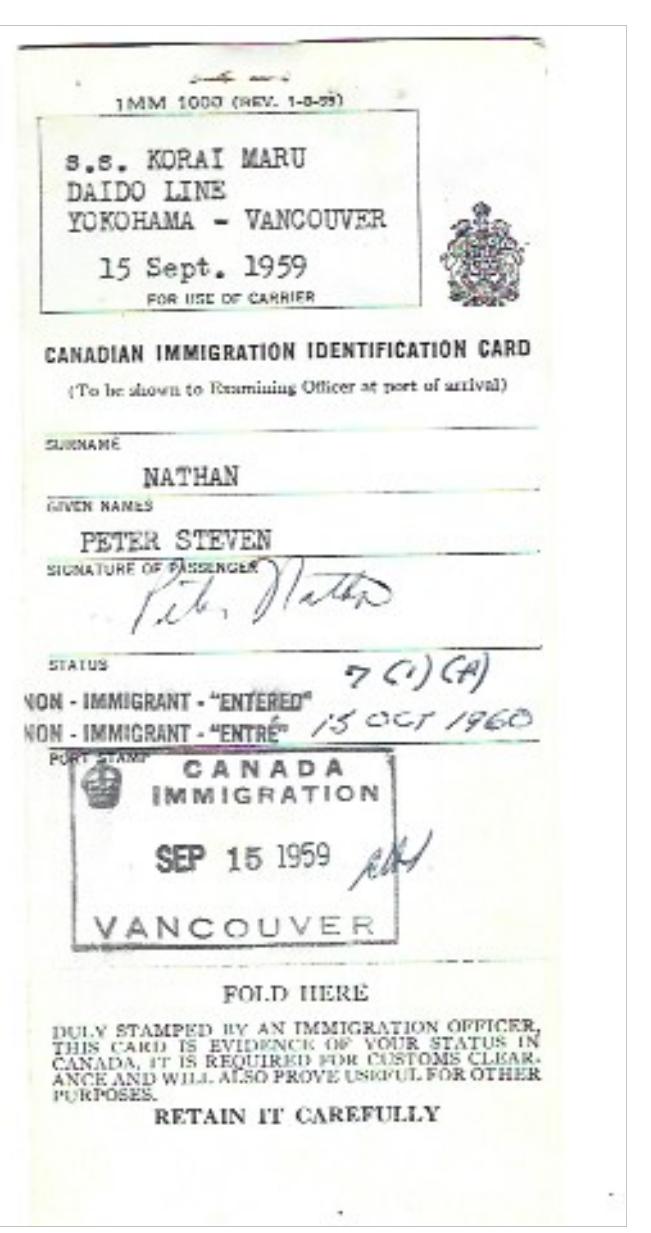
My return from Manila to Canada in the summer of 1959 was not the usual flight but by ship. Since my father's logging business was working substantially with Japanese shipping companies, my father suggested going via Japan to Vancouver by ship, which he could probably even receive without payment. I liked the idea so after a few days in Tokyo I went to Yokohama and boarded the freighter S.S.Korai Maru on 02 September 1959. Since I knew it was to be a long two weeks trip with only Japanese who spoke no English, I came prepared with several long Russian novels of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. Every day I would go to the top open deck where I could "see the sea" and watch the birds and the waves and feel the sun. At dinnertime I would sit at the captain's table and we would communicate somewhat in sign language. It was a small ship but we had a relatively calm trip until we approached Vancouver. Two days before arrival, it became stormy with huge waves, which we met directly in front. The bow would go into and under the wave and slowly come out. Rather unpleasant. I sort of managed to catch some radio news from Canada giving details of the heavy storm and reporting two ships off the

coast in trouble. At dinner with the captain in sign language I asked how it was and he shook his head and indicated it would be tough and that I should strap myself in bed that night. We arrived in Vancouver on the 15 September 1959. From there I took the train to Montreal, good solid land under my feet.



Arriving in Vancouver from
Yokohama 15 Sep 1959

Departing Yokohama on S.S. Korai
Maru On the way to Vancouver
Canada 3 Sep 1959





On the Japanese freighter (S.S. Korai Maru) from Yokohama to Vancouver
Sept. 1959

A Weekend in the Slammer

When I returned to school for my junior year of college, Mike went back to living at the fraternity and I rented an apartment with another friend but like the fraternity, very close to McGill in the center of town. I was over at the fraternity one night, and while everyone was studying, I was in the mood for a night on the town. I approached my friend, Howard Rossman, an engineering major from New Jersey, and said: "Howard, come and let's go and have a drink because I can't take any more of the studying. I'm going out of my mind."

