

Village Dwellers At Heart - But Not on Weekends

In her professional days, Lenore Suhl was by turns a book designer, sales girl (Woolworth), private nurse (NY), hospital nurse, topographical designer, maid (Aegis), surveying work, animated pictures, drawing, salesgirl (SAKS), author, decorator, photographer, assembly-line-work (NY), journalist (Tripoli). But some things stand out for her: her years with Jack Suhl and her stepson Andrew, and her five published novels!

Amazing, then, that she could say, "It's not easy to write about oneself, especially when there isn't too much to write about. But for Claude, I will bare my heart and soul." And she does so below with her writer's eye:

It must have been in the winter of 1960 — or was it in 1961? that I opened the door to Jack's matchbox-sized apartment on Perry Street and faced a tall, strapping, smiling stranger who said: "I'm Claude." The twinkle in his eyes conveyed that he knew the situation.

I was Jack's new girlfriend, but things were acutely unsettled. After my divorce and a dangerous wrong turn, I had moved in with Jack on a part-time basis, but at that particular time he wasn't home. Having moved out from Claire's not long ago in a state of fury and despair, he was skiing in Lech, attempting to regain his composure. As his place was a vast improvement over mine — a dump on west Houston Street, where an ancient fridge stood in the middle of the only room — he had offered me Perry St. during his absence. His next move was unclear. His fulltime commitment still had to be achieved.

Now there stood before me *the* Claude of Claude P. Bamberger Corp., Jack's partner and long-time, closest friend. "Jack told you I'd be by," Claude smiled.



“He did, but he didn’t say when.”

Under Claude’s amused scrutiny I felt myself diminishing. I wanted to make a good impression on this important person in Jack’s life — me, a German from Berlin of that ridiculous “aryan” origin — but it was morning and I was not yet dressed. No doubt I was looking like a slut in my cheap old housecoat, my feet in worn “street” shoes because I had forgotten to bring my slippers.

“You must be Lenore. I’ve just come to pick up the envelope Jack left for me. On the bookshelf, he said. May I use the bathroom?”

I murmured that I had taken a bath and that everything was splashed, that I had not even yet let the water run out of the tub.

“Don’t worry.’ Claude disappeared and was soon back. ‘You took a bath? But the water is still so clean. You must be a very clean person.’”

Was he being sarcastic? As I looked at him uneasily, I looked into the open face of a sensitive, cheerful, generous, honest man, a man who was both optimistic and astute. A man who was not only Jack’s friend but would also become mine.

That was the first time I met Claude. Through the passing decades I have seen him often, last when he visited me in Munich and handsomely invited me to dinner. He walked with a limp but his spirits were undampened. He had done some shopping: small, colorful figures handcarved in the Erzgebirge, and he was enormously pleased with his catch. It was nearly 11 p.m. when we parted at the subway at Lehnbachplatz where I was in walking distance of my apartment. There wasn’t another soul around. The escalators endlessly leading deep down to the platforms were as brightly lit as deserted operating rooms. Unfazed, ready for the next adventure, Claude waved me goodbye and, without a valid ticket, disappeared from my sight.

Perhaps one thing stands out for me: Claude was the life of the party. When some of us felt dejected by life’s calamities (and Claude himself took his share), soon there would come a call to assemble: around a Christmas tree, at the river for some ‘canoodling,’ at somebody’s house for a wine tasting. He will always be gladly remembered!



Arthur Erickson also took part in the East Village revels. He met Claude through Mosten Gilbert, who lived in the same walk up in the Village and who did occasional work for Bamberger’s Plastic Enterprises. Through Mosten he met Jack Suhl, Claude’s business partner as of 1953. Mosten and

Jack became two of his closest friends, even when they found themselves on opposite shores of the Atlantic for years at a time:

In our Village days we partied a lot, played tennis futsal in the city parks, and, when the snows fell, skied snowed at places like Mount Snow and Hunter Mountain. Claude, a veteran of the Army's 10th Mt. Division, and I, a rank beginner, mostly skied on different trails. However, all trails led to a common table where we embellished the day's skiing events and



talked over happenings of wider import like Castro's rise in Cuba (good then) and Madame Chiang Kai Chek and the China lobby (bad). The food was usually stick-to-ribs New England fare: beef stews, mashed potatoes, and slabs of white bread. But Claude, or maybe Jack, added a new dimension to our culinary experience. They discovered a small country restaurant run by a German lady. The specialty there was sauerbraten. All in all, you could say that Claude added a solid main course to our salad days in Greenwich Village.

