Climb Another Mountain
Plant Another Tree

SECOND EDITION

Still Climbing Mountains;
Still Planting Trees

The Story of One Man’s Life

By Sidney Gefen

As told to Wini Rider Young
Keith Gockenbach
and Judith Erwin
FIRST EDITION
Climb Another Mountain
Plant Another Tree

SECOND EDITION
Still Climbing Mountains;
Still Planting Trees

by
Sidney J. Gefen

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Printed by The Hartley Press.
Hartley Press had to be the publisher of my story. My relationship with Hartley began in the early 60s when Dyess Hartley was just launching the business. As one of the first Hartley customers, I take joy in remembering that I introduced graphic artist George Thompson to Dyess, and through that relationship the Hartleys learned new techniques that enabled them to expand and sophisticate their processes. After 50 years, Hartley is one of the largest printers in the state of Florida, and our relationship has come full circle with the publication of this book.
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The next thing most like living one’s life over again seems to be a recollection of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible by putting it down in writing.

– Benjamin Franklin

People are always blaming circumstances for what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can’t find them, make them.

– George Bernard Shaw

As my father planted for me, so will I plant for my children.

– Talmud
Sid Gefen was leaning on his elbows at the desk in his office, his hands covering his mouth. His eyes widened as he pondered the question that had just been put to him.

“Why do you want to write a book?” he was asked. “Whom do you hope will read it?”

His hands dropped to the top of the desk. He pushed himself up out of the chair, his strong but aging frame unwinding to its full height. He turned around and pulled open a file drawer in the desk beneath the window behind him. He pulled out four thick black legal folders and turned back to his interrogator.

“I want to write a book for my children and grandchildren,” he said. “I want them to know there was more to me and my life than this.”

And he slammed the four black folders down on the desk in front him as hard as he could.

W.R.Y.
PART ONE

The Beginning
"EURASIAN ADAM"
11,000 to 19,000 years ago
Write a book? Where do I begin?
How about 79,000 years ago?

My niece Beth Wise told me about a new genealogical, anthropological, ethnographical and demographical root search program called The Genographic Project. Created by National Geographic and IBM, it is a program that, through DNA, can trace one's ancestry back to the beginning.

As Beth is my brother Murray’s daughter and we probably have many of the same genes and similar DNA, she suggested I take part in the program. So I bit, and bought the package for $110.

The kit included swabs and glass vials as well as instructions about how to collect one's DNA. So I swabbed and collected and sent the DNA sample back to the source. About three weeks later – identified only by a coded number – came the answer to who I was and where I came from.

You, my children, and I began in Africa – where southern Ethiopia is now – between 31,000 and 79,000
years ago. According to the report, we can be traced to a single individual, whom the research program has labeled “the Eurasian Adam.”

“This African man is the common ancestor of every non-African person living today. His descendants migrated out of Africa and became the only lineage to survive away from humanity’s home.”

Our pack, or tribe or whatever we were, apparently following a more abundant plant and animal food source, migrated north through the Holy Land, the Balkans and into Central Asia.

My great-grandfather, Israel Gefen, was born in 1820 in Lithuania, which was then part of Russia. My grandfather, Abraham, was born there, too.

I know little about my grandfather, except that he was married to a woman named Sarah. They had three boys and a girl. My father, Nathan, born in 1889, was their second child. First there was Harry, then my father, followed by Thomas and Esther. The family emigrated to the United States in 1898 and settled in Boston.

The good thing about the United States is that all of us are immigrants. Even the Indians and Eskimos came from somewhere else – across the Bering Straits perhaps. Somewhere.

After arriving in the United States, Sarah died and my grandfather married again. His second wife,
The Gefen family in Boston, circa 1910.
(Top left) Grandfather Abraham, Esther, Nathan and Harry. (Bottom row) Bernard, Joseph, Abraham’s second wife (name unknown) and Thomas; little girl (unknown).
whose name I do not know, died in child-birth but the baby, a little boy, survived. He was named Bernard and my grandfather, now with five children of varying ages, raised them alone. (Bernard, who became very successful, was always very grateful to my father and credited him with bringing him along in the family and encouraging him in life. Now Bernard’s grandson Ed is living in Jacksonville and is an educator in the Duval County School System. He is married to Robin Nuss, daughter of Dr. Robert Nuss, dean of Shands-University of Florida.)

Once my father’s 8-year-old feet were firmly planted on American soil he must have flourished. I know that he was educated in Boston.

After moving to New York he became successful and acquired Charlotte Mills, a carpet manufacturing and importing company based in Philadelphia. He moved the headquarters to 225 Fifth Avenue in New York.

It was in New York that he met and married my mother, Bertha Silverberg, who was four years his junior. Her family had come from Vienna, and she was one of four beautiful girls – Sophie, Frances, Bertha and Tillie. They were very close.

Bertha was deeply religious, which my father went along with, and ours was a strictly Kosher home.

I know very little about my father’s early working
life, how he became a success or even how he acquired the carpet mill. All I know is that this is the beginning and the foundation for my life.

My life, which follows.
The house on Copeland Street - Sid rented a room when he first arrived in Jacksonville in 1941
PART TWO

New York Boy
to
Florida GI
(Above) Mother and father Bertha Silverberg and Nathan Gefen, when they were married in 1915 in New York.

(Above) Beach living in the ‘20s.
Papa was a brilliant man and we were people of means. We had a great house, a 16 cylinder Cadillac in the garage and a 53-foot sailboat at the Yacht Club in Sea Cliff, N.Y.

We had servants, and I had my own nanny until I was six years old. She used to take me to church with her.

The only time I remember asking my father for money at that young age was so that I could take it to church and put it in a little slotted wooden box. He later saw to it that I had my own little blue box in my room – for the Jewish National Fund for land in Palestine. I was taught how to give at a young age.

I had two siblings, an older brother Sylvan and a younger brother, Maurice (Murray). I didn’t have a middle child complex because it seemed my mother was always doing extra things for me, like cooking my favorite foods – pineapple upside-down cake, spinach with eggs. She made me feel special.
The first house that I remember, and it was a big house, was in New York City.

There was a lot of love there.

As I told you, Momma was very religious and kept a Kosher home. The house was immaculately cleaned before Passover. The Oriental rugs – and the house was full of them – were rolled up and put away and straw mats were put down in their place for the summer. She made special dishes for Passover and any food that was considered non-Passover and not eaten was taken outside and burned.

Momma respected the rules of her religion. As I grew older, I tried to modify her ideas.

“Kosher laws were great at the time, Momma, but they were made for health reasons,” I would say. “The rule that you had to eat meat within 72 hours of slaughter was made because there was no refrigeration or government inspection in those days. God didn’t send these laws.”

She would not ride on the Sabbath which, for her, was also according to a law of her faith.

“That was because Saturday was a day of rest and animals were supposed to rest, too,” I told her. I tried to convince her that now that we had automobiles the animals were still resting and that it was all right to ride in a car.
She finally did ride in the car on the Sabbath, but reluctantly.

We all believe in the same God, we are just taking different paths to the same end. I think that if religion doesn’t move with the times, it will ultimately die.

When I was about five, we moved from the house in New York to 10 Mador Court in Far Rockaway, Long Island. It was a big house, too. The famous actress Lillian Russell had a house down the street.

Across from our house was a field with cows and an old ice house, and beyond that a golf course where, at the age of 13, I used to play with Bobby Bayer. In the summer we would also go swimming at the Beach Club.

I started kindergarten at Public School 39, and Bobby and I went through every grade together. Often Bobby’s mother would pick us up at noon and take us home for lunch.

Do you remember autograph books? For me, grade school and autograph books seem to go together.

One of the most exciting events in my young life (I was seven) was being taken to the parade for Charles Lindbergh in New York City when he returned from France in 1927. He had just flown solo across the Atlantic Ocean in a single propeller airplane, the first man to ever do so. Dubbed the “Lone Eagle,” Lindbergh
was a national hero.

The parade was up Fifth Avenue, and my father took me to his office where, from his ninth floor window, I could see the crowds and the excitement and the ticker tape.

Papa carried me on his shoulders to see that parade.

And then the dream ended.

Along came the stock market crash of 1929, the bank closings and the Great Depression. My father lost the carpet mill, the house, everything.

A smaller rented house in Far Rockaway replaced the one on Mador Court. There were no longer servants, and my mother did all of her own work. Even the Cadillac was put up on blocks six months of the year so that it only required a six-month license tag.

My father gathered us around him and I remember him saying, “Sons, the mill is gone, everything is gone but…”

And it is here that I believe I was given the foundation for my life.

“…One, you will have a good name. My personal fortune will be used to pay the bills. The word bankruptcy is not in my vocabulary.

“Two, you will have love of God, love of country, love of family.
“Three, you will have a good education, all that you can absorb.

“And four…there is a four letter word. W-O-R-K. And if you work and work hard, you will be a success.”
(Left) A first pictorial of baby Sidney Gefen.

(Bottom left) A first pony ride.

(Bottom right) My younger brother and my closet friend Murray.
Life didn’t seem all that different during the depression, the credit due my parents. Papa became a manufacturer’s representative for carpet companies. Through his own good reputation and business contacts, he knew most of the fine retailers. Momma still kept a loving home, and I continued going to Public School 39 in Far Rockaway.

My grades were good, but not spectacular. Certainly never as good as my older brother Sylvan’s. He was a brain, a straight “A” student.

The highlight of eighth grade at PS 39 was joining Troop 10 of the Boy Scouts. I also was in the Drum and Bugle corps and played the bugle.

PS 39 was followed by Far Rockaway High School, where, in my sophomore year, the school newspaper, The Chat, caught my attention and I was made business manager. This was my first foray into business but “business” really hadn’t gotten to me yet.

Far Rockaway High School didn’t have a good football team and I was eager to play football, so I
transferred to Lawrence High School. Unfortunately, I never made the first team.

There were girls and dates along the way but nothing serious, just a passing thing. Money was a problem.

Although I had jobs – a newspaper delivery boy, an usher in a movie theater, a cabana boy at the Beach Club – I spent the money on myself, things I needed. I even sold Fuller brushes door-to-door one summer. (One of my uncles was a Fuller Brush distributor.)

Upon graduating, I enrolled in New York University, majoring in accounting and finance.

By this time my brother had graduated in accounting and finance from City College in New York and had passed the Certified Public Accountant exam. Because he was only 19, he had to be a junior accountant for two years. He joined the financial firm Skolnic & May where, as a junior accountant, he made $12 a week or 25 cents an hour.

I left college after a year and a half to go to IBM School. I was being sent by the Frank Rubinstein Stores which were one of Skolnic and May’s big accounts, after my brother told his superiors that I knew some accounting.

At that time IBM would not sell this predecessor of the computer but only rent it to clients. A system
School years - autograph books were the big thing in 8th grade. High school brought fame and friends.

(Bottom right) Sidney with Mel Usdon and Robert Bayer
was installed for a trial run in the Frank Rubinstein headquarters in New York.

The machine was about as large as an office desk. The back of it was constructed very much like a telephone board with lots of plugs and wires. Different connections directed which job the machine would perform.

I was taught how to wire and run the tabulator and sorter. With that experience, you could say I was on the cutting edge of the “electronic age.”

But I lasted in the electronic age about one month. When Frank Rubinstein realized that the fancy new IBM machine couldn’t do the job he had expected, out went the machine. Out I went.

When I wasn’t working I spent as much of my leisure time as I could at the 1939-1940 New York World’s Fair in Flushing Meadows. “The World of Tomorrow” with its Trylon and Perisphere as well as its parachute jump, was a land of enchantment to me. It was there that I got to see the king and queen of England and President Roosevelt.

After spending 1937 and half of 1938 studying accounting and finance, and working at it for almost a year, I switched directions mainly to earn more money.

Grumman Aircraft in Beth Page, Long Island, was building a single-engine fighter plane the F4-F, (the
Wildcat), for the Navy. It was also experimenting on the F5-F, (the Rocket).

I was hired to make wooden mockups and other parts in experimental engineering. As part of my training, Grumman sent me to Pratt Institute at night to study marine and aeronautics drafting and engineering.

After nine months, I was laid off because Grumman did not get a contract the company had expected and the experiments with the F5-F were not going well.

While looking for another job, I ran across a notice tacked to the wall of the post office. The Navy was looking for men to repair and overhaul airplanes on an air base in Pensacola, Florida.

I had never been to Florida. For that matter, I had never been farther from home than Albany, New York, where I worked one summer in Uncle Bernard’s furniture factory.

But the job paid $50 a week, which was certainly more than my brother made at his New York accounting firm, so I took it.

After working in Pensacola from April until October, my cadre was offered an opportunity to go to Corpus Christi, Texas, or the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida. I chose Jacksonville. It was 1941. I was 21 years old when I arrived in Jacksonville with
$35 in my pocket.

NAS was the perfect airfield. It had it all – runways for regular aircraft and the wide river for PBM and PBY amphibians.

I found a room in a lovely white colonial house at the corner of Copeland and Oak Street, then a boardinghouse, called Bufton Manor. Black waiters in white jackets served breakfast and dinner in the dining room, and we were sent off to work with a brown-bag lunch. All of that for $7 a week.

Taxis charged 10 cents to take me where I wanted to go, although they picked up additional fares along the way. There were two different cab companies, both owned by Guy Marvin, “Thrifty” for whites. “New Deal” for blacks.

This new way of life in the South, the blacks deferring to the whites and treating them as superiors, was new to me and different. I had never lived in a segregated society before and it came as a surprise, but I adapted.

The first person I met in Jacksonville was Sam Greenberg, who was general manager of the Diana Shops, which were part of the Frank Rubinstein Stores in New York. I met him by way of the New York accounting firm where my brother worked which represented the Rubinstein Stores.
I buddied around with his nephew, Bobby Greenberg, who had a big convertible. I had a car too, a 1937 Ford Cabriolet, a very pretty model with a radio. It seemed like a Rolls-Royce to me.

And then it happened.

How can any of us forget where we were on Sunday, December 7, 1941, when we heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

I had a date with Ethel Smullian at the Roosevelt Hotel, where there was dancing in the Rendezvous Room every Sunday afternoon.

Harvey Bell’s band was playing and everything was going along smoothly when there was a commotion on the bandstand and the music suddenly stopped. Harvey Bell stepped to the microphone.

He repeated the news bulletin that had come over the radio at 4:15 p.m.

“We have witnessed this morning the attack of Pearl Harbor and a severe bombing of Pearl Harbor by army planes, undoubtedly Japanese. The city of Honolulu has also been attacked and considerable damage done. The battle has been going on for nearly three hours. One of the bombers dropped within 50 feet of...It’s no joke. It’s a real war.”

The dancers and couples at the tables dispersed
as fast as they could. They wanted to get home and listen to the radio.

The United States was at war.
CHAPTER IV

The war was on.

I already had my draft card but because I worked for the military I was classified 2A. So I immediately tried to volunteer for flight training in the Navy because I wanted to be a Navy pilot. No luck. I was rejected for not having 20/20 vision.

But something happened two weeks after Pearl Harbor that was far more important to me than the events that were taking place in the South Pacific and Europe. I met Lois Isaac.

Coming out of the post office one day, I bumped into two girls I knew. There was a third girl with them, Dorothy Carr, who was Lois’ married older sister. After talking to them for a while, Dorothy turned to me and said she had a younger sister she would like me to meet, so a blind date was arranged.

Lois’ father was a true Southern gentleman, Herbert, born in Waycross, Georgia. His grandfather, Max Isaac was an original member of the first Jewish congregation in Jacksonville, Aved Chesed –
Congregation of Peace. It is where I worship to this day.

Lois’ mother, Marion, was a member of the Manasse family from Gainesville, Florida.

The couple had a lovely home in Avondale, at 1648 Mallory Street near Willow Branch library. Herbert owned Duval Sales, a company that sold appliances made by Bendix, General Electric and other similar companies. He also owned real estate in Jacksonville.

Marion and Herbert had four children – Dorothy, Lois, Max and Faye. A wonderful black housekeeper named Anna, who was devoted to the family, lived with them for 50 years.

On that first date with Lois, my car was in the shop so I had to find some place where we could go on foot. I suggested that we go for a walk and we ended up at Lane’s Drug Store having ice cream.

At first Lois, who was very pretty with dark curly hair, didn’t understand me very well because of my New York accent. She was from the South and I had never been more than 150 miles from New York City until I arrived in Florida. Two different worlds.

We really didn’t have a lot in common. We both had led very sheltered lives. And, until then, girls and women had not been a big part of my life.

Both of us were just starting to find our way in the world, she as a telephone operator for Southern Bell,
I in my Navy job.

All I knew was that we had the same sound values and ethics.

After we had been seeing each other for about three months, I arrived one Friday night for a regular date when Lois’ mother said, “I think you and Lois are getting too serious. Don’t get serious before you go to war. You know you will have to go.”

After her parents left for the evening (they were going to the Little Theater in San Marco), I told Lois I thought they were trying to break us up.

I looked at her and said, “Let’s get married. Now.”

Without blinking an eye she said “Yes,” she would marry me, but on one condition: until the whole world knew about it, the marriage would be “in name only.”

The nearest town where there was a justice of the peace was in Macclenny about 35 miles west of Jacksonville.

That night we drove to Macclenny in my car. All we needed was a witness. We grabbed one off the street, a man named Ed Frazier. (He went on to become a state senator.)

The marriage license and the ceremony, if you can call it that, cost 7$. I reached into my pocket and found that all I had was my paycheck, which the clerk
couldn’t cash. I had to ask Lois for the money.

Lois Isaac and Sidney Gefen were married in Macclenny, Florida, on March 20, 1942.

When we left the justice’s office and climbed into the car, I turned to her and said, “Now, where do you want to go?”

“Home,” Lois said.

I drove her to her house, took her to the door, kissed her good night and then drove to the boarding house where I was living.

Lois gave the marriage license to Anna for safekeeping. She was the only one who knew we were married.

About two weeks later, I got a call from Lois to come over to the house and hurry. When I walked in the door Mr. Isaac grabbed me by the hand and put his arm around my shoulder.

“Congratulations, my boy,” he said. “You’d better treat that girl good.”

Lois’ parents had found out about our marriage, and her father couldn’t have been more cordial.

The way they found out is that Lois had an argument with them. She had been working hard the past two weeks and, as a result, had been losing weight.

When they started nagging her about her not eating, Lois said, “I don’t have to do what you tell me
anymore, I’m married.”

She had Anna get the marriage license to prove it to them.

The great inquisition took place before I got there. At first I think that they were concerned about my intent.

Didn’t they know I was an honorable guy and a pledge is a pledge?

Next came the big question, “Have you slept together?”

When she told them “No,” Mr. Isaacs beamed and said, “Why, we can get this marriage annulled in two seconds.”

That, of course, was not Lois’ intent nor my intention. We were in love.

Dorothy was at the house during all of this and insisted that we get off, be alone and spend the night together.

“They haven’t consummated their marriage,” she said.

We found a motel on Philips Highway.

Our first home was a rented room in a house in Riverside. Later, we moved to an apartment in a four-unit building on Herschel Street that the Isaacs owned.

I found out later that the Isaacs had hired a private investigator to find out about me and my family.
And guess what? My family in New York had done the same thing to find out about Lois and the Isaacs.
The job scene changed again. I moved across town to the U.S. Air Corps Base at Imeson Field doing the same thing for the Army as I did for the Navy – maintaining and repairing airplanes – at the reactivated Jacksonville airport.

After about a season, I was transferred to the Greenville Air Force Base in Greenville, South Carolina, where Lois and I had a small apartment. While I was there I was sent to Clemson University to take a course in safety engineering and to the U.S. Rubber Company in Detroit to learn about self-sealing fuel cells.

At that time, I also applied for a direct commission in the Army, which I was in line for because of my knowledge of airplanes and the leadership I had shown in my group. I passed my physical exam at Camp Croft in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Wouldn’t you know, just as I was ready, President Roosevelt canceled all new direct commissions.

We discovered, too, that Lois was pregnant with our first child. In November, as the rain and sleet began
(Top left) The picture of Lois and Ann which I carried in my wallet when I was overseas.

(Top right) My picture which Lois showed to the baby every night.

(Bottom right) V-mail holiday greeting to Lois’s parents from the Pacific.
to fall in South Carolina, she realized that she couldn’t drive a car on the icy roads and said, “I just can’t stay here.”

I went to the colonel and requested a transfer. When I was offered a spot at a base in Orlando, Florida,

Lois said, “Let’s go.”

We got to Orlando where we had a little house. Lois went home to Jacksonville in August 1943 to have baby Ann. She named her after her Aunt.

Four months later, when I was drafted into the Army she went home for good.

I was inducted at Fort McPherson in Atlanta and ended up at Kessler Field Army Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, for basic training. I got a 14-day leave before I went to a Replacement Depot at Kelly Air Force Base in Texas, preparing to go overseas.

There I joined a group that had just returned from Africa. They were complaining and hollering because they were just back from one overseas tour of duty and were being sent right out again to the South Pacific.

We, the 24th group, were shipped out of Fort Lawton in Seattle, Washington aboard the Frederick Lykes to Hickham Field in Hawaii and then on to Guam. This was in 1944, just after the capture the Northern Mariana Islands – Guam, Saipan and Tinian.
The battle for the Marianas was one of the most strategically important operations and vicious battles in the South Pacific. It was from those islands that our airplanes could reach Japan. It was from Tinian that the Enola Gay delivered the first atomic bomb to Hiroshima.

I was in the Army for approximately two years and spent 17 months of that time overseas with the 9th Air Force. I continued doing what I had been trained to do – maintain and repair airplanes.

In September of 1945 I was flown by plane from Guam to the Fairfield-Susan Air Base in California. I had hurt my back jumping from a truck and I was given the choice of returning to Mitchell Field in New York or to the Biltmore Rehabilitation Center in Miami Beach.

Lois was in New York with the baby visiting my mother. When I called her there and told her I was coming home and of the alternatives, she said so my mother could overhear, “Wonderful! Rehabilitation in Miami Beach!”

She knew if Momma had heard there was an option for me to come to New York, there would be a dire conflict.

I was honorably discharged at the Separation Center in Surfside, Florida with a 30 percent disability.

I returned home, arriving in Jacksonville about
one in the morning. I immediately went to the Isaac’s house where Lois had been living with two-year-old Ann. They had shared the same room and same bed since I went away.

Lois met me at the front door. After a wonderful welcome home, we tiptoed back to the bedroom. When I went over to the bed to see Ann, she opened her eyes, looked up at me, stretched up her arms and said, “My daddy.”

Lois had shown her a picture of me in uniform every night which Ann kissed before she went to sleep. I looked at Lois and said, “If you never do one other thing for me for the rest of my life it won’t matter, for you have just done the ultimate.”

How good it was to be home with my little family.

We moved back to the apartment on Herschel Street to begin our life together again.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
PART THREE

From Outboard Motors to Yachts

And then some...
The Duval Marine Co. and its proud owner
Chapter VI

Lois was ensconced in the Herschel Street apartment with baby Ann, busy making a home for the three of us.

Just out of the service, I was very concerned about how I was going to support them.

My father-in-law asked me to work at his company, Duval Sales, and I did, without pay. I had absolutely no retail experience, and he was kind enough to let me learn the appliance business. He taught me about the products, how to approach customers, how to sell.

There were two other people already working for the company who had seniority over me. One was Max Isaac, Lois’s brother. The other was Harry Turner, who had worked with Lois’ father for many years.

I knew I was limited by this but I also knew I had to make a living.

For additional income, I sold a boat I bought for a profit. Harold and Vernon Kelley, who owned Florida Weather Makers and marketed air-conditioning units,
also allowed me to be their outside representative.

I knew I wanted to do something else. For one thing, I wanted to make more money, so I was always looking for new opportunities.

Perhaps encouraged by the fact that my father-in-law had an Evinrude outboard motor franchise before the war, I was taken with the idea of getting a similar franchise. Through Lonny Bryan, a Seagram’s liquor distributor who was a friend of my father-in-law’s, I heard about a franchise that was available. B.F. Goodrich was marketing a new product, Champion Motors, in competition with Evinrude, and was looking for people to sell them.

I was able to get $5,000 worth of motors with a 60-day dating – meaning that I had the motors on credit without having to pay for them for two months.

To market the motors, my father-in-law let me display them in the window of his store in exchange for the work I did for him. I also took out a classified ad in the newspaper.

Then I contacted a friend, Marcus Endel, who was a marine and aeronautical mechanic. I wanted him to help me take the motor apart, learn the nomenclature of every single part and why it was there, then be able to put it back together again. You can imagine my satisfaction when we put the reassembled motor in a test
tank and it ran.

Like a surgeon, I knew my stuff. No one was going to fool me.

Because motors were hard to come by in those days, I sold all of them within 30 days.

I went back to the B.F. Goodrich credit manager to get another $5,000 worth of motors.

“What are you going to do with the ones you’ve already got?” he asked.

“If I’m going to pay for them now,” I said.

What incredible help and inspiration Herbert Isaac was to me. He let me use his warehouse to store my stock. He also taught me how to finance and sell motors on term. That led me to the mass market besides the upper class market I already had, and it wasn’t too long before Evinrude offered me a franchise.

Since Evinrude had a more complete line and was better known than Champion, I dropped the Champion franchise and took on Evinrude. I was now ready to lease my own place.

“If you ever leave Duval Sales, you will never come back,” Lois’ mother said to me.

It didn’t change my mind. I wanted to be on my own and have my own business.

I didn’t have much money – Lois and I had accumulated only $3,000 during the war.
“Son, you don’t have enough capital to operate a business,” my father-in-law said.

He told me to see Bill Barnett and Frank Norris at Barnett Bank, where I was able to get a $5,000 loan.

(I am sure my father-in-law called Bill Barnett and put in a good word for me.) I now had $10,000 to start the company.

I leased a building at 917 Main Street in the area known as Automobile Row, and opened shop.

This was in 1947, and I was able to pay off the Barnett Bank loan within a year.

I named the business the Duval Marine Company.
Duval Marine Company, began to thrive, and, as it grew, I needed more people.

It was important that I add a service department, since one of my goals was being able to service what I sold. I hired John Daniel, a retired captain of the city’s fireboat, to set it up. He knew all about boats and engine maintenance.

Always looking for compatible products to add to the inventory, I noticed an advertisement in *Popular Mechanics* magazine for boat kits, 12- to 18-foot wooden boats that you could assemble yourself. The company was called You-Build-It, and, by coincidence, my brother Sylvan was the CPA for the firm.

I ordered a couple of kits and asked a customer who was in the Navy to build one for me because I wanted a sample in the showroom. I guess you could call this the beginning of my “out-sourcing.” The boats sold so well that I became a retailer and distributor for the company.

Needing to broaden my base further, I found
The Service Department of Duval Marine, my motto being “We Service What We Sell.”

My military electronics lab which led us to Cape Canaveral launching pads.
other manufacturers and distributors and decided to merchandise more expensive boats. With the help of Barnett Bank, I learned how to finance and floor plan (bank financing of inventory for a merchant) the operation.

In the beginning we not only had to supply the boat, but also everything that went on and in it; motor, accessories, etc.

I added another franchise, Samson Trailer, made by Ferber Sheet Metal Works in Jacksonville. Besides selling trailers to individuals, we also made them available to the automobile dealers in North Florida. After the war there was a shortage of trucks, and trailers were needed for hauling.

