

I Believed

By Charles W. Lavaroni

He said it and I believed. It made no real sense. It was inconsistent with everything I thought I had been taught. It was beyond my understanding. Still, I believed.

Bill Cowen was a tall, stockily built man with short cropped hair, a twinkle in his eye and often wearing a tweed jacket complete with leather patches protecting his elbows. He was the personification of a college professor. He moved purposefully from the doorway, down the aisle to the lectern in front of a group of students attending their first, introductory class to the field of Education. He always carried a large leather brief case for his notes. His students were primarily young girls or women who just two years earlier had been attending high schools. There was also a smattering of older women, some of whom were married with children and were returning to school. Then there was a group of men who were boys just two or three years before, but because they were veterans of World War II, now recognized as men. I was one of these. And I believed.

I had returned to San Francisco State College one year earlier qualifying as a sophomore. Previously I had completed one year, my freshman year, before enlisting in the Navy. That academic year had been a terrible one. I had graduated from high school at age sixteen, with the maturity of twelve year old. I had received a diploma from my high school, but I honestly can say that I did not deserve one, if deserving means that I had learned a body of knowledge of value. If the diploma meant that I had learned how to pass tests, play the game of compliance, finish homework-- coupled with using humor to impress teachers—then I was deserving of that piece of paper. Interestingly, those behaviors continued to work somewhat for me at the college level. I hated going to class. I hated myself because I really did recognize that I was a fraud. I was not only satisfied with grades of “c”, and a couple of “do’s” I considered myself lucky to get them. I was not sure what higher education was supposed to be, but I was positive this was not it. So, in defense of any sense of respectability, I found a way out. Some of us enlisted in the navy to miss the draft, some to better serve their country. I joined primarily to get out of school. This for me was an acceptable way to walk away from apparent failure. I could leave home without completely embarrassing myself or my parents.

This should not have been too unpredictable, considering my childhood. You see, I was born a “miracle”.

Anna, my mother, a devout Roman Catholic had, a year before my birth, married a local “grocer boy”. Charles, who never completed high school, apparently fell in love with this bright, pretty orphan who was living with her “aunt,” a well to do crippled woman who had somehow taken responsibility for Anna as a young pre teenager. Elizabeth Furger, Auntie Furger, loved and cared for her ward from a very early age. Anna was born san Francisco in 1895. Her parents were poor, uneducated German immigrants. The family had little or no income. Her father was a day laborer who never was found after the 1906 earthquake and fire that ravaged San Francisco. No one really ever knew whether Gustavo was killed, severely wounded, burned to death or simply took advantage of the turmoil and left town. Anna’s mother, Lyudmila, had lost her right arm as a result of an accident, a horse has kicked her. After the famous fire, Lyudmila became the breadwinner for the family of four: Anna, two stepsons from a previous marriage and Lyudmila herself. The stepbrothers almost immediately left home and somehow found passage back to Germany. According to Anna they were never heard of again. The crippled Lyudmila had been making a living she could by selling needles and thread, door to door throughout San Francisco. Often she was accompanied by her sharp-witted, cheerful, talented, curly headed daughter, Anna.

Part of Lyudmila's regular sales territory included the then and still standing, Palace Hotel. Over the years, she met and sold sewing implements to Elizabeth Furger who was a resident of that hotel. "Auntie" Forger somehow convinced Anna's mother that her daughter would be much better off if she could become a full time companion to her and live with her at the hotel. It was agreed, and to the best of any knowledge, without any formal legal proceedings or record, Anna at about the age of thirteen became the protégé of Elizabeth. Her life changed not only dramatically but significantly and for the better.

The deep love, respect and fear of the Catholic Church that Anna had developed in her earlier years was continued and supported by Furger, even though she was not Catholic herself. Along with this sense of religiosity a love of the arts and music was nurtured and encouraged. Anna was given piano lessons which she took to with great relish and enthusiasm. She was evidently a quick learner. She loved to perform from an early age. She played the piano, danced and sang throughout the city. She loved telling one memorable performance where at the Opera House she "danced on a drum." She had been enrolled in a Catholic elementary school and later in San Francisco's Presentation High School. She became a "darling" of some of San Francisco's minor elite segment of society. At one "Sunday Swore" she performed in the presence of the famed impresario, David Belasco, who suggested that she should consider the stage as a profession. She learned how to socialize and participate as an appreciative audience member at the theater, opera house and concert hall. She learned how to order at restaurants, to dress properly, to engage in polite conversation. She never, however, learned to cook or sew. She became an excellent typist and even mastered shorthand. After graduating from high school she was able to find work as a private secretary, all the time living with Furger in a series of hotels or apartment complexes that housed dining rooms or restaurants. They became like mother and daughter, each lovingly caring for the other.

In the late 1910's, around 1918, Anna, working full time-- caring for Furger, often playing piano in orchestras, partying and performing as a soloist was felled by tuberculosis. She immediately was hospitalized in a sanatorium located in Fairfax California, just north of San Anselmo, where Charles and the Lavaroni family lived. Furger rented a small house in a "suburb" of San Anselmo. Yolanda was a train stop about half way between the two Marin County towns. The Western Pacific Electric Railway provided transportation between Fairfax and Sausalito, where the Ferryboats landed to link the North Bay, including Marin County to San Francisco. Auntie Furger, who had wanted to be near Anna, accompanied by a care taker had earlier moved there. She quickly became comfortable in Yolanda, a strikingly different rather rural, at least by her standards, environment. It was apparently important for Furger to be near her unofficially adopted daughter. At least from here it was a short automobile ride to Fairfax.

It was also here that Furger became acquainted with Charles Lavaroni.

Charlie was the delivery "boy" for one of the three family owned grocery stores providing services to the residents of Yolanda. The many train stops located between the several small communities along the rail line were important to that little neighborhood. Each housed grocers and butchers who made their livings serving the commuters who worked in San Francisco. Yolanda, in the early 1900's, had many small, weekend cottages for San Francisco families who wanted to "get out of the fog." It was in one of these cottages where Charlie became acquainted with, first Elizabeth Furger and later Anna.

Looking back, there were three things that Anna and Charlie had in common. They both were born in San Francisco. Both in the same year, 1895 and both had mothers who were at one time the bread winners for the family. As for similar childhood and family experiences, that in reality was just about it!

Charles was a healthy, strong, black haired, gentle, quiet, athletic, young man of about 27 years of age still living with his mother Mary, along with a brother and a sister. The family had a small farm and a grocery store in what is now a residential area of Yolanda. Two other half sisters and a half brother had left the home, married and remained in Marin County. They all had spent their formative years in San Francisco prior to moving to Marin County. Mary had been divorced and married John Lavaroni, a San Francisco fireman who achieved the rank of Captain. Within five years of marriage, John and Mary produced the three siblings who were living on the farm in Marin County when Charlie, the oldest of the three was introduced to "Auntie Furger.

Mary and John earlier had purchased a nice piece of farmland near the Yolanda train stop. Before the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire it was a "back up" for the family's income. After the fire it became the family home, however John as an employee of the City of San Francisco never moved to Marin County full time. There is some evidence that there were other more personal reasons that for many years the Yolanda home remained fatherless. The family, like many families at that time had little or no interest in formal education. Charlie who at about the age of five lost an eye and always felt different yet never ever let it dampen his sense of joy. His younger brother, in a fit of anger, shoved a toy tin horn into his face destroying that eye. Charles never seemed to hold any animosity toward his brother; in fact it was years before I learned the reason of his misfortune. Charles did complete the eighth grade in San Anselmo and attended one year of High School, Tamalpais, in Mill Valley. At the age of sixteen he left school and commuted to San Francisco by rail and ferry boat to apprentice as a "pressman" on the San Francisco Examiner. He never lost his interest in history, arithmetic and of all things handwriting. Until his dying day he would read and sometimes compute just for the fun of it. He was under-educated but well read and interested in people and nature. His handwriting was the personification of the old Palmer Method. (That is one area in which I was definitely a disappointment to him. I suppose there were others, certainly closing my eyes while trying to act as a catcher behind home plate was another.)

On weekends and evenings Charlie, as a youngster, fed and milked the cows, cared for the chickens and collected their eggs while his mother Mary and half sister Catherine were operating the grocery store Mary had built right at Yolanda Station. She did this almost immediately after the San Francisco earthquake and fire. When doing his tasks on the farm, Charlie frequently wore a "pressman's hat" that he had carefully folded from a single sheet of newsprint. This hat making skill was successfully transferred to our son, Charlie's grand son, John. I never mastered it. Charles had many fond memories of his newspaper days. But, it was soon found that with the grocery business expanding, it would be better if he devoted full time to it. He and his brother Jimmy and their half-sister Catherine took over total responsibilities of the store. YOLANDA QUALITY MARKET became, as I remember it, an important part of San Anselmo's economy. It certainly was important to the economy of the Lavaroni family.

While Charlie, Jimmy and Catherine (Auntie Tudie) were" running" the grocery store, Mary Lavaroni, Grandma, the matriarch of the family lived in family house on the farm just a couple of blocks up from the store. She did most of the cooking for the family in a kitchen in the rear of the store building. As I remember her, she died when I was about ten years old, she was a force to be reckoned with. She was a short, plump woman who I far as I can recall, never smiled. She was born in Boston; however she dressed as though she had come to America two weeks previously. She always wore black dresses with black sweaters. Her petticoats were converted from flour sacks that she and Aunt Tudie used in baking. She "hung around" the store like a sheriff or warden making sure that her interests were safe. While Mary could speak Italian, she prohibited its use in the family. She wanted to be American. Between sweeping, cooking and keeping track of what was happening in the store she also was busy building houses on the farm land. These houses increasingly added to her estate. She was, to me at least, a very serious and humorless person who kept close

control of her children. Charlie and Jim ate their meals at the store, in fact Jim moved into a small bedroom built above the kitchen. While the two brothers owned the store, I am sure Mary received a good sum of money for the sale of the property, she, Mary, was in charge. For her, life was a pretty serious thing. It involved mostly making money and making sure there was always lots of food available. Art, literature, music, theater and religion were of little or no value to her, or her children.

It was while living in this very limited environment that Charles began delivering groceries to the cottage that housed Furger and Anna upon Anna's release from the sanatorium. It must have been a shock for both of them. Charlie and Anna represented two completely different life styles, two distinctly different views of the purpose of life; two diverse beliefs as to what life could or should be. Maybe that was the attraction. Whatever the reason, they fell in love. And against the wishes of Grandma Mary, but with the approval of Elizabeth Furger, they were married on December 26th, 1925. This event occurred at St. Anselm's Roman Catholic Church in San Anselmo only after Charles, at age 30, was baptized into the Catholic faith. Mary was not in attendance.

On December 28 1926, I was born. Anna had been told that it was physically impossible for her to bear a child. She would certainly face death should a pregnancy occur. Apparently both she and Charlie agreed to not have children, so they did whatever good Catholics at that time did to prevent a birth., And, when they did find that Anna was in fact carrying a child, they dismissed any idea of abortion. So, upon my arrival I was immediately recognized as a miracle, a gift from God. That, by the way, is a terrible burden to carry. At least it was for me and it did have something to do with how I reacted to education, learning and life in general. I am positive that as a miracle, things had to be different for me.

Besides being a phenomenon, a wonder, a marvel-- I had the name Furger. It was important to Anna that she somehow honor Elizabeth Furger, who was living with Charlie and Anna in a lovely home Charles had built several blocks away from the grocery store on a piece of land that had not been owned by Mary Lavaroni. That fact alone made it increasingly difficult for any close relationship to occur between Anna and Mary. I became Charles Walter Lavaroni Jr. with the baptismal name of Charles Furger Lavaroni. As is often the case in families, the idea of two Charlie's in one house or in our home the notion of "Junior" being so subservient, the middle name Furger became the name of choice. Now I was going through life, not only as a miracle but I had the name Furger as well. My world was different. I was special. I even had a special name. All of my school records, including my first year at San Francisco State, through my mother's and my misuse, were under the name Furger Charles Lavaroni. It wasn't until I went to San Francisco City Hall to get a copy of my Birth Certificate at the age of seventeen that I found my real, official legal name.

