

Other Special Friends

In 1939 David Barish joined a civilian pilot program and trained to fly for wartime transatlantic ferry operations. In 1942 he joined a TWA piloting C-54s transoceanic air traffic control flights. In 1944 he enlisted for active duty in the Army Air Force and qualified on the P51D Mustang. "Fortunately," he says, "the Japanese surrendered the day I graduated."

The Air Force then sent him to the USAF Institute of Technology for two years to qualify in aero engineering and another two years to Cal Tech to obtain an MS and professional degrees in aerodynamics. He then worked with the wind tunnel testing at Wright Air Force Field in Ohio. In 1953 he left the air force and followed a career as an aero consultant.

Subsequently he became a consultant with NASA in a program to land a man on the moon. In the early 1960's he developed a new rotating parachute. It still remains as a staple in today's military arsenal. Later he produced the first generation of gliding personnel chutes allowing spot landing in high winds. It proved to be a version suitable for the landing of three men and was chosen by the NASA for their requirement to return astronauts safely to earth.



In 1965 his gliding chute was first applied for civilian use to be used on ski slopes under the name of Sailwing as a new summer sport which he called: Slope Soaring. The idea was that the soarer would skim down the grassy ski slopes sail into the air and softly land at the base area. The project was shelved because too many parachutes ended in the surrounding trees.

Now the plot thickens. “One day in the summer of 1993,” David tells us,” while driving near a site in Ellenville, NY, I saw thirty paragliders in the air. Thus, at the age of 72, I realized that para-gliding had become a very popular sport, both in the European Alps and in USA. My interest was rekindled and I went back to my drawing board and sewing machine. It seems to have paid off.

In 2001, when I was 80 years old, I was very pleased to be invited to the annual gliding festival at St. Hilaire, France as the guest of honor and finally recognized as the true inventor of this sport.

Two years later I was flying again, trying out my newest designs. Unfortunately I ran out of test pilots (one having been killed) so I had no choice but to continue on my own. One video shows me about 300 feet off the ground flying my latest prototype in very turbulent conditions.”

David’s wife, Johanna is a very lively, outgoing and and capable individual. During World War II, she trained and worked as an aircraft mechanic. However, the major part of her professional life was devoted to the publishing industry as an editor. For some years she ran her own concert promotion business. — music being her passion. To all that, add a few years with the United Nations, where she worked for the Development Program in the Documents Division.

At the age of 75, she had her first paragliding experience during the annual paragliding festival at St. Hilaire, France, where husband David was being honored for his contribution to sports flying.

Johanna recalls the way she and David first met Claude. “It was on a the cold sunny day at the top of Whistler Mountain (below), and it was “love at first sight.” His intelligence and warmth drew us to him, and though we know Claude for just a few years, we became old friends” from the start.

Claude has an enthusiasm for life that surely infects those around him. He is gracious, considerate, generous, open-minded, and genuinely

concern-ed about others; he is a giver, a sharer, a doer. We have known him to go out of his way to help others even when it involves inconvenience to him. Claude insists on being a fully active member of the human race, leaving few stones unturned. His lifelong



love of full speed on ski slopes is amazing, and his companions have learned not to get in his way!

What higher reward in life is there for a man of character, with all these attributes and passions, than having the love and companionship of a great partner — Mo-Li!”

Claude was struck by these relative newcomers in his life. “It is very unusual to form a close relationship at a mature age, yet it was exactly as Johanna, herself an extremely outgoing person, says: ‘love at first sight’.

Only after we knew David, a very quiet, somewhat reticent man, for a couple of years did we learn to our amazement that he was the “inventor” of paragliding, which differs from a simply parachute and from hang gliding, A parachute comes in a bundle strapped to your back when flying in an airplane.