Soon Duval Marine Company became a center for putting boats together. Although boat manufacturers, like Halsey, a Charleston company that made little cruisers, were beginning to assemble more of their product, there was still plenty of finishing to do – painting, installing motors and steering gears, attaching hardware and accessories and softening the hard seats with cushions.

With the new financing plan in place, we began operating differently from our competitors. We had tapped into a totally new market, blue collar workers who could never have owned a boat without being able to pay for it “on time.”
Duval Marine Company was getting to be known around Jacksonville, Northeast Florida and Southern Georgia. Advertisements, selling the fun of boating as well as the boat, appeared in *The Florida Times-Union* and the *Jacksonville Journal* in both classified and display ads. Included in the ads was a weekly column I wrote called “Boating News.” It introduced new products, listed times and dates of boat club meetings, and provided boating and fishing information.

We also had huge displays, along with other dealers, at Jacksonville Marine Association boat shows at the Gator Bowl, as well as at the Jacksonville Fair.

As the boat business grew, Duval Marine Company grew.

And so did my family and household.

The year 1948 was a milestone year for me, marked with both sadness and joy. I lost my wonderful Momma.

I hadn’t seen her often enough since leaving New York, perhaps only two or three visits there and once when she visited us in Orlando.

She was taken to the hospital with a burst appendix and died of peritonitis. Fortunately, I was able to be with her when she died.

Her death brought with it a life-changing spiritual awareness to me, a realization of how much more there
Duval Marine advertised boating fun and family togetherness as well as the product.
is to a person than flesh and bone, of how much life is enriched by the awareness of spirit and a Greater Power.

Our second daughter was born in 1948, and we named her Barbara after my mother. With her birth, Lois and I decided we needed more help at home. That was when Dora Holmes Green, a black woman, became part of our family.

As our housekeeper and cook, she relieved Lois of many of her household chores. Now Lois could concentrate on raising our family and establishing herself in the community.

When my father-in-law retired in 1950, he wanted to go into business with me, so we opened a second store together near the south end of the Main Street Bridge.

In 1951, Lois, the children and I moved from our apartment in Riverside to Southside where we bought a house in St. Nicholas owned by Saul Wolfson and next door to his father-in-law, Abe Monsky.

I took my own father-in-law’s advice to get a mortgage and pay the maximum down payment so that my monthly payments would be at a minimum.

Raymond Mason handled the mortgage. He had a little two-man office, with a Mrs. Dinkins, called the Mason Forwarding Co. above a garage across the street from the Mason Lumber Company. My payments were
$50 a month.

That same year Beauclerc Country Club opened on San Jose Boulevard, and Lois took golf lessons with Peg Hutchins, the wife of Dr. Paul Hutchins. She perfected her game to the point that she became a Flight A Club Champion. She was one of the few women who were allowed to play golf on Sunday morning when the course was reserved for men.

She enjoyed the club and spent a lot time there. Not only did she play golf, but she also had a group of women with whom she regularly played Canasta. They must have stuck together for at least 40 years.

In 1952, only two years after we went into business together, my beloved father-in-law died. Alone now, my mother-in-law gave up the family home to live with her sister.

In 1953 we moved to a larger house in the Granada area of the South Side and nearer to the club.

Another move came along in 1955 when we moved to an even bigger house in Granada. It was a wonderful L-shaped house on a sizable corner lot. This provided a separate wing for Lois’s mother and she came to live with us for the next 17 years. She was wonderful, and there was never a problem with the three generations living in one household.

In spite of all the machinations going on in my
(Top) The Lady golfers of Beauclerc Country Club.

(Left) Lois with Dora Holmes Green, our house keeper for 36 years.
business life – we added two more stores: one on Beach Boulevard and one on Riverside Avenue which was operated by Herman Carr, Lois’s brother-in-law. Lois and I were able to have a normal and contented home life. With our housekeeper Dora cooking and serving the meal, we sat down to dinner every night with the children and Lois’ mother.

The conversation at the dinner table bonded us, each interested in what the other had to say. Invariably one of the girls would ask me, “What did you do today, Daddy?”

That pleased me and I would smile and give them my stock answer, “Today? Well, I climbed another mountain and planted another tree.”

By 1955, Duval Marine had attracted national attention. The Boating Industry magazine published a profile pointing out the success of Duval and my role in turning an $800 investment into $1,000,000 a year business in less than ten years. I was only 34 years old at the time.
Mix 340,000 outboard crazy people and a wide-awake outboard dealer in the same community and you have the makings of good business. That is especially true at Jacksonville, Fla., where the pace has been set for the outboard boom sweeping the nation.

How good will the business be?

We can only point to Duval Marine Stores, where an $800 investment in 1946 has been parlayed into a $1,000,000 gross last year from boats alone, combined with over-all operations grossing almost $3,000,000. We point to Sidney J. Gefen, 34, the owner of Duval Marine, and his story.

Like many another Air Force man, Gefen came out of service with a nest egg of about $800 and scouted the field for a business he could enter on that amount of cash. He decided on an outboard shop, found another man to work with him, and set up shop in the rear of 601 Main Street on the edge of the downtown Jacksonville business district. Gefen remained in the rear of this building for three months during which he developed his shop to the point where he could move into a street-front store three blocks down the street. In 1953, he was back at 601 Main, taking over the entire building.

The close-in location on Main Street was important to Gefen. It was on the funnel where all streets from the Springfield section (a third of the city’s population) converged into the downtown area. Traffic was heavy past the show windows. It was convenient to...
the menfolk going to and from work. Recognizing this Gefen made a note to open branches along the two remaining funnels from Riverside and Southside sections of the city as soon as conditions warranted.

Three years ago, he opened a branch at 900 South Main Street, near the foot of the bridge crossed by 90% of the Southside traffic. Last summer he opened a third branch of Duval Marine Stores at 333 Riverside Avenue — another funnel location for that part of town. Adequate off-street parking was available at these spots.

In common with many other outboard dealers, Gefen set up a sideline activity dealing with television repair. Under the name of Duval Marine Company, he assembled a group of former Navy radar technicians. This placed him in the field of electronics. Quite luckily, too, for when the Korean War broke out the Navy began reactivating about 100 ships from the reserve fleet at Green Cove Springs, Fla., and sent out a call for electronic contractors to supply the Navy's needs in this field. Duval Marine had a ready group of technicians and landed the work. Still later, when the Air Force began building its guided missile range from Florida's Cape Canaveral past the Bahamas Islands, Duval Marine contracted to make radar installation. Before long, Gefen had crews working from Grand Turk Island in the Southeastern Bahamas to Charleston, S.C., where he made complete electrical installations for an Air Force base. Gefen's next step was to become a major stockholder and president of Georgia Shipbuilding Corporation at St. Mary's, Ga., where he is building and outfitting complete gunboats for the Navy and making repairs on Navy ships ranging in size from tugs to destroyer escorts.

These activities helped account for a large part of Gefen's gross last year, and this. But he has never lost sight of the fact that the over-all operation has its birth in the outboard shop and that Duval Marine Stores and Duval Marine Distributors still account for a third of the gross volume.

During the past nine years, Gefen has sold approximately 10,000 new and used motors through his Evintude dealership. This is a large share of the
business in Jacksonville and Duval County, where it is estimated 20,000 motors are in use today.

In addition, he has put close to 4,000 boats in the water.

Duval Marine Stores has pioneered in the outboard cruiser field and put the first commercially built outboard cruiser, a Culver Craft, through its first cruise run. Last year when a manufacturer introduced a new, low cost cruiser, the stores sold 50 models.

How did Gefen do this?

“We’ve catered to the public,” he said. “They bought outboards to have pleasure, and we’ve sold them pleasure.”

He not only sells them, but keeps them sold.

Duval Marine Stores carries on a continuous process of keeping its name out before the public. This job starts with selecting a good site, at traffic funnels, and developing the sites with good displays and signs.

The company keeps each store open until 9 o’clock at least one night a week to accommodate men who cannot shop during regular store hours.

Regular demonstrations are run on the St. Johns River and its tributary streams. The Stores have a regular newspaper advertising program and appear in the paper at least three days each week. Classified ads are run daily with good results. The annual advertising budget runs to many thousands of dollars.

Gefen instructs his key men and employees to make liberal use of all factory aids available, including cut-away models, tank displays and literature. Booths are taken at carnivals and boat shows.

The Stores work closely with industrial arts departments of the school and loans cut-aways for the students to work with. After all, those boys will be prospective buyers in a few years.

Gefen even makes his play for the kiddies who will not be customer prospects for 10 or 15 years. The Stores put out advertising caps, chewing gum, lollipops and plastic Evinrude models for this age group.

Every effort has been made to make people in Jacksonville kit-boat conscious. People who never thought they could own a boat know now that they can. No longer do they look out on the beautiful St. Johns River thinking “if only I could…” They know they can...
and do own boats.

Very good financing helps to close sales and more than half of Duval Marine Stores customers make use of it. Motors and boats are sold on 10% down with two years to pay. Especially reliable customers can buy occasionally for nothing down. Payments are made at the store of purchase – a good way to develop repeat business in accessories and new models.

The service depot now located in a 4,000 square foot area at the new Riverside store carries one of the largest parts stocks in the South and has a crew of four mechanics. The depot has pick-up and delivery service and sufficient drive-in space for boats, trailers and motors intact.

Twenty-four hour service is available for a slightly additional charge, ranging from $1.00 to $1.50.

A 90-day guarantee is issued with practically all used motors, and the purchaser may receive full trade in value within 30 days toward the purchase of a new motor or another used model.

“One of our features is customer satisfaction,” Gefen says. And to carry out his plan, he follows up each sale of new equipment with a welcoming letter and customer report card thanking the customer for his patronage.

To follow up on repair work, each customer is mailed a return-address and postage-paid card asking for his comments on the condition of the gear, whether the charge seemed right and the service was courteous. These cards are mailed directly to Gefen’s central office and brought to his personal attention.

“Anytime I get an adverse report, I’m on the phone to ask the customer for details and see if an adjustment is warranted. I don’t want any customer to be dissatisfied. I tell him to return the equipment and we will make any corrections to satisfy him so that he will go away pleased and help spread the good word to other customers and prospects. The follow-up card helps everybody. It helps the customer get the best service in town. It keeps the mechanic on the ball. And it lets me know what is going on in my business.

While Gefen is largely responsible for the aggressive management policies which have helped Duval Marine Stores to grow and prosper, he has had plenty of help from the manufacturers who appointed him as their dealer and developed excellent sales aids. And he has had help from his key men.

Manufacturers represented by Duval Marine Stores include Evinrude, Chris-Craft, Wolverine, Dunphy, Lawrence, Albright, Gator, Little Dude, Woolsey, Kainer, Attwood, Wilcox-Crittenden and Aluminoy.

Frank Conway ably fills the job of stores coordinator and over-all manager. Mel Bishop is service manager, Herman Carr, Harry Turner and Bernard Berger are store managers. They move around from one store to another, never having a chance to rust to the spot.

All these factors have been expertly manipulated to set a fantastic pace in a pace-setting industry.

Courtesy of The Boating Industry.
Published March, 1955
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
CHAPTER VIII

Let’s backtrack a little and recall an event that had a great impact on the Duval Marine.

In 1949, television came to Jacksonville by way of WMBR, now WJX - TV 4.

This meant TV sets were coming into the Jacksonville market.

In the back of my mind I thought, if people can afford to buy boats, they can afford television sets...so what else, the company would stock TVs.

I got the state distributorship for Bendix television sets, which were very good products, and we sold a lot of them. Again, sticking to my theory that we must be able to service what we sell, I knew we had to set up a service department.

Being a war veteran had its advantages. The War Assets Administration was selling off used and surplus military equipment, and veterans were issued priority certificates to buy. With a certificate of up to $25,000, I was able to purchase a complete electronic lab that not only could service TV sets but all kinds of radios, radar
and any kind of military electronic equipment.

My wife and staff asked, “Who’s going to operate all of this?”

“That watch,” I said.

The company ran a classified ad in the newspaper, “Wanted: Ex-Army and Navy Electronic and Radar Technicians.”

They came by the dozens.

Besides having the knowledge and training to service military electronic equipment, those men had military security clearance. They also knew all about military testing equipment. That was important to me because it meant we could generate a TV signal to show and test sets when Channel 4 was off the air. At that time the channel only broadcast four hours a day.

We now had unbelievable equipment and service.

That mantra again was “We service what we sell.” It was now 1950 and the United States was again at war. Aided by the USSR and allied with Communist China, North Korea invaded South Korea. In a U.S. dominated coalition with the United Nations, the Army and Navy were sent to fight along with South Korea.

The Navy contacted me. It had 730 World War II ships moth-balled in Green Cove Springs, Florida, and, with the help of Jacksonville shipbuilders Merrill,
Stevens Corp. and Gibbs Corp, it was going to reactivate them. We activated the electronic equipment for 101 of the ships – APOs. DEs, LSTs, LSNs and ARDs.

I happened to be in the right place at the right time with the right equipment.

Later, hearing we had military electronic capabilities, plus military security clearance, Ellard Conn of Conn Structors Company, a firm out of Miami, contacted us about doing the electrical work for the Charleston Army Air Corps Base. He also asked us to do the electrical work for the fuel depot at Pine Castle and the Army Air Force Base in Orlando.

We began the Charleston job but because of a steel strike at the time, Conn Structors could not get parts and asked for a time extension. Instead of extending the time, the commanding officer accelerated the work, which Conn could not finish. On the advice of our attorney, McCarthy Crenshaw (father of Florida Congressman Ander Crenshaw), we continued our job until it was completed to the tune of $208,000. We were not paid.

Lois was devastated.

“What are we going to do?” she asked. “Do we have to change our way of living. Do I have to give up the club?”

No, I told her, she was to continue doing everything
she had done before. I assured her that I would make the money back.

I have to admit this was my first experience in the big league and I was a bit dumbfounded.

Conn filed a claim against the government, which was stalled in the Board of Claims for 10 years. It took an act of Congress to appropriate his claim. Ellard Conn died before he received any payment. For my $208,000, I recovered $75,000.

The marine business continued to grow.

Alex McDonald and his son John had a little shipyard in St. Marys, Georgia called the Georgia Shipbuilding Corporation. They asked me to go into business with them to build six patrol gun boats that marine architects Sparkman-Stevens had designed. I joined the company and they made me president, the youngest shipyard president in the United States.

We also activated landing craft vehicle personnel, the flat boats whose fronts dropped down that were used for landing troops on shore during battles. They were in constant use in the invasions of the islands in the South Pacific but were probably most notable in the successful landing and establishing the beachhead in Normandy on D-Day.

But our LCVPs were neither going to the South Pacific nor France but to Iceland. For that reason, oak
panels had to be welded to their sides to help ease the boats through the ice. Consequently Georgia Shipbuilding Corporation had the only Nelson Stud Welder south of the huge Navy base at Norfolk, Virginia. Again we had special equipment and special knowhow.

As a result we were also getting business out of Mayport Naval Station. They approached us about repairing the wooden decks of the aircraft carriers that came in and out of the base. I hired a retired full commander, Richard Cotrell, an MIT graduate, to help with this job. When he left us he went to Sacramento, California, to become president of Aero Jet General.

Because of the wide diversification of the company, I enlisted the IBM Service Bureau to take over the payroll. It was a company that offered IBM services to companies that were not big enough to own the IBM equipment. Not many companies knew about it but it was an accurate, efficient and cost-effective way to handle this part of the business.

Our first ship out of the Georgia shipyard, PGM 33, was launched by Mrs. Grover Henley, wife of a prominent Jacksonville doctor, who had been designated for that role by Senator Walter George.

Lois launched PGM 35.

Ship launchings were both ceremonial and
political events. However, all the formality didn’t faze Ann and Barbara, who were there. Ages 9 and 5 at the time and dressed in little red coats, they were running around and having a grand time while Lois launched her ship. I remember that Lois was pregnant with Carol.
Lois with Ann and Barbara at the launching of PGM 35.
Various vessels at the Georgia Ship Building Corp.

John McDonand (center) and I (far right) reviewing construction plans.
After the Korean War ended in 1953, the ship building and repair business seemed to dry up. There was no more government work.

Although I was still in the boat business, Duval Marine Company was becoming known for something besides boats. It was gaining a reputation for its electronic and electrical engineering capabilities.

I asked my brother Murray to come down from New York to run Duval Marine while I pursued that other end of the business. I was one of those fellows, a juggler, with a lot of balls in the air.

In 1954, the U.S. government approached me about a secret project. A joint military guided missile proving ground was going to be built at Cape Canaveral near Cocoa Beach, Florida and we had the capability to install the electronics.

Experienced staff with security clearance enabled me to negotiate for the electrical installation for the first four launching pads, two block houses and the down-range tracking stations of the U.S. Air Force Guided
Missile Test Center. The tracking stations were to be put on Grand Bahama, Eleuthra, San Salvador, Mayaguana and Grand Turk. In those days, the islands were very primitive and undeveloped.

The government inspector of this off-shore project was Jacksonville native Ed Bernard. We sent crews on duty overseas for six weeks then brought them home for two.

Toward the completion of the mission, the Air Force decided to find a single source to finish and take over the total base operation. The contract included operating the base for 15 years.

We prepared a proposal with our partner Fairchild Aviation. It was estimated at $40 million per year plus a fixed fee for management.

Pan American Airlines teamed up with RCA to bid on the project as well.

Eventually I realized that the request for our bid was just a courtesy on the part of the Air Force. Pan Am and RCA getting the contract was preordained. The big boys had moved in.

Fairchild ended up building airplanes for the Air Force. We got nothing and ended up spending a lot of money.

I took inventory.

We could still sell boats.
Duval Marine Company introduced two private label boats, the Dumar and the Sea Chief. These boats, which were made by the same manufacturer of the competitive product, were a better boat at a lesser price with a longer warranty.

In retailing it isn’t how you sell but how you buy. If you are going to compete, you have to be ahead of your competition.

I would tell the manufacturers, “Don’t sell me anything that is going to put you or me out of business.” They understood.

Manufacturers and I got along famously, and Duval Marine Company moved ahead.

In the meantime, Murray pulled up stakes and started his own boat business, Chatham Marine and Savannah Marine in Savannah, Georgia.

In addition to running my business, I also devoted time to numerous organizations. I served as president of the Jacksonville Marine Association and the Southeast Marine Trade Association and as director of the National Association of Marinas & Marine Dealers. They recognized my services with numerous awards.

Although I was gutsy and young and had a lot of ideas for my future, I knew I didn’t have the experience I needed and wanted. I had always relied heavily on people who knew a lot more than I did.
And then I found my mentor, someone I never personally knew who helped me find my way. It was Alfred P. Sloan who wrote “My Years With General Motors”.

I devoured the book. I read it six times, absorbing every word. For me he was the Bill Gates of the 20th century.

Alfred Sloan gave me the benefit of his knowledge in building General Motors, the largest business in the world. His book provided me with so much practical experience to run a smaller company that it gave me the confidence to start another business.

(Later in life, when I was asked to lecture on business at the University of North Florida, newly published paperback copies of Sloan’s book were on a table in front of the class. A flag across the top of the cover read, “If you read any book on business, this is the one.” Signed Bill Gates.)

I was 47 years old and had reached the point where I was tired of the Duval Marine Company and the many problems that went with the business, namely personnel and inventory. I was also tired of the schedule that went along with retailing, working at night and on weekends and holidays when everyone else was playing.

One day when I was in my office with a representative from the Renkin Boat Company in
Charleston which supplied us with 15 percent of our inventory, a clerk called me on the telephone from the outer office saying that someone wanted to see me.

I had a two-way mirror in my office, so I could see it was someone I knew who was interested in a very expensive boat.

Almost sloughing him off, I said, “Let Bill Clarey work on him.” I hung up and turned back to the Renkin representative.

He seemed stunned that I wasn’t concerned about selling this high-end boat.

“It looks to me as if you aren’t interested in the boat business anymore,” he said. “If you’re not, my boss might be.”

He called Renkin in Charleston, who came down to Jacksonville in two days to buy the business.

I had no idea that I wanted to get out.

I did.

I had no idea what I wanted to do.

Larger dreams perhaps?

Climb a higher mountain? Plant a another tree?
PART FOUR

In the Wake of Boats
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
During those years that the Duval Marine Company grew and flourished, from 1946 to its sale in 1967, other investment opportunities were attracting my attention.

It seemed to me that these opportunities came along, almost accidentally, off-shoots of the business at hand, like small secondary branches of a tree.

Mine is a strange story of a strange career. The good Lord gave me the ability to spot opportunities, to open doors and enter areas where angels might fear to tread, and so it was that I began dabbling in real estate.

With the marine company, I tried to make it a policy to be my own landlord. As I branched out I got leases for the property I utilized with options to buy. Or, I bought it.

The first piece of property that I leased and then bought was at the corner Alvarez and Main Street just off the south end of the Main Street Bridge. It was there that my father-in-law and I set up the second Duval Marine Company.
During this time I enjoyed the comradery of the Downtown Lions Club, one of whose functions was to sell fruit cakes at Christmas time to benefit the blind. I can’t tell you how many cases of fruit cakes were dropped off at the Duval Marine Company by Ray McCarthy’s 7 Up Bottling Company truck. We gave the fruit cakes to customers.

A Lions Club lunch was held every Wednesday at the Seminole Hotel where I met many interesting men. There was Ray, Charlie Hilty and Maurice Cherry, the instigators of the Gator Bowl. I also became a friend of Morris Leibo who owned six menswear clothing stores – five in Jacksonville and one in Live Oak.

We made a lunch date for every Monday and met either at Leb’s in the Roosevelt Hotel or at Bernie’s next door and our friendship grew. One day Morris asked if he could bring his “Uncle Bud” along. Of course I had no objection.

No sooner had we sat down when Uncle Bud said, “I own some property on Beach Boulevard that I’m leasing to the Wolfson Company for a Florida Lumber and Supply store. I want to give it to Morris.”

Morris shook his head, “I don’t want any property,” he said.

Uncle Bud turned to me, “Sid, you have a boat business. I’ll sell it to you for a good price. No
Spending a day with my dear friend Morris Liebo on the “Sidlo” near Epping Forest having fun. The 7 1/2 pound striped bass was the catch of the day.
money down.”

I was interested and said I would buy in on one condition, that Morris would be my partner. I would put another boat business there and the lease payments would pay for the property. Later Morris and I acquired additional property on the block.

This began an incredible partnership that lasted more than 35 years. Everything was done with a hand shake and complete trust in the other. We had a single signature checkbook. He was the bookkeeper, I was the landlord and manager.

I had my eye on some additional real estate across the street from our property at the corner of Beach Boulevard and the west side of Hickman Road, but Morris would have nothing to do with it. He really didn’t want any more real estate. I bought it myself and put up a Baskins-Robbins ice cream store.

Morris and I had a buy-sell agreement so that when he died I bought him out and also the additional property next to the land we had owned together.

During this period the Jacksonville Transportation Authority decided to widen Main Street for the Jacksonville Expressway System.

The JTA secured my property at Alvarez and Main through eminent domain and bought it from me. I found I couldn’t move the building back from the street
as I had planned because the owners of the adjacent property reneged on their initial offer to me of an option to buy.

The JTA was jump starting a highway system through Jacksonville, first with the use of tolls and with bonds. At that time the Trout River Bridge and the Fuller Warren Bridge were toll bridges.

As I knew all about the expressway system and the interstate coming in, I acquired another piece of property at the corner of Alvarez and San Marco and also some property in Riverside on the St. Johns River that already had a marina and dock where I moved the company.

I decided to move the Main Street building to the Alvarez and San Marco property and Gilbert Building Movers of Macclenny moved the building in tact from one corner to the other.

There was property I also wanted just down from the Main Street store at the corner of Mary Street and Main. It was the building that housed the Seven Seas Fisheries and was owned by Jimmy Gant. Jimmy had died and as the family wasn’t getting any income from it they put it up for sale. I was approached by the Real Estate Firm Shelly Middlebrooks to buy it.

Do you know why I wanted that building? As the Expressway was merging with Main Street Bridge,
Main Street Bridge at Rte. 1, Miami Drive and now Prudential Drive, where I bought property, was the beginning of our outdoor advertising business, and also our entry into the commercial real estate business.
I wanted to put a big sign on its roof advertising that Duval Marine Company had moved to a new address. The location would make it the first billboard seen off the Expressway system when coming into Jacksonville. I bought the building and put up the sign.

Soon after Bud Hyde, a representative from the nationally known New York advertising firm of Doyle, Dane and Bernbach, came to see me. The company wanted to rent the sign for $500 a month.

“Five hundred dollars a month?” I thought to myself, “For something that required no personnel, no inventory and no maintenance.”

DDB put up an advertisement for Ancient Age Bourbon.

Again the JTA decided it wanted this land too, for an elevated Main Street and ramps. The Authority kept coming back to buy more land and again I had to get out. I moved the sign to the top of the building at San Marco and Alvarez and I reinvested the money. I acquired an old residence from the Dow Family at Belmont and Main, adjacent to the Expressway, tore it down and put up another sign. It was also rented by DDB to advertise I.W. Harper bourbon. I again had the first sign on the Expressway, and when the Expressway became the Interstate, the first sign or billboard on the highway coming into Jacksonville, an absolutely choice location.
Through my lawyer McCarthy Crenshaw, I bought a piece of property with three lots on it. Mac thought it looked like a good deal and took one parcel, I took the other two. We moved three houses to the property. Of course I erected a sign up at the back of my parcel that could be seen from the Expressway.

Embarking on this new journey of outdoor advertising, I realized that there could be better constructed and more economical signs and billboards than those that were around. Some were even mounted on telephone poles.

Knowing I could only do what could be done with one mind and one pair of hands, I hired an engineer to design a new strong economical sign. It was built differently than the signs that existed then. With this new sign, steel beams were driven deep into the ground and a concrete cap was poured around them to keep moisture from seeping down and corroding them. A wind-tested steel display-board was welded to the beams.

I rented property on US Route 1 and put up a sign, also on some property owned by Florida East Coast Railroad where I erected four more signs.

The real secret was to subcontract – out-source, as they say today. I never hired a painter, owned a can of paint or paint brush, a ladder or a truck. This, plus the
(Above) With the development of the Interstate Highway system the American Advertising Company was born. The Gulf Life Tower, where my office was located is in the background.

(Upper left) The most viewed billboard in Jacksonville on I-95 at San Marco.

(Lower left) American Advertising Company revolutionized billboard construction in the 1960s.
newly designed sign and a self-marketing location, was the answer.

The cost was dramatically different and more economical than the competitors.

As our outdoor advertising clients asked for more locations, we eventually bought property in Duval County from Jacksonville Beach to Maxville. It was my policy to try to acquire four pieces of real estate each year.

It is interesting to note that the property on Main and Alvarez Street, Main and Mary Street, San Marco and Alvarez and Belmont and Main are now part of the Prudential complex. The property that McCarthy Crenshaw and I owned now belongs to Baptist Hospital.

Importing cars was also on the agenda at this time. The Japanese owners of Datsun approached me to help them bring the Nissan automobile to the United States. I remember seeing the first boat load of cars coming up the St. Johns River to the Port of Jacksonville which was then across the river from Jacksonville University.