Howard quickly replied: "No, no, I'm an engineering major, I'm not one of the guys who goes out drinking every night." But I was not about to take "no" for an answer. Although it was already close to midnight, and the bars were all closed, I knew a speakeasy, which were called in Montreal "blind pigs" and convinced Howard that we would only stay for a drink or two and head back. Howard was not having it, but I dragged him there anyway. This blind pig was known for its gambling, blackjack and roulette and array of beautiful women. Howard and I were sitting at the bar, having a drink and a bite to eat, when suddenly, the police raided the joint and the place was swarming with cops. They dragged everyone outside and into a large police bus that was parked out on the curb.

We were taken to the police station downtown along with all the other speakeasy patrons. The following morning, a Saturday, we all were herded into court to plead guilty or not guilty and either pay a fine or go to jail. Neither Howard nor I had enough money with us to pay the \$100 dollar fine each of us needed to be released from jail. We were allowed a single phone call and at 08:30AM, once the courthouse opened, called up our buddies at the fraternity to come bail us out. But none of them managed to make it in time to the courthouse by 9AM when our arraignment was over. We were all transported hand cuffed, by bus to a nearby prison, a three story building, with five

separate wings, and single occupancy holding cells. Howard was absolutely beside himself: "I've got an exam!". I tried to appease him and said: "Howie, look, we're here. Maybe one of our wealthy friends from the fraternity might have some connections and can figure something out and get us out of here. And if not, by Monday morning, they'll come and get us." The prison we were taken to was a very old one called Bordeaux , very large and holding around one thousand different kinds of prisoners.

Howard and I were each put in separate cells in separate wings. Each cell had a small window with wrought iron bars that the prisoners could look out of, talk to one another, sing songs to each other and tell jokes. The meals would be slid in through the door at noontime and evening time. Come Sunday morning, I noticed through the eyehole in the door a long line of prisoners walking down the ramp and I thought "Wait, where are these guys going? Why am I in here?" but then I noticed the door to the cell was unlocked. I walked out of my cell, joined the long line of prisoners and asked one of them: "where are we going?" The prisoner replied, "it's Sunday morning, we're going to church." I found myself in a room, a makeshift chapel, with 50 other prisoners and a priest delivering a sermon. I looked everywhere from where I was for Howard but he was nowhere to be seen. The majority of the prisoners were busy passing cigarettes back and forth between them and within an hour, the sermon was over and the prisoners were filed back to their cells in a long line. On Monday morning, a prison guard appeared outside of my cell door and said: "come on downstairs with me to the office." I immediately asked: "Why, am I getting out?" and the guard said: "I think so." I was taken to the office on the ground floor and asked the clerk who was sitting there: "Am I getting out? What about my friend Howie?. The clerk replied: "You are, and don't worry, they'll bring him down here too." It was 9:00AM on Monday morning and I kept peeking out of the office to see if I could catch a glimpse of Howard. Suddenly, I caught sight of a security guard leading one of the prisoners down the hall

and I heard one of the other prisoners, who was mopping the floors, calling out upstairs to the other prisoner, “Hey Howie, where are you going?” “I’m getting out”, the prisoner replied. I quickly made my way back inside the office and said: “I don’t know which Howie you’re letting out, but I think you got the wrong guy, it’s not my friend!”. The clerk looked the prisoner’s name up and realized they had made a mistake. Shortly thereafter, Howard Rossman, the right Howie, appeared in the office and he looked so happy and relieved that he almost kissed the prison floor. One of our fraternity buddies had indeed posted the bail and we were free to go.

To this day, Howard calls me up from New Jersey where he lives and we share a laugh about the weekend spent in jail in Montreal. Despite spending very little time in class, and even less time doing homework, I somehow managed to complete my degree and my time in Montreal had come to an end. I wanted to head to Europe, hoping to find a job as a swimming life guard, but my parents strongly suggested that I go to Israel to my cousin Rili’s kibbutz, Magal, where I could work with other young people.

Despite spending very little time in class, and even less time doing homework, I somehow managed to complete my degree and my time in Montreal had come to an end. I wanted to head to Europe, hoping to find a job as a swimming life guard, but my parents strongly suggested that I go to Israel to my cousin Rili's kibbutz, Magal, where I could work with other young people.



Trip with my parents to Paris in one of my summer vacations from McGill (1959) in the restaurant Au Mouton de Panurge. My parents, it seems, also like to celebrate...

Chapter 4



After graduation

After graduation in 1962, the year I would turn 22, I really wanted to "bum around" the world. I went to London and then to Vienna where I visited two girlfriends (sisters). I have fond memories of swimming there at the Gansehaufel beach pool with artificial waves which I enjoyed immensely.

My parents did not like the idea of my bumming around. They suggested that I go to the kibbutz in Israel where my cousin Rili (Azriel) lived. Rili the twin brother of Rachel, was born in October 1939 as was I. The twins were born and raised in Jerusalem. Rili had already finished his army duty and had joined kibbutz Magal. This was a relatively young kibbutz, founded in 1953 as a Nachal settlement. Nachal was the paramilitary Israel Defense Forces program combining military service and agricultural development in peripheral strategically-situated settlements. (Nachal is the acronym of "Noar Chalutzi Lochem" meaning "Fighting Pioneer Youth"). Many of today's established kibbutzim started off as such small settlements. I was willing to try living and working in the kibbutz for a while and I arrived at Magal in the summer of 1962.