Skiing with Claude didn't hurt either. Arthur would later take a job as a journalist for McGraw-Hill World News in Paris and would ski in this international journalists' ski meet at St Anton in 1961.



Alice Tibbetts writes as a devoted Bamberger fan:

Our friendship started 62 years ago, 1946. I was 22, Claude must have been 26. We met in a subway after I had given a talk at a symposium of some kind somewhere in NYC. Was it a 4-H group or Youth Hostel meeting — probably the latter — and I was talking about the Soviet Union, having just returned from a trip to that country.



Alice picking blueberries in front of their New Hampshire house with one of their four-year-old triplet grandchildren.

We must have exchanged phone numbers or addresses, because I remember meeting an interesting assortment of Claude's friends at parties, square dances, or ski trips. I was amazed at his energy and commitment to taking trips; it seemed as if he and some of his friends went somewhere every weekend. This is still true. When you get in touch, you find that Claude has just been somewhere interesting or is about to go. Or a wonderful packet arrives in the mail detailing his latest adventures.

He and a group of friends came up to our place in Randolph, New Hampshire one winter presumably to ski. I remember that there may have been a question when they arrived as to whether or not they would get right on with the skiing, but my Dad had built a large fire in our large fireplace, and they all willingly came in to gather about the warmth.

There was a visit in NYC after we both were married. We had earnest talks about the labor movement. My husband Norris was employed by the Textile Workers Union of the CIO at the time. Claude's experience with labor in NYC had not been good.

There were a lot of years when we didn't connect after we had moved to Wisconsin. However, there were always wonderful newsy Christmas cards — news of marriage, children, divorce, illness, trips.

We were both doing a lot of skiing, then, and we finally made arrangements to meet and ski together at Winter Park. That was a

wonderful few days. Claude was full of stories about his travels, a boat trip with his son where they were completely lost, his meeting and wooing of Mo-Li — what a great story!

And then there was a day of skiing after Norris convinced Claude that he needed to rent-up-to-date ski boots and skis. Disaster! Total lack of control. One spectacular fall after another! We laughed and laughed — later! I'm not sure that Norris has been really forgiven for his insistence that Claude would love the new technology!

Another time I stopped in New Jersey for a day on my way to see a daughter in New Haven. Claude and Mo-Li were the perfect hosts. We drove into town to see a play on Broadway — a BIG DEAL for this Midwesterner. How I loved being taken into the City by someone who knew the ropes: where to park and what to see!"



Joan Muller got to know Claude through two people she loved dearly — Jack, Claude's closest friend and associate from the very beginning, and Jan, also close to Claude. Both, as she writes, were "part of those early years in New York: the dye factory, camping and skiing in the Catskills and Adirondacks, evenings in the east village. Claude was a world of friendship and integrity, and so intense in living as were Jack and Jan. Thank you, Claude, for being!"



Lotte Franklin writes: "Perhaps the first memory that I have of Claude is a picture of his business office in the early days of his venture into the plastic business, days when men and women dressed formally in prim business suits for even the most menial of workplaces. Claude, however, as well as all of his employees, were wearing shorts, in keeping with the relaxed atmosphere that pervaded the premises. Despite the fact that various cats and kittens were frolicking over the typewriters and file cabinets and other furnishings and equipment, one could see that business was indeed being accomplished.

I believe this first impression is a representative cameo of Claude's entire life in that he could always combine career and *gemütlichkeit* into one integrated endeavor.

Claude's ease with people and his ability to make life-long friends were a distinct advantage in his business dealings. At times, however, his magnanimous nature could prove a hindrance. I recall his efforts to establish a weekend ski package deal from New York to the slopes further north. In order to impress potential customers he offered free trips to his friends — the strategy being that a bus without empty seats would suggest a booming, thriving business with lots of satisfied customers. A noble idea, but doomed by the mere fact of Claude's ebullient personality, since anyone who rode his bus once, or two times at the most, was miraculously transmogrified from customer to friend!

In the 60's when so many young adults thought it fashionable to be in rebellion against their elders and to mock their values, I admired Claude for not being the least bit ashamed or embarrassed to express his devotion to his mother. I appreciated the warm hospitality his mother always extended to every member of the groups that gathered at her Long Island house to visit Claude.

Claude's thick German accent and his English-in-German-syntax often made him the butt of much teasing. I can't recall how many times I heard Claude's standard rebuttal, "You have to remember I wasn't born in this country." Reading Claude's numerous writings in the past few years, I



think Claude had the last laugh. For someone who "wasn't born in this country" his English is impeccable, and of course, in his writings you don't hear the German accent. Too bad! Foreign accents add charm to this country.