Upon jumping out of a plane in mid air, a cord is pulled and hopefully the parachute opens and lets you glide gently to earth. Hang gliding differs in the sense that it involves a lot of equipment, having an aluminum tubing frame that holds one or two people in prone position. A steep slope, preferably located where wind up draughts are available, is necessary for successful soaring,

A paraglider, by contrast, is much simpler and operates more like a soft kite inflated by ‘ram-airfilling’ chordwise tubes. The equipment involves only a cloth wing and lines, which fold up small enough to be carried in a backpack. In fact, David never goes anywhere without carrying his chute on the chance he may pass a suitable site to do some soaring.”

Johanna goes back to her earlier theme: “Some of the best memories we have of Claude are the times we spent on the ski slopes together. Even in his mature years he was a great sportsman, and shushing downhill with him stays in our memories forever. Of course, that was only one part of our friendship with Claude. His intelligence, humor, insight and enthusiasm for life was contagious. It made us love him and he loved us back. A wonderful legacy for us.”



Fred and Janet Williams Berndt tell this tale:

“Claude was fascinating to us from the moment we met him. Fred and I will never forget our first encounter with Mo-Li and Claude at Johanna and David Barish’s home for brunch. I was impressed by the obvious love and warmth that exuded from the wonderfully odd couple. I say odd, only in the sense that I related on a personal level, myself — a young American of African descent being married to a German man almost my parents’ generation.



I recognized instantly the respect and affection that I have experienced in my own marriage and felt an instant kinship. Opposites do attract! Claude was charming, intriguing, and exuded an openness, an ease, a curiosity that was alive and very present. The anecdotes he shared about his life as an immigrant who for years worked hard to climb to the top of his profession, the revelation that we both shared the same birthday, and his vitally cosmopolitan view of the world seemed to break all barriers of time and space that normally define relationships. We instantly felt connected to this wonderful man as a kindred spirit we’d known for a lifetime.

Fred and I were obviously not the only ones. It seems as if Claude’s life was full of fast friends who remained so for a lifetime. One our dearest memories of Claude and Mo-Li occurred when we all ended up

in Switzerland on the occasion of his 80th birthday. This is a memory that sums up the special light that Claude was in the world.

There we were (right) with a group of robust near-octogenarians (all but Mo-Li, Fred and me), classmates of Claude, eating the delectable “Gateau au Beurre” (below) special to Patisserie Weber in Valangin near Neuchâtel, drinking crisp wine from the region, enjoying the stories of friendship each shared.



In come the waiters with not one, but two incredible birthday cakes – one for Claude and one for me and I’m struck by the generosity of spirit both Mo-Li and Claude embody by remembering that I, too was celebrating a birthday. Claude’s quick wit, easy humor and zest for life was so evident that day – filling the room just like the aromas and flavors of the various “Gateau au Beurre” we enjoyed - at one turn salty, at another, sweet, but always deliciously unique.



One of Fred’s and my favorite anecdotes have to do with the parting picture that remains in our minds at the end of that lovely day. It’s a picture we often describe with a certain amount of envy and awe, as well as an inner motivation we both hope to be able to call on as we advance in years. The weather had not cooperated all day and a persistent and steady drizzle accompanied by gusty winds showed no signs of letting up. Fred and I were looking forward to a lazy afternoon in the warmth of our hotel room and perhaps a short nap. And what did our companions do?

They headed off, 'berg auf' for a hike in the hills, the near 80 year young Claude leading the way as he waved goodbye and disappeared in the thick fog of the Swiss mountains."



Claude and Mo-Li first met Nives Zanotto and Georges Phillip in Klosters, Switzerland in 1980. They went there to ski. Just before they left for Klosters, they received a letter from a Mr. Georges Phillip, a lawyer and Financier in Zurich who wish to meet the Bambergers to discuss the possibility of doing some business in plastics. What started as a very formal meeting ended up as the beginning of a very long and warm friendship. Not much business was done over the years but they kept in close touch and spent many fun evenings together in New York, Zurich and on vacation in the Caribbean exchanging colorful stories of their business deals in Russia, India, Pakistan etc.