Kibbutz Magal 1963:
Peter on left

In those days life on the kibbutz for me, like for most kibbutzniks, meant working in the fields — the banana and avocado plantations, or in the chicken coops. Those were the only options and I worked with the chickens. These chickens did not range free, on the contrary, they were sitting in raised wire cages with wire floors where they were cooped up, unable to move anywhere, and shit heaped up underneath them. Well, you all know what kind of work the new guy always gets.

During those summer months a group of Scouts (Tzofim) from Jerusalem came to work at the kibbutz. The Scout's movement was and still is the largest youth movement in Israel. I hung out with them, mainly because quite a few of them spoke good English. I became the boyfriend of Tammy from the scout group and when the group returned to Jerusalem, I decided to go with them and stay with my aunt Lina - Rili and Rachels mother, who lived in the Kiryat Yovel quarter, on the outskirts. I also decided to learn Hebrew and went to a municipal ulpan - Hebrew language school. After mastering some Hebrew and working at some odd jobs, Tammy went into the army and I decided to volunteer for the Israeli army. I was not an Israeli citizen, but I could join the Mahal – a program intended for Jewish youth from foreign countries who wish to volunteer for military service.

I realized that if I wanted to become an Israeli citizen, serving in the army was a good way to get to know Israelis and Israeli culture and learn Hebrew. And it was, of course, also an adventure. The 3.5 months basic training was done together with all recruits, who were 18 year old just out of high school, while I, like several of the Mahal volunteers, were in their early twenties.

Why had I enlisted in Mahal, the Israeli army in the first place? After all I was not driven by ideology, but, as always, I agreed with my parents. They did not think it right for a young, white foreigner like me to start life from scratch in the Philippines. They wanted me to find a good place in the world to go, maybe

Australia, but Israel was an option because of my aunt and cousins. And I came to really like Israel and the Israelis I was meeting. I felt very much at home with them.

In the Philippines where I grew up nobody around me was interested in religion and there were very few Jews. Many of the Filipinos were Catholics, and then there were many Protestants or Episcopalian Americans. I felt like one of the crowd. But in Montreal I found myself smack in the middle of a large Jewish community, especially as a member of an all-Jewish fraternity. So gradually I noticed that everyone I met with, the whole system, was Jewish. It caused me not to feel completely at home in Montreal, I had never before even dated a Jewish girl. I had liked the beautiful Doris Kaufman, a Jewish girl from my class at school in Manila, but never went out with her. In Montreal the French Canadians disliked the Jews and I experienced several unpleasant occasions verging on antisemitism, just short of becoming violent.

When I connected so easily to Israelis, feeling again as one of the crowd among a Jewish majority, I could envision myself settling in the country and so chose to enlist in Mahal.



Basic training camp 1963



Basic training camp 1963

I arrived about 10 days after basic training had started, sometime in September, 1963. The other volunteers included at least five South Africans. Two or three of them were 18-year-olds. One was my age. And then one was from Rhodesia and one guy from Uruguay. The Uruguayan and I and an Australian are the only ones who remained the rest of their lives in Israel. All the others went back to wherever they came from after Mahal, or continued on to somewhere else.



Writing home Brian left

Peter right 1963-4



I connected well with the South Africans, one of whom I am still in contact with. Lionel, a six-feet tall, muscular guy. Such big guys were allowed to have a second helping during meals, as the amount they were served was not sufficient for their size. Once he came back for his second helping and the soldier on serving duty refused him. Lionel said: "Do you want to discuss this outside?" And the soldier, stupidly, replied: "Sure, as soon as I'm finished." Everybody walked out behind them to watch the fight, the shortest I ever witnessed! Lionel knocked him down with one blow. The End!



From left: Peter, Lionel, Tony

After basic training we were sent to kibbutz Palmachim to do physical work in farming: cows, poultry, harvesting, fruit picking (mainly oranges) and elementary building and repairs. This kibbutz was situated on a fantastically nice spot in the dunes of the Mediterranean coast with a beautiful beach and less than 30 km south of Tel Aviv. I remember my placement there as the best of luck. I mainly assisted in building and very much-loved picking oranges (and to eat as many as I wanted).





Kibutz Palmachim 1963-4

During our time at the kibbutz we were occasionally visited by various army officers, who advised and kept us informed of military topics. Once a visiting female officer asked, after bringing us up to date, if anyone in the army group would be interested in helping out on a large archeological dig at Masada, for about 2-3 weeks. I was the only one who raised his hand, and I couldn't believe it! At McGill I had studied anthropology and was certainly also interested in archeology. I had visions of volunteer Swedish girls at dig and thought, "oh, my God, this is going to be Heaven."

