

This is autobiographical, with the distinction of having good longtime friend and now family member Sebastian Hyde connected in the narrative, along with members of our shared community. This title kinda works....

Chronological Intersections & Parallels:

Seb & Friends, Cacophony, Art!

Part One. Late eighties to mid-nineties

The Academy, Cacophony, Burning Man, homebrew, computers, cassettes, CDs, to the Tuesday night drawing group.

1988-89

Outside the window of my third floor painting studio setup of the *Academy of Art College* fine arts building on Sutter & Mason in San Francisco, with the sounds of the Powell Street cable cars clanging in the air, taking a break from working on oil paintings, looking down at the street below, I was impressed by the longhaired guy riding up in a mountain bike he'd lock to a pole in front of the Academy. Mountain bikes weren't yet ubiquitous, so I was amazed by how durable they look. I rode my old Raleigh Olympian thin-wheeled 10 speed in most days, and they don't handle potholes too well. Anyway, introduced later sometime, that long haired mountain bike riding fellow Academy student was Sebastian Hyde, of the illustration department. This traces my first memory of seeing him around.

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Early 1989 I had paintings displayed in the front window, being an esteemed place to exhibit work, because the exposure is to anyone passing by. [one of them sold through being seen through that particular display]

I was out front near the work, when two students stopped to look at the work. One was the familiar just not yet acquainted Seb, with another longhaired friend who noticed me smiling off to the side, he said something like "*Your work? We make smaller things in the illustration department, just less confusing.*" That was Corey, (years later future brother-in-law, married to sister Jill!) who was then

roommate with Seb. They smile and walked on.

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The bridge between the fine arts department and the illustration department communities was **Carrie Galbraith!** [much more to be written about her in a separate essay, but check out this excellent must-read eulogy by John Law, <https://laughingsquid.com/carrie-galbraith-1956-2018/>] I recognized her at parties and art exhibit openings of mutual Academy students. I liked her cultural style, she seemed way cool and interesting. This hunch proved to be life alteringly true!

Fall semester 1989, she is a double major in both *illustration* and *fine art*, and set up studio space next to me up in that third floor painting room. We bonded instantly, sharing interests and got me involved in the *San Francisco Cacophony Society!* [I have a fun story of how this got started— another time, but here's my first attempt at a comic strip, an 8-page PDF link about my first event, https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/ATOMIC_CAFE-8pg.pdf .]

Involved in Cacophony were several overlapping characters I was introduced by Carrie (Ethyl Ketone was her Cacophony Society nom de plume), including our man of the hour Sebastian Hyde. And illustration majors Kevin Evans, Richard Fong, Dave Adams, Corey Keller, Bruce McKay and Amelia X! From Cacophony events and art shows and parties via Ethyl Ketone who I became friends with: Lance Alexander, John Law, Jayson Wechter, Louise Jarmolovics, Steve Mobia, Phil Bewley, Michael Mikel, Jon Alexandr, Louis Brill, [my tribute to Louis is here : <https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/Louis%20Brill%20.pdf>], and of course my beloved P Segal... to name a few that were her friends and co-conspirators of unique underground fun. She influenced us all! Including Seb, good friend of Carrie, so we became acquainted that autumn around her events.

Carrie is the one who solidified my interest in various literate artists, including Robyn Hitchcock albums, whose music was strong in our compact zeitgeist during those times — and beyond. Seb is also a fan! Amongst other things that Carrie excelled in, and that was keeping active sketchbook journals— hers were a cut above— true artworks on every page and as a whole. I was impressed and

influenced, though I never achieved that level of sketchbook as art pieces, we made decent sketches within. Sebastian was one to sketch scenes of people in pubs we'd all meet at, leading to my eventually joining in with his informal pub crawls with the intent to drink quality craft ales, and sketch anything! Usually drawing people, good socializing too. Known as the Sketch Pistols! (More on this later, when into the 90s.)

1990

Another eventful year. Our final year at the Academy, when several of us graduated. Seb, Kevin and Corey (who was the one wearing a kilt at the ceremony at Masonic Center!) and Carrie! I went as an audience member who wasn't part of the ceremony, having to wait until December to graduate, with two liberal arts classes to fulfill.

All that year was rich in art making, exhibitions, Cacophony events, new friends, great music, making craft ales, Guinness at Edinburgh Castle, Burning Man, San Francisco, bicycling, etc. [see "June 1990" for more personal depths, that essay is linked here <https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/June-1990.pdf>]

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That spring Seb had a gathering to watch the season closer of *Star Trek : The Next Generation*, that I was not interested at first. My older brother Brian — who supplied the very important bridge of getting me to California in the first place, and who also influenced my sister Jill to move there with her kids Casey, Jesse and Lauren, and previous husband Mitch. Plus he influenced our parents retirement location, so Brian really changed our lives!