Again I turned to the Barnett Bank for financing and floor planning. The bank asked to see Datsun’s financial statement. The Japanese, being Japanese, asked in turn to see the Barnett Bank’s financial statement. Slightly embarrassing was the fact that the Datsun
First to import the Datsun, (now called Nissan). Duval Auto Sales opened at 1037 Hendricks Ave., now occupied by Reddi-Arts.
statement was far more impressive than the bank’s.

The cars were first shown on lots next to the Duval Marine Company on Riverside.

The Duval Auto Sales opened on Hendricks Avenue where Reddi-Arts is now. Besides Nissan, we sold Jaguars and Triumphs and I became the absentee owner. As absentee owner I guaranteed that there would either be cars on the floor or money in the bank.

It turned out, however, that the people running Duval Auto Sales lacked integrity and were not one hundred percent honorable. When taking in trade-ins, they would sell the clean cars to wholesalers, getting a cut under the table, while the junk heaps and lemons were left on our lot to sell.

They also had hidden microphones in the closing rooms so that conversations in these private areas could be monitored. When I found out about them I removed them immediately. This was not how I did business.

The final blow came when Lois and I were out of town. I got a long distance telephone call from Leroy Gardener, Vice President of the Barnett Bank, saying that there were four cars not in inventory and out of trust. I told him to charge them to my account. He advised me that this was not necessary.

“No,” I said. “I told you that there would either
be cars in inventory or money in the bank. Charge them to my account.’

Officials of the Barnett Bank bought my dealership and renamed it The Car Store and moved it to Phillips Highway. It was eventually sold it to Gordon Thompson.

That was my first and last experience in the automobile business.

During this time I also dipped into importing portable kerosene space heaters. Called Sunshine Heaters, they were made in Belgium. Dekla of Amsterdam was the world representative. I became the company’s exclusive representative in the United States. I was able to place them with Western Auto that had 3,000 stores and 11 warehouses, with National Merchandise Co., J.M. Fields and with other major chains.

So you can see that when I sold the Duval Marine Company, I felt that I had enough going for me – real estate, the outdoor advertising business, importing – so that I could comfortably change my work habits and not worry about money.

And I was only 47 years old.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
PART FIVE

On the Home Front
Ann registers visitors at the opening of the Beach Boulevard branch of Duval Marine.

Carol and Bruce during college years.
As I have told you before, we had a fine family life in spite of the fact that Lois never learned to cook. Our wonderful Dora stayed with us for 37 years, still cooking and serving us dinner every night.

On Saturday night we kicked up our heels socially going to functions at the club, the better local eating emporiums or the synagogue. Lois’s Aunt Flora who lived in Jacksonville baby-sat for the children. We even took her on vacations with us. It was a secure and family-oriented life.

My father came down from New York to live in Jacksonville in the fall of 1963. He rented an apartment with his second wife but still kept his apartment on Long Island.

He had undergone surgery at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York and at the time I met my brothers there. It turned out that Papa had cancer and the doctors referred us to the Sloan-Kettering Clinic doctors for advice. We were told that chemotherapy would prolong his life but
One for all, all for one. My wonderful father and my brother at Murray’s wedding. Murray, Sid, my father and Sylvan.

The brothers 25 years later with their cousin Seymour.
not the quality of his life.

Based on the doctor’s recommendation, we decided not to tell him the truth but to tell him he had ulcers and let him enjoy the rest of his life without the devastating treatments. Dr. Roy Baker, in Jacksonville, was instructed to give him anything that would help him be comfortable and make him feel better.

Papa was smart and I think he knew the story all along.

In the spring he told me he wanted to go home. He went home in April and died on Long Island in May of 1964.

During those years the girls grew from little girls, to teenagers, to college students. Ann started off at Spring Park Elementary School. Eventually they all went to Hendricks Avenue Elementary School which then had all eight grades. Mrs. Delegal was Principal. Both Lois and I were active in the PTA and Girl Scout Camp.

They had a lot of neighborhood friends to play with. The shipyard built them a large play house, one that several children could play inside of at one time, and there was always a lot of activity around our house.

In the summer we would rent a place at the beach.

I told them that when it came time for them to go
to college, they could go to any school they wanted to and we would pay for their education as long as it was within 90 miles of Jacksonville.

They were good students.

Ann graduated from Landon High School and attended Jacksonville University.

Barbara went to Wolfson and was in the first graduating class, then to Jacksonville University and the University of Florida in Gainesville.

I bent the rules for Carol who had some special courses she wanted to take at Oglethorpe College in Atlanta. She later married Bruce Greenspan and moved to Gainsville, while he got his law degree.

Although I played golf, I loved boating. I bought a Cris Craft with Martin Segal and later a lap strake cruiser that I kept in the boathouse on Riverside. Although Lois cared more about golf, she did give the boat a try. I remember the day I took her out on the river in the cruiser. We couldn’t have been out very long when she spotted her sister’s car coming across the Julington Creek Bridge. Whether prearranged or by some secret signal from the boat, I don’t know, but later the car pulled into the marina.

We went back to the dock where her sister was waiting to take Lois home. No one in the family really cared for boating as much as I did.
Politics also entered my life during these years.

Hayden Burns, who was the Mayor-Commissioner of Jacksonville from 1951 to 1965, and then Governor of Florida from 1965 to 1967, became a boating acquaintance of mine.

The platform for Burns’ campaign was to get the bus company, which had been controlled by friends of the political machine for 15 years, out of City Hall. He won. After the election the city buses cruised around town with stickers pasted to their sides saying “We’re not mad at anybody.”

Burns was a great mayor. He encouraged the life insurance industry to establish their home offices in Jacksonville including Prudential, Gulf Life and 36 others.

A city that is growing needs banks and he improved the government climate for them to flourish in Jacksonville.

Burns and I became close when the United States
Hayden Burns greet visitors at a marina from his Miami-bound campaign barge.
Government began to register boats to claim a personal property tax. Every power boat had to have a state number.

A person who bought and owned a boat was taxed four times. First the sales tax when he bought it, then the license which is tax, then tax on the gasoline needed to run it and now this tax.

Since I was an officer in the Marine Association, I asked Burns to encourage a bill that would eliminate the Personal Property Tax on boats and give them the same status as a car – a motor vehicle. George Stallings introduced the Bill. It passed in the house but was held up in the senate. Aids of Senator Jack Matthews later changed it to the Matthews Bill.

A couple of years later I got a call from Senator Matthews.

“Sid, how would you like it if there was an amendment to the Florida Constitution that said there would be no Personal Property taxes levied on boat owners and that boats would be treated as motor vehicles like cars?”

Matthews was Chairman of the State Constitution Revision Commission, and what started off as a bill became part of the Florida constitution.

Burns ran for Governor for the 1965-1967 term and I put an ample amount of money into his campaign.
I also got the companies that leased my most strategic billboards in Jacksonville to release them for three months to promote the campaign.

But the idea that produced the most mileage was putting a big spot-lighted “Vote For Hayden Burns for Governor” sign on the back of an outboard-motor-powered barge and sending it down the Intercoastal Waterway to Miami. It stopped and collected crowds at marinas on the way and made newspaper headlines when it was finally anchored on the Miami River between Venetian Way and the MacArthur Causeway.

“What Burns Forces Invade by Land, Air and Sea” announced a Miami Herald headline.

Burns won the election and our connection sealed a loyalty between us that was to last a lifetime. He also asked me to serve as his personal representative on the Florida Boating Council.

Governor Burns made a history-making move for the state by bringing Walt Disney World to Florida.

He did not win the Governorship in the next election. A $250 million bond issue intended for purchasing rights-of-ways for roads, covering the needs for the next 20 years and saving the state billions, was passed by 87 percent of the legislators. It was rumored to have been used instead as a payback to road contractors and Burns was suspect.
Two men ran against Burns primary. One was Scott Kelly, a staunch conservative Democrat. The other was Robert King High, a very liberal Democrat.

Burns lost to High.

Those in power, along with Burns, agreed that it would be a disaster if the state got into High’s hands.

Burns rallied his supporters known as the Burns Blitzers (I was one of them), and helped get Claude Kirk elected, the first Republican governor of the State of Florida in 100 years.
CHAPTER XIII

Getting involved in politics can sometimes bring incredible surprises and experiences, like Lois and I being invited to Lyndon Baines Johnson’s presidential inauguration.

As vice president, LBJ became president after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963. In spite of there being no vote-rousing Democratic primary for the 1964 presidential nomination, LBJ went on to become president over Republican Barry Goldwater by a large majority.

Because I was involved in political matters for the marine industry, because I owned billboards that were advantageous to political campaigns and because I was friends with governor-elect Hayden Burns, I suddenly found myself in the inner circle of Florida’s Democratic Party.

A few weeks before the presidential election, a telegram from The White House arrived at our home. It was an invitation for Lois and me to attend a very
LBJ towered over everyone.

The Associated Press and United Press took pictures of LBJ meeting Mrs. Hayden Burns at the Governors Reception. Look who’s in the background.

Lois and I enjoying the Inaugural Ball.
special dinner at the Dupont Plaza Hotel in Miami. LBJ would be there.

I was in Washington working on other things and returned late on a Friday night. I had a cold and didn’t feel very well.

When Lois told me about the invitation for Sunday night, I told her we couldn’t go because I was sick.

“You’ll be all right,” she said. “I’ve already wired our acceptance.”

Only a very select group attended the dinner. LBJ arrived late because he had attended the opening and dedication of the new Florida Atlantic University at Boca Raton and his limousine had a flat en-route to Miami.

I also learned that on the following morning, after giving a breakfast speech in Orlando, LBJ was coming to Jacksonville.

Jack Valenti, Johnson’s “special consultant” who went on to serve as head of the Motion Picture Association of America for 38 years, was there. When he introduced me to LBJ, I was surprised to hear him say, “This is a man who gets things done. When we win the election, make sure he’s taken care of at the inauguration.”

LBJ was very cordial.

The next day as we were getting off the plane
returning from Miami to Jacksonville, I was paged on the airport intercom.

The president was flying in from Orlando in a few minutes and I was asked to join the presidential motorcade from the airport to Hemming Plaza.

I was “in.”

In December, a big brown envelope arrived at our house. In it were five invitations.

They included the Distinguished Ladies Luncheon the day before the inauguration, the Governors’ Reception the afternoon before the inauguration, the inauguration itself, the Inaugural Banquet and the Gala.

Lois and I took the train to Washington with a group from Jacksonville and had a lot of fun. We knew that it was going to be cold when we got there so she borrowed a full-length mink coat for the event. Not only was it cold but it also was snowing. It was the first time Lois had ever seen snow.

We stayed at the Mayflower Hotel.

Lois went to the Distinguished Ladies Luncheon which she said was attended by beautiful people wearing beautiful clothes and beautiful jewelry. Among those she met was Cary Grant.

That afternoon was the Governors’ Reception at the Sheraton. A booth for each governor with a state flag and seal above it had been created around the walls of
the huge ballroom. Forty-three governors were there.

LBJ was to tour the booths and introduce Lady Bird to the governors and the first ladies of each state.

Lois and I arrived before LBJ and as we passed the Florida booth, Governor Hayden Burns, who was there with his wife, Mildred, spotted me.

“What are you doing here?” he shouted.

“LBJ invited me,” I told him.

“You got my letter about serving on the boating council, didn’t you?” the governor asked.

“Yes,” I said.

“That means you’re on my staff,” he said. “Come on in.”

When LBJ and Lady Bird came to the Florida booth, he immediately spotted me, winked and shook my hand, then I introduced him to Lois.

LBJ was a large man – 6 feet 3 inches tall and towered over everyone. He shook hands with the governor and as the governor was about to introduce him to Mrs. Burns, cameras flashed. The Associated Press and United Press were there, and there I was, face-on in the background.

The next morning, the picture appeared on the front page of most Florida newspapers.

This was inauguration day, the presidential swearing-in ceremony at the Capitol. I had two tickets
but when I looked at them I noticed that they were for the Senate standing room section.

“This doesn’t look too good,” I told Lois.

We had breakfast with Lacy Mahon, a member of the Electoral College and a former member of the Florida Legislature, and his wife. He had one Electoral College seat so I traded my two tickets for his one.

“Are you going without me?” Lois asked.

“No, but when I show the security guard one ticket, you look in your handbag and start fussing around in it to look as if you lost yours,” I said.

Although security was at its highest level because of the Kennedy assassination, we passed through five checkpoints this way.

Lois and I sat in a section reserved for heads of state and ambassadors, in an area set aside for the Electoral College.

H. V. Kaltenborn, a noted radio and TV commentator, was broadcasting from a seat in front of me, so I frequently appeared on TV behind him. People at home couldn’t believe what they were seeing.

That evening Lois and I went to the Inaugural Banquet at the Sheraton Hotel. Following dinner, we were going to the Gala, but by what method of transportation we weren’t quite sure.

The dinner was very elaborate, the guests wore
their finest clothes and jewelry. LBJ dropped in and made a little speech.

“This is my first inspection of my war on poverty,” he said, “Looking around I don’t believe you need any help.” The president also announced that we were going to be taken to the Gala celebration “…by a very unique mode of transportation – probably one you have never used before.” But he didn’t tell us what it was.

Lined up outside the building waiting for us were…city buses.

There was a huge motorcade, and streets were blocked by the city police and the National Guard. Motorcycles and police cars with sirens and flashing lights led the way.

It was cold. Very cold. I don’t think Lois had ever been so cold in her life.

As she gathered her fur coat close around her and looked out the bus window at the statues everywhere, she said, “I know how they got there. They were frozen alive and just put up.”

The Gala was crowded, loud and glamorous. I have a picture of Lois and me taken when we were dancing. It was a night to remember.

When we got back, after seeing the papers and Kaltenborn’s broadcast, my father said, “You didn’t tell me you were such a ‘macha’ in government.”
It was just one of those things that happens, the experience. I’m glad we had that precious moment in life to enjoy.
Duval Marine no longer belonged to me and, although I was only 47 years old, I didn’t seem to belong anywhere.

“What are you going to do?” Lois asked.

I still had plenty of real estate to manage and a growing outdoor advertising business to run, but I didn’t know where I was going to manage and run them. I needed an office, but I didn’t want to have it at home.

Lois had already said, “I married you for breakfast and for dinner but not for lunch.”

I floundered for about three weeks and then leased an office in the Gulf Life Tower which had recently been built just across the Main Street Bridge from downtown. It was a handsome building overlooking the St. Johns River with the University Club on the 27th and top floor.

My space was on the northwest corner of the 22nd floor, three rooms – a reception area and two offices, one for me and one for a secretary. I had a view of the ever-growing city, the river, the old Acosta and train bridges, the Fuller Warren Bridge and as far south as Ortega.
Herman Terry had an office on the floor below me. He had been with the insurance and finance operation of Massey Motors and was now with Gulf Life’s Finance Company. Henry Kraemer, who had just retired from working for Ben Setzer, of National Merchandising (Setzer stores and Pic ‘n Save) had an office above me.

The three of us lunched together regularly.

And so I settled in, to go about my real estate and advertising ventures.

That was when the telephone call came from New Orleans, from a man named Herman Penn, whom I had never heard of.

Let’s flash back for a moment. Remember me being Governor Hayden Burns’ personal representative on the Florida Boating Council?

It seems that Burns was at a Southern Governors Meeting in New Orleans, where he spent a good deal of time with his friend John McKeithen, governor of Louisiana from 1964 until 1972. Governor McKeithen began telling Burns his woes. He had a big problem on his hands.

The state had built a convention center in New Orleans. Called Rivergate, it was the largest convention facility in the United States at the time. The building was four years late in completion, was still not ready to be used and was $4 million dollars over budget. It was a
white elephant with no patrons.

Burns told McKeithen to “call a fellow in Jacksonville by the name of Sid Gefen,” who had managed meetings and boat shows for the Jacksonville Marine Association.

Penn was the general manager of Rivergate, as well as author of the Encyclopedia of Convention Centers. He was calling to ask me to come to New Orleans to see the facility and consider putting on a show there.

I asked him if I could bring Lois.

“My wife loves oysters,” I said.

He agreed.

And so we went to New Orleans, put on hard hats – Lois too – and went through the building.

Analyzing the situation, I thought the building needed another year to be completed. However, in nine months it would be in good enough shape to put on a Marine Trade Show and we would need the building in September.

The state of Louisiana and Rivergate Management signed an agreement to have the convention center ready for a trade show by that time.

Now to get down to the business of putting a show together.

I went to Dun & Bradstreet, the top provider of international credit information and credit reports, and
got a list of the 200 top volume marine dealers in the South.

“Only those who paid their bills.” I specified.

Then I made an analysis of how much it would cost to give each of them free airfare to New Orleans and hotel rooms. The cost base would also incorporate the cost of the booths to be set up in the exhibition hall for the show.

The next move was to contact Charlie Jones, publisher of Boating Industry Magazine. I asked if he would give each of the 200 dealers a Blue Ribbon Award, praising them for both their business acumen and leadership and for “being one of the top marine sales organizations in the South.”

The Blue Ribbon Award was the expense-free trip to the trade show and four days in New Orleans. Delta and Eastern Airlines agreed to fly them in at our expense.

When the list of those who had accepted was completed, it was sent to manufacturers.

Penn told Governor McKeithen that all the booths were sold within 60 days. Manufacturers also agreed to host breakfasts, lunches and dinners, hold seminars and provide hospitality suites. As it was not a public event, the Rivergate Management let us use the halls and meeting rooms, which we sold.
The show was such a success that Governor McKeithen asked me to put on another one in January. This time, I decided to put on a World Travel Show open to the general public. To entice people to come we had special displays and entertainment.

Thanks to my connections, I got NASA to produce a complete display, including a space capsule. Astronaut Wally Schirra was there, talking with the public. The famous Ringling Brothers clown, Emmett Kelly, amused children and adults. Sears installed a pool and filled it with performing porpoises from Galveston, Texas.

The trade participants included airlines, resorts and cruise lines as well as a number of countries. Israel and Russia had booths and displays, the first time either had been part of a commercial travel show outside of their own countries.

A few months before the exhibition was to open, two gentlemen from the Federal Bureau of Investigation came to see me. They were concerned about security in the United States, especially where Russia was concerned, because we were in the midst of the Cold War.

I cooperated in every way I could and gave them anything they wanted. They had an office in New Orleans.

A few weeks later, two other men came to see
me and asked if they could talk to me in confidence. Amazingly enough, these two were from the Central Intelligence Agency. They said the FBI was concerned with internal security while the CIA was involved with security issues outside the United States.

“What can I do for you?” I asked.

They explained that they were concerned about the Iron Curtain countries and wanted to find out anything they could about them. I told them that I was already cooperating with the FBI.

But they were there for an entirely different reason.

“We know all about you,” one of them said. “Your business, your reputation, everything.”

The CIA decided that, being in my line of work, I had many opportunities to observe the comings and goings of other countries. I also had an excellent cover, so they were interested in me being a CIA operative.

To say I was surprised is an understatement. After a few moments I said, “I will always serve my country but not in this capacity, one that would jeopardize my family and my life.”

I paused for a moment and then added, “and besides, I have a bad back.”

“What’s the matter with your back?” one of them asked.
“Well, you see, I have a big yellow streak right down the middle of it,” I said.
They laughed.
“I don’t want to go into a foreign country knowing that there is a double agent waiting for me,” I told them.

After they left, I came out of the office to look for Lois and tell her what had happened, that I – Sid Gefen – had been asked to be an operative for the CIA.

“What did you tell them?” she asked.
“I told them ‘No,’ of course.” I said.
She looked at me for a moment and then she asked, “What do they pay?”

But back to the first travel show. Like the Marine Trade Show, it was a big success. One hundred and sixty-seven thousand people paid admission to attend.

This trade show led to another new opportunity – this time to put on a trade fair as part of the American Travel Agents’ (ASTA) annual conference in Amsterdam.

I had never been abroad except when I was in the military and I had to see if I had the capabilities. After Lois and I took an exploratory trip to Europe, I said I could do it.

At a meeting in New York, ASTA’s executive-vice president, George Ficthenbaum asked Richard
Ramaglia, ASTA’s operating manager, “What are we going to get out of it? What kind of money can this Sid Gefen guarantee us?”

“Twenty-five thousand dollars or 25 percent of the gross, whichever is greater,” Ramaglia said.

“Get the check before the nut changes his mind,” Ficthenbaum said, and the Amsterdam show went on.

It was a huge success, which led to a 20-year contract with ASTA.

I realized then that I was in the international trade show-producing business – big time.

International Productions was born.
PART SIX

Show Business
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
CHAPTER XV

Again, a business had grown out of a business.

In producing boat shows that promoted and enhanced Duval Marine Co. and as president of the Jacksonville Marine Association, I had become experienced in the machinations of trade fairs. I had put together many consumer shows and originated a manufacturers’ show for retailers.

Now, here I was launching my own trade fair production company, which – I am proud to say – went on to become one of the most successful in the United States.

You had to know every angle of this business, and I learned by doing – by having successes and by making mistakes.

The aim of any international trade show is to benefit its participants. To be a success, it must be fine-tuned. Establishing trust with customs and immigration officers is a must.

We hired Shenker’s, an international subsidiary
of the German National Railroad, to do this job for us. The German government had a superb reputation for fast worldwide freight facilities and knowledge.

Selection of the site was perhaps the most important element of a fair. The location, weather and airline service – not only for the attendees, but also for the physical components of the show – are crucial.

The site must also have excellent facilities, the most important are the conference center and exhibition hall. Some companies bring exhibits in their entirety – walls, stages, props equal to a Broadway production. For others, booths are created within vast, vacant spaces. This was done by using pipe and drapery; the pipe to construct and form the display area, the drapery hung for separation and privacy. (After the International Productions became established and when it became clear some foreign locations didn’t have sophisticated trade show properties, we acquired our own pipe, draperies and props.)

The exhibition hall, conference center and meeting rooms must be in - or close to - the host hotel. There must be places where exhibitors can have private meetings and give breakfasts, lunches and dinners.

For a major show, the hotel or hotels must have living accommodations for 7,000 attendees, meaning 5,000 to 6,000 comfortable and attractive rooms.
And not only should these accommodations be in close proximity to the trade fair, but also to good restaurants, entertainment, sports events, indoor and outdoor exercise areas, et al.

Everything must work in that one particular location.

Determining the right location often required at least two exploratory trips before the event which included followup on such little details as clocking travel time between the hotel and convention center, meeting halls, event and banquet sites. If any destination was more than 30 minutes away, it was scratched.

Government regulations also had to be followed. The Department of Commerce has guidelines for international trade fairs. A Trade Fair must be officially certified and approved by the government, under the Trade Fair Act of 1959.

Elsewhere in the world, government papers, and sometimes edicts from dictators, had to be obtained for participants, enabling companies that bought space to import personnel, display material, brochures and everything else needed to set up an exhibit.

Once all the components are in place, the trade fair must be publicized. Most important in this area is having good contacts and relations with the publishers of trade magazines, who will not only publish features
about the event but also sell advertisements to exhibitors and participants.

The word will be spread in trade publications by the associations having the conference as well as through followup brochures, letters and telephone calls.

Because every aspect of this business requires instant cross-country communication, International Productions had one of the first WATS lines in Jacksonville. It cost $3,000 a month. We also had a TELEX, the Fore-runner of the FAX and Internet.

This led us into developing a computer marketplace program which we copyrighted, a total target marketing program at its height.

After all exhibitors have contracted for space, and well before the event, a book including the conference program and the exhibitors was sent to those attending. Buyer and vendor were matched and appointments for personal meetings during the trade fair were set up by computer. Notebooks with those scheduled appointments were sent to the buyers and vendors. This caused fewer hassles and made for a smooth-running meeting.

International Productions procedures for producing a marketplace for suppliers (countries, resorts, hotels, cruise lines, airlines,) and travel wholesalers (those who package these supplies into trips, tours, vacations, etc.) were put into a single computerized program and
copyrighted. Called The Computerized Market, this program helped make the company a valuable property which was sought after by Fortune 100 companies like 3M, Ziff Davis Media and Greyhound.

But now, let’s get back to those developing years, the trials and errors, the successes and the one big disaster.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
My professional trade show world began taking off with the American Society of Travel Agents’ contract. International Productions produced one big trade show a year which would be the featured attraction of ASTA’s annual conference.

Tourism is big business. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Americans spend the most money on food, the second most on armaments, and the third most on tourism.

In the business of tourism, there are four players who make up the game.

They are:

The Supplier or Seller – countries, resorts, hotels, cruise lines, airlines, theme parks, museums, zoos, et al.

The Wholesaler – those who package these supplies into trips, tours, vacations, etc., saving agents the effort and expense of coordinating such packages themselves. Among those that put together the packages are companies like American Express, Abercrombie &
Just before an ASTA trade show opening.

(Above) And the crowd arrives.

(Right) Paul Watson and his wife Sue, our Global trade show manager.
Kent International Inc. and Tauck Tours, Inc. Just stop and think of the many facets of a tour – transportation, hotels, food, ground connections, guides and sightseeing, cultural and entertainment venues. To be successful, the Wholesaler must be imaginative, continually coming up with new packaging ideas.

At this time the Travel Agent was the link to the Buyer – the traveler, the tourist, the vacationer. In other words, the general public.

Suppliers and wholesalers exhibit for agents at ASTA trade shows. There, agents are exposed to all aspects of international tourism.

International Productions first ASTA success was in Amsterdam and the company was closely scrutinized by tourism departments of other countries. When officials and representatives came by to see me we would exchange business cards.

This led to our getting contracts with the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) which was only having meetings with speakers but no trade fairs; the Universal Federation of Travel Agents (UFTA), an affiliate of the United Nations with headquarters in Belgium; and South America’s Organization of American States, (OAS). With these contracts and later with the creation of the Florida Huddle, the company produced as many as six to 10 shows or trade fairs a
year. We eventually had offices in London, San Diego, New Orleans and Jacksonville.

But back to the beginning, and the first ASTA contract.

After Amsterdam, 12 annual ASTA trade shows followed before the company was sold – Sydney, Las Vegas, Acapulco (twice), Montreal, Rio, New Orleans, Madrid, Munich, Manila, Honolulu and Miami.

Sydney, Australia, was to be our first show after Amsterdam, but the new opera house had not been completed yet and Rosehill Gardens, the famous race track, was too far from the city. So, we took a hiatus in 1971, the only year we skipped.

The next show was in Las Vegas. The city had all the facilities to stage a magnificent trade fair. It also had another great asset, the full cooperation of Len Hornsby, the city’s director of convention facilities.

Aware that non-gamblers must also find his city attractive and entertaining, he turned on the hospitality and made every component available to us. Headquarters were at the Hilton Hotel, which was adjacent to the Convention Center.

Members came in droves and the exhibitors outdid themselves. Resorts and hotels, steamship lines and airlines, governments and wholesalers (tour packagers) competed for trophies and prizes for the best displays.
And the destination dished out the entertainment. Las Vegas was a great show – a lu-lu! It put the ASTA Conference and Trade Show in the forefront of travel agent supply, and became a “must” in the industry.

Would that all events ran as smoothly as the Las Vegas show. Enter Mexico, the country of mañana. The next show was to be in Acapulco in October 1973.

The country had gotten the bid in Amsterdam, and the government wanted to have a show similar to the one in Las Vegas.

