The Road Not Taken

by Steve Singiser ’58

In June of 1974 I was employed by Chemical Bank New York Trust Company in New York City. I was a vice president in the Trust Department and earned enough to live with my wife, Ann, and three young daughters in a rent-controlled apartment on West 54th Street. Most weekends we drove to Mendon, Vermont, where we owned a very old farmhouse that needed a lot of work. We had purchased it in 1971 for $34,900 as a ski house 5 minutes from Pico and 15 minutes from Killington.

By the end of June, we had moved with our New York City possessions to our home in Mendon. I had quit my job and for the first time had no reliable source of income.

We were very excited. Waking up the first morning I recall thinking, ‘What am I going to do today?’ It seemed like the first day of a long vacation.

The Robert Frost poem whose title I have borrowed ends: “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.”

Sometimes these words are interpreted to mean the author selected a less popular route to follow. I prefer the interpretation that life’s decisions, great or small, rarely give us a clue as to where they will lead. Both were probably true in our decision to move to Vermont.

(Continued on page 16)
One good story leads to another. In the December 2015 issue, we wrote of the Refectory Rebellion of '57 in which seven dinner table mates discarded their mandatory neckties to show support for an eighth, Peter Marlay, who was about to be reported by a monitor for arriving at dinner tieless one too many times. The whole defiant crew was put on College Discipline just as their applications for select career paths were circulating. They saved themselves by staging a dinner some days later at which they showed up in tuxedos at a table set with fine linen, candles and good silver and serenaded by a violin-playing waiter. The event drew the attention of Dean Edward R. Durgin, college disciplinarian. He took the edge off by later dining in the refectory with the group. Martin E. Plaut '58, raconteur of the event for the newsletter, recalled clearly that a Brown Daily Herald photographer took pictures, and Martin was eager to see one displayed with his story. But the Brown58Newsletter wasn’t able to lay hands on the photo. (The Herald for 1957–58 is not yet digitized. The BDH is working to get all years digitized and could use contributions for this good cause.) Shortly after publication, we learned the date of the picture in the BDH from the photographer, Ronald J. Offenkrantz ’58: It ran Nov. 14, 1957, and is reproduced at the right. Ron also provided a historical bonus: his account of two days in September 1957 when Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas visited Rhode Island to address the Little Rock desegregation crisis with President Eisenhower. His story follows.

The Shot Seen ’Round the World (Almost)

by Ronald Offenkrantz ’58

Most of us, maybe all, will remember the meeting between segregationist Governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas and President Dwight D. Eisenhower at the height of the Little Rock Crisis. Many may not recall that the meeting occurred in Newport, Rhode Island, in the first month of our final year as Brown undergraduates.

My fellow Brown Daily Herald staff members and I were active witnesses when Faubus arrived in Providence on Friday, September 13, 1957, and met the next day with Eisenhower in Newport, site of Eisenhower’s “summer White House.” Those two days produced an impactful photograph, launched a highly successful journalism career for BDH reporter Wallace Terry ’59 and landed a body blow to lingering racial segregation in U.S. public schools.

A refresher on the Little Rock Crisis: In May 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were “inherently unequal” and ordered them integrated “with all deliberate speed.” Arkansas, which already had taken many steps to desegregate in other areas, quickly announced it also would comply in public schools. Little Rock’s plan called for school desegregation to begin with high school in the autumn of 1957. Lower grades would follow in subsequent years. Nine African American students were to enroll in Little Rock’s Central High School, but on September 2, 1957, the day before school was to begin, Governor Faubus called out the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the black students from entering. He claimed the action was necessary to prevent protesters en route to the city from carrying out acts of violence. President Eisenhower, vacationing in Newport, arranged to meet Faubus to discuss the tense situation Saturday, September 14.

Faubus had arrived at Rhode Island’s Hillsgrove State Airport (now T.F. Green) on Friday and held his first news conference at the Sheraton Biltmore, which reporter Wally Terry and I attended. The governor kept smiling through the
news conference but did not offer substantive responses to any question. At the press conference, I met a Christian Science Monitor reporter and offered to give him a lift the next day to Newport in the car of my classmate and friend Hal Mark, a BDH staffer. That connection proved to be useful the next day.

More important, Wally and I huddled at the Biltmore Hotel after the Faubus press conference and plotted how we could gain access to Faubus, whose room was up maybe seven stories above the Biltmore main lobby. We knew we couldn’t use the guarded elevator, so we decided to scout around for possible stairways. A Providence Journal photographer was eyeing us as we checked, and he obviously sensed that a black reporter, Wally, and a white photographer carrying a big Speed Graphic camera and heavy-duty flash might pose an interesting opportunity. He slipped into the chosen stairwell behind us. Wikipedia to the contrary notwithstanding, Wally never donned a waiter’s jacket and never attempted to disguise himself as a member of the Biltmore staff.

