Hutchinson Revised

In early March,1953, I got a call at Miller High School to phone Mr. R. C. Guy, Principal, Senior High School, Hutchinson, Kansas. I phoned him that evening. Hutchinson High needed a director of its debating program, who could also teach the social sciences. Someone at the University of Kansas had strongly recommended me for the job, and Mr. Guy had talked to Dr. Benton at Drury and Howard Smith at Granby, who had also strongly recommended me. He asked me if I were interested, and I said I was indeed.

I asked Mr. Guy some questions about the high school and about Hutchinson. Located fifty miles northwest of Wichita, Hutchinson had a population of forty thousand people and was on the main line of the Santa Fe Railroad. Its schools were excellent, Mr. Guy told me, the salary schedule the best in the State, and the three-year senior high school was a top-rated "AA" school with an enrollment of almost l400 students. When I showed more interest, he asked if I could come for an interview the following week, since he was anxious to fill the position. I agreed. The two of us agreed I would fly to Hutchinson the following Thursday.

The following day I got a similar call from a Roger McEachen, who was Principal of Shawnee-Mission High School in Merriam, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City, who also asked me to apply for a position at that distinguished high school in history and debate.

On that day I concluded that perhaps I could begin to see an ending to my many months of self-doubt and serious depression, an end to foolish decision making, endless anxieties, denials and guilt-ridden behaviors, of self-destructive flight and obsession with fears of illness, an end to continuing a love affair long ago doomed, and an end to wallowing too long in a primitive and hostile culture. I began to take an objective look at myself, and discover someone I might even learn once more to like and respect, someone who, in Sinatra's song, could "pick himself up, dust himself off, and start all over again." Had Stuart Smalley, a.k.a. Al Franken, been available in l953, I would have quoted him: "After all, I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and Doggone It, People like me." Perhaps I needed to be wanted and loved once again,, to start believing in myself again, and to stop beating up myself much of the time. It was time I began getting over a lost love. From that week on, I stopped "obsessing" my mistakes, as they say in the l990s. I put the focus on the future, not the past. And like Smalley I soon became "the center of calm in the eye of the hurricane." Rather than engaging in denial and feeding my guilt through religion and self-destructive behaviors, and asking gay priests to forgive me for being gay, I abandoned the whole silly schmeer and re-joined the parade.

Shortly afterwards, on March l6, l953, I flew to Hutchinson, Kansas, for an interview with Mr. R.C. Guy and members of the faculty there. I had a delightful flight on an American Airlines DC-3 from Springfield to Tulsa to Hutchinson. The plane flew low and moved gracefully with the wind currents.

As we left the Wichita area, we ran into an enormous dust storm blowing north from western Oklahoma. We barely landed in Hutchinson ahead of the storm, which had winds up to fifty miles an hour blowing dirt all over central Kansas. When we landed at three in the afternoon, the city of Hutchinson was in near darkness, and I was ready to return to Missouri.

On the way up from Tulsa I had met a very interesting man named Jack Harris, who claimed he "worked for" the Hutchinson News Herald, and had just spent a month in Paris. He talked to me the entire trip about Hutchinson and about Paris, an interesting combination of topics. My notes reveal the following topics: Hutchinson, he told me, was on the Arkansas (pronounced in Kansas as R-Kansas) River, and its wealth had come from two sources, mining the enormous deposits of underground salt nearby, and wheat farming. Hutchinson boasted of the largest grain storage elevators in the world, some of them stretching for half-a-mile or longer.

The salt manufacturers, Morton, Barton, and Carey, all had headquarters in Hutchinson; the high school football team was called "The Salt-Hawks," and the cheerleaders "The Briney-Birds." The Carey family had built the city a huge park, Carey Park, at the southeast part of town; the Mortons and Bartons had helped build an Arena, adjoining the junior college in the north part of town, which seated fifteen thousand people for sports events, and musical and lecture events.

And the Kansas State Fair Grounds were the scene of the annual summer Kansas State Fair, of course.

By the time I landed, Jack Harris had made me already feel like a resident of Hutchinson, and had filled me with anecdotes and jokes about Kansas, like "Western Kansas is always one-hundred miles west of wherever in Kansas you happen to be," and "At the time of the great Biblical flood of forty days and nights, Kansas got only an inch and a quarter." He also kidded about the "lack of beauty" of Kansas, suggesting it consisted of "miles and miles of miles and miles."

The dust-enclosed Hutchinson airport was a beautiful, new and spacious airport with two runways, in contrast to the airport in Springfield, as I pointed out to my friends, which was embarrassingly small and ugly, and had but one runway. There, I had a message to call R.C. Guy at the high school. His secretary told me he was waiting for the duststorm to end and that I should wait for him at the airport. I waited with Jack Harris for twenty minutes at which time someone from the News-Herald arrived with his car, and he invited me to ride with him into town, a very slow ride indeed. At the high school, near downtown Hutch, (Mr. Harris had told me most people called the town "Hutch," rather than Hutchinson.)

Jack Harris got out of the car with me and walked me into the high school and up to the office of Principal R.C. Guy, who was still waiting for the storm to blow over. Harris introduced the two of us, talked to Guy about his trip to Paris, said goodbye and left. As he left, he turned to me and told me that the weather in Hutch was usually much better, but that he did have a friend in Paris who, having visited Hutchinson, told friends, (a la Mark Twain) "I stayed three seasons in Hutchinson, Kansas, and left the same week." His final words to Principal Guy were, "Don't lose this young man, R.C.. He's a winner."

R.C. Guy turned to me and said, "You know, of course, that Jack owns the Hutchinson News-Herald, and that he spends half his time in Paris where he owns a home." I pretended that I did.

Mr. Guy was an extraordinarily sweet, generous and kind individual, soft spoken and amazingly quiet and restrained for a high school principal. He craved a utopian high school in which everyone got along, there were no quarrels and fights, everyone was treated with respect and dignity, and all that happened was both planned and predictable. "I don't like surprises," he told me, "and good planning makes the possibility of surprises that muchless." The high school reflected his tastes and needs. Everything moved slowly and deliberately, but predictably. Nobody knew for sure how Mr. Guy spent his days. The day-to-day administering was done by his secretary, Pearl Clinton, and by the vice-principal, Roscoe Coyne. Mr. Guy made his morning announcements, attended the necessary meetings, made more announcements after lunch, attended after school meetings and went home.

During my two years at "Hutch High" I never saw R.C. Guy angry; I never knew him to have a confrontation with a faculty member or a student; I never even saw him without a smile on his face. And his tranquility was contagious. Hutchinson Senior High School was the most "laid back" school I ever went to or taught at. I always thought that it was the role model for the high school Eve Arden taught at on the television series, "Our Miss Brooks," as well as the one Wally Cox taught at on "Mr. Peepers."

Needless to say, I got a very positive impression both of Mr. Guy, the other faculty I met, and the high school itself. He escorted me around the three buildings that made up the high school complex, and I saw quite a few students in the gymnasium, at the swimming pool, in the music department, and just hanging around the classrooms after school. They were pleasant and attractive.

I met the Vice Principal, Roscoe Coyne, a tall, also laid-back forty-ish educator with a mustache, who looked something like Gail Gorden who was Mr. Conklin on "Our Miss Brooks," and slightly like Don Ameche, and who had a keen sense of humor. He almost immediately challenged me to a quick-time game of chess that lasted seven minutes and ended with Roscoe losing, a stupid move on my part, I thought at the time. It turns out that Roscoe never won; he just liked to play quick-time chess.

That evening I had dinner at the home of R.C. and Mary Guy, and they had invited six other faculty members to meet me, including the Coynes, Ariel Perrill, head of the drama department, Tim Aley, the boys' counselor, Doris Ely, head of the English department, and Aylene Keown, journalism instructor. The next morning, Friday, I met the Superintendent of Schools, Lowell Small, talked to the departing director of the debate program, and the librarian, Ethelyn Flagg, who showed me not only the high school library, which was excellent, but the

Hutchinson Public Library, a block away, where high school students had full privileges. The public library was housed in a brand new and rather elegant building. Its holdings were rather substantial for the size of the community, and the designers had wisely included a number of large reading rooms, each with huge glass windows which allowed the daylight to enter.

At lunch with Mr. Guy and Mr. Coyne, the discussion centered around the debate program and how I would direct it. Hutchinson had a long and distinguished record in inter-scholastic tournament debating in Kansas. The community supported the high school debate program almost as much as it supported the high school football program, I was told, and the two of them wanted to make sure they were hiring a teacher who would commit himself to maintaining a winning program. I guess I convinced them that I would, because at the end of the luncheon, before Mr. Coyne dropped me off at the bus station, Mr. Guy told me he thought I was the person they would like to offer a contract to.

That afternoon I took a bus to Wichita, where I spent the rest of the day and night with my little friend, Mike O'Farrell. I had a room at the Allis Hotel, on the same floor as a matter of fact where I took my CIA examinations the summer before, and Mike joined me as soon as he got off work at three o'clock. We walked and talked about old friends from the summer of l952, about Ron and Paul and Richard Tink, and Bill Smith and Don Taylor, and others. He and Bill Smith, who was attending Wichita State University and still working at Beech, and I had dinner, after which Bill left us at the hotel, where Mike and I did sixty-nines all night and again the next morning.

The next noon I boarded the Frisco passenger train and arrived at Joplin, Missouri, at five, where Paul met me in the Chrysler, which we now called Mr. Chips.

On Monday morning I got a call from R.C. Guy offering me the position at Hutchinson Senior High School, telling me a contract would be in the mail that day. He asked me if I would accept, and I said I would. A few days later I received in the mail a contract for the l953-54 school year for a salary of $4000, the most money I had ever made, and much more than Missouri schools paid.

At long last I had gotten a position teaching what I wanted to teach, directing a good debate program that was amply financially supported, at an excellent and prestigious high school, and earning a salary that was very, very good at the time.

My trip that hot day, August l4, l953, to my new home and job in Hutchinson, Kansas, was both a happy and melancholy one, and I was filled with many mixed and quarreling emotions. I was both relieved and excited to be, at long last, alone and free, but, at the same time, I feared the consequences of both the aloneness and the freedom. I was thrilled and challenged to be teaching at a large and excellent high school, but I remember fearing that I might not be up to the demands and expectations. I intensely looked forward to meeting new people and finding new romantic and sex partners and lovers, but, at the same time, I still deeply mourned the loss of Paul and ever so many of my Missouri friends, and, as the Nat King Cole song phrased it, I didn't "want to be hurt anymore."

I was trained to teach history and government, and, because of the resignation of a Hutchinson High speech teacher at the last moment, R.C. Guy had asked me to teach courses in argumentation, speech, and radio and television. In my undergraduate work I had taken only one course in speech and one in debate. I had no graduate work at all in speech or argument or radio/television. Little wonder that I had a lot of stresses and anxieties to deal with. Accordingly, I continually compared the move to Hutchinson, l953, with the move to Iowa City the previous autumn. Would the stresses in Hutchinson be as unbearable as they had turned out to be in Iowa City? Would they, in the end, force me once more to run away? I had recovered with minimal damage from the Iowa fiasco, but I would not recover from another similar defeat and withdrawal. Clearly I had to make Hutchinson work, or the future for me was grim indeed.