Miguel Aleman, who had been President of Mexico and developed most of the top resort areas, like Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta and Cancun, was now the minister of tourism and lived in Acapulco. He was committed to building the Bonito Jaurez Conference Center, a $24 million dollar facility, in time for the show.

Aleman wanted to have the conference center built in the heart of the city on land occupied by Acapulco’s only golf course which was popular with both tourists and residents. Because Aleman could get anything he wanted, the municipal golf course of Acapulco soon became a 15-hole golf course.

In addition, he issued an official government decree that facilitated the entry into the country of exhibitors. We could enter the country, bring in printed and display
material, our own employees, everything involved with an exhibit without the interference of the government or the Departments of Immigration and Customs.

This decree also served as a standard for all foreign countries where we exhibited in the future.

In December 1972 the Pacific & Orient steamship line launched one of the first modern-day cruise ships, and Lois and I were invited to be guests on its maiden voyage.

The ship sailed from Miami to California, by way of the Caribbean, the northern coast of South America, the Panama Canal and the western coast of Mexico. We planned to disembark in Acapulco for a few days. While there I would check on the trade fair site.

I went to the location there and found nothing but a trailer. To say the least, I was very upset. I didn’t get any satisfaction speaking to the people at the site because few could speak English.

Hurrying back to the hotel, I got in touch with the officials in Mexico City.

What were they doing? The conference and trade show was only 10 months away, and they hadn’t begun to build the convention center.

Officials flew down from Mexico City to meet with me.

“What did I know about construction?” they asked.
“What about missile launching pads and block houses?” I asked them. I let them know that I thought the work I’d done at Cape Canaveral was a lot more important than a convention center.

When they realized I knew what I was talking about and what I had to have from them, they let up.

After reviewing the construction schedule and hearing how many workers they were planning to import for the job and how they were going to house and feed them (3,000 workers housed in tents), I knew they had done their homework and I believed they could do the job. But I also knew that promises would mean nothing and that ASTA and my company would have to stay on top of them.

When I got back to Jacksonville, I called ASTA headquarters in New York and explained the situation.

“You’ve got to keep the heat on, let them know what a disgrace it would be if they were not ready,” I said. “There would be a press conference and, in front of the world, it would be known that Mexico could not be depended upon.”

“Don’t worry, we don’t want a national disaster,” the Mexicans told ASTA.

With the fanfare of national folkloric dances, mariachi bands and fireworks, the ASTA Conference and Trade Fair opened on schedule at the Bonita Juarez
Conference Center in Acapulco. It was a huge success. Another ASTA show worth recalling is the one in Rio de Janerio in 1976, two years after the Acapulco show. It was the first time I produced a show under a military dictatorship.

In late October 1975, Lois and I went to Rio for a pre-meeting and to look over the facilities. We took one of the earliest 747s to Brazil which left Miami at 4 p.m. and arrived in Rio at 11 p.m.

A few days before our departure, the airlines called and asked if we would like to be seated at a table for four or six at dinner. I had not flown on a jumbo jet before and didn’t know what it was all about, so we chose the smaller table.

When we boarded the plane we realized that the upper deck had been turned into a dining room. At dinner Lois and I were seated with the president of Westinghouse of South America and his wife and had a very pleasant time.

I had decided on the National Hotel in Rio for our venue. Jose Tjours, the owner of the National Hotel chain, was the Conrad Hilton of South America. A short little man, he was followed around by an entourage of generals.

Tjours arranged a special dinner and show for us at the hotel for Lois’ birthday on October 28. He
included the president of Pan American Airlines on the guest list.

A general from the government arranged a golf game for me and Barry McDonald of ASTA, and proceeded to follow us around in a cart for all 18 holes. He didn’t play, he just watched. The game? Us?

At that time General Ernesto Geisel was president of Brazil.

He was chosen to lead by the military, then approved by the Congress, which gave you the impression that free elections had been held.

The government headquarters were located in Brasilia, the capital. It was a planned city constructed in a rural area on Brazil’s central plateau.

But the generals that I was working with were not in Brasilia. They were headquartered in Sao Paulo and wanted to meet me. They sent a military attache in a military jet to pick me up in Rio and fly me to Sao Paulo.

I was taken to their headquarters, located in a big house in the city. I had to walk down a long white satin runner that stretched from the front reception area down a long hall to the meeting room. There, I was introduced to an entourage of military officials. I had coffee with them – a demitasse – and told them of our plans.

On the flight back to Rio, the attache turned to
me and said, “The Generals liked you very much. They think they can easily work with you.”

Of course, I was pleased.

Then he said, “How much do you want?”

I was dumbfounded. I suddenly realized they thought they had to pay me off.

I quickly assured him it wasn’t necessary, that I had a contract with ASTA and was being well paid.

He kept pursuing the issue, saying that they knew we would get along. Why not just take the money anyway?

I adamantly refused and immediately reported the conversation to the ASTA people in Rio.

Before a convention, we usually sent some of our people two weeks ahead of time. When I arrived in Rio the Monday before the fair opened, the project manager, who was on the set-up team, called me.

“We’ve got a problem,” he said.

Seventy tons of freight was being held in a bonded area – and not moving. For the trade show to come off as scheduled, it had to be received in the exhibition hall by Thursday.

I immediately got in touch with Brazil’s tourist minister and told him he had a problem. Unless the freight arrived by the next day, we would shut down the trade fair.
“The fair is to open at 10 a.m. on Saturday,” I said. “At 11 a.m., the president general is going to make an opening address on television and radio in front of 150 members of the world press. How terrible it would be to tell the world that the ASTA Conference would still go on but that Brazil lacked the capabilities of putting on a trade show. The story will not be about the Fair, but about the failure of the government.”

Operating by decree, all the freight was moved by military vehicles to the convention center the next evening.

In a dictatorship, you can get anything done.

For me, the years of International Productions were a nice time in my life. They were a march to victory of sorts – climbing a mountain, planting a tree.

I met fascinating people – like Henry Kissinger and Barbara Walters. Lois and I even attended a social function at the White House with President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn.

And I never had a failure.

The secret of that success was simple – “If it won’t work, don’t do it.”

You had to be a winner.

For Lois it was quite another matter.

I wanted her with me, and although she supported me in every way and went along with everything I did,
A few moments of Lois’s and my fifty-seven cruises together.
she really didn’t like any part of it.

First of all, she hated leaving Jacksonville, where she had always lived and which she loved. Not only were the children there, but so was her entire family and many friends.

The girls were grown, of course, but grandchildren were looming on the horizon.

“You may enjoy it,” she told me, “I miss my home, I miss my family, I miss the golf and my card games.”

She missed the social life she had built for herself at the club. She also does not care about publicity or being in the limelight.

Mainly, she was lonely. When I had to go to meetings and was busy, she had nothing to do.

My wife is a very good looking woman, and when she would wait for me in hotel lobbies, as she often did, men would try to pick her up. Instead of being flattered by the attention, she felt insulted.

She did enjoy the conferences when my brother and sister-in-law came along. Other times, the events were a chore for her.

But she stuck by me, supported me and helped give me a life I never dreamed of having.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
CHAPTER XVII

The ASTA trade show that we held – or almost held – in 1980 in Manila deserves a chapter of its own. It was our one disaster, so to speak. One that was totally out of our hands.

The site selection for the annual conference and trade show was determined 2 years ahead of time. This meant the Manila selection was made after the 1978 Acapulco conference. The ASTA board of directors decided at that time that Manila would be the location of the 1980 trade show.

It also gave Imelda Marcos a chance to come to Munich for the event to see what we were doing and to report back to her current husband, Ferdinand Marcos, then president of the Philippines. She stayed at a hotel in Munich where she entertained with a formal dinner party to which we were invited. Music was provided by a group of violinists that she had brought with her from the Manila Hotel in the Philippines. And, of course, the first lady sang for her guests.
Sometime during the following year, at another show in Munich, there was a bombing. Then, about two months before the annual conference, we received word that there were terrorists in the Philippines who did not welcome world tourism, especially Americans.

If the show was to go on, I knew it had to be covered by insurance.

First I contacted Diamond Insurance Company, owned by Abe Diamond which was the insurance company I used. He couldn’t handle it. Then I got in touch with members of the International Association of Convention and Show Managers to see if any of them knew who could help me. I was directed to Bucky Hartford, the Washington, D.C. representative for Lloyd’s of London.

Lloyd’s would sell me insurance for 1 percent of the gross; however the policy would not cover war or insurgencies.

“OK, cover me,” I told him.

Something gnawed at me, that the coverage wasn’t complete enough. I contacted Bucky again and was able to get complete coverage for 2 percent of the gross.

About six weeks before the Manila fair, while Lois and I were getting ready to go to a University of Florida football game in Gainesville with our friends,
Bea and Marvin Sherman, I was listening to the radio. Over the air came the news that three Manila hotels had just been bombed.

The following Monday I called Joe Stone, President of ASTA. He contacted President Marcos in the Philippines, who assured Joe that everything would be all right.

The board voted to go ahead with the event.

“Well, I’m not going,” Lois said. I guess I couldn’t blame her.

The show went on as scheduled, and 5,000 people attended.

The trade fair opened in the afternoon. The formal opening was at seven o’clock assembly in the auditorium of the convention center with President Marcos and Richard W. Murphy, United States Ambassador to the Philippines, giving speeches.

I asked the members of my staff whether they would like to go to the evening session or have dinner with me in a local restaurant. They chose to go out with me.

I was staying at the Philippine Plaza, an Intercontinental Hotel, and again watching the opening of the trade fair on television as I was getting ready for dinner.

At exactly seven o’clock a bomb exploded in the
convention center. Seventeen people were injured. All of us would have been there if we hadn’t made other dinner plans.

I got hold of Joe Stone, who was at the convention as were the ASTA board members. They met and decided to close the convention.

An announcement was made on TV at seven the next morning. ASTA had been warned that if it didn’t make the announcement by 7 a.m., delegates would have to watch what they ate and drank while in Manila. They were left with no other choice.

Accommodations were made available for the delegates to stay for another week as guests of the Philippine government, or they could go home. Many stayed.

On the flight home, I was seated next to my friend Eric Friedheim, the publisher of Travel Agent magazine. Well into the flight, he turned to me and said, “May I ask you a question in confidence? You lost a bunch, didn’t you?”

I shook my head.

“The convention was insured,” I told him.

He thought I was a genius.

When I got the check from Lloyds of London, it was made out to International Predictions rather than International Productions.
Everyone was offered their money back. Eighty percent applied the refund to the next fair, which was scheduled to take place in Honolulu.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
CHAPTER XVIII

As International Productions grew, so did our office space in Gulf Life Tower. At first there was just a secretary and I in three rooms. Then we had five project managers and three secretaries and occupied seven rooms.

The staff consisted only of managers and secretaries because I had formed a management-driven organization, not an employee organization. We outsourced and contracted with the best people to do the jobs for us.

Coming into the office, one saw a map of the world on the wall behind the receptionist. Pan American Airlines obtained the map for me.

If anyone asked why the map was there, I would tell them in jest, “It’s our territory.”

Ed Bell – you may remember him as the “Voice” of Jones College Radio – was executive vice president of International Productions. (His real name was Ed Oberly; he used the name Bell when he became a radio personality.)
None of our clients came to the office. Our work was done across the country, across the ocean and around the world – first by Telex and then by fax.

Within the framework of International Productions, I also supervised the outdoor advertising business and my real estate holdings.

ASTA, my first client, started the ball rolling. Paul Watson and his wife, Sue, headed up the ASTA program.

My next client was the Association of British Travel Agencies (ABTA). The British government had nationalized Pickford, one of the country’s largest motor lines, which included 100 travel agencies among its subsidiaries. It became ABTA. George Skelton, who owned the trucking company, became head of ABTA. In this new capacity he was honored with the Order of the British Empire by the Queen.

When International Productions was staging its first ASTA show in Amsterdam, ABTA was having a conference in Rotterdam so I went to see it. ABTA gatherings were little more than meetings with speakers, and no trade fair of any sort. I gave one of their representatives my business card.

Apparently they visited the fair in Amsterdam and liked what I was doing because a year later I received a call from London. Would I be interested in doing a trade
fair for them? I told them “Yes,” and I would come to London and meet with them.

At about the same time I was doing the show in Acapulco, so ABTA sent some representatives to see the Mexican trade fair. They liked what they saw.

ABTA had never held a convention outside of Europe. So I planned to have the first show in Prince Albert Hall. International Productions then opened its own offices in Orient House in London, which John Jackson, an Englishman, ran.

The ABTA shows consisted of worldwide suppliers showing to British travel agents.

I subsequently asked ABTA officials if they would like to have a trade fair in Florida and they loved the idea. I got together with the State of Florida and the City of Miami Beach and secured the Deauville Hotel.

The show, whose theme was “The British Are Coming,” was a tremendous success and increased the number of British visitors to Florida from 9,000 to over 1 million a year.

International Productions also produced shows for ABTA in Athens and Los Angeles.

The United Federation of Travel Agencies (UFTA) was the next client to come aboard. As the tourist section of the United Nations, it represented the tourist agencies of 74 countries. We produced trade fairs
Ed Bell was the initial vice-president of International Productions with John Lowe, Executive Director of the Marine Association, and me.

Randolph Hodges, Ed Bell and Governor Hayden Burns, who is presenting me with the proclamation stating the creation of the Junior boating Program.
for them from Portugal to Kenya.

The most impressive UFTA event was the 11th World Congress Of Travel Agencies, which was in 1977 in Florida.

More than 1300 hotel rooms were needed for the conference so I went to Miami Beach to see Bernie Resnik, manager of the luxurious Fontainebleau Hotel. He had 1311 rooms so we needed the entire facility – all meeting rooms, hospitality suites, everything. The owner, Morris Novak, called because he said he had to find out if I was “real”.

The only way we could take over the entire hotel was to hold the event when there was a lull in the Fontainebleau’s business. Since occupation was poorest over Thanksgiving we decided to hold it that weekend. Consequently, we got very good rates.

We did have one unique problem, however.

Although English is the language of business and many understood and spoke English, not everyone did. As a result, we had translations in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese at every function.

We found the firm in New York that equipped the auditoriums and assembly halls of the United Nations. Not only did they have the wireless transmitters and receivers necessary, but they also could provide us with translators. Earphones were color coded – red for
Spanish, green for French, blue for English, white for Portuguese.

The hosts of the event were Eduardo Arrarte, a real gentleman who was president of Lima Tours and UFTA, and Robert Whitley, director of the Florida Division of Tourism.

Through sponsors, International Productions provided every one at the convention with breakfast, lunch and dinner each day. For example, a typical American Thanksgiving dinner was sponsored by the American Turkey Growers Association.

While producing this show, we were approached by a Canadian group that was interested in our creating Rendezvous Canada in Montreal for them. At midday, when Joe Wiese’s famous restaurant, Joe’s Stone Crabs, was not generally open, we took the UFTA executives and the Canadian group there for lunch. We got the contract.

Another interesting show International Productions produced for UFTA was at the Kenyatta Center, in Nairobi, Kenya.

My brother Murray and Dave Redmond went on a preliminary trip and took pictures of everything. There was nothing at the convention center or in Nairobi with which to produce a trade show, but we had to make the show work and the stakes were high.
We improvised booths by hanging bamboo poles on wires from the ceiling and draping them. The show went on in style. Another success.

Reuben H. Donnelley, the company that published, a magazine for travel agents, also had us produce trade fairs for them, including Travel Age East and Travel Age West.

For Travel Age East, we had shows in Niagara Falls, New York City and Providence, R.I. Here New England suppliers sold their wares to travel agents from around the world. To entertain them we provided a tour of the “summer cottages” of Newport and took them to a real Cape Cod clambake.

Travel Age West was held in cities like Palm Springs, California; Phoenix, Arizona; etc.

It was ironic that the last Travel Age East show I produced was held at the World Trade Center in New York.

The turning point for International Productions came with the Organization of American States, (OAS). It was created for States of Central and South America by its director Jean Westphal, who later became director of United States Travel Services. She, along with International Productions, created “Market of Tourism”.

It was a trade fair with South American suppliers for (tour packagers) – an innovation in itself.
Called *Bolsa de Tourismo*, it utilized a computerized action plan for producing trade fairs. Out of this grew our concept for the Florida Huddle.

It was the Florida Huddle, with the Disney World’s major cooperation, that brought us to the attention of worldwide companies and advertisers, who were attracted by its method of production and success.

Little did I know that it would also produce a new phase in my business life.
During those years of International Productions, it might seem like it was all work and no play. That’s not exactly true.

As the workload lightened in the summer, Lois and I took full advantage of living near the beach. We first had an apartment in Ocean 21, one of two (Ocean 21 and Ocean 22) three-story condominiums at Jacksonville Beach.

At that time there were no high-rises on Jacksonville Beach, but we watched as the first one – the Seascape – grew up beside us.

Built by Jacksonville developer George Dickerson, it was a unique and interesting building. A copy of one in Palm Beach, it was S-shaped and placed parallel on the beach-front property so that each unit in the 11-story building had an ocean view. In Palm Beach, with property being scarce, it was placed perpendicular to the beach, so that only units on one end had ocean views.

We found Seascape irresistible and bought one
(Left) Fun at the beach, Lois and I in front of the Seascape.

(Right) Actors in our midst, Ceasar Romero.

(Above) Wet-suit fishing with Ben Topalar.

(Left) Riding my moped with granddaughter Ivy.
of the first apartments along with a pool-side cabana and garage. I had a little 12-foot boat there, too.

It proved to be a hit with the family. The children liked to visit which gave me the opportunity to watch my grandsons learn to surf. Lois and I each had mopeds which, in those days, were allowed on the beach.

Of course I had my larger boat nearby at Beach Marine so that I was able to fish and entertain both business acquaintances and friends.

Our apartment had a 53-foot balcony where I had two smokers for smoking fish. For better or worse, I think I was known for my smoked fish.

There often were cookouts by the pool at Seascape. Ten or 12 couples would eat there or go out to dinner – to Strickland’s in Mayport, or Le Chateau or the Seaturtle in Atlantic Beach.

We had a lot of fun and a lot of friends there, including Marvin and Bea Sherman, Evelyn and Leon Irgang, Karl and Dolores Jabour. We also got to know and enjoy Hans and Mercedes Tanzler, John Sutherland, Bryant Skinner and restaurateur Fred Aboud.

As a group of people, including me, we did take time to smell the roses. But business was never far from my mind.
Business

Money*, money**, money*

* Huddle V coming to Jacksonville
January 12-14

It’s a conference with a lot of people attending and few people playing. It’s a lot of work with no cooks, bathrooms, and a lot of activity.

For Florida Huddle V, where 20 players were involved in traveling and performing, it was a busy weekend for the host of the state-wide competition in the Civic Auditorium.

When the smoke clears, a 10-year tradition—Florida Huddle V—will be remembered as an event that brought together players and fans from all over the state.

ECONOMY

Notes

Dave Whitney

We have been hearing a lot about the economy lately. It seems like everyone is talking about it. Some people are worried about it, while others are not. But one thing is for sure: the economy is an important part of our lives.

Florida Huddle V will be sponsored by the Division of Education of the State of Florida. The Jacksonville Committee and Kidney Fund will also be involved.

However, it’s important to get the credits for attending. The Florida Huddle V is a benefit, and the proceeds will go to the Jacksonville Kidney Fund.

And, it may just be the biggest job Jacksonville has ever done internationally. Actually, the money raised...
The idea for the Florida Huddle was generated during the 1977 World Congress of Travel Agencies in Miami Beach.

Bob Whitley, director of Florida Tourism and one of the co-hosts, said to me at one point “Why don’t you do one for us?”

What he was suggesting was, as long as you are doing trade fairs for all these other countries, why don’t you do one for Florida?

We did. The Florida Huddle, which we based on the formula we used for *Bolsa de Tourisimo*, was a copyrighted computerized marketplace.

This is how it operated.

The Florida Huddle was designed to provide top Florida tourism suppliers (hotels, resorts, tennis clubs, theme parks, etc.) with the most convenient and efficient setting possible to meet the biggest buyers of Florida tourism products, tour wholesalers from 40 different countries.
International Productions held trade fairs from Portugal to Kenya: Representing the United Federation of Travel Agencies, the tourism section of the United Nations, 74 countries were involved.
As I have mentioned before, wholesalers are companies that package tours, group vacations, conventions and meetings, golf and tennis trips, et al. Examples include AAA, American Express, Global of London and ANWB, the Royal Dutch Touring Club.

These meetings, or “marketplaces”, which usually took place over a weekend, provided a prime opportunity to get acquainted and negotiate for room nights, air and ground transportation, meals, entertainment and the various ingredients that, when combined, satisfy the traveling client’s needs and desires.

The key factor in the Florida Huddle’s success was the appointment-scheduling process.

International Productions knew a year in advance the destination of the next marketplace. At the end of a current meeting there would always be buzz about the next show, where was it going to be and who was planning to go.

Inserted in the marketplace program was a questionnaire asking such question as: How much business did they do? How well were they served? How could the marketplace be improved? They also were asked if they wanted space for the next year. If so, did they want more or less space? Generally speaking, they all wanted to return. From those critiques, a master list of probable participants was made.
Selected Buyers and Sellers were invited and sent an official registration and marketing survey form. From that information a delegate directory and meeting guide was compiled and mailed to each participant along with an appointment request form.

Two different directories, one for the Buyer and one for the Seller, provided a comprehensive marketing profile of each participating organization and was used by Florida providers to select which Buyers they wanted to meet, and vice versa.

An appointment request form was then filled out and sent to Huddle’s main office (in the Gulf Life Tower) where Buyers and Sellers were matched and scheduled by computer. When those who participated in Huddle meetings arrived at their destination, an appointment book – with the scheduled appointments – was waiting with their credentials.

But that was only the beginning.

Special “shopping marts” were held to enable attendees to schedule additional appointments.

International Productions worked the entire marketing field of the travel industry, but it was Huddle’s copyrighted procedure, the advanced technology and computerized processes and format in market programing, that made it appealing to large companies and to the travel industry as a whole.
At the ASTA convention in Hawaii, I was approached by Bob Bader of Ziff Davis Media in New York, a major publisher whose publications included travel magazines. He wanted to know if I was interested in selling International Production. I was very interested indeed.

Ten years earlier, 3M had expressed an interest in buying the outdoor advertising company which had more than 100 billboards in and around Jacksonville, but I turned the company down on the advice of my CPA brother Sylvan.

Bader, the son-in-law of William Ziff, and I made an agreement, pending approval from headquarters. Unfortunately, when he got back to New York, William Ziff said it was a “no go.” Because of International Productions contract with the American Society of Travel Agents, Ziff rightfully saw it as a business conflict-of-interest with his company’s travel agent magazines.

At the same time, Greyhound was talking to me and 3M approached me again.

3M and I signed a confidentiality agreement so that they could look over the company. They would be buying Outdoor Advertising, the computerized marketing system and the trade show business.

One problem surfaced, however. Joe McCloskey, the 59-year-old general manager of the outdoor
advertising company, did not fit into their pension plan, and he would lose his job.

3M and I made a deal. I would keep part of the advertising business, which changed our “no competition” agreement. 3M agreed to the exception so that I could operate another outdoor advertising business, American Advertising, and keep Joe.

The sale was completed on May 1, 1982.

Ironically, Joe died less than a year later.

Jerry Markbreit was to be head of International Productions for 3M. He would have been excellent, but there was a complication. He was chief referee for the National Football League and had to live within a four-hour plane flight of every city where the NFL had a franchise. Living in Jacksonville was out of the question.

Then Hank Moore expressed interest in the job. He was a member of the 3M acquisition team that had looked at more than 150 companies every year and selected 30, one of which was International Productions.

He called and asked if I would recommend him. The Harvard MBA graduate certainly had been competent with the task he had done with me so I agreed to recommend him on those grounds. In addition 3M already knew his abilities, I told him.
Moore got the job and took over the company. Unfortunately, he wanted to revolutionize everything. He also wanted my office, which was against company policy. 3M had a rule that no former CEO of an acquired company would give up his personal office.

I was kept on as a consultant, and I kept my space in the southwest corner of the Gulf Life Tower.

But…I was not given any duties.

A short time later, I was removed from the mail routing. It was obvious management no longer wanted my services.

Although I retained my old office with the company, I got another space, a personal office, also in the Gulf Life Tower and hired a secretary.

I continued with my affairs until the 3M contract ran out.

The only thing 3M asked me to do during that time was to make a trip to Seoul, South Korea. Jim Gibson, a former vice president and head of the graphic technology part of the business, asked me to take a look at the facilities for the next ASTA convention which was being held there.

Lois said “No” to going to Korea, and so did I.

They came back and offered us two first class airplane tickets and accommodations for any place in the world we would like to go.
“Providing we make a stop in Korea on the way home?” I asked, laughing.

True.

I ended up making the trip alone and doing the job for them.

During this end-of-contract time, being the summer lover that I am, I thought it might be a good idea for Lois and me to look into the possibility of spending the winter months in South Florida. I reasoned that – with proper organization – the business I had to do could be done by fax and telephone.

We started looking for an oceanfront apartment in Key Biscayne. The search ended with an apartment in a 43-story building called The Tiara on Singer Island in North Palm Beach.

And so the evolution continued – for the company I just sold and for me.

3M National Advertising became Outdoor Systems, Inc., then Infinity, CBS, Viacom and now CBS-Outdoor. Just look for the CBS “eye” at the bottom of the billboards.

The trade show business lasted six more years, and folded when ASTA did not renew its contract with 3M.

The computerized market systems, “The Huddle,” was sold off to 3M’s General Manager.
And me?
Perhaps I could still find more mountains to climb
and trees to plant.
PART SEVEN

Turn-around Time
CHAPTER XXI

There comes a time in a man’s life when he must pause before he asks, “What next?” and goes on with his life.

I was 62, not an age when many men retire, but I had just sold my production company and was tired from working hard for many years.

Financially blessed and with enough business projects to keep me going for the rest of my life, I decided it was time to relax and enjoy the recreational activities I’d never had enough time for including boating, fishing and golf.

It was battery-recharging time, a time – I am convinced – that has added longevity to my life.

And it was also the time to become reacquainted with my family. During those busy years, our little family of five had grown in number to 15. Three sons-in-law and seven grandchildren had been added to the original group.

Ann married Ed Grenadier, a fellow student at Jacksonville University with whom she fell in love;
Five years after the family cruise, Lois and I took Carol, Bruce, Adam and Logan on a make-up cruise.
Barbara married a young man she met in college, Lanny Zimmerman; and Carol married Bruce Greenspan, her ninth-grade boyfriend. The two older girls had big weddings at the Beauclerc Country Club while Carol had a beautiful wedding at the University Club.

Lois planned and coordinated every detail of each wedding to perfection – one of her many attributes. And God blessed me early enough so that, as a father, I could sit back and thoroughly enjoy the events.

Together they have given us six grandsons and a granddaughter.

Barbara and Lanny had two wonderful sons together and gave their marriage a good try before it ended in divorce in 1977.

Two years later Barbara married a wonderful man, Larry Jaffe, whom she met while campaigning for Bob Shevin in his 1978 gubernatorial race against Bob Graham. Larry was a CPA with one of the accounting firms I worked with, and he came to me and asked for Barbara’s hand.