A policeman stood outside Faubus’s door when we arrived, but Wally—later to become a famed Vietnam war correspondent—carried out the plan, knocked on the door and extended his hand. I was positioned to act quickly. Faubus opened the door, and I released the shutter and triggered the flash as the segregationist white governor instinctively reached for the black reporter’s hand. The Providence Journal’s shot came in a close second.

Though the Journal’s was runner-up, it was the one transmitted on the Associated Press wire both nationally and internationally. It appeared on the front page of The New York Times and New York Daily News and other newspapers around the United States and the world. Faubus did not invite us into his room for an interview, though he did speak vaguely of a possible interview at a later time.

You will see both shots juxtaposed on the next page.

While the BDH shot was not the one seen round the world, Wally and I could take pride in envisioning the scene in advance, executing the plan, getting through to Faubus’s door, not retreating when we saw the police officer, and taking the picture—a journalist coup. Wally subscribed to two nationwide clippings services which generated hundreds, if not thousands of front pages of the now famous Wally/Faubus photograph.

The Faubus visit continued through Saturday. That morning, Marty Stein, my co-photo editor, and I got up very early, picked up the Christian Science Monitor reporter and Hal drove us to the Newport Naval Station. When we
got to the guardhouse, the Monitor reporter flashed his press credentials and we were waved through. Later, Hal casually mentioned to a man in a civilian suit how lax the security appeared, whereupon we were accosted by three burly members of the Shore Patrol and hauled before the Provost Marshal who dressed us down royally with a hint of appreciation for our exploits. He permitted us to stay on base. The “suit” turned out to be a security officer in civilian clothes. Eisenhower and Faubus met for two hours, including 20 minutes alone. We got many good shots for Monday’s paper, including Ike and Faubus, Press Secretary Jim Hagerty and reporters from across the country.

The meeting at the Newport U.S. Naval Station ended with Eisenhower saying he was sure “it is the desire of the Governor not only to observe the supreme law of the land but to use the influence of his office” to carry out the desegregation plan. Eisenhower told Faubus privately that the governor could only humiliate Arkansas if he attempted to win a battle with the federal government in a case already decided by the Supreme Court.

The photos show the BDH shot was first. Why? In the BDH shot, the eyes of Wally and Faubus are open (the policeman’s eyes are covered by the bill of his cap). In the Journal photo, the eyes of Wally, the policeman and an unidentified man are shut tight, resulting from the brilliant flash of my camera’s flash bulb. Faubus’s somewhat heavy eyelids are in an ambiguous position, possibly owing to his astonishment at the situation.
That afternoon, Wally, with WBRU’s Mike Epstein and Bob Schwartzman, interviewed Faubus at Hillsgrove prior to his departure for Arkansas. We ran a big story/photo spread in Monday’s BDH.

Although Eisenhower depicted an almost perfect meeting of the minds between the two leaders Saturday morning, when the nine children entered the high school several days later, there was a riot, which the governor failed to halt. Arkansas Representative Brooks Hays and Little Rock Mayor Woodrow Mann sought help from the federal government. On Sept. 24, Eisenhower ordered 1,000 soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock to enforce order in the desegregation, and he nationalized the Arkansas National Guard, taking control of the unit out of Faubus’s hands. The school was integrated but it wasn’t all over. Faubus resumed his defiance in the 1958–59 year. He closed all Little Rock High schools, creating the so-called “lost year” for students. The situation was not resolved until the following year. But Eisenhower’s actions in September 1957 had sent a powerful message to the segregationist resistance in Arkansas that its cause was doomed.

I never saw Wally after leaving Brown, but I read a lot about him. His clippings from his 1957 encounter with Faubus impressed The Washington Post, which gave him a summer job and ultimately hired him as a reporter. I was told that the Daily News photograph of Wally and Faubus hung in the Herald Newsroom for years. Wally became Editor-in-Chief of the BDH and went on to cover the civil rights struggle in the ’60s for the The Washington Post and the Vietnam war for Time Magazine and received numerous awards. In 1984, he published a best-selling oral history of black soldiers in Vietnam which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. Wally died of a vascular disorder at 65, after an illustrious career.

I did not go on to become a photojournalist although my photos of many trips and wildlife decorate my office walls including my 2014 photographs of the brown bears of Brooks Falls, Alaska.

Instead, after organic chemistry, Dean Bill Lister suggested I might consider law as a profession, rather than medicine, and I took his sage advice. I received my law degree from Columbia in 1961 and I am in practice in New York to this day, now with Lichter Gliedman Offenkrantz PC.