For his part, Claude definitely thought Lotte belonged under the rubric: Most Unusual Person. "Tired of the politics in the New York school system, where she was a teacher, Lotte quit in the mid-forties, went to Alaska, and for a couple of years taught Eskimo children in Kasiglug, an Eskimo settlement somewhere in the far north, near the Arctic Circle. When she came back home, one of her Eskimo students followed her all the way, to study in New York. Once, she

appeared for dinner in our apartment bringing an Alaskan reindeer skin (somewhat smelly) as a gift.”



Claude writes, “Erich and Inge Meyerhoff played an active part in my life some sixty odd years ago. Erich was a regular on our weekly ski trips to Vermont.” But Erich’s first love was the Medical Library of New York (MLCNY), of which he was the first Director and remained as Director Emeritus until it closed in July, 2003.

“No deficiency in its operation, financial mismanagement, or questionable conduct of its personnel is alleged as the cause of MLCNY’s demise,” Erich would tell you. “On the contrary, the center has always been a superb operation, and each of its directors provided leadership in cooperative solutions for the coordination of resources. Among MLCNY’s achievements are the various editions of me *UCMP*, a computer-aided listing of the periodical holdings of some sixty-eight health-related libraries in our area, including the American Museum of Natural History and the New York Botanical Garden, that eventually grew to reflect the holdings



Peter (r. with Claude. The figure in the middle is one of the inhabitants of the wax musuam they were visiting!

of more than 600 libraries in the Northeast and was regularly updated with on-line access. In addition, MLCNY provided a van delivery service to its membership to provide speedy delivery of interlibrary transactions, a storage facility for members, and, most of all, a site for a collection of less-used journals in the health and allied health sciences with the aim of eliminating duplication. A superb staff maintained a practically flawless and courteous operation. With a collection size of over 450,000 items, it is a measure of its effectiveness that in 2001 MLCNY received 39,571 loan requests and filled 33,882; in 2002, it received 34,882 requests and filled 31,751.” The fiscal support just wasn’t there.

But Erich doesn't forget the old days either. "It is only recently that Inge and I again visited Hogback mountain and its surviving restaurant. What a time it was when you, Claude, were our extraordinary cicerone on those ski trips to Mount Snow, before it was discovered by Playboy magazine. Your skill in finding the right place, at the right time, at the right price are memorable. No matter what disaster met us on our trips through ice and snow, you managed to save the day and remain in good cheer. And, ah, those dinners at the Bottenbergs with the cowed Mr. Bottenberg playing the piano under the watch of his domineering wife. Yes, you can't take those things away from us.



Peter Cohn was born in 1921 in Leipzig, Germany, but his family moved to Berlin when he was five and his younger brother, Michael, two. They lived a middle class existence in a large apartment, although his father was a *Luftmensch*, a member of the communist party, who traveled in intellectual and artistic circles and coincidentally was a close friend of Jack Suhl's father. Let Peter tell it from here:

"Seeing a dark future when Hitler came into power, we emigrated in 1933 to New York with the help of relatives already living here. Middle and high school education in the Public School system, tutoring Jack Suhl in math along the way. When my father died, I interrupted my studies and worked in various machine shops (I liked to work). After the war I went back to college and graduated from the University of Colorado in Boulder with a mechanical engineering degree.

For three years during W.W.II, I served in the U.S. Army where, after basic training, I was assigned to the Engineer Board Radiation Lab at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. Sent on a technical assignment to the China-Burma-India theater of operations (loved Burma). After the end of hostilities, back at the Radiation lab, I worked on captured German infrared equipment and with a German captured scientist. My German language came in handy. I was offered a chance to work at the Eniwitok nuclear tests but fortunately passed that by.

In civilian life I worked for Texaco at their research Lab in Beacon, New York and spent the last 33 years of my engineering career here in N.Y. with EDO Corporation working on international sonar contracts. The work took me on short-term assignments to Italy, Peru, Venezuela, India and Korea. (I like to travel).

Nominally retired in 1983, but am plenty busy with various art and museum related projects (some with my brother Mike), with financial affairs, with family and friends, and with some travel, but not as much travel as Claude and Mo-Li. We have our main residence in Manhattan near Columbia University and a vacation home in Bolzano (South Tyrol, Italy). I have been married for 45 years to Bernice, formerly employed as a teacher in the early childhood field. We have two sons David and Claude who also live in New York City, and two lovely little granddaughters, Silvia and Sabrina.”