That August day I took mostly two-lane untraveled roads from the Kansas State line to Wichita, roads like highway l60 that wanders slowly through small towns like Parsons and Independence and Elk Falls and Winfield. All day long while driving west I tried to have serious talks with my Self, whom I had learned to call "Ed," instead of the traditional "Id," probably a term I picked up from Dean Mace. And I kept telling the over-anxious Self, or Ed, to "cool it." We would have no more dumb plays, no more stupid decisions, no more out-of-

control emotions, and no more childish, tear and trauma causing situations and dysfunctional relationships that caused me to behave like Joan Crawford and/or Bette Davis in one of those films at the old Orpheum.

Ed and I both agreed on that beautiful late summer day that we would spend the time in Hutchinson, however long it was, deciding what to do with the rest of my life, whether to go for a doctorate and if so in what discipline, and where and with whom and in what life style to spend the future. We also decided that I would become the best teacher of debate, speech, and radio/television Hutchinson High School ever had. At the same time, we decided that I should have a ball teaching, falling in love with my students and making them fall in love with me (always at the top of my classroom goals), make a lot of friends and enjoy the relationships, organize and administer the best debating program in the State of Kansas, and have one grand time while I was young, free, pretty and gay. I had just celebrated my twenty-second birthday. And I had been told that, at age thirty, most of life's fun and joy ended. I was determined not to waste the next seven years, or, more importantly, not even the next one year.

About five that afternoon I arrived in Wichita, and I went to Mike O'Farrell's place at 4403 East Kellogg. Mike, still working for Beech, had upscaled his lifestyle considerably since the previous summer when we had first met and developed a most pleasant romance together. He then had a dreary and small apartment in south Wichita; by l953 he lived in a charming, nearly new duplex with an equally charming and nearly new gay companion. They were not lovers, although they did have occasional sex, but they were very close. Mike and I had dinner together, and even took time to have sex together before I left for Hutchinson. I had come to like him very much. He was easy to be with; he made very few demands; he relished each encounter; and he was a superb craftsman during the sex that I, too, richly enjoyed. I was to see Mike almost weekly during that first year in Hutchinson, especially after I got my own apartment.

At fading twilight, I left Wichita on Highway Ninety-six, a colorful little two-lane road which followed the Arkansas River northwest to Hutchinson, an hour away. When darkness came, I could see in the distance the ribbon of red lights which marked the antenna of the only television station in Kansas at the time, Channel 3, KTVH in Hutchinson.

Hutchinson is located in the middle of the State, at the eastern edge of "the high plains," which slope up to the foothills of the Rockies. Hutchinson and the area surrounding it were flat, very flat. There are no hills, much less mountains. One can see vast distances across those flat plains. At night, distant objects seem close. The Hutchinson television antenna appeared to be ten miles away, not forty. The lights of Hutchinson seemed so close, I expected the next curve to take me inside the city limits. That night, the heavens were incredibly spectacular. In the clear and dry high plains night air, the stars were bouncing around close to the top of the car. There were times when I was so excited I stopped, turned off the car lights, and stared at the skies to see an unbelievable number of stars and planets and constellations I did not recall ever having experienced before, much less at a proximity so close they all seemed touchable. I pondered just how I could have spent a summer in Wichita, only an hour away from Hutchinson, and failed to be overcome by that nighttime spectacle. I decided that night on the way to Hutchinson that one of my favorite Hutchinson nighttime activities would be that of star-gazing. The following week I would discover, a few miles to the west of Hutchinson, a nearly perfect place for star-gazing, a patch of slightly elevated sand dunes in an extremely private setting. From these secluded dunes, I could see those wonderful heavens and those incredible high plains and dunes, which, on a moonlight night, could be perceived as ghosts or ships or crowds of spectators or a symphony orchestra, or whatever one wished them to become.

I arrived in Hutchinson after ten that evening, found a motel room for three dollars, had a twenty-five cent milkshake at a drive-in, and quickly went to sleep. The next morning I checked in at the high school and began my search for an apartment, an unsuccessful search at the time since l953 Hutchinson had few apartments, none available at the time. A teacher of vocational education, Carl Skoch, had listed a room for rent in the home owned by him and his wife, Dorothy, who worked in the license bureau of the Kansas Motor Vehicle Department. The Skoches, who were in their early thirties, hence "past their prime," I thought, had a large two story home at ll2 West l2th Street. Late in the afternoon of my first day in Hutchinson, I looked at the available room on the second floor and decided the room would do until I had time to find something more suitable. I gave Carl and Dorothy a month's rent, thirty dollars, and told them I didn't know how long I would stay, which was

fine with them. Rental included the use of the downstairs kitchen. The room itself was a large corner one with four windows, two south facing and two west facing ones. It was modestly but adequately furnished, including a desk.

Dorothy Skoch registered my car for me and got me an easy-to- remember license plate, "RN 6900," which I thought was enormously appropriate. The "RN" standing for Reno County, the county Hutchinson was in. And the meaning of "69," though it escaped the naive Dorothy, did not escape my friends. (In Kansas you could identify the county the driver of a licensed car lived in by the first two initials on the license plates, e.g., "SG" stood for Sedgwick County, which meant the driver lived in Wichita. "JO," standing for Johnson County, and "WY," standing for Wyandotte County, meant the car was from Kansas City, Kansas.)

My landlords, Dorothy and Carl, in spite of their advanced over-thirty age, were still very sexually active, and they had little modesty. From six to eleven most evenings they dined on their living room couch and watched television on the only channel available. They were my first experience at observing television-addiction. At that time, since KYTV-Hutchinson Channel 3 was the only station, it carried a menu of programs each night from each of the networks. On Channel 3, one could view Jackie Gleason on Saturday night from CBS, and, afterwards, watch Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca from NBC. Carl and Dorothy, after dinner and desert, would lie in each other's arms the rest of the evening making out, whether alone or whether the room was full of guests, theirs, mine, or Del's. At bedtime, horny Dorothy and horny Carl would sing to each other the words to a then popular song, "You've got the ding-dong; I've got the bell," and rush up the stairs to bed and bliss.

I enjoyed this nightly scene only two months. Living in one room in the home of television and sex freaks (who also owned an obnoxious cat named for some weird reason "Yo-Yo") quickly proved to be the kind of unpleasant and grating situations I had sworn to avoid that year. Just as soon as I got my classes started and under control, I began an earnest search for a place of my own. Six weeks after I moved in, I moved out. In late September I found a charming and most comfortable and convenient apartment just a few blocks away from the high school, at the Myrnell Apartments, l2ll North Main Street.

The new apartment was a spacious one bedroom, third floor walk-up, the only unit on the third floor, and therefore very private. It faced north, south and west and had an abundance of windows, plus large skylights in both the bathroom and kitchen. There was a large living room with a fireplace; a large dining room that had a sleeper sofa in it and could double as a guest room; a large kitchen, and a large bedroom. The place was pleasantly furnished, and the monthly rent was only fifty dollars. It was but a few blocks from the high school, within easy walking distance, and only a block from a large locally owned market, Dillon's. I rented it on the spot and moved there the first of October.

I remained at the world-class Myrnell Apartments until June of l955, when I left Hutchinson. And, until I lived in a place in San Francisco at 200 Westgate Drive, also for two years (l960--l962), my Myrnell apartment was the most joyous and eternally busy of all the homes I had ever lived in. It was soon to become the "hangout" for large numbers of high school students. At the Myrnell, I had my own television set, which, beginning in early l954, received three channels. I had my own "hi-fidelity" RCA Victor radio/phonograph which played both thirty-three and forty-five rpm records, and a new Smith-Corona portable typewriter. I was, to put it mildly, in ecstasy.

During those two years dozens of students, friends, and family came to visit, drink and dine, listen to music, talk, watch television, work on radio and television programs, debates, and plays, engage in

At Hutchinson High School that fall of l953, I taught five fifty-minute courses: Speech, Advanced Speech, Radio/Television, Debate, and first semester Sophomore English. With the resignation of the former head of the speech and theatre program in July, I became the head of the "department," which consisted of Jean Cramer, who taught speech and drama, and Ariel Perril, who taught drama. My primary responsibility, however, was to maintain the most excellent interscholastic debating program the high school had been proud of for decades. The school and the community prided themselves in that debating program and insisted that the tradition of excellence be maintained. Students began debating as second semester sophomores and continued during their junior and senior years. I was to teach the novices how to debate and to teach those already debaters how to debate better and win debate tournaments. Student debaters received one credit for each semester they

debated, up to four credits. Fall term debate courses emphasized participation in interscholastic debating; spring term debate courses emphasized training inexperienced debaters.

My school day at Hutch High began at eight in the morning with a fifteen minute "home room," after which there were three fifty minute periods, followed by an hour off for lunch. The afternoon schedule included three additional fifty-minute periods, the school day closing at four. Inevitably I had "practice debates" from four until five, conferences with students and debaters after that, and usually got home a little before six. At home, I had my shower, went to some restaurant with Del Knauer to have dinner, and returned to the high school at seven for more practice debates.

I quickly learned to enjoy, appreciate and even to love my students at Hutch. Hutchinson High School was not Beverly Hills or Hollywood High or New Trier or Scarsdale High, but it was very civilized indeed. The Hutch kids were both intelligent and experienced. Most of them came from middle-class families who placed a premium on education. Most of them planned to attend college after high school, and on the average nearly seventy percent of Hutch graduates had gone on to college during the previous ten years. The Hutch public schools were good, and the students in high school showed the results of good teaching. At the same time they were delightfully friendly and well mannered, already a sophisticated part of the "very cool" l950s culture. They were into terms like: "daddio," "hip," "dig," "quick brew," "square," "cube," "pad," "give me some skin," "have a blast," "royal shaft," "How does that grab you?" "forty lashes with a wet noodle," "bad-assing," "Hand-job," "jerkoff," "yo-yo," "weenie," "let's ball," "friggin," "flaked out," "butt out," "kiss off," "faked out," "gross," "weenie," "Don't bug me," "going ape," "really hairy," "up your gigi," "stay cool," "no sweat, "big deal," "cruisin for a bruisin," and "Don't give me any grief."

On television the l950s may have been the age of "The Nelsons," and "Father Knows Best," but my Hutch students rarely watched either, or "Our Miss Brooks." Only my gay students watched "Father Knows Best," and then only to get a slight buzz from watching the sexy "Bud." Hutch students in the early l950s had yet to become addicted to television programming. They still preferred out-of-home nighttime activities, cruising Main Street, meeting at Coberly's, or The Wee One, or Arnold's Drive-In, or Teen-Inn, or some other meet, listen, dance and eat place.