Ron Offenkrantz (Ronblosoff@aol.com) has worked for the Navy’s Office of General Counsel and as an assistant New York State attorney general. Hired by New York Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz in 1962 as a litigator, he quickly found himself arguing major constitutional law issues that included fielding an “onslaught of questions from Thurgood Marshall,” on the argument of the retroactivity of Mapp v. Ohio. In private practice for more than 50 years, he has been a partner in two New York firms and was recognized by the National Law Journal in 2014 as one of 50 Litigation Trailblazers & Pioneers.
My Rainbow Coalition of a Family

‘Not Only With Our Lips But In Our Lives’

by Jill Hirst Scobie ’58

Why am I writing this essay? Partly, it’s because I’m interested in hearing whether there are other families like ours in the class. We have three sons and three daughters. One of those sons is gay and one of the daughters is lesbian. In this way, our family may be very different from yours. How to write about this is something of a puzzle for me. How to talk about this without getting all Anne Sexton-y? (You remember her—a “personal and confessional” poet.) Or, worse, what I really fear: is this a kind of liberal preening, somehow strutting your stuff, taking a bow for being an “open and accepting” parent? It feels hard to avoid that pitfall. One final comment: both Allison and Bradford know that I am writing about them. To do otherwise would be unkind and disrespectful.

I believe that there were factors in my life that contributed to my concern about human rights and my deeply held belief that all persons are of equal worth, regardless of race, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender expression. First, I had the great good fortune of being born to two people who were open minded, well-read, interested in the world, urbane, and liberal in their view of politics and the world. Then, when I was nine, I remember opening up Life Magazine and seeing, for the first time, the pictures of the concentration camps. No doubt this is an experience that many of you remember having. I was also a weekly movie goer, but I have no recollection of seeing the opening of the camps in any newsreels. Then, after gas rationing had ended, I went on a road trip to Florida with my mother, driving from New Jersey to Coconut Grove, Florida. We stopped at various restaurants and hotels with signs that read “White Only,” “Colored Only,” and “This establishment reserves the right to refuse service.” There were separate, labeled drinking fountains. You get the idea.

Now let’s fast forward a few years. What kind of family did I imagine having as a Pembroker? First of all, I imagined having four boys. How I was going to control for gender, I have no idea. Well, my older sister was the one that got the four boys. I was the one who had two sons, two daughters, a third son, and a third daughter. Six in all. Our Waspy parents were all suitably appalled, but too polite to comment, at least not to our faces. Trust me, I knew everything Margaret Sanger had to teach on the subject of birth control. That’s for another essay. Just in terms of numbers, we were already “off the chart.”

Because my husband and I were both social action types, we became social workers, a profession that imbued our lives with meaning. Dick was a ’56 Dartmouth graduate. He got a Masters in Social Work from Pitt, and took a commission in the Army. We got married 11 days after our ’58 graduation, and our first son, Kenneth, was born in June 1959. After 3½ years at Fort Hood, Texas, we returned to the Northeast—in Newton, just outside Boston—with three tiny kids (Kenneth, Kevin, and Megan) in tow. Dick took a job as a community organizer, among other things helping organize the integration of Boston public housing projects. I was a housewife, had a fourth child—a daughter, Allison—was active at Christ Church (Episcopal) Cambridge, in the local Pembroke Club, in the civil rights movement and the PTA, among other activities.
My husband had the wanderlust, but due to our life circumstances, we couldn’t afford to travel. He solved that problem by getting an international job with USAID, working in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for two years as a consultant to the Comision de la Vivienda (a combination of the housing authority and the redevelopment authority). While we were there, our fifth child, Bradford, was born. We returned to the United States in June 1969, the time of the Manson killings and the Stonewall riots.

Little did I guess how significant the galvanizing effect of the “gay liberation” movement would become on our lives. Dick got us back to Boston by entering the Ph.D. program at the Heller School at Brandeis. During that era, it was known for studies in “policy, planning, and the public interest.” In order to buy groceries, I got my first job “outside the home,” running the reading room at Heller. I decided to get my MSW, a project that was postponed for a year due to the surprising arrival of Rachel in ’72, the day after Dick got his Ph.D. So, there, that was the family. Somehow, we survived those years.

Many of you probably found that life got easier as the children matured and began to leave home. We certainly did. Our youngest three children were all quite delightful and easygoing, so there really was light at the end of our tunnel. In the mid-1980s our youngest son, Bradford, went to Emerson College. He lived in the dorm, but we were only about eight miles away in Newton, so we were able to visit easily. At the end of his freshman year, Brad (18) asked if he could bring a friend home to dinner, and when they arrived, they were both very well turned out. Brian was sort of a heart-throb type, looked a lot like rocker Billy Idol, if you remember him. Bleached blond gelled hair, a diamond stud earring, totally dressed in black, quite ravishing. Obviously, this was the first boyfriend, but I was clueless. When denial is working, it is amazingly seamless. My husband “got it,” tried to engage me in a conversation about whether Brad was gay, and I just discounted the idea, gave it no more thought.

About four months later, Brad called and said he wanted to talk with me. He opened the conversation by saying that he thought he might be bisexual. And even though I’d been until that moment in complete denial, I felt that he was just trying to “ease” me into the idea that he was gay. I confess to my shame that I burst into tears. One thought was that his life was going to be harder, that he’d be discriminated against, and the other thought was that he would never have children.

