DAVID PAUL BACHARACH

HOW TO COOK AN OX

To Begin, Begin.

—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

April, 2015

I was asked to repair a copper wall sculpture I had originally created and sold in 1965 to the great-grandmother of the young woman now standing in my studio doorway.

I agreed, with some trepidation, to repair the piece, as I had no precise memory of how, five decades earlier, I had fabricated it. Later, sitting at my bench with Henry, our Bassett hound, at my feet, I marveled at the dull grey lead joints that had endured for so long. Amidst the layers of material and equipment that now fill my studio, I remembered the sweet blue haze of lead solder fumes that used to engulf my Dad's old shop.

1962

A basement cloister, with cinder blocks the color of smudged cream, the room was my sanctuary. I spent hours working by myself with scraps of copper and brass, soldering with my Dad's blue, butane cylinder torch. A broken slate roof tile I'd found the near the lacrosse fieldhouse served as my soldering pad. My Dad was a jack-of-all-trades, my mother and grandfather gifted artists. Like many families, they were the children and grandchildren of immigrants who escaped poverty and persecution by sailing in steerage to the United States in the late 1800s. Their parents achieved hard-won success during the depression and two World Wars. Each generation attempted to give the succeeding one a better life.

Like many of my contemporaries, I was expected to understand and appreciate the peace and security of my life. I was encouraged to study, work hard, go to college and succeed in a manner my ancestors could only dream of. Therefore, it was an unintended consequence

(and complete surprise to all concerned) when my parents, who longed for a doctor in the family, introduced me to craft fairs and the possibility of earning money by selling what I created.

In 1963, my mother and a friend decided to revive my great-grand- father's dress design and bespoke tailoring business. With the help of my grandfather Paul, an accomplished de- signer and tailor of the old school, within months they assembled their first collection. Their "BaBi Clothing" company now faced the task of selling what they had created. My Dad, who descended from a long line of entrepreneurs and skilled prevaricators, noticed in the *Baltimore Sunpaper* an announcement for a craft show.

Mom immediately dialed the contact number to reserve a five-dollar space for BaBi Clothes.

Sitting around the big kitchen table the night before the show, my parents discussed plans for the following day's activities. In our home, children were rarely welcomed to participate in adult conversation, which was fine with me. I was

concentrating intently on reducing a chunk of leathery sirloin to an edible size with my shiny-new Shell steak knife.

Slowly, at a subconscious level, my left ear, the one closest to my father, began to vibrate. I became aware of a shift in my parents' exchange. Carefully lifting my eyes, trying hard not to betray my interest, I noticed Dad adjusting the steak on his plate. Balancing his unfiltered Pall Mall in the massive blue and grey ashtray that sat to his right, he focused on me. Cranial shift by my father was generally a portent signaling the start of a new household assignment for me.

"Gather that crap you've been making."

I was puzzled. "What crap?"

His grey-green eyes were peering at me over his specs. Lowering his chin, he replied, "The stuff piled in my workshop."

"Why?"

"You're going with your mother tomorrow. I want you to try selling some of the pieces you've been working on."

"Why?"

Questioning my father concerning any decision was generally unwise, but I sensed it might be permitted on this occasion.

"Because we have no more room for all your creations!"

"But...." I stammered. The discussion was already over.

My Dad looked away. Picking up his fork and cigarette, he continued to listen to my mother.

Always remember, treat your business, like a business. or you Will quickly go out of business. —Robert L. Bacharach, Baltimore, md, 1963

The show, a glorified flea market, filled an empty lot that until recently had supported a Baltimore row home. The remains of white marble steps outlined the perimeter of the site. The ground was covered with shards of soft, salmon-colored brick and tar-stained dirt the color of umber.

"Pick any spot you want." My dad pointed at a level corner near the entrance. Set-up took twenty minutes. The show lasted four hours. Breakdown took ten minutes. My sales were $200. I decided I liked this art business. I was thirteen years old.