The girls dressed in long skirts, sweaters and loafers. The boys wore jeans, regular or "faded," worn very, very low in front so that the "pubes" showed. White t-shirts were the upper torso attire, and the sleeves were often rolled up to accommodate a pack of cigarettes. Dress clothes were charcoal grey flannels worn with dark blue blazers, pale blue button down shirts, and maroon ties with tie holders of many varieties. By late l953, long hair had been replaced by crew-cuts, flat-tops, and duck-tails. Even I shed my curls in October when I moved into my new apartment, and wore a crew-cut until the early l960s. The guys looked very sexy and anxious-to-find-out. They also looked very sweet and innocent. Brief cases were de rigeur for all the male students and many of the girls. In short, the kids I had known in Granby and Riverton would have been lost in the Hutchinson sea of current haute culture.

Even at twenty-two I looked like a teen-ager in l953-l954, not too different from many of my students. And I certainly emphasized and accented that fact. I reduced my weight to about one-hundred fifty, and I began smoking cigarettes for the first time in my life--unfortunately--primarily, I think, to give the appearance of being a part of the smart main stream group. I started having a drink of wine before dinner at night. Weight loss and drinking were easy. It took me weeks to learn how to smoke without getting dizzy and shaking. But it was "the thing to do," and so I slowly learned.

In Kansas at the time, I should add, there were no mixed-drink bars, only bars where persons eighteen years or older could buy and drink beer and wine. The State owned and operated "package stores," where those eighteen and older could also buy the hard stuff, gin, vodka, scotch, bourbon, rum, and so forth. (Strange that Kansas was doing the eighteen year old minimum long before much of the rest of the nation lowered its drinking age to eighteen.) The existence of these package stores actually made it easier for the kids high school age to obtain booze. It was not difficult to persuade older friends to purchase whatever alcoholic product one needed for the night.

There were a dozen or more "beer bars" in Hutchinson--downtown, out west near the Arkansas River, and in South Hutchinson, where the population consisted mostly of Mexican-Americans and blacks. I enjoyed the beer bars very much. Many of their patrons were sailors stationed at the Hutchinson Naval Air Force Base, located just west of Hutch. Most of the Navy personnel were eighteen or older, and always looking for a place to go to enjoy booze stronger than beer. On weekends bars were very crowded. These bars were great places for meeting and picking-up sailors, junior college students, and even some high school seniors, plus an occasional interesting none-of-the-above.

The faculty at Hutch High consisted of fifty-four teachers, forty of them who had degrees beyond the A.B., a very high percentage for a high school. All male faculty were paid the same salary for the same degree, no matter their length of service. In l953 male faculty with an M.A. or M.S. received $4000. Female faculty were also all paid the same salary, only that salary was $200 less per year than that paid to male faculty, a fact which made no sense at all and was an example of blatant and outrageous gender discrimination. Faculty who married another faculty member in the system were given one year to find another position, no matter how good they were, no matter how long they had taught in the system. The year I arrived, for instance, art instructor Warren Brown had just married English teacher, Elaine Wolfe. One of them had to resign, and so Elaine resigned, of course, and got a job at a small community nearby called Pretty Prairie. The gender discriminations defied fairness, logic, and Constitution. At the other end of the continuum, the high school enrolled forty blacks and any number of Mexican-Americans and had never discriminated because of race. When the Supreme Court ruled in l954 against racial segregation in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. the ruling had no impact whatever in Hutchinson. I cannot recall a single instance of discrimination during my two years there, not even on basis of sexual orientation.

The main high school building was an older three story brick building, very large, with more than fifty classrooms. It contained an auditorium seating fourteen hundred, and a gymnasium with swimming pool. Three smaller buildings were nearby, one for choral and instrumental music, one for vocational studies, including a print shop. A third contained rooms for media studies including journalism and radio and photography, and the school library. In addition to the school library, the almost new and large Hutchinson Public Library was only a block away, and had been co-financed by both the city and the school board. I often took my classes there to teach them how to research.

I knew well only a few of Hutch High's many faculty, including Carl Skoch and Del Knauer. Warren Brown was an instructor in art and a rather good artist himself when he was sober, which wasn't very often. Ariel Perril and Jean Cramer taught drama classes and directed most of the plays, including, my first year there, such fine plays as Christopher Fry's "The Dark is Light Enough," and "The Seven Year Itch." Ariel was pretentious but very nice. She and her late husband had organized the Hutch Little theatre. She was an excellent teacher and director. In l955-l956 she spent a year at Northwestern studying with Julia Kraus.

Doris Ely was head of the English department and was a highly competent and knowledgeable person, who had published several volumes of poetry and short stories. Norma Stroebel and Aylene Keown taught journalism and media, and Aylene had earned two degrees from the Columbia University School of Journalism. Mabel Hanson and Jim Barrett taught vocal music. They had degrees in music from Eastman and Northwestern and were excellent teachers. The concerts of their choral groups were simply superb listening experiences.

Fanny Arganbright taught Spanish. She owned a home in Mexico near Xalapa, and spent summers there, usually with a dozen or more of her Spanish students. Emma Sage and Kate Lewis, taught junior English. Poor Kate had been there forever and had tenure, but her own communication was splattered with indefensible sentences like, "Is they anybody here without they brought a pencil?"

Marie Stewart and Ruth Strickler were the math teachers, both graduates of the University of Texas, and they were excellent. Walter Rinehart, who was from Georgetown University, ran the business department. He had set up a system whereby his department handled all the funds for all of the school's organizations, including the debate teams, the Spanish Club, the Hi-Y, the Brinybirds, and so forth. And to handle all these transactions, he chose from among his own business students, bookkeepers, cashiers, and auditors. He had the most

handsome group of young assistants any "business" has ever seen, including Ken Rayl, Dan Copenhaver and Richard Dunlap.

The boys counselor at the high school was Tim Aley; the girls counselor was Jean Reiss. Tim Aley was something out of a Dashiell Hammett story, he, of course, being Sam Spade. Actually, he looked very much like Alan Ladd. He wore a trench coat and a Humphrey Bogart hat much of the time, and loved to puff away on cigarettes, even while sitting in his office talking to students. When there was no mystery around, Tim would invent one, or find one: The mystery of the open locker; the mystery of the cracked window; the mystery of the extra jockey strap; the mystery of the missing trash can; the mystery of the four flat tires in the parking lot, and so on. Tim spent most of the two years I was in Hutchinson inventing and then "solving" mysteries, and very little of his time counseling students. He was Dick Tracy, not Havelock Ellis.

Girls' Counselor, Jean Reiss, thrice wedded and thrice divorced, was the first self-disclosed women's liberation advocate I ever knew. She scalded both administration and school board regarding the discrimination policy which resulted in different pay scales for men and women. She attacked the principal's policy of seating at faculty meetings men and women separately. And she attacked as sexist the boys' counselor, Tim Aley. "Tim," she said publicly, "like all males, believes that the answer to any woman's problem lies between his legs. He thinks his dick and only his dick can make a woman happy and satisfied."

Roscoe Coyne, our vice principal, was one of my favorites, and one of my best friends. His son Don was one of my debaters my first year at Hutch, and a very good debater he was, placing first at most of his tournaments. Roscoe believed I was a very good influence on his son, and he became my strongest faculty supporter. As I have previously mentioned, Roscoe was a six-footer, with a mustache that made him look debonair and sophisticated. The two of us continued our very fast games of chess, often completing three or four games in the hour lunch break while finishing our lunches at the same time. He was a quiet, kind, considerate and compassionate man, who virtually ran the high school, since Principal Guy, rarely to be found, was too busy doing other things.

The city of Hutchinson itself covered a large area, its Main Street, running north to south, traveled over fifty blocks from South Hutchinson to Medora, and its "Sixth Street," which was highway 50, traveled from the dozen huge grain elevators to the east of the city to the bridge crossing the Arkansas River on the West side, a distance of seven miles. To the south and east of Hutchinson was the very large and attractive Carey Park (named after its founders, the Carey family whose fortune came from selling salt and salt products). Carey Park was a delightful place to spend an hour, or an afternoon, with its lakes, lagoons, picnic areas, horse riding trails, swimming pool, playgrounds, golf course, and baseball and football practice fields.

On the north side of Hutchinson were the Junior College, the State Fair Grounds, and the Hutchinson Arena. The Hutchinson Junior College enrolled eight-hundred students and had a good reputation; it consisted of several Southern California type one story buildings with tile roofs.

The Arena was huge and impressive, even if unattractive to the eye. It seated fifteen thousand, and served to host basketball games, including the State high school play-offs, other atheletic events like gymnastics, and the many exhibits and programs for the two-week State Fair in July. It also hosted weekly during the non-summer seasons, lecturers, comics, musical events, concerts, recitals, and so forth. I recall seeing at the Arena: Red Skelton, Liberace, Anna Russell, the Boston Pops Orchestra, Victor Borge, Fred Waring his orchestra and chorus, and several touring musicals like Paint Your Wagon, Oklahoma, South Pacific, Annie Get Your Gun, Call Me Madam, The Student Prince, and Kiss Me Kate. Granted, it was a terrible place for musicals, at least it attracted them.

The great showman, Liberace, was a big hit in Hutchinson in l954. For some reason, I forget now, Roscoe Coyne asked me to drive Liberace to the Wichita Airport so that he could catch a plane to Dallas and his next concert. I invited one of my cute and sexy students, Eldon Lanning, to go alone with me, and we picked up the very gay, very funny, very fascinating, and very large Liberace at the Baker Hotel one early Saturday afternoon in April. He stood in front of the hotel dressed handsomely in lace shirt with flowing collar, bright green overly

large slax, and an extra large cloak around his corpulent body. He was surrounded by admirers, and I sent Eldon to fetch him.

The great Liberace was much smitten with the petit and charming Eldon. He steered Eldon into the back seat of my car and climbed in after him, sitting so close Eldon had hardly room to move about at all. And that's the way the two of them sat for fifty minutes, always with one Liberace arm around Eldon, often with both of them. It was as close to seduction as one can come without removing the dick from the pants.

Otherwise, Liberace was a most appreciative guest and passenger. He talked the entire hour of the trip. He even told us "Liberace jokes," including one that said, "What song does Liberace sing in the men's rest room?" And the answer, said Liberace, was "Stranger in Paradise." He laughed for a minute after telling that one and squeezed the less-innocent-by-the-minute Eldon even harder as he laughed. He also asked us what we would call an "underwater choir," and replied to his own question, "An aqua capella choir." He also enjoyed that one, clamping his large hands around Eldon's nearest leg and squeezing hard. In short, Eldon brought out the very best in Liberace, and he entertained us both all the way to Wichita, telling stories, singing, and talking about his experiences with a bell hop at the hotel after his performance the night before.

At the Airport, Eldon jumped out, grabbed Liberace's two suitcases which he handed to a skycap, and prepared to say goodbye. Liberace was not yet ready to let go of his new little cutie, however, and bear-hugged Eldon and kissed him for quite some time. "That's my son," he said to a quickly assembled group.

