

Introductions

A friend remarked, “When I think of Claude, I have a smile on my face.” This sentiment reflects Claude’s legendary gift for friendship. He endeared himself to people from diverse backgrounds. Differences in age, race or religion were no barriers. He embraced them all and forged long lasting friendships.

In turn, his personal and business friends responded to him with equal warmth. Claude would have been proud of the lasting impression he left on them. For those who benefited from his lessons, enthusiasm for the outdoors, and patience with the inexperienced hiker, cyclist, skier, (“bend-ze-knees” was his refrain on the ski slopes), he had a transforming effect on their lives. Most recall “persistent memories” of his adventurous spirit, humor and generosity, but some also remember with discomfort the risks he took with them on the ski slopes and hiking trails. All survived to tell the tale with a measure of awe. He combined hard work and fun with equal aplomb though the latter was pursued with more enthusiasm. A friend remembered him crawling out of the camping tent one Monday morning to put on a business suit for a business appointment. He helped pioneer the plastics industry in the United States and established a successful plastics business. Nevertheless it was his personal relationships which took precedence.

This book has been long in the making, over ten years. It was started to commemorate Claude’s 80th birthday in 2000 and gradually morphed into a book about friendship. He was working on this book on Nantucket when he had an accident in July 2003. Though he survived, he was unable to complete the book. The manuscript was then turned over to George McCauley a Jesuit priest and publisher of Claude’s various books including his magnum opus “Breaking the Mold” In between his priestly duties, George re-fashioned the manuscript into a lively tale. He would call to report progress with the book, “I have lives coming out of my ears!”

With George’s untimely death in Sept. 2010, there was now a renewed urgency to complete the book before fate would intervene otherwise. There was also the lingering memory of Claude’ ominous last words to me before his accident. “If something should happen to me, will you complete this book for me? “.

With the passage of time, some of Claude's friends - David Barish, Lena Wulf, Peter Cohn, Steve Enderes, Roberto Pietrocola, who are mentioned in this book have passed away. But friends, even if they are no longer around, live on in our hearts. They will be remembered for enriching Claude's life and mine.

Mo-Li Bamberger

September 23 2011



The Opening Gambit

My previous book, *Breaking the Mold*, is my autobiography, more or less celebrating myself, largely chronicling life as seen through my eyes. As all of us are mortal, I intended the work as a legacy for my descendants and future generations.

This new book, *Celebrating Friends*, is dedicated to the many wonderful people in my life, most of whom I have known for countless years, others who have more recently crossed my path and, alas, those who have passed away both recently and others a long time ago. All of you have in some way contributed to who I am, have enriched my life, and therefore deserve to be commemorated somehow in a supplement to *Breaking the Mold*. If, as will be the case in many instances, their descendants, children and grand children might benefit and learn something about their forefathers they never knew.

It was my spirited wife, Mo-Li, whose idea sparked the flood of letters that make up the bulk of this book. While "Breaking the Mold" deals with the way I see the world and my life, this new work largely reflects how the world sees me.

Each communication of introduction by way of a brief vitae and subsequently a letter addressed to me are followed by my personal comments and observation to amplify the record. It may be a response and, possibly a rebuttal of what was said, and in any event it could spark a lively discussion at a future meeting.

Claude P. Bamberger

October 2000



Mo-Li Bamberger
34 Farview Road
Tenafly, NJ 07670

July 21, 2000

Dear Friend of Claude,

For some time, I have been thinking about how to celebrate Claude's 80th birthday on September 23, 2000.

If he were Chinese, he would get a bowl of noodles with two eggs for long life and good-luck. But this is hardly Teutonic.

To let this occasion slip by without doing something doesn't seem right, even though Claude himself would like to forget about it. On the other hand, a birthday bash alone is not special enough. To be meaningful, a party would have to include all his friends, who live in various countries. Obviously, it would be difficult to organize this.

For Claude, a life without friends is unthinkable. For those who have read his book "Breaking the Mold" and his "Japanese Pen-Pal story," you know his zest for life, ability to reach out to the young and old alike and to maintain relationships over many decades. Through his writing, his friends got to know each other. He has been in plastics for so long that he has become a legend. Some people have remarked disbelievingly, "You mean he is still alive? But I heard of him from my great-grandfather!"

Well, Claude is indeed well and alive. I hope you will join me in marking this milestone in Claude's life and share your recollection of any experience you have had with him by writing a page or two, a paragraph, a sentence or even one word in any language you choose or a drawing if that best expresses your feelings. I will gather all this in a book and surprise him on his birthday. At a later date, I hope to send copies to all of you. Although this letter will be sent primarily to personal friends, I have included a few people in the plastics industry as well.

If you feel obliged to respond, you are correct. I am not letting you off the hook! The responses will be judged and the winner will get ski lessons with Claude! (They can be exchanged for a free bag of our Bamberko Purging Compound!)

Please respond legibly by September 8, 2000 (kindly print your name and address) and mail to: Mo-Li Bamberger, c/o Claude Bamberger, P.O. Box 67, Carlstadt, NJ 07072, USA.

With warmest regards and thanks, Danke vielmals.

Mo-Li Bamberger