I had always felt he’d be a wonderful father because he was so sweet, kind, loving, and funny. Although I cried, that certainly wasn’t the end of the conversation. I said that I was glad that he had told me. And then I said that I loved him for who he was and that we always wanted to know the people that he loved and wanted to share that part of his life. He told us that he had begun to suspect when he was “different” (his word) in fifth grade and had finally talked about it with his next older sibling, sister Allison. He had said to her, “Maybe I’ll tell Mommy and Daddy when I’m 27 or 28.” She told him that she found that ridiculous, that we would be fine with his being gay. We were “fine” with it and her advice was completely on target. She said she thought it would be awful to be “in the closet” with your parents for 10 years. He talked with all his siblings about this before he had talked with either Dick or me, and he’d talked with his father before he’d spoken with me.

A year after meeting Brian, we met Chase, Brad’s next “significant other.” They were very compatible, very interested in each other, a very solid couple who built a life together, eventually moved to NYC, developed a large circle of friends, and had professional success. We considered Chase our “son-in-law,” although there was no such thing as marriage for GLBT people at that time.
I certainly have regretted my initial reaction to Brad’s “coming out,” but life, in its surprising way, gave me a chance to react differently. For 11 years, our daughter Allison had been married to a lovely man, George, with whom she had a then six-year old son, Griffin, when she realized that she was lesbian. She wrote us a letter despite living nearby and our seeing each other frequently. The most difficult thing about this was the sadness it caused our son-in-law and Allison. Not surprisingly, George met a lovely woman, Juliana; they married in our house with Dick acting as the officiant. Alli, George, and Juliana bought a duplex together, so that Griffin could still live with both his parents. Allison had met Amy, a warm, attractive, extremely intelligent social worker, by then and several
months later, thanks to the Goodridge decision (2003, establishment of marriage equality in Massachusetts), they were married. With only a hint of irony, these four call themselves “The Commune.”

During the sixties, when Dick and I were active at Christ Church, we were very committed to the civil rights movement, stirred to action by the unforgettable preaching of Assistant Rector John Snow. Our fellow parishioners, B.G. and Raya Goff, remember him well. Like many white people during that era, we were appalled and horrified at the denial of rights and equitable treatment and opportunities for blacks not only in the South, but throughout the United States. We had been reading: The Fire Next Time, Soledad Brother, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, and Notes of a Native Son. You remember, right? We felt we were part of a great and important movement in this country, working for transformation, really creating a new day.

We felt, thought, and believed that the passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965) were two of the best days that had ever occurred during our lifetime. And part of that idealism included the idea that we were going to integrate and amalgamate as a people. Loving v. Virginia, the 1967 case in which the U.S. Supreme Court ended all race-based restrictions on marriage, was the law that made this so much easier. It is my belief that this is all for the good. Well, none of our children married a person of color. But life continued to work its magic. Brad and Chase decided that they wanted a family and entered the NYC foster care system, with the intent to adopt with no preference as to race or gender. Eventually they adopted a little boy, Henry, and his (biological) baby sister, Annie, both African American. The children, placed with them about 1½ years apart when they were 9 days old and 5 days old respectively, are now almost 4 and 2½ years old. That was another “best day,” the day we attended their adoption.

As I’ve reflected on all of this, I realize that there were other examples that had a powerful effect on the formation of my values and my loving acceptance of who our children are. My mother was absolutely appalled by the threat to civil liberties posed by Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee. She was not silent about this. She bought multiple copies of a book of essays by author/journalist Elmer Davis, But We Were Born Free, which included excoriating critiques of McCarthy, et al., and gave them away to people she encountered in an effort to influence their thinking. At the time, I wished she could be “normal,” i.e., a quiet Eisenhower Republican like most of my friends’ parents. Now I see her as highly principled and unwilling to be silenced in the face of scapegoating and oppression. Another formative experience was being in Mrs. Betty Housh’s sixth grade, Gregory Avenue School, West Orange, NJ.

Mrs. Housh had been sickened by the Holocaust. She believed that the great antidote to the mindset that allows for genocide was education and true understanding, especially about each other’s religions. She read the book One God out loud to us and had students talk about their different religious observances and what they meant. Of course, we were only Jews, Protestants, and Roman Catholics. No Muslims, no Buddhists, no Hindus, heck, not even a Greek Orthodox! She worked with what she had, and she was a terrific teacher.

At Brown, I took a course with Chaplain Edgar Reckard, Christian Ethics. He invited an African-American minister from the South to speak to us about the early civil rights struggle. I don’t recall the details of this talk, but I do remember being deeply moved by the situation he described. Chaplain Reckard connected this to what we were learning about the “social gospel.” It was another seed taking root.
As an observant Episcopalian at the time, I remember that beautiful phrase from the Book of Common Prayer: “not only with our lips but in our lives…,” a phrase that still looms large in my psyche. How blessed and fortunate I have been, in this rainbow coalition of a family. Gracias a la vida, que nos ha dado tanto. Thanks be to Life, which has given us so much.