The dig at Masada was extra special, because it was led by the renowned Yigael Yadin, who besides being an archeologist had been a top Israeli general and chief of staff. I enjoyed my three weeks there tremendously. I didn't find anything myself but witnessed the finding of playing dice and the discovery of stairs leading down to a few large underground cisterns.



Volunteers arrived from all over the world. Yigael Yadin with team of researchers on Masada

Masada is an ancient fortification on an isolated clifftop in the heart of the desert, a lofty plateau overlooking the Dead Sea and the untamed landscape of the Judean Desert, built around the first century BC. In 73 CE, during the first Jewish-Roman war, Roman troops besieged the fortress. The long siege led to a mass suicide on the hilltop of 960 Jewish Sicari rebels, who were regarded as extremists among the Jews of their society. After the suicide the Romans took possession of the fortress. Flavius Josephus, a Roman-Jewish historian alive at that time, recorded much of the Roman occupancy of Israel. He was the only one who told the story of the suicide in Masada and this story is not confirmed by archeological evidence but still, Masada . Many interesting structures were excavated during the two year dig and Masada is one of Israel's most visited sites and in spite of no evidence that the suicide story is true, it has become a national symbol of heroism.

After the six months of kibbutz service, all the able-bodied soldiers, and all us Mahal boys went to advanced training to become paratroopers. At the Tel Nof airforce base we practiced jumping off towers, strapped to a line, learned to fall properly and so on. Then the real thing: on the runway, strapping on the parachutes, entering the plane, being attached to the jump line and taking off for our first jump from a low altitude. The training continued thereafter with night jumps, bundled with weapons and followed by long hikes after landing, sometimes ending in simulated attacks or meeting up with other army units. Sometimes a soldier had more than one weapon to take, like me, who carried an Uzi sub-machine gun and also carried a small mortar weapon, somewhat heavy. A soldier who carried only his one weapon would usually have an FM rifle. The mortar came tied in a bag attached to the leg of the paratrooper as he jumped. We practiced releasing the bag just before we landed. At night jumps the feeling of the bag hitting the ground prepared you for your own connecting with the ground, and where not to roll in order not to hit the weapon bag. This is not so easy! The exercises were very tiring, but I was

surprised at the ease with which I actually jumped. Some guys were scared to jump, and had to be pushed out.



I'm a paratrooper!

Waiting to board the plane
before jumping 1964



1964



Got down safely



Paratroopers. Mahal after getting the wings Standing from left: Lionel. Third from left Victor. I'm sitting on the right

Our volunteer group worked very hard and did everything required of us. We expected to get something in return, like an extra day of leave or so, but when we didn't get it we decided to get injured during a jump on purpose to get some time off. Lionel, Tony the South African and I tried breaking a leg, but (luckily?) did not succeed!

One of our interesting actions yet not at all physically difficult was when we were sent to Mount Scopus in Jerusalem. Before Israel was declared a Jewish state in 1948, Mount Scopus was the place where the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital were situated. All during the time between 1948 and 1967 (Six day war), Mount Scopus was in the section of Jerusalem belonging to Jordan. But, in order to preserve the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital, Mount Scopus was declared a demilitarized zone in an agreement signed between Israel and Jordan on July 1948. Under this agreement, Israeli policemen supervised the major part of Mount Scopus, and until 1967 it remained an Israeli enclave surrounded by Jordanian held territory. However, the policemen were soon replaced by soldiers wearing policemen uniforms. When it was my army unit's turn to guard Mount Scopus, we were all dressed as policemen and warned not to answer any questions by the UN or Jordanian inspectors at the gate crossing by bus. On the short drive to our destination at each door of the bus there was a Jordanian armed soldier standing guard. So next to each of them was stationed one of our largest or heaviest guys.

When we got to the large barbed-wire fenced area and familiarized ourselves with the buildings we learned that our main job was to guard the fence at night for four hours. After a while most of us learned that guarding our backs against our officers visits was more important. We also discovered that although we were hardly armed, there were all the latest weapons available in case of emergencies. By and large it could have been a dangerous situation but again luck was on our side. You begin to understand that in life and especially in the

army, anything can happen. All the Israelis are drafted and after your regular service you are still in the reserves and depending on what your unit was doing and what the situation with the enemy was, your service could be terrible, or just annoying but easy. One of our very good friends, Abraham Adigis, was called up for reserve duty in February 1968 to guard the border near the Jordan river. On 13 February 1968, he was part of an ambush with other soldiers at night when terrorists crossed the border and, in the firing, he was shot and died immediately. He was 26 years old and a good friend. Everyone loved him and since that day, every year, for over 50 years, we all go to the military cemetery on the day that he was killed.

