Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Entrepreneurs Beware
COPYRIGHT

All rights reserved. Ownership of this book is protected by copyright laws and other applicable laws and any unauthorized duplication, distribution or exhibition of this book could result in criminal prosecution as well as civil liability. This includes that no part of this manuscript or transmission may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and/or retrieval system, without expressed written permission of the company president, currently John M. Veleno, of the Veleno® Instrument Company, St. Petersburg, Florida, U.S.A.

Informational address, Veleno® Instrument Company address: Veleno® Instrument Company, PO Box 55268, St. Petersburg, FL 33732. Phone 727-743-5567 - Copyright© July 1, 2015 - John M. Veleno

Electronic Signature JMV
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

The mechanism that incited me to write this autobiographical portion of my life relative to my guitar making is when I became aware of the false stories I saw in publications printed about me and my guitar making. Most of my prognosticated awareness particular to this phenomenon was activated in late 1998 and earlier, when I began seeing counterfeited Veleno® guitars for sale advertised on the internet, stating they were made by me. Identity thieves were using my registered Veleno® Name on their guitars. It is clearly evident that some thieves had to have used deception with famous people, companies and places since they were using their own names, and making false claims about Veleno® guitars in order to gain money and fame for themselves. This has continued to the present time. Therefore, I decided to write how all this came about for the unsuspecting entrepreneur, and numerous others, laboring in a new or old adventure.
FOREWORD

Greed, Greed, and More Greed was developed through lies, lies and more lies which gradually increased during the passing of time until 2014. For years it was difficult for me to believe, although not wanting to, that greed could be such an uncontrollably overpowering emotion until realizing and seeing it materialize in so many people. This phenomenon caused and affected me for close to 40 years.

Only recently did I become aware of how strong and intense hidden human emotions can be in a seemingly concealed, unseen, undetectable manner. However, I feel, there are to be sure, many more and pleasant people who really do mean well to most everyone. But when I tried so resolute to be successful in the guitar making business it seemed many more unsuspecting greedy people came out of the woodwork and joined the established greedy. Beware.

As for employment, I was always a machinist and did
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

my music on a part time basis. While in Massachusetts in 1953, my musical endeavors were developing while intensely studying guitar and music from an accomplished graduate of the New England Conservatory of music. He was capable of playing all the musical instruments I knew of and demonstrated his abilities well. With expertise he taught every musical instrument. After a couple of years he hired me to teach guitar for about 20-25 students part time. I then played guitar part time in a three piece band in a few local night spots.

In 1957 I looked for a music store to work part time closer to home and was hired to teach guitar for Johnny Archer, who owned a music store in Marlboro, Mass. Johnny had been the personal piano player and song arranger/writer for Frank Sinatra for quite a few years. When Johnny hired me he had a 23 piece orchestra in, what I believe, was the biggest and most popular night club in New England, Caesar's Monticello in Framingham, Mass. Big name popular singers and entertainers were booked there usually on
a weekly basis. After being there a year, Johnny asked me to take his guitar music home to study and asked me to play guitar in his orchestra when I got it under my belt, but I was moving to Florida at that time and could not promise him.

My hope with this book, I will be able to help others who may be as naive in believing so much from friends, relatives and strangers as I have done. I feel I have been a simple man whose wish was to enjoy and have a fun life without feeling a need to harmfully interfere with others whose heart is fixed on developing a successful progressive life. I never felt the need to sneakily conspire with innocent or not so innocent others to take unfair advantage of anyone to accomplish my goals, I simply had confidence in myself and knew it was and is the answer.

I passionately hate people who enjoy and/or choose to take the road of greed for gain to satisfy their needs of self-worth rather than through their own accomplishments. They use the "nice" approach while
Greed, Greed, and More Greed
taking advantage of unsuspecting innocent, inexperienced prey in order to line their pockets for the future, thinking "sucker!" Such as I who have been vulture prey. I particularly do not enjoy causing problems but select not to run from them either. I don't enjoy having to write about this but feel it is needed, not for me but possibly for you. I see there has been much more lying and greed than I earlier possibly imagined. I cannot emphasize enough as to how many enemies, known and unknown, seen and unseen, that one can accumulate in so many ways, especially by means of internet. I did not realize some were enemies until after receiving flattery, which mostly always becomes clearly visible. Some, I thought, were friends, some close friends, and some relatives.

Before making Veleno® guitars to sell, I made my first all-aluminum guitar expressly for my own private use for five years. It was after that period that I began making and selling my guitars to many top guitarists and entertainers in the music world without
knowing it was going to take that path.

I lived in Massachusetts from 1934 until 1963. I moved to Florida in 1963 and have resided in Saint Petersburg since then.

My manufacturing experience began at 18 years old in 1952 while working at the machinist trade. After graduating from high school I went to Worcester Trade School nights learning Tool and Die making for two years. I was employed at Mutual Machine Company and making dies for stamping out various leather parts for manufacturing shoes. After two years in 1954, I went to BRACON Bradley Container Corp (BRACON), a subsidiary of American Can Company and stayed there until 1963. There were approximately 2,000 employees at Bracon. I completed six years in a journeyman machinist course while employed at Bracon and they paid for my schooling, after which I received a diploma for journeyman machinist, the highest education level in the machinist trade.
After moving to Florida in 1963, at 28 years old, I began building my first guitar in 1964 and completed it in 1965. I made it for my own pleasure. Why aluminum? After moving to Florida I learned about the vast amount of products that can be made from aluminum. While working at Universal Machine Company for a year we made various aluminum components from a wide variety of alloys, for use in the space industry and computer companies. I was employed there until 1968. Then worked at other machine shops for a year then went back to UMI for a year in 1969, left and went into injection mold making from 1971 to 1975 at Security Plastics. I made small precision plastic injection molds used in fabricating wrist watches. While at UMI from 1963 to 1968 I got familiarized with numerous aluminum fabrications made from aluminum, including various casting processes used for aluminum as well.

I soon began teaching guitar in a couple of local music stores and began teaching guitar at home.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

After a year I started making my first aluminum guitar. I finished it after a year, in 1975. Immediately after finishing my first guitar I was officially invited to become a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASTME) a most honorable directive. I had gained much experience to manufacture most anything made of nearly every type and kind of most all metals. I had been responsibly involved in the manufacture planning of numerous aluminum components. I successfully accomplished estimating manufacturing procedures including time and cost and completing the manufacturing methods used in the process for completing the components we bid on. This included constructing jigs and fixtures used in the processes. I also made parts used in the LEM, the Lunar Excursion Module.

In 1968 I was asked to manage Master Tool and Engineering in Gulfport for a year and was responsible for successfully pulling the company out of serious bad debt to making a profit from 25 space industry components the former manager had bid on.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

and was losing money on all of them. The owner of the business asked me to make quotes on all the prints for the parts. They were all within the limits. I made money on 24 of the 25 parts and the one at a loss was a bad bid in the first place.

I started making Veleno® guitars to sell in 1971. A year and a half after selling my first guitars, in 1973, I experienced having two brain aneurysms which nearly ended it all. My health was not my primary concern but I had to make it important. I was not aware of the conspiring when it began happening. But I can now see how quickly it came about developing unseeingly. None of my enemies wasted any time in forming and building their destructive advances, while I was very unhealthy, taking large prescribed doses of valium while totally unaware of what they were doing. Through most of the following years I did not have an inkling of suspicious thinking. It developed much later within me through the causes and effects of the noticeable greed and experiencing the effects coming from those having strong need for
exploitation. I've heard successful people say that paranoia is a good thing as it can be useful in building confidence. My suspicions grew while developing a mindset of seeing a bleak future after aggressively planned attacks against me and my accomplishments. Through mounting proof I recognized enough to give me a clear view of when and how it all came about. In writing this portion of my life, I'm in hopes it will be useful to entrepreneurs in developing and building awareness toward unsuspected surprises that come from unknown enemies whose wish is to undermine your hard work. In the beginning my attention was always indulging in whatever I was doing, not thinking to beware of what others could or would do, conspiring with each other. The thieves included stealing my name, methods of manufacturing, advertising, selling or whatever it was that I was involved in all the while being totally unaware that they, known and unknown were conspiring to steal not only my product and everything I developed in manufacturing but conspiring to totally wipe out every successful thing I've ever done.
FOREWORD P.S.
Some of the names in this book have been altered, but not to protect anyone. Some parts of the Foreword are mentioned again in the book.

CREDITS
A VERY SPECIAL CREDIT
I give very special credit to the book of "Sirach" (sounds like Sir Rock) which was presumably written approximately 200 BC by a man named Jesus. It taught me most everything I needed to know about people I could meet up with every day. Example "Don't attempt to cross a desert with a stranger. You may not reach the other side." The desert in this saying can mean taking a strange or unaccustomed path in life you are not familiar with, but can be a familiar path the stranger is. I recommend you reading the book of Sirach.

I give credit to Henry (Buzz) Hollidge for suggesting I make an aluminum guitar rather than a mailbox post. In 1964 while requesting him to order a
piece of aluminum for me to make a mailbox post shaped like a guitar, Buzz said, “Why make a mailbox post? Why not a real guitar?” and I replied “Good idea.” And it happened from there. I never made a guitar shaped mailbox or post, but rather made a real all-aluminum guitar.

I credit an elderly aluminum foundry pattern maker at Schmidt's Foundry in St. Petersburg who had made patterns for casting nearly all his life. I don’t recall his name but he told me what I would need and how to make patterns for making aluminum castings. I purchased the materials and made the neck and body patterns at home. When finished I brought them to the foundry, paid the price they quoted to cast a guitar from my patterns and they successfully made the neck and body castings for me, and a year later I had my first all-aluminum guitar. I called it "My Birdland" because of the bird shaped headstock, with six machine heads on one side.

I credit a man who retired from working for the
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Gibson Guitar Company where he was a guitar finisher. I was suggested to visit and show him my guitar. I brought my guitar to his home, a house trailer, on 62nd Avenue North. He examined the guitar, plugged it into his amplifier and was astounded by the sound of the guitar and how well it played with ease. He said, “What is the brand name?” I said, “I don’t have one, how about AlumElec because it is aluminum and electric?” He said “Absolutely not! What is your last name?” I said “Veleno.” He said, “That is the name of your guitar. After all it is a new and unique guitar so put your own name on it.” I was hesitant and thought it would display too much ego putting my name on it, but soon got used to it and liked it.

FAMILY CREDITS
I credit my five children for standing by me during all the stressful times of starting a business in the mid-1970's, during their school years.
I credit my oldest daughter Michele, who has had an environmental consulting firm with her husband Scott for more than 30 years. Our frequent visits and phone conversations have been extremely helpful with business matters.

Second, I credit my daughter Marcella who is a CPA and extensively helped VIC accounting.

Third, I credit my daughter Carla who has a master’s degree in Aerospace Engineering. She has headed many experiments for testing in space since the early 1980’s. She has been very helpful, supportive, kind, and patient. We spent much time together throughout the years.

Fourth, I credit my son, Chris, although he was in High School in the beginning, eagerly helped in assembly and making some parts for guitars when the need arose.

Fifth, I credit my youngest daughter Tina as she
helped in many ways with her motherly instinct, guiding nature and her job related editing experience as a professional person in commercial real estate.

I credit my present wife, Joyce. During the past 24 years she has been a most accepting wife with a kind understanding outlook. She spent many years in Human Resources positions including editing employee procedure manuals and handbooks. She has truly been a helpmate.

I credit Michael and Toni, clothes designers, who made wardrobes for famous stage and TV celebrities, entertainers, and musicians. At my first visit they showed me wardrobes they made for Sonny & Cher, and guitarist Jimi Hendrix. I took their advice about how to present my guitars to entertainers, performers and guitarists. From that point on I proceeded to sell guitars and soon established Veleno® Instrument Company.
I credit my two writing class teachers, Grace Druyor in 2001 and Norma Heinicke in 2013 who donated their times and talents to the St. Petersburg Sunshine Center, a community center for active adults. Both gave me confidence, understanding, and were very helpful in coaching for my writing ability. Both are former school teachers.

I am appreciative toward Jeff and Deborah Herman simply reading their book Guide to Book Publishers, Editors, & Literary Agents 2012” has been a tremendous help.

I give credit to my step-brother Mickey Dimouro. Mickey helped part time in making guitar parts, such as our Veleno® bridges and other related parts when he was in high school.

Special Credit
I especially credit my attorney Dorothy S. Morse of Bradenton, Florida. She has been very helpful since 2002 and continues to be. When, in 2012, I mentioned I've been seriously thinking about writing
an autobiography about the period of times in my life relating to my guitar making, and she said "It's about time. After all, you are a worldwide figure of public notoriety."

Making the Veleno® Guitars
I made my first guitar mostly at home, starting in 1965 and finished it in August 1966. It was not a prototype guitar as many have mentioned; it was an outstanding real guitar. It took a year to make that first guitar and I didn't start making them to sell until five years later, in 1971, and started selling them in 1972.
My first guitar was not included with the serialized guitars. As it was not made for sale, and was not a part of a production lot guitar. It was a one and only, first of its kind, I made for myself. Five years later, when I finally decided to make guitars to sell, I made two guitars fashioned similar to the first one, with the Bird shaped headstock. When I showed my guitar to
Jorge Santana, of his group called Malo. He played my Guitar for the first three songs at his concert. After the concert Jorge gave me some good suggestions and I took all of them. He told me he prefers three tuners on each side of a headstock because he re-tunes strings while playing - by knowing where to reach without having to use his eyes, and demonstrated. So, that is what prompted me to have the "V" for Veleno® head stock with three tuners on each side.

Jorge also took a magic marker showing where he prefers the volume and tone controls for each pickup. At home I immediately cut off the two bird shaped headstocks and replaced those with the "V" shaped headstock. Jorge had also recommended a high/low switch for a quick flip to go from playing lead guitar to rhythm without having to change a pre-set tone control. Since the first few bodies already had volume and tone holes in them I left them that way and sold them as they were.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

I then started a couple more with cast bodies with volume and tone control holes the same way. Then I began making the milled Veleno® guitar bodies, and incorporated separate volume and tone control for each pickup in the positions Jorge had recommended. I also incorporated a polarity reversing out-of phase switch for the neck pickup offering a wider tone range, and added a hi-low tone switch for the guitarist to go from a lead tone to a rhythm tone while leaving the tone controls as is thus easier to switch back to lead.
The **Veleno**® guitar case has a special design.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

The King Cobra

(Most from Wikipedia)
The King Cobra is a shy reptile, which will make all attempts to escape when approached by human beings. The "V" design on the back of the head on a King Cobra is there by nature to appear to be a mouth and eyes, a built in defense mechanism to ward off enemies behind them.

The King Cobra (Ophiophagus Hannah) is the longest of the venomous land snakes, growing up to 18.5 feet (5.7 meters) in length. The snake's venom is a powerful neurotoxin known to be frequently fatal to humans. The mortality rate in King Cobra bite is 75%. Although called a Cobra it does not belong to the same family.

Young King Cobras have natural enemies besides man. The mongoose followed by eagles, owls, armies of ants and a few more. But a full- grown adult King Cobra has very few enemies and can
bring down a 5,000-pound elephant in three minutes. However, one would do this only if it felt completely endangered, not for food.

The King Cobra is peculiar in that it feeds almost exclusively on other snakes, including King snakes, which is reflected in its genus name of Ophiophagus (Snake eater). The King Cobra is known to attack larger snakes including pythons. In spite of the King Cobra's fearsome reputation, it is generally a shy and reclusive animal, avoiding confrontation with people as far as possible.

King Cobras pay little attention to goats, sheep, cows, oxen, pigs and more. But snakes, rats and mice, flee.

When threatened, the King Cobra assumes it's fighting position, which is an upright posture expanding its hood in order to show the potential enemy that the cobra is on guard. Like other cobras, the King Cobra lifts around a third of its body off
the ground, makes a hood, and hisses loudly when it feels threatened. A fully-grown King Cobra would therefore be able to stare at a standing human directly in the eye, making it a terrifying sight and giving it a near-mythical reputation as a deadly snake.

Sirach 12:13 "Who pities a snake charmer when he is bitten."
Record Holder Veleno®
For a production guitar my Veleno® guitar by far holds the record for the highest percentage of guitars purchased, by top performers, of the total number of guitars produced. I made all the final decisions on how my guitar would look, play, sound, what it would have and how it would be.

The Veleno® guitar gained extensive recognition from the very start of sales. Word came back to me that the Veleno® was being called the “Stradivarius” of guitars and the “King” of heavy metal guitars by many guitarists. Everything was progressing fantastic for Veleno® Instrument Company for the first two years. In a short time we were receiving orders and producing up to and more than three guitars per week always on a part time basis until I experienced two brain aneurysms in 1974. After my aneurisms, within a year orders nearly ceased, almost to a screeching halt. At that same time I lost my partner, Harry Wayne Swipes. Business slowed to nearly a standstill. About two or so years later Counterfeit
Veleno® guitars began appearing in guitar articles appearing in musical instrument based magazines and ads then later on the Internet. (Please read email exchanges beginning on page 384)

The guitar Story Starts Here and why it is necessary to know about Other Velenos
This autobiography is not only about what inspired me to make my Veleno® guitars but is essential to know about my true Italian surname Veleno, and probably more so to know how I was influenced, by my family heritage, plus nine years' experience directly involving research and development for creating factory machine automation. Also to know about my involvement in music, mathematics, and other direct life envelopments that amenably provided healthy contributions toward my Veleno® guitar making.

Poison
At 20 years old, while employed at BRACON (Bradley Container), a subsidiary of American Can
Company, having approximately 2,000 employees, I learned from an Italian engineer and Etymologist, also employed at Bracon, that the Italian word, veleno, is defined as "Poison", in Italian and in Italian/American dictionaries, but not necessarily venom". Etymology is the study of roots and origins of words, and his specialty was the roots and origins of Italian surnames. The English word “Venom" is a poison, and is said as Veleno in Italian, but in European and British countries Veleno also refers to someone or something that, R&R (removes and replaces). Therefore Veleno is a word that does not just eliminate but it replaces as well. In Europe, in competition, when the word veleno is used, indicating by the virtue of its existence, the objector eliminates the subjected and replaces the subjected with itself, the new objector. In the U.S. "eliminator" is the word used instead of veleno or poison, such as in drag racing the "top eliminator" has eliminated his chief competitor, and becomes the new "top eliminator".
About 15 years ago I did an internet search for people with the name Veleno in Italy and emailed the first one I found. I asked him if Veleno is his real surname and he replied, “No, I’m the top video game player in Italy and because of that I assume the name Veleno. I am the new Veleno until someone beats me, then he becomes the Veleno”. Therefore, whoever becomes the top eliminator automatically assumes the name “Veleno”, The objector eliminates the subjected and becomes the new eliminator or new Poison!

The Internet shows that some top European racecars have been given the name Veleno. The Dodge Viper in Italy is the Dodge Veleno; Rolls Royce named a super jet engine their Veleno. Simply put, they are: a killer game player; a killer car; a killer jet engine; or a killer guitar, etc. A top eliminator.
Italian sports car named “Veleno” (unknown brand) appears to be about 45 inches high.

I made a top of the line heavy metal guitar with incredible playability and sound, and I've been told it is a real killer electric guitar. Except, my Veleno® guitar has the real, genuine, Veleno name! For more, go to www.veleno.net, I am a Veleno by surname only, not because I am a top gun or anything akin to that, but I have been told I am a living legend in the guitar world. Veleno simply happens to be my surname by birth, not by elimination; nevertheless my Veleno® guitar is without doubt a "killer guitar"!

I feel to get a clear understanding about this autobiographical portion of my life, it is also essential
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

to know about my French/Italian heritage. My French Heritage descended from French Royalty; my Italian heritage from "God only knows!"

My French Heritage
My mother, Virginia Catherine DuGrenier, was born of direct French Royal descent, in Central Islip, New York on January 1, 1913. Her mother’s name was Albina Emily La Joie DuGrenier, 20 years old at the time. Her father was Wilfert DuGrenier, 27 years old at that time. My mother was born with a twin sister who died at birth. Her mother, Albina, died from childbirth a couple of years later. My mother had one older brother, Ernest DuGrenier. Her brother Ernest was sent to a boy’s school in Canada. My mother was taken care of by her La Joie grandmother. My mother's father died of stomach cancer in his early 30s. I recall going to a cemetery in Ipswich, Massachusetts, at about 14 years old, with my mother to visit a grave under a tree where she said her father was buried.
In 1974, at 20 years old, I learned that “DuGrenier” was an uncommon but known French name descending from French Royalty. Many years later when I began writing this autobiography, and after learning this info, I decided to do simple Internet search in 2011 and learned the DuGreniers were French Royalty. A simple free Internet search revealed my Aunt Fredelina DuGrenier as being pedigreed French Royalty and having descendants recorded from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries up to the present time. My aunt Fredelina took care of me from the time I was five years old until seven.

From about 10 to 21 years old I occasionally attended family get-togethers at the home of my Aunt Ernestine DuGrenier Tetreault. They were always fun times. I heard numerous hand-me-down family stories until I was about 16 years old, most centered around three DuGrenier brothers who escaped France and went to Canada with only themselves and their family jewels. I’m not clear about exactly who they were but from what I gathered one of those three
brothers was my great grandfather, father of my mother’s father, Wilfert DuGrenier. As a teenager, the main story I recall is that our DuGrenier forefathers had been large landowners in Normandy, France at least since the 1500s and possibly before. During the 18th century France was under disorder and chaos.

The French Revolution from 1789 to 1799 was followed by the Napoleonic period 1799 to 1815, followed by the French Workers Rebellion around 1850. Logically speaking it was most likely that period of time the three DuGrenier brothers, one being my great grandfather, fled to Canada in a hurry. The story I heard was that the fleeing episode was due to the three brothers suddenly informed through local scuttlebutt that the DuGrenier family was in immediate danger because the French rebels were looking to behead or murder them. The rebels were killing the rich because they believed the rich caused the French poverty. The three DuGreniers escaped France, and went to Canada with only their
family jewels, married and had families. Some later migrated to the U.S. settling mostly in Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. My grandfather, Wilfert, was born in Canada to one of the three escaped brothers from France, and later came to the U.S. and settled in Central Islip, New York. One of his brothers, maybe Frank, joined the merchant marines and was never seen nor heard of again. The third brother was Arthur DuGrenier, who created a very lucrative manufacturing business in 1915, namely, DuGrenier Vending Machines in Haverhill, Massachusetts. My grandfather, Wilfert, had three sisters Beatrice, Ernestine, and Fredelina. My parents divorced when I was five years old. My mother and I lived in Hudson, Massachusetts with my Aunt Fredelina DuGrenier Plough, listed on the Internet as being a pedigreed DuGrenier along with other DuGreniers. During the period aunt Fredelina took care of me for a couple of years, my mother worked as a fancy stitcher on women’s size 6 sample shoes at local shoe manufacturers. My father delivered tonic (soda or pop) and then joined Army.
Then my mother married, Michael DiMouro, first by a JP When I was six years old. Later, after my father got killed in WWII, when I was 10 years old, they married in a Catholic Church and we lived in Hudson, Mass. At that time they bought a home at 171 Manning Street next to my grandfather's sister, Aunt Beatrice DuGrenier Fearing. I lived there with my parents until I married at 18 years old.

My Grandfather's sister Ernestine Tetreault lived in nearby Westboro. She had four sons, Babe, who served in the U.S. Army in WWII, Shipwreck (Bill), Tee (who played college football), and Spudsy (Arthur). Aunt Ernestine’s place was always where the French family fun parties were. I met my rich Great Uncle Arthur DuGrenier, at a family fun party there who supposedly came in his 37 Rolls limo with the open front chauffer seat.
Wilfert, my grandfather, Albina, my grandmother, Ernest my uncle, and my mother Virginia DuGrenier about 1913
My Italian Heritage
My father, John Nicholas Veleno, of Italian descent, was born in Maynard, Massachusetts in 1908, had two brothers: Michael and Nicholas, and three sisters: Annie, Nellie and Jennie. My father and mother were married in 1932 at St. Bridget’s Parish, Maynard, Massachusetts. My father was killed in WWII on August 9, 1944, just prior to my 10th birthday. He was buried in the Brittany American Cemetery in St. James, Normandy, France.


My Italian Grandparents
I recall the home of my Veleno grandparents, Ninna and Tatooch, having a large picture, probably about 18” high, in their downstairs hall of Pope Pius XII. On each side of the Pope’s picture were two other slightly smaller pictures of her two
nephews who were West Point graduate cadets, sons of my grandmother’s brother. My grandmother’s maiden name was Colombo. Both Colombo cadets were killed in WWII fighting in the Pacific theatre. Another Colombo brother was the first Italian to graduate from Tufts Medical School, who also delivered me as a baby. He was also our family doctor until he died when I was probably about 20 or so years old, and another Colombo brother was Lou Colombo, and one of my Hudson High school teachers and a football coach.

My grandfather, Tatooch, always appeared quiet and confident, smiling, happy and sedate, which puzzled me, as he was not excitable or high strung such as many Italian men and women are in our time period. In fact most all the Velenos were quiet and sedate.
As previously stated, in the "poison" section, I was 20 when I began employment at the Bradley Sun Division of American can Company (BRACON) at the age of twenty in 1954. Soon after employment I became friends with the Italian mechanical engineer also employed there and learned he was
an Italian Etymologist. He asked if I knew what my Italian surname Veleno meant in English and I told him “no.” He said *Veleno* means poison in English. I was shocked showing disappointment upon hearing this and he told me not to feel bad because it is a good thing. Although my Veleno family spoke fluent Italian they never mentioned what our surname meant in English and they had numerous Italian friends.

I had learned nothing regarding my Veleno ancestors until I met this Italian Etymologist. He told me he was born, raised, educated and earned all his educational degrees in Italy. He called himself an Italian etymologista, and explained that the word Veleno is commonly used in Europe as a title name often applied to someone or something that is above others in a particular category, such as an auto, an engine, or a person in certain competitive events given the title "Eliminator".
My Italian Heritage in Italia

Never being very interested in history, I suddenly became seriously interested listening to this Etymologist. Our lunch and break time conversations became extremely interesting. We had numerous conversations. He telling me about my ancestry in short segments while I listened to him. That was always the subject the two of us were interested in talking about. During coffee and lunch breaks my attitude about history, relative to Italy, France, Rome, Romans, Italians, Portugal, Spanish, and more quickly became fascinating, especially when talking about my Veleno family.

He loved talking about the history of the Velenos in Italia. He said the **surname** Veleno is recent and extremely rare. He mentioned he was excited to personally know a genuine living Veleno, informing me about the background of my family heritage. Although this was all new to me it really did not seem overly important at the onset, after all, I had gone through 20 years with the name and didn’t feel
any different because of the new things I was learning. But in time, his words grew more meaningful. The etymologist said he would need to start with the fall of the Roman Empire, which he described as a catastrophic event. It seems obvious that there was much confusion and chaos during the sudden collapse of the Roman Empire and presumably particularly when its own citizens took control. That chaotic period was followed by:

The collapse of The Roman Empire was followed by the structuring of Italy, France, Portugal, Spain, other small countries and the city of Rome.

The etymologist said that after the fall of Rome, somewhere around the year "0", The Roman Empire ceased to exist and new countries were formed, one being Italia. When Italia came into being it was not a unified country until 1871, only a little more than 100 years ago, but was divided into 20 or so Regions, such as the U.S. has separate states. Each Italian region had its own king and government. Only the city of Rome survived with
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

that name. Each new Italian Region developed a monetary system, in which they printed and coined currency. A few regions shared a monetary system of their own.

The size of the city of Rome circa 650 BC

Before the Fall of the Empire

Previously, I was verbally told that the city of Rome was founded around 600BC and I imagined Rome as being a tiny village with only a hand full of people, however, while in Rome I found a book entitled "Rome Then and Now" which has photos as it is now with superimposed photos of how it was "then". With photos of the Circus Maximus, It states that The Circus Maximus, was built around 600 BC in the city of Rome. The circus was built behind the forum, which also was the politician's residence. It was originally constructed with a seating capacity for 250,000 spectators. It was soon found to be insufficient so they added seating for 50,000 more which then seated 300,000 spectators, about six times the size of the average sports stadium of
today. It provided entertainment from circus acts to boxing and chariot racing. The book states that a curved starting gate was built later on the north side and was a huge building measuring 1980 feet in length and 660 feet in width. The race track appears as an oval track about a total of \(\frac{3}{4}\) of a mile around, or circuit. Ancient chariots made seven circuits of this track for a single race. I took photos of it while there.

This extra portion by Livy was written to give everyone an idea of the size, by population and general entertainment in the city of Rome from the information learned from a series of books entitled \textbf{The History of Rome} by Livy the most famous Roman historian. The book jackets for the History of Rome by Livy have the following information. It is said that there is no available surviving written recorded history previous to Livy's books, and his existing documents.

\textbf{Livy}

Titus Livius, author of The History of Rome.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

[Livy’s lifetime was 64 B.C. to about 17 A.D., starting before and continuing to about ½ the assumed known lifetime of Jesus with no accountings from Livy about Jesus] Although it can be assumed Livy composed some writings during the time period we know of as Jesus’ lifetime, available books do not include Jesus. **Livy wrote 142 books** and has been acclaimed as being the most famous Roman historian. **At this time, of Livy’s 142 books, only 35 have been found and used.** The available historical writings by Livy stop at 9 B.C., yet he lived another 26 or so years. If there were more books they are lost, have been destroyed, are non-existent, [or have not been made available to unqualified searchers.]

Livy was born and died in Patavium (Padua) and is said that Livy probably lived most of his life in Rome. His historic writings were **written in Latin which was the primary language spoken and written in the greatest part of Europe (The Roman Empire) until about 3-400 A.D.** Livy’s writings of Rome are
very extensive, uncritical and clear. The following information is from Livy's Book I. Livy's writings begin with handed down stories and hearsay that could or may not be authentic but he recorded them first. The books state that prior to written and recorded history the establishment of Rome began with two brothers, Romulus and Remus, which appears in ways as a mythical story. But, as it was, Rome began with a certain group of men who built a very lavish complex called Rome, with all the known amenities of the time, for themselves. The story goes that the men did not take into account that being an all-male complex, much like a monastery, and therefore, who would inherit all their hard work, as they had no descendants. So, they went about the peninsula, we know of as Italy, searching out who the most attractive, ambitious, and talented women were and they found them to be in the Sabine area. The Roman men planned a big bash to invite the Sabine families to their complex and wow them. Being as it was, when the proper time came they told all who attended "The party is over" "time to go home."
Many were escorted back to their homes, but they invited the women to stay because they really needed women to bear children as beneficiaries and inheritors of their new lavish city. As the story goes, none of the women left because they couldn't resist living in luxury, but their parents and others went back to the Sabine hills. Family turmoil eventually festered and problems arose. (Look up "Rape of the Sabines" statue on the Internet. In Italian rape means to kidnap, but does not include violence.)

Livy's recorded historical documents began at 753 BC and methodically continue from there. About 137 or so years later Livy states that in 616 BC, ground was marked out for the Circus Maximus, which logically thinking would have been planned much earlier due its size and location, behind the Forum, which was already there. It was to be a racetrack and entertainment center constructed so they the politicians could have a ring side view, especially useful for gambling and betting. After being marked out and constructed, when finished it
seated a phenomenal 250,000 spectators.

Livy confirms in his writing that not having enough seating, they soon installed an additional 50,000, increasing it to an incredible 300,000 seating capacity, about **six times larger than most of our stadiums today in 2014**. The additional seating was poorly constructed and lasted about 100 years when a section collapsed and about 30,000 people were killed.

The Circus Maximus was used for about 1,000 years, to around 500AD when it was dismantled and/or demolished. But we, today, hardly ever hear anything about it. Why is it? Where did they get all the hot dogs, barbeque, chips, drinks alcoholic and non-alcoholic, etc. to satisfy everyone for such a large entertainment center, used nearly daily for approximately 1,000 years? Keep in mind there was no TV, no radio, no trains, no movies, and no public transportation I know of, or other forms of entertainment or horse and buggy travel. The toilets
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

had continuous running water underneath and were not smelly, and currently there today. They probably can still be used, if you don't mind sitting on an old cold stone seat! The track is long enough to easily have three entertainment rings. But where did all the people come from? Where did they eat, sleep and live?

I personally feel the term “Three Ring Circus” could be where the phrase started. Spectators could move from one seating area to another for the next day by having an agreement with spectators from another seating area for trading seats on the following day. However, having a third section of spectators would have created a serious problem with other spectators by not having an even number of seats to trade. It would be impossible to have an uneven seating trade agreement for viewing on agreed days with others on the following day for the same event in order for everyone to equally see all the entertainment, on three consecutive days. It is said there was much fist fighting amongst the spectators. Could that be where
the game of “Musical Chairs” originated? What a revolting development that must have been. Nevertheless, there must have been confusing circumstances surrounding the Circus. "Stop the music! Stop the music!"

Now then, the **Coliseum** in Rome is less than a ¼ mile or so distance from the **Circus Maximus**, and was built about 500 years after the Circus Maximus was constructed, and only seated about 50,000, **1/6 the amount that the Circus seated**. The coliseum was used for a comparatively much shorter period time, and estimated to cease being used around 150 AD whereas Circus Maximus continued to be used for approximately another 400 or so years later, until 500AD. But, to this date, **the Coliseum** has been given a much more notable, colorful and popular respectable history. When in use all the spectators could exit the Coliseum in 15 minutes while preparing for the next show. The Circus Maximus was in use much longer before, during, and long after the Coliseum was closed! This is a seemingly unfair
mystery to me, except for the gambling. I can find no logical explanation why the Circus Maximus was nearly totally destroyed and completely demolished after 1,000 or so useful years while the Coliseum with all its sickening, so called entertainment, has been so well preserved, and only used for approximately 200 years or less, and being only a stone's throw distance away from the Circus. The Book "Rome Then and Now" states that the last chariot races offered at Circus Maximus were by the great king Totila the Ostrogoth in 549 A.D. Today's Romans say that the damage to the Coliseum was not caused by war or weather but by the city of Rome’s own inhabitants removing portions for construction of their own properties, yet there is extremely little remaining evidence of the once immense seating capacity for the Circus Maximus while many older amphitheaters of that time are still being used today and in excellent condition considering their age. Personally speaking, I would much rather know more about the Circus Maximus than of the Coliseum because of what it was used for and its longevity and
While in ancient Ostia, an old Roman seaport, only about 25 or so miles south of Rome, Joyce and I sat in the 2,500 years or so old amphitheater still in excellent condition. Ostia's ruins are much more expansive than what we saw in the city of Rome, and Ostia's amphitheater seats between 3,000 to 4,000 spectators, and currently used in summers and has an excellent lighting and sound system today! The ancient seaport's ruins are just as interesting, or more to me, than Rome's ruins. In Rome I did not see ancient private home's ruins in a vast area with beautiful mosaic flooring as seen in Ostia.

There were busloads of Italian students arriving from various parts of Italy. I thought that if so many Italian students were bussed there that day, and not to Rome, it must be quite a worthwhile historic place to see, and it was!
Ancient Torture Tactics vs the Veleno Peacekeepers

Livy states one of the earliest methods used for establishing discipline within a group of inhabitants was brutality, and the second was starvation. In early times fighting amongst families was termed a war. Later, larger groups and neighbors banded together to war against each other. Once Rome became an area in which an overall government was established, around 600BC, a method used in Rome for disciplining citizens and others was the use of lictors. According to Livy the fasces was the weapon used by a lictor, a hooded Roman soldier who used a fasces to punish, behead or kill an unruly citizen on a platform in public display. This certainly instilled fear in everyone watching this demonstration. Supposedly, although probably on the payroll, no one would know who the lictor was. If a lictor refused to carry out the judgment, he himself would be punished by another lictor.

