

The Autobiography of Albert Fried-Cassorla

last updated 11/17/02

1967-1971 - Harpur College, SUNY-Binghamton



College for me was a joyful revelation!

Who knew that there could be a life of the intellect? A life of artistic expression, learning, romance, philosophy and more -- all of this wrapped up into one thrilling bundle?

Of course, adding immensely to this thrilling admixture was meeting the love of my life, Martha Fried.

Here we are at Lake Leiberman -- yes, that's an authentic native American name -- the pond near our dorms.

What else can I say about Martha? Too much that would be embarrassingly sentimental, so for once in my life I will now exercise discretion.



High school had been awful with the exception of being with my friends, and classes I enjoyed in English and Social Studies. By contrast, Harpur College (part of State University of New York at Binghamton), was a place where I could make my own schedule, learn what interested me, and be largely free of the attention of noxious middle-aged people.

What a great invention college was! My own children share this enthusiasm for their own colleges.

So much happened during my four years at Harpur. I will not recount even a tiny fraction of them in this outing. I did meet my wife there, but I will leave her out of this narrative. Anyone who reads this will understand the importance of meeting one's lifelong companion. We'll leave it at that.

Now I'd just like to post some great old photos (in my opinion, but then again, I know and like these people.) This batch in black and white is from the collection of Jeannie Kirk. Thanks, Jean!

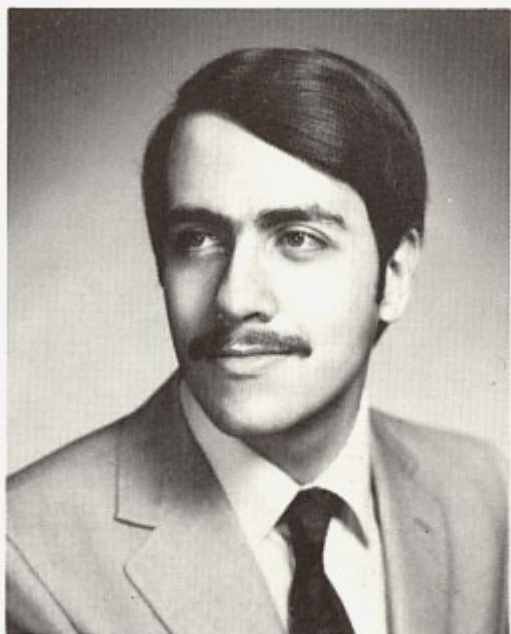
First up is Dan Ruffo... looking rugged in 1970 or so. Smoking seemed so cool back then...Hey, Jean-Paul Belmondo, move over!



Next up are Dan Ruffo with Jean Kirk. This may have been around the time of their cross-country expedition in a creaky old milk wagon.... It was fun playing Cupid with Dan and Jean. Though it did not last, somehow it was exciting to bring them together. (Playing Cupid when it actually *lasts* must be a gas!)



Next on the hit parade is Christine Oliver, who today is a fine painter in California.



Douglas Burke

Doug's yearbook photo, circa 1971

Doug Burke's remembrances of Harpur College

One of the first people I met was "Ox," Richard Oxhandler, roommate, Endymion and counselor in Chenango Hall. He had an off-campus pad.

I met Albert and Martha in the orientation group.

Funnily enough, I can't remember how or when I met Marty, Matt and Marc.

During the first week Al and Doug were in the old snack bar where Albert attempted to found the Sexual Freedom League. (Albert: Which I don't recall, but it's probably true!)

I remember also during our first week we saw a film about the Holocaust. Albert said he wanted to go into politics to make sure that that would never happen again.

We talked about how Doug had seen Albert on the Alan Burke show. I recognized you. I don't remember what you said, but Alan Burke said, "Did anybody understand what he was talking about?"

We hung with D, and she had a very acerbic sense of humor. She spoke of boyfriends (though a lesbian), *penii*, claimed to have been a taxi driver in Paris, and had a friend named Sylvia who followed her around slavishly, earning the sobriquet "D's squire."

Krivulin & Bubba

We were all impressed with Dan Krivulin, because he was an experienced Brooklyn street kid who had supposedly boffed many babes. Albert: I remember him acting in a Pinter play with an Irish accent. Doug: I recall an antiwar play. Sometime in the '80s Doug ran into Dan at the half price ticket line in N.Y. Dan didn't remember him.

Albert: I recall him looking at a picture of Martin Buber on the back cover of one of his books and saying, "Look at the kissa on Bubba."

Marty Kass and Carol Cohen

Marty was always full of energy, smoking and wearing sandals, and running down the hall and calling out "So-and-so, I'm coming to see you." We had a busy social bunch with activities, gathering and gab sessions day and night.

M.K. hung out with Carol Cohen and they were a cute duo.

Other friends of his were L.H. and M.Y.

One friend, S.A., said after sex with L.H., the next morning, "I can't see how we could have been together last night, and this morning, she just says hi and walks away."

Another friend in our contingent was a girl, E, who took LSD about a million times.

To Doug, L.H., M.Y. and E. were intimidatingly cool, in the same pantheon with Grace Slick.



Above: double exposure with Carol Cohen and Marty Kass on top, Albert and Martha on bottom.



Matt Fleury and Elise Passikoff

This is mainly about Matt -- though we hope to have something from and about Elise eventually...

Albert remembers Matt Fleury talking about how cold it was in Watertown, N.Y. Matt came from a rural background and was the intense, quiet, literary type but (says Doug, who knows Matt can handle it!) looked

like a real dufus on his college I.D.

Matt, Marty and Doug all met their academic nadir in Geology 101; Doug tried to copy off Matt in lab but was so rockophobic that he had to drop the course after the first test. Later Matt and Marty managed to miss their anthropology final.

Matt went out with a girl named S. He dumped S. and went with Sheila from Co-Op City. Then Matt fell for Elise, who claims that Doug was instrumental in bringing them together. To this day Doug doesn't know what she's talking about and wishes she would enlighten him.

In the summer after our senior year, Doug lived with Sheila in her apartment in Bingie. In the same building lived a girl named Sandy, after whom Alan M. lusted, as well as Steve and Wendy K., who were actually married undergrads. They all engaged in unusual activities and encouraged Doug to, saying, "We're your friends and wouldn't want you to do anything bad for you." (Ask Doug for elucidation.)

Steve K. had been born in Shanghai, where there was a refugee Jewish community, which was recently profiled in a documentary.

"A" got constantly goofed on. His so-called friends filled his room to waste level with newspaper. They also moved his bed out to Lake Lieberman when he was sleeping one night.

Albert remembers Doug playing Chopin on the piano at Broome Hall.

Doug: a French prof I had was a prestigious scholar, a Proust specialist. His class was absurd and worthless because he would just tell anecdotes about his childhood and play things on a record player, but addressed nothing about the course. He gave everybody A's. The whole thing was a joke.

I had another French professor, Mme J. I worked for her husband, a Lithuanian librarian, who was shocked by the goings-on in the Proust scholar's class.

Mme J. was one of those 50-ish women who is forever trying to look like a babe. She dyed her hair platinum blonde, but not nearly often enough. We always used to say how are Jasenas' roots today? Oh, she really needs a dye job.

Carol H. was another J. student who had the misfortune of being smitten with Doug, who always brought her sandwiches from Dickinson dining hall. She once actually asked him if he was gay and he said no.



Harpur guys from Broome Hall, circa 1967. Top row, left to right: Albert Cassorla, Matt Fleury, Jerry Lesk, unknown, Alan Whiteman. Bottom row, left to right: Marty Kass, Jim Gwyn, and Ira Miller.

1970 - Senior Year