I was not entirely ignored by the Great One. I got some hugs, also, and a big fat Polish kiss, for my troubles. And both Eldon and I got a package of gifts from "Lee" about a week later. Eldon got a beautiful cape, not unlike Liberace's, and I got a baton and a candle-holder for my apartment. We both got autographed photographs, and short notes. To Eldon he wrote, "When you tire of Hutchinson, as you will, just let me know. I am sure I can find something for you to do at my Beverly Hills home. I am sure you would love living here. Thanks for that lovely hour together. You are irresistable. Lee" My note was more mundane. "I have always loved redheads, and you are no exception. You don't look at all like a high school teacher. You're too sexy. Lee."

The Hutchinson Senior High School was located downtown just a few blocks from the heart of the business district. The downtown area contained the new Baker Hotel, twelve stories of elegance; the Wiley Department Store, eight floors of clothing and furniture; three movie theatres--the Fox, the Strand, and the Fine Arts; and several blocks of other stores and shops, including several of my favorite places, Adrian's Record Store, Coberly's Drug Store where students went for after school malts, sodas, milkshakes and sundaes (twenty-five cents each), Roxy's Pizza, The R and S Cafe, The Hollywood Grill, Fyler's Cafeteria, Hoffman's Restaurant, The Rambler Bar and Grill, The Star Bar, Hoffman's Bar and both Dillon's and Safeway Supermarkets.

Nightly Dinners at the restaurants were both cheap and good: Meatloaf, veal patties and hamburger steak dinners were seventy-five cents; lamb chops and pork chops were eighty-five cents; top sirloin steak, ninety-five cents. Salad, dessert and drink were included.

At Meschke's Men's Clothiers, next door to the Hoffman Restaurant, I bought a new dark grey pinstripe Hickey-Freeman suit (fifty dollars), a handsome blue-blazer sports coat with grey slax (forty-five dollars for the both), and a beige sports coat with dark blue slax (forty-five dollars for the both). I bought three pairs of jeans and three pairs of khaki pants (forty-two dollars), and two pairs of loafers, black and brown (twenty dollars). The measurements for my clothes were: waist 32 inches; length 30 inches; coat size 38 regular. Total cost of the fourteen item wardrobe: two-hundred dollars. I was certainly ready to be the best dressed debate coach in Kansas.

All competitive activities between and among Kansas high schools were regulated by an agency of the State Board of Education. Competitive debating and speech activities were regulated, as was football, basketball, and golf, by the same agency. Sixty-six high schools in the State of Kansas engaged in competitive debate through scheduled debate tournaments which ran on Fridays and Saturdays from mid-October until the last of January. At least two tournaments were scheduled each weekend.

The second semester, February to June, the same high schools engaged in competitive "speech and drama events" in a series of contests and "festivals." Speech events included: "oratory, extemporaneous speaking, impromptu speaking, humorous speaking, interpretative reading--comedy; interpretative reading--drama; one-act plays, Lincoln-Douglas debates, after-dinner speaking, and analytic speaking" (whatever that may have been).

In the fall semester, therefore, the students and I concentrated on debate tournaments. In the spring students prepared for all the individual events named above, and this meant that I spent countless hours helping students write speeches and listening to students deliver those speeches and/or read from the writings of others. The task was boring and thankless. I then escorted those students to half a dozen or more "speech festivals" held at various high schools in the State. In May the contestants attended district and state competitive speech festivals, where they were judged and ranked according to the quality of their work.

In the spring, we also began instructing our new sophomore debaters in argumentation and debate, preparing them to engage in interscholastic debating the following year. I used my experienced debaters to help me tutor and supervise the thirty or more sophomores who wanted to participate in competitive debating.

Our fall debate tournament schedule called for participating in eighteen tournaments in four months, including our own tournament held the second weekend in December. At each tournament, I would enter two teams or four debaters, or four teams, eight debaters. Each team debated in six debates or "rounds" against teams from other schools. Each debate was judged by either a debate coach, a teacher, or an interested townsperson.

The judges gave both a win and a loss in each debate, depending on which of the two teams, in the opinion of the judge, had done the better job of debating. The judge also gave "speaker points," through which the four debaters in the debate received "rankings" according to how effective their debating had been. The "best" speaker received a "l," the second best a "2," the least effective speaker a "4," and the next to least effective got a "3." Each of us coaches, of course, wanted each of our teams to win every debate. But we also to receive the best speaker points, a "l" and a "2" if possible.

At the end of six rounds, the eight teams with the best win-loss records and the best speaker-point records were chosen to enter the so-called "elimination rounds," which consisted of octa-finals, quarter-finals, semi-finals, and the final round, the winner of which was declared the winner of the tournament and received a large trophy, the second place team receiving a slightly smaller but nonetheless respectable trophy.

At some tournaments "two-man teams" (two students who alternated debating the "yes" or affirmative side of a proposition one debate and the "no" or negative side the following debate) qualified for the elimination rounds. At others so-called "four-man teams" qualified. (Two students debated the negative each round; two others debated the affirmative.) In those cases, a school then had two teams in each elimination round to worry about, an affirmative team and a negative team. And whether or not a school progressed to the next elimination round depended upon the combined records of each of the two teams. This meant a school had to have four good debaters to be successful.

Debate tournaments were actually very exciting and competitive events, greatly anticipated not only by the debaters themselves, but by the people in the high schools hosting the tournaments, faculty and students, as well as and many of the citizens in the community who came to listen and to judge debates. In the State of Kansas, at the time, debate tournaments generated almost as much local public enthusiasm as did competitive sports events. I recall having over four-hundred people in the auditorium at Hutchinson High School one Saturday afternoon for the final round of our tournament in which Topeka High School squared off against Newton High School for first-place honors.

We had amazingly generous coverage of our competitive debating program from the Hutchinson News-Herald, as well as our four radio stations and the Channel 3 KTVH television. I have in front of me a two page story from the News-Herald, November 8, l953, which discusses the debate program, the proposition for debate that year, our schedule of tournaments, and our chances of winning first or second at the State Tournament. The story spotlights our previous weekend first place win at the tournament at Topeka Senior High School and devotes a

paragraph to each of our twelve teams. Station KWBW would broadcast, on Sunday mornings, the final round of debate from the previous day's tournament if Hutch debaters were involved.

Our tournament schedule included trips to Russell, Great Bend, Dodge City, Garden City, Ulysses, Anthony, El Dorado, Wichita, Haven, Newton, Emporia, Topeka, Lawrence, Fort Scott, Pittsburg, Manhattan, Wyandotte High School in Kansas City, Kansas, and Shawnee-Mission High School in Kansas City. Curiously, the State Board would not allow Kansas high schools to attend tournaments outside the State, even though schools from other States were welcome at our tournaments. To each tournament I sent at least four student debaters; to some tournaments eight.

The budget supporting our program, nearly fifteen-hundred dollars per year, came in part from the high school activities budget, but a significant amount came from the sale of ads in the school's football and basketball programs. Debaters spent a week of their summer time soliciting advertising from local merchants for those programs, and from that solicitation we netted about a thousand dollars, to defray costs of transportation, hotels and meals. We paid all student expenses for each tournament, lodging, transportation and food. The average two-day tournament, four students and myself, cost us about one-hundred twenty dollars, and the average hotel cost per student per night was six dollars.

The debate trips themselves were most pleasant for me, and the students. We usually left for our tournament destination on Thursday afternoons after class, and after a half-hour "pep and analysis" talk by me. (The debaters called it my "Hype Talk," and since they referred to me as "Dad" or "Daddio," the event became known as "Dad's Hype and Pep Time.") As I look through my "notes" for these pep talks, I am today embarrassed by schmaltz and corn and psychobabble. But the kids ate it up, like I was Leo Durocher getting his Giants or Dodgers ready for the "Big One."

I would always start by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the major teams they were to meet at the tournament--Topeka, Shawnee-Mission, Wyandotte, Pittsburg, Newton, Great Bend, Emporia, Wichita North and East, Garden City, Russell, Emporia, and so on-- and talk about the cases they would be debating and the evidence they would have to be able to refute. I would emphasize good appearances and good manners, and give them as many psycho-boosts as I thought they could handle. I would emphasize that they had to believe in themselves first before they could persuade anybody else. They had to realize that they were better prepared than any opponent they would be facing.

"Just remember," I would say, signaling them another group of my tired, if not exhausted, cliches was on the way: "Your opponents are not supermen. They put on their pants one leg at a time. Just talk to them and the judges like an Old Dutch Uncle. Make them want to vote for you, and they will find a reason to do so. Lean into them when you talk; let them know you care very much that they believe you. Put the monkey on your opponents' backs. Keep them on the defensive. Be conversational and sincere and well mannered. Pay close attention to what your opponents say. Look for that big mistake they will make sooner or later in the debate, and then capitalize on it. Know your strengths and their weaknesses. Have faith in yourself. And know that, win or lose, I will still love you, although I will love you a little more if you win. And remember, it takes a mighty big dog to weigh a ton." The cryptic phrase always signaled the end of "Hype and Pep Time."

Our one or two car caravan would leave those late autumn and winter afternoons for Kansas City, or Garden City, or Emporia, or Pittsburgh, or Topeka, and we would listen to the radio for awhile, to the top ten hits like "Mr. Sandman," "My Heart Cries for You," "Hey There," "Unchained Melody," "Secret Love," "Wish You Were Here," "They Tried to Tell Us," "Three Coins in the Fountain," "Wheel of Fortune," and so on. Then we would settle into lovely gossip and delicious conversation.

In an absurdly pietistic mood on these debate trips, I would usually try to misrepresent myself to the debaters as righteous, clean-living, decent, honorable, and the perfect symbol of the doctrine of in loco parentis. I may have wanted to tell dirty jokes and to talk about sex, even seduce the debaters, but those were luxuries I denied myself, and the debaters. I remember on an early trip in the fall of l953, Don Coyne told a very funny only slightly off-color joke: The teacher of anatomy asks the class what part of the human body, when excited, expands five times its normal size. The class titters and blushes, and the teacher says, "In the first place the answer is the

iris of the eye; in the second place all of you have a vulgar mind; in the third place, many of you have a great surprise coming when you have sex." After everyone had finished laughing, I simply announced that jokes like that would henceforth be forbidden on debate trips.

I am embarrassed utterly simply repeating my hypocrisy. I suppose I wanted to separate myself completely from the days at Granby and Riverton in which joke-telling was the routine. I wanted to be credited with having virtues and moral principles I did not in fact have, muchless want. And so our trips, that first year, took place in a sanitized environment. Fortunately the second year I stopped the pretentiousness.

The kids were always hyped-up on the trips, dirty jokes and profanity to the contrary notwithstanding. They were away from parental control, most of them for the first time in their lives. They were stressed, in part from anticipation, in part from fear of not doing well. And all of us learned how to deal with their stressors, overcoming them, or at least reducing their impact, by having a good time together. We would stop somewhere for dinner and continue on to our tournament town and the hotel or motel where we were to stay. I always stayed in a single room by myself.