My new life started by taking 13 members of the family on a Caribbean cruise. We sailed on The Norway – Lois and I; Ann and Ed and their three children, Bobby, 16; Todd, 13; and Ivy, 9; Barbara and Larry with Bradley, 12, and Sandy, 10; and Carol and Bruce. Their
two children, Adam and Logan, were too young to come along.

Lois and I had a suite, where the entire family met before dinner for cocktails, Shirley Temples and hors d’oeuvres.

One evening Lois and I were invited to have cocktails with the Captain and to sit at his table, which is an honor on any ship. (You must remember I was pretty well known in the travel industry because of ASTA and International Productions.)

The children were amazed when they saw Lois and me coming down the stairs into the dining room with the captain and being seated on either side of him at dinner.

I think it was Brad who afterwards asked, “Grandpa, do you own this ship?”

With living in Palm Beach in our future, it was also time to reorganize my office so that I would be able to supervise business operations from there.

In the summer, I moved my office from the Gulf Life Tower to a Southpoint office building. Shirley Hague, a former secretary at Mahoney Adams, a firm that represented the Barnett Bank, became my executive assistant. She meticulously set up detailed and precise files, like those in a law office.

It was then that I asked Dick McMeekin, manager
Dick McMeekin has been an important player in my business life. He continues to be a good friend.
of the Coliseum, the Civic Auditorium, and the Gator Bowl for the city of Jacksonville to head up American Advertising.

The management of the real estate business and the job of servicing tenants was in the hands of Nussbaum & Sons, where it had been for 30 years.

I really wasn’t needed in Jacksonville on a daily basis.

Fax and copying machines were eventually set up in both the Jacksonville office and Palm Beach residence, so that with telephones and computers, business could go on without me missing much.

Actually, there was only enough business to keep the Jacksonville office open three days a week.

Lois and I had sold the house in Granada for one in San Jose Forest, and were ready to set off for Palm Beach in November 1982.

Off to a new and different life.
PART EIGHT

Balmy Palm Beach Days
(Above) The “Sidlo” was docked on the Intercoastal waterway right in front of the “Tiara,” the 43-story condo-apartment building on the ocean at Singer Island, where we lived.

(Left) Once a fisherman always a fisherman.

(Below) Yes, there are sharks in Palm Beach.
November 1982 came and Lois and I were ready to make the big move to Palm Beach.

We had leased a furnished apartment on the 35th floor of the Tiara Condominiums on Singer Island in north Palm Beach. The facilities were fabulous.

The 43-story building was situated on a large piece of property off Ocean Drive where an attended gate secured a long driveway into the attractive building.

A parking garage, with tennis courts on top, included reserved spaces for tenants’ cars. And whether it was after a long day of golf or a short trip to the market, a doorman would greet you and help you with your packages, while a valet parked your car in its special place.

If you wanted to go out, all you had to do was call ahead and your car would be waiting for you at the front door.

A security guard in the lobby guaranteed our privacy.
Besides being on the beach, The Tiara had two nice outdoor swimming pools.

Of course there was a kitchen in our unit, but there also was a restaurant on the main floor that served breakfast and lunch. A bar on the top floor, which had a magnificent view of the ocean and city, included private lockers where our liquor was kept. A bartender mixed drinks and offered hors d’oeuvres every evening, while on the same floor and the floor below, two restaurants served dinner.

Often in the evening Lois and I would go to the bar alone for a toddy. Invariably we would run into another couple with whom we’d have dinner. It was also a good place for Lois to set up card games.

One of The Tiara’s best assets for me was its location next to the Palm Beach Inlet. That meant that I could have our boat, the Sidlo, nearby. I was able to find a slip in front of a private house belonging to a retired doctor right across Ocean Drive.

Our boat was a 47-foot Harbor Master, and if ever there was a boat built for entertaining, the Sidlo was it. Broad beamed with plenty of open deck and lounge space, it was a perfect party boat.

When it came time for us to leave Jacksonville, we decided to go by boat. The cars were driven ahead and would be waiting for us when we got there.
Tim Bellwood, a retired Navy electronics technician, was our captain. We took two days on the trip down, spending the night in Titusville and getting into Palm Beach about one o’clock the next afternoon.

Our end unit on the southeast side of the building had both a balcony and terrace where we had incredible views of the ocean, Palm Beach, Lake Worth, the Intercoastal Waterway and stretches beyond.

What a wonderful new life lay ahead of us.

We already had some perks. By being members of the University Club in Jacksonville, Lois and I had reciprocal guest memberships in the Governor’s Club in Palm Beach and the Old Port Cove Yacht Club in North Palm Beach right across the water from Lost Tree, where Jack Nicklaus lived.

We found a golf club right away, the PGA on PGA Boulevard in West Palm Beach. The following year we joined Jack Nicklaus Bear Lakes Country Club.

It wasn’t until the third year that we joined The Breakers Club, which is a part of Palm Beach’s fantasy hotel, The Breakers.

The Breakers’ season was five months long each year, during which time there were parties and dances where we made wonderful friends.

The social climate in Palm Beach was much more festive and sophisticated than in Jacksonville. We
attended many events, as well as art shows and museum galas. There were debutante balls with Naval Academy plebes and West Point cadets serving as escorts.

But what I liked best was the fact that there were so many outdoor activities to enjoy – golf, fishing and having friends aboard the boat.

I especially enjoyed eating lunch al fresco at Chuck & Harold’s, Charlie’s Crab or at The Breakers’ buffet.

Both Lois and I enjoyed golf and often played in couples tournaments. So with golf for both of us, card games for Lois and fishing for me, our life balanced out very well.

We missed the children and grandchildren very much, but they often came for visits. And in the summer they joined us at the Seascape on the ocean front in Jacksonville Beach or on trips abroad.

We were very happy.

Life in Palm Beach certainly gave me the relaxation period I needed to help prolong my life. It also reemphasized my love for sun and water.

As we adjusted to our new life and environment, Lois began to realize that she was uncomfortable living on the 35th floor of a building. What would we do in case of a fire? A hurricane? Or any other natural disaster?

We moved into an apartment on the 22nd floor,
Sid catches a prize Adican Pampano (6 oz. less than the world’s record) off Palm Beach. As Mohamed said: “Everyday a man fishes he gets a bonus day of life.”
and, instead of leasing it, we bought it. Oddly enough it was this apartment that suffered damage from Hurricane Gilbert in 1988. Luckily we were not in residence when the storm ripped a three-story high panel off the building. A closet full of clothes and some furniture were damaged, but it didn’t deter us from returning in November.

As we adapted to Palm Beach, our lifestyle changed according to our preferred activities.

I sold the party boat for a 51-foot Blue Water Cruiser with a Bimini cover which was more efficient for fishing and water sports. A little 12-foot boat, similar to a Boston Whaler, was added to the Gefen fleet so that I could exercise by rowing, fishing and playing around in shallow water.

Lois longed to be on a golf course, so we moved to Admiral’s Cove in Jupiter, Florida. We had a harbor home so that I was able to have the boat right at hand.

While all these changes were going on in Palm Beach, another move was taking place in Jacksonville.

In 1988, the river front villa apartment at Epping Forest that Lois and I had bought before it was even built was ready for occupancy.

Herb Peyton and Gate Petroleum bought the duPont estate on San Jose Boulevard from Raymond Mason in 1984 and planned to develop it. The
Lois in front of our villa under construction at Epping Forest.
Mediterranean mansion would be a yacht club with docks and a marina on the river. The rest of the property would be subdivided for houses and large river front condominiums called villas.

Property was so in demand that numbers were drawn for building lots and villa apartments at an invitation-only party given at the mansion. For a party invitation you were required to put down a $10,000 refundable deposit.

Lois and I went to the party, as did our daughter Barbara and her husband Larry. Barbara drew a low number and secured a villa apartment in what they then called Building I. Lois and I were not as lucky and drew a number for space in Building II, yet to be built. We selected the type of unit we wanted and, like the others, waited.

Since we weren’t in Jacksonville, Marvin Sherman of Liberty Furniture and his decorator furnished the Epping Forest apartment, and the job was completed to our total satisfaction.

Even before putting our San Jose Forest house on the market, Judge Harrison offered us the asking price for it as long as we included the furniture. We wanted Carol to have our furniture and told him “No.”

He rejected the deal, but two hours later he called back to say he still wanted the house.
Carol has our furniture, and when I walk into her Mandarin house today, I feel as if I am at home. Home as it used to be.

There was one more move in Palm Beach. Although I had enjoyed good health all of my life, I began having trouble walking and needed a hip replacement. The golf course at Admiral’s Cove was difficult for me to maneuver. For instance, there was one hole that had 15 steps to the tee. Also, a new bridge had been built connecting two holes on the golf course that interfered with the waterway to our house. My boat couldn’t go under the bridge unless I lowered the Bimini top and radar arch.

After having my hip replaced at Mayo, we moved from Admiral’s Cove to the Golf & Racquet Club at Eastpoint in Palm Beach Gardens, where we bought a house with a lake behind it. Now I could fish for bass in my back yard.

This was the perfect location and setup with all the amenities that both Lois and I enjoyed.

But on September 4, 2004, Hurricane Frances put an end to it all. There was substantial damage to the house, followed by mold and mildew. Our doctor advised us not to return.

Despite the fact that I would like to have a second house in an area where summer never ends, Lois was
Lois longed to live on a golf course so we bought a home at the Golf and Racquet Club at Palm Beach Gardens where there was a golf course in our back yard.
ready to return to Jacksonville. She always missed her family when she wasn’t with them, so home we came.

The Palm Beach life was one of pleasure and relaxation, but it was also a time when irresistible new business opportunities came along and lifelong friendships were made.

Let me tell you about Eric Friedheim, Walter Pettis, Tim Bellwood and wireless broadcast systems.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
Tim Bellwood was the finest boat captain I ever had.

We met under rather unusual circumstances.

It was a hot Fourth of July night, and Lois and I had taken a group of friends on the boat to see the fireworks in downtown Jacksonville. Marvin and Bea Sherman, Marion and Bernie Siegel and Evelyn and Bob Franklin, among others, were aboard.

We were anchored in the river near the marina where the River City Brewing Company is now, and where other boats were also anchored.

Our captain had an Oriental wife, and she had encouraged him to bring along a wok in which to cook our dinner.

Toward the end of the evening, just as things were winding down and we were about ready to weigh anchor, the entire electrical system on the boat went out. The heat from the wok had overloaded the generator.

When our captain seemed unable to fix the problem, a man, on a nearby boat noticed our predicament.
(Above) “Sidlo” tied to our dock at 333 Riverside Avenue on the St. Johns River. With Tim waving us off for a family cruise.

(Right) Tim with his daughters, Christina and Alicia.

(Bottom) Tim and Christine Bellwood. Tim was the finest boat captain I ever had.
“If you have a towel, I’ll come over and try to help,” he yelled.

With that, he dove into the water and swam over to our boat and climbed aboard.

He said “Hello.” If he introduced himself, I can’t remember. Quickly drying himself off with the towel, he went below and in no time flat found a reset button. We had electricity again, and before I knew it, he was over the side, swimming back to his boat.

We followed his boat away from our mooring, back up the river, but left him when we went into our slip at Epping Forest. He had been incredibly helpful, and I didn’t even know who he was.

The incident so upset our captain that he quit the next day.

That same morning, I received a call from the Epping Forest harbormaster. There was a man at the marina who wanted to talk to me, so I told the dockmaster I would be right down.

It was then that I formally met Tim Bellwood, the man who helped us on the 4th of July. He said he had come to see if I was all right.

Tim was a remarkable man. He was an electronics technician who, after 14 years of service, had just left the Navy.

He had gotten orders to go overseas and there
was no way he could go. His wife and twin daughters were terminally ill with a genetic neurological disease affecting their spinal columns.

Not knowing about “compassionate relief” in the service, he settled for $40,000 in payout money and left the Navy.

Since he was interested in finding work, I hired him as my boat captain, but he could do anything. He even built a dock for me.

We became great friends. I called him Captain and, as the men did at the shipyard, he called me Skipper. He still does today.

For the first couple of years that Lois and I went to Palm Beach, Tim took us down on the boat. Later, when we preferred to drive, he and sometimes his father, Cecil, repositioned the boat.

On one of those trips, one that took the boat from Jupiter back to Epping Forest, Tim invited his father, a former power station engineer, and his father’s buddy “Pat” Patrick to come along.

Cecil wrote a memoir of the trip titled “The Yachting Trip, The story of three men and a yacht.”

As you know, I deplore the word “yacht.” I don’t care how big or luxurious the boat is, it is an MV (motor vessel) or boat to me.

But this is how he wrote the story and it was
This tells it all, the Sidlo.
a “yacht” to him, and the trip thrilling. The memoir included everything from meal menus to fuel intake, but it was the last paragraphs that touched me.

“To Captain Tim, captain of the yacht ‘MV SIDLO’, and most importantly, at least to me, my son:

“I knew that you were capable but you even surprised me with your ability to handle the yacht. Between your skill and the Good Lord shining upon us we have returned safely.

“While on the trip and in this story, when I referred to you as Captain, it was and is not meant to be sarcastic, but to show my pride in you both as Captain and my son. It also made my head and heart swell with pride, as I heard on the radio, at various stops along the way – the personnel at the fuel dock, Palm Coast Marina, and finally at Epping Forest, answer your calls with ‘Captain.’ Let me say you were not only a great captain and a great son, but you are a real good cook, too. You have conducted yourself with a professional attitude that could only make a father like me as proud of you as I am. Many thanks go to you for inviting me along for the trip.

“Finally, deep thanks from the bottom of our hearts [to Lois and Sid] for allowing the pleasure of bringing your yacht, the ‘MV SIDLO,’ back to Jacksonville from Jupiter. It was not meant to be a fun
trip, but merely a necessity to get the yacht from Jupiter back to Jacksonville. But because of your generosity and not holding Tim to a close budget we were able to get the mission accomplished and still enjoy ourselves as we made the trip.”

   Yes, Tim was quite a captain and he was still with me when Walter Pettis Jr., from Stuart, Florida, first called on me at Admiral’s Cove. He telephoned out of the blue and asked if he could see me.

   Although I didn’t know about him then, I later learned that he came from South Carolina and had held important positions in the federal government. However, he had done his homework and knew a lot about me. He knew about my businesses and how I ran them. He also knew that I owned a lot of property in Jacksonville that was suitable for antennas for wireless telephone systems.

   Walter’s firm, Intercel, a company he helped organize, had paid the federal government $46 million for Jacksonville frequencies. He put together a book-length prospectus for me and had come to ask me to be an original partner.

   One page qualified the $124 million investment in the company. And one entire page blared in big bold print:
**objective**

- INTERCEL'S OBJECTIVE TO ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS WITH SID GEFEN TO FACILITATE THE SHARING OF INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES AND RESOURCES THROUGH LEASE AGREEMENT, BARTER OR JOINT OWNERSHIP.

I was astounded, to say the least. After much thought I refused the offer but it certainly got me interested in the cellular phone antenna business.

I was in the catbird seat. I owned land in many locations that was already zoned as commercial property and suitable for towers.

Towers cost $250,000, and Intercel built them in Jacksonville. I became one of their landlords. Two or three companies could be on one tower – companies like T-Mobile, Verizon, Sprint and AT&T – with 15-year leases, and each would pay a monthly fee to use the tower on my land. It was a good passive investment – let them use your land and send you a check.

During this time Walt and I became good friends.
He especially enjoyed the boat and spent a lot of time talking to Tim.

One day he said to me, “If ever that man would like to come work for me, I would like to have him.”

As much as I liked Tim and wanted him to stay, I told him, “Here’s an opportunity. Being a boat captain is a blind alley with no future and no benefits.”

He listened.

Tim Bellwood, a Navy electronics technician who became a boat captain, became the first local Powertel employee.

Walter eventually sold his share of Powertel, which later became T-Mobile. Crown Castle bought some of the antennas for $250 million.

Tim is now in charge of all T-Mobile Warehousing in Jacksonville. After the death of his wife and daughters, he married a woman who had adopted four day-old baby Japanese boys. Tim raised them as his sons. I often saw them together on his boat.

He now proudly tells me that all four are enlisted in the United States military.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
One of the great friendships of my life, which began in business and continued into the Palm Beach years, was with Eric Friedheim, editor-in-chief and publisher of Travel Agent magazine.

He was the son of the legendary Russian-born concert pianist, Arthur Friedheim who was a pupil and disciple of Franz Liszt.

I met Eric at a travel industry meeting in New Orleans.

I happened to be sitting with Ray Watson of the Travel Trade Gazette, a subsidiary of Morgan-Grampian, a London publisher. When the meeting was over, Ray introduced me to him.

After some small talk, Eric turned to me and said, “Tell your daddy if the price is right, I might talk to him about selling my company.”

When he walked away, I turned to Ray and asked, “What was that all about?”

Ray laughed. “Because you’re sitting with me, he assumed you are Max Geffen’s son.” (Geffen with two “f’s”.)
Max Geffen was a media powerhouse, not only did he own Morgan-Grampian but many other overseas publications as well. He was also the publisher of Parade magazine in the United States. If Max Geffen’s progeny was at the meeting, it would be logical that he would be sitting with Morgan-Grampian people. Eric and I became friends before I told him I was not Max Geffen’s son.

Eric was always a journalist, studying journalism and writing for the Eagle at American University in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately he dropped out of school because of the Depression. He couldn’t afford the $150-per-semester tuition.

Although he is best known as being editor-in-chief and chairman of Travel Agent magazine, Eric started his career editing for International News Service in Washington. He also was a White House correspondent and travel columnist for the Los Angeles Times.

Eric was the brain behind the 1947–1949 Freedom Train which, under the aegis of President Harry Truman, carried original versions of the U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights on a tour of more the 300 cities in 48 states. The impetus of the train was aimed to stir up American patriotism.

I got to know Eric quite well when he became
chairman of judges of the exhibits at the American Society of Travel Agents trade shows. There were four judges altogether – all publishers – Eric, Ziff Davis, Arthur Deidrich for the ASTA publication *Travel* and Reuben H. Donnelly. You can imagine the publicity ASTA gleaned by having these publishers involved. Because of my work with ASTA, I became a dominant figure in bringing the travel industry together.

Eric had a home in Palm Beach and was one of the owners of *Palm Beach Society* magazine. Although he only came down from New York for weekends and vacations, he and his wife Bette, and Lois and I became friendly socially.

We attended their dinner parties in Palm Beach and also visited them at their home in Westport, Connecticut.

Ours was a cherished friendship, so much so, that he called me from the hospital right after his wife Bette had a stroke. According to the doctors, she was brain-dead and on life support.

Crushed and grieving, he asked me, “What shall I do?”

I suggested that he talk to her priest.

Bette was a Roman Catholic and Eric immediately called on Cardinal Spellman at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the archdiocese of New York.
“When a person is brain-dead, it means that the soul has left the body,” Cardinal Spellman told him.

This meant that in the eyes of the church life support could be discontinued which was mercifully done.

Eric and I kept in close touch and a few years later he called to say that he had found a wonderful woman whom he wanted us to meet.

“I’m bringing her to Palm Beach, and I want your and Lois’ approval,” he said.

How could we not approve? Edith was a lovely person, and she and Eric had a great deal in common.

He was writing a book and she answered his ad for a research assistant. She was also a musician who taught piano and music at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and they both were music aficionados.

The rest is history.

Neither Eric nor I could keep our minds far from the travel industry even in the Palm Beach environs, so we created the World Travel Showcase for ASTA. A traveling, mini trade-show, with 60 displays, it would go to shopping centers in 90 cities across the United States. It was the perfect way for ASTA to bring exciting world travel promotions to local travel agencies and to the general public, their potential clients.

I even had a magnificent 60-foot backlighted
Eric and Edith Friedheim, two of the truest friends I ever had. Here we are, enjoying the Palm Beach sun.
display built as an example of what could be done.

Unfortunately, the World Travel Showcase never got off the ground because of the difficult travel situation caused by the energy crisis in the 1970s.

Eric died in June 2002 at the age of 92. His memorial service was held in the chapel of the United Nations, and I was one of the speakers. I was introduced as “The fella who put the OK on Eric’s marriage”

Edith gave me a medal Eric received that he treasured, the Jesse Neal Editorial Achievement Award.

Eric’s contributions were endless. First of all, he left the bulk of his estate to charity in the form of the Eric Friedheim Foundation which he had begun years before. He named me personal representative of his will and Edith asked me to serve as president of the Foundation.

Besides making huge contributions to his alma mater, American University, and establishing its School of Communications, there were the Friedheim Awards which were started in 1978 by the Kennedy Center and the Foundation, to reward outstanding instrumental compositions by American composers. Eric also was responsible for the Concert Hall at the Peabody School at Johns Hopkins University.

The Foundation also established and supported the Eric Friedheim National Library & News Information Center on the top floor of the National Press Club in
Washington. The library offers cash prizes each year to award outstanding travel writers. It’s motto, “Tourism Cares.”

One of the first donations made after Eric’s death was a $1.5 million grant to American University where the main quadrangle is named for him.

For Eric and Edith to have such faith in me is one of the greatest tributes I have ever had in my life.

Edith and I have continued to invest the Foundation’s money, including the establishment of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute at the University of Florida (see Chapter XXXI).
President of the University Hospital Dr. Roy Baker, a Jacksonville cardiologist, recommended to the University that I serve on the board of the University of Florida Faculty Clinic/Jacksonville along with three other businessmen and five doctors.
DURING those Palm Beach years, when my main occupations were fishing and golf, I still managed to do a few things to justify my existence. One of the most pleasant and rewarding was serving for 10 years (1980 - 1990) on the board of directors of The University of Florida Faculty Clinic/Jacksonville.

Dr. Roy Baker, a Jacksonville cardiologist, recommended to the University that I serve on the board along with three other business men and five doctors.

Dr. Baker grew up in Jacksonville, attended Emory University in Atlanta and went to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore where he specialized in cardiology. He interned at Bellevue Hospital in New York.

He returned to Jacksonville to practice medicine in the early ‘70s. As I recall, I met him through Lois. She knew his wife, Audrey, either through playing golf or playing cards and the four of us became close friends.

Dr. Baker returned from New York asking one big favor of the city or Jacksonville. He wanted immediate access to hospital care for cardiac patient emergencies –
Dr. Roy Baker and his wife Audrey.

Program for dedication ceremony for Dr. Roy Baker Fire and Rescue Communications Center, 2008.
heart attacks, strokes, seizures, etc.

As late as the mid-1960s very few hospitals had emergency rooms and ambulances. The emergency care that did exist was generally a single room with a nurse in attendance and a resident or doctor on call. Mortuaries supplied hearses to transport accident and supine patients to and from hospitals.

Emergency medicine, as we know it today, was almost unheard of at the time. It evolved from medical practices implemented during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

These practices included being able to treat a large number of patients simultaneously – getting the injured to a medical center as fast as possible (i.e. by Jeep, ambulance, helicopter), and attending to them according to their degree of urgency – the most critical being first. This practice is called triage.

The movie and television series “M.A.S.H.” is the best illustration that comes to mind.

Dr. Baker immediately put his energies into improving pre-hospital and emergency services and strived for continuing care from the field to a modern emergency department.

Coinciding with Dr. Baker’s return, was the beginning of an ambulance service provided by the Jacksonville Fire Department. John Waters, a retired
Coast Guard captain, and a member of the fire department, converted a fire house van into an ambulance by putting a cot in it. It was called the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Service.

Because of the efforts of Dr. Baker and the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Service, a multi-million dollar federal demonstration grant for emergency medicine was awarded the city of Jacksonville. Also in the 1970s a residency in emergency medicine was started at University Hospital – the city hospital – the Duval County Medical Center as it was known then.

The Duval County Medical Center was located on Eighth Street near Interstate I 95. It was a poor and distressed part of the city.

Committing emergency medical service to a city hospital was a challenge and, according to an article on *Emergency Medicine: Coming Of Age* written by David J. Vukich, M.D., the new emergency department at University Hospital was described as a “war zone,” treating over 120,000 patients a year. “Structure, training and quality were desperately needed,” he said.

It was in this atmosphere that Dr. Baker made arrangements with the University of Florida Medical School to establish a Faculty Clinic in conjunction with the hospital.

The staff would consist of experienced doctors
who would both teach and practice. They were not hard to find.

Being on staff of the Faculty Clinic appealed to doctors, especially those over 55 who had been in practice for years. They could still practice medicine but would not be involved with the business of having a practice. Being employed by the state of Florida, they were protected from malpractice suits and the mechanics of medicine. Staffed offices and examining rooms would be at their beck and call. They would have regular hours and regular vacations and salaries were attractive.

The State Board of Regents gave $3 million for buildings to house the faculty clinic and the Barnett Bank supplied an $8 million revenue bond for construction of the facility.

It was the duty of the faculty clinic board to help keep the clinic running smoothly and the doctors and patients happy. At my suggestion, and with board approval, regular surveys were given to patients with the results coming back to the board. We were given insight into the patients’ opinions of the clinic and its medical service and were able to attend to problems immediately and implement services for specific needs.

The practice was so successful that surveys were sent to physicians and all personnel, asking for their opinions - whether positive or negative. This
provided us with a realistic picture of how the clinic was functioning. Surveys are a unique form of fence-mending and correcting errors before they develop into bigger problems.

In 1985, Duval County Medical Center was designated as an affiliate of the University of Florida. In 1988 it became the Jacksonville campus for the University of Florida Health Center and in 1989 it became known as the University Medical Center. Merging with the Methodist Medical Center across the street in 1999, it became Shands Jacksonville Medical Center. It is the largest off-campus medical facility for a university in the United States and the facility is still growing.

When the university took over the medical center in 1988, the faculty clinic was running smoothly and, in 1990, the board was dissolved.

By serving on this board I was able to watch the medical center grow and see its stature recognized nationally with the construction of the Proton Therapy Institute, the latest development in precise cancer treatment.

At the moment I am in close contact with the Baker family who told me that Jacksonville Officials have named a street after Dr. Roy Baker. The building that houses rescue headquarters is also being named after him.
PART NINE

Back In Town
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
Hurricane Frances altered our lives in a big way. Unable to live in the house we owned at the Eastpoint Golf and Racket Club, I soon found another I wanted to buy.

To my surprise Lois said “No.”

She was not longer playing golf and she desperately missed our family when she was in Palm Beach. We had a big wonderful family now, with grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and summer didn’t give her enough time to enjoy them.

For me, days in Palm Beach were bonus days. There is a Mid-Eastern saying, “Every day you fish, Mohammed gives you an extra day to live” and I loved the warm winter weather.

It did seem however that Jacksonville was warming, I guess due to global warming. The winters are certainly more moderate than they used to be.
My great-grandson Josh was there for me when I needed comfort after I lost my brother Murray.

Paul Weiss and Sid

Younger days when Paul Wiese and Buddy Gerbert were here for me.
But Jacksonville had changed since we started wintering in Palm Beach. Many of my closest friends were gone. Morris Leibo, Sam Spevak, Leon Irgang, Charles Rosenblat, Paul Wiese, Bob Franklin, Roy Sloat, Buddy Gerbert and many others.

And as for my playing golf, there were few retired men my age – who were still playing. In Palm Beach there were at least 70 over 70 and many in my age bracket.

And I no longer had Murray -------

Losing Murray was one of the biggest blows of my life. Here I was, going about what seemed to be a normal day, looking after a few business details and then going to see Peg Hutchins who was in the hospital, when her telephone rang. I was to come home immediately.