It was an interesting childhood. My mother became a much respected piano teacher. She was active in the community. She collected money for the Marin Music Chest which was organized to bring important artists to perform in Marin County. She helped create and was the first president of the Marin Music Teachers Association, both still in existence. She attended the San Francisco Conservatory of music where she earned a Masters Degree in Music. She worked with the local schools putting on musicals featuring the students of that school. She constantly, with me in tow, went to concerts, art galleries and the theaters in San Francisco. At the same time, my father was working at the store, delivering groceries, sorting the mail as there was a "sub station" of the US Post Office housed in the middle of the store. He was up very early in the morning brewing coffee for the commuters and home late at night after "doing the books." He took most of his dinners at the kitchen behind the store. When Grandma Mary passed away, Auntie Tудie took over that responsibility. Mom and I ate most of our meals alone. All three of us were seldom home and awake and at home at the same time. Dad had Wednesdays off. He worked every Saturday and Sunday. He obviously loved me, and I felt that

love, but I was a Momma's boy. I thought that fine. I learned my catechism, my prayers, my times tables. I could read at grade level, not for pleasure but for praise. I attended elocution lessons and ballroom dancing sessions. I learned how to ask a girl to dance and how to escort her back to her seat. At best I learned the waltz and the fox trot, not well but to mom's satisfaction. I hated Valentine's Day as I never got enough cards as I thought I deserved. But my mother reminded me that by being good, I would always have her love as well as God's. Life was pretty simple and comfortable in spite of an economic depression in the country that I did not understand or care much about.

At around the age of ten, I did get to know my dad much better. I began working at the store during vacations. Later I worked on weekends and after school. I also got a chance to have a newspaper route which did help me learn a bit about responsibility and follow through. At the store I enjoyed waiting on people, delivering orders, making sodas at the fountain and selling stamps in post office. I liked slicing salami and cheese to nibble. I found my dad fair with the customers. I learned that he recognized their importance to the business. I also found that his brother Jimmy did it differently; Jim acted as though he was doing the customers a service just by taking their money. Both systems seemed to work. I liked dad's approach much better. I learned to trust him that helped our personal relationship. I also found that I could not trust Jim. Yet somehow I admired how he could bend corners, ignore rules and still appear successful at least in terms of generating money and goods... The discrepancy between Charlie's and Jim's behaviors and values were both fascinating and confusing to me. Watching those differences should have been and eventually was an important lesson to me as to how to make the most of the gift of life.

For years I had it made. I had the safety of a home with enough money to live comfortably. I had a family complete with aunts and uncles who while not appreciating my mother, truly respected my dad. Elizabeth Furger, whom I had at least met, passed away in our home when I was about four years old. I was the only living relative of my mother. I was now truly special. So, when I left home for the very first time, to join the navy, I left home not only as a miracle--- I left with a very common name. Things were bound to change and change they did.

I found myself an exceptionally different environment where I was no longer special; one in which I had to learn how to function by my own wits. Until then, my only real responsibility was to make my parents proud and happy. This was my view, not necessarily theirs, I am sure, but one that did work for me. I was to get good grades, follow the rules, fear God, be popular and always be nice to others. I was to love music and art when I was with my mother—baseball and football when with dad. I was never to get into a fight or even an argument. It was my job to make them laugh and at the same time be very respectful, especially when amongst adults. When I was told "naughty" things about others by my family or others, I should never repeat them. If and when I said or did something wrong or inappropriate, I was to ask for forgiveness, say a prayer promise never to do "it" again. Somehow someone else or thing would take care of it. "It", either good or bad was something out of my control. I was never at fault. I could not worry about what I did but I did have to worry about how what I did was perceived by others; especially how it reflected on mom and dad as parents. The good news is that I found out how not to be guilty about a rather shallow, protected life that I was living and at the same time I really never learned how to experience joy. Thanks to the love of my parents I had many, many pleasures in life. Also because of that love I never had to or take the responsibility to find the sense of fulfillment that comes from true learning honest effort or understanding of the world around me. As a miracle, all I had to do was "be"; my parents took care of the rest.

I, in the U.S. Navy found a very different situation. No one was there clean up after me, to help me with any "homework", to support me when my behavior was inappropriate, to rub my back when I was sore from doing

a great deal of physical activity. There was no one there to drive me in a truck when it was raining, as dad did when I had a paper route. No one really cared if I was tired or my body ached. No one told me what was right or wrong to do when "on Liberty." For the first time I had to make decisions about my behavior. There were rules alright, but there was no one there but me to enforce them. I learned to swear, to drink beer, to visit bars and burlesque houses. Museums, opera houses and art galleries were no longer part of my life. It was easy to miss mass on Sundays. I had become "Lavie" or Chuck. Furger had disappeared. In a matter of a few short weeks, I came home from San Diego, fifty pounds lighter in weight and without thought asked my mother to pass the f—ing butter. I did so without even the salutation "please." There were many changes in who I was, but fortunately I was able to return to San Anselmo and San Francisco State College some nineteen months later, still a virgin and without a tattoo. The fear of God, the fear of hurting my mother as well as being exposed to many V.D. movies and talks did severely limit my activities with the female sex. And, as a matter of fact between my religious education at home coupled with the teaching of the navy, it remains a mystery to me how my married life could be so wonderful for me.

There is something very important to recognize, appreciate and celebrate when a man is fortunate enough to fall in love with the right woman. What happened to me and my wife Barbara was similar to what occurred with my mom and dad. We too were different from each other. I used education for approval. Barbara for understanding. I found happiness in groups, she in moments of privacy and solitude. I made decisions often in terms of how others perceived my behavior, Barbara tended to listen instead to herself. I was satisfied with knowledge, she wanted meaning and comprehension. When she went to church it was to celebrate life, I to appease God. As did Charlie and Anna, Chuck and Barbara spent years in love, each learning from the other, growing together, in our case producing three wonderful children, each of whom used our love much more productively than did I my parents love in my early years. However, I am grateful in the knowledge that both Charlie and Anna lived long enough to see that their chubby, frightened boy eventually find a purpose in life. My misuse of their love had, in due course, come to an end. I was maturing. For once I felt I could in reality make them proud by my efforts, not just by my being.

All of that history was in place when I heard Bill Cowen say it. For the very first time I heard about how real learning, true understand comes from within not through rote memorization or repetition. Learning was not given instead it was the result of personal work, reflection thought and commitment. That was a true revelation, one that I belied but could not quite understand.

In a moment my life changed. Up until Cowen's class, Education 100, the "Theory of Learning" I was planning to become a music teacher. Cowen's class was required in the junior year. After returning to State along many other veterans the previous year, things had truly changed. I was "getting" A's and B's. C's and D's were no longer acceptable. Looking back, nothing much had changed except possibly I had learned how to "play the game" better. I was getting even more proficient in figuring out what worked. I had picked up some things from Uncle Jim as well as from many older men had met who had found out how to successfully function in the navy. I took classes in string and brass instruments and apparently leaned enough to teach them. At least I passed the courses with good grades. I learned to read music scores well enough to convince the instructor that I could conduct a group of players. I was not however able to convince either my clarinet teacher or myself that I would ever really be able to play a Mozart clarinet concerto, a requirement for graduation. So I in spite of improved grades, I was beginning to wonder about my career choice. Educ.100, my first course in the discipline of Education forced me to reevaluate my future. As the days and weeks went on and hearing more and more about the ideas of people like John Dewy, Russo, Thorndike and many others I realized that I was fascinated by teaching and learning not by music. How could I be a music teacher when I hated to practice music? I loved the opportunities to perform with others, to play together, to work together but I was not interested at all in becoming a musician. It seemed incongruous that one with so little interest in becoming

thoroughly proficient in a skill or discipline should have the audacity to teach it. I was facing a dilemma. What was I to do?

In all my personal experiences in elementary schools I never had a male teacher. I honestly was surprised to hear that they even existed. Here was a man, Dr. Cowen who himself had that experience. He talked about it with great enthusiasm and pride. His descriptions fascinated me. He made the ideas of different styles of learning, of social studies and comprehension in reading exciting. It was he who started my search for personal meaning, for helping others find understanding through experience, reflection and thought-- not through reading, listening and practice and repetition alone. He helped me recognize that books were resources for explorations not for answers. He helped set the framework for what over time became both my focus and my failure. The three R's became tools, not solutions. At best they were appropriate objectives for successful movement to the goals of citizenship, cognition, communication and consciousness. Those four "C's" became for me the reason for my being. Over time they replaced the need for recognition and praise as the motivation of my decisions. Cowen's words hit at the intuitive level. I heard and I believed.

Before the end of the first semester of my junior year, I transferred my major from Music to Elementary Education. I was formally on the track leading to the earning of not only a BS Degree, but a California State Credential for Elementary Teaching, Grades K-8. This came as a pleasant surprise to me my friends as well as my parents. While my conversion from music teaching was almost immediate, my true understanding as to why it occurred took years and years. In fact it has taken this long to where I can at least try to write it down for me and others to read and understand. I wanted to find personal meaning for myself and in turn be an affective facilitator for others to do the same. I wanted to become a learner and also help others in their personal growth toward meaning and confidence in their abilities to successfully and positively function successfully as members in a free society. It was and still is a very big order.

August 1949 was a most auspicious month for me. Barbara Jean Millar and I were married on the 14th in Saint Anselm's Catholic Church, the same venue where Charles and Anna had exchanged their vows twenty four years earlier. This time it was Barbara who became baptized just weeks prior to the ceremony. Fortunately, both mothers were in attendance and even more importantly they obviously liked each other. I had just received my BS degree and my teacher's credential after Summer Session. Barbara finished her work at the end of the previous spring term and received her Degree and California Teaching Credential in June. After a couple of hectic weeks, taking a short honeymoon, finding an apartment in San Anselmo, registering our credentials-- she and I, on a Monday morning took our new "nifty-fifty" red Ford Convertible to work. That car, the first I had ever had to buy without my parent's money, was exciting for both of us. I dropped Barbara at the Central School in Fairfax where she met her first Kindergarten Class. I, Charles Lavaroni nervously drove alone the next fifteen miles to Novato where I was introduced to fifty four seventh grade students housed in a brand a new, self contained classroom. I was responsible for every subject. Along with the three r's, there was Art, Science, Spelling, Handwriting, Social Studies, Physical Education, Health and Music. Also, because of my minor in Music I agreed to implement an instrumental music program for the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Oh the exuberance of youth!

I was not smart enough, or prepared enough to see the impossibility of my assignment. I was instead thrilled. Here was my opportunity to put into place those wonderful new concepts I had been introduced to by Dr. Cowen and others. As a matter of fact I was disappointed when, after three or four weeks, W.J.J. Smith our Superintendent did some shuffling and about eight students were transferred to another classroom. I immediately regressed to Furger and took that move as an indication of my weakness as a teacher. As Charles, I wanted badly to translate Cowen's words to the reality of the classroom; my classroom. That is why

I introduced group work, individualized reading and goal setting activities to the curriculum. That is why we went into the fields near the school to paint and draw for art lessons. That is why we worked projects and reports instead of workbooks. That is why we set personal goals, and did some self evaluation in determining their accomplishments. That is why we wrote autobiographies and bound them into individual books. That is why I looked for opportunities for each student to make some choices. In general, that is why I purposely tried to do most everything differently than in the manner in which I was taught in my elementary school experience. I wanted for my students what I thought I never had for myself at that age—understanding, true meaning, self awareness and joy in learning. And that is why in many cases I failed. There were some successes and some failures. I am afraid that all Bobby Peno learned was that he could easily frustrate me and disturb the class. His real interests in horse racing and fast cars was beyond my ability to be of any help to him. I not only failed him, it got to the point where Barbara and I called my enflamed duodenum, "Bobby Peno." But thankfully there were also the Sherry Longs' who somehow recognized for themselves that learning was not only fun, it was personally important and above all their own responsibility. It was exciting when they found joy from finding their personal meaning.

What I did not understand at that time was that everyone: large and small, young and old, dull and smart, sad and joyful did in fact already have personal meaning. It is that personal meaning that influenced what they did, how they acted, what they felt, even what they saw. I wanted them to know that about themselves. It was important to me as I was also trying to develop that knowledge and ultimately that understanding within myself. I too was learning. If they were like me they were missing the excitement and power of being responsible for themselves and their learning. I wanted the best for all of us.