The U.S. 1916 to 1945 Mercury head dime, for nearly 30 years, has a fasces imprinted on the
opposite side of the head of the coin. Photos can be seen on a web search for the “Mercury Dime”. I did not read up or search to know the history of it and do not know why it is there. The fasces symbol is also on the arms of Lincoln's chair at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

When one uses a form of disrespect, such as using fear tactics to control people, it is a clear display of hate toward them. Fear making can be done not only by brutality, and starvation of food, but of money, work, and denying whatever a person needs to stay alive, well, and be happy, especially when those needs are readily available. Inducing physical and mental torture is used as well. According to Livy all these brutal practices were used during the various basic development periods of the Roman Empire, as well as other civilizations. Most animal trainers train by the reward system. Many appointed leaders worldwide get generous rewards for dealing out brutality.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

The fasces (from a dictionary) is a bundle of rods with an ax bound with them. It was formerly used before the superior Roman magistrates as a badge of their power over life and limb, and more recent, the symbol of the Fascist Party. The Fasces is where the word fascist originated. The fasces symbol was used on the armband of the fascist Army uniform under Benito Musolini.

The Fasces
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

A Veleno

The Etymologista I worked with at Bracon in 1954 stated that around the year "0", following the Fall of Rome, each Italian region had its own king and government, "Velenos" were individuals selected and established by their regional king to be their peacekeepers. Veleno was not a family name, it was the name of an occupation. Although Veleno was an occupation, he/she was not a policeman, soldier, nor military person, such as the ancient Roman lictor, a military person who exercised peacekeeping by punishing, killing or terrorizing uncooperative citizens in public display on a platform using the fasces as the Roman method of disciplining a lawbreaker. A veleno was simply a highly covert problem eliminator selected by a king.

Velenos left no room for argumentation or favoritism, as they personally knew very few people, and very few people knew them. For the most part no one really cared or worried about missing a totally undesirable character. Life just
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

goes on after death, and no one lives forever. It is said that during those times professional mourners were summoned and paid to attend and lament at a funeral. This is also stated in the Bible book of Amos 5:16. In that way there would be no need for anyone to attend a funeral at all, and no one would know if a lamenter was a friend, relative, farmer or what. (Due to all bibles being copyrighted all bibles must state this datum in a different but similar way.)

When Italia became a named, but not unified country, Velenos replaced the lictors as lictors were no longer needed. Velenos were invisible unknown factors that performed their duty in total secrecy. In this way no one could blame another citizen for the strange disappearance or death of a certain totally undesirable known person such as a child molester. If so, it would most certainly cause some animosity. Expense was minimized for operating and maintaining prisons to house, feed, and care for utterly mean nasty people with nothing to offer a community or society. After all who would complain
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

about the disappearance of a certain belligerent unscrupulous citizen having nothing to offer the general public but habitual inhumane deeds performed in their community suddenly developing a sickness, died, or disappeared? Most likely, no one! Such as in Sirach 12:13. This made it easy to keep Veleno secrecy. A citizen to be eliminated was decided by the king who based his decision upon complaints from a community's citizens. A three-part governing system was put in place consisting of a king with his laws and authority, the monastery with its top-notch educational system, and an invisible force in place solely for the purpose of keeping and maintaining peace within itself. This method proved to be efficient, effective and suitable for that period of time.

During the Veleno period of peacekeeping under Italian regional kings, no one ever saw or knew a Veleno and virtually no one missed a person taken away by a Veleno justice, it was perhaps recognized as the most humane form of justice to maintain
peace amongst the inhabitants of communities at that time. Many other methods probably did not appear as just. But, severe inhumane treatment, bullying, and child molesting by individuals of so-called friends or neighbors were kept to a minimum.

The balance scale describes the justice Velenos were entrusted with. Justice is simply attained by making things even, not heavier on one side or the other, just even. Argumentation does not formulate a clear path to balance the scale. It is so easy to understand and to misunderstand when issues are out of balance caused through argumentation, one way or the other, and is not a guarantee to always end up with the best answer. THAT is when the unfairness of favoritism can easily creep in.

After the fall of Rome;
New Countries and New Languages
After the fall, somewhere around the year "0" the citizens of the peninsula called Italia with its 20 separate regions, plus the other countries known as
France, Portugal, Spain and more were no longer referred to as Romans but rather Italians, Portuguese, French, Spanish, etc. Latin had been the primary spoken language in the entire Roman Empire which had included the areas we now term as Italy, Spain, France, etc. All of Europe and other countries must have similarly been impacted by the loss of their Latin Language and transitioning to their, presumably new, language all happening at the same time. Could that period of time have been what we refer to as the Tower of Babylon that fell? I have no knowledge about Germany and other languages having a different basic language. But when a country loses its language I imagine they babble on and on, and who really cares? At present Tedesco is the word used in Italy referring to the German language. Latin based countries each developed their own Latin based language and Latin speaking countries eventually disappeared in those Latin spin-off countries. Italian became the language for Italia, etc. And I believe that Latin is no longer a primary language for any country.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

As Italian and other languages developed, they became the primary language for that particular country. It appears to me that a country's total language change would take about 300-400 years to accomplish. Each region in Italia, as well as other countries, had different dialects for certain words. Some words in one region may not be pronounced the same way in a bordering region of that same country, and some words in one region were not used in another. In this way people from different regions could differentiate where people from other regions resided. Changing from the Latin language to a completely new language must have been quite an accomplishment in all Europe.

It seems logical to me that since all of that happened rather suddenly, seemingly simultaneously, each country re-established their new ways and practices, to concurrently rebuild each of their former establishments into new countries. Something of that magnitude could not happen by chance, and without previous planning being put into action. AND THEY
CALL WHAT HAPPENED FOLLOWING THAT PERIOD, "THE DARK AGES?" I say the dark ages were *prior* to the time of "The Circus Maximus" as there are no known saved written records to prove otherwise.

**Following the new structuring of Italia:** The etymologist mentioned that in order to maintain a sensible direction in the newly formed Italia, the already established monasteries were made the most of and became the places citizens could rely upon for sound guidance and information for just about every peaceful building purpose. Italian family trees could only be searched directly from families that kept their own records. No family records were kept by the new local governments under kings. Italy did not unify into one central government or country until 1871AD, only about 100 years ago from our present time, being about 2,000 years after the fall of the Roman Empire. Most likely, due to the majority of Italians during that period of time not being literate, but rather unable to read or write when the Italian language was in its development
stage, while the new Italian language was replacing Latin, it would have been a language of sounds and not of accurate spelling and writing.

Currently, in an Italian dictionary the Italian word for “cut” is spelled *Taglia* in an Italian dictionary, but if you are a current "reader" of Italian you learn that when the letter “g” precedes the letter “l” the letter “g” is silent. Pronouncing this word in "Italian" would be "Talia" but in English “TagLeeah”. I would venture to say that the word *taglia*, with the "g" came into being much later than when the word *talia* was most likely used to indicate cut. Probably prior to that time there was no word spelled as "taglia" and which would have been nonexistent. Currently, there is no Italian word “talia", but the pronouncing of those letters emit the identical verbal sound when spoken as the current Italian word, *taglia*. When an Italian hears the letters *italia* spoken as if it would truly be an Italian word, they clearly hear “is cut” or “is cut up”. In Italy I wear a 42 "taglia" (metric) shoe size, not an 8 or 9 as in
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

the U.S. In Italian, the word taglia is used to indicate the "cut" or size of the shoe.

The newly established, cut-up not unified country, Italia, had probably been the most important influential part of the vast Roman Empire which previously encompassed much of Europe. Then Italia, "the boot" was cut up into 20 or so areas called **Regions**, each learning and speaking Italian. In the U.S. we call them **States**, all speaking American English, each state and Italian region having their differing dialects. As previously stated, by dialects people can usually detect the region, or part, a person is from. I see Italia as being divided in numerous ways as compared to what it formerly had been.

The Regions of Italy, for the most part, are still in the same geographical area of Europe; we call “The Boot.” But from the fall of Rome until 1871 each Region had an appointed king who was in charge of that region’s government. At the start, it
appears that Italia was not a fully politically unified country having an army. Logically speaking, the regional governments had to have been set up by a planned group. Each region, supposedly ruled by its king and his sovereign power, willingly bound together by their citizens purportedly existed in peace for around 1500 years. Only until 1871 did Italy become unified under a one system government, and, shortly after ruled by Mussolini a dictator. At the beginning of this period most of the Regions kept the same name label and most areas within each region are mostly the same today. It is interesting visiting each Region's museums and historic places. It can be an exciting learning experience.

The Italian language is not very similar to Latin in many respects. One may be able to speak and understand Italian yet be totally oblivious of Latin. Such were some famous Italian leaders who, after about the year 300 A.D., were unable to read, speak, or write Latin, and many were unsuccessful in learning it. Yet, we never hear about the
incredible changes and how they did it. That may have been a major contributing factor toward the following peaceful years. Successfully developing an entirely new language, in entire countries was no small thing. It had to have kept everyone’s mind busy. I cannot even imagine it!!

**Monasteries and Monks**
The etymologista mentioned that during a period of approximately 1800 years, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Unification of Italy in 1871, monasteries were under the local king’s rule which, in turn, supported (hosted) their Kings and Monasteries. They became the places for education and guidance for all citizens in each of the 20 regions of Italia. There were good relationships between the regions. Monasteries established the community’s education, society rules, and customs. Many regions had one or more monasteries. Scuoli (Schools) were set up to educate children in communities not close to a monastery.
Monks generally work together as a team, planning, architecturally designing and building the complex structures for their monastery, which differ depending on a region's terrain, whether flatland or mountainous, desert, swampy, etc. They also differ due to varying religious backgrounds, habits, superstitions and beliefs of their populace. But having a different religious association was not a major factor for keeping peace. For the most part, they did not have disagreements or war with each other but rather co-existed in peace, emphasizing that basic education and learning is the real key to establishing and having a good life, la dolce vita!

Architectural design, construction and establishing a monastery is a monumental task, of just plain hard work. It takes an enormous amount of diligent ambitious intelligent dedicated people for the task. It may seem to take a lot of money to complete the task but it is not quite that way because monks do not work for pay but work for a place to live,
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

eat, sleep, and work, a place they design and build for and by themselves. It includes growing and farming for their food and drink. Monks made mortar, cement, and tools to work with along with making lumber or concrete.

To the best of my knowledge, to be a monk was/is not a self-appointed, try-out, or applied for position, nor does it require a special school to attend. A monk was/is an individual specifically selected and chosen by the inhabitants of the monastery, who would receive training according to his own special talents, abilities and interests. Being selected to be a monk was considered an honor of the highest degree for a person in that society. A person had to be observed, studied, selected and invited to be a monk. Some monks and knights of old, and perhaps in current times, did not use their birth rite surnames but adopted a different surname. Many lived a secretive life aside from walking around at night chanting hymns at sunset dressed in long brown robes, or other color attire, as many people imagine.
Monks & Knights
According to Webster’s Dictionary College Edition published in 1981 regarding the Knights Templar: Members of a religious and military order, called Knights Templar, was founded at Jerusalem about 1118 chiefly for the protection of the Holy Sepulcher and of the Pilgrims to the Holy Land, and suppressed in 1312; a member of an order of freemasons in the U.S. calling themselves Knights Templars and claiming to descend from the medieval order; a student of law or a barrister occupying chambers in the Temple in London.

Monks described herein were not associated with a military order. Although there were monasteries that transformed some monks into knights, I believe that nowhere were knights transformed into monks.

Immigration of Velenos
Although rare, most Veleno families in Italia now reside in the provinces of Campobasso and the Molise Regions, East of Rome. A few migrated to
Spain, and the U.S. Ellis Island Immigration records show my grandfather lived in Guardialfiera, the name given to a commune. His brother, Anthony’s record shows Guardialfiero, which may have been the same piece of property as Guardialfiera. Immigration records from Ellis Island show people with the Veleno surname as coming to the U.S. from Italy, only between 1895 and 1911, a 16 year window. This perfectly accorded with the time period when The Unification of Italy took place in 1871. Due to a new government dominating such a vast region area, it had to take a few years to create and enforce the numerous new changes of governmental rules, laws, and money. Records show 23 people named Veleno migrated to the U.S., including my grandfather and his brother, in a 16 year window, perfectly fitting the amount of time it would have taken to put the planned changes into effect, while maintaining peace. During my three trips to Italy I spoke with many people, from North to South and East to West conversing with folks who enjoyed talking about their history, which
you will not find, printed. I found it to be an interest of many, and there are as many or more who will not speak about it at all and simply refuse.

The following section makes known where and how I gained the education, employment experience, and knowledge enabling me to design, invent and develop the Veleno® Guitar

After graduating from high school I first enrolled in an auto mechanic course at a school in Boston. The school was actually underneath a section of the bleachers at Fenway Park. I stayed a short time, probably three or four weeks, and the place closed down. I learned quite a bit in a short time but lost interest in auto mechanics, except for doing most of my own car repairs for the rest of my life. I then immediately enrolled in a Worcester Trade School night class for two years. My manufacturing background began after Enrolling in Worcester Trade School for tool and die making.
Plymouth vs. Cow
While driving to Worcester Trade School one night, my passenger, Henry, a nephew of Hank Estabrook, was enrolled there in a wood-working class. It was pitch black at night, out on a curvy country road with no streetlights. All of a sudden coming around a curve in the road I saw a black thing immediately in front of me. I hit a Black Angus cow and it died. It was so dark my passenger could not understand why I slammed my brakes on. Henry said he never saw the cow and was looking straight ahead. The cow ended up on the top of the hood of my car, a 1948 Plymouth, and the entire front end was wrecked. I had the car repaired by my uncle, Galliano, who owned an auto repair business. He replaced the parts and I painted the car.

My First Machine Shop Job
While going to Worcester Trade, in October 1952, I started working for Mutual Machine Company (MMC) in Hudson Mass. Their primary business was making shoe dies. We made shoe dies for
stamping out various leather shoe parts before assembly, some for plain shoes, and some for wing tips, etc. We made numerous dies for stamping out all sizes and styles of designs, especially for women’s shoes. We were very busy the first year but as foreign shoes started being imported, the numerous shoe industries in the area soon went out of business. MMC made their own precision machine tool products, but were not enough to carry their business and they closed.

**Auto Painting**

Earlier, shortly after starting employment at Mutual Machine in 1952, when my car was finished being repaired from the cow crash, enough to drive, to save the cost of having my car painted, I purchased a professional paint sprayer system. After some brief professional advice, I painted the car myself. It came out to be an excellent paint job and absolutely no one where I worked would believe me. One co-worker knew my uncle Galliano and asked him if I had painted the car, and my uncle verified that I
did the entire paint job including the preparation. Later a couple of guys offered me some pretty good money to paint their cars but I really did not like painting cars, I did it just to save myself some money and to own some paint equipment as well. Later on I gave in, and painted their cars for them, and each one came out excellent, and it gave me a few extra bucks.

In 1953, having been attending Tool & Die making classes at Worcester Trade School at night for the second year, at age 19, while employed at Mutual Machine Company, in 1954, I became classified as an all-around machinist, and tool and die maker. At age 20, owing to my inventiveness, I truly felt I was qualified to answer an ad in the newspaper stating: “Experimental Machinist Needed” at BRACON, (Bradley Sun a/k/a Bradley Container (Bracon) a Division of American Can Company CANCO) in Maynard, Mass. and left Mutual Machine at 19 years old in the spring of 1954, and began a new and fresh type of employment with,
Bracon and stayed there for nine years, until 1963. I applied for the position "Experimental Machinist" and was interviewed by Alex Macowski, the plant’s chief engineer. Alex was born, raised, educated, and got his engineering degrees in Germany, and had been a German bomber pilot during WWII. During my job interview he looked me straight in the eye and said, "What makes you think you are qualified for this position?" And I told him that I just knew I was and felt confident in it. He looked at me and just started laughing and said he did not feel that any 20 year old boy could possibly qualify for the position because it would take at least six years of on-the-job training for this type of position. But, he said, I will get you a job in the printing department where they print our containers such as tooth paste tubes, etc. I was disappointed but told him thank you very much. I began working in the print department 11pm to 7am six days per week under the direction of another German educated man, I believe his first name was Wolfgang Wilfert, and was said that he had been a German fighter pilot in WWII.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

There were approximately 20 printing lines. Each line was designed to make a certain container, complete, from start to finish. After a few weeks, the Research and Development department, (R&D) installed an experimental machine to automatically screw caps onto toothpaste tubes, an operation being done by hand. This new automatic machine used a Syntron bowl which vibrated the caps in an uphill trough to line them up to go down a chute where each cap would then be pushed into a rubber holder, then index to the next position to screw the cap onto the tube. Luckily, I was put on as the man in the print department to run that experimental machine at night.

Screwed Up!
Their capping machine screwed up more than it screwed on. This machine was used during three 8-hour shifts and all were peaking at about 35% efficiency of their 8-hour shift. The engineering department had a four-man team observing the day and afternoon shifts to find out why the production was so low, but did not observe during my night
shift. Personally, I could not put up with running this machine any longer with it continuously jamming up. After the initial few days I told my night foreman, Jack Lovell, I could fix the problem in about two hours. “Just let me into the machine shop”, as it was closed at night, “and I’ll make something I guarantee will work fantastic”. At first he said “No, both of us could get fired, this is a union plant.” After a few more days of this machine constantly jamming, he said “Are you sure you can do it?” and I told him “Absolutely.” He said, “Okay, I’ll be going out for lunch tonight and tomorrow night for an hour. Go ahead into the shop and do what you want”. I went into the machine shop, turned on the lights, turned on the machine needed, went to work and finished making the part, a new track, on the second night after spending about an hour each night.

The R&D Team
On the third night, about ½ hour after my shift began I took their track off and replaced it with my
precision track. The tracks looked identical but mine was precision. I got over an 80% efficiency the first night I used it, which included the time to take their track off after the start of my shift, then stopping to replace it with theirs about 15 minutes before the end of my shift and starting the machine up just before the day shift came in. I did this for nearly two weeks, getting up to 88% efficiency every night and the other two shifts got about 35% at the most. About two weeks went by and Alex, the chief engineer, left a message for me to go to his office when I got off my shift. I didn’t know what I would be faced with. I went to his office and Alex said “What are you doing Mr. Veleno?” I said “What do you mean?” He sternly said “You know exactly what I mean. You are definitely doing something we don’t know about to get the production you are getting.” I told him “Nothing but just coming into work and running that machine.” He looked at me angrily and insistently saying “I really want to know what you are doing!” I told him “This is a union shop and if I did anything to make changes to
your machine you could fire me, right?” He said, “Right.” I said, “I’m just coming into work as usual and just doing my job.” He then nicely said, “Look I really want to know what you are doing, and I will not fire you.” I said “Okay, I’ll be right back.” I went to my toolbox, and got my part and showed it to him. I told him, “I got sick and tired of playing with that track on the machine, jamming up non-stop, so I made my own track and replaced the part you had made with the part I made.” He said, “It looks exactly the same as ours, what is the difference?” I told him, “Accuracy, for this part to work properly it simply needed to be more precision.” Alex closely examined the part I made and said, “You made this?” and I replied, “Yes.” He said “You no longer work for the print department you will be working for me from now on. I will place you on a four man experimental team developing automation equipment for me. You will be with another experimental machinist, who also has a degree in mechanical engineering, but he enjoys building machines rather than designing them. There will
also be a project engineer and one electronic technician on your four-man team starting immediately. But there is one stipulation. I have already spoken with my superiors in this matter and they agreed to my having you join us, but they insist you will have to take and complete an ICS Journeyman Machinist course in all the variations used for machine shop practice. The company will pay for your ICS course. So within three months of my date of hire I became classified as an Experimental Machinist!”

I completed the extensive ICS course during the next six years and have a Journeyman Machinist Certificate dated 5/22/1960. It was the highest and most extensive course available relating to machine shop practice. I was so excited and happy from that day on. During my second interview with Alex, less than two months after hiring me, he accepted me as is and immediately placed me on a four-man experimental machine development team in his Research and Development (R&D) department.
Our job was to study certain tasks in which a person was continuously performing a chore by hand and we were to design and build a prototype machine to perform the chore that person was doing, and assign that worker to another chore.

**There were two R&D teams.**
As the need arose, a team member, or members, would be transferred to the other team and we traded team members back and forth taking advantage of each one's expertise and experience. The factory's experimental engineering staff had six engineers who would discuss what we made then design a finished product, improving what we did, refining the appearance over our prototype machine for more practical use. For example we fastened many mechanical components together with “C” clamps as temporary shortcuts. When the staff engineers examined what we had they would refine our work by having components attached with more attractive and stronger welded brackets with nuts and bolts, not “C” clamps.
Asi Aboud

One R&D team member, Asi Aboud, was an experimental machinist on the other team most of the time. But occasionally either he or I would have a temporary transfer on certain projects for a length of time and the two of us would work together in a team. Asi (pronounced as Aysee) came from a highly unusual background. After working with him for a couple of months someone told me he was a son of a billionaire Arab King. I didn’t know whether to believe it or not and since Asi never spoke about his background or himself and I never questioned him about his private life. However, after a few months or so, Asi came into the office one day and placed a dinner invitation he received from his father on our supervisor’s desk requesting taking time off to attend the function. The invitation was larger than a standard 8½”x11” paper size. It was thick, shiny white velour with gold printing and a blue tassel attached at the top center, stating Asi’s father being King Saud (Pronounced Saoood) of Saudi Arabia at that time,
inviting his son, Asi Aboud, to a dinner function being held at a very exclusive place in Boston.

Asi rarely mentioned anything about the occasion except that he enjoyed it very much and told us what was served. According to the local newspaper, some dignitaries also attended the function. At that time, King Saud had been ill and was in a Boston hospital for treatment. From there he later went to West Palm Beach for rest and recovery for about a nine year total. I believe he was in the U.S. from 1954 until 1963, which was about the same time period I worked for BRACON. A few days later I asked Asi why he does not live with his father and mother. He said that his mother was one of about 157 wives of his father and that his mother was not one of his selected few favorites, and not all his wives had children. I never pursued any further information from Asi about his family life, and tried to understand what he offered. He was always very quiet and reserved, intelligent, calm and cool, never showing emotion toward anger or excitement. He
was a very unusual person, as one could easily understand.

**Time Magazine's Article**

At one point Time Magazine came to do an article on our “Million Dollar Junk Pile” as they called it, which was on the fifth floor of the $\frac{1}{8}$th mile long factory, wherein there was a stockpile of numerous parts we had used in various stages of developing automation. We always tore apart and stored the finished prototype test equipment for future use in other projects or until the final mechanism was completed with a more attractive appearance. Time Magazine came to our plant, took photos, and mentioned in the article “This is what it takes to make progress.” Because of their usefulness, many of the junk pile parts were used again and again; some were only a one-time piece of equipment.

There were approximately 2,000 employees between the three shifts at BRACON. A year after being hired I turned 21, in 1955 and was voted into the position of recording secretary for the labor union.
at BRACON. I stayed at that position for two years. Our office was next to a music store. Being recognized as an “Experimental Machinist” for R&D at 20 years old at Bracon had been quite an accomplishment and extremely gratifying. Until the end of my employment in 1963 our four-man experimental development team was to observe a person working by hand and develop a machine to take the place of what he/she was doing, and/or improve on a piece of automation equipment we had previously developed.

**My Interest in Guitar and Music Started Here**

Our union office, being next to a music store, presented an interesting new beginning in my life. During the first couple of weeks in the office I often heard a lone guitar playing classical music.

One day I went out our back office door and into the music store’s back door and saw a man sitting and playing classical guitar music. I introduced myself to the store owner, Mr. Boyagian, who was
also the music teacher. During our discussion he mentioned he graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music and taught every instrument, piano, accordion, violin, viola, obo, French horn, trumpet, trombone, flute, drums, guitar, banjo, all the woodwind instruments, and whatever instrument used to produce music. Eventually I heard him play most all the instruments that he mentioned. He taught numerous students, private and from various school bands. He taught and played excellent classical guitar. Sometimes I would hear him play often heard popular country and rock & roll guitar licks. He played all exceptionally well including his particularly amusing superb hootin, hollerin, and verbal country blares along with terrific foot stomping, always wearing a formal suit with a vest and dressy shoes. His mannerisms were always very refined, even during his low note fart cover up inclusions!

Needless to say I was so impressed with this man’s talent I signed up for lessons feeling very
confident I couldn’t have asked for a better teacher. My brother- in-law Emil had an old f-hole guitar he had been banging on but really didn’t play nor was interested in taking lessons. I asked if I could borrow it to take lessons and he loaned it to me. I used it for three months then my teacher convinced me to purchase a new Fender Telecaster and amplifier. The Tele had a natural blond neck with a white body. It was beautiful. Mr. Boyagian had stated it would be incredibly easier for me to play than the old guitar; therefore, being easier to play, I would learn much faster. That was an understatement. I practiced at home about 2-4 hours every day for the next two years and loved it.

Mr. Boyagian taught me to read music for everything I played. He always picked the selections. He mostly gave me songs that were very popular pre WWII jazz, rag time, or big band music. One song I loved was the classic Hungarian Rhapsody. Eventually I began playing by ear and could play songs I heard on the radio.
Mr. Boyagian described how music is produced on stringed instruments, how they are made, function and operate. During my second year taking lessons he taught me counterpoint, used extensively in developing jazz, particularly chords used in Jazz. He also taught me how to transpose while reading and playing in one key and play in another. During that time, my teacher asked if I would work for him giving lessons to new students, which I agreed to. I worked for him part time for about two years, and continued practicing two to four hours per day. My favorite student was Ray Craft, who was in the air force taking many day and night flights over the North Pole, and back to take a guitar lesson in the same day. Ray loved learning and playing jazz he composed, and I felt gratified to be able to help him.

After taking lessons for a year I joined a three-piece band. Steve Stazewski was the lead steel guitar player and Charlie Carter was the drummer I played mostly background and rhythm, sometimes lead guitar. We played some country music, folk, and of
course, Hawaiian music. Once in a while we played in a few local clubs a couple of nights a week on my days off. I recall a time when a local weekend kid’s show on TV was “Rex Trailer”, a country western guy. Rex showed up at one of our shows one night and invited us to his trailer. He actually lived in a house trailer!! When we walked in, a huge St. Bernard dog eyeballed me, probably because I was the smallest, ran right toward me and put his paws on my shoulders showing me he was bigger and taller. He was trying to lick my face and I kept turning away. Rex’ wife came over and took the dog away and made him behave. Rex was a real party guy entertaining and talking non-stop for quite a while. I guess all of us can do that when we get a captive audience. All of us band members finally got very tired and had to leave, which was about 4 am by then. Needless to say, my wife did not appreciate that; in fact, expressed her disbelief for the amount of time spent away. Not too often but once in a while we band members inevitably got invited to a party somewhere on a weekend
night after playing. I didn’t go very often because of my family, job, and just plain need of sleep and rest. I really loved my Experimental Machinist job, my family, playing guitar and my part time teaching. I always felt that going out for fun after hours was waste of time. Just chit chatting was not for me. I enjoyed playing out but not as much as teaching. Soon after, I put an ad in the paper and started teaching guitar lessons part time at home and stopped playing in a band. I got a few after-school students and a couple of grownups.

**Johnny Archer - The Piano Player**
After leaving my Maynard part time teaching job for two years I quit there and began teaching for the Johnny Archer music store in Marlboro. It was an easy four-mile drive instead of a difficult nine. Johnny Archer’s sister, Lorraine Archambeault, had been married to my stepfather’s brother Jimmy Dimouro. Johnny had changed his name to Archer after going to Hollywood at about 19 years old while playing piano for silent movies.
Johnny mentioned that when he was young, his father insisted he take piano lessons from the third grade on. Johnny said he hated it when his father made him practice at least an hour every single day, sometimes more. But when in high school, he went to a theater in Boston and entered a contest for piano players being tested to play background music for silent movies. Silent movies were a big thing at that time, and many used live piano players for background music. Johnny won first prize, and was immediately hired. He had to watch the movie and play what he felt was appropriate for the scene as it was happening. It turned out that he excelled in it and loved it. After winning first place, and getting hired, he loved playing piano from then on.

While he was still a teenager playing for silent movies, in Boston, a Hollywood talent scout saw and heard Johnny play. He invited Johnny to go to Hollywood as that is where silent movies were being made but began making movies with sound, called "talkies". Johnny went with him to tinsel town and
soon formed his “Big Band” orchestra to play in movies with sound. Sometimes Johnny can be seen in those old movies at his piano, leading the orchestra. Some have dancers lying in a circle on the floor making various designs with their bodies, arms, and legs with overhead cameras filming their variety of body-made patterns. Overhead camera shots in musicals for that type of dance routine were popular for a time. Johnny’s orchestra played in many of the first sound movies a/k/a “talkies”. Johnny also wrote music for the instrumental parts in his orchestra. Following that, Frank Sinatra hired Johnny as his personal piano player. Johnny stayed with Sinatra for quite a long time playing piano and composing background music for much of Sinatra’s music. Johnny also played on Sinatra’s private yacht at Bar Harbor Maine for a time. While there he became seriously ill and developed spinal meningitis, and was admitted to a New York hospital. He had to have his colon removed. Johnny was left paralyzed and it took him about two years to recuperate enough to walk after this ordeal. His
nurse took care of him day and night for those two years and they ended up getting married. Johnny and his wife moved back to his hometown, Marlboro, Massachusetts and opened up a music store

**Caesar’s Monticello**

Soon after opening his music store, Johnny was asked to get an orchestra together for “Caesar’s Monticello”, in Framingham, Massachusetts. I believe it was the largest night club in New England at the time. Johnny put a 23-piece orchestra together and was the bandleader there for a few years. Johnny always had the happiest disposition of anyone I had ever known. While in his daily routine of taking care of himself, his music store, and other business related responsibilities, he wrote music for each part of his orchestra including doing rehearsals with top well known celebrities for a new show each week. Johnny always wrote their music in the key they needed. Performer's managers always sent their music to him a week or so ahead. While in his music store, Johnny constantly wrote music for
all the parts of his 23 piece orchestra for the big name stars of that time, such as Tony Martin, Patti Page, Andy Williams, Frankie Sergio, and numerous others who booked at the Monticello on a weekly basis. For a long time there was a new star every week. He was the most amazing musician I have ever personally known, seeing him writing and composing music, plus running his store, in his physical condition and always smiling! He wrote music all day long, while waiting on customers, laughing, and joking all the while. I didn’t think it was humanly possible for a person to do what he did. He could have his mind multitasking in so many places at the same time and handle it so well, especially in his condition! Johnny was probably the most determined persistently energetic man I have known. A couple of times Johnny insisted I go to the Monticello to see him, his orchestra, and the show. Not really trying to name drop, but this is an integral part of my autobiography. One time I met and spoke briefly with Miss Patti Page, The Singing Rage, and
another time Johnny introduced me to Andy Williams who sat at my table before the show and we conversed for a little while.

Johnny got very upset with me the day I told him I had to move to Florida for my wife’s health. He tried everything he knew of to keep me there. He said “You wait and see, that will not keep the two of you together, I know what I’m saying. I’ve been around the world too many times and know how it works.” It was difficult for me to tell him and to actually leave when he strongly wanted me to stay. He wanted to give me the guitar parts for his orchestra and start playing with him at the Monticello. But I told him that I seriously had to leave and felt he really did not understand what I would do for my wife and family.

My Favorite Guitar Student
A few months before I left for Florida, a new student came into Archer's Music store looking to take guitar lessons. He had the appearance of a
hippy. His hair was disheveled; heavy stubble beard growth, shabby clothes, and dirty shoes, like he had bought them in a used clothing store then dirtied and messed them up. He had a sloppy looking, filled up backpack. Not the usual neat clean looking person coming into a music store to take lessons. But he appeared so familiar to me. When he told me his name I immediately recognized him by his name and his looks, mannerisms, sound of his voice, as a boy I had known during my early school years, up to the eighth grade, who was always well dressed, intelligent, clean cut, straight forward grade “A” student, good looking, and excelling in sports, but now looked like a hobo. When he heard my name, he recognized me as well. It was so unusual seeing that same person in this new appearance, which was so much unlike him, but it was unmistakably him, though, much older and mature. During the younger years I never knew him to be much of a talker, but now, with me, he commanded center stage. I just listened to him. Compared to his former self he was
exceedingly interesting. He started telling me what he was currently doing, which developed into something difficult for me to comprehend. He had done so much of a variety in reality that I felt I had hardly done anything at all! In conversation, I felt I had nothing to offer this man except guitar lessons. Then I said “I thought that you were going to go to a Catholic High School Academy for boys and then, after that, to a seminary to study to be a priest.” He told me that was true. He graduated from the high school academy then went into a seminary to be a priest. After two years he was told that he was not cut out to be a priest! I said “Wow, how disappointed you must have been!” He said, “On the contrary, they told me I was cut out to be something better, a monk!” I was shocked on hearing this and he said “Don’t be surprised, what do you think monks do? Go around dressed in brown robes chanting songs at night?” I said, “Yes!” He said “Good, that is exactly what you are supposed to think.” He said that since we knew each other from previous years, and I still knew
quite a few of his old schoolmates, he asked me to promise to keep everything concerning him in the strictest of confidence from former friends. So I promised that I would, and I did keep him covered. He told me that after the two years he spent in the seminary to be a priest, he was selected to be a monk and was placed in a monastery. He stated that a monk’s duties are to keep the church abreast of all the worldly developments and information during every given present time. He said that monks do most of the religious writings, and regular text books as well, plus other writings in general such as history text, mathematics, and assist in social developments. They recommend necessary changes for the church’s directions and keep up with the latest times to help steer them into the future. He stated church direction, including school text, religious articles, etc. rely on monasteries for the newest ways to go in social developments and that his interest was very strong in those areas. I was surprised to learn everything he told me, which was extremely difficult for me to absorb. I was not of
that mindset and had to make tough self-adjustments. He told me that his assignments in his or most recent past have been one year assignments divided into four segments which consisted of: (1) the first three months learning a particular occupation of his choice; (2) doing that occupation for three months; (3) going back to the monastery for three months to compile and write about his findings, which he could not do while on assignment; (4) finally, meet with others who had been out in the world covering other social and professional areas, including circus or carnival entertainment. Then group discuss, compile and assemble new school texts for use in the immediate near future. Their final results, texts, and recommendations would be sent to church leaders and some as far as to Rome for final approval for distribution to parishes, churches, schools, social institutions helping develop in organizational direction throughout the world. He mentioned that various religions in other countries do very similar undertakings. He considered a monk’s work as being very exciting, much different
than what people presume a monk’s life to be, which I would have to agree with. He told me that his goal this year was to learn to play the guitar so that he could play and sing folk songs in three months. I told him that I never knew anyone who could do this in three months, who never previously played a guitar. He said, “Just watch me. I will do this because I am very committed. Please give me loads of extra work because I will practice ten to twelve hours a day for the next three months. There will be nothing else in my life except for learning to complete this project, and I will do it very well. After all, this is my occupation, just the same as anyone else’s occupation. I get paid to do this.” Not much to my surprise, in three months he knew numerous popular folk songs, played the guitar and sang exceptionally well. At his last lesson he bade me farewell and said that he was going on the road with his backpack somewhere to join a hippy commune and be a real hippy for three months, living and doing everything the way they do, taking his knowledge back to the monastery. Then during
the following months he would be doing everything in the manner he had described to me with other monks who had been out in the world gathering information in other areas of occupations and situations. Being very naive, I asked him how far in his actions he goes while living with and being a hippie. He told me everything in every single way. I wished him the best of luck and he went off smiling. I thought “Wow, what a sacrifice he is making for the Church!” I really was not prepared for this. Speaking with him had been an extremely interesting learning experience for me. I was very appreciative to have been associating with him learning about a monk’s way of life and how their contribution is so immense and important to societies everywhere. I felt that he was doing an extremely noble and honorable thing to devote his entire life to his, beliefs, and faith in this manner to help mankind. I always scheduled him to be the last student of the day so that we could spend some time talking after guitar lessons in which he filled me in on some activities he was involved within his
sphere as a monk. Information I gathered from him regarding monks and monasteries is intertwined with what I learned about monasteries from the Italian Etymologista, while working earlier at Bracon then personally speaking with Italians much later in years during my three trips to Italy.