“And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives…”

—The Book of Common Prayer

Backyard Engineering
by Peter B. Howard ’58

Editors’ Note: When we heard that Pete Howard had created a power lift for his cellar hatch in Arlington, Massachusetts, we asked him for some details that liberal arts majors could understand. As he submitted the very clear article below, he protested, “I expect that readers will smile at this—thinking what a fuss about nothing. Hire a pro and ‘get over it.’ ” We do not agree. Not many readers are likely to follow in his footsteps, but we think they’ll enjoy seeing the way one seasoned engineer sized up a technical household problem/opportunity, taking into account matters like goals, safety, available space and aesthetics. Then, after choosing a solution among several possibilities, Pete acquired information, equipment and material. He had a pleasant time putting it all together. And it works.

I have always enjoyed making things. For many years I led a group of software and algorithm designers and programmers. We were part of a much larger group of engineers and technicians all working on the same electro-mechanical device, a ballistic missile guidance system. This was challenging. We shared satisfaction when eventually it worked as intended. In my spare time, and especially since retiring, I have enjoyed making and fixing things by myself for my family or for neighbors and local customers. This occupation involves a bare minimum of people problems and a lot of material and technique challenges. Instead of Who does what when?, it now is, How shall I do it today?

Our house has a cellar hatch that I built many years ago based on a neighbor’s design. It is made of three-quarter inch plywood and weighs about 40 pounds. It is hinged at the upper edge. So, when opening the door, the hinges carry half the weight of the hatch. This means that opening the hatch manually requires a snatch of at least 20 pounds. There is a brace made from old skis* that holds it open but does not obstruct the stairs. Fifty years ago a 20-pound snatch was nothing. But now it is a different story, especially because it is often opened and closed several times a day.

Over the years I have dreamed of various improvements. The simplest would be to replace the hatch with thinner, hence lighter, plywood. But it is convenient to stand on the hatch to pick grapes from the adjoining arbor, and children like to play on it. Lighter plywood might not stand up for long to this kind of loading.
The most expensive improvement would be to rebuild the whole entrance to accept a standard set of two steel doors that are hinged on the sides. Such doors could be walked on but would not be as good as a sliding ramp or for rolling toy cars. Though lighter, they would still be rather heavy, and the lifting angle is awkward.

There are several options for hatch lifters. The most obvious is a counterweight. The geometry for this is not favorable, and it would require a 20-pound weight to be dangling over the hatch or using multiple pulleys dangling somewhere else nearby. This would be a safety hazard. The hatch itself “dangles” too, but only when open. An engineering friend, during a transcontinental flight, suggested a large wheel and weight counterbalance under the hatch, but space is limited, and it would obstruct the opening.

A hydraulic lifter would have worked. I considered salvaging parts from old earth-moving machinery. It was tempting, but if it were installed inside under the hatch, the opening would be obstructed, and if outside, it might have struck some as an eyesore. The final option was to use an electric winch. A winch is rather unobtrusive, the lifting wire is not unattractive, and there is a convenient place to install the associated electrical stuff inside the house over the pantry window, out of the way. Because the winch would be located quite high above the hatch, it would stress the hinges only somewhat more than a straight lift by a human.

So I decided to use a winch. Online, I discovered that several manufacturers offer winches for the All-Terrain Vehicle community. These units are a neat package of motor, gears, cable drum, cable and hook. They are small, affordable and more than strong enough (1,000 pound pull or more). They are all DC-powered. This seemed at first to require a heavy-duty rectifier in order to use AC house current. But in one online discussion, someone suggested using a small sealed lead acid battery and recharging it after each opening and closing. Such batteries and chargers are available commercially and are not expensive. The charger, sometimes called a battery keeper, is rather sophisticated. It senses when the battery needs charging, charges it, then returns to providing a trickle charge. I bought some of the electrical stuff from the local Ace Hardware because, in my experience, their merchandise is of good quality. Some items were not in stock locally, but the store ordered them. There was neither shipping charge nor shipping damage. The winch unfortunately came with a controller on a heavy electrical cable that barely reached the ground. It would have been impractical for my purposes. Eventually I was able to identify what I needed to control the heavy current. Again I got clues on line from ATV owners who
proudly explained how they hooked up their bumper-mounted winches. The wiring was straightforward. The signal from a hand-held remote control unit had no trouble penetrating the house to reach the receiver. The remote controller even came with an extra controller to use from the cellar. To my delight (and surprise), it all worked the first time.

I was, however, concerned that, should the controls lock as the winch was lifting the hatch, the winch could pull the hatch off its hinges. This would be, at least, an embarrassment. So I installed a safety cutoff. The cutoff consists of a mechanical linkage that runs from a red knob located just over one's head (in the grape arbor framing) as one is using the remote control. The knob is connected to a light braided steel wire (bicycle brake cable). The wire runs into the house and activates a simple toggle switch to kill power to the winch. In an emergency, the operator should reach up and pull the knob. So far this device has not been needed.