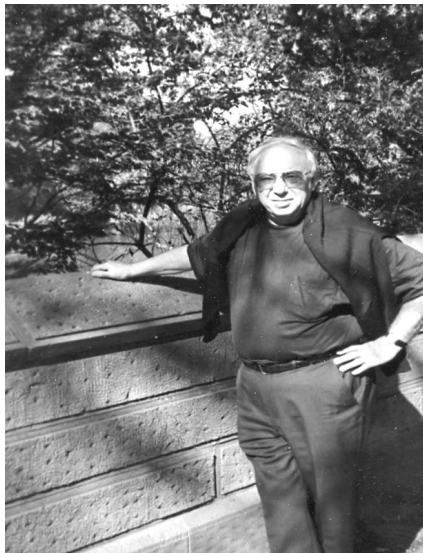


It was in the early 1950s that Hy Shuman met Claude and Jack Suhl in a garage in Brooklyn. He reflects:

“Claude and I were both much younger when we met. What started out as a business call turned into a wonderful friendship, now close to 50 years. Many things have happened since we first met, but the one thing that still remains constant is our friendship. I feel very fortunate that we were friends for all this time.”



“I can’t afford to buy skiing equipment,” Stella Handler told Claude. “I barely managed to buy myself a bike to explore Brooklyn on. But you



had a friend who sold used skiing equipment, second-hand, cheap. I got some very mismatched skis, a pair of old not-so-good fitting old boots, etc. A pair of red and white snowflake mittens Mutti had made. I cherished them for many years.

After some preliminary lessons on gently rolling land, I vaguely recall, you took me up a real ski trail. I remember being scared and you saying, “Don’t worry, you’ll just follow me — you’ll be fine.” Was it at Pittsfield? I do remember that I sprained both my ankles, but rose to ski again. The whole Pittsfield experience was rich. I don’t remember how we all got there, but it was a crowd. Lots of singing, laughing, freezing in a “rented” unheated empty house. Followed by nights in a rooming house that I still think was a brothel. Then there was a diner or something like that where we warmed up on wonderful hot cocoa.

I remember a canoe trip along a river where we camped in tents and were awakened by a cow pushing its head into our tent. On another camping trip we got up one morning to be amazed to see you step out of your tent in full business suit, hat, tan pigskin gloves, and coat, to go off to make a business call! So real life is better than any soap opera — a little unbelievable.”

Claude felt bad that he and Mo-Li hadn’t seen Stella in many years, but he remembered well her early perkiness. “Stella was one of the most high-spirited people I ever met,” he says. “Some sixty-odd years ago she was one of the Friday-night regulars who came folk dancing in the East Village. Easygoing and always with a smile, she had an open invitation to join us on all our outings, where she was an enormous asset because of her singing. I know of no one else who had such a huge repertory of songs, and around campfires, in ski lodges, on kayak trips or long train or bus rides to and from New England, she could entertain large groups of people. Her magnetic personality got people to join her as she sang tirelessly.”

To feed her passion for skiing, Stella took a market research job where she and two other young women were sent into a black slum in Newark. Their job — to go into all the bars on Thanksgiving Day (her own 21st birthday that year!) and get the locals to respond to a long questionnaire on the virtues and popularity of *Reingold beer* and on the slogans connected with its selling. “At a dollar an hour, expenses paid and 50 cents an hour for travel time, it was quite an experience. Proceeds to skiing, of course.”



“As is well known,” Simon Schochet reminds us, “the ancients believed that friends are indispensable to human life. Having lost my family in Hitler’s camps, a life without friends seemed to me one not worth living. I was fortunate to find Claude, a friend with whom I was able to share joy and sadness and to have the intimacy of face to face encounters. His presence, his readiness to help and our conversations have not only stimulated me but have also enriched and sometimes changed my views on life as he had and does have a sunny and positive outlook on life.

Our discussions would range over many subjects. Claude was, despite his outer appearance, a late 19th century man possessed of all the manifestations of that time: romanticism, love of nature, hidden melancholy and the remembrance of his idyllic childhood in his beloved home in Bamberg. During our talks, he would often ponder whether or not people were happier a hundred years ago than now. Were people more beautiful, more honest in the past than now? Strangely enough, Claude was never interested in talking about the Nazi times with me although we were both refugees — as if nothing more could be said about those evil times and people.



In business, there were no obstacles for Claude. In the most difficult and trying situations, Claude found solutions and never gave up. Once we had some discussions about trying to do business with the Eastern European Countries which were then under Communist control.

