

The Autobiography of Albert Fried-Cassorla

last updated 6/13/03

1972 - 1985: Manhattan, Cambridge and Philadelphia

1972 - Manhattan and Attending Columbia University

When I graduated from SUNY-Binghamton, I loved with Martha Fried, my girlfriend and future wife to Manhattan. This was a grand adventure -- moving to Manhattan after spending time in relatively rural Binghamton, and a summer on sultry Long Island.

Since we were each enrolled in two-year Masters programs, we agreed to live one year near her school and one year near mine. The first year was spent in Greenwich Village.

1972 - Living in the Village

We found an apartment at 195 Bleecker Street, in the heart of the Village which is where we wanted to be. There was still a romantic attraction to the locale then - the Hippie Era was not that far behind. And while in high school as a teenager, regular trips to the Village were a part of growing up.

Moving in to our tiny apartment was an ordeal. We foolishly insisted on moving a heavy convertible sofa up 6 flights of stairs. My brother Kenny helped us do it. The sofa kept threatening to fall down the stairs and crush us (most likely Kenny). But we got it up. The apartment was a shotgun affair, with 3 miniscule rooms. But we didn't care about the small space. It was great to be independent in New York!

I remember that the toilet looked like an elephant's head, and I painted eyes on it to complete the illusion. Friend Paul Becker loved this.

1972 - Meeting Louie Gzinterman

While in the Village, I met Louie Gzinterman, a great humanitarian who had a dry goods shop on Bleecker, and who looked after abandoned adolescent boys in the Village. He fed them and clothed them.

It was a privilege to have known him. I spent time with him in his shop, in the back, reading letters sent my kids and appreciative comments from people he had helped around the nation.

I wrote up his story in a paper I worked for, *Metropolitan Review*.

This article I wrote about Louie, *Who is the Holiest Man in the Village?* was read by a filmmaker. He then made a documentary (several years later) called *Louie*. It was shown on PBS in New York, and I believe elsewhere. I was in it.

We stayed in touch with Louie for many years, visiting him sometimes at the Workman's Circle Home for the Aged in the Bronx. His son, Manny, also kept in touch with us for awhile.

Louie used to call me up during the week and say, "Ahl? You want me to come up and make breakfast?"

Sometimes I'd say yes.

He'd say, "Wait while I go to Gristedes. I'll be right there!"

Then he'd come up and make a tasty if oily omelette in my apartment. We'd have fresh rolls and olives, too.

One morning, he called and said, "Ahl! Come down her. I got a colander for you."

"But I already have a colander," I protested. "I use it whenever I make spaghetti!"

He said, "No, not a colander, a colander!"

I later found out he meant a cloth calendar. We used it for many years, first as a calendar, later as a dishcloth. He was always giving us stuff, mainly cloth goods, and all of it useful.

Later sections will cover:

Cosmo's Load

Moving to the Upper West Side

Columbia memories:

Studying with Jacques Barzun, Lionel Trilling., Robert Coover, Nadine Gordimer, Carolyn Kizer

1973 - Marrying Martha Fried

1974 - 1975 Moving to Cambridge, Massachusetts

1975 - Moving to Philadelphia

1975 - Life on North Broad Street

1977 - Spruce Hill, Philadelphia

Working for the Chinese Cultural Center

1979 - Writing *The Skateboarder's Bible*

1979 - 1983

Working for OICs of America

Moving to Germantown, buying a home

Life as Publicity Manager for The Bourse in downtown Philadelphia

The birth of our twins!

1984 - 1985

Working for Hosiery Corporation of America