May, 1963 – July, 1966

For the next three years, I exhibited in as many local shows as I could persuade my parents to transport me to, but I soon looked to move beyond the confines of the limited Baltimore-area craft scene. Once again, my father uncovered a possibility. While visiting a craft fair in Guilford, CT (a show I later exhibited in for many years), my father struck up a conversation with a jeweler. Pointing at me, he asked if this event would be a good show for his son to try.

The jeweler looked me over and stated, "Your son couldn't get into Guilford. First off, he would need five 8x10 glossies to apply."

I didn't know what 8 x 10 glossies were, but they sounded exotic and expensive.

"The best craft show for him to start with is up the road a piece in Stowe, Vermont. You can't miss it," the jeweler declared.

He dictated the particulars of the show while I scribbled them on my hand. "Between Mount Mansfield and Spruce Peak, no problem. Show up with five bucks. Ask for Mary Nyburg, tell her you want to participate and you're in."

Tuesday, August 23, 1966 - 4pm

Seven weeks later I pulled my mother's olive-green Galaxy onto the dusty gravel parking area in front

of Stowe Ski Lodge. I had fifty dollars in my pocket, a small assortment of sculpture, and a worn plywood table, nestled where the Galaxy's back seat had once been. I had arrived.

In front of me, a '64 Chevy C10 Stepside, its orange and white creamsicle twist obscured by a haze of ne dirt, sat near a wooden ramp. Two men dressed in worn khakis and short-sleeved shirts worked in a red-mustard cloud of dust, unloading cardboard boxes. In the shadow of a battered tent, an oddly-shaped stretch of stained canvas like those frequently seen at State Fairs, rested a steel-sided Woodie. The old Ford, with its trunk propped open by overflowing boxes, snuggled between the tent and a sun-bleached, wood and log building. Beneath the tent, perched a black-haired woman in a madras blouse, wilting in the August sun. Seated next to her, wearing jeans with rolled cuffs, was a small, angular man in shirt and tie, methodically arranging his Eberhard Faber pencils and paper with the intensity of a

child counting Halloween candy.

I approached the pair cautiously and asked where to find Mary Nyberg. I had never met Mary, but knew her to be a potter with a home studio not far from my parents' place in Baltimore County. Mary was one of two Maryland representatives to the Northeast Craft Council. Earlier that year, she and a small group of craftspeople had decided to meet in this isolated pocket of north-central Vermont for a conference, exhibition and fair entitled "Confrontation Craft Fair."

Wednesday, August 24, 1966 - 6am **"Need a smoke!"** a solid,

muscular man in a white

tee-shirt announced, as a few recent arrivals gathered.

He clawed a wad of clay from a crumpled bag. "Coffee and a smoke get me going in the morning," he added.

The stranger in the white tee was a potter. He seemed to be addressing an older man, who scratched his freshly-shaven chin and sighed.

"Grass will do for me," the potter stated matter-of-factly, throwing the lump of stiff, grey mud on an old kick wheel. "Do you think the effects of both combine?"

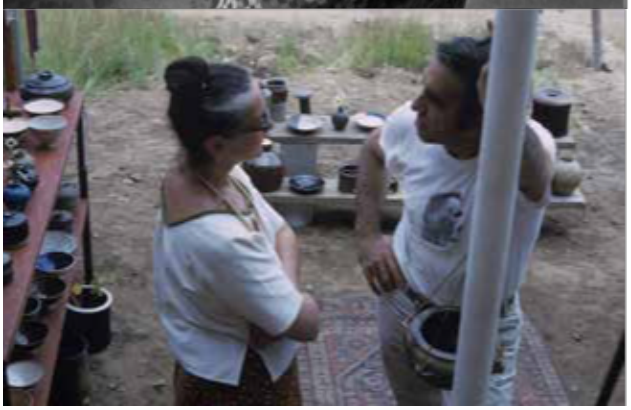
"Grass and coffee? Sounds horrible!" I thought.

There were now five people surrounding the man at the potter's wheel. The older man lit a second cigarette, and handed it to the potter.