As I had been born in Poland, we decided that I should go to Poland and investigate the possibilities of establishing business contacts there. I did go and returned disappointed and without leads or positive results. It is just not possible to do business there was my report. Claude was unhappy with my statement. There is

always a way to do business was his stance. Poland has an industry and therefore business must be possible.

I tried to explain the impossibility of the situation there but he was adamant in his views until I repeated what a Polish manager had told me during a supper when we had consumed much vodka. He admonished me to go back to America and forget about doing business in Poland and illustrated how work was done there. “From Poland” he said, “clay pigeons are sent to Hungary in exchange for eggs. We send eggs to Czechoslovakia

and in return receive chickens. We sell the chickens to Bulgaria in exchange for chicken liver pate. We export this pate to the Soviet Union which sends back clay pigeons!

Claude laughed but still did not give up. Things will change in time was his considered opinion. He was right: there is now a booming business done with Poland.”

Simon graciously responded to a request from Claude and Mo-li, who respected his historical interests, for his scholarly research projects and the lectures he gave at various universities in Poland, the Czech Republic and this country. Many were about the captured Polish-Jewish officers who were murdered in the Katyn forest about which he is an expert. Simon later travelled with a famous photographer to a place in Ukraine where families of survivors of the Katyn forest like this woman could be found.



As an industrial psychologist and psychological consultant to managements of business, government and social agencies, and who reviewed and taught management systems aimed at increasing people’s effectiveness and satisfaction in their work in both developed and developing countries, David Emery seems admirably formidable. A volunteer ambulance driver in World War 2 and father of five, a former Iowa freestyle swimming champion also into surfing, skiing and flying — sounds awesome enough. But David rests on more modest laurels. “What long, good memories we have” he says, “— all the way back to the “gang” that skied, played soccer, coffee at Mutti’s, square danced, then all of us when the families started to intertwine.”

Bea Emery, his wife, was the beginning of a connection with Claude. “I found myself alone in New Hampshire. In the middle of a lot of introspection, I ran into Claude at a little convenience store. He had a great bunch of friends and adopted me. It felt homey after my self-esteem had

just been tested. From then on he was a great friend, which later included my husband David and all our many children."

"You," she wrote to Claude, "were the one who ventured all over the world and broadened our horzons. You were a wonderful model to our children, introducing them variety of ideas and concepts. You taught them to make the best pflaumen-torte, you got them excited about hiking,



cookouts and canoeing and you brought them great presents from your travels. You and David, sometimes to my exasperation, played endless chess games. I admired your resourcefulness in weathering the leaner years and then back up again to everything you built on your own. I admired your courage and sense of enterprise. It's been a real, enriching pleasure knowing you — and all that from an accidental meeting in a little store in the North Country."

Claude considers Bea a lifetime friend. "We met during the war years in the early forties during a long Christmas holiday ski weekend in North Conway, N.H. As usual, I had made all the arrangements for a varied group of people, disregarding the compatibility of the participants. There was also some mixup about the bed and breakfast accommodations, and when we got there the place had no record of a reservation for our group of about eight people.

In consideration of our plight (we had come some eight hours by train from New York), the innkeeper said we could sleep in the bar after the midnight curfew. A makeshift mattress dormitory was established, where males and females happily slept together — quite unusual given that time

before the sexual revolution of the sixties, when such arrangements became the rule rather than the exception.

While shopping for bread, cheese, and salami — our mainstay of nourishment in those days — we bumped into a good-looking female student from Sarah Lawrence College, who had hitchhiked, skis and all, from Connecticut to North Conway, also foraging for food. Her name was then Bea Landshof; she was a German refugee like myself. She seemed forlorn and distressed, in need of a place to stay. My friend Jack adopted her for the weekend, and she joined us in our makeshift dormitory. She has been a good friend ever since.

But what can I respond to such an ode of praise? I have considered Bea always a good, sympathetic and understanding friend. In fact when I review the relationship with the Emerys over a lifetime, it is only thanks to a personal bond between Bea and myself that our relationship lasted that long. Relationships between people are complicated, to say the least.

It is rare that two couples, involving four people of varying background, upbringing, taste, and inclination, all get on equally well together. More often than not, one or more in a foursome does not see eye to eye with the others and at best is merely tolerated by the others to preserve decorum. At worst the relationship between the couples ceases and what remains is a one to one connection between the original friends, a connection obviously limited for logistical and emotional reasons.