When I walked into the living room Lois and my three daughters were there, plus my young great-grandson Josh. They motioned for me to sit down in my big armchair.

It was then that I was told that Murray and his wife Joan had been killed in an automobile accident. They were driving to the Houston Clinic in Macon, Georgia where Murray had had his hip replaced, when the car ran off the road, Interstate 16, at Dublin, Georgia.

I began to sob uncontrollably until Josh, my great-grandson crawled up onto my lap and hugged me.
Murray and I were very very close. We spoke to each other on the telephone almost every day.

As youngsters, however, we were separated by age. He was four years younger, and although Sylvan, Murray and I shared the same bedroom at night, (we called it the “barracks”) and he palled around with Bobby Bear’s younger brother, Martin, our great friendship didn’t really begin until after the war when he came to Florida to work with me.

As a 20-year-old Private First Class, he fought in World War II – going ashore at Normandy on D-Day, fighting in the Ardennes Campaign and the Battle of the Bulge, taking the Remagen Bridge, crossing the Rhine and meeting the Russians in Elbe, Czechoslovakia.

He was big. He made a good soldier. But in spite of four citations and numerous battle ribbons he never ever wanted to discuss the war.

Leaving the military, he went to Alfred University in Alfred, New York where he majored in Frozen Foods and met Joan Ehrens. He never did utilize the frozen food part of his education, but he did fall in love and marry Joan.

Joan’s father was a dress manufacturer, so he went into the fabric business until he came to Florida to help me with Duval Marine. After a year he opened his own boat business in Savannah. He had one store and a
Sid and Murray were devoted brothers who talked to each other on the telephone every day.

Murray’s lovely wife complemented him in every way.
marina, while I had three stores and a marina. Although we were separate, he followed me.

We would go to boat shows together and we combined forces. This enabled us to buy in volume.

Murray was civic minded and established a fine name in Savannah. He owned a lovely house in a square across from General Oglethorpe’s statue. If you saw the movie “Forrest Gump” which opened with Tom Hanks sitting on a bench, the house seen behind him was Murray’s.

Savannah is notorious for its celebration of St. Patrick’s Day when the river in dyed green and hundreds of Hibernians parade through the city. The parade, including the 24th Infantry, marched right past his house. Murray always had a party during the parade where 150 people, including the governor of Georgia, watched it from his lawn.

Murray and Joan would come to Jacksonville to celebrate the religious holidays with us and had almost as many friends here as they did in Savannah.

One of the best boat trips I ever had aboard the Sidlo was from Palm Beach to the Keys and back with Murray and Joan, Lois and I. Happy times!

Murray and Joan would both be very proud of all that their daughters have accomplished. Vicki is a guidance counselor in Dallas, Beth is a guidance
counselor in Westchester County, and Ellen is head of Ellen Gefen Productions, creating videos for the furniture industry in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Murray had always said he wanted to be buried in the old Bonaventure Cemetery which is down near the river in Savannah.

“I’m gonna be looking over the marina forever,” he would say.

Indeed, he and Joan were buried there, in a field of white marble tombstones.

The girls wanted them to go out in style and glory, so, defying tradition, identified their burial plot with a beautiful polished black marble tomb stone and polished black marble grave plates.

Murray had the biggest smile. Everyone who knew Murray loved Murray.

My business had practically run itself for more than 22 years and I only returned to Jacksonville occasionally while we were in residence in Palm Beach.

The real estate had been handled for many years by Nussbaum & Sons – now by Available Real Estate owned by Sam and Charlie Price and headed by Fred Pollitt.

My financial interests were managed by our daughter Barbara.

The outdoor advertising interests were now under
the control of our managing partners, Clear Channel and CBS.

The cell phone towers were “no-brainers.” They were rented with 15 year leases, the checks coming in a year in advance.

For 10 years, Dick McMeekin was at the helm of everything else. He and Shirley Hague, my executive assistant arranged everything.

Shirley was with me for eight years, Corky Jordan for 10 years, and Elaine Gehert has been with me for 10 years . . . so far – and the best I’ve ever had.

After leaving Gulf Life Tower, the office was set up at Southpoint. Then it was moved to a medical building we bought on Atlantic Boulevard. When I sold that building, we moved it to Metro Park on DuPont Avenue, a new office facility built by Sam and Charles Price. Our office is now in Metro South, giving us more space.

I usually go to the office for a couple of hours three times a week. Sometimes I don’t go at all.

Different projects occupied my time, like having served on the board of the Faculty Clinic and president of the Hampstead River Front Villa Condo Association at Epping Forest. My time is spent micro-managing; making final decisions on real estate holdings, the Friedheim estate and maintaining our partnership with
Elaine and Dr. Richard Gehert. Elaine has been my executive secretary for the past 10 years, the best assistant I’ve ever had.

Sam Price, Fred Pollitt, Elaine, Sid, Lois and Dick Wyzanski, at a birthday lunch at the Athens Café.
Clear Channel and CBS.

Also, on moving back from Palm Each, we built a bank on a piece of our property.

When Lois asked, “Now why did you get involved with that?”

I thought and perhaps I said – “You don’t drive by an unclaimed gold mine without stopping the car.”

I also started EDIS, a luncheon club for men over 70 which meets every second Thursday of each month. EDIS stands for Every Day Is Sunday.

Fish?

I sold the boat in 2006. And Yes, I have already bought another. It was Lois’ idea for a birthday present to me.

But what I am trying to do most is perpetuate the tenets of my father, that is what I really want to leave behind.

You have just read about the work part and the ability God gave me to recognize business opportunities and make the most of them. I have also told you about the fun, travel, the excitement and material perks that came along with it.

Now I want to turn to other thoughts, perhaps very much more important, of my legacy.
Although there are many Geffens in the United States, our name G-e-f-e-n, which is spelled with only one “f”, is rarer. It is the Hebrew spelling, where no two of the same letters appear together in the language.

In Israel, the name Gefen – with one “f”, is as ubiquitous as the name Smith in the United States. There are hundreds of Gefens in Israel. Just look them up in a Jerusalem English language telephone book.

The word “gefen” is included in a Hebrew prayer that has the phrase “…fruit of the vine.” “Vine” in this instance is the word “gefen” pronounced “gef-en.” Consequently, in Israel, an English word suggesting wine has been translated into the Hebrew word “gefen.”

Therefore, when those families with names like Weinberg, Weinstein, Weintraub, et al, settled in Palestine before it became Israel in 1948, they associated their name with the word “wine” and changed it to the Hebrew – Gefen.

Because of the spelling of my name, more than
Herbert Isaac.

Marion Isaac and her sisters Ann Manasse and Claire Isaac.

Lois with her sisters Dorothy Carr and Faye Buchman.

Three daughters, three sisters Carol Greenspan, Barbara Jaffè, Dr. Ann Grenadier.
once have I been identified as a sabra, a native born Israeli.

I have always been very proud of my family. Although I was proud of my heritage, I took it for granted and it was a very natural part of my life. I was raised in a Kosher household. I went to synagogue. I have always believed in God, one supreme being for everyone. I still do.

I say all of us have one God. We are just taking different paths to Him.

This is also another area of our lives where Lois and I have been completely compatible. Her father, Herbert Isaac, a true Southerner, had come to Jacksonville with his family from Georgia. Herbert’s father, Max, was one of the early members of the first Jewish congregation in Jacksonville, Aveth Chesed – Congregation of Peace. It is where I worship today. We found his name in the Aveth Chesed’s 100th Anniversary Book.

Six generations of his family have worshiped in the same synagogue.

When Lois and I attended synagogue it bothered both of us that the choir consisted of non-Jews hired to sing transliterations, which were new and unfamiliar to them. We felt the congregation would be stronger if members participated in the music program.

As a result, the Gefen Family Music and Choir
The ground-breaking of the Jewish Community Alliance.

In Grateful Appreciation To
MR. & MRS. SIDNEY GEFEN
For Your Support & Devotion To The
JEWISH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

GROUNDBREAKING
April 5, 1987
Fund was created in the early 1990s bringing a full-time Cantor to the synagogue and establishing a choir of members. In addition, the choir was brought from the upper loft at the rear of the synagogue to the front where we could see and hear it.

The fund also helped expand the scope and variety of the music program, which enabled the synagogue to hold special musical events, buy an organ and a baby grand piano. The organ was dedicated to the memory of my brother Murray Gefen and his wife, Joan.

The Jacksonville Jewish community also had a lovely country club. But because of the membership’s inability to support it, in the late 1970’s Beauclerc Country Club folded. The golf course was purchased by developer Peter Boss, who turned it into the Villages of San Jose, a gated community of townhouses and small villas.

The Beauclerc Country Club board of directors, of which I was a member, kept 10 acres of land and the clubhouse. Eventually a meeting was held to decide what to do with it.

Lois, who never speaks at public meetings, stood up and said, “I think we ought to have a Jewish Educational Alliance.”

David A. Stein, son of the founder of Burger King, who was a shareholder of Property Corporation
Logan Greenspan’s Bar Mitzvah in 1994. Logan is a member of the congregation of Ahavath Chesen.
A family Seder which includes all of the family – children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
which owned the Beauclerc Country Club property, contacted the Jewish Welfare Board In New York.

“We’ve been waiting for you people in Jacksonville for 35 years,” they told him.

The land and building were surveyed and the Welfare Board estimated that it would cost $6 million to build what we wanted.

Thirty-one people gave $3.2 million and the community pledged $2.8 million. Like most ambitious projects, it ran $1 million over budget so 10 individuals met the bill.

Today, approximately 900 people use the Jewish Community Alliance Center every day. It has two Olympic-size swimming pools, one indoors and one out, and tennis courts. It includes a preschool as well as classes and programs for all ages. The center has been a huge success and a wonderful addition to the area.

As you enter the center, there is a Holocaust Scroll on display in a glass case.

One of the items on Adolf Hitler’s master list for post-war Germany was to build a museum displaying the artifacts of The Extinct Civilization – Judaism. As he ravaged Europe and began his collection for the museum, he seized 1,530 valuable Hebrew Scrolls and stored them in a warehouse in Prague, Czechoslovakia. When Allied troops came upon the warehouse, they
removed the scrolls to a protected area until they could be moved to the Westminster Synagogue in London, where they were restored and distributed throughout the world.

We acquired one for the Jewish Community Alliance center.

*We will never forget.*

Our grandson Sandy Zimmerman is president of the Jacksonville Jewish Center at the moment.

I was very touched in 2007 when Lois and I were asked to celebrate Passover with our daughter Barbara and her family. As you know, Passover commemorates the Exodus – circa 1314 B.C. – when, in seven days, Moses freed the Israelites from Egyptian slavery.

Passover, therefore, is celebrated for seven days in the spring each year and a festive meal, called a Seder, is held the first and second evenings of the celebration. During the meal, the story of the Exodus is retold, with readings, and symbols of the occasion are explained – unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and others. Imagine, using the old rituals, how much time this could take.

Barbara found directions for a 30-minute Seder on the Internet. She set up a beautiful long table for the dinner and her lovely family participated; in addition to Barbara and Larry, there were Sandy and Lynn Zimmerman and their two children, Leah and Brooke;
Brad and Robin Zimmerman with their children Samantha and Joshua; and Darren and Jamie Jaffe and their children, Garret and Lauren; Lois and me.

What touched Lois and me the most was that our great-grandchildren were participating and carrying on the tradition, a continuity my parents would have loved. And I have now been informed that I will have another great-grandchild in July, the parents, Adam and Leslie Greenspan.

To think Lois and I started all this. Now there are 19 of us. Quite an accomplishment to go from two to 19 and to have 17 of them living in Jacksonville.
CHAPTER XXVIII

The best deal Lois and I ever made in our lives was when we agreed to pay for our children’s educations as long as they went to a university within 90 miles of Jacksonville.

The result, I believe, is that 17 of 19 family members live within 18 miles of where we do.

Many people think that exposure to big and sophisticated cities is a necessary part of a person’s education. I know all about big cities, but I cannot imagine a more satisfactory or happy life than we have created together in Jacksonville.

What joy it is to have my family around me, to be able to go to their houses for holiday dinners and poolside parties.

Isn’t it ironic that I, who was raised only with brothers, would produce a family of women? Women other than my mother were not a part of my life.

I knew very little about children. Consequently, Lois had the mainline to our daughters while my life seemed to be set on getting our future established.
(Top) Murray’s wedding. Back row, left to right: Sid, Bernard, Nathan, Murray, Sylvan and Thomas Gefen; Front row: Bernard’s wife Rosilyn, Joan - the bride, and Sylvan’s wife Marilyn.

(Middle) Cousins have been important to me in my life: Ed Sedran, Seymore Gefen, Stanley Sedran and yours truly. On our ocean front balcony.

(Bottom right) Ed and Robin Gefen, Ed is Bernard’s Grandson who was my father’s brother.
As a family, we always had dinner together at the dining room table, with our housekeeper Dora serving, and I remember lively conversations.

Family vacations were always very happy times. Lois’ Aunt Flora Peterson joined us as a baby sitter.

We really were an all-for-one, one-for-all family.

Ann, the baby girl who greeted me so warmly that night I returned from overseas, did have a time adjusting to me. Who was this creature who had come into her life and taken away her mother’s full attention? But I finally won her over.

Growing up she was always with a bunch of girls. I think of her as a “beauty pageant” type.

A student at Jacksonville University, Ann was engaged to marry a nephew of my cohort Morris Leibo. Instead she fell deeply in love with Ed Grenadier, a classmate. They had a beautiful wedding at Beauclerc Country Club which Lois planned.

A CPA, Ed is past-president of the Baptist Medical Center Foundation and is very active in fund-raising and civic activities. He was also president of the Southside Kiwanis Club and president of the congregation of Ahavath Chesed, our temple.

They have three children. Bobby is married to April and they have a son Kyle. Todd is married to
Jennifer, who gave us three great-grandchildren—Emma, Max and Jane, and Ivy is married to Dan Butterworth and they have a son Ethan.

Maybe I overdid the “work ethic,” but Ann went on to get her Ph.D. in psychology from NOVA Southeastern University. She now has her own biofeedback clinic, Bio-Feedback Associates of Northeast Florida in her own building in Baymeadows. The clinic employs six bio-feedback therapists, including daughter Ivy who also graduated from Jacksonville University.

Bobby owns B & B Lighting, which services tall street and parking lot lights. He owns five mobile hydraulic lift trucks similar to those used by the Jacksonville Electric Authority.

Todd also graduated from Jacksonville University, and had business and marketing experience with Lanier, a 3M company. He works for Synthes, a company that makes medical devices for orthopedic patients. He puts on scrubs and goes into the operating room to demonstrate, assist or implement the devices. He is pretty well known in the medical community around town.

The Grenadiers have lived in Deerwood for many years, where Ed served on the board of the Deerwood Country Club and played top-notch golf. They have just remodeled and enlarged their home and swimming pool.
All my grandchildren in one place at one time. Ivy Grenadier, Sandy Zimmerman, Adam and Logan Greenspan, Todd Grenadier and Bradley Zimmerman.

Murray and Joan would be proud of their daughters pictured above with two of my daughters. Carol with Ellen and Beth and Barbara next to Vicki.
Great-grandchildren
(Top) Emma, Jane and Max Grenadier.
(Below) Lois with Sandy, Brooke and Leah.
(Right) Ethan Caldarelli
(Bottom right) Kyle Grenadier
area which is the scene for many happy family picnics.

Ed and Ann like to bike together and own a tandem bicycle. I occasionally take them on the boat to the Florida Yacht Club, drop them off and they bicycle all the way back to Deerwood.

Although Barbara, our second daughter, was the tomboy of the family, she was definitely “daddy’s little girl.” I used to kiss her on the neck with the excuse that I was “looking for sugar.”

She was very athletic and a great swimmer, and she still runs six miles every day.

Barbara started college years at the University of Florida but ended up at Jacksonville University. Although she was editor of the university’s newspaper with credits in journalism, the school did not give her a degree but certification in the business school.

She married a fellow student, Lanny Zimmerman, and they, too, had a lovely wedding at Beauclerc Country Club. They have two children, Sandy and Brad.

Barbara, who is highly motivated, soon discovered her interests and Lanny’s were leading in different directions. They subsequently divorced.

In addition to her expertise in the financial field, Barbara was very interested in civic affairs. As a result, and she became involved with Robert Shevin’s campaign for governor in 1980. He had been the state’s attorney
general from 1971 to 1979. While working on the campaign, she met Larry Jaffe, a co-worker, who had been Shevin’s roommate at the University of Florida.

Larry, also divorced, was older than Barbara by several years. He was mature, stable, a respected CPA in Jacksonville and as interested in finance as she.

Discovering their many common interests, Barbara and Larry fell in love and marriage followed.

Larry’s children; Andrea, Darren and his wife Jamie and their children Garret and Lauren, are very much a part of our family, especially when there are parties and holiday celebrations. However, I am not as involved in their lives and careers as I am with those of Barbara’s children.

Barbara was managing director of Wachovia Securities, where she has formed the Jaffe Group, 3,000 clients for whom she invests and also publishes a monthly bulletin. With the new merger of Wachovia and Wells Fargo, Barbara has now relocated the entire Jaffee group (3,000 clients) with Citi Corps Smith-Barney. She is now managing director of Wealth Management. She is listed in Baron’s as one of the top 100 women in finance.

Outside of business she was the first woman to be chairman of the Jacksonville Police and Fire Pension Fund and has also served on the boards of Baptist Medical Center, River Garden Hebrew Home, the
Family Matters

Barbara Jaffe of the Jaffe Group has determination and energy, in the office and out.

STORY BY LISA E. DAVIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL FRakes

Bradley Zimmerman, Barbara and Larry Jaffe with Bradley’s Josh and Samantha, Sandy Zimmerman with his Leah and Brooke.
United Way, and many others.

Larry is an avid football fan - especially of the Gators. His love of football also led to his becoming a member of the task force that helped bring a National Football League franchise and the Jaguars to Jacksonville.

Among the other people involved in bringing the team to town was Carl Cannon, publisher of The Florida Times-Union.

Both of Barbara’s boys, Sandy and Brad, went to the Bolles School, the University of Florida and had Wall Street training. Brad went back to Florida for a business program and accelerated to get his master’s degree as a Certified Investment Management Analyst.

Sandy, and his wife Lynn, have two daughters, Leah and Brooke. Brad, and his wife Robin, have two children, Samantha and Joshua.

Sandy and Brad are both senior vice presidents at Citi Corps and Smith-Barney.

Sandy and Lynn and Brad and Robin have just raised $92,000 for the religious school at the Jacksonville Jewish Center.

Barbara and Larry live in a villa across from ours in Epping Forest where her grandchildren decided for some reason to nickname Lois and me “GG-her” and “GG-him.”

Nice to have them close by.
Carol, the baby—I called her Skeezix after the boy in the Gasoline Alley comic strip—was the most docile of our girls.

She went to Oglethorpe College in Atlanta for a year but moved to Gainesville while her husband Bruce got his law degree at the University of Florida.

She married Bruce Greenspan, the boy she has been in love with since ninth grade. Her wedding was at the University Club. They were married when they were very young.

Bruce is a lawyer who first worked in the public defender’s office. He later opened his own practice.

Carol has been helping him run his office for 20 years. They are very much involved in each other’s lives and still very much in love.

They have two boys. Adam and Logan.

Adam went to Bolles and then to Johns Hopkins to become a bio-medical engineer. In the summers he worked with John Hardy in the laboratory of the Mayo Clinic and also in the laboratories of the University of Florida and Johns Hopkins. He is now working at Johns Hopkins in his chosen profession.

Logan, our youngest grandson, received his degree in finance from Emory University in Atlanta. After fulfilling a two-year contract with Wachovia, he went to Aspen, Colorado, to assist in organizing and
opening a mega-health club. Missing his Southern roots, he returned to Atlanta where he was assistant to the managing partner of Wright Equity Partners. He is now at the Kellogg School of Business at Northwestern University, where he is earning his MBA.

Carol and Bruce live in Mandarin, and much of the house is furnished with furniture Lois and I collected throughout our lives. They came by the furnishings when we moved from San Jose Forest to Epping Forest and Marvin Sherman of Liberty Furniture and his decorator furnished our new home while we were away.

Whenever I walk into Carol and Bruce’s home, a wave of nostalgia comes over me because I feel as if I am back home in the house where we raised our wonderful daughters.

Perhaps you might think we spoiled our children, that we helped them financially. I will admit, that when I was able, to giving them the government’s allotted tax-free amount each year. And Lois and I did help them from time to time with houses and things, but we were very careful.

Having grown up in the Depression, credit card spending, imported cars and large houses, for those so very young, worried me.

So I checked up on them to see how they were doing.
Celebrating Sid’s 85th birthday party for the family at Ivy and Dan Butterworth’s. Standing left to right: Florence Grenadier, Leslie Greenspan, Bruce Greenspan, Carol Greenspan, Lois Gefen, Sid Gefen, Barbara Jaffe, Larry Jaffe, Jamie Jaffe, Darren Jaffe, Lynn Jaffe, Ivy Butterworth, Robin Zimmerman, April Grenadier, Robert “Bobby” Grenadier, Ann Grenadier, Ed Grenadier, Jennifer Grenadier; Kneeling left to right: Adam Greenspan, Logan Greenspan, Max Jaffe, Sandy Zimmerman, Dan Butterworth, Brad Zimmerman, Todd Grenadier
There is great satisfaction in succeeding, and Lois and I did not want to take away the initiative of their succeeding on their own.

They have.

I have been blessed.
Clockwise: Bob Moses, Sid, Perry Cohen, Marvin Sherman and Walter Kraemer

Bernard Gefen, Murray Gefen, Rosalind Gefen, Sid and Sylvan Gefen at Bernard and Rosalind’s 50th wedding anniversary.
CHAPTER XXIX

A ship can not reach port without a crew, just as a man cannot reach his goals without help.

What a crew I had, keeping this ship afloat and in shape for all of these years. My crew included lawyers and accountants who kept watch over my business life, doctors who saw to my well being, and family and friends who gave me ballast with their support and love. How very much I needed them all.

Right from the beginning, I tried to get the best professional advice I could.

When I was just back from the war and going into business, I needed help handling a lease. Although I was young, I knew I should listen to lawyers not laymen and decided to seek out one of Jacksonville’s best at the time, Joseph Glickstein, Sr. He was then general council for Louis Wolfson.

Although Attorney Glickstein lived in Neptune
Beach, he had his office in a building at the corner of Bay and Ocean Streets. (It is the building that now has a giant jaguar painted in its windows.)

The office was small, two rooms, a walk-up on the second floor.

When we were finished with our business I asked him, “What do I owe you?”

“I live in Neptune Beach and have the only flagpole on the beach. It needs a flag,” he said. “Son, you are just home from the war. There’s a flag company up the street. How about getting me a new flag?”

I was deeply touched. This gesture was considerate and respectful of me in every way.

Joe Glickstein knew how to make franchise leases long before McDonald’s was ever heard of. He helped me negotiate a lease with Uncle John’s Pancake House in Santa Barbara, California for a pancake house I was putting in a building I had built to their specifications. It was at the corner of Beach Boulevard and Hickman Road.

There were two offers; the first, a 15-year lease with three options or, the second, a 30-year lease with no options.

When I heard the first offer, I jumped at it.

“That doesn’t sound bad,” I said.

He looked at me and said, “Son, do you want me
to represent you or do you want to represent yourself?”

I was taken aback.

“I’m sorry, sir, I really want you to represent me.”

“An option is a one-way street,” he said, “If they want options they have to pay for them.”

He directed me toward the longer lease where I received a percentage not only of the revenue but also of the growth. It ended, due to Joe’s foresight, that during the last 10 years I received three times the original rent.

As Joe became busier, he turned me over to his assistant McCarthy Crenshaw (father of Representative Ander Crenshaw [R. Fla.])

Mac was very savvy about real estate.

I have discovered that the secret of buying real estate is to buy it “right”, meaning – at the right time at the right price. The best buys, I found, came through either attorneys or accountants where I could close “fast”. For me, working with them was far better than working with brokers in the real estate market.

Mac, as I have already told you, became a partner in the purchase of three lots in the area south of Gulf Life Tower. Originally I put an outdoor advertising sign on one of the pieces of property. They are now part of the Baptist Hospital complex.

I progressed through the Glickstein firm with Mark Hulsey, Larry Fay (who became judge), Joe
(Top) Dear friends celebrating a birthday together at the Wine Cellar. Left to right: Marvin Sherman, Lois, Bea Sherman, yours truly, Sylvia and Walter Kraemer, Shirley and Perry Cohen.

(Left) Karl Jabour - enjoys an afternoon aboard the Sidlo.

(Bottom left) Dr. Steve Petrow (right), with friends.
Glickstein, Jr. and Byron Block.

With my move to the Gulf Life Tower, I changed firms. First it was Louis Safer, who became a judge, and ultimately Louis Ansbacher who was my attorney for 20 years – until he died.

He called me every morning between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m., that was – until Lois put a stop to it. His door was always open and he was always ready to listen.

It was automatic with him. You would give him a problem, he would reflect on it. Then he would come up with a solution that was amicable, equitable and successful.

I will always miss him.

Since then, many wonderful attorneys have helped me make my way. In appreciation, I want to mention them here.

First, Mike Schneider and Lawrence Ansbacher who took over after Louis died.

And with the diversification of my interests, others were added – Brenna Durden, of Lewis, Longman & Walker, who is listed among the top 100 of “The Best Lawyers in America” in *Jacksonville Magazine*; Bill Birchfield; Chester Bedell; Morrie Goldstein and Don Wright of Rogers Towers.

There were the accountants, too, who carefully tended the complicated financial aspects of my business

This old body has held up pretty well after 88 years of wear and tear, thanks to a crew of doctors who have helped me ever since I injured my back during the war.

Dr. Paul Hutchins, chief of orthopedics at St. Vincent’s and St. Lukes hospitals, took over first.

Fresh home from the war, and concerned about how I would pay for his services, I asked him, “What’s your fee?”

“You own a boat place, don’t you?” he said. “How about a propeller for my Evinrude motor?”

I ended up going to the Naval Hospital at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville. It seemed as if they were trying to keep me there forever. Lois tried to run the business but sales were dropping off and I had to get out.

I called Paul.

“I can’t get you out of that hospital,” he said. “You are going to have to do it yourself.”

The next time the doctors had rounds, I propped myself against the bed and convinced them I was ready to leave. Lois picked me up. I went to Paul’s office to get a shot of novocaine so I could go to work.

I was so lame and in pain that I had a cot in my
office where I rested whenever I was alone. Strategically placed mirrors alerted me, while I was in a supine position, to customers entering the store.

Dr. Roy Sloat, my dentist, introduced me to Darvon. This was this pill that did the trick.

A customer came in one day and said, “Where’s the crippled man.”

I was happy to say, “He doesn’t work here anymore.”

Paul Hutchins and I became good friends. He was the one who taught me how to fish which certainly has brought a tremendous amount of joy to my life. His wife Peggy and Lois had a wonderful time playing golf together.

He went on to become the leading orthopedic surgeon in Jacksonville and the team doctor for the University of Florida Gators. He didn’t like to sit on the bench alone during a game and often asked me to join him, a prime vantage point if you like football.