During that same period of time working at Bracon and my guitar music epoch period, my wife, Betty, had been gradually been getting exceedingly ill during the previous six or so years. She regressed into a dreadfully poor health condition which wasn’t as noticeably serious to me, as it had been happening so gradual when I did see. I had to make enormous changes in my routines. We did the best we could under the circumstances. Over a period of about eight years we went to about six doctors in succession. First to our family doctor, who we always kept, then dermatologists, and others who specialized in nervous conditions, which, they said, was the major contributor toward her skin condition, especially on her hands. During the cold
weather her fingers would crack and bleed. All the various doctors gave her a wide variety of medications to calm her nerves. But she progressively got worse. She was finally admitted into the Lemuel Shattuck hospital in Boston, a specialized hospital used for recuperation and rehabilitation of prolonged illnesses. She was there for three months. During that time, I had to keep on working at my job which had excellent medical benefits, plus tend to our five children as well. I was working an 11pm to 7am shift 6 days a week at Bracon; which was helpful in my being able to make daily hospital visits and often slept in a chair at the hospital. I got help from parents, relatives and from whomever I could to help taking care of my children. My mother and father had moved to Florida in 1960 and built a duplex home with two bedrooms on each side. Then, in order for me to survive they helped enormously by taking my two oldest girls, Shelly and Marcy, until I could sell my home and move to Florida. They agreed to take Michele and Marcella until things got
better. They stayed about a year, until the remainder of us came to Florida. I contacted a former schoolmate, Ronnie O'Brien, a radio announcer, and his wife Inez, who did not work. And since they were unable to have children I asked if they would take care of my baby, Tina, for a while until Betty got home from the Boston hospital. They were more than happy to do that for me, but they really missed Tina very much when I had to take her back. They took excellent care of Tina for close to a year. This helped Betty to recuperate also. I did whatever I could to take care of Chris and Carla meanwhile. Working nights helped me immensely.

**House Painting**

After I successfully painted a couple of cars in 1954 I painted a couple more up until 1960 when I saw and decided to purchase a SpeeFlow commercial airless paint unit that put out un-thinned paint out at 2 gallons per minute with 2,000 psi. I started a part time house painting business. But with everything in
my life going the way it was, I only contracted to paint three houses to 1963. **After taking my painting equipment with me to Florida** I made an appointment with Ace Sign Company to demonstrate to sell the equipment, by painting a 4’x8’ plywood panel with a full and even coverage of a paint of their choice, non-thinned, in less than two minutes. They timed me and it was actually more like 40 seconds. Everyone at the demonstration was flabbergasted at the performance and immediately purchased my equipment. At that time they had never seen anything like it and appreciated it. 10 or so years later I saw an employee of Ace Sign who told me they were still using the equipment, and loved it.

**1961 Prior to Our Separated Family**
My cars didn’t last long going back and forth to work, an 18-mile trip, and a mostly daily 50 mile trip to the hospital, with Boston traffic. As a result I had to purchase cheap cars one after the other in the following months. I bought a couple of $50
cars, a 1948 Desoto, 1950 Mercury, and I believe a 1952 light blue Ford Station wagon for $150. Cheap cars did not last long in those days compared to what a car will do now. My financial position became inadequate very fast, paying doctor bills, unexpected airplane tickets, children’s care. Soon everything involved dragged me financially down and I was mentally distraught struggling to keep my family together and safe.

From 1955 until 1963 I studied guitar and music in Massachusetts. Soon became a guitarist in a three-piece band, worked part time as a guitar teacher in two music stores successively, and taught guitar at home. In September 1963 my family and I moved to St. Petersburg, Florida and about two weeks later began employment at Universal Machine, Inc. (UMI) in St. Petersburg. UMI was in the initial startup stages of manufacturing computer modules and space vehicle components such as for the Lunar Excursion Module (LEM). When I began there were a total of four employees in the Company, a mother, father,
son, and son-in-law.

Marcy, Carla, Chris, Shelly and Tina, 1961
Prior to Moving to Florida

My first guitar (Page 5) was made for my own exclusive personal use and pleasure. Two features I wanted were ease in playability, and sound. It had everything I was looking for and was more than satisfied.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

I had not been contemplating making guitars to sell. My all aluminum guitar was not a prototype guitar and not an experimental guitar as many have misstated, it was a real guitar, finished, whole and complete.

A prototype is considered an unfinished product made for trial or for the purpose of future development! I made, completed and finished a guitar, and very much to my surprise it functioned and sounded better than most all others I used! It was not a prototype by any means.

Having knowledge about music and stringed instruments, I knew exactly what to do, how to do it and just did it, never consulting with anyone as to how or what to do about guitar making while or during building my guitar. However, I had to learn about making patterns for casting aluminum insofar as shrinkage, draft angles, gates, risers, etc. from an old time aluminum foundry pattern maker who taught me how to make the patterns necessary
for the foundry to cast my the aluminum neck and body parts.

I enrolled in an Engineering Drawing night class at St. Petersburg Jr. College, earned a 93% in my final exam, and purchased all the tools needed to make my own designs, patterns, mechanical drawings and final prints and still have most them.

My first guitar played and sounded much better than what I expected and felt the tone qualities were unsurpassable. It became the only guitar I used for the following five years. I believe that my first aluminum guitar was the first successfully built all-aluminum guitar made in the United States of America, possibly in the world. My guitar shined liked chrome when polished, producing a very striking appearance, due to it being made of high-quality grade aluminum alloy. I chose an alloy preferred by salt-water boat hardware parts manufacturers because of its high corrosive resistance, tensile strength and durability; plus
requiring minimal inexpensive maintenance and upkeep. When finished, the alloy offered a striking chrome-like appearance. This was not a feature paramount to what I was looking for but certainly became valued.

**A Most Exciting Moment**

In September 1966, one month after completing my first guitar, one of the most exciting moments of my entire life happened without my foreknowledge. I was Elected to be A Member of the ASTME, (American Society of Tool and Manufacturing Engineers) and received a Certificate of Membership, mailed to my home address, from the ASTME, signed and sealed by the president and secretary of the Society. The document states that *I was duly qualified and elected to be a member of the ASTME society*; an organized and functioning institution for the advancement of scientific knowledge in the field of tool and manufacturing engineering, main office in Michigan, we both realized that I did not have a
formal college degree as well.

Being elected by that society is a most prestigious honor in the field of engineering and manufacturing. I felt highly honored. To the best of my knowledge, No one could simply join the ASTME, to become a member one must unknowingly become elected by the members of the Association.

I feel that I was elected due to my accomplishments in making that first all-aluminum guitar in the United States. After having the combined nine year period of Experimental Machine Designing and building, studying guitar, and learning intense Music Theory gave me the ability and knowledge to design and construct that guitar which I feel would have qualified me to use the title "Musical Instrument Engineer", although I never felt the need to use the title.

Using My Guitar
In Florida I began using my all-aluminum guitar while offering guitar lessons at home and at Sanborn’s House of Music on Central Avenue in St. Petersburg, then later at Bringe’s music store in 1966. Prompted by my optometrist, also a guitarist, I joined a music appreciation group mostly assembled of former college musicians who wished to continue playing for their own appreciation, and met one night a week at Azalea Middle School. I did that to help keep my playing talent up to date. A music instructor passed out written score for each instrument in the group. The group sounded very professional.

Five years later, in 1971, after making my first guitar, I was prompted by friends to make aluminum guitars to sell and was fortunate enough to show my guitar to people who helped me in that area. I calculated an accurate formula to determine fret positions for any length neck. My first guitar neck turned out excellent.

I then started my part-time business, Veleno®
Instrument Company (VIC), which produced and sold most of the guitars from 1973 to 1976. But due to having suffered two brain aneurysms in 1974, I was unable to produce guitars as rapidly as I had been. When the doctor told me I had a brain aneurysm I didn't know what it involved and what it was. He said "A blood vessel burst in your brain and left that part non-functioning, that part actually died. However that can be serious or not very serious depending on where in the brain it took place, and the purpose it served." He stated "The brain has many areas that do not appear to do anything. Usually in instances like this another part of the brain will come to its rescue to try to do the function for that part of the brain. They can do quite well in assisting but cannot completely take over its former function. But many people get by just fine, depending on how serious the damage was, which we cannot know at this time." I ceased making production lots of 25 at a time when I lost my partner and gradually diminished to taking one guitar order at a time with a 12 week delivery period.
During that following 9-year period Veleno guitar’s publicity and popularity suddenly surfaced and rapidly continued at an alarming increase. I received numerous favorable emails from various parts of the world but virtually no orders for a guitar. Yet, during that period I saw many supposed Veleno® guitars advertised for sale on eBay and by some dealers. Many accompanying photos for those ads displayed visible features of contraptions I never incorporated with my guitars. It was soon clear some of them were counterfeited Veleno® Guitars made illegally by identity thieves claiming those guitars were made by me. But I did not have the means to track them.

Without advance warning, in 2002, all Veleno® guitar notoriety and publicity suddenly came to an abrupt halt,

This abrupt halt has continued until present. All publicity and notoriety halted immediately
following the court's decision to turn down Anthony Marc's application and that no one could use my Veleno name for manufacturing their guitars.

After examining the information I received regarding this phenomenon it became clearly visible that the Veleno® guitar publicity had not been done for my benefit, but was rather done for the people who were planning to steal my name "Veleno" for their backward scheme of thievery. Very few guitar orders engendered after 1975, when my partner, Harry Wayne Sipes, left Veleno® Instrument Company, following my brain aneurysms.

We received virtually no guitar orders during that 9-year period, 1993 to 2002, yet Veleno® guitars were noted as being popular in news articles, guitar magazines, books, museums, and other news media. I recently and now feel that some famous name people became innocently involved with clever promotional arrangements concocted by identity thieve counterfeiters, and when some became famous names became aware of this they simply washed
their hands of the entire mess. For those who did, thanks a lot Sherlock. I believe that many who were involved were unaware that some Veleno® guitars used in their promotional efforts were not made by me, the real John Veleno, but rather by illegally operating fraudulent identity theft criminals thus causing a very confusing ingredient so much so that a few Veleno® guitar owners did not knew if their guitar was a genuine Veleno® or not. Neither the counterfeiters nor I benefited from this revolting development, and all lost. Some guitars were sent to me for verification. Some of those received a Certificate of Authenticity and some did not.

If you were one who washed his hands of the entire mess, I don't blame you. You did a good thing for yourself. And if you can come forward to me now and place yourself where you unknowingly thought you were - I forgive you, otherwise upon knowing this, and not coming forward; I don't forgive you due to "you can only earn honesty from yourself". Some information found on the Internet or other
sources may differ from what I have written, but you can count on this autobiography as reliable to the best of my knowledge. Consider doing a web search for “John Veleno” and be sure to use the quotation marks before and after the name as illustrated. Especially visit my Website, www.veleno.net and thoroughly roam the website. There are many more exciting life experiences that brought me to where I am today.

A Record Holder
For a production guitar the Veleno® guitar by far holds the record for the highest percentage of guitars owned by top performers of the total number of guitars produced. And unlike other manufacturers all Veleno® guitars, were sold at a 40% discounted price, but none given away for promotional purposes. Two and a half months after I suffered a second brain aneurysm I gave a Veleno® Traveler as a gift to a very special person, “Margie” of Gulf Artist Productions. She assisted me in promoting my guitars for four and a half years without ever
asking for anything in return. She was not a musician or an entertainer. Therefore I consider all Veleno® Guitar purchasers as Veleno® guitar buffs.

Following is a list of purchasers or owners. Of the less than 180 guitars I made prior to 2002, I personally sold to most on the list. The question mark indicates it is unknown whether or not it could be a fake Veleno® or could have been purchased from a dealer who purchased it from VIC (Veleno® Instrument Company) or a former Veleno® owner, and/or the owner never registered or sent the guitar to VIC for verification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTISTS WHO HAVE OWNED AN AUTHENTIC OR UNKNOWN VELENO® GUITAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A = authentic Veleno® Guitar - ? = unknown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marc Bolan of “T-Rex” (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eric Clapton (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Greg Allman, “Allman Brothers Band” (A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lou Reed (A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

• Johnny Winter, blues guitarist (A)
• Ace Frehley of “KISS” (A)
• Todd Rundgren (A)
• Sonny Bono (A)
• Dan Ferguson, former personal guitarist for “The Sonny and Cher show”, who also mentioned to me his Veleno® guitar was the best studio guitar he ever used (A)
• Dolly Parton (?)
• Steve Albini of “Shellac”; “Nirvana” (?)
• Pete Haycock, of the “Climax Blues Band”, who owned three Veleno® guitars, including a Veleno® Traveler (A)
• Ray Monette of “Rare Earth” (A)
• Mark Farner of “Grand Funk Railroad”, who owned three Veleno® guitars (A)
• Ronnie Montrose of “Montrose” and “The Edgar Winter’s Band” (A)
• Lonesome Dave Peverett of “Foghat” (A)
• Jeff Lynne of “Electric Light Orchestra” (A)
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

- Mick Mars of “Motley Crue” (?)
- Terry Blankenship of “Daemon” (A)
- Ed Kuepper of “The Saints”, an Australian punk aesthetic (?)
- John Stone of “Chocolate & Vanilla” (A)
- Keith Levene of “The Clash”, known for his outstanding guitar work in “PIL” (?)
- Robert Bond of “Rise” (A)
- Mark Klyne of “Loveday” (A)
- Robbie Krieger of “The Doors” (A)
- David Black of “Seduce” (?)
- Frank DeTulio of “Depot” (?)
- Mario DeMurier of “The James Gang” (?)
- John Olafson of “Babel” (A)
- David Surkamp of “Pavlov’s Dog” (A)
- Ted Smida of “Out of Control” (A&?)
- David Robinson of “The Cars” (a Veleno® guitar shown on their “Panorama” album) (A)
- Johnny Depp, from November 1998 Guitar World magazine, page 60 (?)
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

- Frank Hannon of “Telsa” (?)
- Twiggy Ramirez of the “Marilyn Manson” group (?)
- Eric Erlandson of “Hole” who owed Three Veleno® guitars (?)
- Xavier DeRosnay of the French group - “Justice”. (A)

The reason I never gave a guitar away to an entertainer was because my very first guitar sale was to Marc Bolan of T-Rex and I would not dare give one away to another guitarist after Marc purchased a Veleno® guitar from me. And, he bought two, one for himself and one for Eric Clapton. My giving one away would have been highly insulting to him. Then after having the two brain aneurysms my course was deflected and I never attained to having a "full time" guitar making business, which was close to becoming a reality. Knowing I had been a very generous person I would have given guitars to many expert players helping them in other ways on their way to more than just the
success they already have.

**The Veleno® Original**

The Veleno® Original is a full size guitar with 22 frets. The Veleno® neck is \( \frac{3}{4} \)" thick up to where it tapers to fit into the body, and has a 11" fret board radius. Serial numbers 1-5 had 2 pickups, a three way selector switch and one volume and one tone control. Serial numbers 6 and onward had two pickups, each with its own volume and tone controls and a three way selector switch for neck or bridge pickup or both. Some future numbers also had a phase switch with a hi/lo tone switch for an instant pre tone controlled lead guitar or background guitar switch.

**The Veleno® Traveler**

The Veleno® Traveler is a totally new type of stringed musical instrument entirely in a guitar class of its own. It came about by a request from famous blues guitarist, BB King. I went to a concert he was headlining at the Tampa Armory and got in a line of admirers to meet him after the show. When I
finally got to him he asked me to get to the end of the line as he wanted to have the time to talk with me about making a request about making a new guitar. So, I went to the back of the line. When the line finally came to me at the end, about 3:00AM he said he'd like me to make a guitar about "This long".
Veleno® Original reflecting a Veleno® Traveler
I asked for a tape measure and measured it and it was about 27" long. BB told me he works 365 days a year and is unable to develop new ideas while he is travelling by plane with lots of time on his hands, and if he had a guitar the size requested he could plug in ear phones, to work out his new ideas, which would accommodate him nicely.

So I designed and made the 27.5 inch long Veleno® Traveler guitar. However, it seems he was never able to get in touch with me as he was in transit almost all the time. I tried to contact BB but to no avail. Me, being stationary and not travelling much, I thought he would contact me it just didn't happen. Nevertheless I still very much appreciate the idea he gave me and I built on that. I love this new instrument, and made and sold a few.

Aside from BB's reason, I believe my Veleno® Traveler is a crown jewel for the crown of any guitar playing King. Being in a class of its own
with its unique playing features, can be a big plus to every guitar King who looks for unusually superb string bending, and for developing unique new sounds in his music score.

The **Veleno® Traveler** is 27 ½" long has a 20 ¾" string length from the "0" fret to the bridge, and has 24 frets. It is tuned to a first string "G", three half notes, higher instead of the standard first string "E". The body is designed for perfect balance. Its unique design is highly attractive, its playability is superb. These features place this guitar in a category and class of its own. Johnny Winter was one of the first professional guitarists to try out the Traveler. While playing it in a dressing room after a show he exclaimed "Wow, listen to this! I can bend a string a full octave and it comes right back in tune."

Following are links to a video of the Climax Blues Band with Pete Haycock proudly demonstrating his string bending techniques on a Veleno® Traveler.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

During some of his riffs you can see he bends the string first then plucks it at a desired high note then relaxes the string to the anticipated lower note numerous times offering beautifully sounding unique reverse string bending sounds from the Veleno® Traveler. Hear Pete Haycock executing this sound on his Veleno® Traveler recorded in 1981 at:

http://myvideo.de/watch/8924037/Climax_Blues_Band_I_Love_You_1981
Or copy and paste: http://youtu.be/DktA8nbPREI to the address line on your browser.

Making Ankh Guitars for Todd Rundgren
Less than a year after my partner left VIC Todd Rundgren contacted me by phone after sending me his Ankh drawings Todd mentioned he had given his Ankh design to each of “the big three” and each told him, “It cannot be done.” I assured Todd I believed making them would be no problem. I was on a 30mg valium per day prescription at that time and
had to focus on finishing Ankh shaped guitars I promised Todd. The first Ankh guitar was delivered to him on New Year’s Eve, December 31, 1976. Todd phoned me full of excitement about the Ankh guitar saying "It is just like the drawing". He repeated saying about the Ankh guitar “It looks exactly like the drawing!” I said “I know” and then he emphasized “I mean exactly!!” And I repeated "I know." He then mentioned he had planned to go to a party but decided to stayed home and play the guitar because he loves the way it plays and sounds. (I have the original drawings he sent me.) I feel I made his dream guitar a reality.
The Veleno® made Ankh guitar for Todd Rundgren
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Custom three pickup Veleno® Original Guitar made for Jack Germany

After 1977 it took all of the following 10 years
and more to eventually overcome most of my physical and cerebral adjustment problems. I did this by a slow gradual constant increase of exercises. See the *Jogging to get in shape* section. I think that after I had the two aneurysms, some people thought I was going to die. I feel they did not know how intent I was on restoring my health back to fairly normal. Since then I have occasionally gotten horrible insulting phone calls, death threat emails, and “when are you going to die!”

**Chronological Order of Notoriety and Popularity Events Affecting My Veleno® Guitars**

For 16 year period, from 1977 to 1993, Veleno® guitar popularity and notoriety was mostly non-existent. But (17) events during the nine year period from 1993 to 2002 Veleno® guitar popularity and notoriety suddenly and overwhelmingly surfaced which was *immediately followed by an about face then* Notoriety and popularity suddenly stopped Dead! To the best of my knowledge the first incident offering popularity
about my guitars was in 1993 and totaled 15 consecutive exciting notoriety incidents, mostly worldwide, until 2002

(1) 1993: a large hard cover book entitled The Ultimate Guitar Book by Tony Bacon has a photo of a Veleno® guitar appearing in an article.

(2) 1995: January: Vintage Guitar Magazine has a four-page article with six attractive photos.

(3) 1995: July: Vintage Guitar Magazine has a two-page article and a beautiful photo of a Veleno® Guitar on the cover.

(4) 1996: A book entitled Vintage Guitar Classics has a six-page article with numerous photos in a well-versed article about Veleno® guitars by Roach, Barney. A copy was sent to me. There are a few historical mistakes.
(5) 1997: I purchased and registered the Internet domain names Veleno.com and Veleno.net.

(6) 1998: Below shows an inside photo and a cover photo of the November 1998 Issue of Guitar World magazine. It displays a Veleno® guitar caressed by Twiggy Ramirez, of the Marilyn Manson group.

Twiggy states on page 60 “Johnny Depp gave me this guitar worth about four or five thousand dollars” with incorrect information about me as being in the Miami area and misspelled my name.
“Veleno” as Velano, but once printed it was too late to notify them of it and it became a major factor prompting me to write this autobiography. I recently (2014) saw a video with Johnny Depp playing guitar with the Marilyn Manson group. I really like Johnny Depp! I feel he is truly one of the Greatest Actors of our times! Ciao! When that 1998 magazine issue came onto the newsstand Ted Smida, a guitarist in a local group I had known for quite some time, came to my home and informed me that the cover of the current issue of Guitar World Magazine shows a Veleno® guitar with Twigly Ramirez and has an inside two-page fold out photo showing a Veleno® guitar with Twiggy. We went to a magazine store that night in November 1998 and sure enough, he showed it to me. I was surprised and overwhelmed by the sight of it. A year or so earlier Ted had also purchased the first guitar I made for myself in 1966, from my son, Chris. Being very distraught from my divorce, of which I was the one who applied for it, I left the guitar in the home we were living in at that time. After my divorce in
1980 I did not have or rent a place to store anything, or have very much. I rented and lived in a small duplex apartment my parents built in Pinellas Park around 1958. My parents lived in the other side. On so much valium for so long a time and going through bad business experiences I was very distraught and going through a divorce for so long a time I forgot where I left the guitar.

However, I accepted the fact having the thought in mind that Ted was a guitar collector and at least my first guitar would be in very good hands and stay in good shape. I had previously reconditioned it for him after he purchased it from Chris as well. Being that prior to this night, months earlier, I enjoyed Ted's personality so much I gave him the first guitar amplifier I used in my band in Massachusetts. It was a Sears Silvertone tube type twin 12" speaker amp I owned knowing Ted would take good care of it. On that same night Ted drove us to the newsstand in November 1998. When we left the store and
came back to my home, we went into my dining room and there Ted informed me that he and a certain Barney Roach, from California, a writer for Vintage Guitar Magazine, were colluding to write a book called “The Veleno Story.” The way Ted spoke about the book I believed the book was close to being printed. Due to the current events of the time taking place, emails vastly increased from people I did not know. This included Barney the Roach from California. I was thoroughly furious when I learned Ted and the Roach did this without ever consulting me about their book at any time. The Roach told me that I was the most stupid person he ever knew and had never been contacted about the planning, research, and elements of the already in progress manuscript called, “The Veleno Story”. At my home when Ted began telling me about the "Veleno Story" it was also going to contain false information detrimental and very harmful to me, all being done by people who never consulted with me about their writing their story.
They were conspiring in making false claims about me in their book knowing nothing whatsoever about me in what they had already planned to write and publish. I recently met with Ted Smeda and he now denies he was ever involved with a book called The Veleno Story. When I pressed him he said "NO, we were writing a pamphlet!" I said "Why? What for? You never mentioned that before. You were never involved with or were a part of Veleno® Instrument Company!" What was your need to write a pamphlet about my guitars? I also still have the photo the Roach from California took and sent me that has his sticker on the back that states "Main Stream" Component Technologies, 10225 Barnes Canyon Road, Bldg. A207, San Diego, CA 92121 that he supposedly took. I had put the photo he sent me on my website but when I told them I didn't like what they were doing, falsifying information about me - the Roach said "Take my photo off your website. I have it copyrighted", although it
was not I took it off, as I really didn't need it, I had enough without him.

(7) 1998: *Friends contacted me about going to the Hard Rock Café in Orlando* to see my Veleno® guitar on display. My wife, Joyce, and I went and saw the guitar I sold Lonesome Dave Peverett of “Foghat” (Song "Free Ride")

The Veleno® Guitar Display Seen at Hardrock Café in Orlando for Dave Peverett of “Foghat” displayed on the wall over entrance to the bar, and took the following photo. But when the café was later rebuilt the guitar was no longer there. Friends
contacted me at times mentioning they had seen a Veleno® guitar in other Hard Rock Cafés, in other locations, but I was unable to check the validity and no one sent photos.

(8) 1998: At this point in time I began to see counterfeited Veleno® guitars advertised for sale on eBay with the statement that they were made by John Veleno. Most every guitar advertised in this manner with contraptions I didn't approve of and never would have used, and did not integrate with a Veleno® guitar.

(9) I contacted eBay and they were very gracious putting a stop to most of the advertising of the counterfeited Veleno® guitars. I understand eBay could not spend a tremendous amount of time investigating.

(10) 1999: I published my first websites Veleno.com and Veleno.net, which included information about the counterfeited Veleno® guitars
made by identity thieves using my name. I offer a free in depth inspection examination to all claimants owning a *Veleno®* guitar. Positive verification includes a Certificate of Authenticity to owners of a genuine *Veleno®* guitar. I personally engrave my signature on the inside of the guitar and keep a photocopy and records at three different locations. A Verification Report accompanies all inspections. Some, but not all of the determining factors are listed in Verification.

**(11) 2000:** An excellent hard cover book entitled *Electric Guitars – The Illustrated Encyclopedia* was published and has a two-page article with six photos of the Veleno® guitar.

**(12) 2000:** In December I received three Hardrock Café - *Veleno®* guitar pins from *pin collectors*. Total strangers sent me the Tijuana, Acapulco and Sidney guitar pins, which I probably never would have known about.
(13) 2000: Michael Wright’s *Guitar Stories* II Michael called me by phone when his article was in the making. He asked for Veleno® guitar info for his article and I accommodated him, somewhat. Sometime later his book was published with an eleven page article including several Veleno® guitar photos. *I noticed some misquoted statements and*
the misspelling of my name, (Similar to the October 1998 Guitar World's article about Twigly.) Michael's article begins stating Veleno sold a few guitars with the bird shaped headstock. Not so. Please be advised and know that I never, sold a guitar with a bird shaped headstock. The very first guitar I ever sold was to Marc Bolan of T-Rex which began with a bird shaped headstock, but I cut it off and replaced it with a "V" headstock. If there are existing aluminum guitars made with a bird shaped headstock they would have to have been counterfeited, and most likely probably counterfeited by the same folks who made the other simulated guitars. The two birds I cut off no longer existed, I, myself, threw them in the aluminum trash pile. The only bird shape headstock I made remained on the first and only guitar I made for myself. Michael Right was dead wrong! Much later in time, around 2010 a photo came to my office showing Veleno type guitar bodies with three bird shape headstocks on guitars I never held in reserve but destroyed. I don't know how or who gave Mr. Rite
his information about the "birds". It appears to me there were many people involved in Veleno guitar making unknown to me. Michael called me after writing the book and told me he got fired from his job but wouldn't tell me why. It appears that he later got re-hired.

(14) 2001: February, Veleno® Guitar on Display at The Boston Museum of Fine Arts. One of my guitars was featured in a display called “Dangerous Curves” of 110 rare guitars. See the following brochure page featuring a brief history about my Veleno® guitar. No one contacted me regarding the museum display or for the contents of the brochure. This resulted in misinformation. As you well know, I never made a guitar shaped mailbox seen stated in the museum pamphlet. That seemed so stupid to me. Eric Clapton did not purchase a Veleno® guitar as mentioned. Marc Bolan of T- Rex purchased two Veleno® guitars, one for himself and one as a gift to Eric Clapton. I do not know what the date of 1974 refers to in the
print shown in the upper left hand corner on the following brochure. Although it was the year I had two brain aneurysms, I noticed the mistake or misprint after reading the notation under Electric Guitar in the upper left hand corner (see below).

Veleno® guitar on Display at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts
(15) **2001: February:** The local Tampa Bay *Weekly Planet* Magazine, and features a beautiful cover photo of a Veleno® guitar *painting* by famous artist Max Peter. Accompanying the photo was a fascinating eight-page article. I was not aware but happy the local paper was going to feature a Veleno® guitar by Peter Max on the cover in the local Tampa Bay newspaper.

16) **2001:** Someone informed me that *Dolly Parton’s Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee* featured a Veleno® guitar with a large butterfly on it, in Dolly's “*Rags to Riches Museum.*”
Joyce and I went to Dollywood, saw it and were thrilled by the sight of it. Above is a photo we took. I don't know how or when one of my guitars got there but felt very happy upon seeing it.
March 2002: Their final try March 2002: By aid of grapevine I learned that a certain Marc Anthony, who I never heard of, filed a trademark application for the exclusive use of my surname "Veleno", to use for his making electric and bass guitars.

With the help of a wonderful and detailed patent attorney, Dorothy S. Morse of Bradenton, Florida, Anthony Mark's filing to use my Veleno name for making his guitars was turned down. I did not know he had filed for that trademark until a couple of weeks prior to our opposition filing date was close to expiring.

2002-2004: Immediately following the decision of the Trademark Office, we, my family and myself, thought everything was looking hunky dory for us. We set up shop to make and sell the famous Veleno® guitars especially after all the publicity my guitar received. We didn’t realize for more than a year that the publicity was not done for our benefit.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

We were totally unaware we had so many powerful strong enemies. All my family pitched in not prepared to get bitten by the invisible serpent against us. We did not know who or what to protect ourselves from. We proposed no opposition. It came upon us without warning like a tornado. Something inexperienced people, a/k/a dummies, are not trained for. There were slight winds, but no storm warnings.

My Children and I Pitching in Setting up Shop in 2003

After we won the court case against Marc Anthony in 2002 we, my children and I, set up shop to make guitars in small production runs again. We thought with all the good publicity that had taken place, since 1993, we would get many guitar orders, but the orders did not appear. We were not familiar with the prevailing scheme against us. Therefore what we were preparing for never materialized. We were so naive we didn't realize until much later in years that the popularity blitz was not done
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

for us but, most likely, for and by counterfeiting identity thieves of the worst kind.

The 2003 NAMM Convention
In January, 2003 Joyce and I, my son Chris and his wife Cindy, attended the National Association of Musical instrument Manufacturers (NAMM) convention in Anaheim with our Veleno® made Ankh Guitar for display. After taking a break I came back into the large showroom area where there was an excellent guitarist playing my Ankh shaped guitar surrounded by a large crowd. He gave an outstanding demonstration. When the crowd dispersed, I was unable to see him long enough to get his name. Later, hardly anyone came close to me during the following two days of the convention, except for two oriental guitarists who picked my guitar up and gave exquisite pieces. Their incredible demonstrations were amongst the best I've ever heard. But again, they left before I was able to get their names.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

While there on the first day a man approached me and introduced himself as Barney Roach and told me he was involved with writing The Veleno Story, with Ted Smeda, and said, “Well, when you put up your website, it ruined our book!” I told him, “That was my intention!” I have emails on file from him.

The Ed Roman Experience
At that NAMM show we had the feeling we were being shunned, sometimes with vague insults and being ignored when speaking, and very few people stopping at our display. I never understood the reasons for this. On the second day the four of us were invited to Ed Ramen's portable motor home office parked in the NAMM shipping area right outside a back or side door to the NAMM convention I was under the impression he was going to serve us chicken soup. But Ed introduced himself as the King of Guitars, instead of chicken soup, from Las Vegas. I had never heard or known of him before that day. Ed explained how, as King, he controls everything in the guitar world. He told me
that unless I go through him I would never sell a guitar. Because I never met nor heard of this man before this day' and I felt he was just another guy acting like the old time neighborhood bully and so I didn’t take it to heart. However, in time it turned out that he was close to totally right. Eddy told me that he would sell every guitar I could furnish him, all I would need to do is “Do not put any serial numbers on any of the guitars.” I told him absolutely not!! He said: “Then you will never sell a Veleno® Guitar”, and until now, it became about 99 % true. I’d venture to say that if he could predict the future so accurately he was in the wrong business, he could do much better as a “seer”, since I have only received less than one guitar order per year in 10 years. I knew that not serializing any musical instrument is stupidity and clearly open to illegal counterfeiter and business suicide. I, myself, cannot comprehend why anyone would spend the time and money to make guitars, claiming they are genuine Veleno® made guitars when they are not. I feel that when someone
claims to be me, or anyone else, he denies who he is and is insulting himself. If you are going to make something, put your own name on it, and not backwards! Isn’t it much easier to join with a person who already has the notoriety you are trying to steal away? I don’t know how they seemingly took it away for a while! That is probably a secret I will never know. Ed mentioned that he has friends, here and there around the country operating music stores. However, I felt if he put a bad word in about me to a few stores he may have had an interest in, it should not hurt me. But, it did not work that way. I received absolutely no orders from any music store. All my sales came from individuals, whereas in the past I received orders from numerous stores throughout the country. We had no clue of what was going to happen with our guitar business until after we saw Ed Ramen. His prediction was materializing. Previously, I had never known who the king was, and recently learned he died in 2011, and I’ll probably never know who if anyone replaced him
as king. Ed had also mentioned that whatever anyone makes he can copy it and make it better. I say, “Well that’s no secret, anyone can do that! What is more precious is being the first to make something entirely new, a first and unique with outstanding performance! Now, that’s something just anyone can’t do!”

Summary
After having received numerous insulting emails, some used the worst language and insults imaginable, including death threats, I had the feeling that after the aneurysms - many people thought I would be kicking the bucket very shortly. I sensed that several did whatever they could in preparation for that to happen. I have no idea what plan some probably conspired. It seems that there was something very involved and more in depth than I could comprehend. Every once in a while I get a request to make a guitar. Sales are not often, but I occasionally enjoy making another guitar or reconditioning one of the older Veleno® guitars,
which I have continued doing throughout the years until the present time.

Joyce and I went to Italy in 2005 and toured by car using a GPS. Our base was a B&B in the Sabine Hills, about 25 miles North of Rome. As previously mentioned, the Sabines are extremely historic Romans. Their women are listed as the first women residents of Rome chosen by the original builders of Rome. We chose that area as my daughter Carla and I spent some time there in 2004 and chose it because of its historical value. Do an internet search for the sculpture "Rape of the Sabines" and it's interesting history. In Italian, rape means to kidnap.
Joyce and I in Venice - 2005

Our tour began in local towns (citas) a little north of Rome then South to Rome and especially Ostia and others places along the West coast, then to the East Coast, travelled Northward, then returned Westward toward the Sabine Hills. When near the East coast we visited where my grandfather came from, Guardialfiera and listed in the Ellis Island Immigration records as his place of origin. We
found Guardialfiera to be an interesting small community on the top of a hill in a remote area. One road, approximately a mile and a half long, led to the top of the hill where the Cattedrale Di Santa Maria, was located on the highest point. It seemed so unusual to see a Catholic Cathedral located in a small commune having no town or city name but rather just a commune.

Translated, Guardialfiera means to look or watch for fierce or fiery women. Probably indicating to watch for the hot tempered, not necessarily mean or dangerous to anyone, however one just may be! I feel that possibly when the surname Veleno was assigned to my Grandfather and their community was probably also assigned the name Guardialfiera, and in turn it would become a named commune. Logically speaking, as a result, all Italian citizens in general would then know who the Velenos were and where they lived.
There was a central main street in Guardialfiera, probably less than about a half-mile long. There were short streets to each side. There may have been 50 to 75 homes. We saw a fairly large lake and river to the south. It was very picturesque. We were amazed at how clean the community was. We walked around and entered the cathedral, which was under renovation. When we walked inside the workers were cordial and told me, in Italian, there
had been an earthquake (terremoto) and they were repairing the damage to make it safe and usable again. I told them my name was Veleno and asked the worker if there were any Velenos living in the area. Without hesitation he abruptly emphatically exclaimed “NO!” he did not say “I don’t know”, which I thought was unusual.

View to the South

We left the cathedral and could see farmlands in every direction but no nearby towns could be seen. It seemed quite a distance from other settlements. The view was absolutely beautiful. The cemetery
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

was not close to the cathedral but was rather in a remote area on the opposite side near the entrance to the community. We found it to be a very interesting community, not termed a town or city, on the top of a hill.

Cemetery

Most all the graves were eye-level tombs dug into the side of the hill in rows with paths between them. Some had a few relatives buried in one tomb. Many of the gravesites had paintings or photos under glass of the ones buried there. Some had
written stories or a brief history below the picture.