There is so much to be said here. Enough to fill a book. Bea married Dave Emery and I married Kathy. We had two children, the Emerys had four. We spent many a weekend together. Later, we jointly bought some land on Nantucket and built vacation homes next to each other. That's where we spent most of our summers when the kids were still small.

Now that our families have grown up we haven't seen much of each other. Bea and I might meet for lunch several times a year — interludes that give us the opportunity to catch up on the news in each other's life. The friendship and empathy for each other endure."



Let Claude introduce John & Marlies Fry. "Although we have known the Frys for a good many years and consider them friends we don't see much of them, which is unfortunate. For one thing, they live in faraway Westchester County, in one of the loveliest houses we have ever seen. Custom designed and built by John, it overlooks a huge reservoir. From their terrace one can observe all kinds of waterfowl, and around sunset deer magically appear, grazing in a copse below their house. John and Marlies are into gardening,

and when they are not away skiing they stick close to their beautiful home and are hard to dislodge. John was the editorial director of *SKI Magazine* for 16 years. Then he became the founding editor of *Snow Country*, launched by the *New York Times* in 1988. He was elected to the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame in 1995. In 2006, he published a much acclaimed book, "**A Story of Modern Skiing**"



Meanwhile, he continued to write a column in *SKI* mostly about the foreign ski resorts that he visits, frequently reporting about various ski events. One of his more exotic trips was a visit to Harbin in Manchuria (*below, playing hockey there*), with the explorer/adventurer Ned Gillette. There they found that the indigenous population had skied for many years. The Harbin skiers, used to skiing on barrel staves or crudely handmade wooden skis, were amazed to see the fiberglass

skis, step-in bindings and modern clothes John and Ned brought with them. Even such things as gloves seemed to be a novelty. Obviously, the Frys are very unusual people, and Mo-Li and I are proud and fortunate to be able to count them among our friends."

"What can one write about *le grand Claude*," John Fry asks himself, "that does not sound like wretched excess? Here is a man capable of uniting qualities rarely co-extant in one character: obdurate courage, insight, loyalty and winning charm. Not surprisingly, I've been enriched by knowing him.

I have spent much of my life skiing yet I can recall only once being on the slopes with Claude. We were vacationing together at Copper Mountain, which, at 9,000 feet above sea level, is one of the world's highest ski resorts. The two of us were immediately recognized as "old farts." Ancient alpinists we were. Dressed as he was in somber khaki wind-jacket and navy blue pants, Claude looked like a model for "Herr Hoch Alpinismus," or the old man of the mountain who had perhaps just escaped from the nearby Colorado Ski Museum. The impression grew when, in the mid-way lodge at noon, Claude extracted a boulder-sized crust of bread, a cylinder of

smoked sausage and a wedge of remarkably aromatic cheese from his leather rucksack and presented them to our table for lunch.

We rode the lift after lunch to near the top of the mountain. It didn't occur to me that the slopes presented any special hazard to Claude. Mo-Li was not present and I had either forgotten or never learned that Claude's heart, a once robust organ, had fallen into disrepair. In short, it might easily stop beating. But he skied well, better than many men half his age.

And so it went. Typically, each day Claude followed me down the mountain. As the week progressed, my skiing grew stronger. One day down the beautifully pitched Andy's Encore, from about 11,000 feet, I led Claude and my wife, Marlies, in a non-stop descent of a mile. We may have made fifty or a hundred turns. It was March and the sun shone. Finally we

stopped to rest.



Perspiration beaded on Claude's face. He looked like he was undergoing the sort of strain observable on the face of a wrestler who has been pinned to the mat. Finally he spoke. Gasping in the thin air, he said he had a confession to make: he had this heart problem.

"My God," I exclaimed, "skiing the way you are at this altitude, you'll kill yourself. You're crazy!" Claude grinned sheepishly in

response.

Of course, he didn't kill himself. He was in the mountains, doing what he loved best. That was when I came to know the indomitable strength of Claude's will to live. Mightier than any polymer! Enduring as the most advanced vinyl. The scrappiest *mensch* in the world!"

But Claude gets the last word in. "Of course, John exaggerates greatly in his description of our ski outing on Copper Mountain a few years ago. Then I was still wearing my old Austrian leather ski boots, custom made by Mr. Huette, who in the 1960s was a famous bootmaker in Austria, living in St. Anton. I remember distinctly that week on Copper Mountain as a watershed outing, with respect to my antiquated ski equipment. Every time I went up on the chairlift, some teen-age kid would look at my boots with the query, "Gee, where did you get these? Cool!" More sober and to the point was a ski instructor who rode up with me and remarked, "I saw you skiing. Let me tell you, you'd ski a lot better if you would get rid of those."