Tournaments started at noon on Fridays. Students congregated for a pre-tournament assembly in the auditorium of the host high school. Some tournaments attracted thirty schools; some attracted sixty schools. My debaters entered the assembly room in a group, and they were an impressive and handsome lot. Our guy debaters dressed uniformly in dark blue suits, light blue shirts, maroon ties. Our girl debaters likewise wore dark long dresses. And every debater carried a nice leather briefcase.

The sight of eight Hutch debaters, all dressed in elegant, becoming outfits, entering the assembly room with their briefcases and file boxes, prior to the beginning of a tournament was an awesome and visually attractive sight, designed to inflict psychological defeat on the enemy prior to the start of the debates. Some teams had lost before the debate had begun, because we looked sophisticated, determined, and formidable.

At the tournaments, pairings were done by lottery for schedules already drawn up. Schedules for all six rounds were handed out at the beginning. Sometimes coaches judged, but usually all judging was done by high school faculty and town residents. The first two rounds on Friday afternoon were debated in front of high school classes, who always made good audiences. The two remaining rounds on Friday were usually in front of only a judge, the opponents, and a timekeeper.

Friday night after dinner the debaters and I had lengthy discussions regarding cases, arguments and evidence our teams had heard, and I answered whatever questions they had. Saturday mornings, they debated twice more prior to ten o'clock refreshments and assembly at which time results of the preliminary rounds were announced and posted, and the pairings for the octa-finals were made, followed by more conferences between coaches and debaters. Hutchinson debate teams always made it to the octa-finals, almost always to the quarter-finals, and usually to the semi-finals.

The final round of the tournament didn't begin until about two-thirty Saturday afternoon. If we weren't involved, we stayed to listen to it anyway. If we were involved, I worked with my debaters until time for the debate to begin, and then disappeared and let them do the very best they could without any interference from me. For final rounds, there were at least five judges, sometimes seven. And the coaches of the teams involved sat in a lounge somewhere, having cokes or coffee, while they worried about the results of the ongoing debate. No coach could bring himself listen to a team of his in a final-round debate; the strain would have been too much on him or her, and on their debaters.

It was the time during debates that the "circuit" debate coaches got to know each other very well. We had a delightful and commendable camaraderie, even though our teams might be bitter rivals. Good will, respect, integrity and much warmth and friendliness was at the heart of academic debating in Kansas during my years there. In spite of the fierce competition, everyone "kept their cool." I remember only a few fights and quarrels, and no bitterness among coaches or debaters.

Matt Hill, from Topeka, gentle and sweet, was the "dean" of the group, and he monitored behavior of both coaches and students. "Reasonable good luck to you," he would say to both, "and don't take it all so seriously.

You're supposed to have a good time, too." Maury Swanson, of Shawnee-Mission was jolly and equally calm externally. H. Francis Short, of Pittsburg, knew every coach and most debaters, and he knew how to kid both of them out of momentary hurt or anger. When altercations occasionally occurred, funny-stories would be told by the coaches about the incident until the incident became not a dramatic moment but a comedic one. When Bessie Duggan, of Haven, and Vic Capper, of Topeka, had a disagreement over something and she said to him, "A gentleman would not have done that," the story soon developed that Vic Capper's answer to Bessie Duggan was, "But, Miss Duggan, I am no gentleman." Even Vic and Bessie had to laugh.

"Mama and Papa" Moore were the coaches from Newton, and had been for decades, and they were very, very good, turning out winning teams every year. But they had a less than nice reputation for "spying" on other teams. Papa Moore would station himself outside the door of an ongoing debate between two teams who would soon be meeting Newton's teams, and take notes on what he heard. The coaches called this no-no, "Mooring it." And Mama and Papa Moore "win at any cost" stories could easily fill the hour that coaches had to wait for a debate to end.

One of my most favorite coaches was an irresistable little balding gnome from Great Bend named Louis Banker. Louis was originally from Russell, where his parents owned a department store, in which one Robert Dole worked during his high school years. Louis and Bob were good friends, or so Louis reported. He also believed that young high school Bob Dole was "gorgeous, hunky and sexy." Louis got an A.B. from the University of California at Berkeley in l942 and served four years in the army during the war. After the war he got a master's degree and his teaching credential in speech and English and history, and began teaching at Great Bend High School. "Louie" was one of the funniest men I have ever known. Everybody loved him, and his wit and endless supply of amusing anecdotes, helped make him the life of the party, or the tournament. He brought to tournaments, for instance, what he called “Wesley Beads” for his debaters "to say" during rebuttals, urging them to chant "John, Charles, John, Charles" while they "said" their beads. He grew marijuana in his greenhouse in Great Bend, long before any of us used it, and smoked it between rounds at the tournaments.

Louis was delightfully gay and loved to drive those high plains at night, cruising for tricks, and thinking nothing of making the sixty mile trip from Great Bend to Hutch several times a week, primarily to have dinner and then to pick up sailors from the Naval Air Station west of Hutch, take them to the sand dunes or elsewhere and have sex. He would occasionally bring them by my apartment if I were home, introduce them, and then ask if the two of them could "borrow" my bedroom for a while, and I would allow such an intrusion only if I could "partake of the goodies," as Louis Banker phrased it.

On one of Louis' visits with sailor in tow, he met my cute little friend, Mike O'Farrell from Wichita. He then had to drive the extra sixty miles to Wichita at least once a week to visit Mike and his many friends. "It was worth the sacrifice," he told me, after his first roundtrip.

Bill Reynolds, of Garden City, was another friend I spent a lot of time with at tournaments. Bill later became director of debate at Georgetown University, and he and Herb James who was debate head at Dartmouth, both Kansans who had known each other since childhood, became lovers, even retiring together to Florida in the l980s. Bill was probably, next to me, the best coach in Kansas.

At the Kansas high school tournaments, at the end of the final round of debate, the host coach collected the ballots from the five or so judges, read the decision of each judge, and finally declared a winner, amidst much cheering and applause for both teams. Members of the two teams, and the coaches, all shook hands, and the host coach and debaters handed out the trophies, some of them so gigantic they would barely fit in the trunk or backseat of the car. Everyone said a lot of thank-yous to the hosts and to the other coaches and teams, and then we departed for home, stopping on the way, of course, for dinner, and always putting the beautiful new trophy in the middle of the table to admire for a few brief minutes, while we exchanged tales of the tournament. In the meantime, I had called The News-Herald, the radio stations, and, of course, R.C. and Roscoe, if we had won either first or second.

At some tournaments we did not do well, or, as we all said in unison in those depressing moments, we were "a day late and a dollar short." I never criticized, much less pressured, when the kids lost, because I knew they felt

much worse about it than I did. I would say things like, "Next time if you can't convince them, just confuse them;" "So they don't put on their pants one leg at a time!" "Those guys were so good anyway, your chances were no better than those of a one-legged man in an ass-kicking contest," or "The next time you will go into the debate room with a whip and a chair." And soon, on those dark prairie nights driving back to Hutch, we were all telling funny stories of events and people at the tournament; adding names of debaters, coaches and fellow-travelers to our own " I.P." club (Molly Clark's "Important Person" club, which featured impossibly arrogant, pretentious, and self-appointed "important" persons); singing songs together, and sleeping on somebody else's shoulder.

Tournaments were indeed exhausting. Whether we won or lost, the Hutchinson News-Herald always ran some kind of nice story. And win or lose we always had a reception group at the high school waiting for us when we got back. If we had trophies, which we almost always did, a press photographer was there to take photographs of debaters and trophies and rush back to the newspaper so that the Sunday morning editions carried the story on the front page. To say that both the school and community were supportive would be an understatement. I got a lot of hugs from a lot of parents night after night when we got back from those tournaments.

There is a remarkable closeness that develops between leader and followers under these conditions. There is no closeness like that between a "coach" and his students who work and travel together, live together, engage in a common competitive cause together, and share victories and defeats gallantly together. The kids, utterly naive and unsophisticated in the substance and skills of argument and debate when they first come to you, place a wonderful trust in the teacher. To the students, the teacher is a god who is always right, never wrong, even when his being right hurts them, or brings them enormous pleasure and self-pride. And the teacher, in turn, places great trust in his students, that they will both work hard, master what has to be learned, and perform in a predictably splendid fashion.

The bonding between the two is a wonderfully fascinating process to watch. Modeling behavior always is intriguing.. Students began to repeat my phrases; they began to ape my dialect; they even assumed some of my physical characteristics, the way I walk, the occasional wink, the smile which appears after certain things are said. In the end, most of these high school students would have walked on water for me.

I remember every student debater, every tournament, every triumph and defeat, and I am sure each of those sixty debaters does also. I suspect on autumn and winter Saturday nights even to this day the roads of Kansas echo with conversations and songs of the Hutch debaters from l953 to l955. And there must be dozens of restaurants on whose tables tall and beautiful silver trophies suddenly appear at about eight o'clock on those Saturday nights.

My beautiful debaters and friends included: Don Coyne and Charles Remsberg (Don went on to get a Ph.D. at Cal Tech and become a professor at the University of California, Berkeley; Charles got degrees from Northwestern, worked for the Chicago Tribune, and wrote pulp fiction.); Miller Brown and John Knightly (Miller got his Ph.D. and taught at Trinity and Wesleyan; John became librarian at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.) Hugh Grant and Hulse Wagner (Both got their Ph.D's and became college professors, Hugh at North Carolina, Hulse at Kansas State.); Dick Young and Bill Hiett (Both got Ph.D.s. and became college professors.); Eldon Lanning and Bob Dick (who also got their Ph.D.s and became college professors, at Virginia and Indiana); John Wolfersberger and Dave Blackim (John taught high school in Kansas; David became debate coach at Hutchinson Junior College.); Bill Nelson and Molly Clark (Bill got his Ph.D. and became a Professor at the State University of New York; Mollly became an attorney in San Francisco and was very active in women's movements.) John Boaz and Clayton Cox (John got his Ph.D. and became a professor at Illinois State; Clayton lived on a farm near Hutch.); Sharon Grueber and Norman Beyer; Terry Elliott and Dave Wiley (Dave became a poet and a painter.); Margie Williamson and Fred Robertson; Don Tennant and Dwayne Thorpe; Don Pray and Don Powell; Kathleen Roberts and Ed King; Jim Young and Bruce Lewellyn; Paul Ganong and John Panettiere; Bruce Lewellyn and Robert Clay; Dan Welchons and Jerry Elliott (Dan inherited his aunt's house in Hutchinson and lived there most of his life doing nothing; Jerry became a hippie lawyer in Wichita.);

Regrettably, I do not know what became of so many of my students and debaters. I do know that every single debater went on to college and graduated.

In two years my Hutch debaters and I never quarreled or fought; in two years not a single debater on a single trip ever embarrassed me or the other members of the squad, or Hutchinson High School. They were dedicated, motivated, and damned good.

At thirty-six tournaments in two years, these kids won fourteen first place trophies; twelve second place trophies; and eight third-place trophies. They won 502 debates and lost l60 for an 80% win average. My first year, Coyne and Remsberg, Brown and Knightly won 42 debates and lost only 8. My second year, Lanning and Dick, Clark and Nelson won 44 debates and lost only 8. Moreover, every student who "came out for debate" got to attend at least six tournaments, whether they were winners or losers.