My first year of teaching ended with a sense of relief, satisfaction, frustration and generally good feelings. The eight piece school band and Novato's first school chorus, under my direction, performed adequately for the traditional graduation program. Kids, parents and fellow teachers said many nice things about the various learning activities that had taken place in my classroom. I was playing a bit in a pretty good dance band. I had taken up golf. Barbara and I had moved into a two bedroom house, next door to my parents and owned by them. Because I had some GI Bill "credits" still available I had enrolled in San Francisco State College's Graduate Education Program. Barbara had found happiness in teaching at the Kindergarten level. Things were on a roll.

My second year continued pretty much along in the same pattern established the previous year, but in many ways even better. I was now the fourth male teacher in the district. The class size was smaller, there were only thirty one students in my class. Bobby Peno had run away from home, with a high school girl, on a stolen motorcycle. The school band doubled in size. I was still trying to find new ways to stimulate learning, different ways to organize the classroom to excite curiosity and creativity with the students. As before, there were successes and failures.

It was in my third year of teaching and learning and continuing my graduate work in hopes of earning a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision when I met another force in my development. Dr. Aubrey Hahn had just come to San Francisco from Bellingham Washington where he had been both a successful public school administrator and professor at Western Washington State University. He continued to force me to look at education from what I guess one could call a progressive point of view or perspective. His ideas pretty much mirrored those of Dr. Cowen, but his presentation was completely different. He did not lecture. We sat in a large circle in his classroom. He threw out issues, problems and questions. We, the students, were required to do the thinking. While he initiated confidently he responded non-judgementally. His theory was that to be an administrator you first must be a good teacher. He believed it was the

administrator, especially the school principal, who was responsible for making schools exciting, productive institutions. What was most interesting, was that he behaved as though he truly believed that the only way that could happen is if we internalized that theory by our own processing; our own efforts. Here again I heard and I believed. But this time I heard it from me. It was not given to me. Hahn's behavior, his teaching, made my last year of teaching in Novato my best—at least I remember it that way. I had gained some confidence with what I was struggling. I learned that I had to trust myself and the kids with the likely possibility that learning would come in different ways, at different speeds with different outcomes with different kids. I learned to accept and in fact encourage those differences. I could let go. That did not mean I cared less, instead I cared even more. I began to celebrate those differences in learning styles, learning outcomes and personal meaning amongst the students.

My fourth year in the Novato Schools was a dramatic one. At the age of twenty three I became the principal of the now third school in the district, the Hill Street School... Barbara and I purchased a home in Novato and had our first child, Catherine. The school, my school, was housed on two sites, separated by about two miles. Twelve brand new classrooms were located on one piece of property. Six classrooms, rented from the Presbyterian Church on the other. There was no "office" on either site. There was no secretary. The larger, twelve room structures served as the home for grades Kindergarten through grade three. The other building, the "Annex," grades four through six. The custodian's workroom on the larger site was divided to allow space for two desks, two telephones and four chairs. In that larger building, we were on "double session," which meant that a group of students started class early in the morning and right after noon a second class would occupy that room. To make it interesting, the morning session was dedicated to the students enrolled in the Hill School, my school. The afternoon session was peopled by students enrolled in the West Novato School which was being built and hopefully completed by the spring of the next year. Another first year principal, Don Wineland, and I shared the "office." Fortunately we had known each other and had even commuted together to State to earn our credentials. To say that I was a successful principal would be a lie. It was enough to say that both Don and I lived. Whatever we thought we learned from our administrative courses was of little value. What we learned from the navy in my case and from the US Air force in Don's, along with what we had learned from working with kids, fellow teachers and parents is what saved us. What we both did learn was that we could survive. Actually, in the long run, that turned out to be a pretty positive learning experience for both of us.

During the next eight years in Novato I remained an Elementary School Principal. In 1958 Hill became a middle school for grades seven and eight. Over the years, the facility had grown to where it had several classrooms, a large multi-purpose room several playing fields and a complex that serves as the District Office. It then became the site for the seventh and eighth grade students who had previously attended three elementary schools, including Hill. I along with a few of the Hill staff was transferred to another well established school across town, the Olive School.

I had tried to continually grow as a leader. I became active in the Novato Teachers Association; one year I was its' president. In those days administrators were eligible and encouraged to participate as viable members of the educational community, alongside teachers. I joined the local chapter of Phi Delta Kappa and later the newly formed Marin County School Administrators Association. I participated in various workshops and meetings organized by the California Council for Supervision and Development. I even timidly started to take course work leading to an EDD at U.C. Berkeley. I felt as though I was getting at least closer to the principal I wanted to become. I tried to support teachers in their personal and professional growth. I was excited when together we would plan and execute ideas to make the school experience richer for all of our students. But there were times when I felt quite inadequate. It was difficult for me to support teachers when I found their

ideas about grading, classroom behavior, and the use of punishment, testing or relationships with parents significantly different from mine. I wanted their personal meaning to be the same as mine. I was asking for the impossible, yet it bothered me. There were some sleepless nights, some angry confrontations but fortunately, all in all, many of my goals were being met.

One Saturday morning, on the campus of U.C. Berkley, a professor called me aside and told me that a friend of his had an "opening" in which I might be interested. Gerry Jacobus, the Kings County Superintendent of Schools was looking for a "bright young successful principal" to serve as the Director of Curriculum for that county. I knew I was settled and happy in Novato, but the fact that a UC professor considered me bright and successful intrigued me. This time I wanted to believe and I made another intuitive leap. I went home and immediately applied. Within a day or two Barbara and I drove south on hi-way 99, through Fresno to Hanford California, the county seat of Kings County. It was a typical hot San Joaquin Valley day. While I met with Mr. Jacobus, Barbara visited Mrs. Jacobus, Marian. We both found our hosts charming, hospitable and interesting. Gerry and I had a long discussion as to what we thought important about schools and education. We found that we had much in agreement. While I discovered the two men had similar views about our profession, Barbara discovered that she and Marion felt the same about the importance of family. There developed an immediate sense of trust, respect and friendship amongst the four of us.

I remember two interesting events of my conversation with Gerry: one, this was to be an informal meeting one with no expectations from either side of the table. Early on it was made clear that no formal offer was going to be made or accepted that day. Two, I wondered why there was no Assistant Superintendent or why the Curriculum Director reported directly to the superintendent. There were many other issues, procedures and situations discussed. But these two stand out in my mind seeing that as we left Gerry's office late in afternoon, I was handed an envelope along with Gerry's words, "Don't open this until you get home."

Well, that envelope burned a hole in my pocket. Several miles north, in Madera, we stopped for a cool drink of water. I opened the envelope, lo and behold there appeared a contract for the position Assistant Superintendent, not Director of Curriculum, with a salary figure higher than I supposed. I was thrilled and together Barbara and I decided to accept before we arrived home.

Now our lives changed and changed significantly from what our family previously experienced. The five of us, Barbara, Cathy, Pete and four month old John were off to a new world, together. And it truly was a new world, not just for the Lavaroni family but the world in general, our country and especially for the "world" of Education. It was August 1960. It was the start of the wonderfully frenetic, restrained insane 60's. The poster of the day read, "Question Authority." There were race riots, bra burning, the Vietnam War and LSD. A beloved President, an important Freedom Fighter and a progressive candidate for the presidency were assassinated. Labor laws, voting rights, the issues homosexuality, marriage and divorce were all being questioned. Popular books read by the masses dealt with the rationality and proper function of schools. Space was now a place to explore. Everything and everyone was involved; Newspaper, Movies, Television, Magazines, Churches, Political Parties, City Councils, Social organizations and a whole variety of "do gooders" made their voices heard. And, often those voices were in conflict between one and the other. The federal government, for a variety of reasons, including the need to "beat the Russian's into space", spent billions of dollars. A goodly number of those dollars, along with monies and energy form private corporations, institutions of higher learning, state and local governments literally poured into all levels of Education.

Even little Kings County, California and its' county seat Hanford was affected. This rural, rather traditionally conservative part of the world in terms of education came alive. I, as a person fascinated with the ideas of "personal meaning", initiated by the influence of Drs' Cowen and Hahn, had not only found a new home but found myself in a leadership position at a time where everything was being reviewed, researched, and experimented upon. The rules were changing. Education was becoming an important barometer for the future success of our nation.

What I know now, and was completely oblivious of at the time were three very important facts: One, in our society, Education is a political activity—not merely one of service. Two, the role of an Assistant Superintendent is a Staff Position, while being a Principal or Superintendent is a Line Position—they are distinctly different in function as well as in responsibility. Three, spending money can get us to the moon as we know where it is--spending money on Education will lead us nowhere as there is no clear, agreed upon recognition as to what education is or what it is supposed to produce.

Without these understandings in mind, I confidently and happily jumped into a new world. At exactly the same time several new superintendents and assistant superintendents came to Kings County. Gerald Jacobus, my new boss was everything I had hoped for. Things were changing for him as well. He had lived his whole life in the Valley. He, a quiet man, had carefully built a support base within the educational community as well as within the political elements of the county. That was evident in many ways, not the least was in the structure recently built by the county for his office, the most modern building in town. It was a completely round- one story brick building with wonderful glass windows and walls, completely air conditioned and landscaped. It won a prize for the architect as well as for the County Board of Education. It would not have been built without Gerry's restrained and careful leadership. In retrospect, it was as though he had been silently waiting and hoping for a time to break out of the safe cocoon he had been building for himself over the three terms he was voted into office. I along with the few new, young, wild eyed, kind of progressive thinking successful educators arrived at the time. We were ready to change education. Gerry too was ready. I found out later, he was already planning for his last election which was to occur in less than two years. He was excited and he trusted me. It was a near perfect situation.

Previous to my arrival, the curriculum staff was "sent out" to work with the various districts. It was their job to meet the administrators and teachers to provide the services each district determined to be of the greatest need. I felt that the office should not only provide services but also offer leadership and coordination amongst and between the districts. Gerry allowed me to form a county wide Curriculum Committee. It was the charges of this committee to find and meet as many common concerns throughout the county as possible. It was designed to better utilize the various monies and services that were available for the schools. For example, Fresno State College was much more willing to lend its' programs and offerings to a group rather to individuals. Grantors were much more interested in working with numbers that could provide more complete results and affect more people. Suppliers would offer services and improved prices when greater numbers were involved. Experts of various sorts were easier to hire when monies could be pooled to increase to pay for their services. Publishers were much more interested in assisting as many a district as they can in one area on any one given trip. Staff members from the California State Department of Education found it much better to meet at one place, at one time to disburse their information. But most of all that bi-monthly meeting gave all the administrators of the county an opportunity to share their needs, fears, successes, failures, problems and solutions.

Friendships were made, individuals were helped and a sense of hope and pride was engendered, if not for all, for most in attendance. The men and women involved, I am confident, used these meetings and their results as moments of sanity in an otherwise crazy world.

It was exciting for those in attendance, but more importantly the committee coordinated many new and improved services for the teachers and students of the county. It was through their efforts that an elementary Spanish Language Program was introduced, free to the schools, through a local commercial television station. A thorough in-service Social Studies Program on work of Dr. Hilda Taba was presented by Dr. Mary Durkin, a professor from San Francisco State University. Fresno State University staff members offered classes in Modern Mathematics and Creative Writing. Dr. J. Richard Suchman from The University Illinois Urbana, was a frequent visitor to the county where he helped establish a core of teachers and administrators who introduced and supported his Inquiry Training Program. Dr. Ruth Fielder from U.C. Berkeley was hired to assist districts with the problems they were having with race in the schools. N.D.E.A. and N.S.F. grants for science instruction and materials were written, approved and administered through the curriculum committee. Dr. Art Costa, then the Education Officer for N.S.A. Educational Program was a regular visitor to the county. Continuing arrangements were made with The Child Study Program at the University of Maryland and three Kings County educators completed their Doctors degree through it. A large computer was purchased, one that the county schools, especially the high schools could use for making schedules and keeping records. A series of county wide institutes were planned and presented to encourage communication amongst the teachers of the various schools within the county. This committee helped identify and support several teachers and administrators as they developed and used their newly acquired leadership and consulting skills throughout the county.