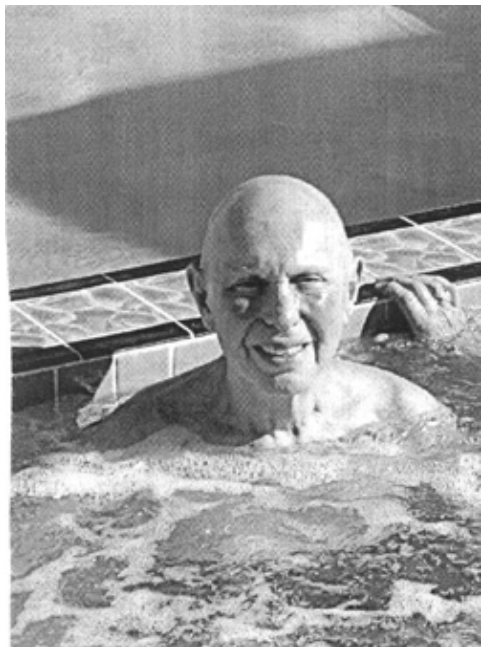
Well, that's exactly what I did. My famous Huette boots, which look like a noose, with a menacing hook dangling from it, are now hanging on the wall at the Copper Mountain midway restaurant as quaint antiques."



"Howard Ross became a friend almost by default," Claude writes. We first met him on one of our arduous Vermont ski trips in the mid forties when he was introduced by his sister Lenore Kantrowitz, wife of my close friend and lawyer Bob. Howard became a Professor at Baruch College, and I got to know him a little better when Mo-Li came to the USA from Malaysia to do post-graduate work for her Ph.D. thesis. At that time Howard introduced Mo-Li to a friend and associate of his who subsequently accepted Mo-Li as a Ph.D. candidate.

We got to know Howard much better after the tragic, premature death of first Bob and later his sister Lenore. Since then we have maintained contact, albeit sporadic, with Howard. Considering our age we no longer meet on ski and canoe trips or even hikes for that matter, but we do on occasion have a gourmet dinner together in New York City. When the chips are down, we know we can count on him. He is a true friend!"

His friend responds: "I have known you more or less for 50 years. You, Bob & Lenore would make a series of brief appearances in my life, usually on Sunday evenings when you all returned from some trip. I have only a dim memory of Kathy. Memories sharpened when Mo-Li came on the scene. She graced the landscape — lovely, charming, giving. Unforgettable Nantucket — the natural beauty, your a-frame house, the clamming, that monster flounder caught as a fluke, zucchini bread (I still have the recipe in Mo-Li's bond). And, before I forget, the case with Bob preventing an interloper from building a house in



Nantucket destroying your view. Since Lenore and Bob died, the friendship has grown.

You, Claude, are as memorable as ever. A clear voice, incisive, witty, active, moving through life if slower then with as much assertiveness as ever. I know you will triumph over the intrusions of age. Courage, always. With Mo-Li, it's easier and essential.



Ah, the Braunthals! They go back some sixty-odd years in my life's history. At age 24 I was very much in love with Annalee, a young Bronx beauty of Russian heritage. It was a stormy, for the most part unsatisfactory, relationship that lasted about two years.

One summer, AnnaLee, then 18 years old, had a job as a camp counselor at Pioneer Youth Camp, near Harriman State Park I hitchhiked (which in those days was my most reliable and only mode of transportation) one weekend for a visit, only to end up in a fight as usual. In the heat of an argument AnnaLee said, "Things don't work out between us, but I have the *perfect* girlfriend for you." She mentioned Jagna Braunthal, the daughter of Hilde Braunthal, a camp counselor. Subsequently I met and dated Jagna on a regular basis. Although I never considered marrying her — she was too *wholesome* for that period in my life — I considered her a worthwhile and interesting person, and we remained lifelong friends. Unfortunately, she died prematurely of cancer. Jagna lived in Queens with her brother Jerry and her parents, and this way I got to know Jerry, then an undergraduate at Queens College.

Jerry Braunthal chooses flashbacks to reflect upon his friendship with Claude.