Paul had back problems, too, and went to the Oschner Clinic in New Orleans for surgery. Unfortunately he got a staph infection which caused his spleen to burst and he died. He was not old, perhaps in his late 50s. I am still in contact with his family.

Other doctors have followed but I’m especially
grateful to my current Mayo team who refuel and repair me – Drs. Gary Lee, Steve Petrou, Kurt Blasser, Jim Bolin, and Mary O’Connor. For many years my friend Ronnie Levin has been my dentist.

And then there are my wonderful friends who replenish my spirit, friends still with me since the Granada days – Bea and Marvin Sherman, Shirley and Perry Cohen, Sylvia and Walter Kraemer, Sam and Fay Price and many many more I could name.

My cup runneth over. The wonderful life I have had is because of all of them.

Yes, the ship is still sailing, full steam ahead.
CHAPTER XXX

When you get to be my age, one can’t help but step back and wonder. “What am I leaving behind?”

I am not talking about trusts or financial inheritances. My business affairs are running along in fine order and they will help support my progeny for many years, which gives me great comfort.

Nor am I talking about a building with my name to commemorate some endowment I might have made. I have always felt that the rewards of giving are results.

God knows I am leaving behind a different world, one very different from the one I was born into.

I don’t think human beings have changed so much as their way of doing things. Methods have changed which I think are better and simpler.

What I am wondering is if I made any lasting contribution or put any small dent in the world as we know it today? Was I part of any of the changes?

I was certainly witness to them.

One of the reasons writing this book has been
Marvin and Bea Sherman friends who have continually replenished my spirit. I cannot imagine my life without them.
interesting is that it has given me a chance to remember
details of the wonderful life I have led. But it also has
given me a chance to reflect on where I was as those
changes happened.

We can all remember where we were when
the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Harvey Oswald
assassinated President Kennedy, man landed on the
moon and terrorists crashed planes into the twin towers
on 9/11. Those were incredulous instances that brought
all of us to a halt.

But do we remember our place in the evolution
of flying – from biplanes to jets, of home entertainment
– from radio to television, of business procedures –
from adding machines to computers, of travel – from
cars to planes, of communication – from party line to
cell phone?

In reflecting on my life I realize that I was not
only witness to but was also involved in a small way in
some of these changes.

Starting with my first ambition of being an
accountant, I learned to wire the back of one of the first
business IBM computers for alphabetic and numeric
tabulating and sorting.

Working with airplane design and maintenance,
I helped change them from clumsy boxes to sleek
fighters.
Arthur and Polly Gutman, Morris and Ellen Leibo, Sid and Lois, Dr. Irving and Bea Diamond at a Beauclerc Country Club costume party.
The boat business in my life led me to getting laws passed to establish a boat as a motor vehicle, helping to make a boat affordable for the working man.

It also led me to the wealthy customer who could afford a television set. Wanting to service their TVs caused me to buy an electronic lab that was needed in the construction of Cape Canaveral launching pads and the Caribbean island tracking stations for NASA.

Detroit losing its monopoly on manufacturing automobiles to Japan happened in my time, too. Guess who was one of the first to import Nissans?

The tourism business is totally changed because of video, cable and Internet. Now, everyman’s travel dream can be a reality. A company that grew out of a boat business helped make travel easier and less expensive by being one of the first to computerize methods for packaging tours.

And we discovered cell phones and cell towers by looking for other uses for billboard real estate. And we watched those billboards go digital.

While serving on the board of the University of Florida Faculty Clinic/Jacksonville, I watched an average hospital grow, and with the introduction of its Proton Therapy Institute, be one of the most advanced cancer treatment centers in the world.

Yes, it has been quite a ride and it is wonderful to
Presidents in my life
(Top left) Ferdinand Marcos;
(Bottom left) Ed Grenadier,
Jimmy Carter and yours truly;
(Top right) Sid, George H. W.
Bush, Barbara; (Bottom right)
Hillary and Bill Clinton.
Mr. Gefen,
With best wishes and appreciation,

[Signatures]
H. R. Ford  Ronald Reagan  Richard M.  Barbara Bush
Betty Ford  Nancy Reagan  Lee Minton  C. Bush
discover in review that I have been a part of the changing world. In retrospect I find I was a sort of innovator and, perhaps, even a pioneer in my time, which perhaps may give my family a lead to follow.

But as I look at the ever changing world, whatever small impact I might have had, melds into the whole.

The true value of my life, I feel, is found in Lois and my children. I see them building their lives, settling into lovely homes, investing wisely, setting up educational funds. Through their mother’s impetus, they know what to do. They have been taught to contribute and to involve themselves in public service.

What I leave behind is a family to carry on my principles.

Have a good name.
Love God, family and country.
Live life with love.
Be intellectually curious and seek a good education.
Have a strong work ethic.

When my grandson Todd was very young, he was asked by a contemporary, “How do you get money?”
I heard him reply, “You earn it.”
Yes, I have left something behind.
Fred and Andrew Gefen, my brother Sylvan’s sons

My father Nathan and I in front of our St. Nicholas house. (Circa 1950s)

My brother Sylvan and his wife Marilyn with Lois. (Circa 1960s)

(Above) Max, Jane and Emma Grenadier, my beautiful great-grandchildren.

(Right) Daren and Jamie Jaffe and their children Lauren and Garret.
Sid with his friend Adreus, owner of more cruise ships in the world during the 70's.

Bob Franklin and Bernie Siegal spend an afternoon aboard the Sidlo.

Shirley Cohen, Marion Siegal, Dorothy Carr and Lois having cocktails on the Sidlo.

Seining off Jacksonville Beach near the Seascape.

Sid with his friend Adreus, owner of more cruise ships in the world during the 70's.
Paul Wiese, Sam Spevak, Marvin Sherman and Sid, together again.

Lois and Sid at the wailing wall in Jerusalem.

Marvin Sherman, Paul Wiese and Sid, friends forever.

Sid, Paul Wiese and Buddy Gerber enjoying an evening together.
Sid, Fran Kinne – President of Jacksonville University, Lois and Robert Shircliff, Chairman of the University Board.

Sid,

This was taken at the Order of the Dolphin Banquet in May, and I wanted you to have it.

Your friendship and support are very meaningful to all of us at Jacksonville University and we are proud to have you as a member of our Major Gift Society.

Best regards, as always,

[Signature]

[Handwritten text]
Barbara sponsored this Habitat house in Jacksonville in memory of our housekeeper Dora Holmes Green. President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Roselynn Carter are pictured with Barbara’s husband Larry Jaffe and her son Bradley Zimmerman.

Bradley, Sid and Larry at the same scene.
The scene is still Sid Gefen’s office, and I am sitting where I did for that first interview, in one of the two leather chairs that face the big desk with the larger executive chair behind it.

The room is familiar now because I have been here for two hours, once a week for more than two years, listening to stories, asking questions and talking.

SG and I have been writing a book together, the story of his life.

Since I am not a native of Jacksonville, I had not heard of him, nor he of me. Consequently, this story has evolved as honestly as it could, with no previous influence or opinions. It has been “listened to” and retold by a total stranger.

SG and I were brought together by Dick McMeekin, once manager of the Coliseum, the Civic Auditorium and the Gator Bowl for the city of Jacksonville and former general manager of American Advertising, a Gefen company. Dick is now the voice of Jones College Radio.
I had met Dick only twice before he called to ask if I would be interested in helping a Jacksonville businessman write his memoirs.

Dick knew me through The Florida Times-Union, where I was a reporter, columnist and women’s editor, and more recently through Water’s Edge magazine, where I am a department editor and still writing. I say “still” because SG and I are of the same generation.

SG has not come into the office yet, it isn’t quite 10 o’clock. He is always on time. It is part of his work ethic.

“When you make a date with a person, you make a contract with him,” he said.

He honors his contracts.

As I wait, I look around the room that I have gotten to know so well. I know what is hanging on the peach-beige walls, what is stacked on the bookshelves and even what is scattered over his huge desk.

There is the fish knife, a gift “To a fine Sportsman from the Springfield Atlantic Bank.” He incessantly takes in and out of its wooden case like a dagger from a sheath. He also picks up a very executive-looking nameplate that reads “SID GEFEN” and fiddles with it. The desk also is home to a pen and pencil holder, a paper spike and a marble paperweight which is engraved with “Honorary member, Big Brothers & Big Sisters.”
SG is especially proud of the thick spiral-bound looseleaf notebook that is always on the left corner of his desk. It contains maps, plats and aerial views of his real estate holdings, which his grandson Brad compiled for him. When we talk about a piece of land, a cell tower or a billboard, SG looks it up in the book, shows me the picture of it and tells me exactly where it is. I know Jacksonville as I never did before.

On one wall are framed letters declaring SG a member of the Republican Senatorial and Congressional Inner Circle, plus an autographed group photo of Presidents Ford, Reagan, Nixon and Bush and their wives.

“Do you know what a good president should provide?” SG asked me when he first showed the picture to me.

“Good government, an open door and a sympathetic ear,” he said, answering his own question.

Behind me hangs a document with an embossed seal stating that SG is a Mason, belongs to the Moroccan Temple and perpetually supports 20 Shriner’s Hospitals and two burn centers. It reads,

“We stand tall so they can walk.”

Being a Mason means a great deal to SG.

Next to that is the framed copy of an article that appeared on the front page of the December 30, 1981,
Times-Union. It reported the sale of SG’s company.

3M Buys International Productions Inc.,
Producers of Florida Huddle

On another wall hangs a fishing trophy, a mounted 7-foot, 7-inch sailfish. The brass plaque beneath it reads,

Caught by Sidney Gefen,
July 1952 aboard Ship Melody
Capt. Stu Loveland
Sailfish Alley off Ponte Vedra

There is a bookshelf beneath the trophy filled with books and pouring over with documents.

On top of the shelf is a scale model of a modern apartment building with a restaurant, offices and enclosed parking. Architecturally speaking, it could have held its own with other commercial buildings on Riverside Avenue. Conceived by SG, Charles Price and architect Ted Pappas, it was to be built on the Duval Marine property and designed to extend out over the St. Johns River. Unfortunately, the Downtown Development Authority would not go along with the plans.

“They didn’t want the Riverwalk to go through the building,” he said.

Behind the big desk and SG’s chair is another
desk under a large window.

A framed poem written by a former boat captain is at one end. A picture of Lois and Sid, an international clock that doesn’t run and a magnifying glass centered in a miniature boat wheel are in the middle. At the other end is the line of drawers from which SG retrieved the black folders at our first meeting.

Back to those black folders, the ones he slammed on the desk when I first asked him why he wanted to write a book.

You recall that he said, “The reason I want to write a book is so that my children and grandchildren know that there was more to me and my life than this.”

The black binders contain the 3M contracts to buy International Productions, positive proof of SG’s national financial success.

But they don’t include the adventure, the excitement or the fun of getting there. Or stories of the joyful living that came afterward.

They do not mention the wife, family and friends whom he loved and, in turn, supported him along the way.

Sid Gefen would far rather be remembered for the boat captain’s poem than any black folder.

Titled “His Touch” it begins:
How could I describe
the touch of a man
who could turn any problem
into, “I can!”
With a simple thought,
a wink and a smile,
the will to walk that extra mile.

How could I describe
the touch of a man
who could turn any vision
into a workable plan.
With confidence and can-do,
A will to succeed,
Blessed with ability – never [guided by] greed.

How could I describe
the touch of a man,
who could raise three daughters
with – a simple plan.
That they would always
and evermore be
The girls in whom his principles he’d see.

How could I describe
The touch of a man
Who lived his life
with a basic plan.
To live by the rules
sent from God up above
And sprinkle them with [incredible] love.

How could I describe
the touch of this man,
who believed in me.
Now this is my plan.
To live my life,
Following . . . rules just like he,
hoping someday he sees himself in me.

How could I describe
The touch of this man.

Tim Bellwood

I hear the outer door opening. SG has arrived, right on time, once again keeping his contract with me. Writing the book and getting to know Sid has been a wonderful, rewarding experience, and I have made a good friend.

W.R.Y.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

No one can go it alone when writing another’s memoir and I have several people whose help I could not have done without.

First of all, thank you Dick McMeekin, for putting Sid Gefen and me together. How did you know we would fit so well?

Secondly, I wouldn’t have thought of taking on the project without the help of Atlanta-based Scott Simpson, my editor when I was on staff at The Florida Times-Union. He has always tended my writing with loving care and with him I knew I would stay on track.

Mary-Lil McClure, a former teacher, can spot a typo from 500 feet. If she missed one while copy-reading this book, it was because there were so many. Madie Martin helped edit, too.

My friend Bryant Skinner helped me write the contract which makes him my business manager.

And last but not least, thank you Elaine Gehert for letting me disrupt your office routine, and Lois – your domestic tranquility, while all this was going on.

And thank you, Sid, for two interesting, educational and entertaining years. It was a great trip.

W.R.Y.
CLIMB ANOTHER MOUNTAIN PLANT ANOTHER TREE
PART ELEVEN

Still Climbing Mountains; Still Planting Trees
As I mentioned, when my close friend Eric Friedheim died in 2002, I was designated to serve as President of the Eric Friedheim Foundation. The Foundation included the bulk of Eric’s estate.

Over the intervening years, Edith Friedheim (who served on the Foundation with me) and I looked for opportunities to put the Foundation’s money to good use. We wanted to ensure that the investments made by the Foundation would reflect Eric’s interests, ideas, and principles and would continue to provide a legacy to Eric’s memory for years into the future.

Eric’s life work was writing and publicizing the travel and tourism industry. Through his publications, including Travel Agent magazine, he wrote and edited articles illuminating trends in travel and tourism. For five decades, his weekly opinions and perspectives on industry trends earned him the respected title of “Dean of the Travel Industry.”
Eric believed that tourism, especially international tourism, created enormous opportunities to foster global understanding and cooperation. It was no accident that Eric’s memorial service was held in the chapel of the United Nations, as Eric’s work as a tourism ambassador opened many doors between countries around the world.

Edith and I agreed that the University of Florida, and its Center for Tourism Research and Development, offered an excellent opportunity to continue Eric’s ideas and principles. There could be no better place to celebrate Eric’s life and continue his work in expanding the role of tourism. With eight full-time professors and 27 affiliated professors, representing several countries, The University of Florida’s College of Health and Human Performance already had the largest concentration of professors devoted to tourism research.

A gift from the Foundation provided the catalyst to grow the travel and tourism research of the university; the professors and students of the school provided the passion and energy to carry forward Eric’s work. The University of Florida had the infrastructure, the international focus, and the desire to grow.

The Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute (EFTI) was born.
The mission of EFTI is: “building a bridge between the tourism industry, organizations, destinations, and higher education through excellence in interdisciplinary research . . .”

Goals of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute:
Research tourism-related impacts that include economic, environmental, and cultural issues.
Develop opportunities for tourism research in the private, public, and non-profit sectors.
Help formulate public- and private-sector policies that will lead to improvement in tourism planning and development.
Provide training for the private, public, and non-profit sectors via workshops and certification programs.
Facilitate collaboration as well as communicate tourism research findings to industry partners, elected officials, and community organizations.
It’s exciting that I’ve lived to see so many impacts of the Institute in such a short period of time. It focuses on such diverse programs as:

- Ecotourism and Heritage Tourism
- Coastal, Marine, and Water-Based Tourism
- Sports Tourism and Event Management
- Hospitality Management
- Tourism Marketing
- Tourism Crisis Management
The Tourism Crisis Management Institute is studying how the Florida tourist industry should plan for and respond to natural disasters such as hurricanes. The methodology behind these plans is being shared and applied at tourist destinations worldwide.

EFTI supports partnerships and studies around the world, including Russia, Armenia, Turkey, South Africa, Curacao, Zambia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and in communities across Florida. Ecotourism and Heritage Tourism are particularly important in Africa and many countries in Europe.

In my years organizing and hosting travel shows across the globe, I learned how to do business internationally. We had to deal with problems, and the occasional crisis, while continuing to foster economic cooperation and bringing people and money to “hidden paradises.”

Eric spent his life uncovering new and exciting travel destinations. The University of Florida is known internationally and is willing to work around the world. The matching of Eric’s past and the Institute’s future creates a strong legacy.

Talented professors and nearly a thousand students provide the energy and vision to grow into the future. The money provided by Eric’s Foundation gives it “wings to fly.”
The Tourism Crisis Management Institute develops research-driven solutions to crises, addressing planning, preparedness, response and recovery.
Eric’s funding put EFTI “in the big leagues.” In 2012, a little more than a year after EFTI was named, the United Nations World Tourism Organization recognized the Institute as one of only six partner organizations in the United States. In addition, the Institute joined the National Travel and Tourism task force, which has been charged by the Obama Administration to monitor and guide our nation’s marketing strategy. EFTI had arrived!

Tourism is the third largest industry in the world, behind only food and military in terms of annual expenditures. As Dr. Brijesh Thapa, the Director of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute wrote in the Institute’s 2011 annual report: “Tourism generates more than $6 trillion annually worldwide and supports one in twelve jobs. Seven million of those jobs are in the United States. In Florida, tourism is crucial, given its abundance of natural and manmade attractions. More than 84.5 million people visit the state each year, spending $65 billion, making tourism Florida’s number one industry.”

Clearly, the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute has the potential to impact a tremendous number of lives around the world. Eric would be proud of the legacy his institute provides and the opportunities it gives to so many young people to contribute to peaceful interchanges around the world.

In 2012, the Foundation continued Eric’s legacy
by establishing the Eric Friedheim Travel Journalism Award with a five-year cash gift. This award, and its resulting publicity throughout the travel industry, gives EFTI expanded marketing for much less than the cost of a true marketing campaign. Much the way I leveraged publicity for the ASTA travel shows by having major publishers serve as judges for the exhibits, these journalism awards will enhance the growth of the programs at the Institute for the next five years. Learn more at www.uftourism.org.

I believe EFTI is off to a great start and will continue to be recognized as the leader by the tourism industry in much the same way that the Wharton School or the Kellogg School are recognized in the business world.

In the spring of 2013, EFTI was featured on the main website of the University of Florida and on related social media pages.

My great friend will be remembered far into the future through the work of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute.

Rest well, my friend. You’ve earned it.
Brijesh Thapa and Sid

Sid and the Gator

Kelli Brown, Interim Dean of Health & Human Performance, with Sid
Standing on the north bank of the St. Johns River, midway between the Acosta Bridge to the east and the Fuller Warren Bridge to the west, the view is impressive. Across the river, on the south bank, is the medical complex of downtown Jacksonville, including the Baptist Heart Hospital and the Nemours Children’s Hospital. Further to the east, but still on the south bank, are the Prudential Building and the Aetna Building. Surrounding us on the north bank are the Fidelity Building and the Alfred DuPont Foundation Building. The land behind us is empty. Eventually, the city will find use for this prime real estate, but for now it is home to a long grassy strip and an old, yellow fire building opposite the intersection with Forest Street. This could be the site of an internationally known ferris wheel and a major family merry-go-round. This would make the site attractive to both citizens and visitors, and complete the park.

This is where my career took off. This is the location of my first riverfront venture, The Duval
ORDINANCE 2010-898-E

AN ORDINANCE NAMING THE GEFEN RIVERWALK PARK THE "SIDINEY GEFEN RIVERWALK PARK", WAIVING SECTION 122 102(a),
ORDINANCE CODE CONCERNING NAMING PUBLIC FACILITIES
AFTER LIVING INDIVIDUALS.

WHEREAS, Sidney J. Gelen was born on April 20, 1920; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen has contributed significantly to the City of Jacksonville and the State
of Florida since he moved from Long Island, New York in 1941; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen served in the United States Army and was stationed at Naval Air
Station Jacksonville repairing airplanes prior to the start of World War II; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen married Lois Isaac, a Jacksonville native on March 20, 1942; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen and his wife raised three daughters in Jacksonville: Ann Grinham,
Barbara Jones, and Carol Greenebaum; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen began his first business, Duval Marine, in Jacksonville in 1947 and
ultimately moved that business to property he owned on Riverside Avenue; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen always worked to provide fair to his marine customers while teaching
them some use of and respect for the St. Johns River; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen worked extensively with Mayor and then Governor Haven Ensley to
bring tourism to Florida; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen founded International Productions, a company that staged massive
annual boat shows, including The Florida Hardware, which showcased Florida's tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen spent 10 years as a member of the Board of Trustees of the
University of Florida College of Health and Human Performance for his contributions to tourism in Florida; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gelen had his property on Riverside Avenue, the site of his first business,
Duval Marine, added as a property to the city in 2005; thus making possible the completion of the
Northbank Riverwalk Park; now therefore

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL
January 25, 2011

[Signatures]

APPROVED

John Peyton Mayor
Marine Company. From 1947 until its sale in 1967, Duval Marine built and sold boats from this location. When full, the 200-foot dock could berth fifty boats. On dry land, we provided boat storage, sales and service areas—everything people needed to enjoy the growing sports of boating and fishing in Jacksonville. In addition to the riverfront site, we had sales locations on 917 North Main, 900 South Main, and 5200 Beach Boulevard.

It turns out that the land and water rights owned by Duval Marine had an ownership history stretching back to a Spanish land grant. The original documentation of the Spanish grant is held by the State in Tallahassee.

It was and is a prime piece of real estate, one prized by both the City of Jacksonville and Fidelity Insurance and Mortgage Co. The city wanted the land to complete Northbank Riverwalk Park in time for the Super Bowl. A local business wanted to build additional office space.

Although sale to the local business would yield a higher price, my heart couldn’t refuse the needs of my hometown. Mayor John Peyton worked hard on my behalf, and a combination sale and donation provided the land needed to complete the Riverwalk. In recognition of the donation, this section of the park was named Sidney J. Gefen Riverwalk Park in a dedication ceremony on April 18, 2011. Although local ordinances
City Councilman Warren Jones, Sid, Mayor John Peyton, Barbara, Ann and Carol

Brad and Sandy Zimmerman
prevent naming public property after living persons, Mayor Peyton and the City Council passed a special ordinance to create a one-time exception, and the park was dedicated three days before my 91st birthday.

The park itself is beautifully landscaped, with brick paths and wooden benches at convenient intervals from the parking lot. Along the river, the park connects with the two-mile-long continuous walkway, which is used by hundreds of walkers and runners on a daily basis. One section of the walkway is a 150-foot wooden bridge spanning part of the original dock area.

So, 400 years after the Spanish grant and more than 65 years after my first association with this land through my new company, Duval Marine, this section of the north bank of the St. Johns River will forever be associated with the Gefen family. The beautiful views from its park will be enjoyed by generations of Jacksonville residents to come. One of the aspects of

Carol at the Park in 2013
The great-grandchildren enjoyed the park
my life of which I am happy and proud is that I have worked exclusively for non-profit, community service for thirty-five years.

***

I’ve been blessed with a long life and a great support team, and I’ve worked hard not to waste either one. In 2010 the University of Florida recognized my contributions to the travel industry, the business industry, and to community and state organizations with a Lifetime Achievement Award. My association with the University of Florida stretches back over more than thirty years, including my support of the growth of UF Shands, now known at UF Health, the research hospital in Jacksonville, where I rendered many years of service to the board and the board of trustees over a forty year span.

Over the years, I’ve been impressed with the reach and impact the University has had locally, in the State of Florida, and internationally through its affiliation with other universities around the world. This broad focus is one of the reasons I chose the University of Florida to be the host of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute and the Eric Friedheim Travel Journalism Award.

It gives me great pride to be recognized by the University with such a distinguished award. It’s wonderful to be an honorary “Bull Gator!”

***
Sid is a “Bull Gator”

University of Florida Lifetime Achievement Award

Bruce Greenspan, Dean Steve Dorman, Sid Gefen and Carol Greenspan
Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute selected as UNWTO Knowledge Institution

This summer, the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute (EFTI) in the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sports Management was named one of only six institutions in the United States to partner with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

EFTI was selected as a UNWTO Knowledge Institution, helping to set research and knowledge management standards on tourism analysis, tourism policy and governance.

UNWTO is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. They generate market knowledge, promote competitive and sustainable tourism policies and instruments, foster tourism education and training, and work to make tourism an effective tool for development through technical assistance projects in over 100 countries.
Lois and I continued to support the Music Program for the Congregation of Ahavath Chesed Temple. I’m thankful that the gifts have provided joy to so many congregation members. The words of our Senior Rabbi, Joshua Lief, mean a lot: “The beauty of our Temple Chorale uplifts the worship experience for all in our congregation, and your support over these many years is an inspiration as well.”

Lois and I shared the support and joy of The Temple congregation for most of our adult life. It’s been our honor to return that support through the beautiful voices and music provided in every service.
I’ve always been active in politics, and I’ve carried forth my belief in hard work and business success into the contributions I’ve made on behalf of politicians who support entrepreneurship and business interests. I’ve served on state organizations, such as The Florida Boating Council, and city organizations, such as the Board of Jacksonville University and the Jacksonville Marine association.

Many of these contributions have gone unrecognized, as they should. Every American should take an active role in our democracy—it’s what makes us strong as a collective nation of immigrants. It’s our combined values and backgrounds which make us unique as a nation and a people.

It is with great pride that I share one letter I received in December, 2004. It’s a simple, one-page, handwritten note, thanking me for my contributions to his campaign. The signature matches the simple title on the top of the page: “President, George W. Bush.” In 2004, the State of Florida was the deciding state in his re-election, and the contributions Lois and I made to his campaign helped him carry the state. I’m honored to have received a handwritten note from the President of our great country.
Dec. 21, 2004

Dear Sidney,

Thank you for your great help on my campaign in Florida. Your state played a critical role in this election, and the Vice President and I were fortunate to have your help in campaigning in Florida.

I am honored by the trust of my fellow citizens, confident in our purpose, and looking forward to continuing to lead this Nation for four more years.

Barney joins me in thanking you for your steadfast support and wishes you and your family a wonderful Holiday.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
On April 13, 2012, my biggest supporter left me for a better place. Lois and I were married for more than 70 years, and spent most of that time in her home town of Jacksonville with our family. Lois was always very focused on family and felt most comfortable when she was home with her children and grandchildren. As Ann said, “Mom traveled all the time with Dad, went to balls, dances, and fancy dinners, but she couldn’t wait to get back to Jacksonville—back to her family.” Barbara remembered: “Mom wasn’t flamboyant in any manner of the word. She always dressed nicely and looked comfortable in fancy restaurants, but she’d just as soon eat a Krystal burger as anything. When I’d visit at River Garden, she loved the warm Dunkin Donuts I’d bring in the morning.”

Lois enjoyed golf and cards with her friends when she had time in the middle of the day. Barbara remembers fondly that her mom was the Ladies Club
Lois and Sid, 1964

Lois and Sid, 1971

Fay Buchman (Lois’ sister) and Lois
Champion at Beauclerc the same year Barbara was the Junior Ladies Champ. “Mom and Dad both liked to golf, and there are albums with pictures of the two of them golfing around the world.”

Lois spent the last several months of her life in the care of the wonderful people at River Garden. To recognize the memories and great friends she had during those months, the lobby of River Garden is memorialized in Lois’ name.

***

Reflections of My Mother
(80th Birthday Tribute)

I would like to reflect on things which make Mother - MOTHER!

I thought I was the luckiest girl at Hendricks Ave. Elementary School, because I had the prettiest mother and even at 80 she still is the prettiest mom.