By November 1964 the six months paratroop training was over. Everyone apart from me was released from the army, but since I had joined 10 days after the others I had to stay, although the army didn't know what to do with me. I requested permission from my officers to go to the Kirya (IDF headquarters in Tel Aviv) to speak to someone I knew who could fix everything. Permission was granted, and off I went in my paratroopers uniform with the distinctive red beret and the silver wings on my shirt. At the gate of headquarters I was asked "whereto?" and answered: "The Chief of Staff", general Bar Lev. It so happened that Bar Lev had lately been on an official trip to Manila and that my father, as head of the Jewish community, was his host and guide. This is how I could claim that I was acquainted with the general! Bar Lev recognized the name and knew that his guide's son served in Mahal. Thus, he arranged for my immediate release from the army, as there was no reason at all for me to remain. The next day, the end of November 1964, I walked out of camp a civilian and flew to Manila, back to my parents.

By December I started preparing for my new Job: the establishment of a new lumbering site in Borneo, an extension to my father and his business partners company's lumber business in the Philippines. I was promised a good salary

directly paid into a bank in Hong Kong.

With ten experienced Filipino lumber workers we went to check out the area the company had received from the Malaysian government for logging. The area was in Sarawak, a Malaysian state on Borneo.



My passport issued just before I started working in Borneo



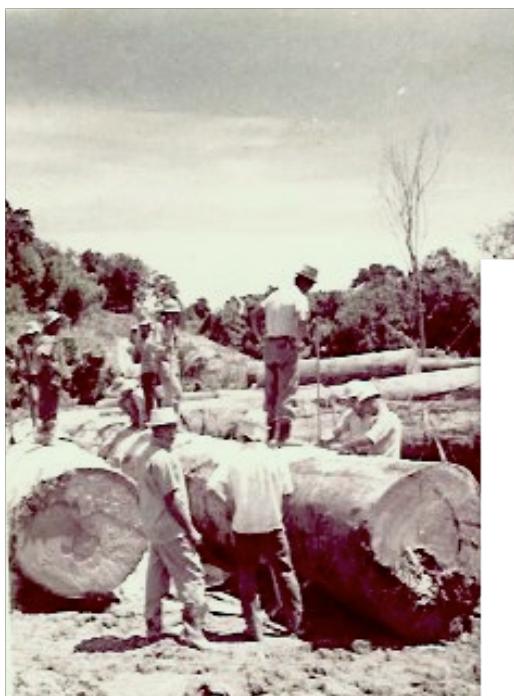
Borneo is the third largest island in the world. Sarawak stretches along the island's northwest coast, including many beaches on the South China Sea. It's known for the rugged, dense rainforest/jungles of its interior. Sarawak and Sabah, had many native tribes living in the jungles. They had been hunters and head-hunters and lived in longhouses built on poles above the jungle ground. Borneo also has some unique animals such as Orangutangs, Proboscis monkeys, and (not unique) but huge Python snakes.

The capital of Sarawak is Kuching, a bustling city set on the Sarawak River. We searched for a suitable place to build the camp. It needed to have a flat, open area next to the river so the logs could be rolled into the river and floated downstream to the bay to be loaded on the charted ships that transported them — usually to Japan. We also had to assess how difficult it would be. These were Mahogany trees with heights of up to 75 feet. Some so heavy they wouldn't float and had to be tied between other logs that floated.



Checking logs at bay before loading onto chartered ship





Walking on the logs in Mindanao Philippines
before shipping to Japan is Robert Frieder



Karl Nathan (center left) and Lou Sheff (center right) at a meeting with workers in the logging camp, February 1967.

At the end of January 1965, we started to bring in qualified, experienced employees and equipment. My main duties were to deal with Sarawak and Malaysian authorities, applying and receiving the required approvals and licenses. For this I had to leave the camp by canoe with an outboard motor to the small town of Lawas, that had a sandy, or muddy, airport, with a pretty short, unpaved, runway. Only small propeller planes could take off and land there. From Lawas I flew to the nearest large airport which was Brunei. Brunei is a tiny nation in Borneo, surrounded by the Sarawak region of Malaysia and the South Chinese Sea. It is ruled by a Muslim sultan who resides in a massive palace in its capital city. The sultan was, and still is today, one of the richest men in the world. Brunei is wealthy primarily because of its oil and gas.

From Brunei I would fly on with Malaysia Airways to Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, or to Singapore, which was at that time part of Malaysia. In 1965 Singapore was a large city even by world standards, at the southern tip of the Malaysian peninsula, where one could buy practically everything. Singapore had been part of the British Empire until WW II, then came under Japanese occupation and after the capitulation of Japan the city went through turbulent times. In 1961 the state of Malaysia was established, uniting the former British possessions: Malaya, Singapore, and Sarawak and Sabah (both on the island of Borneo). The population of Singapore was mainly Chinese, but included many Malays, Burmese, Indians, Brits and mixed nationalities. It was an exciting and enjoyable place, not least because all spoke English (thanks to the Empire). But when one walked the streets at night one had to be careful not to step on the many poor, homeless people. At least this was a tropical climate, not cold, but quite often it rained or stormed. Today Singapore is one of the cleanest and modern and rich cities in the world, but in 1965 it was still like before the war. Once I went for only one day to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital, another time to Hong Kong, which I knew from earlier visits in my youth with my parents. Both in Singapore and in Hong Kong I had friends or acquaintances through my family's connections.