At our own tournament in Hutchinson, the occasion was one of great excitement. We had over one-hundred teams from all over Kansas at the event, which meant we needed at least three-hundred rounds of debate judged by Hutchonians. The News-Herald ran a lengthy article on the tournament and included an "invitation to the public" to judge at least one interscholastic tournament debate. Within twenty-four hours after the publication of the article, we had at least one volunteer judge for each round of debate, and in several rounds used more than one judge. On the Thursday night before the Friday and Saturday tournament, we invited the judges to hear a debate between two of our teams, and I taught them what to listen for in a debate, how to take notes, how to evaluate arguments and refutation, and how to analyze rebuttals. I also taught them how to do brief critiques of the debates they listened to. I believe they were the best prepared group of lay judges we could have had.

At our two-day tournament everyone was helpful. The home-economics department served coffee and cookies to all the debaters and judges and provided a lounge for visiting coaches. Mr. Guy and Mr. Coyne allowed us to schedule debates in front of most classes, and most students heard at least one debate. The faculty volunteered to judge or serve as timekeepers. How sweet it was, as Jackie Gleason used to say, to see a community so involved in an intellectual activity and so supportive of its young people. When a sports reporter for the News-Herald wrote a tongue-in-cheek article lamenting the fact that there was more community support for the debate program than the football and basketball programs, he received a hundred letters attacking his column.

Hutchinson debaters came within two speaker points of winning the State Championship in January of l954. We tied Shawnee-Mission at twelve wins and four losses apiece, and the tie was decided, not by an additional debate as it should have been, but by going to the total speaker points for the sixteen rounds of debate.

My second year, I began with an almost new debate squad, since most of my first year squad had graduated. For the first three weeks, we struggled, not winning a single tournament. The fourth weekend, jokingly, as I held my "Hype Talk" prior to sending two groups to two different tournaments, I said that if either group won first place, the winners could throw me into the lily pond at Carey Park.

That weekend Hutch High debaters won both tournaments, and on Sunday afternoon, the entire squad came to my apartment to "escort" me to Carey Park's lily pond, and there, four of my beauties lifted me by arms and legs and sent me several feet out into that cold November water, after which they wrapped me in blankets, brought me back home, put me in a tub of hot water, and opened three bottles of champagne so that everyone could celebrate. The next day in the News-Herald on the front page was a large photograph of the Carey Park dunking, captioned, "Hot Teams; Cool Coach." In the photo I had just hit the water, and thirty debaters were cheering.

Principal R.C. Guy decided he wanted to take a debate trip with us after he had seen the photograph, and we decided he should accompany us to the tournament at Wyandotte High School in Kansas City, Kansas. We took eight debaters, Mr. Guy, and myself on that trip, and all of us stayed at the Chatham Hotel on Kansas City. R.C. sat through twelve rounds of debating at the tournament and got enormously involved in the excitement of the tournament. My teams won sixteen out of sixteen debates in the preliminary rounds, and all eight debates in the elimination rounds. We won first, second, third, and fourth places, and R.C. Guy called the News-Herald himself to give them the good news, and he bought everyone a dinner at the "Green Parrot" in Kansas City to show his and the school's appreciation.

My second year teams went on to have an even better year than the excellent one compiled by my debaters during my first year. At the State Tournament, we were once again denied the first place trophy on speaker points, not wins and losses, and there was no tie-breaking debate. Again we came in second.

At the close of my second year of directing the debate program at Hutchinson, as I was preparing to leave Hutch and go to Northwestern University, we had a wonderful banquet for all the debaters and friends of debating, over a hundred people, and I spoke to those kids I loved so much:

"As we bask in this great warmth we call tournament debating, I think my greatest remembrance came this year, the culmination of events. Never did a group have more cause for despair than we had last fall, having lost most of our squad. All we had was hope, a desire to win, and the willingness to do something about the challenge. Even when we lost and lost at the beginning of the year, we were stubborn. We kept working and practicing daily, and twenty-four pioneers stuck together until we forced the breaks to go our way, until we were able to say to ourselves we were as good as anybody else we would meet at a tournament. And we started winning, and we never stopped, ending our year in triumph, and achieving what our fondest dreams would not permit us to believe was possible. And all of this epitomizes to me the intangible values of our work, the fact that after the wins and losses become a part of the past, and the trophies are forgotten, important lessons of life remain indelibly imprinted upon the personalities, minds, and characters of each debater: the value of work, the reward of patience, the importance of commitment, the need to know more than your opponent and to be cleverer in using that which you know, the importance of being able to think and reason and analyze and argue and refute that which is wrong when you see it, and the ability to articulate your thoughts cogently, effectively, and eloquently. Tonight you can be proud of yourselves. In the days to come, as the experiences of this year become a fixed part of you, you will realize even more why you are proud of yourself tonight. I will always love and respect you not only because you did the impossible, but because you are beautiful and loving people yourselves, who have earned respect. I will remember every lovely and exciting moment we spent together, and I am sure you will also. It's been worth all the headaches after all."

I paid tribute to Tom Kelly, who taught me so very much during those two years. Tom knew all there was to know about debate; he also knew so much about kids and about trying to enjoy life while you work your way through it. Tom was a heavy drinker, often spiffed at tournaments, but even when spiffed he could listen to a debate and not miss an argument or a piece of evidence. And he was loved by both debaters and community.

Tom had coached debate for years at Russell, Kansas, where, among many others, Bob Dole had been one of his debaters. "Bob and his colleague Frank, were the meanest and best sons-a-bitches I ever coached," he told me. "They terrified their opponents with their arrogance before debates. They would rearrange the furniture in the room, for instance, placing opponents' chairs much farther away from the podium than theirs. They would put the desks in the room in front of their own chairs, leaving the opponents without desks. And during debates they were just plain obnoxious. Once when Bob was speaking and his opponents kept talking to each other, he screamed at them, "From now on all I want from the two of you is silence, damnit, and damned little of that." I could never do anything to slow them down, short of kicking them off the squad, and the school would have fired me had I done that."

At Hutchinson High School, Tom produced state championship teams half the years he coached there. He left the high school to move to the junior college where he continued his championship record, winning the Nationals four out of ten years.

Tom was a great psychologists and possessed abundant wisdom about putting together both teams and a squad. He knew how to make debating challenging and exciting, and how to create a climate in which the kids wanted to knock themselves out to win.

When I had problems and questions, I knew that Tom Kelly would have answers and solutions. Tom was the originator of the "Old Dutch Uncle" approach to debating, as well as the "They put on their pants one leg at a time" set of attitudes. He and I became fast friends.

At the debate banquet that night, after I had paid tribute to Tom, he spoke at length about debate and about the students he had taught along the way, including Senator Bob Dole and a debate team that "weighed four-hundred eighty pounds" which won the state championship one year "on weight alone." At the end of his speech, Tom Kelly talked about me. He had been asked, he said, to bestow a thank-you and farewell gift to me, in behalf of my debaters. And he read to the group the inscription on the card that accompanied the gift: "To our beloved coach, Russ Windes, the only person we have ever met who puts on his pants two legs at a time. We can never repay him for what he has done for us and with us. He always told us that he loved each and every one of us. And now we say to him, "Each and every one of us loves you." It was, as they say, a tearful occasion for everyone. The gift was a beautiful watch.

In my other classes in speech, those concerned with the electronic media, radio and television, I was given the

responsibility of producing four weekly radio programs and one fifteen minute television program on KTVH twice a month. We produced a half-hour program which was broadcast on radio station KWBW on Saturday mornings at nine titled "Meet Your High School," (Theme song, "School Days," up and out. Announcer Robert C. Dick: "It's time for Meet Your High School.") "MYHS" consisted of interviews with faculty and students and visiting firemen at the high school, and panel discussions of school issues, programs, and problems. For instance, we did four Saturday morning programs discussing and analyzing the high school athletic programs, since the football team had lost eight out of nine games, and the basketball team had a record only slightly better. We had four programs on the music department and interviews with the four faculty members responsible for that program. We interviewed Principal Guy and Vice Principal Coyne regarding high school curriculum and the quality of teaching. We interviewed faculty involved in the history and social studies program; faculty in business education; faculty in drama; faculty in English; faculty in the vocational studies. And in each case, the faculty had to face questions from at least four students on our panels.

We produced another half-hour program on KWBW which was broadcast Sunday afternoons at five-thirty, called "Youth Forum." On this show, our highbrow program and the one with the biggest audiences, our format consisted of a "renowned" guest and a panel of four or five students who asked questions of the guest and even debated with the guest in a pleasant, non-aggressive sort of way. We tried to find lively guests and lively topics. Sometimes the topics concerned local matters, and we would interview the mayor, the city manager, city council members, and reporters for the News-Herald. Sometimes the topics concerned State matters, and we would talk to the local assemblyman or State Senator. We interviewed the candidates for Governor during the fall campaign of l954. After he was elected, we interviewed Governor Fred Hall on his plans for his two-year term of office. We interviewed visiting "artists, celebrities and performers" like Liberace, Red Skelton, Anna Russell, Fred Waring, and Arthur Fiedler, as well as actors in theatre productions held at the Arena. For these events my entire class in radio and television would involve itself in some phase of production, scripts, interviews, music, and helping Dick Fraley, our KWBW staff engineer-announcer in the control booth.

Dick Fraley, who virtually was KWBW, was an absolutely invaluable person in assisting me with our radio shows. He spent much of his time Thursday nights helping the students piece together all the interviews they had done during the week, and helping them write continuity for their shows. And on Sunday afternoons he always entertained our special guests for the forum show, made them feel comfortable, and essentially helped the students produce the entire show. He was enormously helpful with students we sent out from the high school to "intern." Dick and I had both grown up with radio programs, and our conversations were always sprinkled with quotes and characters from earlier radio. Our "Lum and Abner" experiences caused "Aye Grannies, Abner," to become a frequently spoken phrase at the radio station. And we would take turns being Lum or Abner or Cedric Weehunt, Sister Simpson, Squire Skimp, or Dick Huddleston.

We would use our "Lone Ranger" memories to yell at appropriate times, "Meanwhile, back at the ranch...." or "So, Tonto, we are surrounded by Indians. What do we do now? And Tonto replies, "What you mean "we," white man?" And from "Vic and Sade," we would assume characters like I.Y.Y.Y. Skeeber, Uncle Fletcher, and Addison McSweeney, Rishagin Sishagin from Fishagain, Michigan." If I got a call at the high school from a "Bluetooth Johnson," or a "Rooster Davis." I knew it was a call from Dick Fraley. And Pearl Clinton, the high school secretary, always knew that calls for "Mr. Peepers" meant that she should buzz my room. It could have

been worse had he asked for "Our Miss Brooks." At KWBW, the secretary there likewise knew that calls for Reggie Van Gleason and Snookie Lansome were for Dick Fraley.