There was one activity that stands out the most, both for the county and for me as well. That was the work we did with Dick Suchman. I had attended a conference in early 1962 where Dick was the featured speaker. His words, his behavior once again triggered my belief in the excitement involved when one takes on the commitment and responsibility for learning and personal meaning. I was hooked! Drs. Cowen and Hahn were regenerated in the form of this tall, bright, humorous "Jewish kid." from New Jersey. Dick became my personal guru, my hero, my confidant. I was convinced that his "Inquiry Training Program," when used in classrooms would bring about the kind of educational results I considered of most importance. The first grant I wrote to help get him and his ideas to Kings County was expanded by NDEA officials to include most of Southern California. This gave me the opportunity to meet and work with many people in leadership positions throughout the state. In turn I was able find and bring other resources to the county through the Curriculum Committee. Without that initial contact with Dick, and the State Department of Education, I think our work would not have been as affective as I believe it was. Also, it was through these contacts that I was contracted by the Franklin Publishing Company to work with three other devotees of Inquiry, to write textbooks for middle grade science. My book, "The Wonders of Water," was published and did become a Supplementary State Textbook. That book edited by Dr. Art Costa helped established a friendship with him that exists today.

As I write this now I am both reminded how exhilarating all these experiences were for me and others and at the same time wondering how many of them are still in use in any form. In the long run, did they really make any difference, and if yes, "What?"

Regardless of the answer to that question, things were happening to me. For the first time-- the majority of my motivation was coming from my commitment to advancing what I thought the purpose of an education: the development of a group of people of character who could communicate, think and hold themselves responsible for their actions. For me that meant they behaved as a result of a continuing, conscious search for

increasingly genuine, competent and relevant personal meaning .My own personal meaning was more important to me than “what others thought of me.” Yet, with all the meetings and workshops I was I was developing a pretty positive reputation in the valley and out.

There was more Charles than Furger present during those first three years in Hanford. Then in the midst of the fourth year the old Furger came alive. I was finding my success quite wonderful which ultimately led to humbling experiences. About the same time I was being asked to present some Inquiry Training Workshops throughout the valley, I received a telephone message from an old friend, Ralph Giovennielo. Ralph was the superintendent of Marin County’s San Jose School District. We had met and worked together in the Novato schools. He was its’ first Director of Curriculum during much of the time I was an elementary school principal. This was during the time of rapid growth to the point that Novato had become a unified district, meaning amongst other things, it was responsible for maintaining secondary or High School programs for students after graduating the eighth grade. The neighboring San Jose School District was also growing, and growing to the point that a merger or unification seemed appropriate for people in both communities. Plans were made to hold an election sometime in the future. If successful there would be a new board of education elected by the voters in each district. There would be two superintendents to choose from and one would become the superintendent of this newer and larger district. There were all kinds of personal and political ramifications, both hidden and in public, involved in what could be a “messy” project.

Should a new district be voted into existence, a new board would be elected and a superintendent appointed. In the San Jose area, it was hoped that the majority of the new board would be made up of members from the former San Jose School Board. It was then I became a political pawn. I was asked to become the Assistant Superintendent of the smaller San Jose district. Apparently I had established a pretty good reputation within the Novato Schools as well within the community of Novato. Ralph and “his” board thought I might be able to positively influence many Novato people to vote in favor of their members if I became Assistant Superintendent of the San Jose District: a brand new position. No matter as to the real reason why I was offered the position, I Furger Lavaroni, in need of praise and recognition did, just months before the election, accept the offer. I was going home in glory. I thought news of all the wonderful successes I had in Hanford had preceded me. I assumed I was wanted for my creativity and leadership abilities. That, at least, is what I wanted to believe.

So in August of 1964 I, without consideration as to the deep feelings of love Barbara found for Hanford and life in the valley, nor to the many preparations needed to move back to Marin County, we began packing up our belongings for our new old home. We were leaving an old, beautiful, two stories, and white shingled valley home complete with two large palm trees in front and a small orchard behind --to a rented, old mildew laden bungalow built on the property that was once part of the Lavaroni farm. I had to be “on board” in my new position before we made the move, leaving much of the packing to Barbara and the three children, John the youngest being four.

This was the beginning of the very worst two years my personal, our family and my educational life. Nothing worked as planned. The move was very difficult for everyone. There was really no authentic educational rationale for creating the Assistant Superintendent position in the San Jose District. I was really not needed as there was an excellent consultant already on staff. I tried to establish a presence with the other administrators, some I had known previously and did have some success. The high light of that year was meeting with and working with Fred Newton who at the time was the principal of the San Jose Middle School. He too was fascinated with Dr. Such man’s Inquiry Training. We kept each other alive just by thinking and talking of the possibilities inherent in that program.

The election was held and a new, larger district was formed. The majority of the new board was made up of members who previously served on the Novato Board. Ralph became Associate Superintendent; I Assistant Superintendent for Elementary schools. I had little respect for the newly appointed superintendent, and he equally little for me. Old friendships had not reignited. Our daughter upon entering the seventh grade in San Anselmo, attending the same school I had attended as a youngster, almost immediately became fodder for the slings and arrows of a few pre-teen and teen age girls. (Barbara has convinced me that at that age girls can be worse bullies than boys. Based on that experience, I can believe it.) We made arrangements to have Cathy leave Isabel Cook School, "my old" school, transferred her to the Catholic school in Fairfax. At the same time we purchased land from my father and began building a new home, next to the house in which I grew up in Yolanda. There was now no question about it, little "Furgie" had returned. To make it even more difficult for myself and my family, I continued my interest in such man's Inquiry Training Program. I was traveling as a consultant, teaching workshops and writing, along with Art Costa and my other friend of Inquiry, Fred Newton, a series of booklets extolling the virtues of Suchman's work for Science Research Associates, S.R.A. It was getting to be as bad as it was when I first attended college. I was focusing on me not on my family or my job. I was acting fraudulently in terms of whom I wanted to be.

And, just about the time I had to face reality, another offer appeared. I was given a chance to retreat respectfully. Dr. Richard Foster a former Marin County Superintendent of Schools and a recognized leader throughout the educational community was hired by the Sausalito School District to assist in finding and appointing a new superintendent. I had known for many years that the Sausalito District had many difficulties. The district served two very distinct and different communities; Sausalito and Marin City. Sausalito was an older community made up of generations of fishermen, boat builders, merchants, and a large group of new and successful professional people commuting to its' neighbor San Francisco. Marin City, created during World War II as a result of a booming ship building facility, had become the home for many poor, minority families, most of whom were black and originally from the southern states of America. Along the perimeters of the coast lines surrounding these communities were several military bases which housed army and navy personal and their families. Then too, a small community of houseboats which tended to attract people with artistic and freer life styles emerged along the shore of the bay. The Sausalito Marin City School District while relatively small in terms of miles was quite large in terms of the different racial, economic, social, and political backgrounds of its' inhabitants. While there are theories extolling the positive results of diversity, in the case of this community that diversity was harmful to the successful operation of the local schools. It came to a point where there was a re-call election and a slate of progressive young men were elected to replace the older, conservative board which had one remaining member left to complete his term. Foster was hired to help the new board find a superintendent who could change what the majority of the new board saw as a failed system. I was pleased when Dick called and suggested I apply. Once again "someone liked me." After screening and completing a series of interviews I was offered a contract as the new Sausalito Marin City School District Superintendent. In a decision built on some psychological need, immature judgment, and self-importance I accepted. That terrible decision had disastrous results for both me and the district.

On my second meeting with the board, scheduled about two weeks before the first day of school in September 1965 I made several recommendations. They included: closing the one school building in the Marin City, immediately adding four portable classrooms the old "downtown" school site in Sausalito, making each of the schools serve a particular set of grade levels, thereby bussing literally all students to their assigned school, doing away with the established tradition of ability grouping, prohibiting the use of ABC Report Cards, removing a particular phonics based reading program from the classroom, stopping the use of Standardized Ability Testing, hiring a cadre of young black men and women as teaching assistants and playground monitors,

and in essence telling a group of administrators and teachers they had failed in their previous efforts. I did all of this willfully and with pride. I honestly thought I had the answers. I could bring stability to chaos. I had a strong “personal meaning” as to what a good, affective educational program should be—I had absolutely no understanding as to how to make it happen. Oh, there were a few people; teachers, parents and one administrator who shared my vision, but we were in the minority. Looking back, besides ignoring any semblance of understanding how change might peacefully occur, there was no majority of anything in the first place. There was a great deal of complaining and very little listening. There were many theories and very little interest in using data to as a means to support them. There was a great deal of finding fault and very little self examination. There were many character faults found, always in the “other” guy.

From that original meeting on I did everything I possibly could to make it work. I knew I was right in recognizing that the system I inherited was sick. It soon became obvious that the various remedies were not working. At least the illness was exposed but at a terrible expense. The district, in September 1965 had an enrolment of over 950 students and a new superintendent. In September 1966 the district had another new superintendent and an enrollment of less than 700. For what it is worth, today in an area that has had population growth; the district serves less than 300 students. While things change, they often remain the same.

In, January of 1966, with what I assume was a nervous breakdown, I asked for my resignation. The board suggested that I take two weeks off. I did. I stayed at home, worrying, not sleeping, not eating and began a series of meetings with a psychologist. Two weeks later I returned. This time the board accepted my resignation and announced it “because of health”. That was a true statement, but only if it accurately read “mental health.”

Dr. Virgil Hollis the then elected Marin County Superintendent of Education came to my rescue. When he asked what I thought I would do when I left the district, I answered with sincerity, “I think I will join a carnival or circus.” He immediately pointed out that I lacked neither the skills nor the stability to do either. Here was a man, whom I had previously and publically worked against his being elected, coming to my side in a time of need. He calmed me down and offered the services of his office to help. I did the best I could. At the suggestion of the board recommended I fired one principal to show the community that the board was interested in somehow making a difference. With Hollis’s backing, along with my wife’s loving support and several visits to the Psychologist’s office I survived until June. My great failure had come to an end. It was time to mature, give up Furger and try to find Chuck again.

While all of this was going on-- Hollis, without my knowledge, was working in my behalf to find a position that would allow me to not only stay in the field of education but remain in my new home as well. Without officially applying, I was given an interview with the San Anselmo School District Board of education. How I successfully handled that interview, I will never know. Within hours of it, I received a telephone call from Steve Parodi, San Anselmo’s superintendent, offering me the position of principal of Isabel Cook School. This was the school I once attended, the one from which Barbara and I had just removed our daughter and currently the school where our other two children were in attendance. It was weirdly wonderful. I was thrilled, excited and at the same time quite fearful. How could anyone who had just proven his inadequacies ever be given such an opportunity? But, here was a chance to redeem myself in a profession I had learned to love and respect, one in which I thought I had lost any chance of having any future. Here was an opportunity to once again help others as they seek meaning through personal inquiry. This time I had to do it right. If there was a need for change, I had to think not only about that change but how best to achieve it. I had to hear--listen better, become a better questioner and less the answer giver. I had to pay attention to values, interests and

beliefs different from mine. I had to learn how to become a facilitator, not a dictator. I had to gain the trust of a group of people, teachers, students, parents, fellow administrators alike. Intuitively I knew I had to respect not only my personal meaning but the personal meaning of others. I had to become aware of how I was behaving if I was ever going to be able function in a way constant with my sense of how an effective principal should act. I knew I had to move slowly, which was generally inconsistent with my prior performance. It was a challenge.

My reason for my qualms might be best illustrated when on the very first day in my new office, Mrs. Nash, a current first grade teacher and my first grade teacher some thirty years earlier, came in, closed the door and said, "Furger, if you won't tell anyone I was your teacher, I won't."

Actually I did not listen to her. I was proud of the fact that "she had done such a magnificent job in teaching me." It was fun reminiscing with her. I felt it gave me an opening with the staff and the parents who respected her. Evelyn being there was very important to me. While it reminded me of Furger, it also seemed to settle my nerves. Maybe it was safe for Charles to emerge.