Although we did not go to all the gravesites we did not find any for Veleno. During my three trips to Italy I spoke with people, north to south and east to west.

After leaving Guardialfiera we drove to the west coast of Italy, going north along the coast, then crossed over to the east coast along the cities there then southward and back to the Sabine hills where our home base was for our entire trip. We visited and toured a few wineries, olive oil makers and some small local museums which we found very interesting, especially examining the coins that were minted locally, here and there.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greed</strong></td>
<td>Greed, Greed, and More Greed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Posted List of Guardialfiera Commune’s Work</strong></td>
<td>Completed-and yet to be done</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Veleno method
Following the fall of the Roman Empire, only the residents of the city of Rome were considered Romans. The Veleno method superseded the Roman Empire peacekeeping methods, of Lictors formerly used for maintaining peace. In the newly formed Italia following the fall of the Roman Empire, no one made a claim that he or she was Roman, they all became Italians, except for the people who actually resided in the city called Rome. When the people who lived in the city of Rome called themselves Romans it is no different than people from New York referring to themselves as New Yorkers, in the same way we Americans do here in our cities. (Just an example of how some people feel special simply by being in or from a specific place) They visualize themselves in a special imagined category dealing with a pride rather than in a factual existence, although they pronounce some words quite differently than in other parts of their country, it is their dialect, and has no bearing on who, what they are, or do, but imagine.
The Second Etymologist

One night in 1974, 20 years after meeting the Italian etymologist in 1954, I met a second etymologist who was enamored about my French background. I was at the Bayfront Center in St. Petersburg to meet the group "Rare Earth" and their hit song was "I just want to celebrate." While I was in the dressing room a lady was there showing her credentials, and introduced herself as being a journalist on the editorial staff of the University of South Florida newspaper, and was there to interview the group. When she finished her interview with the group she turned to me and asked, “Who are you? What are you doing here?” so I explained about my guitars and showed her the one I had there. It was Veleno guitar number 7, which I had just sold to Ray Monette, guitarist for the group. Then, she began interviewing me taking notes. After knowing my surname is Veleno, she asked, “What is your mother’s maiden name?” I said, “DuGrenier” and excitedly she blurted out “Oh my God!. .... ‘French Royalty!’” She told me that her highest interest was
etymology and the origins of American surnames. That incident was an interesting surprise. I had not the slightest idea of what she was talking about, just absorbed it, and took it as a compliment. I hardly ever thought about this coincidence until writing this story. Until then I had not known my immediate French relatives were of a French Royalty origin.

I thought about how bizarre it was to have met a man Etymologist in 1954, telling me about my Italian family's poison background and a lady journalist, reporter, Etymologist, 20 or so years later, in 1974 telling me about my mother's royalty background. It seemed so odd, especially being that I rarely speak about family with anyone, and never heard of an etymologist until the Etymologista from Italy told me, and I looked it up in the meaning in a dictionary.
Heritage Summary
Revolution, War, Peace, Justice, and Unification are all factors in the heritage that make up my background. I discovered that my Italian and French ancestors were intelligent, self-reliant, and confident in their accomplishments and responsibilities. They were dependable inventors and responsible peacekeepers. I feel that their resourcefulness and incomparable spirit are in the genes that reflect in the man I am; the real John Veleno.

Some Stories of My Life
Amongst the major reasons this autobiography is written is to offer examples of my memory capabilities. After having two brain aneurysms, I have been accused of only being able to recall very little regarding events of my life. Therefore I include this section to indicate it is a made up story and a falsehood. It seems more people than not remember very little prior to school age. The following details may seem unusual to most who cannot recall much of their early life’s events, especially childhood, but
I recall all of the following events, and many more with clarity. It always seemed unusual to me when I was told that only a few recall as much as I do and so few recall their pre-school years. I have more memories, but what is listed here should be sufficient.

**Early Life and Pre-School Years**

My earliest recollection is when I was probably about four to five months old. We lived in a duplex house my grandfather, Tatooch Veleno, built on Glendale Street in Maynard, Mass, a small town of about 5 to 6 thousand at that time. My grandfather built several houses in that area. We, my mother, my father, and I, lived in Maynard, Massachusetts until my parents separated when I was four years old.

**My First Winter**

In my first winter, snow covered everything. Being born in August 1934, I was probably about five months old. Unable to walk, and was told I walked at 10 months old. I recall sitting in a sleigh-like stroller. It had a seat like a stroller but instead of
wheels it had sleigh-type runners underneath that curled up in the front. It had armrests on the sides. My great-grandmother was called Mamooch. Mamooch was pushing me along on the sidewalk in the snow. There were two kids on each side with their hands on the armrests while she pushed the little sleigh down the sidewalk. I recall thinking, or feeling “Why are these kids holding onto my armrests walking alongside me? Do they think I’m special? Is it because I’m being pushed in a little sleigh sitting down nice and comfortable, all bundled up and warm, and they have to walk and not ride like me?” I didn’t know who they were but they were very nice to me. Later in life I recalled that incident and told my mother about it. She was so surprised I could recall that incident as clearly as I did, and still do.

**The Turkish Steam Bath**

My parents occasionally went to the local Turkish steam bath. So, one day, we went there and it was my first time. I must have been somewhere around
six months old. The floors were bare wooden slats spaced apart about ½-inch. There were slanted structures to lie on starting at about 6 inches high off the floor; slanting upward to the wall with the same wooden slats as the floor. My father set me in a little wooden bucket held together with two steel bands around it. He sat me on the edge of the bucket but my feet could not reach the bottom. There was a sponge between my legs. I tried to reach the bottom to help hold my balance but with my knees bent I could not reach the bottom and started screaming because I felt I was going to lose my balance, fall off backward and hit my head on the floor. So I screamed until my mother took me out. I, later, likewise told this to my mother and she was so astonished again, but this time she could verify what I said in every detail. After a couple of years I learned it was called a Turkish Steam Bath.

**My First Spring**

One time when the weather was very nice, before I could walk, and probably about 10-11 months old, I
clearly recall my mother setting me in a playpen on the ground right outside her kitchen window where she could keep an eye on me. She constantly looked out the window. I hated being in that very limited space. So I crawled to the edge and sat with both feet hanging out between the bars. When I saw my mother look out her kitchen window to check on me I made sure she saw me reach down, grab some dirt and put it in my mouth. She would immediately run out, take me out of that jail, bring me into the kitchen, wash my mouth out and put me back in the playpen. But she was a fast learner; it only took a couple of times of doing that before she decided to just keep me in the house crawling around. I didn’t crawl around too much because I realized she was good to me by taking me out of that awful place and keeping me in the house. I mostly liked it under the kitchen table. It was a much better place on account of the way it was built with a support that came down from each side to the center of the bottom. And I was out of the way. I could sit on that like sitting on a horse and it was comfortable. Whenever she went into another room, I would crawl
and follow her, that way I knew she knew where I was and it worked very well. It was much better than being out in the pen.

**My First Walk**

I remember the first time I walked, which must have been about June, 1935. We were in the living room. My mother was sitting in a chair and my father had me standing in front of him while he was sitting on the sofa. He kept prompting me to take steps. I would take about 2 or 3 steps, then realizing that he was trying to get me to walk by myself, I started to take more steps and, I’d say in about 10 minutes I walked wobbly from my father on the sofa to my mother on the chair. They got all excited and I felt “big”.

**My First Birthday**

I recall my first birthday party, sitting outside in a high chair, on the side of the house, with a birthday cake on the tray. My mother had never put the highchair outside with food on it, which I
thought as unusual. I really didn’t know what to think about it nor understand what it was all about with all the kids around looking at me and singing, I guess it was “Happy Birthday.” A couple years later my mother showed me a photo of that event, which I recalled, and it was then that I learned it was my first birthday party.

My Baby Time Baths
In Maynard We lived in a duplex house in which my father’s sister, Nellie, and Uncle Ralph also lived on the other side. My Aunt Nellie used to take care of me while my mother and father worked. Every day she gave me a bath in the kitchen sink. Sometimes when she stooped over her boobies would have a crack between them and I would reach in to put my hand in there. She always jumped back giggling and laughing telling me “Stop that!” But I thought, “Why does she want me to stop when she is laughing and giggling? She wouldn’t do that if she didn’t like it!” So I did it all the more. But she started to wear things I could
not reach inside, and then realized she really didn’t want me doing that. So, I stopped.

The Moose Lodge Christmas Party
I was about two years old when everyone went to a Christmas party at the Moose Lodge my Uncle Ralph was a member of. I could only say a few words. There was a crowd of little boys and girls, mostly older than me, sitting around in a circle on the floor. Uncle Ralph was playing Santa Clause and had the perfect build and personality for it. He played the part very well. The only thing was I had not heard much about Santa and didn’t connect what they were trying to accomplish. As soon as I saw him come into the room I hollered out “Uncle Ralph, Uncle Ralph.” He quickly came over to me with a big bag of toys, reached in and pulled out a small harmonica and put it in my mouth. My mother and father kept trying to convince me that he was Santa Claus but I just could not understand what they were getting at.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

They didn’t want me to spoil anything for all the other kids and it did manage to keep me quiet. At the time I didn't realize why he did that, but did after a time passed. Uncle Ralph, rather Santa, was handing out various toys to the children. I saw him handing out teddy bears to kids. I could not imagine why they were hugging the teddy bear. It was only a stuffed piece of cloth like a pillow in the shape of a bear and was not real; in fact I didn’t like the way it looked. The sight of the other kids hugging something that has no feeling and does not know what you are doing was puzzling to me. Why were they excited over a stuffed piece of cloth? Uncle Ralph eventually made it over to me again, pulled out a teddy bear and gave it to me. My parents acted very excited that I got one too. But I could not show emotion toward a gift that was not real. It just did not make any sense to me, nor saw any value in it. My parents were disappointed so I showed some attraction toward it so they wouldn’t be upset.
Cousins Mary, Caroline, Bobby and Eddy
My father’s sister, Jennie, and my, Uncle Louie, lived in a house across the backyard we shared. Their four children, my cousins, were Mary, Caroline, Bobbie and Eddie. Bobbie used to make wooden model cars and planes from kits and hand-paint them in their basement. Mary always doted on me, so she was my favorite and I loved her for paying so much attention to me. She was like an angel, so pretty with her freckle face. They took me to the Colonial Theater to see Westerns on many Saturdays, and mostly took the fire escape as a shortcut to avoid the crowd when the movie was over. Eddie carried me on his shoulders most of the time.

The Putrid Smell
There was a cesspool with a large square steel cover on it between our house and my Aunt Jennie’s house. I remember one day when they took the cover off and there was a putrid smell. It stayed protuberant in my memory and I can still almost smell that awful odor.
Taking Part in the Great Depression
About 1937, when I was three, the U.S. was trying to pull out of a great depression. I was beginning to talk and one thing I heard most grown-ups say when they met is “Hi, are you working?” So I would sit out on the front steps of the house and every time someone walked by I would say, “Hi, are you working?” I didn’t really know what it meant but it seemed like something friendly people always said when approaching one another. So I would say it to be neighborly and friendly.

Neighbor Kids
Neighborhood kids came around quite often to play with my cousins or me. I recall Tommy Sweeney; he had a small, red, two-wheel bike, the blond haired Robinson twins, and tall Dick Woodard, who lived next door to the right and whose father was an undertaker. They had wooden coffins laying in their back yard. To the left of our house, next to our driveway there was a brick schoolhouse, grades 1-6, and a large schoolyard. I
attended some fun kindergarten Summer school activities when I was four.

Ketchup

I recall a pretty little Russian girl who came to play with me often when I was about three or four years old, and whom I really liked a lot. Her name was supposed to be pronounced Kachu but I couldn’t pronounce it correctly and called her Ketchup. Well, Ketchup stayed as her nickname the rest of her life, although it didn’t last long. Word got to me that when she was a senior in high school she was riding in a Volkswagen with some other girls; two of them were twin sisters. One of the twins was driving and they had just come from a senior high school event. They turned onto a highway, I think route 9, into the path of an oil tanker. The car exploded and they all burned to death. I never saw Ketchup after I was four years old. People who knew her said she told friends she was going to marry me when we grew up. I never
knew about that until I was told about the accident much later in time.

I remember my baby sitter, Irene Sebastian. She took care of me often until I was four to five. She lived in a small apartment house across the street from us in Maynard.

**Going to Church**

My father’s sister Annie and her husband Scaffie lived downstairs with my grandfather and grandmother in their house. They took me to church on Sundays in my Uncle Scaffie’s Chevrolet. He loved his new two-tone brown and tan car and could not stop talking about it. We went to St. Bridget’s Church, which was probably about a ¼ mile away. They impressed me about the church being God’s house and everyone had to be quiet. I behaved as they instilled the fear of God within me. They told me not to be afraid of God, but to be afraid of not doing what God wants us to do.
When a Kid Has to PEE!
I remember going to an event in Maynard. It appeared to be a sort of public or similar event, at about three years old in a big wide open field. There was a crowd of people listening to a man talk. My mother was holding me. I developed a strong feeling to pee. I whispered in my mother’s ear I had pee about three times. She didn’t take me and finally I just hollered out “but Mom I really got to go pee!” And she took me.

My First Plane Ride
I remember, at about age four, my father taking me for a ride in a small airplane that seated four. The plane was orange and white. It was very exciting, especially taking off and landing at the Marlboro Airport. I remember what it was like looking down. I was surprised at us taking off and landing in a grassy field. It was a little bumpy and I wondered why they did not have something paved like a road to land and take off on. When taking off and landing there was a nearby hill we had to fly
over. I was a little nervous about going into it while taking off and landing, but we made it.

**Tonic**

In Massachusetts we didn’t call soda – soda or pop. We called it tonic. And so my dad drove a tonic truck for Maydale Bottling Company. The company was owned and operated by Paul Highlander. Their most popular drink was Maydale ginger ale. Every so often my dad would take me over to Paul’s house for a short visit. Paul had a little dog, Trixie, who would jump over a stick when Paul held it out in front of him about four feet high. I remember being in a semi-circle windowed small room over the home’s front entrance with Paul sitting there with Trixie jumping over the stick. Paul enjoyed entertaining me that way. The neighborhood kids had a song that went “Maydale ginger ale, five cents a glass, if you don’t like it shove it up your - ask me no questions I’ll tell you no lies!” My Dad delivered tonic to quite a few places and often took me with him. One place
I really liked was a place called (sounded like) Bouskie’s. Everyone there dressed like cowboys and cowgirls. Some wore holsters with guns. They tried to keep me amused when my dad was delivering tonic. Sometimes a guy, or a guy and a girl played a guitar and sang songs. Another place must have been a pool hall, or a similar place with billiard tables. My dad appeared to be popular and had many friends everywhere we went.

**I Drove a Truck at Four!**

Once when I was about four years old, my dad was inside delivering tonic to a gas station/auto repair garage, which was on a slight curved grade road alongside a river. The garage was on a corner of Rt. 117 in Gleasondale, Massachusetts. While he was in talking with the guy in the garage I fiddled around with the gearshift and the truck started to roll down and toward the river. My dad immediately saw it, ran out of the garage, jumped in, steered and stopped the truck. He never grew angry with me at all, but was very distraught with
herself for leaving me alone with the truck under those circumstances.

The Boat Ride
I remember my father taking me for a boat ride at Lake Boone. He rented a boat and asked four girls if they wanted to come along, and they did. I sat in the middle between two girls on each side. When we went out onto the lake the girls started to rock the boat side to side and the water was coming right up to the edge of the boat. I got very scared thinking we were going to sink and pleaded with them to stop but they continued, laughing. My dad got angry with them, took them ashore, and made them all get out of the boat for scaring me. I developed the feeling that I was really very special to him.

Shopping Italian
My parents, relatives, and grandparents shopped in a little Italian store named Salamone’s. I recall going there and seeing the various types of spaghetti products in slanted glass display
containers, in which you could reach in with a scoop and take out whatever quantity you wanted.

They would weigh it and wrap it. In those days they weighed without the wrapper so you didn’t pay for the wrapper weight, it was free!

**Hide and Seek**
Probably around four years old I remember playing hide and seek and tag in my grandfather Veleno’s small vineyard with cousins and friends. There were about 6-12 rows of Concord grape arbors and vines. We ran up and down and in between the rows. It was a lot of fun.

**The Powder Mill**
Not too far from where we lived there was a powder mill that made gunpowder and fireworks. Many local people worked there. One day I heard a humongous explosion and everyone was all upset saying, “The powder mill on Powder Mill Road,
blew up!” And, it did. It killed a lot of people, but none that I knew. But it seemed all the grownups knew people there that got killed.

**My Grandparents Velenos Home**

I remember Ninna’s spaghetti dinners and other Italian dishes on Sundays served with a glass of my grandfather’s homemade wine, everyone praying and making a toast. He, Tatooch, had two large barrels of wine in the cellar. He also had a grinding wheel in the cellar to sharpen tools. The wheel, probably about 18” diameter, had a foot-operated device to spin the wheel, sort of like how the old sewing machines work. He had me pump that thing for him and it was difficult to do trying to keep it at a good speed. It took all of my weight on two feet. Tatooch would say, “Can’t you do better than that?” My great uncle Tony Veleno and my auntie Rose lived upstairs in my Grandparents’ house. Every time I went there Auntie always made a cup of tea for me, served with cookies. They had a tan with brown designs steel porcelain table
and I enjoyed tracing the designs with my fingers. Auntie Rose was a terrific person. To me, she seemed to be wise and extremely understanding. My great uncle Tony was nice but rarely spoke. They never had any children.

The 1938 Hurricane
I turned four years old in August 1938 and I clearly recall all the excitement we experienced. No one knew it was coming and everyone rushed preparing for it once the strong winds started blowing. We ran around the yard picking up everything, toys etc., to bring into the house. The winds came with a very loud noise that shook the house. The real strong winds didn’t seem to last very long. When the wind subsided my father took my mother and I for a ride to see the damage. We had to go off the road in a few places to dodge fallen trees and debris. We went to Acton, only a couple of miles, where there was quite a bit of damage. It was an awesome sight. I can still clearly visualize a large two-story home in Acton with a
huge fallen tree with its roots pulled up higher than our car. The tree was lying through the crushed roof, resting on the staircase in the center of the home. The car was about a 32 Ford coup with a rumble seat. Insisting on riding in the rumble seat, told to sit, not stand, I could not resist standing. Over bump I got catapulted over the back, onto the dirt road, unhurt. Many years later we learned from radio and TV news that the great hurricane in September 1938 had 200 mph winds in our area.

**The Earthquake**

We also had an earthquake in Maynard about that same time. There were cracks in the road and other places. I recall feeling the ground shaking, but it was not bad enough to be scared. Everyone went out looking for cracks in the ground, in the roads, and on the sidewalks and we found quite a few, but nothing wider than about one inch.
My Parents Separated
I was five years old, in 1939, when my mother and father separated. My mother moved to Hudson, Massachusetts and lived with my aunt Fredelina and Uncle Joe. I called her Matount Pluff, probably a French way to call one’s aunt. Although her name was Plough, it was pronounced as Pluff. They lived on Lincoln Street. Their daughter, my cousin, Erleen Plough, was my godmother, and she lived there as well.

My First Outside Baby Sitter
Shortly after moving in with my Aunt Fredelina I recall my mother taking me to Marlboro, a four-mile drive, to have a baby sitter take care of me to give my aunt a break. Well, that lasted about one day. When my mother left I wanted to go with her but she insisted I had to stay because she had to go to work. I was crying when she left and the two ladies there said “he’ll be okay, we’ll get him to stop.” Well one took my arms and one took my legs and had me stretched out between them.
Pulling and kicking I refused to stop crying and refused to go outside and play with the other kids so they put me in a room full of toys and shut the door. I was able to open a window. I climbed out and left the house. I remembered my way to Hudson and to my Aunt Fredelina's house, so I began walking there. The ladies called the Marlboro Police, who came looking for me. A short time later the police stopped and picked me up. They asked where I was going and I told them to my Matount Pluff’s house in Hudson. They wanted to take me back where I was but I pleaded with them to take me to my aunt’s house. They asked if I knew the way there, and they argued between themselves one saying it’s impossible for him to remember at five years old. And I showed them the entire way right up to her house on Lincoln Street. When we got there they told her about what happened and recommended I stay with her. Even though she really didn’t want me there, I felt she was a wonderful lady and would let me stay
with her. The house was not very big but she gave in to her emotions and kindness. I knew she really loved me. Shaking her head, she would say with a big smile “You little devil!” I would also like to pick up the phone and talk with the telephone operator. But my aunt would get very upset about that. So I eventually stopped.

**My Second Outside Baby Sitter**

Shortly thereafter, my mother found another baby sitter in Marlboro. I was there for one day. There were five or six kids there, all behaving well but me. The lady made some homemade ice cream and gave everyone a dish. I took one taste and just didn't like the flavor, as it did not taste like ice cream to me. The lady said, “Everyone else is eating it, it’s good, go ahead and eat it.” But I refused. Then she forcefully stood in front of me and firmly said “I said eat that ice cream!” She leaned down toward me, holding the dish, and I pushed the ice cream in her face. She called my
mother and told her to come and get me. So back to my Matount Pluff I went.

**Christmas at Five**

When Christmas came, before I went to school at six years old, I asked for a policeman’s uniform. They got me one and I was overjoyed. I don’t know if it was my mother, Matount Plough, Erleen, Uncle Joe or all of them. It even had a police whistle with it. I wanted to go out with it on but they wouldn’t let me because it was far too cold and snowy to go outdoors with just that suit on. But, when no one was looking, I went out. There was always quite a bit of traffic going by their house, as it was on a main drag, and there was a large tree growing through the sidewalk by the street. I would hide behind the tree and blow the whistle. Almost every car I did that to would either slow almost to a stop or would stop and look around then drive off. Needless to say, I got caught and my aunt and uncle took the whistle away from me and I never had it again.
The Bathtub, Breakfasts, Garden, Toodie, Ice Man, and Uncle Joe

I remember taking baths upstairs in the old-fashioned bathtub with the four feet resembling animal’s paws on the floor. I remember Matount Pluff giving me Rice Krispy's with a banana for most breakfasts. I remember my Uncle Joe planting a garden, digging potatoes and carrots and picking tomatoes in his large back yard garden. He bagged potatoes keeping them in the cellar for the rest of the year. I remember lying on the back porch floor, sometimes falling asleep, in the warm sun on good days with Toodie, their dog. He stayed right there with me all the time. We didn’t have a refrigerator but had an icebox and nearby Lamson's Lumber Co. also made Ice. Their iceman would come by on a horse drawn wagon. Using ice tongs he took a large cake of ice, brought it in and put it in the icebox.

There was a neighborhood store called Talbot’s, about two blocks away. My Uncle Joe would take
me there quite frequently. He was a tall lanky guy with a long slow stride. He held my hand and I had to either skip or partially run at times to keep up with him. He kept teasing me about running to keep up with him. (He had a heart attack and died when I was 10 or 11 years old and I was one of the middle pallbearers.)

My Godmother Erleen

On my sixth birthday, in 1940, my cousin Erleen apologized to me for forgetting my birthday, but I never noticed or thought about it before she mentioned it. She was always busy and apologetic. She took me to Woolworth’s 5&10 cent store and said ‘Pick out any toy you want and I’ll get it for you.” So I picked up a metal airplane similar to a Curtis P40, but with wings that fold up. I enjoyed that toy more than anything else I received.

Erleen’s Dancing School

Erleen, also my Godmother, was a dance instructor
and had a dance school for children. Once a year she put on a dance recital at the Hudson Town Hall. I heard she was an excellent dance instructor and her recitals were always great. I went to a couple of them, but no way could she get me to dance. I wouldn’t let her teach me. I was very stubborn when it came to that. I always thought it was a thing for girls to do. But she accepted me and I loved her all the same.

I don’t recall very much of one of my father’s best friend, Mike DeGrappo, who also was my godfather, but I do remember his name and his mustache I thought was very stylish, so I trim mine similar.
Before I went to school my mother moved us to Marlboro, I think it was on Broad Street. I recall seeing the big ugly Mack trucks doing roadwork by
our house. With their weird mean looking front part that reminded me of a wasp. The street was on a main thoroughfare. We lived there for a very short time, and then moved back to my aunt Fredelina’s.

**Gifts from My Dad**

In 1940, when it was time for me to go into the first grade, we went back to Hudson and lived with my Matount Plough. Sometimes my dad would come by with his tonic truck and take me with him delivering to his customers. Most times he bought something for me. Even though I couldn’t tell time he bought me a watch on one trip. Another time he wanted to buy me a BB gun, but when he mentioned it to my mother she got furious, so I didn’t get one.

**First Day at School and First Grade Photo**

At this present point in time I searched and found an old photo album in the closet. Please note that I have never looked on the Internet to verify any of the following information. I went into the first
grade in the fall of 1940 at the Packard Street School. My first grade teacher was Mrs. Lycett.

Presently I am looking at my first grade class photograph of all the students (no names are listed on the photo or anywhere else). I have not seen most all of them since 1948 and recognize many by sight first Row 1-Bobby Correa, 2-John Veleno (myself), 3-?, 4-Roy Zina, 5-Roger Morell, 6-Winthrop Puffer; 2nd Row -1-? 2-?, 3-?, 4-?, 5- Conrad Holden, 6- David Witkenstein; 3rd Row -1-Norma West, 2- Josephine, 3- Pearl Witkenstein, 4- Richie Chartrand, 5 Marty Chartrand, 6 Jose Valerio; 4th Row -1 Pearl West 2-?, 3- Deloris Simco, 4,?; 5th Row - 1?, 2-Dorothy Semasko, 3 - ?, 4 – Maureen Welch, 5 - ?, 6 - Julia.

When Mrs. Lycett left the room, on the first day of school, many of us did not know what we were supposed to do. So one of the boys opened up a window and a couple jumped out. Another group
formed, including me, and we jumped into the schoolyard and played. The teacher, Mrs. Lycett, came back, called us into the classroom, sat all of us at our desks and placed paper bags over our heads that the bottom had been cut out leaving the top easy access for kids walking by to poke their hand down on our heads. We really felt foolish and never did that again.

My dad joined the Army that summer. Although he was past the draft age, he felt it was his duty. Later his younger brother, Nick, was drafted.

**School Years**

Jumping ahead in time for a moment I will list teachers I had in most every grade. 2nd grade Miss Coombs, 3rd grade Miss Douglas, 4th grade Miss Douglas, 5th grade Miss Green, 6th grade Miss McGrath, 7th Grade Mr. Tom Fielding & Mr. Fisher, 8th Grade, I don’t recall the name. Some of my High school teachers were Mr. Donahue, Mr. Bondalevich, teacher and football coach, and. Lou
Colombo, teacher, football coach, cousin and brother to the other Colombo brothers previously mentioned.

During the ice-cold winter in the first grade I got my tongue stuck on the school steel hand railing. A teacher fetched some hot water and poured it onto my tongue and railing. It half worked and then I knew I would just have to pull my tongue off the railing whether I liked it or not and just did it. It bled and took a few days to heal and I never licked anything that cold, ever again. There is nothing like learning from experience.

On first grade graduation day my report card said "Passed on Trial" and not having advance notice to the meaning of it, I thought it was good because it had three words instead of one, "Passed". However when I got home and my other explained what it meant I felt pretty bad about it and didn't want to do badly in the second grade to stay back with the kids who stay behind. But when I went into the second grade, with Miss Coombs, I was
only there two weeks and she decided to keep me as she saw I was not a trouble maker. I really liked, Miss Coombs, a lot. After two weeks she decided to keep me there and not on trial. By then I knew what passed on Trial meant and I did pretty well in the second grade.

The Disappearing Five Pound Box of Chocolates
I think my mom and stepfather first got married by a Justice of the Peace, then at a later date in the Catholic Church. We moved to an apartment on Houghton Street and I had to go to the Broad Street School, but only for a few weeks. While living on Houghton Street my parents bought two cocker spaniels, and named them Midge, a light brown cocker, and Tarny, a black and white mixture. On Valentine’s Day my step dad bought my mom a five-pound box of chocolates and left them on the living room table. When I got home from school the chocolates were all gone! Shortly after, my parents came home and blamed me for the chocolates being gone! I said I never had a
single one, and didn't! They said it was impossible for the two small dogs to eat five pounds of candy.

Shortly thereafter we moved to Manning Street and my parents bought a home there for $2,200. Then I transferred back to the second grade at the Packard Street School, where I started school, and stayed on Manning Street until I graduated from high school and got married. Then I went into the third grade with Miss Douglas as my teacher. She was pretty, and had a very good opera type voice and enjoyed singing occasionally. It seemed she paid more attention to me than most of the others. When I found out she was going to be my fourth grade teacher I felt somewhat uneasy, but I soon became much more comfortable when I realized she was being helpful and concerned. After graduating from high school, we met in a store and she apologized to me for giving me extra attention. She said she liked me and wanted to help me advance in my learning. She had been a big help.
I can picture exactly what she looked like. She was pretty and always had a nice smile.

**Grammar School (now called - Middle School)**

In school sports activities I played various positions in baseball, as most boys do, in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. I played football in my sophomore and junior years of high school. While we were playing against Concord toward the end of the season I was injured, who had not lost a game in five years, but we won and I felt great about that, but I was no longer football material.

**High School Years Spare Times**

Early years in high school included being picked up after school by a bus to go apple picking, or cranberry picking. On our own we did much blueberry, blackberry, raspberry, and cherry picking in or near our neighborhood in the countryside. I ate most of what I picked. One day a friend of mine and I went to a closed down piggery where all sorts of vegetables were
abundantly growing wild together. We brought home a couple of bags full of excellent quality vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots, onions, rhubarb, celery, and more. When I got home my mother was excited seeing the quality and quantity of these veggies. She said, “Where did you get these?” I said, “At the closed down piggery up the street.” She said “Oh my God, get them out of here and throw them in the garbage before we all get sick!” Sometimes we took a bike ride up to a cider mill and bought some fresh made cider, and drink about a half- gallon before getting home.

During my junior year I began dating Betty, my ex-wife, starting by taking her to her Junior Prom. She was going to an all-girl Catholic Academy at that time and it was difficult for her since no boys went to her school. Since I chummed around with her brother, Emil, Betty and I started dating frequently after the prom.
Working During My Senior Year
During my high school summer vacation before my senior year I worked for the Clover Farm Market in Hudson. I mostly stocked shelves and delivered groceries with the company station wagon. The owner was John I. Reddy. The butcher, Frank Cavanaugh, and someone you wouldn’t want to mess with; I was told he’d throw a knife at you. He sure enjoyed bragging about the sausage mix he made every Saturday morning, giving everyone a free sample. One day Frank told a customer, who lived in a third floor apartment, there was going to be a sugar shortage, and talked her into buying a 50 pound bag of sugar. I had to carry that bag up three flights of stairs and when I got back to the store everyone had a good laugh for themselves. Frank lived at Curley’s dairy farm, also on Manning Street, about ½ mile the opposite direction from the Estabrook dairy farm and our house was half way between the two.
Learning Dog Care and Training Dogs

During my third, fourth and fifth grade school years my mother and step father, Mike, decided to raise AKC (American Kennel Club) registered Pedigreed Cocker Spaniels. They started with the two that ate all the chocolates previously mentioned. They constructed a dog kennel for mating and housing their dogs. The Kennels had four separated doggy sections with concrete runners about 16’ long. Both my parents worked, my mom worked in a shoe shop and my step Dad was a chef. I always got home earlier than they did. I got home from school about 2pm, step dad about 3pm, but he always took a nap because he had to open at 4am every day. My mom got home about 5pm and we ate dinner about 6 to 7 every night. When I got home from school my chore was to clean out the inside dog kennels where the dogs slept and hose down the concrete runners, and put the waste in bags to throw in the trash. To help keep the dogs healthy I put down fresh wood shavings in their living area and in the runners. We had as many as 25 or so Cocker Spaniels at
times, mostly puppies. But puppies always sold quickly, so were not as much work as anticipated. We also entered the Cockers in some local dog shows. My parents taught me how to work and train the dogs for shows. I helped by training them in walking and displaying them. Our most important show was an AKC dog show at the Boston Gardens, the place where large events took place, including bull riding contests, and shows like the Ice Follies, etc. My mother and I showed a couple of our best dogs there and they won first, second, and third places.

**My Horsing Around Days**
When the doggie business started to slow down, they sold all the dogs they didn’t want to keep for pets. We kept Midge and Sargie. The following year they decided to get riding horses to rent out. They didn’t start out immediately but we had to learn about taking care of horses first. That was not as difficult as it would seem because my mother’s brother, my Uncle Ernie, had recently
moved back from Wyoming where he had worked about 20 years for a ranch that rounded up wild horses, broke and trained them for riding, then ship them back east to horse buyers in Boston and New York. All Uncle Ernie ever knew about and talked about was horses. He was the most knowledgeable person I ever knew about horses.

When I was about 11 years old my stepfather’s brother, Sammy, had recently just purchased a riding horse named Boston. They sat me on Boston in our side yard close to a young maple tree. Prior to that I had only ridden Estabrook's farm ponies rounding up grazing cows for a couple of years, but no horse up until then. The horse knew I was not an experienced rider and took advantage of it. He started running, circling the house, and I had all I could do to hold on. He came back around the house by the maple tree and went under a low branch high enough to clear the saddle but not me. It literally wiped me off the saddle (good thing it was an English saddle), everyone was laughing
because my penny loafers stayed in the stirrups.

Within the next couple of weeks my Uncle Ernie came by and talked my parents into going to a horse auction. But we had no place to keep a horse. They started converting the dog kennel right away and it easily housed two horse stables. In a short time they converted their garage into temporary stables as well. Shortly they bought a horse barn up the street and had it moved onto our property next to the converted dog kennel, and it would house four horses. So we had eight horses in a relatively short period time.

When I was 12 years old my uncle Ernie gave me extensive riding and horse care lessons and taught me how to ride western style, English style, racing style, and bareback using all the proper gear for each one. I immensely loved learning about horses and horseback riding from my uncle Ernie. The only problem was that riding took up all my
time and I couldn’t go and play neighborhood baseball and football, which were common pastime games. Both my parents worked full time jobs. After school and during the summer all my time was used for taking care of the horses and exercise riding them. I really didn’t mind but every time I went riding by when my friends were playing baseball or football I would hear them loudly, “There goes the show off, too good to play with us anymore.” When I got older I realized the reason was - they must have been jealous, but I felt I was letting them down by not playing ball with them.

Silver
When I was 13 my parents bought me “Silver”, a very lively, pure white stallion quarter horse, and looked just like the Lone Ranger’s horse. Actually, I think my Silver looked better. He was flawless and beautiful, so muscular, full of vigor and life, with a perfect build. He would instantly rear up quickly when pulling back high on the reigns. Unfortunately it took us a couple of weeks to get
accustomed to each other. When we bought Silver, we were warned that he would never let anyone ride him for about two weeks without throwing them. He needed to get to know a rider, and it was no guarantee. He had to really like someone a lot. He probably had an excellent trainer he was very fond of. I petted him and talked to him every day like he was my buddy.

For the first week I could ride him for about 15 minutes. He could feel how tense a rider was. As soon I felt confident and relaxed, I found myself in the air and there was nothing I could do about it. One habit he had would be to hold his head high, causing the rider to shorten the reigns, and then he would quickly pull his head down, pulling the reigns out the rider’s hands, and they would flip over his head. You couldn’t get the reigns back; all you could do is hold onto the horn on the saddle. When this happened Silver would run wildly or buck and you would find yourself thrown off into the air. If he was close to our house he would run
full speed back to the barn and go in, barely
clearing the top of the door and wipe off whoever
was on him. That’s rough on a western saddle. You
would have to realize you’d better put your hands
in front of you to push yourself off his back. He
only did this to me a couple of times but I kept
on talking and petting him, hugging his neck.
When he started talking back to me he made noises
like snorting and grunting. He would paw, or hoof,
when he wanted me to give him a treat (a little lump
of sugar), but he had to earn it first. We continued
that friendship. After that rapport developed he
never pulled his tricks on me ever again.