Back to Star Trek, Seb's event — around Picard as a Borg cliffhanger — got me catching up that summer with Brian who had been a fan already.

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I eventually talked Bri and Jill into joining Cacophony events, to get away from the suburbs and have urban adventures. It took a few months until joining one of John Law's urban night hikes through questionable places (or *zones*) — and they

totally loved it! They were so *in*, making good friends over the next few years.

An inspired and inspiring character of Cacophony, **John Law** is a real gem! Excellent all around guy, torch wielding cultural historian for all things underground and overhead, culture jamming, unique extreme DIY fun. He seems to live for those moments, cackling with satirical joy with it and at it. Always helpful to make interesting and adventurous events happen, with a Harry Tuttle zeal and a Zappa like iconoclasm, and eventually became a star as a bay area luminary. All around friendly fellow, *ha*, despite being popular! Adventurous Cacophony driver of enthusiasm, and our friend who was responsible for several favorite cacophony events!

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Cacophony events in 1990 were a centerpiece, especially *Zone trip #4 "Bad Day at Black Rock"* in Nevada, with the now banned from the city *Burning Man* added to the list of activities.

More extensive documentation has been made about the birth of that monster festival to be, but I'll mention how that was our event, with Seb a good part of it, making the custom shirt with amazing design. And one of the first things I saw happen out there on the playa, was Seb and Kevin playing Croquet on bicycles! Very surreal, this was a unique and dreamlike event. [my notes on the event, posted here: <https://www.trippingly.net/burning-man-musings/dean-gustafson>]

Since my birthday was days ahead of the event that labor day weekend, Seb gave me one of the zone trip shirts! Generously doing the same every year made, and I didn't yet know that his is just over a week before mine. Good birthday season!

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Back home with more events and parties, the big one was the incredible Halloween party at the famous flat, — 1907 Golden Gate — the most interesting old labyrinthine place to be party central. And Seb and Kevin played the part of convincing Klingons, — in character. *Effective!*

This was a night of firsts, a few hours before this was *The Night of the Exquisite Corpse*, public theater event at the Victoria Theater in the Mission near my flat.

Meeting costumed characters who later were also at the Halloween party. One of them was new to several of us that night. That was "Mom Marge" played by Peter Doty — playing this extreme complaining suburban housewife to absurd levels of parody! Leaving impressions, some couldn't take it! [we really miss Peter who died unexpectedly earlier this year, 2023. He became a good friend since 1990, so I wrote a series of memories as a tribute, unfinished with more to add, linked here: <https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/memories%20of%20Peter%20Doty.pdf>]

The costumes were fun and varied. P was the beautiful diva hostess — without whom! Lance, who sent me the formal invitation in the mail, was a priest offering absolution in the form of vodka shots along with some arcane knowledge delivered in his distinctively droll manner. I had a bulky painted papier mache mask that I made, and the klingons declared that as having "*honor*". The place was packed with creative costumed characters. What an initiation to 1907. Oh, what a night!

1991

A fantastic favorite year [see my essay, aptly titled "1991", with the PDF linked here: <https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1991.pdf>]

~ Homebrewing ~

Early in the year, Seb and Kevin visited my pad on Bryant Street in The Mission, because Seb wanted a demo on homebrewing, and I had been making my own craft ales monthly for around half a year by then. Getting pretty good at it, I first made that excellent stout in the summer that I never seemed to top whenever trying a stout. I was making more IPA's by then, and I think that was what I brewed that day.

Great to have them visit. Seb brought a tape of *The Pogues*, cranked on the kitchen boombox as I walked through the basic steps. Elementary processes, but with timing, balance of ingredients, and sterilization being key. A fine afternoon — and Seb really took to it! Soon becoming an expert brewer of excellent quality and variety beyond mine! A real natural brewer.

It does help to witness making homebrew first, as I did in summer of '90 at Jane Austin' s apartment on Bartlett Street, she and good friend and roommate Joe were soon hitching up for life, and one day they were home brewing, and I asked to check it out. A fine day, they make a stout with Jane's sister Ann and her guy Lawrence. I took notes. They played Dylan. The place smelled great from boiling barley, as any good home brewer knows. My kitchen had that wonderful aroma every time I brewed.

Those guys expressed astonishment over the excessive artworks that artist friend and roommate Jim and I were making. It was everywhere, and I was a nonstop painter. Often experimental flops, but prolific.