After a summer trip by automobile trip most of the northwestern states of the U.S., the Lavaroni family emerged from under its "Black Cloud" with least the hope of stability. September 1966 started much differently than the previous year. Fortunately, this time I was not hired to the "change the world." I was to manage the educational programs of a "going", well established school. I felt I had a better idea as to what should be done. When the school year started, the school which for many years held classes K-8, now became a K-6 school. That simplified it for me as the teachers who had been involved with our daughter's transfer the previous year were now in another building. It was also interesting as our two boys Peter and John were enrolled there. Here was a place I knew and one in which I had some history. It should be easy. And it was.

The experienced staff was happy. The parents were happy. The kids were kids. I was happy. After about five weeks I stopped seeing the psychologist. We were off to yet another beginning for me. I truly appreciated the willingness of the superintendent, Steve Parodi and the San Anselmo school board to take a chance with me. I kept a low profile with the staff, stayed out of the teacher's hair for most of that first year. I did continue doing a few workshops on my continued interest in Inquiry. I read about new ideas, attended conferences and tried to stay abreast of all the changing ideas. I along with Art Costa, Fred Newton and Larry Lindberg presented a few weekend workshops at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle Washington. These workshops were funded by "The Far West Laboratory for Education". The money was provided by U.S. Office of Education. Dr. Stuart Van Wingerden, then Chair of the education department of Western Washington State University, was one of the educators in attendance. He liked me, and I like him. He invited me to present a W.W.S.U. extension course in Inquiry during the summer of 1967 in Bellevue Washington, a suburb of Seattle. This was the first time that I was able to take our family on what amounted to a "working vacation." Fortunately there have been many since. It was the beginning of another phase of my life, even though I did not recognize that at the time.

That summer had a profound effect on me and how I was performing as a principal. I realized that while the previous year had been stress free for me, I had not really done much to help the school and teachers delve into what we all could do to improve the education of all the students we served as a whole. Workbooks and mimeographed worksheets were still very popular with many teachers. Different classes used different textbooks for the same subjects. We hadn't talked much about what standards of behavior we expected from kids on the playground, as well as in the classroom itself. A couple of the teachers heard about my involvement with Inquiry so I began working with them. A couple of teachers had invited parents into their

rooms as aides. I did what I could to help one or two teachers, who had asked for it, in planning for individualized learning. In general at the same time while “things remained the same” things were changing.

For the next two years there was a change in my behavior, my “style.” I decided that so long as I was being paid as the principal, the educational leader, I should at least begin taking on that role. I changed. I became more aware, more pro-active, more involved in what was happening. I paid more time in pointing out the differences in teaching methods, expectations, underlying belief systems, materials being employed etc. I spent less time defending practices I thought inappropriate. I hope I did spend time defending the teacher if not the teaching. In that process feelings changed, some teachers felt challenged and threatened. I was working more and more in trying to focus on how one organizes the classroom and eventually the school as an environment emphasizing personal meaning. There were many and constant discussions of the function of, need for and relationships between content and process, data and theory. We became less complacent, more excited, more frustrated, both challenging and challenged. I think the one thing I had either forgotten or not yet understood was how impossible and probably unhealthy it is to expect the same personal meaning to exist amongst a group of people. I ended up on several occasions taking sides instead of exploring possibilities. The “line” responsibilities of being principal interfered with the “staff” responsibilities. I found it difficult to be both the evaluator and the one responsible to encourage self-assessment. The dual role of “boss” and “helper” was confusing to me.

That period of time was especially confusing to me as I was increasingly being recognized as being a successful “change agent” outside of Isabel Cook School. Because of doing a bit of writing and having many opportunities to consult, present workshops and teach in two different Universities, Newark State, New Jersey and Western Washington Bellingham summer sessions 1968 and 1969. I was being sought out as an example of an educational leader. I was spending time helping others and at the same time getting frustrated with the slowness of change at Cook School. I realized that I was not as successful as others thought. I was like many people I had observed, “An expert, a person several miles from home.”

Perfect timing for me to get a call from Sister Samuel, President of “Dominican College of San Rafael.” Sr. Samuel, one of the most beautiful people I have ever met in my entire life, called me to meet her one very warm Friday afternoon in May of 1969. I remember parking the car in front of Guzman Hall where Sr. Samuel had her office. I sat there wondering why I was there. I knew that she wanted to talk with me about some kind of faculty position. Was it teaching elementary science, because of the “Wonders of Water” and the Inquiry Training writings and workshops? Maybe it was because of the various “Individualized Reading” and “Critical Thinking” sessions I had presented around Marin County. Was it because I had taught some “Values Clarification” workshops? Could it be that she learned about the twelve Units explaining Inquiry Training that I had co-authored with Art Costa and Fred Newton, published by Science research Associates? I really had no idea. But I was intrigued. I knew that Dominican College was a woman’s college that had been in San Rafael for many years. I knew it had a well respected Music Department as my mother had long time relationships with the Sister who was its’ Department Chair. Also through my mother, I had met Dr. Aigner, the chairman of the Education Department. I knew the program for teacher education as we had one or two student teachers completing their requirements at Isabel Cook. I also knew there was a well respected teacher educator, Dorothy Blackmore, in charge of the student teachers. What I did not know was, why I was there. I remember, at the time, wondering if I was offered a job, why would I take it. Being a principal, especially in a school so close to my home was pretty good. Besides, I had made a strong commitment to myself to not ever again try to be a superintendent. Principal was about as “far as I wanted to go.”

Then a weird thing happened. As I stepped out of the automobile I heard birds singing and I saw lush, healthy green bushes and trees. For the first time in quite a while I heard silence. There were no voices at all. No honking automobiles. It was peaceful. Almost immediately after stepping into Sr. Samuel's office, I found that same feeling. Her quite confidence, warm smile, laughing eyes and strong sense of self relaxed me. I was hooked. Now I wanted the job, any job. I saw myself happily functioning in this quite, nurturing environment without the daily pressures of little kids, frustrated teachers and angry parents. (What I found out later was there really were plenty of automobiles around there, so many it was hard to find parking. I discovered young women can be noisy, angry and difficult. I learned that college instructors can be as frustrated, jealous and insecure as elementary teachers. And, it was also revealed that birds will always come to an area where they are being fed.)

Our meeting started with Sr. Samuel's information that Dorothy Blackmore had been invited and accepted an important position with the California State Department of Education. Dominican needed a new Director of Teacher Education. This person would work directly with Dr. Aigner and was responsible for administering student teaching assignments for students seeking either the California Elementary Teaching Credential or the California Secondary Teaching Credential. I was immediately fascinated with what I thought he job to be. I knew there was much I had to learn about the details, the state laws as well as the overall responsibilities of being a faculty member at Roman Catholic institution. After my "breakdown" I had become a "fallen away Catholic." I was instantly relieved when Sr. informed me that she was about to offer me the position "Director of Teacher Education not Director of Religious Studies."

There was one important consideration that stopped me from instantaneously accepting the offer when it was first presented by Sr. Samuel. That was the salary. While it was comparable to that what I was receiving at Isabel Cook, there was no retirement plan nor was there any suggestion of future increases. I wanted the position. In a matter of just an hour or so I had the sense that "this is what I have been looking for." My intuition was once again at work.

Looking back, Sr. Samuel too must have listened to her intuition. I knew that universities and colleges offered off campus "In Service Courses" for teachers. I had taught in some. I also was sure that Dominican did not yet entered into that venue. I asked if she might be interested in starting such an "In-service Teacher Education Program" designed to meet the needs of the already credentialed teacher. These would definitely not be in conflict with or in competition with the already well established credential program. "Non-Credit" credits were to be offered. They would be based upon the number of hours of direct instruction coupled with the amount of time necessary for successful completion by the student. In all cases some form of assessment, test, project or performance would be required for the grade. The only expenses would be for instructor salary. Instructors would come from the many outstanding practicing teachers and administrators from Marin County and the San Francisco Bay area. Any announcements would be the responsibility of the instructor after securing approval of the course or workshop from the college. I was to be determiner of the appropriateness of the course as well the qualifications of the instructor after consultation with Dr. Aigner (Later a committee of three, myself along with two other members of the Education Staff, Artelle Farley and Dr. Stephen Padover along with the College Registrar would take over that task.) The college would receive \$7.00 per non-credit unit. Any money left after paying the seven dollars per unit and the instructor's salary would be divided, 50% to the general fund of the college and 50% to me as the administrator of the program.

Sister Samuel agreed and in the fall of 1969 I started on what was to be last twelve and a half years of my working for a salary. Those were wonderful years. I was primarily working with young people, mostly undergraduate women at first, along some older men returning students seeking a teaching credential. In those early years, students could qualify for a B.A. Degree and a teaching credential in four years. This

changed around 1972-73 and the Education Department was focused entirely on meeting the needs of the graduate, many of whom had previously attended colleges and universities other than Dominican. The In-Service Program was an instant hit. Besides making Dominican College much more visible throughout the bay area, it was bringing in increasing revenues for the college and for me.

Two of us, Artelle Farley and I were responsible for the initial course to the formal credential program, Education 100, "Introduction to Education." The two of us had an amazingly similar understanding as to what we considered important to our students. We had similar values and beliefs. Our senses of humor were almost identical. And of at least equal import, we came with significantly different backgrounds of experience. It was our task to set the scene for what was to follow. It was here where we could expose our students to the excitement of and commitment to the development of "personal meaning." We saw it our task to make sure our students would know and appreciate the differences between content and process and the appropriate need for both. We devised activities that would require, critical thinking, self-assessment, creativity and group work. We were doing projects before there was "Project Based Learning." We introduced our students to many of the same people Drs. Cowen and Hahn had to me with the addition of several others the likes of Suchman, Parker, Veatch and Bateman. We presented the concepts of individualized instruction, modern mathematics, contract learning, and positive reinforcement. We used instructional tools of Flanders's Interaction Analysis, Journaling, and Goal Setting. We attempted to model the kind of classroom management and classroom organization we thought supported the students' autonomy and self actualization for the eight years we worked together.

In 1973 Sr. Samuel was informed that the California State Department of Education was seeking applications for a grant designed to change and improve teacher training throughout the state. There were to be three recipients. One large state university, one medium sized state and one smaller independent school was to be selected. Dorothy Blackmore was to be responsible for the administration of study. Artelle and I prepared the application, one that would dramatically change our program in two major ways. We would become entirely objective based. A form was to be created, one that would clearly name a learning goal and an objective that could be measured or observed to indicate the successful meeting of that goal. This document was divided to offer a large space in which the student could propose an objective different from the one we wrote. Each such objective had to be one that was measurable and observable. The timing of the successful completion of each goal was responsibility of each student. Of course our lectures, discussions, use of resource people and other scheduled activities would influence when any one objective was completed. For example, Flanders had to be introduced before a student could demonstrate its' application, but determining where and when it could be used was the task of the student.

Another major change was proposed. Two elementary school sites were to be selected as the "home" for the fourth year graduate program. A majority of or students' time would be spent at that school, one in Kentfield and one in Novato. First semester students would spend upwards of twenty five percent of their "instructional time" at the school of choice. Their objectives would be collecting data as to the materials used, the teaching styles the staff members employed, the varying discipline methods enforced as well as the student's personal reactions to what they were experiencing. Their major responsibility was to be identifying the teacher with whom he/she wanted to work as a student teacher the next semester and obtain that person's approval. That second semester ninety percent of the students' time was to be at the elementary school site, the remaining ten percent at Dominican where total group activities would take place. These major modifications were designed to literally demand reasonable, rational and responsible behaviors on the part of the student. These were, in our minds, the sign of the professional teacher.

To make the program manageable, we, Artelle and I had to plan being off campus the majority of our time. Each school found a place for us to have "our office" near where the action was to take place. We assumed that with this design there would be periods of conflict, issues of confusion and events that needed monitoring. And, we found, after having the grant approved and implemented in the fall of 1974, our prediction accurate. Our new program was not easier for either us or the students but much better for both. From the first day on, students were given the opportunity to take increasing responsibility for their personal growth toward professionalism. We as college instructors were given the opportunity to work directly "in the field" with administrators, teachers and the elementary students as well. We would have hands on experiences in real classrooms, in real situations, with real teachers and kids even on occasion interactions with real parents. Master teachers were actively involved in many activities as either a participant or as a leader. The school as a whole became a living learning environment.