- **Flashback #1**

Many decades ago, in the pre-Sabina (my wife) era, Claude became the master organizer of bus trips from N.Y.C. to top New England ski resorts,



a novel but apparently not such a profitable idea. Jerry and other fanatic skiers traveled north on Friday evenings, and into the night hours; some folks can sleep on such occasions, others hardly. Most of the time the skiing was great; on a few occasions, with almost snowless hills and before the invention of artificial snow machines, a near disaster from a skiing point of view. But there were compensations: good meals, good conversation, and good companionship made up for the one to two inches of snow on the ground. We returned from such weekends nearly exhausted but encouraged by Claude's inimitable optimism, ready to leave on the next Bamberger expedition.

And who can forget the walks along the Palisades; the canoe trips along the treacherous Delaware (I think) River, full of rapids, organized to the last degree by none other than Claude, who never seemed to become tired.

- **Flashback #2:**

Claude paid us visits in Amherst, after seeing his aunt in Hartford. Sabina and I made sure that prior to such visits we had on hand the inimitable pretzels and European-style dark breads from the Normand Bakery in Northampton. Occasionally, while on a visit to N.Y.C., we met in Manhattan and went to a museum or the theater.

- **Flashback #3:**

Our mature years: we spend occasional overnight visits in the four-star Hotel Bamberger in Tenafly, New Jersey. Our gracious hosts, Mo-Li and Claude, make sure that our luxury suite is comfortable. We schmooze outside on the terrace or inspect the luxuriant garden. For dinner, we proceed to a nearby ethnic restaurant or enjoy the homemade dishes of the two master chefs. Then we proceed to reminisce about the past, discuss the present, and speculate about the future, not forgetting to touch on the protracted legal proceedings of Bamberger plastics pitted against the corrupt giants in the industry.

The next morning the breakfast table is replete with delicious fat-laden German sausages and European cheeses, which, according to various doctors, should be eaten only in moderation. Claude, *are you listening?* Jerry does not go hungry, there are fresh bagels with margarine to still the hunger."

Others, however, might suggest different flashbacks — Jerry getting a Ph.D. from Columbia in political science, landing a job at U. Mass in Amherst in 1954, the year Amherst actually started a political science department, establishing the Western European Studies Program there and forging a link with the University of Freiburg. He was a visting professor at various other Universities as well, some intriguingly exotic.

In 1999, Jerry received the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit, Germany's highest honor for non-Germans who are not heads of state. The award recognizes his academic achievement and contribution to German-American cooperation. On behalf of German President Roman Herzog, the New England Consul General, P. Christian Hauswedell presented the medal (*Jerry holds it at the left*), extolling Jerry as a leading expert on Germany's political system, as well as for broadening America's knowledge and understanding of Germany and contributing to exchange program between U.Mass and Freiburg.

Sabina's achievements are also notable. She studied in Manhattan at the High School of Music and Art, majoring in the cello. She worked as a laboratory assistant at Columbia Physicians and Surgeons Hospital and at the Rockefeller Institute in New York, then receiving an MS degree in bacteriology and public health at the University of Massachusetts in 1956. Later She held laboratory positions at U. Mass and at Amherst College, and occasionally taught biology elsewhere.



For many years, she's played cello in a local symphony orchestra and in a folk dance orchestra, and regularly plays chamber music with friends. She's been a guide volunteer at Amherst historical house.

Jerry and I have both been active in progressive political organizations, ranging from the Democratic Socialists of America and the Massachusetts Greens to the Citizens for Participation in Political Action. Such activities range from peace vigils to attending meetings, signing petitions, and writing to our Senators and Representatives. That, " she says, "is what got us out of Vietnam."



As David Schermerhorn tells it, “It started out with a quasi-development, followed by a brief honeymoon canoeing on the Delaware river. The new bride jumped ship after her top-of-the-line Abercrombie & Fitch life jacket deflated mid-Skinner’s Falls. The plucky groom paddled on alone for several days and, despite the odds, remains married to the same delight, Joan Carol, 40-plus years later.

We went on to raise two fine children, David and Kate. The latter has issued grandson Sacha — a particular pleasure, that one.”

David’s professions or jobs: summer stock, merchant marine, Bellevue Hospital attendant, insurance adjuster. After a \$40/week offer, he tells us, “I could not refuse. I gave up adjusting for the bright lights of film production and never looked back. Come full circle now, I have returned to the boards on my Orcas Island paradise in Washington State, stunning local audiences as Agatha Christie’s Inspector Poirot, Don Juan, etc. My son the director has offered me a cameo in his next film. Negotiations are under way.

In recent years, I have relished Arctic trips — Greenland to Siberia (*not to mention this picture of the Magnetic North Pole*)



Oh, yes — the things I stand for? Short ski-lift lines and long friendships.”