~ Cave Shaman ~

Cacophony events continue all year, including my own highly revered event that April : Cave Shaman meets the marshmallow roast. Teamed with Academy friend Jason Puccinelli, settings perfect, lining Sutro Baths cave with candles to beautiful ritualistic effect. Full moon, high tide, perfect weather, most everyone in Cacophony showing up, contributing to a truly cacophonous time. Seb captured this in comic strip form expertly in 2011 for the SF Cacophony Society history book! I helped supply storyboards and memorable details.

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Robyn Hitchcock at the Kennel Club that May, A memorable night! everyone was there! (except John Law, surprisingly, being one of his biggest fans.) Seb later got a tape of the show, and I got a copy. Several of us were big fans of RH. His work of the time was *the* soundtrack. *Perspex Island* was soon to be released.

~ Summer events ~

Several good ones, ending with the highly anticipated Burning Man event, second year in the desert, and we were eager! [for the more full report, see within my essay titled "1991"]

Leading up to labor day weekend,, was the Burning Man exhibition and film showing event at Fort Mason, with everyone there! Great promo, with

registration to join, essentially tripling attendance in the desert that year.

This was the first official Burning Man event, yet some of us treated it as our Cacophony Society zone trip. Seb made another shirt, then Larry started objecting to personal sales, essentially starting a rift between Cacophony event Zone Trip, and Burning Man as the main draw. This didn't stop Seb! It's not like he's out for profit as much as covering costs. It's still Cacophony based after all.

Some highlights of standing out, was Seb, Kevin and I posting flags in the heat; those guys as mudmen were a tribal hoot! (again. See "1991") They drove out in Michael Mikel's earthquake damaged car. Leaving the event, they took a detour to drop friends off in Arcata, and leaving, I believe at night, they hit a bear! They were okay but the bear was not. Later Seb paid tribute by brewing a batch called "Dead Bear Red".

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Adventurous year! I started seeing the lovely P Segal , writer, foodie, hostess diva of 1907 Golden Gate! I was very fortunate to be with her. [again, more in depth, especially of the parties, are in my essay "1991", in particular, the first Glugg party/zone trip decompression.] Such good times!

I think Seb was living at 1907 Golden Gate around then? Whenever I would visit, he'd be around. Kevin lived there for a number of years, and making extraordinary artworks in the front room. **Kevin Evans** is a gifted artist who excels! Creating highly original realms in paint, etching and extraordinary digital techniques, he Illustrated the Cacophony book fabulously decades later. Essential helping launch the first zone trip in the desert. Influential ! <http://www.kevinevans.com/>] Living there along with around 6 roommates on two stories, it was quite a community. John Casten, Lance, Fil Slash, Marc Weber, father O'Malley, Ann, I forgot who was there exactly when, there were so many! With Seb and Kevin thrashing to grunge, a music genre I've always associated with Seb ever since. He is from Seattle after all, a city I didn't know at all back then.

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Grunge rock becomes popular, with Nirvana hitting the charts as the Seattle band. Followed by lesser known but essential in zeitgeist, the Melvins, Mudhoney, Meat Puppets, tapes given to me by Seb! Those bands were of that year. The Mekons too! Who I saw that fall at the Kennel Club. (they didn't all start with M)

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Halloween brought out even more costumed partygoers, and more klingons at the annual 1907 party! Including Bruce and Carrie! Seb and Kevin had more tribal support to act the part. It was a raging hoot as always, but with four klingons was a spectacle!

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The White Christmas event ended the season! Everything white: food, clothes, walls of the bunker at Fort Funston with a full moon! Good times, I went with Brian, Jill, Casey, in perfect weather conditions. To name a few there was Nancy, Chandler, M2, Seb, Peter Fields, P, and it was Ethyl Ketone's event, with Jayson and Johns help. Extraordinary!

1992

More of the same continued ... More better home brewed ales, by both me and Seb! with good cacophony events, Starting with the annual Christmas tree burn at Ocean Beach, first Saturday of the year, meeting with a dead Christmas tree in your car, under the one remaining Doggie Diner head that was actively public, (then representing the *Carousel* fast food restaurant near the zoo and ocean), a tradition that went on for around 20 years, and the blazes were insanely huge, getting as big as a house! Danger Rangers event, well played!

Doggie Diner heads starting to loom larger as a fun presence. Thanks to John Law for owning two of them! They were stored up in Glenn Ellen in Sonoma County, at Don and Jeannies ranch. I went up there with Seb, Kevin, Lance and John early that year. The kids were a blast, with skull collections, they had a good countryside environment to explore. The dogheads resided outside on their

property. That was a fun overnight!

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Atomic café #3, in Berkeley this time, in an abandoned toothpaste factory. This turned out to be the biggest and last one, and much more involved with more space to play with. Challenging to pull off. There was getting in unnoticed, meeting at the Bart parking lot, filled in the back of uhauls, driven nearby, doling a small group of people at a time. The event space was daunting with dark, corroded spaces, but the crew was organized so all were safe. I was the Free Band drummer, so I was part of setup. Band equipment hauled in and out, by strangers was disconcerting to us, especially Nick with expensive electronics, but turned out to be okay.