After our late Sunday afternoon radio program, my students always came back to my apartment, where we had our own version of the "covered dish" dinner. Dave Wiley and Clayton Cox were in charge of the refreshments, and they always raided the delicatessen at Wiley's Department Store, to come up with delicious assortments of food and grog. Dave was into spiked punch, himself. Actually, Dave was into vodka and tonic for himself, but prepared spiked punch for everyone else except Clayton Cox who, saints forbid, liked rum and coke. I always told Dave and Clayton that I did not want to know a thing about what was served, nothing.

The parties were grand fun, needless to say, and we spent hours reviewing the day's happenings and listening to the tape of the final program, plus the out takes. Often Dick Fraley joined us. His great memory for trivia, and sense of humor, entertained us all evening.

Our group usually consisted of Bob Dick, Eldon Lanning, Molly Clark, Don Powell, Dave and Clayton, Paul Ganong, Dan Welchons, Pat Raleigh, Becky Caudill, Leroy Mills, Mike Allen, Zane La Croix, Gary Settle, Bruce Lewellyn, Margie Williamson, Jerry Stremel, Guy Spenser, Paul Alfaro, Richard Milhon, and Gretchen Engler.

"Fetchen Gretchen" Engler was a favorite of mine. She was intellectually gifted, creative, highly talented, and possessed a brilliant wit. She became "my gal Friday" at school, constantly volunteering to help me with radio and television projects, plays in which I became involved, and even keeping the books on my debate budget. She was a jewel. Like Dick Fraley, she loved to play "radio character games" with me. She and I liked to do the day-time soaps, and her favorite was "Stella Dallas." She would leave notes for me, sometimes signed simply "Stella," other times signed "From the fabulously wealthy and insane Ada Dexter." I was either Dick Groevnor or her son, Stanley Warwick. If I were Dick Groevnor, the letters and notes from Gretchen were addressed to: "The socially prominent and handsome Dick Groevnor." One note starts with, "Ada is mad, utterly insane. She fired a revolver through the door four times when Stella knocked on it and tried to talk her into giving up the gun." And concluded, "Only Joe O'Malley of Omaha can save her from herself."

When I wrote to her, sometimes she was Ada Dexter, sometimes Stella Dallas, and sometimes "Lolly Baby," daughter of Stella. The last "letter" Gretchen slipped under the door of room 30l at Hutch High, said the following: "I, Gretchen Engler, do hereby state that I cannot stand the following: (l) General Eisenhower; (2) Grizzly and Greedy Republicans in general; (3) John Foster Dulles; (4) Richard Nixon; (5) All conservatives--they have one foot in the grave and the other in the last century; (6) All Capitalists who are destroying the country by creating a class society and great disparity in wealth; and (7) All Americans who never fail to miss the point. Now do I get an "A" in the course? Or do I have to hate more groups? Remember the favorite phrases of Del Knauer, "Yes siree, Bob," which has no meaning at all, and "Chickens always come home to roost," which has a lot of meaning, don't you think? Anyway, how about a malted milk at the Moose Club after your practice debate? Love. Fetchen."

Gretchen was my assistant director for the one play I directed the final spring I was at Hutch High, Gramercy Ghost, a play by John Cecil Holm, which had been done on Broadway in New York. The play had something to do with a girl who lived in Gramercy Park who had inherited a ghost named Nathaniel when her landlady died at age l03. The ghost had been killed near Gramercy Park and condemned to an earth-bound existence because he had failed to deliver an urgent message to George Washington. The play purpose: to find a way of getting rid of Nathaniel. I cast the play with a very sexy cast of senior students, named Gretchen my assistant, Eldon Lanning Dan Welchons, Pat Raleigh and Paul Ganong as my stage managers, and rehearsed for six weeks. Richard Milhon, Guy Spenser, Dan Copenhaver, Paul Alfaro, Con Marteney, Earl Maroney, John Weir, Mike Walker, Jerry Stremel, Gary Settle, and Nancy Holmes were all in the play, and each one was a beauty. My feeling was, if the cast was gorgeous, nobody would reject the play and its production. And I was absolutely right.

The cast, crew, and I had a romantic and amazingly enjoyable six weeks together, during which time I was no longer a pietistic debate coach, mouthing platitudes about winning, but a romantic, heroic, sex-obsessed, Hollywood/Broadway director/producer who would lead cast and crew to a successful future in entertainment.

When frustrations and failures appeared on the stage during rehearsals, I would yell from my seat somewhere in the auditorium, "Allentown? Did you say Allentown? You have Broadway within your grasp and you want to go back to Allentown?" It calmed nerves, brought a few chuckles, and the cast in unison would sing, "Come on along and listen to....the lullaby of Broadway." Then someone would yell, "Time for a sex break. Who gets to make it with our director now?"

Eldon Lanning and Bob Dick worked with Dick Fraley of KWBW on sound effects and music for the play. Dan Welchons and Pat Raleigh worked on lighting and set design and props. And Fetchen Gretchen sat by my side night after night writing down my suggestions at each rehearsal. Sometimes she would overdo it. When I asked her to read something back to the cast at the after-rehearsal critique session, she was apt to blurt out, "Why the fuck can't these two people get the goddam scene right?" And everyone would giggle nervously, knowing, or thinking they knew, that Gretchen was adding lines to my script.

At any rate, the nights of production the cast performed magnificently before sell-out audiences. Eldon and Paul provided appropriate and supportive background music throughout the play through bits of pirated recordings. Each character had an identification melody--Nathaniel had the Sauter-Finnegan "Doodletown Fifers." Charles and Nancy made love to Billy Vaughn's "Melody of Love," and so on. Dan and Pat learned the art of mood lighting and became real craftsmen at it. We rented Revolutionary War costumes from a New York costume outfit, and the bill was embarrassingly high, but Gretchen managed to persuade the student bookkeepers to do an underhanded transfer of funds from the Briney Birds, and Del Knauer, the sponsor, never knew the difference.

Our cast party was held at the Moose Club, and later at my apartment, and it was an all-night celebration. Gretchen and Dave Wiley were in charge, and, as usual, Dave raided the Wiley Department Store delicatessen, and, at the same time, persuaded someone he knew very well at the Kansas State Package Store to turn loose of a lot of booze. The rooms of my apartment were strewn with members of the cast and crew of Gramercy Ghost the next morning, all suffering hangovers. But that was all right. It was Saturday, and they had worked diligently for six weeks and had given a couple of thousand people an enjoyable night at the theatre. And I had only three weeks remaining on my contract at the high school before the school year ended.

On Monday morning Roscoe Coyne mumbled something to me about "playing Hollywood," and "parents who didn't know where their kids were." And I suggested that since those "kids" were graduating in three weeks and would be on their own the rest of their lives, parents should get used to "not knowing where their kids were." Roscoe winked and agreed.

Dear Gretchen left Hutchinson for the University of Kansas, and then for graduate work in the l960s at the University of California, Berkeley. She married an Episcopalian priest, and they lived in Ponce, Puerto Rico, for many years. After their divorce, she moved to the Lake District, where, according to friend Del Knauer, "she does Faith Healing by the laying-on of hands. She started by curing sheep, and gradually worked up to humans."

At one of the performances of Gramercy Ghost, we did have in the audience some guests from "Hollywood." In mid-April Joshua Logan began filming the movie Picnic in Hutchinson, and the city became both a beehive of activity, and a place where hundreds of stage-struck Hutchonians stood in line to apply for the role of an extra in the many "crowd scenes" to be filmed there over a six week period of time. Virtually all of the rooms at the eleven story Baker Hotel were taken by producers. writers, directors, cinematographers, actors, and people in costuming, lighting, design, make-up, and so on.

The Hutchinson News-Herald each day published a schedule of scenes to be shot and their location. Throngs of Hutchonians turned out to watch the first film to be shot in Hutch since parts of My Gal Sal were shot there in l94l, and Wait Til The Sunshines, Nellie in l95l. Joshua Logan himself came to a high school assembly to talk about movies and, in particular, the filming of Picnic. James Wong Howe spoke at the same assembly about cinematography and "how to shoot a movie."

William Inge was in town. Actors Kim Novak, Bill Holden, Rosalind Russell, Verna Felton, Betty Field, Cliff Robertson, Arthur O'Connell, Nick Adams, Phyllis Newman and Nick Adams stayed at the Baker, and most of

them visited the high school to talk to students about acting and their careers. The notable exception was Bill Holden, who seemingly talked to nobody. Newcomer Cliff Robertson was very popular. Rosalind Russell and Verna Felton were simply wonderful to the students, giving them a lot of time and patience.

When I view Picnic today, the original wide-screen Cinemascope version, I see quite a few of my students and student friends at Hutch High, particularly in the picnic scenes which were shot at Carey Park in Hutchinson and at another small park on the banks of the Arkansas River just southeast of Hutchinson. And, if I look closely, I can even find myself, and Del Knauer, and Ariel Perrill, and other faculty members. I can see Burley Grimes, Zane LaCroix, Paul Ganong, Bob Dick, Eldon Lanning, Molly Clark, Terry Elliott, Ed King, Bill Nelson, Clayton Cox, Sharon Grueber, Don Powell, Dwayne Thorpe, Dave Wiley, Bob Clay, Jim Young, Jerry Stremel, Gary Settle, Jim Morris, Gretchen Engler, Mike Walker, Dan Copenhaver, Paul Alfaro, Dick Milhon, Bob Mellor, Jerry Elliott, and Dan Welchons.

They are milling about the park; they are riding in the boats on the lake; they are engaging in silly and dated pasttimes, like sack racing, that tended to present Hutchinson kids as something out of the l890s; and they are singing ancient and overly sentimental songs against a day's end background of a gorgeous Kansas sunset and twilight. There we all are, frozen in the stark, unembellished cinematography of James Wong Howe. There we all are, as though we were all still seventeen and eighteen, and time had stopped forever in the spring of l955, in the lovely month of May. The extensive picnic scenes in the film, which took two weeks to shoot, were plagued by the unpredictable and often violent and turbulent weather in central Kansas in the springtime. Hutchinson is at the northern edge of "tornado alley," and has to endure a lot of severe storms during the months of April and May. I never quite got used to the enormously strong winds, the spectacular lightning and heavy rolling thunder, the heavy rains with hail mixed in, and even a tornado or two.

The night before shooting was to begin for the picnic scene, Hutchinson had hours of severe storms, including several tornadoes that touched ground at several places in the county. The film crews had strung lights throughout the park, had hung picnic lanterns everywhere, had gotten all of the small boats set for the crowning of the "Neewollah Queen." (Halloween spelled backwards, Mr. Inge.) The tornadoes destroyed everything, and it was a week before the set could be rebuilt and shooting take place.

I never see the film, good and bad as it is, without thinking of the kids and the good times we had together. In the movie's final scene, shot from a helicopter, we see Bill Holden leaving Hutchinson, just as he came, bumming a ride on a freight train, while Kim Novack's bus follows the train to some unknown destination where the two of them will live happily ever after, or, as we read at the end of Bill Holden's final film, "S.O.B.," "happily everafter--until the next movie." The scenes give unforgettable pictures of the central Kansas plains and prairies and of Hutchinson itself. And I always get misty-eyed, and for a few brief moments miss those delightful kids in Hutch and those high plains very much indeed.