During those seven years 1969 thru 1976, I, as director of Teacher Education had many opportunities to grow and change and at the same time remain committed to my interest in Personal Meaning. I became fascinated in all kinds of programs I felt could lead to that goal for myself as well as my students. I explored The Bay Area Writing Project, Team Teaching, Educational Television, Performance Based Learning, and The Habits of Mind looking for that one activity that would make the difference. It was like jumping from one solution to another without clearly defining the problem. Always Inquiry, and its' Data Theory Cycle model, remained in the back of my mind.

It was during that time I participated in an important school wide change. The whole notion of tenure came up. I, along with others on the faculty, began to question the traditional purpose, role and function of tenure. It seemed, at least on surface, automatic from Instructor, to Assistant Professor thru Associate Professor, and with an earned doctorate to Professor. (It dawned on me that I had done pretty well moving to the level of Dean without that doctor behind my name.) I had been on campus long enough and had contacts with students often enough to realize there were wide discrepancies in the quality of instruction offered our students. I also realized that there was no recognizable system in place that was designed specifically to help me or anyone else become a better instructor or a better administrator. In 1973 the President, Sr. Samuel, her Council, with the support of the College Board appointed a five person committee to study the issue. That body was made up of three instructors, two of whom were tenured, one staff person and one administrator. I was one of the three faculty members selected to represent the faculty position. After a two year study proposal to replace tenure with periodic review and extended appointment was offered for vote to the four groups making up the Dominican Community: Students, Faculty, Staff and the Alumni. The vote was unanimous for approval. The faculty had the lowest percentage of approval, 56% and the students the highest, over 85%. This new plan introduced a means for the continued development of Professional and Personal Growth and included a built in system to provide help to any faculty member who demonstrated weakness. Periodic Review was institutionalized in 1975. I am proud of the leadership role I played, along with others including John Savant of the English Department, in making that dramatic change.

(Several years after my leaving Dominican I met the then president Dr. Fink. I asked him how the program was working. He informed me that "I did away with it." Why', I asked. Fink said that It prevented him from hiring the quality of people he wanted. I thought about that ---I think he really hated giving up his authoritarian power to decide who stays.)

1975 brought another opportunity for me and the college. It was decided that we should develop a program to offer the California Elementary Administration Credential. I working with a local administrator and Artelle Farley designed a program similar to the one we had created for the teaching program. This too was based on

specific learning goals with the opportunity for the student to identify specific observable or measurable objectives indicating the successful meeting of that goal. Each objective had to have the approval of the instructor. While I taught a couple of courses most of the instructors were successful working school administrators. Dr. Donald Leisey, the Superintendent of the San Rafael School District was one of most successful instructors in this new program.

A little, and ultimately unsuccessful, detour was taken on my road back to sanity in early 1976. Furger had returned. I had been complaining in private to some fellow educators about what I saw as the sad condition of California's public schools. A friend, either Linda Lambert or Helen Wallace goaded me into "trying again." I wrote a letter to the Reed School Board who was searching for a new superintendent. In that letter I explained how I had learned so much about how important education was, how wonderful I knew the district was and how I felt I could help it even improve. Surprisingly I was selected to appear at an interview with a large group of parents, administrators, students and teachers in attendance. After a short introduction and a few minutes extolling the "great reputation" of the Reed Schools, I was asked the question, "If selected, what would you do to make our schools better?"

After a brief period I answered. "The very first thing I would do is work with a committee of teachers and administrators to develop a questionnaire by which every teacher could accurately list his philosophy of education, his grading policies, his classroom behavior standards, his parent expectations, and any other information that would present a clear picture as to what would happen in the classroom."

I followed that with. "Then I would work with some parents to create a questionnaire where parents could succinctly list their hopes, desires and expectations for the education of their children. It would be our task as administrators then to link children with teachers who shared similar goals and objectives with those of the parents."

The next question should have been and in fact was, "What would you do when a teacher was found to have too few a number of students to legitimately make up a class?"

I had dug a hole and it was time to jump into it, "I guess I would be spending time in Sacramento doing whatever I could to change the tenure laws of the state."

Not surprisingly, I was not offered the position. I was both saved and relieved.

During the Dominican years I had been writing, eventually having three textbooks published by Addison Wesley and another by Franklin Publishing for elementary science, as well as "Humanity", a book for parents and teachers which explored my understanding of personal meaning at that time. This document was published by Dimensions Press earlier in 1970 by a small Marin County publisher. (There is an un-cashed check hanging today above my desk at home for the sum of \$.96 cents, the total amount of money I ever received for writing this tome. Ah the financial rewards of being published.)

"Humanity" while bringing in absolutely no money directly did however have an effect on both my finances and my schedule. Dr. Michael Kittredge contacted me after having read it. Mike was about two years younger than I. We had met as teen agers at Lake Almanor, California several years earlier when our two families had summer cottages very close to each other. His family was different than mine in many ways but the one thing we had in common we were both only children. Also, I found out later we both had very powerful mothers. Perry Kittredge, Mike's father was the Physical Education Director for the San Francisco Public Schools at the time. He and his wife earlier had started a tutorial service to help students, primarily young male athletes

make up grades so they could qualify to return to the Junior and Senior high schools and compete in the sports of their choice. Soon word got around and younger students having difficulty in the rather rigid system of the schools at that time were admitted. Eventually a building was rented and an Independent School program was established. In 1944 the family purchased a three story building in the Richmond District of San Francisco Kittredge School was established to serve the needs of elementary aged children primarily in the neighborhood as well as children from families interested in small class size and one that offered a strong “traditional” 3’R set of experiences. Mrs. Kittredge took over the program upon the death of Mike’s dad, Perry.

Mike continued his personal interest in the field education and after teaching in the city schools became Principal of an interesting new program for recently arriving students from China. He was responsible for the formation of the “New Comers School” school in Chinatown. It was 1971, Mike’s mother had become ill and the school needed someone to take over. A very competent and experienced school secretary was available. Mike had his weekends and after school time open to be of help. But, Mike thought it important to have a person with credentials available during some regular school hours to observe, assist in any problems and serve as a part time, on-site Director. The students had been screened. The parents wanted them to be successful. The job should be doable. After reading my book, and remembering our times together in Lake Almanor, Mike called and asked if I would accept that responsibility as part time Director. I was dramatically introduced to the field of Independent Schools in general and to Private Profit Making Schools in particular.

Here I was, a full time faculty member of Dominican College and Chairman of the Education Department, a position I received when Dr. Aigner was appointed Academic Dean. At the same time I was teaching summer sessions at Universities in Oregon and Washington, writing articles for professional journals, serving as a Director of a small private school and starting to play music again. I was active in various professional organizations. Life was exciting. Cathy our daughter had attended Dominican and had graduated and was married. Our older son Pete was attending Chico State University. John, our youngest was playing football at Sir Francis Drake High School. Life was good.

On about December 18th, 1976 while at home for the Christmas Holiday I received a call from Sr. Samuel. After telling me she was dissatisfied with the performance of the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid and was about to “fire” him, asked if I would take the position. I not only did not know that he was failing, I knew little or nothing about the responsibilities of that office. I could see no reason as to why I should be offered it. Sister reminded me that I did know the college and the local community it served. I was the father of a graduate and a current undergraduate. My three year old grand-daughter, Cara, was attending the College sponsored Nursery School. I was now chair of the Education Department the largest Graduate Program of the college. Her confidence in me was exhilarating. I would have to give up the In-Service Program, but the new salary would make it the remuneration at least equal. I would be leaving programs I had helped design and implement one about which I knew very little. The idea while frightening was exciting. Here was another opportunity for my growth. Once more I could expand my knowledge and my search for personal meaning. I accepted.

The next four years my ideas about education expanded tremendously, I had already had the experience of seeing the “business” aspects of education when dealing with the successful Teacher In-Service Program. Now I was to learn how independent education is financed. What is the function of tuition? What is the role of aid, both governmental and private? How are institutions marketed? How do public relations affect enrolment? Does the local community have any part to play in the success of the one small, private, religious four year institution in the area? These and many other questions needed to be explored by me working closely with

the other administrators. And, it had to be done with a totally new staff. Every other staff member of that department resigned when informed of the dismissal of my predecessor.

I must say that he, my predecessor was of great assistance to me. He was willing to remain on campus to do what he could to help me in my new duties. He helped select new employees. He was thorough in introducing me to the responsibilities of the job. He shared personal experiences and concerns he felt both helped and hurt his own performance. When I asked him why he was so cooperative and not angry? He explained, "I hope someday to have responsibilities similar to that of Sister Samuel and when I do I hope to be able to do what she did. If I learn how to accept hard choices I will be better at making them."

That just might have been the most important learning I made during the next four years, my last four years at Dominican College.

They were wonderful years. They were learning years. We established some new procedures. We followed through some older traditional ideas. I had the opportunity to become more active in the administration of the total institution. I became privy to some of the successes and failures the college was experiencing I learned how courses are developed, programs evaluated and problems solved. Through our efforts, the efforts of the College Board and the staff as a whole, enrolment was slowly increasing each semester. I felt some pride and satisfaction that I was aware of the responsibilities of the Dean of Admissions. I was never really confident that I was able completely function at a level worthy of that title.

The 1979 election brought an amazing change to education in California and in my life as well. Proposition 13 changed the taxing policies for property throughout the state. School Districts and other governmental agencies were faced with severe financial problems. I did not worry how that might make my life difficult. But, Don Leisey, the San Rafael Superintendent of schools and a truly respected member of Dominican's Administrative Credential Program did. He "saw the handwriting on the wall." He did not want to work under the conditions he predicted would result with the advent of Prop.13. He was looking for an educational experience, one not associated with the public schools.

A few months earlier, Mike Kittredge had passed away. His wife, Grace, was not at all comfortable being responsible for the school. She asked if I would "take over." Would I buy it? That was impossible as far as I was concerned. I told Don that Grace was interested in selling the school. It took a while, a great deal of thought, work with accountants and lawyers, many sleepless nights when Don and I decided to become partners and purchase the school from her. One more time intuition took hold. What seemed like overnight, in reality several weeks, "L/L" Corporation was formed, money raised and Kittredge School became a business with two partners. We had purchased the name, reputation, the records, furniture, books and responsibility to pay the faculty from Grace Kittredge. She remained owner of the three stories building on Lake Street, San Francisco. We were entrepreneurs. Now it was time for us to function as Educational Entrepreneurs. Fortunately, I was working full time at Dominican. Don was able to and did take over the responsibilities of Kittredge. He worked closely with the staff and with the Principal, Shirley Freeman who Mike had hired earlier. She had replaced the secretary who had worked there many years prior and had the title Administrative Assistant. I had remained Director with part time responsibilities after Mike's death as a favor to Grace. I knew Shirley as she had earned a teaching credential from Dominican several years earlier.

It was 1980 when I was still Dean of Admissions, Kittredge was functioning with Don supervising Shirley and I was becoming more aware of the responsibilities of school ownership, Don was also looking for ways to expand. He found an independent school in Sacramento, Merry hill, which was for sale. This was a much larger school, one that provided services for pre-school aged children through the 8th grade. In doing research he

found that Merry Hill enjoyed a good reputation. To check that out he called his friend Dr. Bill Cunningham who at the time was the Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools. He asked Bill to check with his staff to see if they knew any reason to worry about the quality of the school. When in a rather short time Don got a call from Bill saying, "buy it" Don was angry. How could Bill have found out anything in such a short amount of time? The reply pleased Don, "Over half of my professional staff sends their own children there." The die was cast. I was invited to once again be Don's partner, sharing that ownership 50% each. Again I trusted my intuition. "L/L" would now own two schools. Again we owned the "school" but this time the property belonged to us. We had students, teachers, buses, furniture, books and materials along with several buildings and an expensive loan.

In November of 1981, I announced my retirement from Dominican College to take place as of December 28, 1981, my 55th birthday.