There is one unexpected side effect. The gears in the winch are very noisy. So far no complaints from neighbors.

The project took several weeks of pleasant labor. This included rebuilding the heavy plywood hatch itself. After fifty years, it harbored lots of decay. The total cost of all materials for the project was under $600.

The hatch lifter has been in almost daily use for about six months. So far no failures. Come try it out!

* The solid wood skis are a fond memory. They were painted red when I bought them cheap—secondhand—on the way home from a Brown Ski Club trip to replace my old Army surplus ones. Still painted red, they make a fine hatch support or brace with tips cut off and screwed together bottom to bottom. One end of the brace is hinged to the house. The other end slides along beneath the rising hatch, snaps into place when the hatch opens fully, and props it up.

Green to Mean

by Edward Flattau ’58

Editors’ Note: Ed Flattau has been writing a syndicated environmental column since 1972. In his latest book, he explores how and why behind the GOP’s transition from a key participant in the creation of the modern environmental movement to a largely adversarial stance grounded in ideologically inspired vilification. Ed was born in New York City. At Brown, he played on the basketball team and was captain of the varsity tennis squad. He attended Columbia Law School but decided after two years to become a journalist. Prior to the column, he worked as a political correspondent for United Press International in Albany and Washington. He is married and the father of two. His synopsis of From Green to Mean, the new book, is below. It appeared previously in the Huffington Post.

The Republican Party has experienced a dizzying downward spiral in environmental sensitivity, especially in the last four decades.

That is the theme of my new book, From Green to Mean (The Way Things Are Publications, 2016). In the book, I explore why and how the GOP has retrogressed, and what hope there is for redemption.
There were no signs of regression in the early days. For example, President Abraham Lincoln displayed incipient conservation credentials by among other things creating a preserve that was to become Yosemite National Park. By the beginning of the 20th Century, outdoorsman President Teddy Roosevelt emerged to become the father of the modern national environmental movement, launching the National Wildlife Refuge System along the way. Later on, even Richard Nixon got into the act by establishing the U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) in 1970.

In 1972, the Republican National Platform was filled with effusive praise for the EPA and its regulatory mission. Yet 40 years later, the Platform denounced EPA’s regulatory activity as a threat to the economy and personal liberty.

Environmental regulation was no longer routinely portrayed as protecting the nation against air and water pollution, sprawl, and loss of critical habitat. Instead, Republican leaders generally characterized it as a sinister partisan maneuver by Democrats to empower big government with the intent of rallying a voter base at the expense of individual liberty and a free-market economy.

Environmental activism was dismissed as a means of redistributing wealth to a burgeoning minority population in order to instigate class warfare and curry votes.

How did it come to this?

Much of the anti-government impetus can be traced to the administration of Ronald Reagan, who infamously quipped that “the scariest words in the English language are ‘I’m from the federal government and I’m here to help you’.”

An early pivotal development was a widely circulated 1971 memo written for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce by the soon-to-be appointed Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell. In the document, Powell warned that the federal environmental regulation imposed on the business community threatened economic prosperity and individual freedom and could turn the nation into a socialist state. The memo is regarded as setting the stage for today’s GOP lawmakers. Most of them don’t dare stray from the party line for fear of retaliation in the form of a primary challenge from the Far Right.

How did environmental regulation become such a virulent target? Republicans’ quest for political power has led to a pursuit of substantial financial reserves and invariably the deep pockets of corporate polluters. These donors’ quid quo pro for campaign contributions was the rollback of environmental regulations. Republican members of Congress by and large dutifully sought to keep their end of the bargain. As justification, they frequently have castigated the regulations as excessive, unnecessary, counterproductive or just plain discriminatory.

Republicans also perceived environmental protection as a Democratic instrument to attract a rapidly growing minority population who favor continuation of extensive government services.

In addition, environment was a legacy issue for Barack Obama. It thus became an object of Republicans’ disparagement, given their widespread enmity towards the president.

Can the GOP snap out of its environmental rut before time runs out? The answer is probably in the negative if the Party needs a major global ecological catastrophe to bring it to its senses.
One can only hope that the incremental advance of environmental degradation will deliver a wakeup call before it is too late. After all, the most environmentally derelict jurisdictions (e.g., the coastal Southeast) are heavily Republican and happen to be the most geographically susceptible to nature’s wrath.

Letters from Classmates

This past June Anne and I spent three weeks in Zimbabwe on a leopard-hunting safari. This was my fifth hunting adventure in southern Africa, but my first trip to Zimbabwe. Anne hunted with me on four of the previous trips. We both agree that the safari in Zimbabwe, while being the most basic and primitive, was by far the best adventure.