This video capture shows that it was a totally crazed blast!

<https://youtu.be/I3IjDTWXVlg>

Seb can be spotted taking photographs, and some of his pictures made it out in circulation, including one of me in a respirator. Brian is spotted briefly, wearing a white lab coat. He took an old rusted metal sign found there, saying "MINES DANGER", I remember hanging in his garage for years afterwards.

Longtime friend Dhaivyd joined the band for a jam, on washboard percussion with a friend. Good peak event of early '92! We really got away with a lot, that couldn't happen the same way now.

~ Venues / Pubs ~

Robyn Hitchcock & the Egyptians at Slims in February!

Otherwise, I think that was when 20 Tank brewpub opened across the street on 11th near Folsom. An active block. 20 Tank was a Seb favorite. Exquisite ales, and industrial interior. We had good times there over the years.

Speaking of favored watering holes in the lower Haight was the *Toronado* [a Lance fav. Great ale variety. Never my han, too crowded.], *The Noc Noc* (crazy fun interior! But not necessarily craft ale centric), and the very British *Mad Dog in the Fog* (more my style.)

Independent craft ales were starting to expand beyond Anchor, Sierra, Red Hook, to name a few biggest West coast breweries that had been making the quality hopped up goods that we loved. Soon we'd have Lagunitas as a go-to!

Seb was the most dialed in to the best brews in our circles — and this hasn't changed!

~ solo exhibition ~

Oh yeah, I had some good exhibitions, in July at Fort Mason was a big solo show of paintings. 43 paintings retrospective. Great to have, thanks to Larry Harvey for the connection, at *Bayfront Gallery*, where one year previously was the Burning Man display and documentary showing. The reception was a fine art party, with most cacophonists there, and some fellow Academy alumni. P did a knockout job catering! With watermelon boats, (the two of us dropped them in the bay from the dock, to cheers! After the opening ended.)

~ Burning Man 92 ~

I left my drums at home and made an installation instead of a large analemmatic sundial, using trigonometry. It worked!

I think that was the year Jill brought the kids with. Jesse and Lauren looking great with Egyptian style costumes! Seb got Casey driving on the open playa!

The Playa got a bit too soft from some unreasonable rainfall a few days previous. This made for little mountain biking, the wheels would spin. Too bad, because I just got my first mountain bike, and had brought out in Brians Jeep, uselessly. The year a small airplane tried landing near the site but flipped upside down on the unsolid surface! I was not looking in that direction at the time, but I saw and heard the commotion. Turning around to see crowds racing, towards the inverted airplane! *Crazy moment!*

The event starts to need rules as the numbers grew exponentially. It only takes a few loose cannons, I remember the guy driving donuts around our tents, so the newly appointed "Rangers" took the keys away.

Other better memories, someone from our encourage of cacophony ignited a

long line of sawdust with fuel. Everyone flocked to this! Beautiful! Near the first wedding there of friends Mary and Brewster!

Wonderful twig figure sculptures made by a delightful British woman, Serena? Early Playa art of natural materials. My sundial included.

The event became less of a "zone trip", now a festival tradition that was here to be annual. I felt overcrowding, and thought it's over for me. But some more ahead.

Seb made another stunner zone trip #6 shirt. He gave me every one every year made, as birthday presents. Thanks Seb! I still have them all!

~ Aquavit birthday party #2 / disaster zone ~

Ha! The party of high expectations from last year, went sour— to put far too politely. A bigger party this time, and everyone drinking whatever was brought. It started good, but got weird. I remember getting upstairs at a point to look out the roof window seeing Erik and John jumping from roof to roof — sword fighting!! *What the???*

Bemused, I then find myself playing Kevins amplified bass. Seb was there, With Kevin urging me to "play faster! *Faster!* ***FASTER!***" and I did! Sloppy, loud, insane. Jayson got a nose scratch from a chair fight. Lance was out sick hiding in his room, we were not quiet.

Drunkenness unhinged and people getting sick, puking. Good friend and roommate Jim ended up destroying the carpet in Kevins room— swimming in vomit! *Urgh, I'm gonna hurl!* And the first thing I do? In automatic semi-conscious mode, snuck out with my bicycle, riding home across to the Mission flat with one eye closed or I'd see double, ended back home and puked my guts out in my own toilet, because it's the polite thing to do, *right?*

The next day, hung over, I talk to Erik on the phone, who was *still* puking, so that phone call didn't last. What I soon found out, was P was worried and furious that I left my own party without informing anyone (it was really stupid to ride the bike that toasted). They looked for me everywhere in 1907, to find I'd disappeared. P was *very* upset with me for a long time, deservedly. What was at reason why

everyone got sick was the overzealous mixing of drinks and food. Bigger crowd also meant more alcohol and snacks brought.