I had a friend named Robert who desperately wanted
to ride Silver. I warned him about what Silver
would do but Robert insisted. Because Robert was
big and tall, I let him. I didn’t think he could
handle him but I let him try. There was a field,
about 200 yards long, across the street from our
house. Robert started at one end of the field and
got Silver running fast. I saw Silver holding his
head high and knew what he was about to do. While running full blast, Silver quickly put his head down pulling the reigns out of Robert’s hands and over Silver's head. At full speed Silver headed toward the left side of a utility pole, and at the very last instant, he took a quick right and went on the right side of the pole and Robert ended up wrapped across the pole with his stomach right in the middle. Silver just noticeably strutted back to the barn looking like a show off.

One thing Silver really thoroughly enjoyed was playing tag with other horses and riders. There were quite a few horse riders in our area and most riders were older than me. Every once in a while they would gather and come by my place asking if I wanted to go play tag with them. We would all ride up to one of the many local apple orchards to play tag. I always wanted to take Silver. When I was on him he knew exactly what was going on. I would always volunteer to be “it” first. Silver could easily catch any horse I went after to tag. And he
would not let any other horse near us when they were trying to catch us. After being invited to play tag about three times, whenever they came by after that they told me I could not use Silver because it was like cheating. Silver was full of so much quick energy and he loved playing tag. So I just didn’t go with them. I loved riding Silver because we had so much fun. I thoroughly enjoyed the way he had fun. He wanted to prance most of the time instead of just walking like most horses do. He’d do quick steps sort of hopping, very lively, lifting his front hoofs high. I think he just plain liked showing off, being the big shot he was.

We also had another good horse named Russell. He would pull a two-wheel sulky very nicely. Every once in a while my mother would hook Russell up to the sulky and go off shopping. My step dad was restoring a sleigh at that time. When we got a lot of snow I hitched Russell up to the sleigh, which was nearly complete with its beautiful red velvet
cushioned seats. It was so hard to resist. For some reason Russell didn’t like the sleigh and he started trotting along the side of the road getting closer and closer to the plowed four feet high snow banks. I tried to steer him away from the bank and slow him down but he eventually got very stubborn and pulled the sleigh up on the snow bank. The sleigh tipped over and the shafts broke. Needless to say that was the end of our sleigh, but it was not the end of my hearing about it for quite some time.

The Horse Show

The August I turned fourteen years old, I would be going into the first year of high school. Hank Estabrook, a dairy farmer up the street, had recently purchased a well-trained thoroughbred Tennessee Walker. Hank asked if I would ride his Walker in the "Best Show Horse" contest in a local once-a-year Rod and Gun Club horse show. I mentioned to Hank that he had many nieces and nephews who rode very well and maybe he should
ask one of them. He said absolutely not, this is my decision and I want only you to ride him, no one else. I went up to Hank’s farm and rode his horse every day for about a week and a half before the show. I had never ridden a horse that responded to every single command so smoothly. With each command of the reigns and voice he reacted to everything so intelligently, easily and immediately.

Uncle Ernie taught me everything for every style of show riding: correct posture, leg height adjustments, properly holding the reigns, between what fingers, etc. Certain commands are used with your feet, hands, reigns or voice. This horse simply understood every single movement I made to direct him, and we got along great together. The horse did so well I asked Hank if I could ride him in “The Best Rider Sixteen and Under” contest and Hank agreed. I told my parents what Hank wanted me to do for him and asked them if they wanted to go to the show. They said they weren’t interested in going because they felt that neither
Hank’s horse nor I would do very well. I rode Hank’s horse in the event for “Best Show Horse” and his horse easily won first prize.

A little while later I rode the Tennessee Walker in the “Best Rider Sixteen and Under” event and won first prize. I had to ride Western style, English style and Bareback, including changing the gear, and won in all three categories. One of the parents, who had two sons riding in the same contest, started arguing with the judges saying that I was an unheard of rider and that he had paid a lot of money for his sons’ horseback riding school lessons during the past two years, and that one of his sons should have won because they, the judges, knew his sons. All three judges told him it was a contest for the best rider and that I was unanimously selected by all of them, and that was all there was to it. In a fit of anger the father hit one of the judges, wearing eyeglasses, so hard that his glasses went flying about six feet. I quickly got my prize, a blue ribbon and a pair of English Jodhpur
riding boots, and left. Hank asked if he could have the blue ribbon I won, and I gave it to him. When I went home and told my parents about it, they did not like the idea that I gave Hank my blue ribbon, because it was more important than the riding boots I got for the prize. I told them I thought that the best thing I could do for Hank was to at least give him the blue ribbon that states “Best Rider Sixteen and Under” so that Hank would be able to show his nieces and nephews proof that he knew what he was doing when he selected me to ride his horse. I felt I did a good and proper thing for him after what he had done for me, and some nieces and nephews were schoolmates.

My One Day of Horse Racing
My step-dad enjoyed betting on horse racing ever since he was a young man. Soon after I won first prize for “Best Rider” at the horse show, my stepfather decided to buy a racehorse. He heard there were going to be young jockey tryouts at the Weymouth Fairgrounds for wanna-bees 16 years of
age and under. So my stepfather contacted them and registered me for a jockey tryout on our own racehorse. Uncle Ernie taught me jockey style riding which was quite different. I had to position myself above the horse in a manner to let the horse feel that I am as weightless and motionless as possible. This is done with the position and leg control movements of the jockey while the horse is running below him, similar to what the shock absorbers and springs do for a car. Let the horse feel as free as possible for him to do his thing and he will appreciate it. Racehorses really love to run. It is something in them to just do.

**The Real Thing Gates!**

I was so surprised when we got there because; it was a real racetrack with grandstands, and the gizmo that has the metal gates for each horse to stand in. When the bell rings all the gates open simultaneously, the horses run out, and the gizmo is pulled off the track into the infield. I had never personally seen one before and “Now I will be in
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

one!” How exciting this was for me. I had been making friends with our horse for a few weeks. My horse was so anxious he kept pushing me sideways against the cage. When the gates opened he shot out, like out of a cannon. He loved running! We ran in the first race and won. I never kicked nor whipped the horse, I just let him go and do the thing he really loved. But immediately after crossing the finish line I pulled back on the reins. Pulling as hard as I could I couldn't stop him. He kept on running and we went around the track a second time. Everyone in the stands stood up and cheered. I guess they thought I was doing a victory lap, but I just could not stop him. My father got so upset, he did not believe me and said “You know what you are doing, you are an expert and I know it.” I said, “Dad, I really could not stop him.” After that race I was immediately approached by three other horse owners who wanted me to ride their horses, one in the third race, one in the fifth race, and one in the seventh race. I had to get to know these horses in short order so I spent all the time I could with each
of them before their race. We won all three of those races, but no victory laps. The horse I rode in the seventh race was a dapple grey horse and I never liked that color horse. However, he won and seemed to sense my negative feeling and I felt he just wanted to prove something to me.

On the way home my dad was elated saying he could not believe the great day we had. He wanted to make a jockey out of me. I was a small guy anyway. He said he was going to put me on a starvation diet so that I would not gain weight but retain the weight of a jockey when fully grown. Previously my mother was really excited about me being a jockey as well. Being a seamstress she had visions talking about making fancy colored jockey clothes for me but now she would not hear of me being put on a starvation, growth-stunting diet. Therefore that was the last time I ever raced a horse, but I still considered it another wonderful day in my life - winning all four races in one day, and on an expert track with other expert jockeys.
I never expected that would happen at all. Well, needless to say, that was the first and last of my jockey days.

Shortly thereafter, the horse renting business didn’t pay off any longer, fewer and fewer customers came by. Like everything else, it can get old too. All in all the most horses we had at one time was eight horses, and a grand total of 17 different ones. So my parents sold the horses and equipment when I was 15 years old. And my step dad started making pizza at the Italian club every weekend instead, and I was learning to drive!

Getting Married, Going on a Honeymoon and Starting a Family

I had been going steady with my ex-wife since after her Jr. Prom and we got married in November 1952, when I was 18. I drove my 1948 Plymouth sedan (the one I hit the cow with) to Miami for a honeymoon. There was no tunnel under the Chesapeake Bay at that time, just a ferry. On the
second day about midnight I got stopped in Greensboro, NC for a stop sign violation. We were brought to the police station and they talked about locking me up until dawn. But seeing we were just kids on our honeymoon they let us go. Then I very carefully drove through Georgia. I was reminded that in those days some southerners were still carrying out the Civil War!

On the way to Miami we stopped at Marine Land Florida for the day. In Miami we stayed at the Rodney Apartments on Collins Ave, a two level motel with a center lawn/garden on the beach. It was in a very nice location on Collins Ave. run by a husband and wife team. One night I bought a coconut but didn’t know how to cut it open. It was very tough, so I went to the motel office and asked the husband if he had a hatchet I could borrow. They immediately started whispering to each other looking very suspicious. He very nervously asked what I wanted to do with it. And I told him to open a tough coconut. Both of them suddenly
looked relieved, I can’t imagine what was going through their minds, but he told me it wouldn’t work. He suggested purchasing a coconut already halved. I went back to our apartment and I tried cutting it open again with knives they had but gave it up. So, the next day I bought a halved coconut.

In Miami we took in a night show at the Americana Hotel, the place where the famous Arthur Godfrey’s daily morning TV breakfast show took place. If I remember correctly they said there were about 1,500 seats in the dining room and it was an extremely high quality stage show with excellent talent, magicians, tumblers, singers, dancers, and more. We were seated about eight rows from the front. During the show, the very pretty and fine lady-singer left the stage with her wireless microphone. I didn’t notice where she disappeared to and I was looking around for her. I could hear her but couldn’t spot her, when all of a sudden I felt a hand on my shoulder and she was standing
behind me singing and looking down at me. Being my usual, normal self, it made for a pretty good laugh, at my expense. We did a few touristy things, the Fountain of Youth in St. Augustine, etc., and then drove home. On the way home, while driving through Fort Lauderdale there were very few hotels. We saw numerous “Land for Sale” signs along Route 1 within the city limits that read, “Beach property 5 Cents Per Square Foot” I had $250 extra dollars on me and wanted to buy some of that Fort Lauderdale Beach front property. But Betty thought that I had gone completely off my rocker! So, I never made the call but just drove on.

Our First Apartment
A short time after getting home, we were living with my parents; we learned that Betty was pregnant with our first child, Michele, who was born in September, 1953. We went out looking for an apartment, and found one at Estabrook’s farm, where I had worked in my younger years during school months doing chores, picking vegetables,
and riding their ponies up on the hill, called Long Hill, rounding up the grazing cows and bringing them home for milking before dark. The Estabrook's knew me well. Their farm was about a half mile north on the same street we lived on. They had a cute little apartment upstairs in their farmhouse with everything we needed for a starter. For home entertainment, aside from watching TV, I frequently played the harmonica and helped with our daughter, Michele. She was the sweetest little baby. When eating she would nearly always fall asleep as soon as she had enough. She would clamp down on the spoon and it stuck straight out. I would lightly move the spoon up and down and her head would bob with the spoon. We stayed at the farmhouse a few months when we were approached by a builder we knew very well. He had built a custom house for someone who then was laid off from work. That person was unable to pay for the custom designed house he ordered and the builder was unable to sell it. The builder owned a lumber camp in New Hampshire. From his own
lumber he built his own home nine years prior. He asked us if we wanted to buy his house and he would give us a good deal. Not being old enough to sign legal contracts, my parents co-signed for me, and we purchased our first home in 1954, when I was 20 years old. Then the builder moved into his customized house. Our second daughter, Marcella was born shortly after we moved in our new home.

Living in Our Beautiful New Home after Nine Years

After my father, John N. Veleno was killed in WWII the government sent me monthly payments from his $10,000 life insurance policy. I put what had accrued from the beginning into our new home and made monthly payments on the remainder until I sold it in 1963, when we moved to Florida. The view looking at the house from the front yard appeared to be looking at a one-story Cape Cod-style house with a fireplace chimney on the left side of the house. Starting from the front left side
of the house there were two standard-style 44-inch wide glass windows, a 30 foot-long concrete sidewalk leading to the oversized front door, another 44-inch-wide glass window. (The glass panes were 44” wide). There was a knotty pine sun porch on the right side, with a 30-foot long sidewalk leading to another front entrance door between two regular size glass windows on the porch. The view from in back of the house appeared to be a three-story house with a standard walk-in door to the basement. There were two, standard-size windows on the right side of the basement and a garage to the left. The sun porch, with three windows, was above the garage. There were kitchen, bathroom, and rear spare bedroom windows. The third level had a full-size dormer from the center of the main roof, toward the back outside wall, and was two feet shorter on each side than the first story roof. In the back, the dormer had three evenly spaced windows for a bedroom on each side and a bathroom in the center. The dormer was uniquely placed that was not seen from the front and had a window on each side.
Marcy and I in the Snow in Front of Our Home
The house had a full cellar with concrete construction on three sides with wood construction and siding to the ground level in the back. The house was built on two 12” steel I-beams, the full length of the house, inserted into the side concrete walls, so that no posts were needed in the cellar to support the upper structure.

**Basement Exercise Room**

I was able to build a recreation and exercise room in the basement in the fashion I wanted. I furnished my exercise room mostly with weight-lifting equipment. I had a set of dumbbells, and a barbell. The dumbbell with collars weighed five pounds each. The barbell with collars was 25 pounds. The weights were eight pound weights, eight 5-pound weights, eight 10-pound rings, and eight 25-pound rings and 4 2.5-pound collars. I made a bench press table and an incline table with had plenty of room for exercising all the various exercise routines. I worked up to my usual routine
in about a year which consisted of military presses, of 125 lbs. 6-10 repetitions, and one at body weight, 150 lbs.; 8 repetitions of deep knee bends with 180 lbs.; bench press 240 lbs., 6 repetitions; 10 straight-arm laying down pullovers with 125 lbs.; one hand overhead lift with 125 lbs. and many other varying lifts including curls, one hand curls, military presses, and more. My usual routine was two hours every other day, religiously done for three years, with enough rest between the various routines to restore normal breathing.

**Photo Lab and Laundry Room**

I built a photo-lab dark room in the basement and had all the photo equipment, including a photo enlarger, needed for home processing. I started with black and white film, and eventually into color processing. I took numerous family photos at home, and at family events, including beaches and other travels. I also built a washroom in the cellar, installing a washer, dryer and a full-size chest deep-freezer.


Inside the Home

Every room in the home was built with a different type of wood. There was a large, tiled floor in our eat-in kitchen where we had a full-size table and chairs. The living room was birch with birch floors, window and door trim. There was a large fireplace with a built in heatalator in the living room. There were three oversize 44” wide glass windows, two in the living room and one in the dining room.

The front door opened to a foyer with a doorway to the right for the dining room, and a stairway straight ahead.

Shortly before our third daughter, Carla, was born, there was a heavy snowstorm in January, 1958 with about 4 feet of snow. I recall looking out the living room window, and Betty was very big, round, and very pregnant pulling a sled with Shelly and Marcy on it. Suddenly she fell down on her stomach. I couldn’t believe what I just saw! Her
hands out to the side, not touching the ground, and her feet sticking straight out behind her, not touching the ground, and she just rocked back and forth. One hand was still holding on to the rope on the sled. I ran out but she was up by then. Then there was a blizzard in February 1958 when Carla was born. What a time. We had to drive through the blizzard to get Betty to the hospital. If I recall correctly, her brother Emil drove and did very well in the blizzard.

Carla was an unusual baby, always smiling. She just looked like all she wanted to do was have fun and enjoy everything. I don’t recall her being deadly serious about any particular thing. However, as she grew, she developed a certain sense of when we were going to get visitors and who they were, and it always came true. She knew when it was going to rain before it even looked it. She would tell her playmates “Let’s pick up our toys and bring them in the house, it’s going to
rain.” All the kids did what she said and it always came true, and all her playmates never doubted whatever Carla said.

We lost a couple of baby sitters because of Carla predicting things. She would tell a baby sitter “A friend is going to call you.” And the phone would ring within 5 minutes. Some baby sitters freaked out at that and would not come back. We would tell them about that beforehand and they would say, “That’s okay, I don’t mind.” But when it did happen they freaked out. We were able to keep one good baby sitter before Joan Thimolt, she was a senior in high school and a neighbor who knew and liked Carla. She said she understood, and stayed with us for quite a long time. Carla would tell us when her Grampy was coming, even on a day when he was supposed to be working. It always happened that he would come and only a few minutes after Carla said it.
Then our son, Christopher, was born in August 1960. Christopher was definitely “All boy” as the saying goes. The girls loved him and he loved his sisters.

Our youngest, Tina, was born in October 1961. Tina was a very good and very quiet baby with a wonderful disposition. We couldn’t have asked for a better little girl.

Things were getting pretty rough and tough for all of us during that period of time when Chris and Tina were born. Now we had five children, Michele, Marcella, Carla, Christopher, and Tina, all delivered by Dr. Hood and all born in the Marlboro Hospital.

Betty had gradually been getting ill during the past six or so years. She regressed into an extremely poor health condition that wasn’t as noticeably serious to me, as it had been happening so gradual. We did the best we could under the
circumstances. We took her to about six doctors in succession; some were the family doctor, dermatologists, others for her nerves, which, they said, caused a skin condition especially on her hands. During the cold weather her fingers would crack and bleed. All the doctors gave her medications to calm her nerves. But she progressively got worse. She was finally admitted into the Lemuel Shattuck hospital in Boston, a specialized hospital for recuperation of prolonged illnesses, and was there for three months. Of course, during that time, I had to keep on working at my job which included excellent medical benefits, plus tend to our five children as well.

I was working an 11pm to 7am shift 6 days a week, which was helpful in my being able to make daily hospital visits and would often sleep in a chair at the hospital. I requested our parents, relatives and whomever I could, to help in taking care of my children. My mother and father had moved to
Florida in 1960 and had a duplex home built, with two bedrooms on each side. They agreed to take Michele and Marcella until things got better, and they stayed about a year, till the remainder of us came to Florida. I contacted a former schoolmate, Ronnie O'Brien, then a radio announcer, and his wife Inez, and asked if they would take care of my baby, Tina, for a while until Betty got home from the hospital. Since they were unable to have children they were more than happy to do that for me, but they really missed Tina when I had to take her back. They took excellent care of Tina for about a year.

My favorite sport – Skiing!
Skiing had been my number one sport since I was five to six years old, so there are numerous stories I could tell. But I will only mention a few things I feel were small but outstanding events for me during those periods of time. A neighbor boy named Leonard taught me how to ski at five to six years old. He gave me lessons in going down small
grades and off small jumps. I began to enjoy it very much. Eventually, whenever there were four or more inches of snow on the ground, which was mostly all winter long in Massachusetts, I was on skis. I started to love skiing more than doing anything else, and would go from morning till sundown. While growing up I skied on numerous local hills plus some hilly apple orchards. There were ski tows close by in Marlboro and Stowe, Massachusetts, each about four miles away, where I did nearly all of my local skiing. I went to Stowe as often as I could; it was steeper, longer, and had a good rope tow, with fewer skiers. One Sunday afternoon, while I was skiing in Stowe, two women were there who lived about a mile or so from where I lived in Hudson. They approached me and asked if I would be interested in trying out for the Olympic team. They said that I was by far the best young skier on the slope and that they had been watching me for a few weeks. They mentioned that they had previously sponsored up and coming skiers. They told me they would
sponsor me for tryouts for the Olympic ski team and if selected they would sponsor me for the Olympic ski team. They gave me their names, phone number and address and asked if I would present them to my parents for approval of their offer. When I got home that day and told my parents about the two women who wanted to sponsor me, I gave them the information the ladies gave me. My parents knew who the ladies were and their comments were “What do two wealthy old maids want with a teenage boy, you stay away from them and don’t ever get in touch with them ever again. They must have something strange in mind to be going after a teenage boy.” So, I never spoke with the ladies again.

A couple years later I did some downhill racing and a little ski jumping in Berlin, Massachusetts that was safely rated for about 180 foot jumps. I did a few jumps but did not enjoy it enough to stay interested. I didn’t care for the landings. The hard slam was much harder and difficult than it appears,
and it was a tedious climb up to the top just to ski for a few seconds.

**Down the Chute**

While going down the chute, one must crouch low, and spring up about two to three feet before the end of the chute. This maneuver gives distance to your jump. To get more distance, once you spring up, you must position your skis to "fly" as effortlessly as possible leaning forward perpendicular to the skis that you possibly can to catch the air and "fly" with your hands back alongside your legs to get less wind resistance for flying, catching the wind underneath the skis to get distance. In approaching your landing you must be prepared to absorb the landing hit, bending your legs for shock absorbing, and go as low as you can, then to an upright position to edge-slide sideways for a smooth stop. It was a little more difficult than I anticipated. I did some practicing but the biggest thing with me is it was just not exciting enough for me to keep on practicing. Especially when there was no lift to bring you back
up, not that I was lazy, but I just didn’t want to spend the time and energy doing it. I’d rather go up as high as I can on a lift and speed downhill on a steep curvy trail. To me it feels more like silently flying, not being pulled or pushed for power, but using your own physical power for making the constant necessary adjustments to the power of nature and gravity.

**Downhill Racing**

So, ski jumping was out for me but I really loved downhill racing. After being approved after a couple of tryouts I entered a fairly important downhill race at Hogback Mountain in Brattleboro, Vermont and came in third doing my absolute best possible. The course was 4/5 mile and my time was 54 seconds, starting from a stand still. At some points I reached 65 to 70 or so mph.

However I knew I could not do better than two foreign skiers who beat me by two to three seconds. That day I started to understand that eyesight is
the most important attribute for a downhill racer. In order to maintain control one must see the terrain at least for a constant 40 - 50 feet ahead in a continuing procedure in which the brain transmits a continuing constant adjusting mode to one’s body and leg muscles to the terrain the actual experiencing while looking ahead. It becomes eye to complete body control and not thinking about what to do, just experiencing what is going on, doing it with complete enjoyment. When one types or plays piano fast one never stops to think what fingers go where. When the eyes see the music score - the mind transfers intelligence from the eyes directly to the fingers in unbelievable speed while the fingers automatically type or play without the performer thinking about it at all. I know I did the best downhill run my eyes would allow me to do that day in the downhill race. I always knew my absolute control limit. One tiny bit faster than my best eye to leg control would end me up in a total wipe out! For me to do better I would have to
have had better eyesight, and I had 20/20 vision with glasses on. I believe that better than 20/20 eyesight is probably the most important attribute to have in any sport to be in the top numbers. I guess you can call it reaching “terminal velocity” or some have said “Boy, you like to live on the edge.” However, I've seen many others closer to the edge than I've done to give credit to.

After the age of 18 my favorite ski areas were Belknap Recreation Area (now called Gunstock) in Laconia, New Hampshire, and Mt. Snow in Vermont. I was unable to go as often as I would have liked to. I never skied on Canon Mt. in New Hampshire but always wished I could have. Skiing Belknap Mountain was my favorite because it was easy to travel to and only about a 1½ hour drive. It had many lifts and fun trails and was plenty fast enough. Belknap had three excellent jumps from medium to extra-large. One time I skied there all day at 20 below zero. Another
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

time there was about three feet of snow and it had rained the day before. During the night the water froze on top of the snow making a thick sheet on the surface of the entire mountain, which made it very dangerous. Only a few went down the mountain that day, but I did a few times. It really put the ski’s steel edges to the test that day. It was like ice-skating down the mountain. I had skied there for three winters in succession without falling, including running into a guy walking across a path of an “Experts Only” ski trail. He was crossing just on the other side of a bridge over a brook which I was about to cross at about 50 mph. As he was walking slowly I hollered “Track” as loud as I could but he didn’t hear me. I flew across the bridge and could not avoid hitting him. I got into a low crouch position with my right shoulder low and hit him on the hip and butt area. He went over my head and landed in back of me. It did not cause me to lose my balance, fall, or lose speed. I just kept on going and was out of sight
before he could even spot me. There are warning signs all over those slopes, everywhere in all the dangerous places, warning, “Experts only trail. Stay out unless using the trail.” But many people just go wherever they want without reading signs.

The End of a Three Year Record
After skiing extensively on the mountains in Vermont and New Hampshire for three years without falling, it ended with this experience at Belknap Mountain. I was going exceptionally fast, as usual, down a “For experts only” marked trail from the top of the mountain. When nearing the bottom there was a flat area about 200 feet long. At the end of the flat area there is a steep slope about 400 feet long just before the level stopping area at the bottom. While crossing that 200 foot flat area, I was unable see over the edge as it was out of view. Not able to see where I was about to land in about two to three seconds, I shot out into air, at about 60 miles per hour for the
next 150 feet, and saw that I would be landing three to four feet directly behind a young girl or lady, slowly doing the beginner’s *snowplow* at about 5 to 10 mph - dead ahead,. I didn’t have time to warn her, and unable to turn to miss her, didn’t want to hurt her, so I instantly crouched low while in the air, landing behind her doing at least 55 mph, went straight between her legs, with my chest hitting her butt. The impact forced me to lay on the backs of my skis still moving at about 45mph. I could only see the bright blue sky above, with her sitting on my stomach and her arms wrapped tightly around my legs holding on for dear life, screaming her head off, not for help, just long constant death curdling screams. We finally came to a stop after cruising a few hundred feet, and I asked her “What in the world were you doing on the bottom of a slope marked ‘For Experts Only’”? She said “It looked like a good spot for a beginner because I didn’t see anyone using it and I would have it all to myself.” I said, “Well at least neither
one of us got hurt, but please use the places marked ‘Beginners’ to learn how to ski!” and I left. I was grateful nothing had been sticking up out of the snow, like a bush, that would have gone between my legs. Fortunately it was a good clean area.

**Mount Snow in Vermont**
Mount Snow in Vermont was an excellent ski area. From a distance, it looked like a postcard mountain. The top is bare, comes to a peak, and snowcapped. At that time they had a 90° heated swimming pool on the top of the mountain. People were running out of the lodge and diving into the pool coming out in a cloud of steam so that you could not recognize them. Good idea for certain skiers but it was never on my agenda.

**Dangerous Runaways**
I taught my mother to ski in local places near where we lived, and took her up to Mount Snow this one time. She actually went to the top and skied
all the way down, not bad either. The parking lot for that place was below where the bottom of the ski-stopping area was. As I had just come down the mountain standing there for a few minutes, a runaway ski came down the mountain bouncing wildly. It flew about 40 feet away from me just hitting the tops of the snow, hit a wave in the snow then got air bound, flying into the parking lot. It went through the windshield of a car and stuck into the rear seat. Fortunately it didn’t hit anyone. We didn’t know how far it had come down the mountain, but it must have come from pretty high up. However, that dangerous problem was solved in many ski areas. No longer did they allow a run-away ski to happen. Straps were invented to tie the ski, at the binding, to the skier’s ankle. That prevents a run-away ski. But there is another imminent danger. If you fall and your skis come off, and you find yourself tumbling down a steep area, your skis are tumbling with you, you find it difficult to decide what part of your body you want to protect.
Sharing a Ski Lodge for the Night
One can get quite an experience going to an inexpensive ski lodge. I went to one to spend a night. It was a very large old mansion looking place, and not very expensive so I booked a night. It was a three-story building. The third floor was reserved just for men, and the rooms up there were smaller than the first and second floor rooms. There were three rooms on the third floor with two-high bunk beds. The room I was in bunked about twenty guys. There was one toilet in the hall with about a 50 man share experience. The second floor was reserved for married couples and couples with children. There were more rooms on the second floor than on my floor. The first floor was reserved for girls and ladies only. The first floor had a large central room. The central room had an enormous fieldstone fireplace. It was wide enough to put eight-foot long logs in it with room to spare. Around the room there were about eight to ten sofas. The girl's bedrooms were off to the sides of that room. I don’t know how many
doorways were off to the sides, maybe eight to ten. When I was escorted to my third floor room I was told to expect a very cold night and they would give me a bunk right next to the potbellied stove. When I got there and I was pointed to my bunk and I noticed there was no fire in the potbellied stove. It was cold and about 25 below zero outside. It was not much warmer inside. There was one window in the room with a large coiled up rope next to it with a knot tied about every eighteen inches. That was our fire escape. The night was so cold, one guy, who couldn’t stop shivering, got up with his PJs on, wrapped in a blanket, and went down to the fireplace on the first floor to warm up. He said he stood in front of the fireplace for a few minutes and began to hear giggles here and there and started to hear some laughing. There were no lights on in the room but the fireplace glowed enough that when he looked around he could faintly see. All the sofas had girls in them sitting nice and cozy enjoying the warmth radiated from the fireplace and laughing.
He hustled up the stairs, came into our room and nervously told us all about what happened.

**Wildcat Mountain**

My favorite of favorite ski area was Wildcat Mountain in New Hampshire. I had never been there until the second year it was open. Wildcat is next to Mt. Washington, the highest mountain in New Hampshire. Wildcat opened in the winter of 1957-1958 boasting a 10,000 foot long enclosed “gondola lift” ride. A gondola could carry two skiers at a time. When I read about it I became so excited I could hardly contain myself. I had to go there no matter what! I asked several friends if they would go with me, no one wanted to go except one, Donald Eastman. He was a former schoolmate and a good skier who said he’d be happy to go. We went during the first week of January 1959. It was about a four-hour stormy snowy drive. When we got there, there was a very heavy snowstorm, some calling it a blizzard. There were quite a few cars in the parking lot but very few people with skis
going up the mountain. Most were just standing there looking. I thought "How can this be? This is Wildcat!" But I never would let snow stop me at Wildcat. My friend, though a good skier, was reluctant to go up the mountain, so he patiently waited at the bottom, and I don't blame Donald, he was always a very cautious person. I just hoped he wouldn't be upset with me.

The gondola lift was running but barely anyone got on. I was very excited just by being there. I got on a gondola by myself and went to the top. It was windy and snowing heavy up there. Some would probably call it a blizzard. I waited all of about 10 minutes before anyone else came up, as I did not want to go down the mountain by myself. I wandered around a little and found a good jumping off place to start. The best spot seemed to be sort of like jumping off a cliff, but it really wasn’t nearly that bad. The tips of the skis were sticking out in the air about two feet just waiting to push off.
Finally a man about twice my age came up and started chatting and asked if I had been waiting long and I told him about 10 minutes. He said he was surprised because there were quite a few skiers at the bottom but very few expressed interest in going up during the snowstorm. Even with it being windy was not enough to scare an avid good skier. I didn’t feel I was that much of an expert although they were the only trails I was interested in skiing down and so was he. I was only interested in skiing fast but being older he wasn't as enthusiastic about too much speed.

While we were talking and waiting to ski down the mountain he noticed the initials, “JV”, written on the tips of my skis. He immediately asked if my name is John Veleno. I was extremely surprised hearing him say that, and I said, “Yes, my mother painted my initials on the tips of my skis.” He said, “I thought so, you look just like your father and that’s how I know who you are.” He told me
his name, Lee Davenport. I asked him how he knew my father and he told me that he was with my father when he got killed. I asked him what happened. He said, “Do you really want to know?” I said, “Yes.”

**Learning about My Father’s Death**

Lee told me that he and my father with about nine others were trapped in a trench and a German machine gun nest was trained on them for about two days, and they had no one to help them. It kept getting worse by the minute, and they were running out of supplies. He said "All of a sudden your father acknowledged that he had more experience than any of the others as he had spent much time training recruits back at Fort Benning, GA." Lee said, “Your father expressed that he felt responsible and due to his experience and age everyone called him ‘Pop.’ Your father exclaimed ‘It is obvious to everyone that none of us stand chance at surviving. They are going to get all of
us very soon if someone doesn’t do something. Seeing that I have the most experience I feel it is my duty to take care of you.’ He then opened up his jacket and told all around him to, ‘At the same time, take a couple of hand grenades each, pull the pins and stuff them in my jacket.’” Lee then said “Your father took a couple of hand grenades with pins pulled in each hand, quickly jumped up out of the trench and started running fast toward the machine gun nest throwing all the grenades at them as fast as he could. When the Germans realized what he was doing, they machine-gunned him down literally cutting his body in half down the middle. But his grenades managed to kill all of them, as it takes a few seconds for the grenades to fire. And all of us got out alive.”

The Single Downhill Run on Wildcat
We waited momentarily and Lee said, “Are you okay?” and I told him I was okay and glad he told me that. He asked, “Who do you want to go down
first, you or me.” I told him “Me, but I like to go fast and you may not be able to keep up with me.” I was in terrific shape, as I always started a couple of months before ski season to exercise all the muscles used in extreme downhill speed, including repetitions of one-legged deep knee bends. I felt he may not be in as good a shape as I for this steep more than two mile downhill run at full speed, which would take a lot of strength and energy. I was also filled with emotion like I had never experienced. So I took off and went as fast as I dared all the way, it was very exciting. During the flight I get a thrill now recalling the continuous large waves of snow about 5' high so silently created by the continual power of gravity pulling me down while turning crissties to check my speed. When I reached the bottom I waited a couple of minutes and Lee appeared and said, “You really do like to go fast don’t you!” I told him “That is what I always do” and he said “Once like that is enough” and said he would be
leaving and that it was very nice meeting me. I told him likewise. I never saw or heard from him again.

For those very brief moments in my life Lee Davenport made a very big impact for me knowing what my father was like with his Army friends and about the people he cared for. That was the last and only run down Wildcat Mountain I experienced, yet one of the most appreciated anywhere, anytime.

VVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVV
This section is an update to newly acquired information regarding my father and Lee Davenport.

Dad at St. James Cemetery in France
A few years ago my daughter Carla searched the internet for WWII cemeteries in Europe to see if she could find where her grandfather, my father, John Veleno, was buried and found that he was buried in the Brittany American Cemetery in St.
James, Normandy, France. While writing this autobiography I recently searched the Internet for the Brittany American Cemetery in St. James, Normandy, France to look up my father’s name. In that section I saw that Mr. Lee Davenport honored my father by placing an American flag on my Dad's portion of the cemetery website for honoring deceased veterans buried there. After seeing his Lee's name and photo I recalled him as being the man who introduced himself to me on the top of Wildcat Mountain.

(P.S.) Recent update discovery: While doing this autobiography I recently learned information on the internet about Lee Davenport, a physicist, and about how important he was in being a key figure to ending WWII in Germany. Do an internet search in your favorite search engine for "Lee Davenport Radar" including the quotation marks and learn about the revolutionary radar device he invented and secretly took with him to Normandy and was
living in the strictest secrecy in Normandy. Lee Davenport had also been on the TV show "I've got a secret" and with all the hints he gave no one was able to guess what his secret was. It was his laser beam invention to transmit TV signals via laser beam. He demonstrated this live on TV by transmitting the TV signal to an on stage monitor. He would interrupt the signal by placing his hand in front of the beam to break it, and then remove his hand and the signal would return. It was truly amazing.

**Going to Germany for Vacation**

Joyce and I are presently making plans to visit Carla and her husband Alex in Munich, Germany in August and to visit the cemetery in France while we are there. Carla was there a few weeks ago. The two bouquets of flowers with C. Veleno are from Carla. Initially I received two Purple Hearts, one for when he was wounded and one w/oak leaf cluster, for when he was killed.
Recently I received further awards, a Bronze Star for heroism engraved with John N. Veleno, plus the American Campaign Medal, European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal & Bronze Star Attachment, a World War II Victory Medal, and a Combat Infantryman Badge 1st Award.

I believe Lee Davenport was instrumental for writing the specifics listed about my father you see in his memorial page listing shown in the following memorial which included an American flag inserted in the usual place for a flower display.
For Dad
- John M. Veleno
  Added: Apr. 11, 2013

I hope to be there to visit his gravesite this Easter, 2013.
- C Veleno
  Added: Mar. 27, 2013

- C Veleno
  Added: Aug. 31, 2011

John N. Veleno
Private First Class, U.S. Army
Service # 11056666
12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division
Entered the Service from: Massachusetts
Died: 9-Aug-44
Buried at: Plot H Row 13 Grave 17
Brittany American Cemetery
St. James, France
Awards: Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster

- L Davenport
  Added: Jul. 25, 2005

This page is sponsored by: Anonymous

Accuracy and Copyright Disclaimer
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

One of My Last Times with Dad

VVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVV
Early 1962 - Planning our Move to Florida
When Betty got out of the hospital in Boston in 1962 after being there recuperating for three months, I began making plans as recommended by her doctors to move to Florida to help her skin and nerve condition. Another employee at BRACON suggested and offered to help me build a trailer to move whatever we wanted.