My job allowed me to come home on leave to Manila for a week every month. I still had many friends there and knew where to enjoy myself. The place we went to starting when I was in my last year in high school was a bar called Guernica's. It was owned and run by Guernica himself, who was a former Jai Alai (Basque ball game) player. There was a Jai Alai stadium in Manila which was very popular. And the Guernica's bar had its own musical trio (Filipinos singing Spanish songs – like the Los Paraguayos). And the customers would join them singing with their San Miguel beers in hand.

Three of the favorite songs that I learned there were:

- La historia de un amor

- Malaguena Salerosa
- Maria Dolores



Old Time Favorites

Seafood Casserole	145
Oxtail Ragout	245
Beef Stroganoff	125
Irish Stew	245
Baked or Boiled Pignuckle w/ sauerkraut	140
Corned Beef & Cabbage	140
Beefsteak Filipino	125
Steak & Kidney Pie	120
Steak & Mushroom Casserole	125
Chili con Carne	72
Fish & Chips	120
Fried Chicken Wings	110
chicken wings chicken feet pie	125
	25



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10" Oscillating..... 30.00
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WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND

Mushroom Quiche	95
Chicken Pot Pie	95
Beef Caldereta	210
Chicken Liver w/ Marsala Sauce	185
Bulalo Steak	370
Burritos El Faro arroz ala cubana	125

From The Charcoal Fire

Beef Spareribs	310
Grilled Red Snapper	140
Grilled Pusit	70
Grilled Assorted Sausages	

Coffee

Coffee or Tea	18
Decaf	20
Italian Espresso	20
Capuccino	20
Irish Coffee	20

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"THE HUMBER"
if it is not incomparable



E. C. McCULLOUGH & Co.

Homemade Deli

Pork Sausages	120
Knuckwurst	120
Bratwurst	120
Bangers	120

the above served with choice of
sauerkraut, or mashed potato

Desserts

Fresh Fruit in Season	40
Apple Pie ala Mode	40
Chocolate Ice Cream Sundae	40
Ice Cream	40
From the Dessert Tray	70

Pasta Corner

Spaghetti Pizzaiola	100
Spaghetti a la Putanesca	160
Spaghetti Al Nero	160
Penne w/ Grilled Vegetable	100

the above served with garlic bread

Daily Specials

Monday	Roast Beef
Tuesday	Grilled Tanguingui w/ Mango Salad
Wednesday	Chicken Curry
Thursday	Pork Spareribs
Friday	Chateaubriand

THE SAN MIG TIMES

1927 Philippines Vol. XI

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San Mig has MORE to OFFER!

Historical Account

It is believed that a native kingdom existed in pre-Spanish times in the region which now belongs to Pangasinan. This native kingdom was called by the early chroniclers "Layug na Caboloan". At the time of the arrival of the first missionaries in this region, the king was Kasikis. His capital was Sapan Palapar in the neighborhood of the present town of San Carlos.

The coast towns of Pangasinan, like those of Ilocos, were known to Chinese and Japanese traders

long before the arrival of the Spaniards. It is believed that commercial relations then existed between these foreign traders and the natives. As a matter of fact, Chao-Ju-Kua, a Chinese geographer of the thirteenth century recorded the existence of a region called Li-King-Tung, with which the Chinese traded. This region is believed to be Lingayen.

The exploration of Pangasinan began immediately after the occupation of Manila by Legaspi.

(To page 4, col. 1)

It began in 1895, when San Miguel beer won its first of many awards as a product of the highest quality at the Exposition Regional de Filipinas. By 1896, San Miguel beer was outselling by more than five-to-one all imported beers in the country.

The 1900s ushered in a period of modernization in government, education and industry. New technologies, products and services transformed the lifestyle of the people. The electric streetcar came to Manila, followed shortly by the first automobiles.

Demand for beer increased with the developing prosperity of the times as dramatized in

(To page 4, col. 1)

What male students must do during this vacation.

Summer vacation has come. Since the general habit of our students in these islands is to spend their vacation having a good time with their girlfriends in their native town, these girlfriends are apt to ruin their ways and often cause

them to fall in their studies, especially when they become so attached to each other.

Another thing that is very bad is that when they are spending their time only having a good time, the young students learn to drink and eat

(To page 4, col. 2)

Commercial News and Comment

Mr. E. Steiger — of Messers. Kuenzle and Streiff recently returned to Manila from a vacation spent in Europe, looking fine. Mr. Steiger is managing the Liquor department, and invites all friends around.