Turned out that Brian was the only person there who didn't drink much, and didn't get sick. Wise! Designated driver. Over indulgent mixing should have been cautioned against, but we didn't know any better.

[for a superior writing about this disaster party, see P Segals article, <https://brokeasstuart.com/2015/03/13/the-city-that-was-the-worst-party-ever/>]

Learning the hard way, I remarked to P that the following year is going to be an ice cream social. (and that happened for the 1993 birthday party!)

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Halloween , no 1907 Golden Gate party that year for a change. P was overworking recently and needed a break from organising it . I still swung through the Castro, where M2 brought out a giant row of bubble wrap to pop! That street party always had more fun costumes, always great!

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I'm not exactly sure when, but Seb hooked up with cacophonist Jane Sommerhauser that year. This may be when they moved to Clayton Street in the upper Haight /Cole Valley area with roommate Clair. A nice top floor flat.

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A very good year, with more continuing fun!

1993

and another fun year!

Good cacophony events, 1907 parties, new Robyn Hitchcock cd out and tour, his last with the Egyptians. We were on it!

~ going digital ~

More solo exhibitions. Brian gave me my first cd player! In an increasingly digital world, I would need to get new releases taped by friends, because they were less available on vinyl and cassette. CD format ruled the 90s. Seb was one of my main cd buying friends, and taped some favorites of the era. Now I could collect my own! Starting with the Grateful Dead vault releases that attracted me the most! Oddly that taste wasn't shared with cacophony circles. Perhaps too close to home as big legends? And the scourge of tatty strung out deadheads all too visible on Haight Street like a seedy skid row? I saw differently and absolutely am endlessly fascinated by the bands rich oeuvre. Anyway, the cd era began for me that January! "Respect" came out that February, on a balmy morning I walked up to Streetlight records in Noe Valley and bought it the day of release. A tradition I did for nearly every Robyn album since Perspex Island (could not find the lp for a while, only cassette before I had a cd player.)

For CDs at 1907, P had stacks of classical and some flamenco cd's I could borrow, enriching my world. Fil Slash was a unique individualistic pothead dj living at 1907. A cool cat if there ever was one. He'd sell cd's cheap, like a dollar each.

~ The desert ~

I got involved in *Desert Siteworks*, an offshoot from the growing Burning Man event. This was a focused group of artists, setting up installations around Trego Springs, our first hot springs site at the Black Rock desert from 1990. Great place and event that July, I will write about another time. But influenced my choice to not get to Burning Man, as it was my 30th birthday weekend with plans to paint, and drum on the ocean cliffs of Half Moon Bay with friends! That was fabulous!

~ a new media ~

In late July something happened. Brian got a home computer. Visiting that day, brother Gary was helping him pick a good one, I think they got it at Costco. I took to the "Paint" program like a natural, making fun experimental color illustrations. Crude, only 8 bit, but wow, *256 colors!* I labeled one "hjcga", for "He just couldn't get away!" because I was addicted to exploring digital graphics! Purely for expressive fun. I made several that day, and most every time visiting after that. I ended my twenties on a digital path! Yet still painting and drawing remained

chief.

My limited exposure to computers was down to thinking they're too inaccessible and too expensive, so I wasn't interested.

P had a Macintosh SE for writing,, which we jokingly referred to as the "So Eentsy" (SE). Jim had a computer, taking a class in 3D graphics. (possibly 3D Max?) Fascinating, but I thought beyond me.

~ no aquavit party ~

Amusingly titled as an ice cream social, people still drank moderately and responsibly. A fun 30th birthday party at 1907, with the added feature of my band playing in the living room! The Haight Ashbury Free Band, we played very out jazz, often to extremes.

That night was the last time most of us saw Amelia, who was sadly diagnosed with a brain tumor. A close friend of Carrie, she showed up with short short hair, as a result of the treatments. Such a sweet person, and so unfair. She moved in with family in Vermont, we exchanged cards occasionally until passed around 2010.

1994

[here's yet another more detailed writeup to peruse, if curious of my history <https://dean-gustafson.com/autobiographical/1994.pdf>]

This year leads me to the big career change for a bunch of us Academy alumni. P tipped me about this in the Spring. The new work opportunity at Mondo Media, led by our friend Richard Fong, who was an art director there, was seeking illustrators who could draw and paint, to adapt our traditional skills to digital media for a big Microsoft product — animating animals in motion. Most were already rendered as stills, we had to learn Adobe Photoshop 2.0, and Macromedia's Director to re-render these stills in animated motion. Challenging at first, with a fortunate learning curve time allowed first, on their computers, in the facility on Townshend Street near the Caltrain station. So I'd bike there easily up Bryant Street to South of Market regularly, it was like free school, and dove in.