The last leg of our trip was by a small single-engine plane that landed on a narrow dirt strip after a pair of giraffes moved off of the landing area. Our trip provided an opportunity to observe a large selection of African wildlife including elephants, zebra, giraffe, wildebeest and the elusive leopard. Poaching is a major threat to the wildlife and we were able to learn and observe the action being taken by hunting organizations to control and eliminate this threat to all African wildlife.

All of the people we encountered were friendly and helpful. We will not forget them. Much of the country is beautiful; however, life is quite difficult for many who live in Zimbabwe. We were able to observe and, to some degree, experience this ourselves. There is not enough electricity generated to supply the demand. Roving “blackouts” occur constantly; even hospitals and government facilities are affected.

This was a trip of a lifetime.

—Kirk Smith

A good single malt is always appreciated after a hard day.

Kudu, the Gray Ghost, one of Africa’s finest.
More Letters from Classmates

I was the photographer from the BDH referred to in Marty Plaut’s trip down memory lane. [“Looking Back on the Brown Refectory with Martin E. Plaut ’58,” December 2015]. Not only was everyone wearing a tux but one of the group played the violin. I recall that the photo with the violin soloist appeared in the Herald the next day. —Ron Offenkrantz

Editors’ note: The current issue follows up Ron’s letter (Page 2.)

This [story of the dinner with tuxes] was a real treat. I was in the hall when this event happened. It seems so quaint by today’s standards. We had our own table of eight including me and John Shapira, Robert Feldman, Happy Leader, Lou Sanders and others. It was memorable. It was wonderful to relive one of the most amusing experiences at Brown.

Also, I enjoyed the piece by Marty Ritter [“If Memory Serves.”] I have a special reason to remember him. My father and his father had a mutual friend and I was told to look him up. As it happened, he sat next to me at the Brown Club in August of 1954 at a Freshman Orientation Dinner. After dinner, there were speakers and one speaker in particular said, “Look to the left of you and the right of you”—suggesting not all of us would graduate. Both Marty and I graduated of course and to this day do not know the name of the other person. Wonderful to reminisce about a very happy chapter in our lives. —Steve Kurtz

I enjoyed very much reading the writings of our classmates. —Dick Neal

To respond to newsletter articles, please send emails to Brown58Newsletter@gmail.com.

Or you can transmit your comments from the newsletter website. (www.brown58newsletter.wordpress.com). Click on the red word “comment” or “comments” next to the speech bubble.

Great hunting season. Harvested a 6 x 7-point bull elk from the Bear’s Ears herd north of Hayden, Colorado, with a Browning 300 Win Mag rifle. Used a crossbow to harvest an 8-point whitetail deer on our 158-acre farm in mid-Missouri. Lots of lean venison for us and the local food bank. Also harvested a 25 pound, 12-ounce wild tom turkey on our farm—biggest one ever.

Hope to see you at the next five-year reunion. —Brody Summerfield
The Road Not Taken

(Continued from Page 1)

I had worked at the Chemical Bank for 12 years. That was long enough to gain a fairly good understanding of my job as a trust investment officer. Most of the time it was a great job that was interesting and offered a high degree of job satisfaction. Much of its appeal was watching our clients’ portfolios increase in value; it was the era of the ‘Nifty-fifty’ equities in the stock market. Thanks to a robust stock market I thought I was doing my job very well. Around the middle of 1972 investors began to realize many stocks were grossly overpriced, and they started taking profits. For the next two years stock prices declined precipitously. The popular market averages fell about 50 percent and the ‘Nifty-fifty’ much more than that. Any stocks purchased during this period quickly lost value. My job satisfaction went to zero.

It was a time for a career change. It was time to make something with my hands. It was time to move to Vermont and make wooden lamps. That was my plan. As going-away gifts from my colleagues I received a router, a power saw, and a drill press—exactly what I asked for.

Making wooden lamps for a living was nothing like I had imagined. My unique idea was to sell them in kit form with assembly required. In less than a year my company, The Green Mountaineer, was out of business.

I found the secret to surviving in Vermont without a regular paycheck is to work part-time at a number of jobs, usually low paying; spend no more than you make; and enjoy the inexpensive pleasures of living in Vermont. We survived the first 10 years by following this formula. We had started with some modest savings and our farmhouse was almost free and clear.

In many ways they were the best 10 years.

Examples of odd jobs we had include my working with a local carpenter who not only paid me but taught me a variety of building skills such as roofing, replacing clapboard, and plastering. A bonus was that I really enjoyed his stories and humor. I also took a basic plumbing course at the local vocational school and read books to learn electrical repairs. Ann and I worked seasonally at a local orchard; she graded and sorted apples, and I worked collecting the crates of just-picked apples. These were minimum-wage jobs for sure, but what a great time of year to be outside in an orchard.

At some point we purchased two rundown rental properties. One was a tiny cottage for $10,000 and the other consisted of three small lake cottages for less than $40,000. They did need a lot of fixing up, but by this time we had the skills to do the work ourselves. Being landlords was not our favorite thing, but it did provide income.