I purchased a trailer bed with a trailer hitch that was made from a vehicle's rear axle, then built a box 8' wide x 16' long x 8' high for the trailer. It was large enough to take everything we wanted.

I measured every single box and item that was going to be put in that trailer and packed it on paper. The trailer was packed solid with no spare space. It was amazing that we were able to take everything we wanted including washer, dryer, and freezer, furniture, and paint equipment. I bought a full size 1957 two-tone blue Buick Station wagon to haul the trailer and make our move. Betty, Chris,
Carla, Tina and I left Hudson, Massachusetts around the last week in September 1963 with all our household goods, plus five pairs of skis (one pair was my mother’s), ski clothes and boots. It was an interesting trip. Georgia state police stopped me to measure the width of the trailer and found it to be exactly on the limit, so it passed. When we arrived in Florida we brought the contents of the trailer to a storage facility. We were finally back together again with Shelly and Marcy. We stayed at my parents’ duplex. They had a screen enclosed carport and most of us slept there for a little over a week. It wasn’t too bad, it didn’t rain. We soon found a home in Pinellas Park.

We noticed some of our belongings were missing, when retrieving our belongings but coped with it. I don’t recall what happened to my skis. This home had three or four bedrooms and we managed fairly well. It had electric ceiling heat, something I never heard of before. It was sort of nice in that it generated a radiation effect that heated the floors,
nice while walking barefoot in the winter.

Chris, Marcy, Carla, Shelly and Tina

The Five Arrive, back together In Sept 1963
About a month or so later Betty’s mother, father, sister and her two children came down from Massachusetts and moved in with the seven of us making a total of 12 residents. We had a very packed house for a short time but managed very well. I recall that New Year’s Day being about 75 degrees and we had a cookout. This was very unusual for us, coming from Massachusetts.

My First Job in Florida

The second week in Florida I got a job at Universal Machine, Inc. (UMI). It was a family run business with a Father, Vernon Orenduff, his wife, and son Charlie, and son-in-law Buzz; a total of four people. That was quite a switch coming from a plant with 2,000 employees to a much lower paying company with a total of four employees. Although very small the job seemed promising because the father, Vern Orenduff, had owned and operated a large machine shop business in New York during WWII fabricating various parts for Grumman, Lockheed, Martin and other airplane manufacturers.
He sold, retired, and then came to Florida. But now he wanted to start something for his family. At that time many of the Aircraft companies were getting involved in spacecraft and space exploration. Many of Mr. Orenduff’s former contacts from New York were now in the Cape Canaveral and Melbourne areas, the Florida Space Coast. Mr. Orenduff visited some of his old friends and came back with prints for us to bid on. He, his son Charlie, and Buzz his son-in-law, did most of the bidding in the very beginning. Shortly thereafter Mr. Orenduff gave me prints to bid on as well. I did very well in giving the time and cost estimates plus designing and building jigs and fixtures mostly for manufacturing, computer components.

During the 1930s, Mr. Orenduff had become a well-known and famous dirt track racecar driver and drove in the Indianapolis 500. One of his personal friends was Fred Offenhauser, maker of the famous Offenhauser engines, which nearly all the Indy cars used at that time. Once, when Mr.
Orenduff was racing in an Indy 500, he came in for a pit stop and a car came in behind him that lost its brakes, and crashed into Mr. Orenduff’s car, killing some of his pit crew. Mr. Orenduff’s car was green and he would never purchase anything green after that incident. I've heard that the Indy 500 has not allowed a green car race in it since then.

The Daytona racetrack was built by Bill France in 1958, who also was a personal friend of Mr. Orenduff. Bill France had formerly been a dirt track racecar driver during the time and met Orenduff, also a dirt track racer. After the track was built Orenduff would occasionally call Bill to get a few passes for us at the races, it was not only exciting but we met many of the world’s best drivers of the time. We got full passes for races including the 24-hour sports car endurance races if and when we had the time to go. Having full access to the pits during a race was very exciting enabling us to meet many famous drivers and crews.
During the next four years we built UMI from a four man shop into a fifty man shop. Mr. Orenduff was very up on the latest machinery used in machine shops. We built machines in house specifically to machine parts Mr. Orenduff had bid on. He soon began replacing much equipment with newly developed tape run numerical control (NC) equipment.

Buzz and one of our employee metal finishers, Gale McFarland, built drag racers and raced at the ¼ mile drag strip at the Sunshine Speedway on Ulmerton Road during the 1960s. Big Daddy Don Garlits raced there quite a few times. Hearsay is that one time Garlits chute didn’t open; he couldn’t stop in time and went across Ulmerton Road. I don’t know how true it is but if it is that must have been quite a ride. In the mid-1960s I met a man who owned a very small machine shop on Haines Road. I asked to make a deal with him that if I contracted some paying work to do in his shop
would he accept a percentage of what I made for the usage of his shop, and he agreed. Gale spoke with Don Garlits about me possibly doing some work for him. Then Don asked me if I would make some 7075-T6 aluminum main caps for his engines, which I did. Gale’s father-in-law also owned a local Harley dealership and Gale had some connections with other motor cycle shops in the state and got orders for us to fabricate front-end extension stanchion tubes for motor cycle extended front ends. We filled a few orders. I had to make our own taps and dies for threading the tubes since I could not find a machine tool supplier that carried them. Motorcycle extended front ends were becoming popular at that time.

Our New Home in Florida

In 1964 I contracted to have a new home built. It took about three months in the process. The plans for this two-story house had a flat faced two-story appearance in the front with a walkway across to the oversized garage on the right. I requested to
change the plans to have the second story overhang the front by adding two feet to the 2nd story level, giving it a much nicer appearance, causing a non-flat appearance with the second floor rooms larger, plus serving as a roof with a four foot protective covering over our front sidewalk to the garage. The builder didn’t charge me for the change, saying it was a good idea and inexpensive to do, and he would build more this way. It was an eight-room home with four bedrooms upstairs and a full bath. The Master bedroom had a shower bathroom. The first floor had a large living room/dining room combo, kitchen, and a regular dining room and a half bath with a door out to the back patio and future pool area., The oversized two-car garage made it easy to build cabinets and a workbench. I also built a loft for storage in the garage.
Our New Florida Home
Two years later we had a 15'x30' pool installed with clean sweeps and an automatic chlorinator which kept it absolutely clean.

Our New Home and the Mysterious Mailbox
Soon after settling in, in 1964, I advertised “Guitar Lessons” in the local newspaper, and eventually had
about 110 students in all until I began making guitars to sell in 1971. As previously mentioned, I began making my first aluminum guitar for my own personal use in 1965. It was shortly after the City of St. Petersburg Licensing Division contacted me to inform me that I would need to have a teaching license because I was giving guitar lessons in my home. I was told it would cost $35. I asked "what would I get for that money aside from the right to teach at home?" I was told "nothing, just a license." I told them I should get something other than that, and asked if I would be able to put a sign up. They said "NO." I asked "Why Not?" They told me because this is a residential area and signs in the yard are prohibited. I asked if I could put a sign on the building itself. I was told "Yes, but no larger than 1’x1’ in size." I said "Okay, then I’ll do that", thinking all the while that no one would look at the house and see the sign, so what I’ll do is make a mailbox post shaped like a guitar to set my mailbox
on for an attraction. Somehow, along the way, it was misunderstood and became neither the "mysterious mailbox" nor whatever someone's imagination came up with. I never made a mailbox or a mailbox post in my entire life. I never, in my entire life made anything that had to do with a mailbox.

At that time, mostly working in mainframe computer parts, tape tracks, etc., plus Space project components. I thought that making a mailbox post would be easy to do. I planned on making the post out of a ¼” thick aluminum plate with a long stake attached to drive it into the ground. Working at UMI at the time, I asked Buzz Hollidge, the owner’s son- in-law who did most of the purchasing for the company, if he would order a quarter inch thick aluminum plate for me, large enough to make my guitar shaped mail box post. He said, “What do you want to do that for? Why don’t you make a real guitar instead?” I said, “Great
idea, I think I’ll just do that!” So that is when I proceeded to make an all-aluminum guitar, not a mailbox nor post, but rather a guitar! I have absolutely no idea where so many people got the idea I made a mailbox shaped like a guitar, and actually believed it! So many had been misled and I have no idea by who!! or Why!!

Planning to Make My Aluminum Guitar
At that time I felt the best way to make a guitar would be to have it cast of Almag35 aluminum, extensively used for making attractive boat hardware due to its salt resistance and ability to maintain a chrome-like appearance. There was an aluminum foundry one street away from where I worked which was very convenient. I would only need to make wood patterns of the body and the neck to have them cast in aluminum. The pattern maker at the foundry told me what I would need to do to make the patterns to get good casting results. I made my guitar patterns, brought them to the foundry and had them make the body and neck
castings. They came out great! Up to that time I never thought I would be making a guitar or to sell guitars. I just wanted to make a guitar for myself that I would really enjoy playing. I wanted a guitar neck as thin as the Tele neck at the first fret, with the same thickness close to where it joins the body. But - I liked the neck and fret curvature on a Les Paul so I combined the two. I also did not care for jumbo frets. After all, everyone has their druthers. With the guitar body being made of aluminum it had to be hollow and thin. This offered a unique and different sound than a solid or hollow wood body. Aluminum absorbs string vibration in a different, but stable way producing a cleaner tone. To better understand this, hold a guitar that is standing on a chair, place a finger in back of the neck at the nut and pluck a string. Feel the vibration. Then do your same test on a Veleno® guitar. There is a tremendous difference in the way the wood versus the aluminum neck absorbs the vibration, leaving more vibration for the body. My guitar neck design turned out easier for me to
play and maneuver on. My first headstock was shaped like a bird and I called it my Birdland. The neck and body, both being made of aluminum, offered more string sustain. Also, wood is less stable in varying temperatures especially under heat and/or humidity conditions. The aluminum, being more stable, proved to be truer as the guitar seldom went out of tune. After selling some locally, comments from local players stated how well my guitars stay in tune, especially under the heat produced from stage lighting. Heat causes wood guitars to go lower in tone, and have to be tuned “up”, whereas aluminum tends to expand causing the notes to go ever so slightly higher and/or tuned "down", if at all. To offer more fret accuracy I put in a “0” fret after making my first guitar.

As previously stated, it took a year to make my first guitar. After beginning with only one body and one neck par, although I had three necks cast I only worked on one. I had to make sure that every detailed step along the way would be right
as there is no turning back when a mistake or bad planning happens. I did a lot of planning, slowly but constantly making slight changes along the way, that would not make scrap out of what I had, to arrive at what I wanted. In August 1966 I finished my guitar. It was exactly what I wanted and I was thoroughly satisfied with it. I used it for the next five or so years mostly in giving guitar lessons and joined an adult music appreciation group for a few years that met on Wednesday evenings at Azalea Jr. High School. The group consisted of former college musician students who studied music wishing to continue playing. All of us appreciated this program. We assembled as an orchestra to read and play music for pleasure. At each session the director handed out music to everyone according to the instrument that was played. We had a fantastic and enjoyable time at each session.

In November 1968 I started working full time for
Reynolds Metals and installed a 15’x30’ swimming pool in our backyard. As the children were growing older we felt it would be fun to have a pool to help keep them at home and invite their friends to come to our place rather than having them go other places, and it worked out very well.

**Commercial Lobster fishing in the Caribbean**

In the spring of 1970 my entire family was invited to a fish fry by Sammy Carter, a neighbor across the street. Sammy was a commercial fisherman and built his own 47-foot commercial fishing boat a few years prior. While we were out in his backyard enjoying some fresh, deep-fried grouper, Sammy started talking about planning to go lobster fishing in the Caribbean about 200 miles off the coast of Nicaragua. After a few pieces of excellent good fried grouper he had freshly caught, and a few brews, Sammy went into his house and came back with a nicely kept fancy wooden box about 6 inches x 8 inches at the bottom and 10 to 12 inches high. He opened it up and there was a
marine sextant inside. This is an instrument for determining angular distances, chiefly employed by navigators for measuring altitudes of celestial objects, such as the sun and stars to determine latitude, and using the Greenwich Mean Time to determine longitude. I did not know how a sextant was used and neither did Sammy, although he bought it several years prior, paying $600 for it. He asked me if I would take it home with a book of instructions to learn how it works. I took this instrument home, studied the book for a few nights, understood, and learned how to use it.

The next weekend I called him and told him, “Yes, I know how to use it, why?” Sammy explained that the only electronic navigating currently being done is Loran, which could only be used off the coast of the Gulf of Mexico up to, but was useless at 100 miles out and no good at all in the Caribbean. Only the military had electronic navigation for use in the Caribbean and oceans. I don’t know about ocean liners. So, the only way
anyone would know where he was, would be for someone who knew how to use a sextant for determining their longitude and latitude positions. I studied a few days and basically learned how using the noontime reading. I listened to the marine radio broadcast ever day to keep my watch set to the second with the Greenwich Mean Time. He said that if I went lobster fishing with him in the Caribbean to help him in navigating, plus doing any welding and emergency, mechanical-type boat maintenance if necessary, he would pay me more than I ever made anywhere.

My Six Week Adventure on the High Seas
I agreed to take on the challenge because his offer was a base pay that was nearly twice what I ever made per month, in addition to a percentage of the catch once brought into port. He said he’d hire a few other guys to do most of the work in setting, pulling, and stacking traps, plus someone to cook. But everyone on the boat would be involved, in one way or another, with all the work for setting,
pulling and stacking traps. Sammy contracted a 68 footer for this trip. I had never been on a fishing boat over about 20 feet, nor had I been out to sea far enough not to see land, nor had I piloted a boat. At this point in time I began feeling like I was my own Monk! The day before we were to leave, Sammy and I went grocery shopping for seven men out to sea for six weeks, plus. He bought excellent food saying, “When you’re away from home for so long the only thing you really enjoy is eating, so we should eat really well.” Amongst everything, he purchased a couple of extra-large prime ribs and whole tenderloins including the best in pastries. After all, we did have an empty 25,000-pound capacity deep freeze on board to start with.

The Boat
The 68 foot Julu had a four-inch thick fiberglass hull, driven by a large Caterpillar diesel engine. The boat drew nine feet of water, had a 900-gallon fuel tank, held 500 gallons of fresh water and was outfitted with 200 lobster traps. It had an excellent
automatic lobster trap-pulling device. The boat had a 25,000 pound capacity deep freezer kept at 25 degrees below zero for storing the catch. The freezer was run 24 hours a day by a Mercedes diesel. The boat also had a small Lister diesel engine for emergency electricity. The sleeping quarters and pilothouse were in very good condition for a fishing workboat. It had an upside wheelhouse for docking and for pulling and setting traps which worked exceptionally well. The boat had outrigger stabilizers for traveling and while stationary in rough waters, which helped in sleeping.

**Sailed Away**

We finally shoved off and headed toward the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, which was the last thing we the saw while leaving St. Petersburg. The next day, after traveling all night long on autopilot, I sighted the coast of Cuba from the upside wheelhouse (too close for comfort.) After a while a Cuban gunboat began following us for a few hours while heading for the Yucatan.
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Straits. But the gunboat left when we started through the;

The Yucatan Straights

The Yucatan straights are about 90 miles wide between Cuba and Mexico. Every day, at a certain time for low tides and high tides, the water is either going into or coming out of the Gulf of Mexico through that 90-mile wide straight. Well, the waters soon became extremely rough, so much that everyone on board, including Sammy, except for me, got terribly seasick. We had a strong head wind against us all that day as well as the tide going against us as we were entering the straights. It was about a six-hour trip to get through the straights. I piloted the boat the entire time from the upside wheelhouse. It brought back memories of horseback riding in that it was much similar to riding a galloping bucking bronco all day long. The front of the boat would come totally up out of the water and dive head on into the next wave. While riding up the wave then down into the next wave the water came over the bow with a tremendous
splash against the front of the cabin. This was continuous, non-stop, all day long. The 68 footer was like a cork bouncing around in a bathtub. Sammy told me that he had never been seasick in all his years of commercial fishing, but this was too much and it took him over the top. Although we had strong head winds, and a rough sea, I didn’t mind it because it was a beautiful sunshiny day and the temperature was perfect. And, I thought it was fun! I didn’t see any other crew members until after we were through the Straights.

That night, about midnight, we were traveling in circles and everyone was falling off their bunks. The autopilot chain that controlled the rudder had broken and the boat was going in circles. We turned the main engine off and I fixed the steering problem so we were back on track, off and running an hour later. We finally got through that day and night. We traveled a few more days south, deeper into the Caribbean. We used Joy detergent to wash because Sammy said it was the best soap to mix
with salt water. We couldn't use the fresh water because it was for drinking and cooking only.

“Florida Lobster” Fishing
Two days later, we arrived at the location Sammy said where the Florida lobsters would be. Florida Lobsters do not have claws and Northern Lobsters do. Joyce calls all of them "sea bugs" and does not eat them.

Using the depth finder we located large underwater plateaus about 30 to 50 feet deep to set the traps on. There were mile deep trenches, or canyons, between the plateaus with sharp cliffs on the sides to the sea bottom. Sammy said that the lobsters live on the sides of the cliffs and come up onto the plateaus to feed. Sometimes they come up like small armies across those flat plateaus. With 200 traps, we set 100 traps in the morning and pulled 100 traps in the afternoon every day for four weeks. We emptied the lobsters from the pulled traps into an extra-large box. After pulling all the traps we
took the lobsters out of the box one at a time, twisting and pulling their tails off, separating the tails from their bodies and heads. We then bagged the tails in 20 pound bags, stacking them in the freezer, while throwing the heads and bodies into another box. After that we drove off to find a deep trench between the plateaus, driving far enough away to throw the heads and bodies into so that the dead pieces would sink into the mile deep trench, not scaring off the lobsters living on the side so of the cliffs waiting to come up and feed on the plateaus. During that four-week period my clothes really smelled bad but I think I sort of got used to it. We went through a couple of late afternoon and night storms that tossed us around quite a bit and the boat dragged anchor, but we always found our way. Overall, most of the weather at night was perfect. The others slept in their bunks but I spent most all of those good nights on top of the cabin. I took my blankets and pillows up there and slept peacefully and completely bug free! It was fantastic. The night temperature on
most nights was always around 75 degrees with a slight breeze and beautifully clear, starry skies, a serene way to drift off to sleep. Although the others thought I was completely nutso, I didn’t think so! While sleeping below in the bunks, the Mercedes engine for the freezer ran 24 hours a day and was too close and noisy for me, but the hum seemed to put everyone else to sleep. Once in a while a bird would stay with us for a couple of days then fly off somewhere.

**Finally Got to Use the Sextant**

After four weeks Sammy started heading to where he thought Grand Cayman was and asked me to get the sextant out to take a reading and head straight to George Town harbor on the Grand Cayman Island. I took a reading of the sun, checked the exact Greenwich Mean Time, checked the chart, and gave Sammy the heading to take us into George Town harbor. I told him we would be there in three hours and fifteen minutes. He said “Impossible” it would more likely be four to five
hours. I said, no, three hours and fifteen minutes. Well, I just couldn’t wait, so after two and a half hours I climbed to the upside wheelhouse looking for land. In less than fifteen minutes I saw land dead straight-ahead. At exactly three hours and 15 minutes we were pulling into Georgetown Harbor and set anchor. I felt fantastic about my first calculations in determining position using a sextant.

Grand Cayman 1970
This adventure took place before Grand Cayman was touristy; it was just a small neighborly community. The visitors, not many, were nearly all commercial fishermen, plus usually one to three, or so, travelers who got there via their own sailboat or private yacht. There were no large commercial ocean liners. We waited for the harbormaster to check us all out, showing him our passports. He inspected the boat and gave us the “all clear” sign. We had a nifty little dinghy with an outboard motor to travel back and forth to the island. It helped us quite a bit, as we were getting low on supplies and
needed to get my laundry done! We were anchored about 100 yards from shore. The sea bottom was about 40 to 50 feet deep. At night, in the moonlight, the water was so clear that while looking down into the water, the surface was barely visible, so much so that it gave the feeling of floating in air. The sea bottom was incredibly clear and fish could be seen swimming around many of the small sunken boats.

The Great Shamah Run
I couldn’t wait to get my laundry done and Sammy, the captain, told me if I took the path he pointed out, and followed it through the jungle about 300 yards, I would get to a house where a lady named Aimy does laundry. He said, “At about 100 yards you will go past three small houses, called Haley’s Corner. One house has an outdoor counter selling candy, cigarettes, etc. But just keep going down the jungle path.” I lifted my four weeks of laundry bag into the dinghy and headed for the beach, then trekked through the dense jungle on a path barely
wide enough for two people to pass. I went by Haley’s Corner where a few guys were sitting on the ground having a drink and smoking. Further down the path I came to a house on stilts, about four feet off the ground. There was an old-fashioned washing machine on the porch with a wringer mounted on the top. I asked the lady standing there if she was Aimee, and she said “Yes, and it looks like you have laundry to do.” I asked “How much?” She said, “five dollars and it will be ready in about three hours.” So I left the clothes and returned to the beach to go back to the boat.

Three hours later I went down the same jungle path to Aimy’s laundry. Surprisingly enough she had done a very good job, folded them nicely and they smelled so much better. Aimee warned me to watch out for Shamah, a girl who just got out of jail for beating up and robbing another of her sailor clients, much like me. I paid her, gave her a tip and started back down the path. I’m only 5’6” and suddenly, out of the dense undergrowth, a girl about
21, 6’2” and 180 lbs., looking like an amazon, stepped in front of me and said “Give me your wallet!” I thought, oh no, here’s Shamah. I leaned over as if to get my wallet out and with a hard start, hauling my laundry, took off running low around her. She tried to grab me but missed. I put myself into high gear, then overdrive, running as fast as I possibly could and Shamah was hot on my tail. She wasn’t gaining, but was much too close for comfort, almost close enough for a flying tackle, but not quite.

We passed Haley’s Corner at a full speed clip with the guys loudly cheering, about half for me and half for Shamah. I think they were taking bets. I thought “Only 100 more yards!” I finally reached the clearing on the beach. Shamah suddenly stopped chasing me then sat on the beach laughing. There were about a dozen people on the beach when Shamah stopped. All joined in laughing and clapping. They continued their display as I got into
the dingy and headed for the boat. This episode shed a little light on the age-old question of who can run the fastest, mad or scared.

The Island and Going Home
Grand Cayman was interesting at that time. There was only one major road from one end to the other, about seven miles long. The islanders who had a car and drove that road knew every single inch of it. I think they could drive it with their eyes closed but I would not have mentioned that because someone just might want to try it on me! It was a little scary riding with those people on that road, but they said they never had an accident. One night a couple of us went to a nightclub on the other end of the island in a town called Hell. It was a fun evening. I stayed at a rooming house for a couple of nights while Sammy was getting the boat refueled, a fresh supply of water, having the lobsters weighed and sold, plus getting more bait and supplies. The rooming house included dinner. No menu, just dinner. On the first night I told the
waiter “That was the tastiest and tenderest, roast beef I’ve ever eaten! He said “No sir, that is not roast beef, it is turtle. Roast beef would have cost a small fortune, and so would chicken. We have a large turtle farm on the island and that is our main meat source.” Never having eaten turtle, I was in kind of a state of shock, but I have to admit, the turtle was exceptionally good.

The next day I told Sammy I did not want to continue on the trip. It had been a very interesting learning experience in many ways and I appreciated that. I told him I missed my family and wanted to take a plane home and he understood. After I got home, and when Sammy got back, he told me he could get me a newer 97-foot boat that I could be Captain of. I told him, “Thank you but No!”

Master Tool and Engineering
In the summer of 1970, and back from my fishing trip, I learned that a business investor had been
looking for me. He owned several businesses, mostly restaurants, and at one time his businesses included Florida Downs Race Track. He had just purchased a money losing machine shop named Master Tool and Engineering and wanted me to go to his office and talk with him. The company had very recently contracted to make 27 space project parts, in which Master Tool was losing money on nearly all the parts. The parts were for companies contracted with NASA. The investor said he heard about me and contacted me to look at the prints for the 27 jobs he had and to give him an estimate on each part. I gave him my time estimates and he immediately fired everyone in the shop, put me in as manager and told me to hire whomever I wanted to do the work, but not to hire any previous employees. I put an ad in the paper and felt confident that everyone I hired could and would do their job right. In another week and a half we proceeded to work and we made a profit on all the parts except for two. On one of those two we about broke even so we only lost on one
job. It had been a bad bid in the first place. The investor/owner was extremely satisfied with what I did for him.

**Second Time around at UMI**

In 1971 I was offered a good increase in pay by UMI to return working for them. UMI had been contacted by their dependable associates on the space coast and were in the midst of acquiring new component contracts with NASA. After returning to UMI, Buzz Hollidge, son-in-law of the owner, Vern Orenduff, asked what I had done with the aluminum guitar I made back in 1966. I told him I’ve had a few guitar students, and occasionally played in an adult music appreciation group at the Azalea Middle School. I told Buzz I’d bring my guitar in and show it to him. Buzz asked me “What about selling them?” I told him “no such luck.” I had shown it to a few local guitarist entertainers and all had the similar remark, “You don’t make guitars out of aluminum; you make them out of wood!” Buzz laughed and said “try it now,
we’re into the space age, people will really think differently about it.”

A Night Starting at the Cheshire Cat
So, on a Saturday night, I brought my aluminum guitar to the Cheshire Cat, a nightclub on 22nd Ave. South in Gulfport where, I heard there was an excellent guitarist there on weekends. I wish I could recall his name, as he was incredibly good and knew some important local people. He played the guitar and was very excited about how it sounded and played. During a break he called someone on the phone and then asked me if I could stay till he finished at 2am. He wanted to bring me somewhere afterward to meet someone. At 2am we left and went to an old looking three-story house close by that had grass about 2’ high in the yard, not very impressive. At about 2:05am he knocked on the door. A guy about 6’5”, standing on 3” high multi-colored shoes, wearing unusual colorful clothes, came to the door, greeted us, and invited us in. There were sewing machines in every
nook and cranny; all around inside the house, plus, new entertainer show-type clothes hanging up on wall-with long clothes racks everywhere around the rooms as well. This man introduced himself as Michael. Michael said, “We, Toni, and I, make clothes for Rock stars and TV performers. Our business is called Michael’s and Toni’s. Here are outfits we are currently making for Sonny and Cher” (who currently had a weekly TV show). Michael also showed me a wardrobe he had just finished for Jimi Hendrix. After talking for a short time, Michael asked to look at my guitar. He paused giving it a little thought, then made a phone call to a man in Tampa who owned a recording studio and asked if he could open up his studio to see how my new type all aluminum guitar would sound recorded. The guy told him “Come on over, I’ll open it up for you.” Meanwhile Michael phoned a guitar player in Bradenton, and told him about my Aluminum guitar and asked if he would meet us at the recording studio in Tampa owned by a mutual friend, to try out the guitar in a recording. The guitar player said he would. It was about 3am
when we arrived at the studio. The man doing the recording said “Let’s have the guitarist sing and play the guitar to see how it will sound recorded, and to hear how the guitar will sound with him singing.” The guitarist played the guitar and sang. He stopped and said with emphasis, “I really think you have something here!” I didn’t know who the guitarist was doing us this favor. Maybe, someday I’ll find out. Everything was passing by me at breakneck speed, most was all new to me and over my head. The recording came out great. The guitar player, the studio owner, Michael, and I agreed it sounded fantastic and everyone was satisfied. On the way back to Michael’s he told me that there would be a concert on Saturday evening at 7pm at the Bayfront Center in St. Pete. He told me to be in the parking lot at 3pm, carrying my guitar case, wearing a T-shirt and blue jeans. Michael said, “You will see a tall guy dressed similar to what I’m wearing. His name is Ed. Go to Ed and tell him your name and he will get you into the sound check. He will give you instructions as to what to do when you get in there. I’m a very busy
person and have done all I can do for you. You take it from here and I will leave the rest to you. Goodbye and good luck with your guitar.”

So now it was left entirely up to me to carry on from there. Saturday I went to the sound check, not knowing what to do or who I would meet after seeing Ed. I was under the impression that the Bayfront Center, not a group, would be doing a sound check on their equipment. The first group I met was The James Gang then shortly after a couple of concerts I met a group called Malo, whose guitarist was Jorge Santana, Carlos’ brother. He tried my guitar in the dressing room and was very impressed with the way it played and sounded. Jorge asked me if he could use it for his first number. And I told him yes, by all means. He played it for his first three songs and I was more than satisfied. Back in the dressing room, after his performance, he gave me several ideas about features he prefers to have in a guitar, which mine did not have. To me, all of Jorge’s suggestions
were simple, common sense, and based on logic, not personal feelings. He was impressed with how the guitar reacted to the heat from the stage lights. Only one string went slightly out of tune, but did not go low, as strings usually do on wood guitar, but being metal under those heat conditions, rather went slightly high which he got back in tune by simply over-bending that string while playing. So, the most important change would now be to have three tuners on each side of the headstock. In that way Jorge said he could reach up, while playing, knowing which tuner to turn to get a string back in tune without having to look up at the headstock to see if he was turning the right one. By a quick feel he would know exactly which one to turn.

My First Times in Making and Selling Guitars
The first change was to change the headstock design. I changed it from the bird design seen on the guitar I made for myself, to the “V”, for Veleno, design in order to get three tuners on each side. It took about a week to make that change and
have a neck cast. That new neck was on my first guitar to sell, serial #1, and had my new “V” design. Soon at another concert I showed it to Marc Bolan of T-Rex and he loved it. (The guitar I made for myself five years earlier has no serial number, because there was no serial at that time, and it has the bird shape headstock.) Marc asked to have his name engraved on the guitar plus asked for a second guitar to give as a gift to Eric Clapton, one of his closest friends. A week later when I finished serial #2, which was in work at the time, I had the engraving done and I noticed Marc's name was spelled Mark. I immediately phoned Marc to tell him there would be a delay in shipping the guitar, probably about a week, because his name was misspelled as Mark in the engraving and I was bringing it back to the engraver to have him do it right. Marc said, “No, leave it just the way it is. It will be a part of the history of this guitar and I want to keep it that way.” So I shipped them to Marc. I later learned that his true name is Mark Feld.
I began going to rock concerts hoping to sell my guitars, attending afternoon sound checks and showing them to top guitarists, entertainers, producers, managers, promoters, associates, and other people directly related to the entertainment industry I could get in touch with at the time. I managed to do this without making myself a pain in the neck, but rather was able to make some good friends with most all of them. From 1973 to 1974 I went to 54 concerts in a period of 52 weeks. Most of the concerts were held at the Bayfront Center in St. Petersburg, the Curtis Hixson Hall in Tampa, The Armory in Tampa, The Lakeland Civic Center, the Tampa Stadium, and the Wagon Wheel Flea Market in Pinellas Park set up a stage a couple of times and hosted a couple of up and coming famous rock stars of that period. My guitar making business was doing well and I continued on a part time basis. I sub contracted certain work to reliable sources. In a few months I was making and finishing production runs of 25 at a time.
I recall one player who told me he brought his Veleno® guitar to a sound check in the afternoon while the stage was being set up. He told me that a 28-pound speaker fell from a cabinet about 20 feet high and landed smack in the middle of his guitar case. He said he was petrified, and afraid to open the case, which had splintered in the center. But his Veleno® guitar looked okay and undamaged, he plugged it in and it was still in tune! He was so surprised he called me immediately to tell me about it!

From March 1972 to February 1974 I was still working a 10-hour workday at UMI from 7am to 5:30PM, sometimes six days per week. I made my guitars on weeknights and whenever I had time on weekends. Weeknights I usually worked on guitars from 7pm to 1:30 am and programmed myself to sleep from 2am to 6am on a regular basis. I never felt tired, just excited working my regular job, building guitars, continuously going to concerts, and meeting many important people in the
music and entertainment business on four hours sleep per day. I really believed I was healthy and strong enough to physically endure life without a problem.

Invited To the 1974 NAMM Convention by Traynor Amps

In February 1974 I began employment at Security Plastics as a mold maker eight hours a day. This gave me more time to spend making guitars. Security Plastics made small plastic injection molds to cast plastic parts used in watches, washing machine controls and parts for small motors such as in weed eaters.

In April 1974 I joined NAMM. I believe NAMM started out as the National Association of Musical instrument Manufacturers about 114 years ago. To the best of my knowledge the current (2013) association name has been changed to the International Music Products Association but still goes by NAMM. I was invited by Traynor Amps, of
the Cerwin-Vega company, to the June, 15-18, 1974 NAMM Convention held at the Houston Astrohall. It was immediately after experiencing my second brain aneurysm which happened on June 6, 1974. During the first week of April 1974 I did not wish to tell anyone at that time what happened to me after the first and second aneurysm, but Wayne knew and everyone at work found out.

**Having two Brain Aneurysms**

Up to the last week in April 1974 I energetically continued my regular job, and part time guitar making I unknowingly suffered a brain aneurysm in which a blood vessel had burst in the brain. I fell to the floor at home. Remaining wide awake, only able to move my eyes up and down to respond yes, and back and forth sideways for no, but totally paralyzed without feeling for about a half to one hour. Slowly and gradually I pulled out of it. Because of not experiencing pain, felt I was okay but suffered strong dyslexia and experienced difficulty in speaking. Once feeling better, I paid no attention to
what happened and went to work. I told my foreman, Dan Balog, what happened and he said, “My God, you had a stroke, a brain aneurysm! You need to see a doctor.” I didn’t go immediately but did a day or so later.

In May 1974 Security Plastics, nominated me Mold Maker of the Month. Not that my mold making was the best looking, but rather was done most efficiently and cost effective, meeting all the requirements.

On June 6, 1974, I experienced an identical second aneurysm episode of the one experienced earlier in March but this time was taken to the St. Petersburg General Hospital. This one dramatically slowed all my activities; I never experienced pain at any time as a result, just feeling a much more tired than before and needed ample rest in-between periods of tiredness. I was still registered to be an exhibitor at the NAMM Convention in the Houston, Texas Astro Hall from June 15th to the
18th. One good thing was that from the onset of the first brain aneurysm, although momentarily losing nearly all my senses for about a half hour, I felt no pain. Despite my aneurysms I decided to attend the already planned trip to the NAMM convention.

Emergency Room: A spinal tap was performed during the exam. The physician told me I had a brain aneurysm but due to being in great physical condition, it was clearing up fast. He said that all the symptoms indicate that a blood vessel burst in the brain, but tests were unable to locate exactly where, and that the bursting blood vessel would leave that part in the brain unable to function as it had in the past. It could have been in an unused or slightly used area. However, not knowing exactly where it took place made it impossible to determine what part of the brain was damaged. The physician warned me to be careful because if it happens again, I may not be as lucky and it could be the last time.
Three noticeable events took place following the two aneurysms. The first being that I was no longer able to stay awake, anywhere, for much more than three hours at a time, but I found that 15 minutes of sleep would refresh me with another three hours of quality awake time, then again, would suddenly get overwhelmingly sleepy. While at work I went to the rest room to sleep with an alarm on my watch set for 15 minutes. I later noticed after a couple of rest periods, I did not need an alarm; and would awaken after about 12 to 15 minutes.

The second event was realized after the second brain aneurysm. A few weeks prior to having the first brain aneurysm, I experienced a light popping feeling in my left temple, similar to a nerve twitch, but it wasn’t. As the days passed it lasted a little longer and longer, and then started doing the same thing on my right temple as well for a few days. After the first brain aneurysm, the popping feeling
completely stopped. Then, about two weeks before the second brain aneurysm the exact same popping feeling started to happen, first on the left side then on the right side gradually increasing exactly like the first time but I did not associate it with what I had previously experienced. It was then that I had the second brain aneurysm. After the second brain aneurysm the popping feeling again, stopped. I began resting more than I ever did and the physician put me on doses of valium to keep me relaxed.