I needed to escape construction work, and opportunity rang clearly!

Seb and Jane were already residents there, diving all of their time in. Also fellow Academy students Dean McDonald and Pete Hermann who I hadn't seen for years were there. Kevin occasionally, Gavin who lived in 1907 at the time. And new coworkers, I remember Shelline from Canada, and of course owners John and Dierdre, who I believe that are also Canadian.

We had fun laboring away all summer, bringing our cd's in rotation. My new faves were The Soft Boys *1976-1981*, Steve Tibbetts *'The Fall of Us All'*, Trip Shakespeare, Frank Zappa *'The Yellow Shark'* to name a few. Plenty of grunge from Seb, and various from everyone. A good environment.

Dean McDonald would chime in with a "*ka-ching!*" every time one of us completed a sequence quickly. It became easy money after awhile! Good opportunities for gaining skills and cash! I didn't know what if this could continue for long, so this amped my plans for returning to Europe, and now I could be there even longer than originally expected, with more funds involved. So I dug deep into mapping every detail, from budget, transportation, rough schedules, contacts, destinations, but sublet my room? Or leave the old rent controlled flat? That answer became clear when Jim announced moving out with Misako, now fiancé. And the newest roommate Casey McNamara wanted a solo studio apartment. This meant too much struggle to remain, so we closed it off by October 1st.

Rapid changes all around.

I think this was around the time that Seb, Jane, and another roommate found a huge warehouse building they named "*The Wedge*", being a triangular shaped gray building near Fruitvale in Oakland.

I got inspired around Sebs birthday to make a cake resembling The Wedge! With P's help, because she's the expert on making creative food presentations for work, made a crazy triangular tall little chocolate cake with gray frosting! (not the most appetising look) which I brought to their now empty Clayton Street pad for a small gathering.

I moved out of the old Bryant pad, ready to move on with a foot into my thirties now. New career direction, Europe for three unforgettable months, a crazy confidence that I'd later land in a better apartment, with more work to get. Regardless, I didn't have much choice so I fell back on confidence.

1995

Back from the most extraordinary 3 month trip through Europe — a major dream made true! Both invigorated by all that European culture, and intimidated by conquering a preferred lifestyle in San Francisco and not in the suburbs of Concord relying too much on family, I needed to get back work. Only a bad stretch of bronchitis set me back for January.

Returning to Mondo Media didn't work. Priority was given to those who stayed on. I left for 4 months, with word that work should be available when I return, but not promise-able. They let me practice on their computers, which was great, but I needed income ASAP.

Seb, Jane, Richard, Dean, Pete, Shelline, and others, were in the system. I wasn't anymore, having sacrificed that security for travelling. So my limited job applications went out, as an early player in the career title of digital multimedia. I used the Academy of Art job center that March, instantly having good response from *Midnight Design* based in Montclair above Oakland.

A good interview, they were a small crew with growing amount of projects and a life changing hire! I was able to work from home, and I was a perfect fit for what they needed. Being a true night person, I thrived on focusing on projects into the early AM hours, and if the files weren't huge, could email them and they'd have the work first thing when in the office. Great! Bigger files I'd load on backup modules. Zip drives and floppy disks were still the norm in '95.

The work and coworkers were great! And I've been friends with owner John Williams ever since!

~ Living Spaces ~

The Wedge turned out to be short lived for Seb and Jane. One year? They found a

more suitable setup at The Foundry art studio complex, again in Oakland. Fruitvale? A really good space for artists.

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I worked hard at the computer that whole year, and looking for a decent apartment in the city became much harder than expected. Long lines of others looking more aggressively than I, were power yuppies with fat checkbooks and resumes. I was deflated, discontent to be there with family. However, something more important was happening, I didn't realize at the time, — that this time is golden for being with my parents, especially mom, who didn't have much time left. But I groaned, not knowing this. Plus they appreciated my presence and pitching in. I regret showing moodiness then.

Jill and the kids lived nearby in Concord, and that was a time that Academy alumni and cacophony acquaintance Corey was dating Jill. I tended to expect that he was just another temp in her life. But nope — unbeknownst to my limited perception, he turned out to be a real keeper!

Burning Man 95.

The final for a few of us originators, who had enough of the growing hype, scale, and need for rules and regulations. It started becoming this techno-tribal nudist and glitter event. So different from the first few years out there. Gone was a unified sense of irreverence, Cacophony Society style. Still amazing — in many ways moreso. Seb, Kevin, myself and some others from the first years lost interest in returning after that year. Still, it was eventful and fabulous!