Messrs. Ynchausti & Co., have added another beautiful steamer by name Governor Forbes, to their already excellent fleet of Inter Island Steamers. The Governor Forbes is the largest vessel in the coast wise trade.

The manager-ship of the Compania Maritima, one of the oldest Philippine S. S. Company's in operation, has been transferred from Messrs. Smith Bell & Co. to the well known firm of Messrs. Fernandez Hermanos.

(To page 4, col. 3)

Ford Touring Car -P-1,295⁰⁰

Manila Trading and Supply Co.
Opposite Sentral—Malecon, Manila

The Matchless Brew. Pale Pilsen

Real beer with real flavor--no other drink can compare with it



San Miguel Brewery

San Miguel Beer began operations in 1890 in Manila after receiving the Royal Grant from the Spanish king. When I was in Manila on my week leave, Guernica's was the place that I would meet my friends and drink beer all night. One night, on my way home at 3 am, and feeling how drunk I was, I decided to drive very slowly and follow the white line in the middle of the road. The roads were deserted and all of a sudden there was a loud bang and the car stopped. I got out and went to the front and saw I had hit the dividing island in the middle of the road. I turned around and saw that there was a car stopped just behind me. It was a police car and they politely asked me if I was all right and suggested that one of them would drive me home. Which they did and from that year on they would visit my father at his office every Christmas ...

Since I had seen how useful small planes (Piper cubs) were, I started taking flying lessons in my leave times when I was in Manila. I would fly once or twice at each visit. After six or so flights my instructor let me fly solo: take off, fly around a little and then land, all alone. To get my pilot license I 'only' needed to complete 40 solo flights. Unfortunately I left the Philippines long before I could fulfill this requirement.

I was 25 years old when I had had enough of Borneo after 15 months and the operation did not need me anymore. I decided the time had come to get married. So in early 1966 I returned to Manila for a short while and then came back to Israel, where by chance I met my wife, Miri, but more about this later.

In 1966 as a new immigrant to Israel, exempt from taxes, the first thing I bought was a car. Not many people at that time in Israel had cars especially not young people, because of the high taxes. And the second thing I did was to get a puppy, which was supposed to be a Belgian Shepherd dog. He was black and grew to medium-large size. He was very smart and loved to swim. We decided to call him Friar, which had various funny slang meanings in Israel and other languages. It turned out to suit him perfectly.

With a friend, Gideon, we rented an apartment in Yefe Nof, just outside the Beth Hakerem, a quiet neighborhood of Jerusalem.

In Israel, in June 1967, straight after the six-day war, I chose a job (not as a pilot) with Arkia airline, because I had enjoyed flying so much. The Atarot airport, which had been the airport for Palestine in Jerusalem until the six day war was now used by the Israeli airline - Arkia, for flights within Israel. While I was working with passengers on the ground, I noticed some gliders on the runway. I started to learn to fly gliders, which I found to be even more fun than noisy propeller planes. Alas, very soon the gliders no longer came to Jerusalem and the Jerusalem airport also stopped serving regular flights, so there was no more work to do there.

Then I got a job as a receptionist in the Eden Hotel on Hillel street in Jerusalem, right opposite the El Al office, very close to King George street, where at the time the Knesset (the parliament of Israel) was located. Eden was not a luxury hotel, but was centrally located and had a good restaurant and garden. Soon I got to know many of the members of the parliament, mainly the ones who did not live in Jerusalem and used to stay in the hotel when the knesset was in session. I usually worked night shifts, which included the door to door distribution of the daily newspapers in the early hours of the day.

After the six day war Jerusalem was united and it was possible to visit the West Bank. Tourism definitely seemed to be growing and especially in Jerusalem. I wanted to get into the travel business, both incoming and outgoing, in Jerusalem. During the year from mid 1966 to mid 1967 (until the Six Day War), I had been looking into the travel trade, working in various offices and driving around Israel's main tourist attractions. I met Perry Roded, a qualified American Israeli travel expert and together we opened a new travel agency. Perry had the expertise and my father had the capital. I had plenty of