After noticing the popping feeling I became acutely aware of whenever it occurred, no matter where I was or what I was doing I would stop and lie down, resting until it stopped, which most of the time was just a few minutes. If I didn’t rest it would continue non-stop 10 to 15 minutes. After the second brain aneurysm I got that feeling about once a week. As time went by it became less and less frequent, and eventually, after a few years, I
only experienced that popping feeling once or so a year. It still happens occasionally, but not as prominent or as long.

The third noticeable event was I lost coordination of my two hands during fast and/or very precision guitar playing. This especially happened if I was a little nervous. Previously being nervous never bothered me. Formerly I could easily play well under pressure. But, I found I could no longer play fast fingering without making noticeable embarrassing mistakes. My playing became slower and uninteresting. This discouraged me from playing and I was ashamed to tell anyone about it. It became distressing. I thought that if I practiced for long periods devoting a lot of time to it, my coordination would come back but it seemed to stay the same, or get worse. Eventually I realized I could not overcome the problem. So, I stopped playing altogether especially when people remarked about my poor playing and I felt dispirited.
I was immediately started on 30 mg valium per day. Due to experiencing those two aneurysms I was forced to make changes in all areas of my life but struggled continuing filling guitar orders. I had a difficult time adjusting to a new living routine forced upon me owing to the aneurysms.

I type a lot on the computer and notice having the same problem. If I stay relaxed and rested I type pretty fast. But when I get tired or nervous my typing gets terrible. I have to make numerous corrections. But while playing the guitar corrections cannot be made, you just don't sound very good.

**At the 1974 NAMM Convention**

On the first day of the NAMM convention I placed my Veleno® guitar on a stand on top of a table along with my brochures. Of everyone who walked by, no one looked at my guitar or my brochures and I felt very discouraged. Toward the end of the day I browsed around and saw the Fender display with sexy looking girls and crowds of people around
their display, and I thought, “Why not?” I, however, did not simply want just pretty girls to attract the guys to my exhibit.

Early on the second day I contacted Kelly Girls, who primarily offer office assistants, and asked for a pretty girl to help me at the convention show. When she arrived I briefed her about my brochures and guitar. The traffic toward the Veleno® guitar and Traynor Amps dramatically increased. My girl attracted many curious people who immediately wanted to engage in conversation with my Kelly Girl about my Veleno® guitars. They asked her questions about my guitars, which she answered quite well. I booked six sales in the remaining two days of the convention as a result of having her there, plus the possibility of 25 or so more orders in the future. She really enjoyed doing this for me. I invited her and her boyfriend out to a steak dinner after her second night, which was the last night of the show. During dinner I learned that her boyfriend was a guitar player.
Never being an “aspirin” person for aches and pains I was faced with having to take unfamiliar medications. I continued satisfying customers without burdening them with my problems. I was slowed in my guitar production output resulting from the loss of good help, especially Wayne Sipes, who joined VIC and became a partner in 1971 while I was in the process of making and selling guitars #5 and #6.

**CNC (Computer Numerical Control) versus TruTrace Milling**

My first four guitar bodies were made from castings in 1971. Soon, during my “off” hours, I “leased time” on a TruTrace machine from UMI that had been laying idle for about a year, from the time they started purchasing and using CNC machines. I set up and began using the tracer making guitar bodies #5 and #6 from solid aluminum stock. This worked out great. But quickly, UMI requested to use their CNC mill on a trial run of making 10 guitar bodies to study whether or
not it would be feasible to make the guitar bodies on their CNC equipment, versus me making them on a tracer mill. I then contracted with UMI to have 10 bodies machined on their CNC mill. During the making of the ten bodies UMI informed me that one got scrapped. They gave me the scrapped one, no charge. I settled to pay the contracted price for the remaining nine bodies to which UMI agreed. The CNC machined guitar bodies started at Serial #7, the Veleno® guitar I sold to Ray Monette of the group “Rare Earth”. The last of the nine guitar bodies from the CNC mill was serial #16 which Johnny Winter purchased.

While finishing and selling #5 and #6 guitars made on a tracer mill, Wayne Sipes became a partner with me in my part time VIC guitar making. We, UMI and I, both agreed and decided it would not be feasible to make guitar bodies on their CNC. I also, had previously requested to purchase the TruTrace mill from UMI, and they agreed to sell it me. I took out a second mortgage bank loan on
my home to purchase the TruTrace mill plus other equipment needed to start making guitar bodies. I rented space for the tracer from UMI until mid-1973 and moved my machinery to a garage-type shop rental unit in Seminole, FL. I began making small batches of bodies and increased as time and orders required. I started out small, 2, then increased as time and orders augmented to 5, 10, 15, 20, and finally 25. This worked out very well. I then placed a temporary cap of 25 bodies to make at one time, until I could operate my part time business on a full time schedule, which I was heading toward in early 1975. From 1974 to 1975 Veleno® Instrument Company (VIC) continued filling guitar orders at a very good level about one to two per week before I had the aneurysms.

But not long after I had the two aneurysms our orders dwindled to about one per month within six months and less than one per month the next year. It was about guitar body #136 that everything slowed.
When My Partner Left Our Company

In September 1975 Wayne asked to leave VIC. This led me into a period of confusion and duress causing my life to turn about 180° brought on by all the unexpected newness happening in my life including while in a peak period of having a very successful guitar-making business. Wayne was an excellent worker. He always wanted to do better than I, a good competitor. He loved competing with me in everything. During that stressful period, not in a condition to predict the future, I was totally and completely confused and discouraged with everything the way it was heading, being on 30mg. valium per day, I mentioned to a relatively small number of close friends that I may no longer be making guitars, even though I knew it was necessary to fulfill my obligations. I had parts to assemble about 10 guitars and trained my son, Chris, how and what to do in assembling a Veleno® guitar. But I knew I could not completely give up making guitars entirely. I felt my Veleno® guitar was my baby, my creation,
like one of my own children.

It is now June 2014. Until late October 2013 I believed Wayne Sipes had been a very good partner in V.I.C. since 1972 when he decided he did not wish to be associated with V.I.C. any longer. We were both employed at Security Plastics as mold makers at that time. With me having an extremely foggy mind, we both examined our accountant’s company records and mutually agreed through fairly accurate calculations to a fair amount for his portion of the company, according to our company accountant, and paid him with a Veleno® Instrument Company check #1065, in the amount of $2,000.00 dated September 24, 1975. Wayne had genuinely appeared to be an excellent partner for me in that he was a steady conscientious worker, until expressing his desire to part from VIC. He had been a very good person especially in that he was a “go getter” with experience in programming and operating CNC machines. In 1973, Wayne was employed at UMI and worked
on the trial run making Veleno® guitar bodies on their CNC. He and one other man, Bill, Burnett, were the only UMI CNC operators and programmers for that particular machine at that time. When Wayne left, fellow workers told me that rats are always the first to leave a sinking ship.

### My Two Rented Shops

In 1972 while searching for someone to make my Veleno® guitar bridge insert adjusting screws I met Frank Cipola, who had a screw making machine shop. I contracted with Frank to make a few hundred bridge adjusting screws. Mentioning to Frank I was also looking for shop space, he leased me a garage unit adjacent to his shop on the north corner of 47th Ave. N at 96th St. N., in Seminole, Florida where I made my guitars in small production runs. It was in an industrial area on Seminole Boulevard across from the Bay Pines Hospital. I never contracted with him for anything else except for bridge screws and renting shop space. I rented the unit until the spring of 1976. It
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

was there, that I began manufacturing guitars on a gradual increasing production basis up to lots of 25 bodies at a time there. After Wayne Sipes quit VIC in 1975 I continued in that shop until 1976. When I left that shop I moved my equipment to shop space I rented from Dave Basch and Bill Reinhardt, a couple of friends I had previously worked with at Security Plastics.

It was at Dave's and Bill's shop on Betty Lane in Clearwater I made the three guitars for Todd Rundgren and made a couple more Veleno® guitars including a special custom 3-pickup Veleno® Original guitar for a client in Texas in mid-1977. I was using my PO Box 21578, St. Petersburg, FL 33702 and home address of 2981 164th Avenue North for all my business interactions, and where I shipped from. Todd had sent his plans and drawings to my home address. I have no idea how or why the 3131 Tyrone Boulevard address was stated as my address in his article in the November 1977 issue of Guitar Player
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Magazine. I later learned it was a business address belonging to Frank Cipola, and where Crazy Richie worked for Frank.

Todd’s Guitar Player Magazine Interview

The cover photo on the October 1977 issue of Guitar Player Magazine shows Todd Rundgren with the Ankh guitar I made for him. On page 35 of that issue Todd is asked “Who made the ankh-shaped guitar you’re playing now?” Todd responds, “It was made by John Veleno, [3131 Tyrone Blvd., St. Petersburg, FL 33710].” Yet, I never used the address of 3131 Tyrone Boulevard for, or in, any type of correspondence in any manner whatsoever with or for anyone. It was printed as you see it with the brackets around the bogus address. I have the feeling that Todd did not know that it was going to be printed that way. I thought it was a mistake, but as time goes on I see that was no mistake as I saw it was Frank's address! Someone had to provide that address to
the magazine and they accepted it. While I was making Todd’s guitars, my son Chris was graduating from high school and looking for employment. I asked Frank Cipola if he had a job my son Chris could do, being that Chris was looking for a job and Frank gave my son Chris, a part time job mostly for doing errands.

**The Bet**

After I had the two brain aneurysms I physically slowed down to about 50% or less, but still felt I had a lot of energy to use. In 1977 a friend came to visit. This man, about 10 years older than my wife and I, came in with a bible under his arm, which I had never seen him with before. He said, “John, you’re going to hell!” I said, “Look, I consider you a good friend, but please don’t come into my home telling me I’m going to hell! What are you doing with a bible under your arm, you look like a bible freak!” He said, “I’m trying to save you!” I said “Save me? Save me from what?” He said “The problem with
you Catholics is you don’t read the bible, you do whatever your church tells you to do that and not in the bible.” I said, “Now wait a minute let me see that bible you are reading.” It was a King James Version and I told him, “I’m not going to argue with you.” I'll buy the one you are reading. (I did not know there were different bibles for each religion stating different things in different ways, but soon learned they had to be different because each one is copy righted, it is the law they have to be different.) I bet I’ll prove you are wrong in what you are saying.” So, I purchased the smallest, a 3½” x 5”, King James Version I could find because I didn’t want anyone to see me reading a bible thinking that I’m a bible freak. I read it word for word, not skipping a darned thing. It took me three months, reading slowly, to finish the book. Being superstitious I never read a footnote or reference written in any bible. However, I did make my own references and notations for remembering only. They all state "you shall not add or take away from the words of this book."
I was not looking for God by any means. Being Catholic I believed I already knew everything one needs to know about God. Yet, it was quite different than what I expected. My very first thought was “All the different Christian religions stemming from the words I just read in this book!” That is amazing and mind boggling. I found it to be very interesting reading, and far from what I was expecting! So, I wrote the comment in the book “The best sold and the worst read” and still have it!

I thought that there must be something more to it than what I understood so I bought “The New International Bible” thinking this would be more my style. I read The New International Bible (NIV) cover to cover and found very little difference in what I read, except for the thees, thous, hithers, thithers and the other stuff like it. Finding the NIV much easier to read and faster, yet understood similar things to what I read in the King James Version. The NIV didn’t show me much more than
what I had read in the KJV. Next I bought a Catholic Bible; the New American Bible (published Copyright 1970). I was aware that some Bibles with a different name have different contents. The Catholic Bible had more books in it than the other bibles. And I noticed that all the bibles in the bookstores are copyrighted! What does that mean? It means that no one can copy what is written in order to use it to make money. If anyone wishes to make money using a bible they must be affiliated with the religion that has the copyrighted one or give them a cut, or it must be written differently according to copyright laws. Anyone can legally copy what is copyrighted, but not use it for the purpose of making money without prior permission. I’ve spoken with many bible readers who believe the best way to understand a bible is to do one’s own translation. My belief is that if I want different translations, then buy different bibles and see how verses compare from one to another, done by expert professional translators. It’s a heck of a lot easier to trust the experts than to translate it, as an amateur,
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

yourself, and much less precious time consuming. I bought nine (9) different versions (translations) and if I don’t understand something clear enough I can line them all up and read all nine to see what a certain passage means. However, I felt no need to do that except once, when I was curious just to see the similarities and differences.

From 1977 to 1981 I read all nine Bible versions, one at a time, reading four to six hours a day, from beginning to end and finished reading a grand total of sixteen times during a four year period, about three months each per reading. I completely read some versions two to four times, which are a part of those sixteen times. I read certain books of the bible numerous times. I recorded some bible books, especially Sirach (pronounced Sir Rock) on tapes and played them in the car while I was driving. I found that book to be the most useful as it taught me much about how to understand everyday life and about the numerous types of personality's people have that one can experience during any
time period and how to respond to them. I never read a footnote or cross-references printed in bibles as it clearly states "Do not add to or subtract from this book."

However, I made my own numerous and extensive cross-references for my own reading pleasure. I finished reading Bibles, 16 times, beginning to end, cover to cover in 1981. Somewhere in a Bible, Paul says, “I offer the gospel free of charge!” And so do I, but only with select individuals. I never involve myself in discussions about interpretations or discussions about how or why I understand scriptures the way I do. If you are interested, I can sum it up all for you in a song the Beatles made, “Let it be”, from Revelations 22v10 and in some bibles it is Rev. Chapter 22v11, which is usually on the last page in a Bible. If you have not read a bible, listen closely to the words of that song. One can learn something useful from it. I have a Koran and a Qur’an, and have read the Koran to
learn, discover, and understand what it says. Both books are copyrighted. I never discuss religions.

During and after my experiences with having aneurysms, my guitar business soon slowed to a snail’s pace, to one to two guitars a year plus some repair and restore work. The time that I spent reading bibles was taken from time previously used solely used for making guitars but I never took all of the time from it, and all that went with it; running a business, promoting, advertising, satisfying customers, traveling, keeping track of everything in numerous ways. During that stressful period while making guitars I always worked a full time job supporting my family, while making guitars on a part time basis. Then in 1980 I began a very long recuperation period working on restoring my physical body to recover from some of my physical setbacks caused by the aneurysms.
I always kept in mind that the ER physician said after the second aneurysm, “If it happens again it might very well be the last, so you must stop doing something.” I had no choice but to slow down quite a bit. My mental and physical being was already doing that without my trying. I stopped doing too much of any one thing, but have continued Veleno® guitar repair and restore work as well making them on a one-at-a time basis for a few years.

**Jogging to get in shape**

From 1977 until 1988 I was employed at the Stroh’s/Schlitz/Pabst brewing companies' can making plant located on White Way in Tampa, Florida as a Trouble Shooter/Machinist. My work schedule was a 7:00 pm to 7:00 am shift, alternating three days one week and four days the next. At that time I began a serious jogging routine during off hours to restore my health. Getting home from work at 7:30 am was a choice time for jogging.
In the beginning I started by jogging a distance of four driveways in my closely built homes neighborhood. After jogging only the distance of four driveways, back and forth, probably about 400 feet each way, I was totally and completely exhausted. As I entered my front door I would drop to the carpeted floor in my living room breathing heavily, thoroughly fatigued. It took all of about 15 minutes before I could get up with my wind back enough to feel I survived. After one year I was jogging a distance of 1 mile but it took 12 minutes for me to go that first mile, still dropping completely exhausted onto the living room floor, feeling very proud of what I had done. Four years later, in 1981, every other day I began consistently jogging three miles in twenty-four minutes, sprinting the last 100 yards, and not breathing overly hard. I did not increase my distance but continued the three-mile twenty-four minute jogs until 1997, as it had become an easy piece of cake and I came to love it.
In 1997 I was diagnosed as having prostate cancer and had surgery. During recuperating I discovered my large breathing capacity had significantly diminished. This discouraged me from jogging because my best time three months following the operation was one mile in twelve-minutes versus my previous three miles in twenty four minutes only three months prior. I worked on that for a couple of years but could not improve. My breathing capacity had drastically dropped.

My Immediate Reactions in Emergencies
Earlier in life, there were two incidents in which I had to think and react on impulse without contemplating.

First Incident: This incident happened a few years prior in 1957 or 1958, in Massachusetts. I was traveling north on Manning Street following a Thunderbird. There was a crossroad at Cox Street, which had a stop sign. Directly in front of me a tractor-trailer traveling down Cox Street went
through the stop sign at about 35 mph passing in front of the T-Bird. The T-Bird went under the trailer section and the back wheels went over the car crushing it. My first impulse was to see how seriously someone may be hurt. I was unable to force the driver door open at first but managed to in a few seconds. There was a young man lying across the console on to the passenger side floor. He couldn’t breathe and his face was turning blue. His necktie was too tight and needed to be loosened. I ran to the cab of the truck and asked the driver for a knife. The driver appeared to be in shock. The man gave me a jack knife and I ran back to the car and cut the man’s necktie. Blood gushed out of his mouth and he started breathing. I then recognized him as Walter Finley, a boy, who had been in my high school graduating class. The police and ambulance came shortly after and asked me to leave. I read the news of the accident in the newspaper the following day. It stated that Walter was brought to the Marlboro hospital.
During my writing this autobiography I went onto Google and searched for a Walter Finley in Massachusetts. A search in the White Pages revealed that he was, or is, an 80 year old (my age) residing in Marlboro Mass.

**Second Incident**: Happened around 1964 or 5 when I took my family to Sand Key beach in Clearwater for a day. A wind came up and the waters began to get a little rough. There was an excited crowd of people nearby. I investigated to see what the commotion was. They were watching and pointing to a lady on a small blow up type mattress approximately 150 feet out on a small blow up type mattress being driven to deeper waters. She was paddling to come back in but drifting further out, not making progress. Everyone was just standing there looking but no able bodied person made a move to do anything to help her. I thought that if I don’t go right now, I don’t think I’ll have a chance to save her so I dove into the water and swam as hard as I could. I swam out to her,
grabbed hold of her raft, and with her paddling and my pulling we made it to shore. The exited crowd seemed to all be Spanish speaking and was unable to speak English. When we finally got back her friends all gathered around her hugging her and making a big deal out of I don’t know what, as I didn’t understand Spanish, but they acted as if I was not even there. One Spanish speaking man came up to me and shook my hand. He sounded he really appreciated what I did. I felt good that I didn’t have to read about her in the paper the next day. Luckily, this happened following a period in which I had been faithfully body building every day for a couple of years. Feeling I had the strength and stamina by being in excellent condition to rescue her it, I just did it on impulse without hesitation.

When I recall these incidents it is an about face to people I have met who pre-judge me as being a dangerous or strange person when they learn my name Veleno means “Poison” in English. At the time these incidents happened I did not stop to
think about anything except to help someone in danger of losing his life, while apparently no one else did. I ponder on it I think “What would my father have done?” I know he would have done the same.

**Selling My Tracer**

I don’t recall exactly when, but sometime in 1980 a stranger came to my home in Clearwater. I don’t recall his name but he mentioned he was from the New Orleans area and heard I was looking to sell the equipment I had stored. I have no idea how he came about knowing this information. He asked me if I was planning to make more guitars and I told him no. I was thinking, not in terms of on a production basis mass-producing them in batches like I had been. I felt I could do some work and it would be easier, to sub-contract some work than to do it all myself.

He offered to purchase the TruTrace mill I had stored at Frank’s place. I told him okay. He also offered to take other things, such as scrap metal and
some rough raw aluminum castings I had on hand. Since I no longer needed the equipment which was mostly setting idle, I felt that the money he offered was enough to repay for the machinery and tools I purchased through a bank loan with my home as collateral I took out in 1972 to purchase the TruTrace and other related equipment. This man purchased the items, rented a truck, and hauled everything away. I never saw or heard from him again.

The Synagogue

I was granted a divorce in 1981 and a marriage annulment from the Catholic Church in 1990. After the divorce in 1981 from, my wife Elizabeth of 28 years, and mother of my five children, I found myself single again. I knew I would be faced with some serious life's changes and dating problems. Not being a very worldly person and not one to be involved with other people’s interests, I was straightforwardly taken in by some women and easily persuaded. I knew I would need to go through an adjustment period to get through some
of these new problems now facing me, as it was difficult for me getting accustomed to that new type of existence at 46, but not what I became faced with. I had always been a person who mostly believed whatever anyone told me was true. It became challenging to make necessary changes but knew I had no choice.

After reading nine Bibles for so long and so many times, when I stopped reading I was very curious about what the Jews were presently like. After all, when the book was written the Israelites were mentioned as being the chosen people of God, and the only thing I knew about them is what I read in bibles, and many in real life are successful in business and professions. So I decided to try to find out for myself what they are really like today by attending services at a synagogue. Not knowing there were three different types of synagogues, at random I unknowingly went to a Conservative Synagogue. They had a Saturday service, in which I quickly learned was three hours long.
Quite long for me seeing I was brought up Catholic, which only had a one-hour service, but this was interesting and I endured it. The following week I went again and many in the congregation who saw me there the week before gave me some strange looks but didn’t say anything. The third week I went and was asked, “What are you doing here?” I responded, “I’m interested in learning how Jews worship God, because according to the Bible they are called God’s chosen people.” I was then told that I was sitting in someone’s seat and that I should speak with the Rabbi about that. I was told that seats are paid for on an annual basis to belong to a synagogue. So, feeling unwanted, I temporarily stopped going.

Learning To Be Single, And the Synagogue-
Lesson #1
A lady friend, I had honestly thought of as reliable, told me she had a friend named MD who was interested in dating me and I agreed. MD contacted me and we went out for a lunch and paid our
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

separate checks. She invited me to go to her home the following day. I went and saw it was a little above average nice place. When we went into the living room she said she always wanted a fireplace put in a wall on an outside wall that had no windows. She stated that without windows it looked like it needed something. The following day I visited her and she had hired a stonemason to cover the entire wall with fieldstone and was going to build a fireplace in the center with a hearth that came out about four feet. He was there when I arrived and they were discussing the project. MD asked if I would go out to dinner with her and I accepted. She said, “Since I invited you, I’ll pay.” I told her that I should pay for my own but she insisted on paying so I thought it would be all right. We went to the Wine Cellar, an above average restaurant and she paid the bill. I was not in a position to pay dinner bills like that unless it would be for a very special occasion. She knew the manager and some of the employees. We had dinner and she ordered a bottle of wine to be brought to the table. I did not wish to have any
wine and told her, but she insisted on me having just a little, so I did. She told me that this restaurant is one that she frequents.

After the dinner we returned to her home and she invited me to stay the night. I was easily talked into staying at her place. I soon learned that she gloated on having friends in the upper echelon. I felt she had a problem and I would help her. The next day she insisted I move in with her that it wasn’t good for me to live alone. Needless to say, I moved in with her. In the evenings MD started bringing me around to visit some of her friends. One was a genuine German Duke, so she and friends claimed, and she introduced him as Duke so and so, and he probably was. That night, prior to leaving for Duke’s place, she made a martini for herself and asked if I would have one, and I said “No” as she already knew I didn’t care to drink. When we arrived at the Duke’s she rang the doorbell and extended her hand with her martini toward me and said “Hold this for me will you.” So
I did, and felt uncomfortable when the Duke came to the door seeing me holding a drink.

The next night we went to another one of her friend’s home and she did the same thing, made a martini, and brought it with her sipping a little as we went along. When we got to her friend’s house she said “Hold this for me will you.” And I replied, “Hold it yourself.”

When her friend came to the door MD was holding the drink. After that she tried this trick one more time and never mentioned or tried it again. We went out to eat nearly every night, and she always paid, sometimes just a fast food restaurant. Then she started another habit. When we went out to eat, as we were sitting if there was an attractive lady sitting anywhere around, and I looked in that direction, MD would give me a swift kick in the shinbone that really hurt. I was so surprised when she did that and she never
commented about it. A couple of times feeling the shinbone kick was enough. I thought “Now she owes me”.

Joining the Synagogue
Since I was seemingly rejected at the synagogue, which was close to where she lived, I immediately thought, “in view of the swift kick, MD would want to do me a favor.” I asked her if she would attend a service at the synagogue, thinking that since she is a good singer, somewhat boisterous, seemingly intelligent, and very forward, she would have no problem getting in as it appeared to me that they really like women at the synagogue, or any church for that matter. MD appreciated me asking her then immediately went and joined the synagogue. She paid for a seat near the cantor and his wife and started going weekly. She purchased some Hebrew flash cards to take home for her and I to learn Hebrew together.

When the Passover holiday came she was asked to
attend their holiday meal. She asked me, and to which they said “Yes!” We had learned enough Hebrew to be able to read their books correctly, pronouncing all the Hebrew words, doing their prayers, and sing some Hebrew songs at the meal. They were impressed and I was asked by the Rabbi to join their synagogue.

So, I spoke with the Rabbi and he told me that the seats are sold annually to their congregation. I asked if there were any seats that have not been paid for and he told me “Yes.” I asked him the cost of a seat and he told me $245 per year. So I gave him $245 and asked him to please assign me a seat for a year. The Rabbi also assigned me the name Levi to use when going to the synagogue. The Rabbi contacted the Cantor and asked if he could sell a seat adjacent to his group and the Cantor who approved it, which was right next to “My sister.” I was always under the impression that a cantor was a singer, but not in this case. A cantor at a synagogue assigns certain members to perform a part of the
service. Before the service begins, the cantor has five cards to hand out representing five different parts of the service to be performed. He walks around, and at random, handing out the cards to members for the part they are to perform. During the service the Rabbi looks heavily on for mistakes. When the Rabbi sees or hears a mistake he makes the person do that part over again.

I was very inquisitive and asked various members of their congregation many questions regarding Judaism, who answered all of them honestly and as accurately as each knew. It was explained to me that there are three different types of synagogues Jews can attend, the Orthodox, the Conservative, and the Reform. As they were defined it became apparent that the Orthodox are those who practice as close as possible to what they interpret what it is that God wants them to do regarding foods and containers, laws, and that everything should be kosher, which I understand to be clean according to
Jewish dietary laws. The Conservative Jews are not quite Orthodox strict, but do observe many of their religious laws concerning foods and other laws, but not as authoritarian. Some go off their chosen diet but are not quite as loose as the Reform Jews. Holy Days are observed in their own special ways. I overheard someone say that the Reform Synagogue Jews are what many call “The Middle of the Road Jews” and are for the rich ones who don’t have the time to do all the observances as they are busy taking care of their businesses, and take a shortcut to their religious beliefs. But I think all three types observe kosher foods closely. I have never attended an Orthodox and seldom to a Reform synagogue and therefore I am not qualified to make more comments other than what I heard while at that particular Conservative synagogue. I cannot verify anything I write about these matters regarding Judaism or anything as being factual; they are interpretations offered by the various members from whomever I spoke with at that
time. Please don’t think I take any religious sides toward one or the other, or for any religion, or for any reason whatsoever. My belief is that whatever anyone does is his or her own choice, not mine.

From what I gathered, a barmitzva is for boys and a basmitzva is for girls. Each is a religious service in which a Jewish male or female performs all five parts of their entire religious service, plus singing the notes properly using trope signs. Trope signs are written signs associated with certain words or letters when being sung indicating up or down voice tones for the notes being sung. Therefore, all the members of a congregation are able to perform all the parts of their weekly and more services. The Rabbi does not do the service but helps the selected ones if they go off the beaten path and puts them back on. All of this takes much personal discipline to accomplish. It takes much time, possibly years, to learn all the parts thoroughly. A three-hour service every Saturday is
quite interesting and no one is ever seen yawning. I was under the impression that when they sing certain songs in Hebrew they seem to race through it, which I’ve overheard as being the Jewish Race. Their Hebrew prayer books, songs, and scriptures are read completely opposite as English. They read books written in Hebrew from the back page to the front and from the right to the left. However, like most other books, it is still from top to bottom and not bottom to top.

**Bowing Out Gracefully With Respect** Although I purchased a seat for a year I ran into a problem. After I was there for about six months, the Rabbi told me that half the congregation liked me but the other half did not, and are having disputes regarding me. He approached me and asked when I was going to get circumcised to become a Jew. He said that it would not be a big problem as it can be done with just a little pin prick to draw a tiny bit of blood, and is not a full circumcision. And I told him that I was not planning on becoming a
Jew. He asked me. “Then what are you doing here?” I told him "It doesn’t make much difference why but I came to learn about Judaism and what the chosen people, according to the bible do today" And he said, “Well then I feel you do not belong here. You are in the wrong place.” I told him “No, I am in the right place. Every Saturday when your own scriptures are being read in English, I clearly hear you say “You must treat the stranger who lives amongst you as yourselves” and “I am that stranger.” He said, “My congregation will never understand that.” I said “Why not, it is clear to me that God is telling the Jews it is one of the laws they must abide by and I ask that you enforce that law and make it clear that I am that stranger. If I were not here you would not have the opportunity to observe that command!” He said, “No, they will never understand that!” Then he said, “Do you believe in Jesus?” I said, “I believe what he said when he said ‘follow me and do as I do’, and Jesus went around teaching the Jews from their own written
scriptures stating ‘It is written this... and it is written that...’ quoting from the scriptures. They did not have a new testament at that time and you, supposedly, have the identical same scriptures he had, which you claim you abide by, so in that same way I am following him.” The Rabbi said, “Well, that is a new one, I have never heard that one, but I cannot explain that to my congregation either. My congregation is saying to me that in a few weeks the Jewish Holidays will be here and a gentile will be sitting inside the synagogue while there will be Jews standing outside who cannot afford to buy an annual seat. That will not go over very big for me.” I said, “Okay, look Rabbi, I did not come here to cause anyone a problem at all, and I most certainly do not wish to do so now. So what I say is adios, and goodbye. But what I want you to do for me is to find a Jew who cannot afford to pay for a year’s seat and give the remainder of my seat time to him.” He said, “I know just the man.” I said “Okay and good bye. I came here to learn and I learned enough to satisfy
that need.” I surmised it is no wonder so many Jewish people become lawyers, doctors, realtors, bankers and whatever else they may excel in, even singers. It is probably because since childhood they are brought up with such strict discipline, including voice control, good for singers, and remains with them for most of their lives, and in my estimation, becomes a piece of cake. For one thing, many Jewish youngsters spend Saturday, the day of leisure beginning with a three hour religious service, plus other religious duties added. This requires much patience and self-discipline, and strict parents who care about their children’s future, as compared to so many non-Jewish children having free as you wish Saturdays,

Paying Her Mother A Visit
By so many of her actions I decided MD was a little off her rocker and told her I did not want to live with her and wished to go back to living in my own apartment. Then she told me that her mother lived in Ohio and her father had passed away a few years earlier. She proceeded to tell me how rich her mother
is but her mother was only giving MD a modest allowance to live on, and MD wanted us to get married. She also wanted me to legally change my last name to her last name when we got married. She wanted me to meet her mother, to which I reluctantly agreed. After all, I was in a learning mode and this was a good one. MD bought plane tickets to Ohio and we took a taxi to her mother’s home from the airport. It was planned we would stay for a week. When we arrived at the front door her mother greeted us and showed us a brand new Cadillac with all the options. Her mother purchased the Caddy for us to have and drive around for a week. She didn’t rent it; she actually purchased it, and said “I needed another new car for myself anyway.” Then, MD said to me “Look across the street and see the shingle over the doorway of that house.” It read, “Attorney For The (MD’s last name) Estate” and MD said, “this is where our attorney resides and his only work is to take care of our business. He also gets three months a year to go to Ireland for vacation from which he just returned.
We stayed for the week and I kept getting hints from her mother that MD is a difficult person to live with, and indicated I try to put up with her. I did not join in to agree with her but took it all in. It had already become apparent to me that MD would be impossible for me to live with. MD and her mother told me that her father had been in the business of drilling oil wells and felt there was oil on a certain piece of property in the area. He purchased the land and drilled, but found not oil but natural gas instead. I was told that this gas well was currently supplying half of the state with gas and they were supposedly extremely rich.

One Day at 440 West
When we came back from the trip I told her again that I still did not want to live with her any longer. I went back to live in my apartment, which was the opposite side of the duplex home my parents had constructed in Pinellas Park. Then MD phoned me saying she had a very good surprise for me. She came to my apartment, picked me up and drove to
440 West, an apartment condo located at 440 West Gulf Boulevard, on Clearwater Beach, right next to the public beach. She pressed the elevator button for the 8th floor or so, led me to an apartment door, and handed me a key saying, “Try it.” Naturally, the door opened to an incredible apartment with a beautiful view of the Gulf. At that time 440 West was the most elite and desired apartment building on the beach. I refused to stay there and refused to take it, but I did agree to stay there one night only, just for the experience.

The Failed Suicide Attempt
On the way taking me back to my apartment MD stopped at her house. Saying “Come on in, I’ll only be a minute.” She went into her bathroom locked the door and screamed, “I’m not going to live here without you.” I then heard a loud sound of glass shattering on the floor and her screaming, “I’m killing myself.” and her cries about how much she loves me and how much she hurts which faded out in a few frenzied minutes. I made loud
steps toward the front door opened it and slammed it shut. I tip toed back in and stood in front of the bathroom door. She briskly opened the door, came out and stood in front of me. I said, “I thought you were dead, what happened?”, then laughed. While we walked out she was saying, “You will never get away from me.” I asked her to please drive me back to my apartment.

The Actress
On the way to my apartment I asked MD how and why she learned all the different weird behaviors she pulled on me in so many unexpected passions. She told me she had been a drama and acting teacher plus directed theater plays. She then told me that, previously, before me, a man had been living with her who raised a litter of expensive dogs to sell while living there. I’m not familiar with breeds of dogs, but this one sounded like shitzoo. When the litter came he asked MD to watch them for a few days because he had to tend to business out of town. Meanwhile, a few
customers came to pick up puppies they had purchased in advance. One puppy had been sick. After her man left to take his business trip the sick puppy died. MD told me she put the dog in the freezer and when he came home she cooked it and served it to him in a stew. I don’t know if she really did that or not, as it seemed unlikely, even for her. I felt she was trying to scare me into staying with her and that I should behave according to her rules. I think that story may have come from one of her plays. But one never knows! It was enough to scare me away.

Her Private Investigator
I finally returned to my apartment. MD phoned me several times a day during the first few days I spent in my place. Every time she called she told me everywhere I went and who I saw. I asked her how she knew. She told me she had a full time private investigator following me. I told her she would not get me to go back with her. It didn’t take long for her to stop calling me. I never told
her but I felt she always knew that love is more important than money. The last time she called she told me she was dating an airline pilot, and I thought “Good Luck Buddy!”

**Learning To Be Single, Lesson #2**

I decided I needed to get to know women a little better and thought that dance lessons may be a good place to start, so I signed up to take lessons at an Arthur Murray dance studio. I had a very good dance teacher, SH, who had been teaching ballroom dancing for about 20 or more years. She was an excellent ballroom dancer who scored high in competitions. She immediately treated me like I was her king, and I fell for it. Absolutely no lady had ever treated me as nice as she. She had an apartment where I stayed with her for a few days, and then we both moved into my duplex apartment in my parent’s house.

My apartment had a 12’x24’ enclosed room that had been a carport. SH said it would make an
excellent dance studio for her and she could give dance lessons at home. I installed a ¼“cork sub floor, with a maple wood parquet top floor. I also installed 7’ high dance studio mirrors on the 24’ side, which had a narrow window on each end. I added an excellent sound system for ballroom dance music. I installed a standard dance hall 16” mirrored ball with a red spotlight on one end of the room and a blue on the other. She kept treating me with much respect in everything, continuing on as if I was her king. After a short time we ran off and got married. On the day we married I was a king in the morning and a bum in the afternoon. We were married at noon, then everything I did after that was wrong. She horribly picked and constantly whittled on me, looking for a chance to argue about everything and anything. It was like she turned into the wicked witch of the North. I likened her after a TV program character, being a real live female Boss Hog in her speech mannerisms. After arguing a bit I got furious and she calmed down. I was in total shock about what
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

was happening. It was so unbelievably believable. Even after experiencing Lesson #1 - I was trembling inside.

