

1962—Fifty years looking forward and 2012—fifty years now looking back.

There are two events that prompted this column. First my wife, Melanie, retired on June 8th after 37 years in secondary education. Not being one to let a single blade of grass grow between her feet she promptly put out her shingle on June 9th and went into private practice. Second, this June marks the 50th anniversary of my graduation from 8th grade at Alice L. Barnard Elementary School in Chicago.

Alice L. Barnard was the first female principal of a school in the city of Chicago in the 1876. She was a member of the Howe-Barnard families who were instrumental in the founding of Beverly Hills, the area on the far southwest side of Chicago where I grew up. Here cousin, Annie Lyon Howe, founded the first Christian school (Glory Kindergarten and Training School) in Kobe, Japan, in the late 1887. Covers addressed to both women and various other family members came onto the market in 1999 when the family's correspondences were given to the Newberry Library in Chicago. The covers must have been sold off by the family or deaccessioned. Over several years I have purchased over 50 covers from dealers (none with letters) ranging in dates from the 1860s to the 1920s.

As a final aside I now realize that I missed the cover find of my lifetime when I was just 12 years old. My mother knew of my love of history and introduced me to the remaining Howe sisters. Their family home was located next door to our church. I remember that their house was just filled with relics of the history of Beverly Hills. Every few weeks I would stop by after school and they would tell me stories and show me items from the past. Little did I know about the correspondence held in their attic.

I was 13 years old in June of 1962. My interests were selling stamps, the Civil War Centennial, making money doing yard work in my neighborhood, and girls. In the next few years the latter would overwhelm the others. I started high school that fall at Morgan Park with the hope of one day becoming an architect (However, in college, TAM – theoretical and applied mathematics put an end to that desire).

The early 1960s were the final cocoon years of post-war America. Once November of 1963 came it all started to unravel for the next seven years until May 4, 1970. As much

as those seven years changed the world we all seemed to survive and found our way back to the track of life.

Fifty years now looking back.

When I look back over the past 50 years it certainly has been “a long and winding road”. It is hard to come to grips with the fact that it has been 50 years since my eighth grade graduation. Whew! Where did the time go?

For those of you who have followed this column over the years you know that there are a couple of threads of my life that have survived the 50 years. Stamp collecting and the stamp business have always been one of those threads. The other thread has been my passion for entrepreneurial endeavors. While I have had my share of bumps along the way it is the blessings that are always at the front of my mind. They include my two sons, stepdaughter and son, continued good health, amazing friendships that have developed over the years and Melanie, my mate of the past 10 years, August 4th will be our wedding anniversary.

It was Melanie who said on our first blind date, over dinner: “You make a living doing this?” Yes, and what a living it has been in every way.

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