On the occasion of Claude's 80th birthday, Nives Zanotto and Georges Phillips wrote:

"Dear Claude,

We have given considerable thought to what we would like to wish you on your 80th birthday. We found it. We would like to wish you TIME, moments of joy, of well-being. We would like to offer our sentiments of friendship and strong ties with a great human being. We are happy to have time to raise our glass to you on September 23rd wishing you a HAPPY BIRTHDAY!"

They enclosed a wonderful poem in German about time by Elli Michler which was most appropriate. Claude who always had a million projects could never could find the time to do half of it.

“On your BIRTHDAY we do not wish you just any gifts.
We wish you what most people do not have:
We wish you TIME. Time to enjoy and time to laugh.
And if you make good use of it, you will be rewarded.
We wish you time for what you do and time to reflect,
Time for yourself and time to share with others.
We wish you time for leisure and recreation,
And time to be happy and content.
We wish you time -- not just to pass
We wish the time for you to last
As time to marvel and to trust
But not a race against the clock.
We wish you time to reach for the stars,
And time to grow and mature.
We wish you time to hope anew and to love:
There is no sense in putting it off.
We wish you time to find yourself
And enjoy every day, every hour.
We wish you time also to forgive
We wish you: Have time to live!

Free translation by Sigrid Karner of a German poem by Elli Michler



Remo Solari was born in Italy Oct. 31, 1926. Castel San Giovanni, Piacenria. He came to America in 1947 and became a TV repairman. He worked also in restaurants and loved to cook.

Margaretha Streefkerk was born in Amsterdam, Holland April 15, 1940. Came to the United States Sept. 22, 1963. She worked as a governess in Flushing, N.Y. (in Holland she had worked and studied to be a children's nurse at a children's hospital on the outskirts of Amsterdam.

She tells us, "The family I worked for in Flushing lived next door to Remo's oldest sister., His sister asked if I would go out with her brother. He had 3 children from his first wife, who past away in 1962. His children were then 4, 6, and 7. We did go out and we got married Aug. 8, 1964 in Flushing. The children were 6,8, and 9. Together we had three more children. All together six, two girls and four boys.

Later on my husband fixed anything and everything less and less TV. Because TVs changed so much and, they became cheaper to buy a new one. We had a pizza restaurant with ice cream etc. in Englewood for a while so we did both. It got too much also with the children who needed more driving etc. When our last son was born, he was special and needed a lot of attention.



All in all our children are grown now. The oldest son Anthony got his doctorate from Duke University so he lives in North Carolina. Peter started his own business in a basement in Dumont and has a big place in Orangeburg for T shirts from all schools and landscaping etc. He lives in Blauvelt, N.Y. Renee lives in Michigan and has her degree in Certified Medical Assistant works for 3 doctors. Yvonne works in Englewood Hospital catscanning technician also M.R.I. lives in Cresskill, NJ. Ed has his finance and economics degree from the Wharton School of University of Pennsylvania, lives in Belgium and is a head trader for Electrabel,



Remo Jr. lives in Park Ridge, NJ in a group home and is very happy and works at ARC in Hackensack. We have all together 13 grandchildren and our life is very busy especially with Holidays. When the children got older I worked nights in a group home for 9 ½ years. At the moment I work for 3 dentists in Englewood Cliffs.”

How did he meet Claude you ask? Let this poem tell the tale:

Every weekend Dr. Lou Mandel
would ring Mr. Bamberger’s bell.
They would have breakfast together
and talk about everything and the weather.
One weekend Mr. Bamberger said:
I need some repair done very bad.
Could you recommend a man?
Well, said Dr. Mandel, I think I can.
So Mr. Bamberger met Remo Solari
and he took him to his factory.
They did repairs and talked and in the end,
They were happy, each had a friend.
We all went out in the morning for dim sum in New York.
For dim sum you do not need a fork.
Inside every noodle is a surprise
Some is good for the brain, bones or the eyes.
On the market were many different goods.
It all came down to good vegetables and foods.
We had dinner together and Ray was the cook,
It was delicious, the recipe did not come from a book
We all enjoyed fondue and lobster together
It was great and everything was always better.
Claude also loved linzentart
That was a cookie after his heart.
Having dinners and discussion together, you see,
means a lot when you are with great company.
Friends like Mo-Li and Claude it is our wish
To have many more times like this
So with this poem Grace and Ray,
Wish you a very “Happy Birthday”



This from Shining Sung; “Claude, hop on the time capsule, tighten your seat belt and let’s jet back to 1968, to that precise moment when I first met you.