Excellent Sangwich Meat
We were married for approximately 10 days when everything seemingly regressed into oblivion. She began giving dance lessons at home with students she already had. I was working full time on the night crew at the Pabst plant. On about the 10\textsuperscript{th} day she said “Here, I made a sandwich for you for lunch.” She was looking at me with a weird look in her eyes. I lifted the top piece of bread to see what it was. When I lifted that top piece of bread there were maggots crawling around on the lunchmeat inside. I almost threw up. I asked her to look at what she did, and all she calmly said was “I didn’t see those things at all!” After that episode, SH told me she had to leave to go shopping. While she was gone I piled up her belongings in the driveway and changed the locks on my doors. When she returned she called me every nasty name under the sun. I
chose not to respond. This was a very good lesson for me, and filed for a divorce as soon as I could.

Learning to Dance
I determinedly took dance lessons from other teachers where she was still working. After a short time I asked the manager if I could teach and give dance lessons. I was told I would need to be tested first. Most of the lady dance instructors were about half my age and one after the other couldn’t understand why they were not able to wear me out by continuously dancing a variety of fast routines for extended periods of time. I never got winded, but all of them got tired much faster than I did by far. They told the studio manager, “He’ll do.” I never told them about how long I had been jogging on a regular routine, and was at that time.

I began giving dance lessons at the school. After a short time I changed schools and went to a different dance studio as a dance instructor there. Meanwhile, the so-called wife, SH, never responded.
to my divorce attorney’s notices, or to the court notices. She had disappeared and, unknown to me, returned to St. Petersburg a couple of years later. Meanwhile my attorney took the due course for getting my divorce by default. Since SH never received the court notices, and never appeared to respond to her court notices, I got my divorce before she returned from “a trip to Greece” after which she tried to claim we were still married. I said “No way Jose”. Some guy also phoned me saying that he had taken her to Greece and asked me “How dangerous is she?” I stayed away from that one. I gave dance lessons until January 1983 and decided to just get on with my life in other areas.

Learning To Be Single, Lesson #3 Massage Therapy
After the experiences learned in lesson #1 and my short-lived lesson #2 dance career, I decided to try another profession, Massage Therapy. I enrolled in the Humanities Center School of
massage in Pinellas Park and spent the necessary 18 month time of 18 months, to complete my schooling. I took the Florida State Board of Massage Examination, got a 97% score and was granted a license to practice on June 11, 1984.

Going to the school of massage was a very enjoyable and I met many wonderful people at the Center. This was quite a different type of existence. Occasionally a lady student and I dated. All were very nice. One male student had an excellent 60' sailboat. Infrequently he invited some of us to go sailing. The students at the massage school were much different than the people I had experiences with during the most recent past.

Aside from getting frequent massages, another thing I enjoyed, was that once a week we had a meeting and sat in alphabetical order in a circle on the floor. Each student was asked what problems they may have encountered in the past or during
the past week and how they coped or solved it. Nearly every student, except me, studied about natural medicines and cures for a wide variety of problems they may have and solutions for them. I heard complaints about ailments I had never heard of before. And when it came to my turn, I simply told the truth, being “Off hand, I can’t think of any noticeable problems. I guess I can attribute my seemingly excellent health to eating plenty of spaghetti and meatballs”. After a couple of times of “Still eating spaghetti and meatballs” they just skipped by me. Truthfully, I really didn’t have anything else to say! Ailments to speak of were unknown to me. Simply put I wasn't playing ball in their park.

After receiving my Florida Massage License, I advertised in the newspaper offering massages at my home and also made house calls. I sold the large dance hall mirrors that I previously installed on the 24’ long wall in my former carport converted to dance hall and replaced them with a large wall
mural of a beautiful garden scene showing an attractive fountain in the center of the garden. It looked realistic. On each side of the mural I hung a large potted plant from the ceiling each about 6’ high with long stems and leaves reaching the floor, which added dimension. I placed a massage table in the center of that room and since I already had an excellent music system I played soft soothing suitable music while giving massages. The mirrored ball and colored spot lights I purchased for dancing fit perfectly for improving the atmosphere. I did very well for about a year. I can genuinely say that massages are real hands on experiences.

**Art and Sculpture**
During this period I also thought about dabbling in Art. I took an art class at an art school on Park Boulevard in Pinellas Park. I only did one painting, which came out pretty good. I didn’t care for painting very much, and still have the one I did. Then I decided to do sculpturing, in plaster, and felt my one piece came out excellent. I cannot elaborate
on what or why I sculptured, I stored it away. A few years later, after closely examining my sculpture, it showed that it had been broken, possibly by falling, but someone put it back together and I still have it.

My First Computer

In 1985, my daughter Carla, who lived in Boulder, Colorado, came to visit me convincing me I should have a computer, and talked me into buying one. She felt I really needed one because I was accustomed to being busy, and didn’t have enough to do. I think she was looking for a way to keep me off the streets and out of trouble. Together we went to a computer store and returned home with a Compaq computer. A couple of days later she returned back to her home in Boulder and I was left with the Compaq! I didn’t know anything about computers but soon learned how to play games and then some. At first I found myself playing games at night and got so addicted I played them until the bright morning sunrise.
Fortunately, that phase was short-lived and I got through it. I then studied and learned quite a bit about DOS, basic programming, spreadsheets using Lotus 123, and what makes a computer tick. I later assembled and built my own computers from purchased parts. Unfortunately I was not a typist but did okay for the time being. At the present time I can honestly say that it was an extremely good thing Carla did and how much I still appreciate it.

Ordination for Minister
Meanwhile, in 1985 I took written tests from the Church of Gospel Ministry and got very high grades. They were tricky in that many questions had multiple choice answers, A, B, C, or D of which many were incorrect. I got upset with them having wrong answers to the questions. I told them I was insulted in that I knew more about the bible than they did and “They! were testing ME?” I also wrote in the correct answers, which were not in the multiple choices. They responded giving me a 98% for doing that. I was told the reason I did not
get 100% was because one question had two answers and I only gave one. They explained that is what they do to weed out the phonies. After assessment I was accepted for Ordination by the Church of Gospel Ministry in October of 1985. For a short time I conducted a few Bible study classes but felt it was something I did not care to do.

**Aerobic Exercise Class**

In early 1986 my daughter Tina came to visit me and asked what I was doing with the room in which I had installed the dance floor. I told her massages but not too often as I had slowed in it for lack of interest and had stopped advertising. She told me she had a friend that held an aerobic dance exercise class in her garage but it was hot and there wasn’t enough room. Seeing that my place was air-conditioned plus the fact that I had an excellent music system installed, she said that the room would be perfect for their class, so I told her they could use it. A couple of nights a week for quite a while a dozen or so ladies came for aerobic
exercises. Many times I joined in. We had a lot of fun enjoying ourselves doing a wide variety of exercises. After a little more than a year, due to various reasons, one this, another that, as to why they could not attend a class, it eventually broke up and discontinued. Just like everything else, it gets old after a while, especially when one is young.

**The Photographer**

In late 1986, already having a previous serious interest in photography since 1954, I thought my special ex-dance, massage, aerobic room would be a perfect setup for photography so I purchased studio lights, automatic film processing equipment, photo background papers and whatever else I needed. Soon the former recreation room was converted into a photo studio. There was a washroom with a large sink at the far end of the studio room. I made a film processing and photo developing room out of it. I did my own black and white and color processing and enlarging. I advertised locally for modeling photography and
acquired some good clients and offered photo shoots with excellent portfolios. I approached a John Robert Powers modeling school in Clearwater and was accepted to do part-time modeling photography for them, which lasted about two years. My business increased from students, and others, by word of mouth and small ads. I did satisfactorily at photography for a couple of years. The garden scene wall mural made an excellent backdrop as it appeared so realistic for the studio. It came in handy so I used it for a number of photos. I still have many samples of my photo modeling work. Earlier, in 1973, I made the cover shot and designed my first guitar brochures, and revised my brochures for 2002.

**Legal Secretary**

In mid-1988, having a computer but not knowing how to type very well, I enrolled in the St. Petersburg Vocational Technical Institute to take their Legal Secretary program. In April 1989 I received a Certificate for Completion of Legal
Education by the St. Petersburg Legal Secretaries Association and on June ninth 1989 I received a Legal Secretary Diploma for completing the requirements under the standards approved by the State of Florida Department of Education. Having this education completed made it much easier for me to become proficient in typing and making my own websites, plus writing this autobiography. While taking this class I was asked to be in a television commercial for the school along with another lady student. We were given lines to memorize and it was an exciting experience for both of us. We felt honored by being selected to do this ad for the school. I think we did a pretty good job. It was thrilling for both of us, especially when we saw the ad on TV.

1990 Licensed State of Florida Private Investigator

I applied for and received a position working for an investigative agency whose primary business was investigating fraudulent insurance claims. At the onset my responsibilities were typing final reports
from hand written reports brought in by the six local field agents. Soon, my computer knowledge was helpful in setting up a local intranet system for the company.

There were four offices in our location and about seven computers connected through our local intranet system. We also set up an off-premise connection for our computer in a field office in Tallahassee. It worked out extremely well. We were also linked with some of the best information sources in the country for researching people we were responsibly investigating. After two years employment I was qualified for a State of Florida Private Investigator License and was licensed for the following four years.

Joyce and I Dating and Getting Married
Although Joyce and I married in 1990, we began dating in 1983. We met at a church function for “divorced Catholics.” I saw their ad in the newspaper. I could not believe that a Catholic
church would have a function for divorced Catholics, as I believed they are not supposed to believe in divorces. I was curious about how they were going to do this so I went. Joyce was there and we talked and were somewhat attracted to each other. When we first dated, I got a surprise concerning our conversations. Whenever we talked about something and I expressed a different opinion, as many Italians do, Joyce would say, “Well, you have your opinion and I have mine, and that’s okay, we don’t have to argue about anything, so let’s change the subject.” which she would do. I said “I’m Italian and we really don’t argue, we discuss things like this in a peaceful way.” She said “Well, I am German and we are both entitled to our own opinions and I don’t care to discuss this any further." And she would just change the subject.” I thought “that was an interesting attitude” and I had a difficult time getting used to it but works when done with understanding. I also began doing that myself. Joyce is a very positive person who does not care to recall bad happenings, only good things.
For the first three years of our dating Joyce never knew anything about my past. I never mentioned my guitar making. And despite my previous women problems I felt confident with Joyce.

Our Marriage and Part Time Wedding Services
A few months after we were married we started a part-time wedding business. We began by just doing a wedding ceremony. We soon included wedding music, then a wedding arch, and wedding photography. Joyce learned how to shoot good photos and she did an outstanding job. We photographed numerous weddings. In 1991 we also designed and printed our wedding brochures. Our wedding website only has photos Joyce or I took. Along with our wedding business we soon added DJ entertainment for wedding receptions. We purchased the necessary equipment for this and hired a professional DJ for the first year and a half. Then Joyce and I did the DJ work. Our wedding business became popular and was an enjoyable experience doing it together. I also made and
published our wedding website on the Internet. We mostly did beach weddings. For wedding music on beaches I built our www (White Wedding Wagon). It was similar in construction to a gas-powered large wheelbarrow with about a 4’ wide 5’ long box and adapted it to take large tires for beach sand. I built the sound system, powered by heavy-duty batteries. The components were all separate quick plug-in sections, speakers, players, amplifiers, etc. and it had exceptionally clear sound. It was known locally as the best sound system used on the beach for wedding music. I easily maneuvered it to various wedding locations on the beach, parks and homes, plugged it in and was playing music in about five minutes. It had incredible sound. I drove it into and out of my van in a couple of minutes. I did not sit or ride on it and didn’t need a permit because I walked behind to steer it. While storing the equipment, I used self-limiting battery maintainers keeping them fully charged.

As the need arose at one time I did a couple
weddings myself, setting up the arch, performing the wedding ceremony, doing the photography using remote control, and playing the music by remote control. I enjoyed it very much and it was a lot of fun. Everything turned out fantastic. Looking at the photo album no one would ever have known it was done by one person. We provided a variety of wedding service combinations depending on our client’s needs for approximately 150 to 200 weddings a year. But when the economy and morals began changing due to money or attitudes toward marriage, it continuously dwindled along with many other small businesses until phasing out in 2012. We have since totally retired from offering wedding services.

At one point in time for my 65th birthday Joyce, without my knowledge reserved a large banquet room at the Don Cesar Hotel on St. Pete Beach with her saved money. She invited all my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The date fell at a difficult time for my daughter Carla as she was
bringing up three daughters and was involved in their various school activities. So Joyce purchased their plane tickets because she wanted everyone together for celebrating the occasion. It was a delightful surprise for me and everyone pitched in bringing something for the dinner, drinks, and dessert. This made the occasion more personal and extra special. We also took them to Busch Gardens in Tampa another time. We tried to have family fun get-togethers whenever we could. When our wedding business slowed we were no longer able to provide for these types of events. I feel I could have not asked for a better woman than Joyce. She is always so thoughtful especially with birthdays, holidays and other special occasion celebrations. Joyce particularly likes to plan surprise birthdays.

On my 65th Birthday at the Don CeSar
Finally Made 65

Surprise 65th Birthday (children) Carla, Chris, Shelly, Marcy, yours truly, Tina, Randy, Leah, Brian

On another occasion with all our children we attended the Arabian Nights Show with their white Arabian Lipizan Stallions in Orlando

At Arabian Nights Orlando
Joyce, yours truly, Marcy, Scott, Shelly, Chris, Cindy, Beth Ann, George, Tina & David

Another year Joyce bought parasailing for two at St. Pete Beach; another was a hot air balloon ride for both of us, another was indoor skydiving. I was impressed because there was a professional skydiving group practicing in the chamber while I was waiting for my turn. So it turned out to be a real life simulation. Joyce also bought zip-lining experiences for another birthday. I usually never knew what was going to be until we got there.

My 70th Birthday Warbird Adventure
I had never been in an aircraft except as in a passenger plane, and when about four when my Dad took me up in a small plane. During my life I occasionally mentioned it would have been nice if I had learned to fly jets. Unknown to me, Joyce purchased stunt plane flying lessons for my 70th birthday at the War Bird Adventures in Kissimmee, Florida. An instructor took me up in a WWII trainer, shown in the photos. I sat in the front compartment and he sat in the rear. Both of us had the same controls, connected. By radio he described everything as we sat there, then started the engine and we took off to fly over an area set aside for his stunt flying exercises. He went through each
exercise explaining all the controls and how to use them. When we arrived at the designated area he started the stunts one at a time. He did the first one and after I would repeat what he did. As he was doing each stunt he described in detail what he was doing with the controls and instruments while performing the stunt. He then had me perform that stunt with me alone at the controls, the stick for going up, down, left and right, the foot pedals for stabilizing the flight, and reading the instrument panel, mostly for speed, altitude and horizon. First he did a barrel roll. He then had me do it handling the controls completely by myself as he assisted by radio headphone contact. Next was a complete forward circle loop. Then he asked if I would like to try one that he rarely does because by this point in a lesson most people cannot handle it, or just will not do it, to which I said, “yes”. He then flew straight up close to a stall speed, then did a “wing over” to the left and dove straight down to a certain speed and altitude, pulled out, then leveled to the horizon. He then had me repeat what he did.
I performed all of the maneuvers very well without having any problem. After the flight, the instructor told me he was surprised at what I did because he said there have been very few people at any age who performed that final exercise without his taking over to help, but for some reason he said he felt confident I could do it. At any point in time during any of the maneuvers he was able to take control but never found the need to. Unknowingly I later told this experience to a couple of guys who had been jet fighter pilots and they laughed about what I did because I thought it was such a big deal. However, I really doubt if they flew stunts completely piloting themselves on their very first plane flight. I have a video of my flight taken from the plane of the entire episode, plus photos and another video of the plane taking off and landing. At 70, it definitely was a special treat and a very enjoyable highlight in my life. Joyce always looks forward to just a couple of days to go somewhere to a museum or similar place we have never been. I have no idea what her next surprise will be. We
simply enjoy ourselves whenever and wherever we get the chance.

Hard Rock Cafe
My most recent discovery regarding a Veleno® guitar was found at the HardRock Cafe in Tampa, Florida. Two of my neighbors occasionally visit the Hardrock gambling Casino in Tampa. While there a short time ago they were looking at the wide touch screen display, near the entrance of the HardRock Cafe restaurant. It shows numerous guitars and other items of memorabilia, in a continuously moving display. They were surprised when they saw a Veleno® guitar on the screen. The next day they told me what they had seen and I was amazed. A few days later Joyce and I went to the HardRock Cafe and my neighbors came with us. While viewing the wide screen memorabilia display, I touched the photo of the Veleno® guitar I had sold to Marc Bolan of T-Rex. It came up extra-large on the screen. Its appearance was surprisingly dirty, marked up, and appeared to have
been mishandled. I touched the enlarged view of the guitar and it then came up with a little history statement stating that I spelled Marc’s name wrong on the guitar. I contacted HardRock and they eventually cleaned up their Veleno® guitar and the appearance has been drastically improved with its near original chrome appearance. Recently, Jeff Nolan, guitar historian for Hardrock International, phoned me in which we had an excellent conversation and I told him that when I had Marc’s name engraved on his guitar I noticed it was spelled incorrectly and immediately phoned Marc and told him there would be a delay in shipping the guitar, probably about a week, because his name was misspelled in the engraving and I was bringing it back to the engraver to have him do it over right. Marc said, “No, leave it just the way it is. It will be a part of the history of this guitar and I want to keep it that way.”

Marc's request has come to light and alive, now, 40 years later. Jeff Nolan of Hard Rock International
informed me that Mark was Marc's real name but did not use it as an entertainer. Jeff stated he is currently making the necessary corrections regarding my misspelling Marc's name showing on their big screen. I noticed the name was changed for a short time but then was re-remarked that I, again, had spelled Marc's name wrong. Even so, it would have just been just a mistake!

Now, after seeing my name spelled wrong in so many publications and other places relating to Veleno® guitars and John Veleno I have the feeling they seemed to be intentionally done by either clowning counterfeiters or possible investors who put their money into the "well planned promotional schemes" of notoriety prior to my winning the court case protecting my Veleno® guitar name and it all came to a screeching halt. I also believe that my website, www.veleno.net gets hacked into as well. I've seen changes in and misspelling words, and messed up artwork I did not do, including
misspelling Marc Bolan’s name and others’ on my website, as you can presently see. There are other wordings including photo changes appearing to be mistakes and are not. Unfortunately I do not have the means to stop it and protect it. I have made numerous corrections and have not been able to prevent it from happening over and over.

HardRock's Veleno® guitar's appearance has been drastically improved with its near original chrome appearance, but then scratched up once more as it presently is in Jan 2014, but no correction mentioned at this time for Marc's misspelled name.

I am seldom impressed by whom or what a person is or has done, but am impressed in what I see by others who have truly completed outstanding accomplishments. I am mostly impressed by how that person is with me, how he/she speaks, and what he/she does in my presence, and what I know to be factual about him or her, and what they say they know to be factual as common sense dictates.
Unintentionally I have been encompassed by some highly unusual situations in an unusual assortment of ways often offering insight to see much about life in general. I always try to leave well enough alone and not dispute with anyone unless I feel I know facts that may differ. Yet I still feel most people are mostly true and honest, fully aware that many are not.

Current update on my five children

Michele and her husband, Scott Russell, have two sons, Matthew, adopted as an infant, and his wife, Alicia, who have two children; and Tyler, in college, also a daughter, Colleen and her husband Geza, have two children. Scott and Michele have owned and operated an environmental consulting firm in Florida assisting business entities required to comply with environmental laws for well over 30 years.

Marcella is a CPA, presently working in the assets...
division of an insurance company. Her husband, George Marks is now - a retired private investigator, employed by T-Mobile. They have two daughters, Lisa and Jennifer, who both have children.

Carla has a master’s degree in aerospace engineering, and her husband, Dr. Alex Hoehn, has a PhD in aerospace engineering. Both have prepared a wide variety of NASA experiments during the past 20 or more years and now live in Europe. Both assist NASA and ESA, (the European Space Agency.) They have three daughters, Jessica, Michelene and Nicolette, all doing well in college.

Christopher and his wife Cindy have been general building contractors in Ohio for over 25 years. They have two children; a daughter, Beth Ann, and Cindy’s son, Tony, from a previous marriage, who my son Chris later adopted. Beth Ann and her
husband Charlie have three children. Tony and his wife Wendy, have three children.

My youngest daughter, Tina, and her husband, David Peacock, have a son, Brandon, and a daughter, Lauren, both in college. Tina has a commercial real estate license and works with commercial building contractors. She is also proficient in Mortgage Company underwriting. Her husband, David, is a long term employee with the local power company, Duke Energy.

All my children had previously been involved in some way or another with the guitar business since the beginning in 1971. Some had gone to a couple of concerts with me. My children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are a legacy I am proud of.
I obtained and compiled the following Additional Information after October 2013

These new findings begin with a 2006 email exchange between myself and former VIC business partner, Harry Wayne Sipes, who left VIC in 1975, about a year after my having the two brain aneurysms. This portion identifies and reveals false claims Wayne Sipes accused me of in his emails and is revealed in the VIC business journals I inadvertently found in October 2013. Wayne Sipes clearly states that I cheated him, by my not keeping my promises. Following is proof I kept my promises plus more. If this is what he did to me at that time what more damage has he possibly done during the years since then? Could he have been involved making false claims in the guitar world regarding me and my Veleno® guitar? Is it possible Harry had been involved in Veleno® guitar Counterfeiting?
Email exchanges in 2006.

----- Original Message -----   From: V.I.C.
To: Wayne Sipes
Sent: Wednesday, June 07, 2006  8:48 PM
Subject: Re: Veleno Original #136

Dear Wayne,

Thank you for emailing. It was a surprise to hear from you. Your email arrived a few days after I left for Italy. Just got back and have been extremely busy on catch-up. I was confused about your statement that you received Veleno #136 when our partnership split up. On my records, #136 guitar shows up as being missing as of October 1975 with no record of who or where it went. The "partnership" we did not include realizing, acquisition, or receiving of goods nor equipment if and when you left the company. It was agreed that you would receive 1/2 of the profits generated from sales after business expenses, which we both had originally agreed to and is exactly what we did to my
knowledge. At that time I was the owner and sole proprietor of Veleno Instrument Company, and never recall including a guitar as part of our separation agreement. As you well know, all the Veleno guitars were made in sequence and sold in that same way. How you received #136 is unknown to me.

----- Original Message -----  
From: Wayne Sipes  
To: V.I.C.  
Sent: Thursday, June 15, 2006 9:33 PM  
Subject: Re: Veleno Original #136

I had to smile when I saw the statement in your email that our partnership split was to have only included splitting the "profits". (In a perfect world maybe this would have worked.) You know that there were no profits to split (there was never any money for either of us - it always went back into buying parts etc.). We had some money in the checking account and you reimbursed me for my expenses, gave me some of the money from the
checking account and asked me to take a guitar instead of cash since you needed some cash to continue on. I agreed to this arrangement (even though I could barely play a guitar - it soon became a cherished keepsake however). #136 was part of the batch of guitars we were working on at the time and since it was finished, that was the one I ended up with. All during our partnership, we never had a disagreement on anything and our splitting up was no exception. I value that very much and know that it could not have happened with anyone else - especially not today.

I'm glad you responded to my e-mail and I know that you are still around and your family is doing well. I'm also glad I was able to solve the mystery of the missing #136 for you. Wayne
The following VIC figures are from the original 1973 to 1975 VIC business journals records found, in October 2013. 1973 to 1975 was the period of time Harry Wayne Sipes was a member of VIC

This recently found data is from Original Records provided by Seminole Business Services recorded during that year and a half period of time. Harry Wayne Sipes became a member of Veleno® Instrument Company in late 1973 when only six Veleno guitars had been made and sold up to that point in time. At that time Harry Sipes recommended Seminole Business Services with June Heiser, Owner, to be the accounting firm for our company, VIC. I accepted his suggestion and she did an excellent job for us.

Commissions from Sales paid to Harry (Wayne) Sipes for commissions from Veleno® Instrument Company (VIC) for Guitars Sold documented in the company journals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Guitars Sold</th>
<th>Ck# &amp; Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/27/74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 457 - 85.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/15/74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 494 - 181.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/17/74</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ck 539 - 202.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/21/74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ck 576 - 175.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/6/74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 651 - 72.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/6/74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 655 - 56.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21/74</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ck 662 - 245.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/30/74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 669 - 98.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/5/74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 676 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/10/74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 677 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/13/74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 686 - 70.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/13/74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 687 - 51.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/28/74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 695 - 56.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/8/75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ck 756 - 245.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21/75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ck 767 - 245.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/22/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 770 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26/75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 778 - 98.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/13/75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 791 - 127.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/25/75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 809 - 106.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/28/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 903 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/3/75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 914 - 101.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/28/75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ck 943 - 196.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/17/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 954 - 50.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/30/75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 965 - 98.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 987 - 55.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24/75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 988 - 98.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/28/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 990 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 1003 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/15/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 1008 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/29/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 1016 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/5/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 1021 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/11/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 1031 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/29/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 1045 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/9/75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ck 1054 - 98.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/16/75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ck 1059 - 49.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Comms.**  
$3,335.03
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Aneurysm Related Medical expenses
I had suffered two brain aneurysms. First, I believe, on 3/11/74, and the second on 6/10/74. I was placed on 10 mg valiums per day on the first incident, later to 20 mg on week and progressed to 30 mg. per day after the second stroke. I gradually cut meds down and completely stopped while making the Ankh guitars in 1976. According to Google in 2013, the dollar buying power ratio is $5.00 for each $1.00 dollar in 1976. V.I.C. made the following medial payments for the incurred expenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/24/75</td>
<td>Termination Amount</td>
<td>Ck1065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,335.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Medical Payment Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/11/74</td>
<td>Admitted to Mound Park ER - Placed on 10 mg. Valium per day</td>
<td>Ck 466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 150.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to St. Pete General for tests and 20 mg Valium daily prescription.</td>
<td>3/15/74</td>
<td>Ck 475 - 333.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Pete General ER Payment</td>
<td>4/22/74</td>
<td>Ck 517 – 65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Pete General Payment</td>
<td>6/6/74</td>
<td>Ck 562 - 65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitted: St. Pete Gen. ER with tests and 30 mg Valium daily</td>
<td>6/10/04</td>
<td>Ck 564 - 300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Pete General Payment</td>
<td>6/26/74</td>
<td>Ck 578 - 65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Pete General Payment</td>
<td>7/22/74</td>
<td>Ck 595 - 65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Pete General Payment</td>
<td>8/22/74</td>
<td>Ck 609 - 65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Pete General Payment</td>
<td>9/29/74</td>
<td>Ck 637 - 66.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Medical Expenses paid by VIC for John</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,016.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VIC (Veleno® Instrument Company) paid Sipes unknown Cash expenses from 1973 to Sept 1975
Cash Reimbursements to Harry Wayne Sipes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Wayne</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/31/73</td>
<td>$15.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28/73</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/31/73</td>
<td>17.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30/73</td>
<td>26.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/31/73</td>
<td>37.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/30/73</td>
<td>39.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/31/73</td>
<td>95.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/31/73</td>
<td>204.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30/73</td>
<td>49.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31/73</td>
<td>59.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/30/73</td>
<td>28.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/21/73</td>
<td>45.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/31/74</td>
<td>58.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28/74</td>
<td>48.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/31/74</td>
<td>121.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30/74</td>
<td>112.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/31/74</td>
<td>34.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/30/74</td>
<td>110.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/31/74</td>
<td>No cash claim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/31/74</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30/74</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31/74</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/30/74</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/21/74</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/31/75</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28/75</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/31/75</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30/75</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/31/75</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/30/75</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/31/75</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/31/75</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/30/75</td>
<td>758.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,909.48</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please note that Harry Wayne did not make further EOM Cash claims after my 2nd aneurysm.

Harry Wayne’s Reimbursements paid by Checks (Significantly small as compared to cash)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PAID BY CHECK NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/27/73</td>
<td>Ck 305 $81.95 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/14/73</td>
<td>Ck 342 $27.22 - Harry Wayne S. /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/24/73</td>
<td>Ck 347 $12.95 - Harry Wayne S. /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/29/73</td>
<td>Ck 378 $9.03 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/4/73</td>
<td>Ck 398 $10,00 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/22/73</td>
<td>Ck 404 $102..07 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/13/74</td>
<td>Ck 426 $11.94 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/19/74</td>
<td>Ck 430 $-12.00 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/26/74</td>
<td>Ck 435 $4.50 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11/74</td>
<td>Ck 439 $9.65 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16/74</td>
<td>Ck 448 $4.00 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/24/74</td>
<td>Ck 454 $5.00 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5/74</td>
<td>Ck 496 $72.68 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/8/74</td>
<td>Ck 502 $11.18 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/7/74</td>
<td>Ck 529 $12.47 - Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total monies VIC paid to Harry Wayne Sipes by checks and Cash from 1973 to October 30, 1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Check</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/3/74</td>
<td>Ck 556</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/4/74</td>
<td>Ck 560</td>
<td>$10.40</td>
<td>Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/21/74</td>
<td>Ck 573</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
<td>Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/30/74</td>
<td>Ck 671</td>
<td>$3.28</td>
<td>Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/27/75</td>
<td>Ck 713</td>
<td>$25.90</td>
<td>Harry Wayne S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Check Reimburse - $457.22

Total monies Wayne Sipes received by 9/27/75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Reimbursements by check</td>
<td>$457.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Reimbursements in Cash</td>
<td>$1,909.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sales Commissions</td>
<td>$5,335.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total monies Wayne Sipes received by 9/27/75</td>
<td>$7,701.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Google, the amount calculated at today’s dollar value (2014) is a 5 to 1 ratio and would come to $38,508.65!! Not bad for a part-time at home evening and some weekends at the shop for a 1 year and 7 months after hour's job!
Commissions paid to Wayne, are clearly marked on VIC guitar serial number tally sheets, not shown here. Harry Wayne is not only a fibber but his email (p. 376) Sipes explains how he politely Swipes a Veleno® Guitar! So, he is also a Swiper!

Summary of Harry Wayne Snipes' Claims
In Wayne's goodbye email dated Thursday, June 15, 2006 9:33 PM he stated "All during our partnership, we never had a disagreement on anything and our splitting up was no exception. I value that very much and know that it could not have happened with anyone else - especially not today." Those compliments were very nice considering the commissions he received plus taking a guitar without my knowledge from VIC. Harry is like a thief who does not know the difference between arrogance and confidence.

Hmm, Good Fibber and Polite Swiper sounds like a worthy name for a song, anyone for music?
Sirach 12:13 Who pities a snake charmer when he is bitten.

Veleno® Instrument Company received little to no benefit from the abundant publicity that was given to Veleno® guitars after 1975. It was at that time that counterfeit Veleno® guitars were discovered and we finally announced it on our new website, www.veleno.com in 1989. Our newly developed nearly perfect foolproof ID system curbed them for the most part. But our sales were very skimpy and have been ever since, with none last year.

The following was added in 2013. Hard Rock International (aka HardRock Cafe) put an improved video on YouTube which speaks well about my guitar and somewhat nice about me but they never ever contacted me concerning anything in regards my guitars. It appears they think they know
it all. After contacting them they made some alterations but are not in line with my satisfaction.

Currently there exists a new wave of "Music?" with some appearing on YouTube utilizing snarling and growling with no melody whatsoever, some carrying on for 20 to 30 minutes at a time. For those who are avid followers of that new "now" music, they place all types of music before them, in a humorous category to make fun of and laugh about, amongst themselves of course.

Please do not misunderstand me; I recognize how music types and styles evolve and how they affect every "current" generation during any given period of time. I comprehend how many of you feel and have been in the position of humor to a younger now generation than your music period, mocking, snickering, and laughing about your music appreciation period. Just grow up!!

Admittedly, I was no different and thought my
parents were humorous when they were young folks, seeing Rudy Valley as being fantastic singing, “Your Time is My Time” through a cheerleader’s megaphone. But those were days for growing up. Now, and likewise it is time for many others to grow up and be a little more mature, especially seeing the position in music many of you, and I, are in, and have a little more respect for the elderly and for some of the greats of the times gone by. Some other folks have made improvements on related matters such as in promoting and advertising. Consider this autobiography was not projected to include much of my private family life yet enough for this writing. I am in hopes you see I never intended to impress anyone but nonetheless did.

The company name Veleno® Instrument Company was projected to include other fine musical instruments under my Veleno® name as being “Killer” instruments, and nothing that states Veleno® Instrument Company should be limited to
just musical instruments, although it's not only a
good idea. I'd like to include an advanced Lie
Detector instrument, usable on a phone, come to
a reality under our name, very fitting for the name
"Veleno" don't you think? Nothing should stop
here and now, or be put on hold. I hope to work
together with others for the future of the real
Veleno® Instrument Company. In this way, all
involved can make a generous unselfish profit,
possibly never having the opportunity again. Some
tried in a dishonest way and lost. A fact is, look
at the expert qualified list of owner guitarists aware
they had something special when they saw, tried,
heard and purchased a Veleno® Guitar, this is the
point.

I believe I'm having more fun than a barrel full of
monkeys. Please realize that when I learned to play
guitar, and played in a band my favorite guitarist
was Andre Segovia, classical Spanish guitarist, and
saw in person in Boston. Second was Chet Atkins,
third Les Paul. During those early days Les Paul and his wife, Mary Ford, were most always within the top 40, sometimes ten. Top male vocalists included Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Andy Williams, Patti Page and Vaughn Monroe. Later hits included Bill Haley and The Comets with Rock Around the Clock, and Chuck Berry with Johnny B. Goode. The Beatles began around that point in time, plus Fats Domino, Tubby Chess, Chubby Checkers and others. There was no Eric Clapton in the charts, nor was he heard of while I was playing in a band. His popularity became evident when my daughters were in college, along with up and coming others beginning their popularity. When my daughters were in college I was 40 years of age and getting older when I began selling guitars in 1974. A little earlier I had seen Clapton play in person at the Armory in Tampa, where I saw BB King. And when I was in a band in 1957 at 23 years old, Eric Clapton was only 12 years old!!

Guitarists of the world's best performers truly felt
and stated Veleno® guitars are amongst the finest playing and sounding and appealing electric guitars. This autobiographical portion of my guitar making life is being finalized for now.

More updates are planned for the future.

Final Summary
Revolution, War, Peace, Justice, Unification, and Heroism – all factors in the heritage that make up my background. I discovered that my Italian and French ancestors were intelligent, self-reliant, and confident in their accomplishments and responsibilities. They were dependable inventors and responsible peacekeepers. I feel that their resourcefulness and incomparable spirit are in the genes that reflect in the man I am. – The real John Veleno
Please stand up and stand out with us of Veleno® Instrument Company!

The real John Veleno

Anticipating more adventures
Veleno® Bass Guitar
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Pictures - Index 399
Cover - Veleno® Guitar Body in Progress Reflecting Its Maker

My First Guitar 9
Veleno® Guitar case 11
Veleno Sports Car 18
My French Grandparents 25
My Italian Grandparents Plus 28
Fasces 44
My children in 1961 96
Veleno® Original reflecting a Veleno® Traveler 113
Veleno® Ankh made for Todd Rundgren 118
Custom three pickup for Jack Germany 119
Guitar World magazine 122
Display at Hardrock Café, Orlando 127
Hardrock Veleno® Guitar pins 130
Veleno® Guitar in Boston Museum of Fine Arts 133
Dolly Parton-Dollyville-Rags to Riches museum 135
Joyce & I in Venice 2005 144
Guardialfiera 2005 146
View South 147
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Town Cemetery 148
Guardialfiera work list 150
Matount Plough, Erleen, Sundu, Uncle Joe 182
Marcy and I in snow 215
My Dad's Memorial 247
My Dad and I (around 1941) 248
The five arrive (Back together again) 251
Our New Florida Home 258
At my 65th Birthday 362
At Arabian Nites, Orlando 363
Warbird Adventures Stunt Plane Flying 364
Anticipating more adventures 394
Veleno® Bass guitar 395
Back cover photo of Veleno® Original guitar 398

Most of the autobiography was written in 2013
Recent information added in 2014
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Veleno® Original reflecting the heavens
Greed, Greed, and More Greed

Will The Real John Veleno Please Stand Up And Stand Out

The Veleno® Guitar – The First All-Aluminum Guitar Made In the United States of America