I got a ride with Seb and Jane in their truck. Enough room to crash in the back for most of the drive.

Brian didn't go, busy switching careers himself, interested in websites! Good to leave remodeling homes before it's too late. Not easy, but home contractor work can always be found in the meantime.

We arrived at the playa before at night the event, and it was already buzzing with activity! The plan was to stay out there for a week, spanning before and after the

event. Help with some things, and I had a much nicer sundial in mind to make!

Settling in, we were near Flash Tompkins parody restaurant "McSatan's". Flash is a real fun, but loud individual, intimidatingly so. Our camp, along with Kevin and some others I didn't know, became known as "white trash camp." Don't exactly know why, but now theme camps were the new norm, after Peter Doty started "Christmas Camp" in '93. That was so over the top irreverent, that it made good waves! (I missed that year.) This was a much bigger event, noticeably, with around 5000 attending this year, with an abundance of activity, a bit too much for me, I like the desert best by itself.

~ anagrammatic sundial ~

I made the sundial with the help of Eric Samuelsson, aka "Geekboy", appointed rock pickup driver by I am thinking John Law? So we drove near Trego Springs, where my *Desert Siteworks* sundial still had its stones loosely scattered around the spot, after two years. I collected more specific stones this time, interested in a better quality sundial, alternating black and white stones was such a better aesthetic choice. And off we went back. I calculated the snap lines with previous coordinates, being the same time of year. Working it out in delirious heat, Crimson Rose, who was a now a major organizer for Burning Man™, noticed heat exhaustion and racing over to spray cool Water on me. A welcome relief! Could have had sunstroke. I took breaks and finish it. Beautiful! Proud work.

~

Lots of lounging in the shade of Seb's large "bread box" shaped truck. Kevin too. Just escaping the daytime heat. Seb made excellent homebrews for this trip, and brought an abundance to go around. Graduating to kegs — effectively! The favorite for the desert heat, was the refreshing *Rosemary Sage Wheat*. Yummm, I later got his recipe and made my own, bottled.

~ the storm ~

The week has standout memories. The brief yet very dramatic rainstorm with lightning, making a muddy playa stopping transportation for a few hours. With dramatic skies with electric vibes, double rainbows, and mud people swarm!

Before having any idea what weather changes were ahead, I decided to walk back to camp from Trego Springs after getting a ride there in Alex Seneiki's vintage Cadillac with suicide doors! [I know Alex from *Yes No Maybe*, his innovative band]

The spring was getting crowded, and I recognized how that ecosystem is now in danger if this continues. I did really enjoy the place, and sketched some figures, not successful drawing in the heat, but good to try.

Walking back, camp was probably around two or more miles over to the west of Trego, relatively close that year. When I was about halfway there, I was surprised by the thunderstorm booming from behind me! Fearful of lightning, I started running in vain — no match for that sky. Suddenly soaked to the bone! And the muddy playa now difficult to walk on, but the storm spared me, and was now racing towards camp! *Uh-oh*, hopefully everyone will be okay there! Dramatic open skies are phenomenal in the wide open spaces of the desert, and I could see the apocalyptic clouds, lightning strikes flashing, thunder, and rainbows!

Slow walk with mud sticking to boots, made me wobbly but a few inches taller. By the time I was close to camp, the hot sun was back in charge, blazing away. What I approached was a spectacle you'd only see at Burning Man — from a distance looking like a swarm of squiggling worms, turned out to be people! Crazy scene! This was the new Burning Man culture, too extremely orgyistic for us cacophony society founders in our eccentric vintage outfits. (I was in sensible white sheets and Brians pith helmet.)

Getting to camp central, I noticed my sundial was the only part of the ground undisturbed by feet walking on the wet mud! Other than under vehicles that is.

Skies with rainbows and contrast had most everyone awestruck. You can't help but be stunned by the visions! Everyone had accounts of the dramatic weather hitting camp. Fascinatingly, within two hours the ground was dry, all moisture sucked from below the surface.

~ more highlights ~

The art installations theme camps. P ran a larger café setup, and Danger Ranger devised a quonset shaped tent with pvc pipes arching over with a cover stretched

over that skeleton like whale ribs.

There was a big zoetrope structure near center of camp. A large yet not giant Camera Obscura by Chris Demonterey, with Dave Warren present — good to see him again! He used to work the permanent one at the Cliff House.

My sundial of natural local materials (this disappeared from the art out there) I met sculpture artist Dana Albany who made a tall lifelike camel of papier mache and paint. Impressive!

Wandering disgruntled postal workers camp had wit! New York City twin towers camp. Tiki bar camp. To name a few.