During the summer of l954, the summer of the televised Army-McCarthy hearings, I became a "summer playground supervisor" during the nine to four hours five days a week; a baseball umpire for junior league games from four to six in the late afternoon; and an official announcer and scorekeeper at senior league baseball games from six-thirty to nine.

The playground job was at one of the city's eight "summer centers," where kids of all ages came to play pingpong, horseshoes, volleyball, baseball and basketball, or to engage in more sedentary pursuits, like reading and playing cards and monopoly. The centers also provided instruction in various arts and crafts for kids of all ages. During the week, I had five student assistants at the playgrounds/center I directed. Two were there every day, and three taught classes three days a week.

Dan Welchons and Don Copenhaver were in charge of the athletics, organized and individual ones, and Paul Ganong, Gary Settle, Paul Alfaro, Richard Milhon and Jerry Elliott taught courses in art, photography, music, and drama to dozens of young people who frequented the playgrounds. It was a good program. It not only gave the kids something to get socially and competitively involved in, it also gave many of them introductions to arts and skills they would appreciate the rest of their lives. I myself had a wonderful and very busy time and enjoyed

being out-of-doors that exceedingly hot and dry Kansas summer. And I developed close ties with several of the high school students who assisted me.

Jerry Elliott and Richard Milhon were two beauties whose main interest at the time was the theatre and acting. Both had great talent, much of it not yet developed, and were strongly motivated to work with kids who had even mild interest in drama. They were especially good at what we called the "improvisational theatre" in the l960s. They could take a group of six or eight ten year olds, and, in a morning's time, have them performing a charming impromptu play. Both Jerry and Richard were outgoing, dynamic, and very attractive. Jerry, who had just graduated from high school, had been in every play in school he could try out for, in addition to being class president and participating in sports, journalism, and radio-television. He was a true charmer whose charms were supported by good looks and intelligence.

I plunged myself into my second year responsibilities at the high school, which were enough to keep at least two teachers busy. When the new term started in September, l954, I had my usual five classes, twenty-four new debaters to prepare for sixteen tournaments, four radio programs a week to produce, and a future to think about.

By the autumn of l954, I had decided that I no longer wanted to study or teach history, and I abandoned the goal that had dominated both my college work and my teaching for several years. I liked very much the work I was doing at Hutchinson, and I had no longer a burning desire to teach and write history. I loved to direct debate programs and "coach" students in argumentation and debate, to teach them about propositions and judgments, how to research and prepare cases for and against a proposition, how to support and defend arguments through inference and evidence, how to attack arguments of an opponent and how to defend one's own arguments. I came to believe that the study and practice of argumentation and persuasion constituted the most significant experiences and influences in a young person's education. And I wanted the thrill and pleasure of teaching them both to young people the rest of my life.

These self-assessments which I explored and verified during the fall term of l954, caused me not merely to rethink and reevaluate what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, but to make a series of decisions to implement and operationalize those judgments and conclusions.

By early December I had decided: (l) To résumé my work on a doctorate after completing my second year at Hutchinson Senior High School; (2) To change the discipline in which I would get the doctorate from history and political science, to communication studies (argument, persuasion, group processes, political communication, communication theory, media studies including television and film); (3) To apply to four of the best programs in those studies.

Accordingly, in December I applied to Northwestern University, The University of Wisconsin, The University of Minnesota, and the University of Illinois. I believed that I would be admitted to the graduate programs at each school because my undergraduate and graduate records were both nearly straight "A," and I had great recommendations. But what I had to receive in order to begin again my pursuit of the doctorate was financial help. I had to receive a graduate fellowship and/or teaching assistantship, plus remission of tuition, in order to be able to return to graduate studies, because, the simple fact was I had absolutely no money, not even a dime in savings. I lived each month on my salary. (My salary for l954-l955 at Hutchinson was increased $500 to $4500 per year, which meant I grossed $375 a month, less taxes and social security, and netted $286.) And so, I reasoned, I would go to that graduate school which would offer me enough money so that I could afford my tuition, my housing and food, and my other necessities.

Roscoe Coyne and R.C. Guy combined to write for me a very sweet and generous letter of recommendation, dated December 28, l954:

"We both have mixed feelings writing a letter in behalf of Mr. Russel Windes, the head of our speech and media program for two years. We would like to tell you he is awful in every way, and we will be glad to get rid of him. That way we could keep him here with us, which is what all of us want. The truth is, Russ Windes is a fantastic man, and we have been extremely fortunate in having him on our sixty person faculty for two years. He is brilliant; he is hard working; he is very well liked by students, faculty, and Hutchonians alike. As a matter of

fact, the students don't just like him, they adore him. Russ had devoted himself to his work at the school, often sacrificing his personal life for the students and programs. This Christmas vacation, for instance, he has sacrificed the entirety of his vacation holding practice debates to get our students ready for the January tournaments, including the State Championships. He is a remarkably fine classroom teacher. In his classes in radio-television, he has directed the production of four radio programs on local stations on which more than forty of our students have participated. And these have been first-rate, quality programs. Most of all, we think, Russ is a person the students love, admire, respect, and work very hard to please. He commands discipline, but he is at the same time a close friend. His intervention saved one of our students a year ago from suicide. Russ is always available to these young people, night and day, to discuss both scholastic and personal matters. We've never had anyone like him, and we're not sure, if he leaves, we can ever again find anyone even close. We both know you will like him and care for him as much as we do. But when he leaves, it will be a sad day for Hutch High."

I made Bob and Eldon "varsity" debaters in the fall of l953, even though it was "against the rules," and the high school frowned on sophomores going to tournaments. But, after Bob had told me his life's story, I couldn't resist. I paired him with Eldon, a very bright, friendly, knowledgeable and sophisticated kid, who looked about twelve years old and still wore braces, and Bob and Eldon won three tournaments that first year. They did even better their second year, almost winning the State Championship.

Bob, Eldon, and I were easy companions and did a lot of things together, like fishing trips, camping trips, tennis, ping pong, chess, and, of course, our weekly radio programs. It was Eldon's voice that introduced both programs, and Bob who signed us off. They were always at the Sunday evening dinners, and Bob loved to take nighttime drives with me around the Kansas countryside.

During my last spring in Hutch, Bob fell in love with a girl named Becky Caudil. "Old Beck," as he called her, learned that Bob was fond of spending nights at my place, and she issued him an ultimatum: Stop seeing me socially, or stop seeing her. He chose to stop seeing me, which hurt me personally even though I had no emotional attachments to Bob. I had done so much for him during those two years, I was disappointed that he had chosen to show his appreciation by excluding me from his personal life. But he was still an emotional child.

Bob married Becky right after they graduated from high school, and attended Hutchinson Junior College for two years. His self-destructive behaviors continued for a long time. He and Beck had two children in two years. He spent three more years getting his degree at Kansas State College at Emporia, working full time at Ward's to support "Old Beck" and the children. After Emporia, Bob earned an M.A. degree and taught at West Texas College and then at the University of New Mexico. When I was in San Francisco in the l962, he applied to Stanford University to begin work on his Ph.D. I was a close friend of Jon Ericson, professor at Stanford and head of the department there. And I persuaded Jon both to recommend that Bob be admitted to the doctoral program, and to recommend him for a graduate teaching assistantship. Bob entered the program at Stanford in nearby Palo Alto in the fall of l962, and we renewed old friendships. i

Eldon Lanning enrolled at Northwestern University and debated on our university debate teams there for three years. He also earned his Ph.D. at the University of Virginia and worked for the State Department and taught courses in international relations.

In January, I was admitted to the graduate programs at each of the universities where I had applied for admission. From three of the universities I received teaching assistantships, plus remission of tuition. From the University of Wisconsin, I received only remission of tuition. I weighed carefully the merits and weaknesses of the graduate programs and assistantships at Northwestern, Minnesota, and Illinois. And on February 4, l955, I accepted the offer from Northwestern University--remission of tuition worth fifteen hundred dollars a year, and a teaching assistantship in argumentation and debate which paid $l200 for the nine months, barely enough to subsist on.

Northwestern assured me, however, that I could "probably" serve as a "resident counselor" in one of the men's dormitories, and receive lodging and food in compensation. I applied for the "resident counselor" position

immediately. And I submitted my resignation, effective at the end of the spring semester, to Lowell Small, Superintendent of Schools in Hutchinson, and to R.C. Guy. Both accepted "with regrets."

The decision to leave Hutchinson was one of the most painful ones of my life. I dearly loved the place at the time. I loved my friends, my students, and, most of all, my job. And I believed at the time that I might have been happy there the rest of my career. That belief, of course, was sheer nonsense. I could not have been happy very long teaching in a central Kansas high school in a community of forty thousand people. And I could not have been happy very long without earning my Ph.D.. But at the time, l955, sentiment and emotion almost caused me several times to change my decision before I left in early June.

The decision was a tough one; it was the right one, and it took a lot of bravery and guts and foresight for me to say the word that whisked me away from the place and situation in life where I had been the happiest. I am sure a lot of people, indeed most people, would have chosen to stay in Hutch forever.

"Roads taken, and roads not taken," who is to say? For me, my years at Hutchinson gave me a new purpose, a new identity and self to achieve that purpose, and more beautiful memories than I could possibly recall. Jim Croce sang a song called "Time in a Bottle," and when I hear it, for some reason, I substitute "Hutchinson Friends" for the "you" Crocce sang about: "If I could save time in a bottle/ The first thing that I'd like to do/ Is to save everyday 'til eternity passes away/Just to spend those days with you. If I could make days last forever/ If words could make wishes come true/ I'd save everyday I could treasure/ And again I would spend them with you." But then, as Mother Bess used to tell everybody, "Russ falls in love with every place he ever lives. And every place is better than the last one."

The "farewell parties" for me started in mid-May, with the banquet given by the debaters, and then the parties after the first and second productions of "Gramercy Ghost." The Saturday night before I left Hutchinson forever, in early June, l955, there was a swim party in my honor held at the home of Dave Wiley's parents, in Willowbrook, just west of Hutchinson. The Wiley home was a magnificent one, Spanish type with rile roof, a huge swimming pool, and beautiful desert-like grounds. There were a hundred or more kids there, and by the end of the evening there wasn't a dry eye in the place.

During the evening we did a reenactment of my famous Carey Park dunking the previous fall, and Dave and Don Powell and Clayton Cox did the honors of tossing me in the pool, only this time I had my swimming suit on, and both the water and the air were fifty degrees warmer.

I flew from Hutchinson to St. Louis on Sunday June 5 to spend the summer with my parents. As my plane took off from the Hutch airport, I took one long and farewell look at the city on the high plains that had forever changed my life. I had come wounded and hurting; I had left healed and strong and confident. And in between, I had had the time of my life. Let me tell you. The memories are still there--clear, intact, and indestructible.

Russel R. Windes