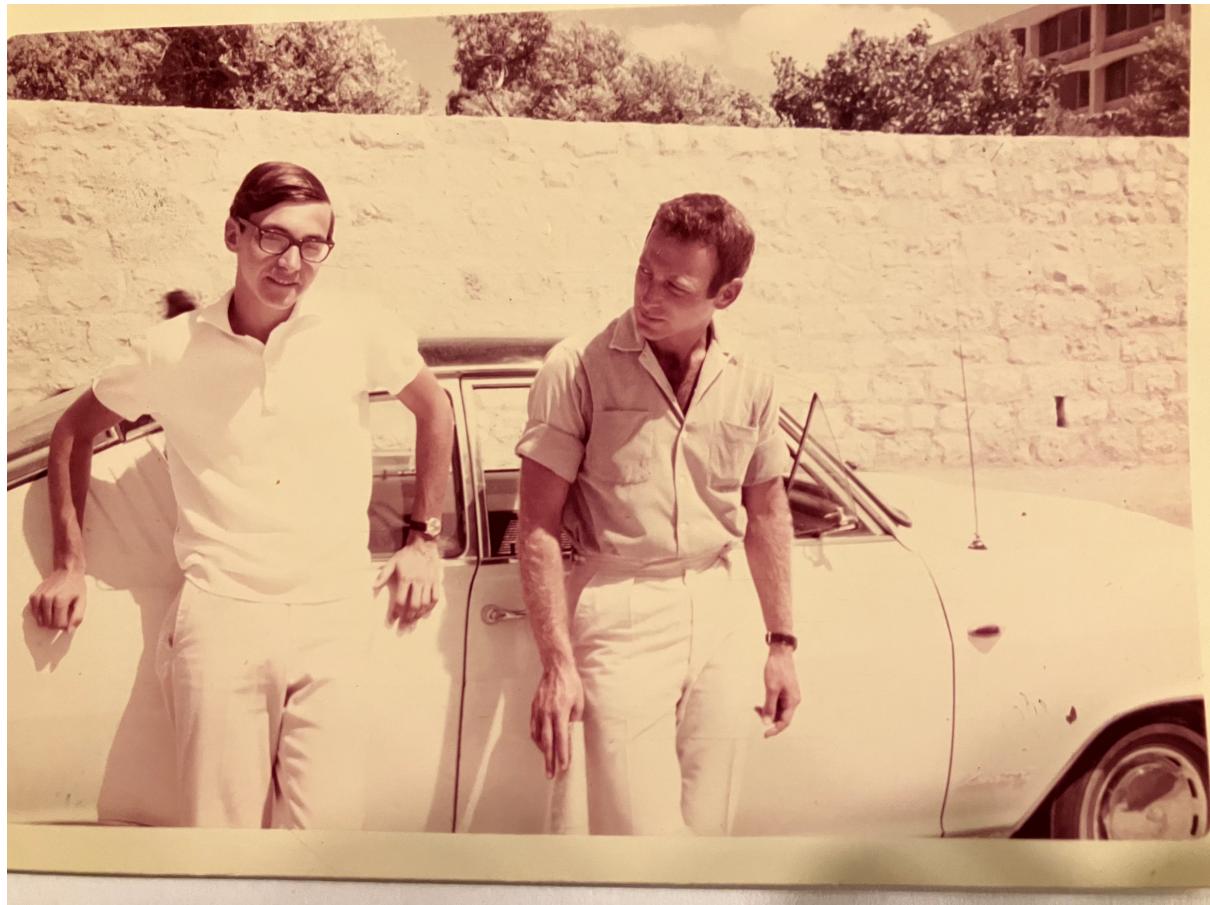
travel experience and had lived in many places: Manila, New York City, Montreal, Switzerland, Italy. I had often been in Europe as a tourist, in London, Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Rome, Vienna and also in South East Asia, the Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok.

It just so happened that on Hillel Street, opposite the Eden Hotel, where I had worked and next to a bank, a new building had a street floor office for sale. On its other side was the El Al office. We could still make adjustments and additions for our office, since the building was not quite finished. The office was bought in my father's name and our company would rent it from him. Thus was our travel office, "The Promised Land", born in Jerusalem.

But so far the story has skipped over the six day war in June 1967. What did I do? I was not called up for duty by the army (since I was not yet an Israeli citizen). As the owner of a brand new car I volunteered at the Jerusalem Municipality, to drive people who needed transport during the time of the war. I was happy to meet Miri there again, who also volunteered. Sometimes I would go up on the roof with Miri to see East Jerusalem and the Old City, from where the Palestinians were shooting at the West. The municipality was located right at the wall dividing west Jerusalem (Israelis) from east Jerusalem . Once a shell landed near us and luckily we were not hurt. I had first met Miri when I returned to Israel in May, 1966. I had a friend, Elisha, who was the older brother of my first girlfriend , Tammy, who took me with him to visit his girlfriend, Rachael. And she was studying at her apartment together with her friend, Miri. The four of us went out together and that was the start.

I was glad that at the end of the war my brother, Leonard, arrived from Manila, after finishing his first year of college at Grinnel in Iowa USA. He had intended to visit me in Israel on his way back to Manila, but because of the war in June , he went strait to Manila. He lived with me and Gideon in our

apartment in Yefe Nof and bought a scooter and got to know all my friends and finally decided not to return to Grinnel in Iowa. He learned Hebrew and continued his studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. So he, of course, also got to know Miri before any others of the Nathan family. Leonard had not gone on to high school at the American school in Manila. He went to an international school in Villars, Switzerland where he not only studied but also learned how to be a good skier, (more about Villars later).



My brother Leonard and I in Jerusalem August 1967
and my (first) new car