~ live music ~!

Polkacide! Three Day Stubble! The Mermen! A band performed each night with Johns *Doggie Diner* head behind a flatbed truck stage. Great fun! The Mermen played at sundown before the burn, perfect choice! Whenever I hear the cool groove of their song "*Raglan*" it brings me back to those moments.

The burn itself was a hoard of excited people, like the amateur hour of a new years eve countdown. Guess some of us became jaded about the burn. Best appreciated from a distance for us old timers. It did look good from our campsite!

~ after burn ~

Afterwards the orientation was harder to navigate with no more neon lit Man up. I spent some time with P helping at the cafe. She didn't have much if any leisure time this trip. The cafe turned into a full time job.

I found distraught people who could not find their camp in the dark, without the Man as a beacon, and dark with several unorganized rows of cars. I had a good directional sense and could talk them through the navigation. I'd ask... *Which way was the pointy Hill compared with the taller mountain?* (to get East-West figured out). To, *which side was Man? Near center of the event?* Etc. And this approach worked, so I became "Camp Compass" for a few hours. Some were cold. One needed heart condition meds! All were panicking, some in tears after walking around in circles. So I had a good contribution, as Danger Ranger directed

the lost to me at the cafe.

Meanwhile I recognized a high school face in the cafe, we never knew each other but I could tell, Diane from Minneapolis, I surprised her by my introduction! She works at the Exploratorium. (We connected more later by 1999)

~

For a couple of following days sticking around for casual cleanup help, and enjoy the post event event of the smaller group owning the zone, was a lot of fun. I took Seb's mountain bike out to collect any scrap of trash I could find, standing out upon pristine pure playa. Leaving no trace is important!

Fly Springs was closed by its owners that year, but we slyly snuck in late anyway! Late night, cars parked away from the entrance. The place is that too phenomenal to miss out, and we had such good history enjoying it since 1990.

Shooting guns out on the playa was crazy, but in daylight. Guns are not my thing but using that landscape as a shooting range is part of the freedom out there, at the time still anarchic. The shooters played it safe, knowing what to do correctly. Joe Fenton is into it, cacophony society eccentric.

Later at night, at Trego Springs was a crazy scenario of guns popping (into the hillside) with Johnny Cash blasting from a truck! Wild West moments!

John Law was driving a borrowed van, and was reckless going over the mounds, I was a passenger, bumping my head on its ceiling, "*John, cool it!*" to get cackling. He was in a regretful funk then, about his driving license revoked after a dentist visit drinking and driving afternoon afterwards. Spouting diatribes about this, and we mostly appreciate his outspoken candor, he just needed to express in loose cannon mode. Anyway, crazy final night there.

~

After the hot drive back the next day, Seb dropped me off at the family house in Concord. I'm not totally sure, but he might have met my parents before? At some of my art openings, or through Brian or Jill?

~

The rest of 1995 was spent in uphill learning curves at the computer for Midnight Design, still seeking a good apartment, not easily. Overall it was an important year of change, good and bad. Jerry Garcia dying was a huge blow to the heart, even though I saw him live less and less over the past few years. For concerts, the few I attended were absolutely fantastic.. *King Crimson* was the event of the year! I went twice! The **THRAK** tour of the six piece double trio Crim! And Todd Rundgren *The Individualist*, at the Fillmore! The CDs were and are big favorites. I remember finding *Vrooom* at Amoeba Berkeley early that year. Blown away by the music, I left it in Brians pc, and said be sure to listen to this with headphones. *Yeah!* Most assuredly approved!

1996

That first Tuesday of the year, Seb started a figure drawing group! in the main shop room of The Foundry pad, plenty of space to set up tables and a model platform. Splitting the total amongst whoever shows up. I think it was just \$40 at the time for 3 hours. Not a bad deal if five artists show up. The first time we were 4 of us? I don't exactly remember, but the model was Eileen, I think from the first Bay area figure models guild. Seb knows his resources, throwing the best figure drawing sessions. We had ales both store bought and that we both brewed, plus snacks. Rotating CDs we'd almost all bring in, mileage of musical tastes varying. Richard would show up, and Marshall and Boyd who I introduced from Midnight Design. This is where I met Paul Clift, a regular for the next two years, and held painting sessions at his place in SF. Seb switched workplaces by now, I think doing graphics for games at *Electronic Arts*? We now were no longer starving artists and can afford figure drawing sessions, CDs, craft ales, art supplies, and computers! So this new stability kicked us into higher gear. Good *new* times!

I was focused on Midnight Design jobs, less games other than education based, presentations, promos, and more varieties keeping it all fresh. I loved it! Soon moved back to the Mission, and more big changes.

~ ~ ~

End of Part One.

To be continued... !