Later in the decade Ann and I obtained real estate licenses. It was a time of high inflation and even higher mortgage rates. Qualified buyers were scarce, and we made few sales. I had one large commission which just about covered the cost of a memorable, but impractical, trip to England with our children, where we visited Bill Tozier and his family. We had no regrets taking this trip.
For the most part we lived pretty close to the bone when we had to. I don't recall being deprived. It helped that we owned our home and could do our own repairs and improvements. We did the same on our rental properties. We drove our cars until they wouldn’t pass inspection. We bought low-cost major medical health insurance and had few medical expenses. Our earned income was so low we paid little or no income taxes and no FICA. In the winter we shut off several little-used rooms during the coldest months, wore sweaters, and gathered mostly in the kitchen. That was where the girls did their schoolwork; their bedrooms were too cold. In the summer Ann planted a sizable vegetable garden. She canned and froze much of the harvest and we ate the rest.

We enjoyed many of the free recreational activities a rural state offers: hiking, boating, cross-country skiing, free concerts and other activities. We owned a VW camper, a great vehicle to take to different state parks for overnight camping. Free lift tickets could be earned by gate-watching at local ski races. We used our lake cottages when they were not rented. One great perk for me was that my unstructured work schedule allowed me to participate more than most dads in the lives of our daughters. I could volunteer to chaperone school trips, attend daytime school activities, watch them play sports, and help with their homework.

For all of the above reasons and experiences I have never regretted our decision to move to Vermont. Those 10 years provided many of my favorite memories. They were not, however, years without times of sadness, moments of disappointment, or periods of worry. These are really not important from today’s perspective.

One unpleasant memory has stayed with me.

I began having a recurring dream. I dreamt of myself as out of work, out of funds, and out of touch with my profession. My best option was to return to New York City and apply for my old job having not succeeded in Vermont. My prospects were not good. I thought I might be unemployable. I always woke up before I learned the outcome. I hope no one reading this has had to live that dream.

In April 1984 Vermont National Bank hired me to be the local trust investment officer. I was very ready to go back to work. It was a perfect opportunity. It was also an excellent time to invest in stocks and bonds as well. How fortunate!

Very briefly I will try to tie this story in with my being a member of the Class of 1958. First of all, for this period

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A Half Century of Investment History

Last year I wrote a series of three articles recalling my memories of the past 54 years beginning in 1962, all but 10 of which were spent doing portfolio management at three organizations: Chemical Bank, Vermont National Bank, and Trust Company of Vermont. These years nearly span the same years since graduation. The series is titled, not surprisingly, ‘A Trip Down Memory Lane’. The articles were fun to research and write; perhaps some of the events will be fun for you to recall also.

The articles have been archived on our website. To gain access:

Open the web page of my company: www.tcvermont.com

- Place your cursor on the word ‘Resources’ to activate a drop-down menu.
- Click on the words ‘Newsletter Archives’ to open a gray field showing yearly dates.
- Click on the year 2015. Links to four quarterly issues will appear in blue letters.
- Click on ‘April 2015’ to open my first installment. July and October will complete the series.

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and the entire span of years since graduation, I have been so lucky to spend time with my closest Brown friends and classmates. They are: Bill Tozier and Warren Paul, both of whom I roomed with at Sigma Nu; Paul Johnson, a fellow Sigma Nu pledge; and GA Willich, a fraternity brother I got to know through activities outside our fraternity house. By no means last there is Artie Parker, who we all wished had pledged our fraternity although we have not held that against him. Before each of us married, Warren, Bill, Art, and I rented a bachelor apartment on the Upper East Side of New York City.

Finally, I have a strong belief that 1958 was a great year to graduate from Brown or Pembroke in terms of opportunities presented to us to put our educations to work in the ever-changing landscape of the past 58 years. I have been particularly favored in this regard. If you have a story to tell, I hope you will share it with the rest of us. '58 is still great. Go '58!

Reminder of New York City Mini-Reunion October 21–23, 2016

As of late May, nearly 50 classmates and guests are signed up for the various weekend events in New York City celebrating the joint 80th birthday of the Class of 1958—58 years after our graduation. If you plan on coming but have not yet registered, please send off a $50 deposit per person and the sign-up form to:

Class Treasurer Bob Wood
39 Fall River Avenue
Seekonk, MA 02771.

We need to know by June 30th who wants to attend the Broadway show “Beautiful.”

You can select other individual events as late as Sept. 15th, though earlier would be very much appreciated.

If you decide to stay at the Roger Smith Hotel, call the hotel number, 212-755-1400, and ask for the Brown Class of 1958 group rate. Book now to ensure a reservation.

If you missed or misplaced the mini-reunion weekend schedule with the registration form, please email Jim or Sandy at jamesr.moody@gmail.com or sandymctaylor@aol.com for a copy. We look forward to seeing you in NYC.