Don had earlier moved his work obligations to Sacramento. His family remained in San Rafael. He would commute weekly between these two communities. I took over a very small "piece" of Kittredge and began spending more time there. I became "Head of School" and Shirley remained Administrative Assistant. I saw my role as being there to help. She was doing a wonderful job in everything from interviewing potential students to evaluating teachers. I was there to help with any problems from selecting new staff to selecting appropriate learning materials. I was more like the board, superintendent and finance manager; she the principal and classroom supervisor.

The next several years things happened so quickly it was like a blur. I remained at Kittredge, doing less and less as Shirley and the staff kept the school moving. There were more and "better" kids. New teachers were bringing in newer ideas. I was becoming more and more interested in developing new ideas, meeting new people offering more services to schools and organizations. I was consulting and teaching workshops more than ever. I became active in ASCD, CASCD, and The Council for the Social Studies. I was invited to speak and teach in New York, British Columbia, New Jersey and Arizona. I was doing consulting work in Mexico, Japan and Africa for the American Independent Schools Association. In 1986 I formed a corporation, Charles W. Lavaroni Inc., to keep better track of all the consulting work I was doing away from Kittredge. One of the special uses of CWL Inc. was in partnering with Dick Godino, Bob Caine and Pat Mc Donough to establish a couple of Conferences, one in San Diego and one in Contra Costa County, to help School Boards develop strategies to pass Parcel Tax Initiatives. Those and other such activities helped keep me busy with the California School Boards Association and the California School Administrators Association.

In 1984 I was selected to serve as the Social Science Coordinator for Marin County's Education Task Force. This appointment had a profound effect on my professional life. As coordinator it was my responsibility to work with a group of elementary and secondary teachers from central Marin County to coordinate a K-12 Social Studies Program for the thirteen school districts in the Education Task Force. Once again I was really deep into the arena of consultation and curriculum development. It was exciting. It got me directly and quickly back into the recognition of the importance of personal meaning as in reality the charge of the Task Force was to develop strong positive personal meaning for students in the agreed upon disciplines which make up the Social Studies. The California State Framework for the Social Studies clearly outlined the learning expectations in three distinct categories; knowledge, critical thinking and values. It was our task to develop a Curriculum Guide that would identify the appropriate goals and objectives in each of these areas but also establish an assessment program that could be used to determine the achievement of students K-12 in each of the three subdivisions of study. This was an undertaking that by its' very nature supported and demanded recognition of

personal meaning as the ultimate result of learning. I was once again focusing on what got me interested in education in the first place.

Assessing Knowledge was relatively simple. Tests, essays, performances, and portfolios were known and accepted assessment activities. Critical Thinking and Valuing were distinctly different. After a great deal of thought, study, arguing the committee as a whole came up with the notion that we could at least recognize thinking and valuing while it was being done by ourselves and others. We could observe it. We could, if we had a means to record it, we could observe behavior over time. Earlier, I had become familiar with the Flanders Interaction Analysis System designed to identify teacher behaviors in the classroom. In fact I had been trained in the system and offered many workshops and courses in its use. I recognized it as a means to help teachers become aware of the kind of communication they were using in their daily teaching. Flanders is based on the idea that verbal dialogue can be codified and accurately observed by individuals well trained in the definition of each of the oral behaviors used. And, it is possible through training to achieve at least 90% inter rater reliability between several trained observers.

After meeting with a student of Flanders who convinced us that we could create our own system using the accepted observation methods used by Flanders, we started work on developing such a system. A committee of seven teachers and I were selected to spend one summer developing behavioral descriptors of each of the individual operations that we call thinking and those that make up valuing. Then, for each such behavior a concise descriptive example was identified, one that would be distinctive enough to insure the accepted 90% inter rater reliability threshold. We spent the next year testing the validity of our instruments in several classrooms of the county. We were thrilled. We recognized that we had invented something quite exciting and valuable. The seven of us asked for and was granted the rights to the system which used program we developed cooperatively with "Integrated Barcode Solutions" from Grass Valley California and using the bar code readers manufactured by "Symbol Technology" of Dallas Texas. We were incorporated as INNOVATIVE ASSESSMENT, Ltd. Now I was involved in another entrepreneurial activity. This one lasted for approximately four years. None of us got rich and the most any of us lost was the \$100 we each put up to become incorporated. We sold over \$70,000 of product. We performed demonstrations and training sessions in several school districts.

One of the more interesting developments with IA involved the Air Force Training Academy in Colorado. I had offered a session for ASCD in their yearly conference, that year in Boston. The chair of the mathematics department at the academy was impressed. Within a week of returning home we found a \$10,000 request for the equipment and the program. We were elated. I quoted a reasonable figure for training which we were happily prepared to offer. After several weeks with no communication, I called Denver and was told, after quite a long period of silence, those boxes had never been opened. Whatever interest that had been previously demonstrated by the order, was now gone.

We did have many successes, but only when we were doing the observations. The few times we tried to train others who were not involved in the original process were unsuccessful. In reality it took too much time to learn how to use the program and bar code readers at the level of reliability required to be affective. Our services became too expensive except in the few situations where there was "outside" or soft monies available. One of our members, Don Armstrong, took one year leave of absence from his regular teaching position for one semester. While he was able to keep busy, there was not enough income to even make up his salary. I was retired as was another stock holder and developer, Peter Beldon. Between the two of us we could at least keep the corporation alive for another year or so. Finally we had to recognize that while the system

was educationally viable, it was too labor intensive to be affordable. We were just a few years ahead of our time. I am convinced that in today's market, we would be successful.

This whole writing project has been difficult for me as my search for personal meaning has been constant and punctuated with many connected yet disjointed activities occurring separately and at the same time, continuously and intermittently. That should not surprise me as meaning, true personal meaning does change and become deeper as one moves from intuition, through the state of awareness to the present demonstration and function of daily decision making. IA was one of those wonderful activities that helped me get a sense of who I am and what I believe. Certainly partnering with Don Leisey and purchasing Kittredge School influenced my increased understanding today.

Right after Don and I purchased Kittredge in 1980, Barbara and I took a working trip to England with a group of Headmasters from several east coast schools. This was to be a chance for me to learn more about the trials and tribulations of running an independent school. We met some administrators and their wives from some rather prestigious schools. We found them enjoyable and quite different from us. I learned the great difference between not for profit schools and proprietary or profit making ones. I had assumed that public schools did not like us but I had assumed the independent schools would. WRONG! I never did figure out why they considered for profit schools as being somewhat below their standards, especially when history indicates that those original "great" schools were started as being owned, usually by a family. Some individual either singularly or with the backing of a small group of people started a "business." Non profit schools were the result of tax policies, not "the goodness of man." Both forms of independent schools were institutionalized because someone or "someone's" thought that they could provide an educational program better than the ones developed through the local government.

I did learn a great deal from the several headmasters representing the "other" form of independent schools. I was amazed, certainly because of my naivety, to find that they faced the same kinds of difficulties as did public school superintendents. They had a Board to which they were beholding. They had control, so long as they were doing what the board ordered or approved. Don and I, on the other hand, had complete control. When we met the fire code of the local community, observed standard rules of safety, and followed established employee regulations, we were ready to open our doors. We decided what was correct and appropriate for our students and families. Oh, we had pressures certainly, but we, and we alone, had the responsibilities to make the school function in a manner that would secure and keep the confidence of the families we served. We were autonomous. It made a difference, in some ways quite freeing, in others frightening. We had no one to blame except ourselves,

Upon returning home in I told Don of my experiences in England and how I thought it wise if we join AAIS, the American Association of Independent Schools. Both Don and I had been active in various educational organizations and recognized the importance of their activities. I called the office for application papers only to be informed that as a "for profit school" we were ineligible for membership. I was angry. I talked with Don about the possibility of starting another organization, this time to meet the professional interests and needs of the proprietary schools. Don was sympathetic to the idea but was very busy in Sacramento "growing" the merry hill Country Day School family. He supported my interest in doing something for our segment of independent education, but I had to do it alone in this case as he was spending his time building new schools throughout the Sacramento area. Fortunately, I had two friends here in Marin County who at the same time did what Don and I had done. Dr. Pat O'Donnell of San Francisco State University and his wife Betty created The Discovery Center, a K8 school in San Francisco.

Ralph Gioveniello the former Superintendent of the Reed School District and his wife Lynn built the Stewart School in Santa Rosa. The five of us got together and decided that we should try to originate an organization exclusively for School Owners. I took the leadership. I started calling people I heard about, contacting schools in California, writing letters to other states, calling state departments of education, reading the yellow pages from other areas and finding as many people as I could who administered our kind of schools.

By 1981 I had found enough proprietors to call a meeting in Los Angeles. There were about twelve school heads in attendance. No organization was formed but new names were added and most of all, we were encouraged to go on. In 1982 a small group of us which now included two members from Southern California met with lawyers to establish a framework for a new association, one dedicated to bring a basis of professionalism to our faction of the educational community. In the fall of that year another meeting was set up in Los Vegas. This time there were approximately seventeen schools represented from four states, California, Florida, Nevada and New York. I presented the suggested incorporation papers developed by our lawyers to the assemblage with the proposed title National Independent Proprietary Schools Association, NIPSA. I was voted down. I felt betrayed after all the work I had done, the name I wanted was to be voted out. Instead we were to be named, NIPSA, the National Independent Schools Association. It is now some thirty one years later and NIPSA still exists with well over one hundred schools in more than three quarters of the United States as well as an accredited School in El Salvador. And, most importantly, due to the hard work of many proprietors since it's inception, NIPSA is now recognized by the Department of Education as well as all of the school accrediting agencies as the one that legitimately can accredit schools for profit as offering valid and appropriate learning experiences for their graduates. NIPSA today enjoys the same professional standing as does AAIS, the organization which in 1981 refused membership to Kittredge School. This fact is the result of years of effort by many committed educators who took personal pride in their willingness to invest their money as well as their time to provide excellent programs to their students. While I am proud that I started NIPSA, I am even more impressed with the many men and women who over the years helped it develop to the level of acceptance it holds today. They are to be honored for their dedication.

After leaving Dominican, through the 80's and 90's, I had many opportunities to teach, consult and offer workshops in fifteen states as well as five foreign countries and at the same time I was also becoming fascinated with some of the differences between working for salary and being an independent entrepreneur. Most of these differences were positive. One of the first ideas Don and I had when we originally purchased Kittredge in 1980, before the advent of the popularity of computers, was our recognition of the possible educational value they might have on learning. One afternoon we met in San Rafael at a small bistro, had a beer and made arrangements in less than an hour to purchase six computers. Within that same hour we contacted a young instructor at San Francisco State for his help in making the best possible use of them with the students. As Don accurately pointed out, that process would have taken months of study, argument and frustration just two years ago when he was superintendent. We were able to do it in a matter of minutes.

A second example concerns our ability to meet the personal needs of our staff. One of the more interesting one involved a young teacher whose wife had been transferred to New York City for an extended period. This seventh grade teacher had proven his ability as a teacher as well as his loyalty to the school over the previous years. We felt it important to "keep" him on our staff. We worked out a schedule with him that would allow him to fly to New York for two Fridays and two Mondays each month for three months in the spring without changing his salary for that time. In that way we could keep continuity with a given class and at the same time indicate how much we trusted that teacher and wanted him to remain. It was a "win-win" situation, one that would be difficult if not impossible in a public school.

For some reason, I guess because of what I had experienced in the public schools, I sometimes considered making a profit schools in somehow inappropriate and maybe even wrong. I never lied about it when interviewing parents or in fact said anything at all about it. One day, for some reason or another, I felt I should make that fact clear. So, I said to a potential parent, "I own the school and one of the reasons is because I hope to make a profit. Does that in anyway bother you?"

He replied, "Not at all, if anything goes wrong I know immediately to whom I should go."

I had broken the ice and from that moment on I not only tried not to hide our status as a corporation, but instead talked proudly as a "tax paying "member of the community in which we serve.

This brings up an understanding or learning important to me developed through my continuous search for personal meaning, "life is not linear." Yes, there is a beginning and ultimately an end. Chronologically there is a continuum but a straight line it isn't. There are spurts, there are peaks and valleys, and there are steps backwards, forward sideways. Sometimes those steps are joyful, sometimes painful and always potentially meaningful. Much like this paper, life jumps from ideas to ideas, from dates to dates not necessarily in the actual sequence of time. With that in mind, the years of 1985, '86 '88 and '89 are now reviewed as one because of their interrelated importance in my search.