When I was young, I thought mother’s job was playing cards, I really did not know it was recreational. I honestly thought your card partners were your co-workers. The way mother played cards, you’d think our livelihood counted on those card games.

Golf has always been a big part of mother’s life. I
Barbara, Carol, Lois, Sid and Ann

Ann and Sid

Danny, Laura, Robin and Ed Gefen at Laura’s Bat Mitzvah, Oct. 6, 2012.
thought that was Mother’s second job. I would compare her tournaments to a college student taking a final exam.

I remember being excited when mother dressed me, Ann and Barbara alike when we were little. Nobody told me I would be wearing the same outfit in hand-me-downs for 10 years. That’s what happens when you’re the baby.

While I’m thinking about it, I want to thank Ann and Barbara for paving the way. By the time I got into adolescence, the horrible teen years seemed like old hat for mother (so I thought).

As I said many times before, one wish you and Dad had for me ultimately came true—“I hope you have a kid just like you.” Well Mom, your wish came true—DOUBLE.

Looking back, I don’t know how you did it, raising three girls—and going through the change with three daughters, wow, now I salute you!

Even at 80, nothing has really changed (thank God)—you still go to work (only part-time now) at the card game and on the golf course. You’re still the prettiest woman.. And Dad is still your best friend.

Happy 80th Mom, I love you, Carol

***
Dear Grandma,

Wow, the last time I wrote to you I think I was at summer camp. Well now I will say a bit more than I did then on those little postcards I used to send you.

I know it’s been very hard for you for quite a while, and I hope you have moved on to a better place. We miss you already, but you left us with enough wonderful memories to last us for the rest of our lives. Today I want to share a few of these memories of you that I will always treasure.

Most recently was the first time you saw Drew, when she was still a baby. I was amazed how you held her, your tenth great-grandchild, with a natural ease, as if you were back in time as a third-time mother holding my mom. Thankfully I did get a few pictures of it, along with some of Grandpa holding up Drew like the Lion King which was pretty good too.

My mom even told me that a couple weeks ago she showed you a picture of baby Asher, and that while you couldn’t speak, she saw tears in your eyes. I only imagine it was a combination of joy and the sadness you felt knowing that you were not able to hold him like you did every other baby born into our family.

Growing up, we spent a lot of time with you at your house and at the beach. I remember that you couldn’t stand it when I would climb through the holes
Carol, Logan, Adam, Drew, Leslie & Bruce Greenspan with Sid and Lois

Samantha Zimmerman, Drew Greenspan, and Emma Grenadier.
in your balcony or go too far out in the ocean. Now I realize that you were being protective of me and it goes to show how you were still caring and attentive even as a grandmother.

Actually it was at the beach where I saw you do something that maybe nobody else has, cook! Whenever Logan and I would sleep over at your beach condo, you would let us stay up late watching TV with you in bed and then we’d all have breakfast in the morning. Grandpa would take care of the fruit, and he would also squeeze fresh OJ - the best! Then there was one time you told me you were going to cook something and it would only take 3 minutes. I was probably about 8, and I had no idea what to expect. Then you showed me your special recipe for the 3-minute egg, and you know what? I still remember how nice and runny those eggs were.

Now being married to Grandpa, you spent a lot of time at sea. You and Grandpa took just my family on a cruise since Logan and I were too young to go when you took everyone else on one a few years earlier. One of the stops was St. Thomas, and when we got there the cruise line gave everyone a 50 dollar meal allowance because their crew went on strike that day. We were all worried about what was going to happen and you kept everyone in good spirits, cracking jokes like “their food’s not even
that good anyway, this will be the best meal we eat all week”.

You must have gone on 30 or 40 cruises, sailing on beautiful ships all over the world. However, there was one boat on which you were not always a willing passenger, ironically bearing your name - the S.S. Sidlo. Logan recalls all the times we would all go on Grandpa’s boat, and you would be holding court in the cabin, whether it was for conversation, watching over us while we ran around through the rooms and lower level, or just enjoying the air conditioning and tv.

I never realized it, but my mom says that you were very superstitious. She was telling me how you would go out of your way to avoid walking under a ladder, if you saw a black cat you would turn around and walk the other way, and you would never tell a dream before having breakfast because it was bad luck. Maybe it’s not just irony that your last day here was Friday the 13th.

Grandma, these are just a few of many lasting memories I will always carry with me. You were such a wonderful grandma to me, Logan, and all of my cousins. The fact that you wanted us all to call you simply Grandma says a lot about your no-nonsense attitude. You were always very direct, which came through in your humor, in your boldness, and in your affection.
Now I want to be direct with you. We all love you dearly and we are especially fortunate to have had you in our lives this long.

As for where you may be right now, my mom put it very well by saying, “if you have found a card room and a golf course, then you must be in heaven.”

Love,

Adam

Adam Greenspan and Lois
Sid, Lois and Marion Isaac (Lois’ mother), at the Grand Opening of Uncle John’s Pancake House

Lois with Carol, Barbara, and Ann
Over Thanksgiving, 2012, I took the entire family on a 7-day cruise, with stops in Jamaica, Haiti, and Cozumel. We sailed on the largest cruise ship in the world, The Allure of the Seas.

It took some planning to get thirty-three Gefen’s, Grenadier’s, Jaffe’s, Greenspan’s, Zimmerman’s, Caldarelli’s and Butterworth’s available at the same time, but going over Thanksgiving made it easier, since the family usually spent the holiday together in Jacksonville. With effort, we all made it to Fort Lauderdale, where we gathered in one place.

It was a big place!

The Allure of the Seas weighs more than 225,000 tons, slightly less than an American Nimitz-class aircraft carrier. It was as long as four football fields stretched end to end, and cost $1.2 billion to build!

It carried 5,400 passengers and 2,400 crew members when fully loaded. Its sister ship, the Oasis of the Seas, has an identical deck plan, but due to normal
construction tolerances, is two inches shorter. Both ships were built in Finland and are operated by Royal Caribbean International.

With sixteen passenger decks, seven distinct neighborhoods, and 25 different places to eat, the ship was a floating city that never slept.

For entertainment, a huge theater hosted the Broadway musical Chicago, complete with orchestra, as well as other musical and comedy acts nightly. Casino Royale was available for gambling, and there was dancing and music virtually everywhere.

For the young and young at heart, there were Dreamworks characters and movies, including a 3D theater for How to Train Your Dragon and Monsters vs. Aliens.

On the afterdeck, a three-story aqua theater sported dive shows and acrobats. A zipline over Central Park was enjoyed by my grandson, Josh, and Carol’s granddaughter, Drew, rode the carousel until the horses returned to the stables, riding a record forty times in one day.

The two wave generators on Deck 16 tested the surfing skills of Max and Brooke, but most of the family was content to enjoy the pools and deck chairs, catching the sun’s rays to their hearts content. The ship even had an ice skating rink, but the joys of gliding across the ice
were wasted on us Floridians.

On Black Friday, instead of fighting the Christmas shopping crowds in Jacksonville, we gathered at a huge TV screen poolside to watch the Florida/Florida State football game.

The intent was for the extended family to have a bonding experience, with all my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in one place.

At dinner, we had four tables of eight. People sat where they wanted, while I moved around to different tables enjoying the company of everyone.

During the day, people went their own way, meeting for meals. My three-room suite was the headquarters, but each family had a luxury suite.

The ship was explored by all.

The trip was a 100% success!

Clockwise: Adam, Drew, Brooke, Samantha, Leah
The same eyes, the same smile, the same focus. The best of pals, Sid and great-grandson Asher.
Max

Ethan

Brooke
Ivy and Ann

Larry and Barbara

Bruce and Carol
Drew

Leslie, Drew and Carol

Jane
Jane, Emma, Max, Ann and Ed

Todd
Ivy and Dan

Leah, Brooke, Sid and Sandy

Ed and Ann
Allure of the Seas, the largest cruise ship in the world.
Asher and Sid, looking at the world with a 92 year difference in perspective.
A successful life is not complete without the contribution of close friends. For Marvin Sherman, Sid Gefen has been one of the best. Marvin and his wife, Bea, became friends with Sid and Lois Gefen around 1954 when they all lived in the St. Nicholas area of Jacksonville. It was one of those unique relationships that flourished and endured through the years with many shared experiences. The Shermans and the Gefens shared vacations, personal and professional triumphs, and the joy of building a treasure chest filled with fond memories.

Among the current stories that Marvin likes to tell is about when Sid’s driver’s license came up for renewal at the age of 92. The Department of Motor Vehicles insisted that he take a battery of tests that included his vision and driving skills. It was expected that he would have to attend driving classes. However, he passed without a glitch on the first try and received a license good for six years. Marvin told his friend, “Sid,
A long and rich friendship Sid and Marvin
you’ve got a license good until you’re 98. By then, you can afford a chauffeur.”

According to Marvin, the two couples traveled together a lot and enjoyed wonderful trips. As opposed to conventional wisdom, the four left friends and always returned friends. Marvin recalled one special trip when the foursome was touring in Europe via water. First, they flew into London where they spent three days, then boarding their ship, they traveled to France. The Shermans visited Paris while the Gefens visited Normandy. Having the ship for a hotel eliminated the inconvenience of packing and unpacking. During the course of the voyage, they went to Plymouth, England; Dublin, Ireland; and Scotland. They crossed the Baltic and docked in Bergen, Norway. Leaving the ship for lunch, Sid wanted stone crabs, one of his favorites. It was a busy port with several large ships docked. Across from the water, there was a farmers’ market with an array of foods to choose from. Seeing a large collection of boxes containing huge stone crabs, Marvin said, “Oh boy, I know what we’re going to have for lunch.”

In the area of the dock, there were a number of two-story houses with restaurants on the second floor. They chose a restaurant and settled in for lunch. When the waiter came, they attempted to order stone crabs but were told the restaurant did not serve them. Disappointed,
After finding three restaurants that did not serve the seafood, despite the fact that the farmer’s market had box upon box of the item, Sid went to the manager of one of the cafes and asked if they would serve the stone crabs if the group purchased them at the market.

“I’ll do it if you don’t tell anyone,” the man said.

They then went back to the market and purchased two, five-pound bags of the crabs. According to Marvin Sherman, there were enough crabs to more than satisfy their party with so many left over that they shared with others in the café. “We never found out why the Norwegian restaurants would not serve them, but they were delicious.”

Marvin credits Sid with introducing the Shermans to the Seascape Condominiums at the beach. When the first high-rise condo buildings were built at the beach, Sid and Lois purchased one and graciously entertained their friends. Recognizing how much the Sherman family enjoyed the beach, Sid decided the Shermans should have a condo of their own and set about to make it happen. Sid approached a neighbor about selling the neighbor’s unit. After a confusing exchange, the man finally sold the unit to the Shermans, but bought another in the building. Before the story was done, not only had the Shermans gained a beach get-away, the neighbor
had commissioned the Shermans, who owned Liberty Furniture Company, to furnish a total of four properties.

“Thanks to Sid, we not only got the condo of our choice, we also got four jobs,” Marvin said.

Throughout Sid’s career with Duval Marine, his production of trade shows around the world, his involvement in charities, and politics, Marvin Sherman has been a constant friend. The Shermans accompanied the Gefens to many of the national and international trade shows that Sid produced. They were in Louisiana for the trade show that launched Sid as an international producer. According to Marvin, German tourism in that area rose from 9,000 before the show Sid produced to 190,000 that following year. The Shermans were also in Orlando with the Gefens for the first Florida Huddle Show, and at the University of Florida for the opening of the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute, plus many more trade shows in numerous countries. Marvin considers Sid to be a proud, smart, good family man—generous to charities and proud of his children and grandchildren.

“Sid does much for people that no one knows about. Everywhere we went with the Gefens, everyone knew Sid,” Marvin said. “He’s a good man.”

According to Marvin, despite his age, Sid continues to have a sharp mind. When doctors told Sid that he needed a hip replacement, he checked into
St. Luke’s for the procedure. He called Marvin and said, “They’ve prepped me, but I’m not keen about the idea. Guess I’ll do it.”

The next morning, Marvin had another call. “You’re already done?” Marvin asked. “I wasn’t going to let them operate on me. I took a shower and went home.”

He did eventually have the surgery.

Marvin Sherman’s voice is filled with devotion and admiration for his longtime friend. He describes the many trips the two couples took together as “great times.” He speaks with affection and respect for his friend’s social, business, charitable, religious, and civic endeavors.
I have said before, family is the most important part of life. My life has been indeed full. For seventy years, I had my wife with me to enjoy it. Lois and I shared the joy and pride of having three beautiful daughters to carry on the traditions we established. When asked the secret of our long marriage, I say that we never had an argument. While we each found happiness in our separate interests, we always came together as a family. As the future unfolds, our seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren will each take their place in the world, fortified by the values we have handed down. They are the acorns that have fallen from our tree of life.

Although the void created by the loss of a beloved spouse is impossible to totally fill, my daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren have been a source of spiritual nourishment. They are in constant contact with me, always available when called. As the calendar marches on, imposing the inconveniences of skirmishes
SID AND BROTHER MURRAY START EARLY BUSINESS VENTURE IN FAR ROCKAWAY

SIDNEY GEFEN BIRTHDAY NEWS

E. D. I. S. TIMES

by cereal maker

I have lived longer than I appeared. I'm thinking back when we both were in our twenties and I was attending

I recently met students in architecture in their home town. I wasקדዋי. I was attending

I was younger I had problems and they offered the July

As I was younger I had problems and I was unable to

He was available. A fund

We had a good business going and from the very first time, I

Since you were you might ask

At the very young age of

Keezix Remembers Dad

By Carol Drupal

This is a brief outline of my memories about my father, Joseph Fishman. I抦 happy

When I first saw my father, he was an amazing man, not only as he cared for his

The best years of my life, my father, were

I have tried to reflect memories of my father, Harry and nunca. Given the

Her 80th Birthday.

GRANDPA'S TOP 10 SAYINGS

1. As long as you're dreaming.

2. We've been married for

3. I was born in New York and

4. I told you every time but that was

5. I wish you were here. I wish

Keezix Remembers Dad

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I have tried to reflect memories of my father, Harry and nunca. Given the
with health, Betsy Tilis and her outstanding crew have given me a lot of help, making certain that my health is monitored, meals prepared, and transportation available.

A treasured illustration of the love and devotion of my family occurred on my eightieth birthday when family and friends were invited by the girls to celebrate and contribute to the *Every Day Is Sunday TIMES*. Among the warm, nostalgic, and sometimes humorous contributions was a piece by my beloved brother Murray, describing the beginnings of our foray into the world of business.

“I know Sid longer than anyone else. In thinking back when we both were in our teens and I was attending Far Rockaway High School, I was asked to start a pilot program for NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE. I was to offer students the publication in their home room at five cents a week. The program was successful and they offered me the distribution in all of New York City. As I was younger, I had a problem—I was unable to drive in New York City and that is where Sid fit in. He was available, had a Ford car and so he went out and secured representatives in most of the New York City Schools. We had a good business going and then the war came along. I thought you should know how we got started in business.”
My grandsons, Brad and Sandy Zimmerman wrote of my Top 10 Sayings:

• How bout them apples!
• So what’ya know good?
• But are you a MD (money dr.)?
• Not bad for an ol’ man!
• Mama wouldn’t let me!
• Let me tell you what I used to do for a living!
• Bought that property in 1963 for a dollar!
• I came to Jacksonville with $30 in my pocket!
• Lois, what did you do with my keys?
• LOIS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Again, on my ninetieth birthday in April of 2010, I was taken by my lovely daughters to a private dining room of the River Club in Jacksonville where I was led to believe that it was to be for the taking of photos. Instead, it was a surprise celebration that included a large number of family and friends. They presented me with a scrapbook containing an array of heartwarming greetings and tributes, including a postage stamp with my image. To be honored by the family and friends is the greatest honor one can receive.

The success that each of my daughters has achieved in the realms of career, service to society, and family commitment gives me a rich feeling of pride, especially when I hear the credit they return to me for
VALUES MY FATHER TAUGHT ME
By Barbara Jaffe

It is not until after you have your own children that you have a new understanding and appreciation for your own parents. It is at that time, Dad, that you get to reflect on your own childhood and relationships that you have with those before you (parents) and those after you (children). So in that spirit and on the occasion of this wonderful celebration, that I share with you those values that you instilled in me that I hold most treasured.

1. Honesty is not the best policy, it is the only policy.
2. Give back to the community. Many are not as fortunate as you. By giving both your time and money, you too are rewarded.
3. Your family is the most important thing. Financial and social events come and go, but it is that relationship with those you love that is above all else.
4. Shoot for the stars. You might only reach the sky but it will be greater than you ever dreamed possible.
5. Hard work never hurt anyone. You appreciate life more if you EARNED it.
6. Stop and smell the roses. Life is not a destination, but a journey.
7. Pursue what you believe in. Don’t let anyone tell you it’s not possible. It just means, they haven’t tried as hard as you.
8. Believe in God. There is a greater purpose in life.
9. Believe in yourself. You taught me that I was good. But that it was up to me to be self reliant. You gave me the tools and allowed me to experience the rewards of knowing myself.

10. I leave number 10 blank. Because you taught me that we are always learning, to keep an open mind and to experience what unknown lies ahead.

DAD, thank you for all these lessons that you have shared with me. I also have been blessed to find from working on the EDIS Times, that you have shared these insights with many of your close friends.

Love Barbara

“Laughing Family,” Sid’s 93rd Birthday celebration
my role in their lives.

Ann has written that she owes her positive view of life to me. Barbara has said that I passed on to her the principles that there is nothing greater than love of family, country, G-d and the value of a good and honest name. On my eightieth birthday, Carol thanked me for giving her beautiful memories and a wonderful life. The most important thing I taught my daughters, and what I know they each live by, is that honesty is not just the best policy. It is the ONLY policy.

Again, on my ninety-third birthday, I was treated to a celebration.

In the spring of 2013, I watched with pride at the Bar Mitzvah of my great-grandson, Josh Zimmerman, eighty years after my Bar Mitzvah in April of 1933 (when an ounce of gold was worth $20 as opposed to the $1336 it is worth today). I commemorated the occasion
for Josh with a 1927 gold piece as my grandmother had planned to do for me for my Bar Mitzvah. However, she was unable to follow through on her plan because on April 3, 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt signed an Executive Order forbidding possession of monetary gold by any American citizen. Josh is the son of Barbara’s son, Brad.

An accomplished student of Hebrew, Josh required no assistance in reciting his portion of the service. Again, it was gratifying to see the family traditions continue and the degree of love and loyalty expressed by the attendance of nearly all of the family. Seeing the strength and unity of the family assures me that the Gefen heritage will continue for generations to come.

As one should know by reading so far, family is the primary focus of my life. I was blessed with a devoted birth family. Not only do the members of my immediate family gather on special occasions, the extended family of cousins also play a significant role in our lives, including the son of my mother’s sister, Edwin Sedran, the daughters of my brother Murray, and the family of my uncle, Bernard Gefen. In 2011, we convened for the Bar Mitzvah of Danny Gefen, son of my cousin, Ed Gefen of Jacksonville and great grandson of Uncle Bernard. Ed’s father-in-law is Bob Nuss, Dean of Shands Jacksonville for almost 30 years.
Sid with his grandchildren

Sid with great-grandchildren
Sid with grandchildren and great-grandchildren

My brother Murray’s girls, Beth Wesi, Vickie Mokurla, Ellen Caudill
Carol, Logan and Bruce Greenspan

At the Cemetery where Lois is buried. Brad, Samantha, Sid, Josh, Barbara, Larry, Sylvan’s son Fred and his daughter
Fred and Andrew Gefen sons of Sylvan and Marilyn Gefen
Honoring the 35th Anniversary of CEO, Martin A. Goetz at River Garden Hebrew Home. Sidney Gefen, A. Hugh Greene, Barbara Jaffe, and Martin A. Goetz

Sid and Asher – Great Grandson, 92 year difference. See the Eyes!
Cousin Ed Sedran and wife Gloria from Jupiter, FL

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Sid Gefen is a bundle of energy. At 93, his health can often be frustrating, but it doesn’t slow down his enthusiasm, drive, and dedication to help better the city he has called home for 72 years.

Gefen is still a sought-after, popular leader and advocate who excelled in almost too many industries to list. Yet it is his 40-year history of community and non-profit work – after a series of profitable careers – that is possibly his greatest legacy, aside from the grand children and great-grandchildren that light up his life. The Sidney J. Gefen Riverwalk Park on the Northbank Riverwalk is another reflection of his living legacy, as the naming rights for those who have passed. It took a special waiver through city council passage– another exception to the rule, something Gefen has been his entire life.

“I love working on things to help bring Jacksonville alive,” said Gefen, who today serves as President of the Eric Friedheim Foundation, the philanthropic trust set up in 2002 after the death of Gefen’s best friend. Friedheim, a journalist and publisher of magazines and travel guides, became a close friend after the two were introduced in West Palm Beach social circles. As Gefen developed trade shows around the world, the two traveled extensively and partnered to unveil new options around the world for travelers and tourism industry professionals.

Knowing Friedheim never had children, Gefen’s guidance of the Foundation has helped to deliver scholarships to promising University of Florida students attending the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute. The school has developed an entire department dedicated to the study of tourism, recreation and sports development. “Quite ironic, my friend is sending children he never had to school,” Gefen said, “he would be happy knowing this was achieved on his behalf.”

A Jacksonville resident since 1941, Gefen came here to repair aircraft at NAS Jax just before the start of WWII, he arrived with thirty-five ultimate dollars in his pocket and the rest is history. Gefen has done enough in the course of his one lifetime to fill up several. He owned Duval Marine, invested in real estate, entered and left the car dealership business, began working in electronics and selling and repairing TVs (even building four launch pads at Cape Canaveral) and branched into outdoor advertising, ultimately selling a lot of that business to Clear Channel and CBS.

Somehow along the way, he found time...
to marry Jacksonville native Lois Isaac, start a family and raise three daughters. The family became active members of the Ahavath Chessed congregation, where Gefen still worships today. Matter of fact, Gefen attended a musical celebration to show case the prosperity of programming, illustrating the impact of his generosity and gift giving to the cultivation of music at The Temple.

When Gefen sold Duval Marine, he began looking around for something else to do – and it didn’t take long for the phone to ring with the governor of Louisiana asking for his help putting on boat show. The successful venture helped lead to the creation of International Productions, a company dedicated to staging and producing trade shows, including The Florida Huddle that annually showcased Florida’s tourism.

International Productions grew to be the largest organization of its kind, staging six to 10 international trade shows a year around the world. Gefen sold that business in 1982 to 3M. He was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010 from the University of Florida College of Health and Human Performance for his contributions to Florida tourism.

While Gefen still has an incredible head for business and a seemingly Midas-like touch with whatever he dabbles in, his heart and soul for the last few decades has been dedicated to his family (wife Lois, who passed away in 2012, three daughters, seven grandchildren and great-grandchildren) and his beloved city of Jacksonville.

He served for 10 years as a board member of the University of Florida Faculty Clinic. And his passion continues to help Jacksonville fulfill a healthcare initiative to become a regional leader in the industry, something that was started, he said, more than 25 years ago.

“Jacksonville has missed the boat on a lot of things,” said Gefen. “Disney’s first choice was the area where World Golf Village was today, but that didn’t happen. There used to be four major banks here, and they all left. We used to be an insurance hub, but those companies have all left. Twenty-five years ago, the Mayo Clinic came here, the University of Florida began their healthcare partnership here, Johnson & Johnson is headquartered here and we have the Proton Therapy center – healthcare is a great opportunity for us.”

When asked where he gets his motivation, Gefen names the most influential book of his life – My Years at GM by Alfred P. Sloan, Jr. And many more business tips and life lessons can be found in Gefen’s own book, Climb Another Mountain, Plant Another Tree. His second book, Still Climbing Mountains, Still Climbing Trees, just went to the publisher. Gefen plans on donating all proceeds to charity.

“I read My Years at GM six times – it showed me what it takes to succeed,” he said, “I was always able to visualize what was gonna happen. Then I just took everything one day at a time. And most things happened to become a big business.”
Good Morning:

Greetings from sunny Gainesville!

We have begun our Fall 2013 semester and operations are in motion at EFTI and the Dept. of Tourism, Recreation & Sport Management. Earlier, an activities report for our Spring/Summer Semester was sent to you folks, please see link http://efti.hhp.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/Advisory-Board-Summer-Newsletter-june-2013.pdf As you can see our faculty have been pretty busy with various activities and initiatives in Florida and globally. Some of the highlights of the late summer include:

- Study abroad programs in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Russia. Our program to Peru did not have enough enrollment but we plan to offer it again next summer.
- Planned and hosted a conference on Regional Sustainable Tourism Development in Yerevan, Armenia (This was an event as part of our grant funded by the Dept. of State)
- Conference presentations in various destinations in Florida, U.S., and globally.
- Research project field activities in Armenia, Nepal, Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Namibia, and Russia.
- Research project - Study the Effects and Impacts of Gaming in Florida for the Florida State Legislature
- Research project - Visit Gainesville Advertising Conversion Study
- New proposals submitted to state and federal agencies for research funding based on Request for Application.
- Mentorship and graduation of doctoral students affiliated with EFTI faculty.
- Research publications in academic journals.

We will report more details about these aforementioned activities in our fall newsletter to the board.

The fall semester has been busy already with the new academic school year. So far, some of the highlights include:

- Submitted proposal to the Dept. of State for funding to leverage on existing work in Russia.
- New proposals being developed for research funding based on Request for Application.
- Ongoing paperwork for our International Internship Program with several Canadian Universities and Disney.
- Conference presentations in various destinations globally - Turkey, Japan, Kenya, etc.
- Conference planning for the first Tick-Borne Disease Symposium will be hosted on December 5th, 2013 at the University of Florida. This initiative is led by Dr. Holly Donohoe and funded by the Emerging Pathogens Institute. More information about this program is noted http://efti.hhp.ufl.edu/index.php/activities/current-projects/tick-com From the tourism side, Dr. Donohoe and colleagues are working on a project entitled: Knowledge, Perception and Behaviors Related to Tick-Borne Diseases Amongst Workers and Visitors to Florida State Parks. This event is led by our Tourism Crisis Management Institute.

- More activities are ongoing and will report in due course.

Thank you all for your service to the board which we appreciate your time. Hal will be coming to campus on Friday and we will further discuss initiatives with him. We would also like to have you folks to visit campus. Please let me know and we can facilitate a program.

Finally, please visit our website to learn more about our activities www.utourism.org

Best Wishes
Brij

From: Thapa, Brijesh
Having a little fun climbing a different Mountain
EPILOGUE II

Coming very late to the completion of this book, we had only a couple of months to get to know Sid Gefen, but it did not take long to realize what a remarkable man he is. While his business pursuits are inestimable, his philanthropic endeavors legendary, what impressed us most is his love and commitment to family.

Sid was married to one woman for seventy years. He loved, admired, and respected Lois Isaac Gefen in the manner every woman would desire. He was the provider and protector of his family. Although they each enjoyed their individual recreational hobbies, on all things important, Sid and Lois were together. The integrity of their lives shows through in the lives of their progeny. It was indeed an honor and privilege to spend a few hours in the life of such a man and to find faith renewed in the institution of marriage and family.

KG and JE
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