It was shy of 43 years ago when my sister and I arrived in New York. That fall, our cousin, Richard, with whom you have been doing business, came from Taiwan to New York on a business trip. He wanted to introduce someone he knew to protect two girls, fresh out of college in Japan, who landed in the big jungle called New York.



You, Claude, were the chosen one to fulfill this role. I remember (how could I not?) so well that night when you invited us to have dinner at the restaurant way up high at 666 5th Avenue. (Were we impressed by the stunning view of the city!) You were all smiles, and patiently explained to us every item on the menu. (That was the first time in my life I had raw oysters!) That was also the first time I met an American with such a heavy accent. And the rest, as they say, is history, and what a glorious history it was!!

During all these years until you left us, the wonderful things I have done together with you and Mo-Li are enough to fill a small volume: the wine-tasting, hiking, skiing (in my silk stockings, you would tease me), studying in Tenafly (during my graduate school years), vacationing in Nantucket, West Hampton, the Kutztown fair, going to movies (Blue Angel is still my

favorite) and of course, countless dining and theater experiences, all of them ‘the first time’ in my life.

How you have opened my mind and vision! I was also able to travel vicariously through your travelogues filled with most unbelievable anecdotes to the most remote areas on earth. Your positive attitude and sense of humor made all the ordeals you and Mo-Li encountered during your adventures looked like blessings.

Through your diligent writings and the time we spent together, I learned about your extraordinary past which was always a living part of the present, be it a place, a country or the people who were lucky enough to cross your paths in their lives. People who have touched you are in turn touched by your royalty and friendship. For



you, friendship is a lifetime commitment. By spreading your wings over continents and harboring your friends wherever they could be, you spread your joie de vivre.

Claude. We love you and we miss you.”



Jean Beltramini tells us a little bit about herself. “I worked for J.P. Stevens and Co., Inc, which was located in the Empire State Building. While there, I was a receptionist, model (when needed) and secretary. At the time Stevens was one of the largest textile firms and since Ken was a textile engineer we met there and the rest is history.

Of course, several years later I decided to pursue a career as a travel consultant and that history you know! Nowadays I enjoy the work I do as a volunteer at Hospice House working with patients and volunteering as a docent at Davenport House, which is the house that started the Savannah Historic Society, which saved several historic homes from destruction in the name of progress to make way for a parking garage or such!

Also, the joy of travel that Ken and I did, and the many friendships formed through the years. For, truly, family and friends are among my most

important possessions. I guess the above is what I stand for, but I must add that I hope in my heart.



I feel it only appropriate that I should start a letter like this while flying to a destination, for travel is how I first met Claude. I was his travel agent, consultant, coordinator, etc. for a good part of my travel consulting career. He was and will always be my favorite client. Why? He is so intelligent and well read in all he does, so it is no surprise for me to say that I learned so much by doing his trips. When he married Mo-Li, the research and attention to detail became even more interesting.



My most favorite of all their trips was the trip to India in 1985, which included attending the Pushkar Fair (*above*), with arrangements for a private tent with private facilities, and organizing trips by train from one area to another, hotels, etc. It was, for me, a joyous accomplishment, and I could not wait to speak with them upon their return. Fortunately, most of my efforts were successful, but Mo-Li did become ill while traveling through India.

However, nothing stops these inveterate travelers. I always loved to pick up the telephone and hear Claude say, ‘Well, Jean, I have another challenge for you.’”