In 1985, Barbara and I purchased the building on Lake Street in San Francisco, the one that had served as the home for Kittredge School since 1944. Grace Kittredge had decided that it was time to sell. I think she was concerned that the school might not successfully continue and it would benefit her to have some money from its sale. She was willing to "carry" the loan and the agreed upon price seemed fair for both parties. That purchase made sense to me as just a few months prior to this date; L/L Corporation was reorganized to include a third partner, Jeff Thorner. The major stock holder remained Don Leisey, with Jeff and I being minor partners I gave up a portion of the partnership and received full ownership of the Kittredge School Corporation. Now Kittredge was totally my responsibility. Don and I used some of the money from the sale of Merryhill School portion to "pay off" our outstanding loan on the property. The two of us became sole owners of the Sacramento Merryhill Country Day School site.

In 1986, three Kittredge employees asked if they could become partners with me. While I liked the idea, I did not see how a school or business this size could function with four owners especially when I was not interested in devoting full time to it. I suggested that they take over the corporation and in a short time they agreed. I set a very low price for the business as I knew I would be receiving the monies from the lease. Shirley Freeman, the Administrative Assistant, Peter Lavaroni the 1st and 2nd grade teacher and Terry Young, the 7th and 8th grade teacher became partners. Peter was to own 49% of the corporation, Shirley and Terry 25 and a half percent. In that way there was no one partner who held a majority stranding. They enthusiastically took over the Corporation and continued to offer outstanding educational opportunities for their students. I was able to continue my interests in teaching in college, doing workshops, building NIPSA, consulting and increasing my own understanding of schools, business and education.

1988 turned out to be an extremely important year for me and my family. This was the year that, through the leadership and hard work of Don Leisey our financial situation blossomed. He was able to complete a sale of the Merryville Country Schools to a Philadelphia Company, ----- . That transaction included a long term lease on the property in Sacramento that housed the original Merry Hill School, a three acre site owned by Don and me. Each one of us held 50% of that piece of property. The sale of the corporation netted each of the three of us Don, Jeff and me a sum of money commensurate with the percentage of stock we held in the corporation.

Don and I agreed that after paying taxes on the sale we should complete the payments on our loan and own the property outright. That is exactly what we did. Now, except for my continuing efforts through CWL Inc. I was out of the education business and instead in the field of Real Estate. I had a lot to learn. It was different. It was freeing.

1989 brought yet another and “brand new” set of experiences to my life, my personal meaning. I continued exploring teaching and learning, yet like it or not I was now a business man. All through my formal teaching and administrative work I considered myself an educator. I always thought I was innovative, creative, pioneering, groundbreaking and an entrepreneur and as such I could not understand or even trust people who said “schools should be run as a business.” No, schools were public services that needed people who had a calling, certainly not ones who were interested in making a profit. In fact I considered profit a four letter word. That is not quite true but almost so. I could not understand why voters would even consider voting no on a school measure.

Then Don Lease, excited with the sale of Merryhill Schools, actually 22 in number, reminded me that I had accompanied him on quite a journey. He was proud of what we had done together, and so was I. Through many discussions and arguments we recognized that given the status of education in California, we did create an alternative, one that provided the opportunity for choice. We had produced a product that families wanted for their children. Together, between the one school Kittredge, and the several Merryhill Schools, some quite a bit larger than Kittredge and some smaller, we had successfully met the educational needs for well over 4000 students, pre-school through the 8th grade. I say we only because we were partners. My efforts in the success of Merryhill were limited at best as serving as a sounding board and sometimes reactor to Don’s suggestions and plans. I am grateful to Don and his energy in carrying the bulk of the work for growing the Merryhill Schools to the position they enjoyed when we sold the corporation. I am proud of what we did. And, when Don suggested that our experiences should be used to help other creative, and exciting risk taking educators test their ideas in the marketplace, I became eager to join him in establishing some kind of an organization to do just that.

“The International Academy for Educational Entrepreneurship” was formed in 1999. It had then and now as of today only two Directors, Don Leisey and Chuck Lavaroni. There has never been nor there ever any officers. I am assuming there will never have any other members. Will we dialogue with others, work with others, share with others-- defiantly “YES”. But, this organization is a reflection of us. We have nothing to sell, we only have many things we want to learn and share. IAEE has provided both of us the opportunity to grow and deepen our understanding of the many issues, problems, suggestions, public forces and conflicting arguments inherent in the educational world of the United States. Our belief was and is, we do have something to say— something to give.

One of our first activities was establishing our web site, www.edentrepreneurs.org. We did this as a means to help us meet our mission; “to support and encourage other educators who are willing to use their time, talent and money to improve education in the United States.” We use this as our conscious. In it we list our various activities, share our ideas and projects, and honor Educational Entrepreneurs we have identified and network with other organizations of similar mind. One of the first things we did was argue out our definition of an Educational Entrepreneur; “A teacher or administrator who is willing to use their talent, time and money to create a program, project or service for the benefit of students.” This specific definition was arrived at after many long discussions. I admit I thought one could be considered an entrepreneur without taking a risk and use her own money to start. I was wrong. Using personal funds is inherent in the very definition of the entrepreneur. While a person can act creatively, think out of the box and even appear “entrepreneurial” he

cannot call himself an Educational Entrepreneur until he invests money into his creation. We consider this accurate definition to be important and more than just a language exercise. It is often that the imprecise use of words that can cause difficulties in understanding and communication. We feel strongly that with all of the current public press talk about the need for entrepreneurs in education the possibility of improvement will be enhanced if all the players would use the same language. While many teachers and administrators are creative and deserve our encouragement, they are not necessarily entrepreneurs.

In 2000, we published a book, "THE EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEUR: Making a Difference." In this volume we highlighted the lives of twenty-two men and women who did in fact risk their talent, time and money to create something of value for students. Included were a variety of services, materials, programs, and schools. Our schools Kittredge and Merryhill were not in the book. The west coast, east coast, mid states and the south were all represented. The book has served as a guide to a few people we know who used it as an encouragement for their own personal development and helping them decide to become educational entrepreneurs and start their own business. Following their progress has been quite rewarding.

One other activity of IAEE is the awarding deserving Educational Entrepreneurs the title, EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR. Currently we are in the process of making that determination for the person or persons for 2013. This is a fun exercise for us.

I mentioned earlier that there was a period of time where I was active in attending California School Board Association and California Superintendents Association as a presenter or as a guest of Bob Cain and Sue Lora. On one rainy evening in the early 1900's the three of us were traveling to a State School Boards Conference in San Jose. Bob was telling us about Kentfield's interest in introducing the Character Education program from Los Angeles, CHARACTER COUNTS, to the district. He was wondering how such a program might be assessed. The more we talked the more we recognized was that maybe the best way to determine the results of such a program is through the eyes of the student. We talked about developing a rubric that would be used over time to see what if any changes might occur in the students self assessment and understanding of the five pillars presented in the program: Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Respect, Citizenship, and Caring. We developed four levels of self- assessment activities K-12 and field tested them in both the Kentfield and Tamalpais High School District. Besides Bob who was Superintendent of Kentfield and Sue who was a Tamalpais board member, and I, there was Ellen Rosen another Tamalpais board member who together were responsible for originating first set of documents. While we were working in the elementary and middle school, another educator was working with the primary students. Ellen Dodge was helping the k3 teachers with activities to introduce the concepts of Character Counts to the younger students. It was Ellen who first saw the powerful potential of the Kimochi Dolls in this endeavor. Later around 2003, when Rosen decided to leave the original group another woman, this time a member of the Kentfield board, Anna Pilloton joined and a small company called "Critical Links" was formed. Critical Links continues today helping various groups develop strategies to bring self-assessment activities to students. We were committed to making learning a conscious and autonomous activity leading to more powerful and accurate personal meaning. We did some work with other schools and with other professional organizations. One of the more important tasks we are currently working on is with Kittredge School. Here, we are helping the staff and students create rubrics focused on the sixteen "habits" identified by Art Costa and Bena Kallick in their exciting work, HABITS OF MIND. We strongly believe rubrics will play an important role in helping students grow from intuition through awareness to consciously functioning as thinking, caring, socially positive and affective communicating human beings.

And that brings me to why I started this exercise in the very first place. It seemed important for me to get some current thoughts and beliefs about the whole issue of education, teaching and learning written-- at least

for me, if not others. We as a nation, while going forward in many ways seem to me at least, to be losing our identity, our faith in the purpose and hope for ourselves, our future, and our confidence. The stronger we become throughout the world the weaker we become at home. The more we learn about how to discover and use our natural resources for our comfort, the more we recognize how we may be putting our very existence in jeopardy. The lack of trust in our government, our banks, justice system and issues of race and religion makes for very difficult times. Schools are being asked to do more and do more with less; less money, less clear and agreed upon goals and objectives, less commitment. Oh there are and always have been answers. Phonics, Modern Math, Instructional Television, Programmed Learning, Inquiry Training, Project Based Learning, Habits of Mind, Self-Assessment, Communication Skills, Citizenship Education, Individualized instruction, Computers are but a few that have over time captured my imagination. The wonderful and simultaneously frightening thing about that list is twofold: 1. each one of these have use and potential for good. 2. This is NOT a complete list of all the possibilities.

What I have learned and continue to learn is what I have done as an educator is based on my basic and intuitive belief about the purpose of education, one that while changing and becoming increasingly more specific, one first raised to the conscious level by Dr. Cowen is an activity that speaks to and supports the concepts of Character, Cognition, Communication and Consciousness in a functioning human being. I believe that any program designed to help students learn must pay attention to those four notions. Without character we can have presidents who start wars for purposes of revenge or financial gain, Without cognition we can have superintendents recommend dramatic changes in district policies which tear a district apart, without communication we can have a congress that is incapable of passing laws to improve the lives of citizens and without consciousness we can have voters going to the voting booth supporting people and issues that are inconsistent with their values and beliefs. Without the Four C's the Three R's of little or no value. In fact it is the C's that make the R's possible. One will not read, write or do arithmetic unless he sees some use for that endeavor. There is no question that poems can be memorized, letters formed and multiplication tables regurgitated to pass a test or win praise, but until the poem influences a decision, a piece of writing helps understanding or a mathematic formula helps human beings the exercise is of little value.

Personal Meaning is for me the issue. As stated, maybe too many times, we all have our own personal meaning. On Friday July 19, 2013 I think we had the most dramatic example of how personal meaning influences who we are, how we behave how we deal with our daily lives. On that day President Barack Obama spent 18 minutes talking off the cuff, without notes, without a teleprompter. He spoke as one human being to another about what it is like growing up a black child in our country. His talk was especially important to me, as you might guess; I recognized it as the perfect exemplar of what it has taken me so far 22,656 words to try to say. (Oh, the wonders of a computer.) We see life through our own experiences. We interpret what we see and feel via those experiences. Come hell or high water we function as a result of our personal meaning. None of us can ever have exactly the same personal meaning, the same understanding. Sameness is not the goal. But the recognition of and conscious use of those meanings to create a good life in a decent world is not only possible but necessary. I am confident that is what Obama was telling us. He knows we can't be him but maybe we can learn more about ourselves, our own personal meaning, by reflecting on his.

I have an absolutely clear idea of what I mean by the 4 C's. I am sure you too have your own idea as to each of them. I am also sure our ideas will be both similar and different, especially if we want to use them to build a school curriculum. We need something more specific. With that in mind I offer you the following schematic. I do this as we can look at the four developed programs: CHARACTER COUNTS, HABITS OF MIND, KIMOCHI DOLLS and CRITICAL LINKS. Each of these programs has a specific function. Each can stand on its own, on its own merits. I suggest them because I know them. I am also aware that other educators have created like

programs. If you know of another Character Education program that helps students explore the wonders of character, another thinking program other than Costa's, a communication skills curriculum different than Kimochi or a program that requires self assessment in the human behaviors of thinking, moral decision making and communicating effectively, then use it. The program is not the answer, creatively using the leanings involved in each of them in a holistic nurturing classroom in a school focused on the conscious development of responsible personal meanings is worthy of consideration. I invite you to try. It seems to me you can't lose.