A woman began speaking. Compact and full-figured with straight dark hair and a broad smile, Jean was not old, but arthritis was already thickening the joints in her fingers. She cradled a small cup of thick coffee.

"There are going to be crits," she said. "Ron and I, and Toshiko and Turner. And a square dance. And meetings about how to sell your work."

"What the hell is a 'crit'?" I screamed silently, attempting to confine my ignorance to myself. Is a Toshiko a person? A man? A woman? Who or what is a Turner? Something to do with wood? And a square dance. I hated square dancing. Grass and coffee, now crits, Turners and



Toshikos? Can't be English and sure as hell isn't Yiddish," I reasoned. "These people have their own language!"

Wednesday, August 23,1966 - 2 pm

An afternoon lecture on the business of craft was held in the back of the lodge. Fifty or more people crowded into a dimly illuminated room from which all fresh air had been removed. A small bank of sealed windows lined one side of the room, a stone fireplace the other. An empty portable bar was pushed aside and the space filled with an assortment of chairs, tired exhibitors and shop owners. The planned panel discussion/question-and-answer session revealed that attendees were generally

experienced makers,

but inexperienced sellers. The business of craft was taking its first casualties.

A mustached man stepped forward. "The challenge of the craft shop owner/exhibitor's business model is that family, responsibility of ownership, and business needs can involve different, and at times conflicting values, goals, and actions. Issues can arise where the three components overlap, necessitating integrated action to ensure that the requirements of the business do not create family disasters."[1]

"Ah crap!" I sighed to myself. "This is more complicated than I thought."

Thursday, August 24, 1966 - 11 am

I was busily setting out my work when I remembered that my father had made me promise to call to let him know I was alive, that I'd arrived safely and found a place to stay. There had to be a pay phone somewhere.

"Excuse me." A young woman with a British accent was addressing me. Instantaneously, any thought of promised parental communication dissolved, to be re- placed by my first wholesale client, ever!

Three hours later, I had written four wholesale orders totaling $300. I was surprised to learned that many wholesale buyers were new shop owners with empty shelves to fill, who expected to have their orders ready for pick-up when they left at the end of the week. I soon realized that wholesaling was a new experience for almost everyone and there would be many rules in this business of which we were all unaware. Galleries didn't place orders, as my father had said they would, they chose from what was available at the show, paid their bill and took immediate delivery.

Friday, August 25,1966 - 9 am "Meeting tonight."

I jumped! The lapidarist next to me was speaking. A razor-thin man in a putty-green sport jacket and black, pencil tie, he had spent the previous day in silence, watching his tumbler barrel rotate in its motorized cradle, polishing the rocks inside. "What kind of meeting?" I asked.

"Exhibitors." "Where?"

“Court of Honor.” “When?”

“Six.”

“Thanks.”

“Sure.”

“How are your stones coming?” I asked. “Will they be ready for retail?”

“Yep,” came his monosyllabic response. “Great.”

Friday, August 25, 1966 - 8 pm

At that night’s meeting, we discussed the Ox Roast.

The ox was to be purchased at the von Trapp family farm. Exhibitor volunteers agreed to dig a fire pit, cut

wood and handle the entire cooking and serving process, working in shifts.

Saturday, August 26,1966 - 5 am

Sleeping in the Galaxy was cheap and easy, but not particularly private. At 5 am, a man I knew as Peter stuck his head in the open window and yelled, “Want to meet Maria von Trapp?”

“From the Sound of Music?” I mumbled.

“Yes!” he barked. Peter’s normal conversational tone was powerfully boisterous. He possessed little ability to modulate, even at 5 am.

Picturing Julie Andrews spinning like a dervish in a nearby field, I replied, “Yes. When are we leaving?”

“Now! Jump in the wagon!”

Five of us piled into a new Ford wagon and headed out to the von Trapp farm.

The back seat was packed with boxes and a small, barely visible man. An old fella with thick white hair and a beat-up fedora poised at a jaunty angle climbed into the

way-back seat with me, a sort of rumble seat.

Fully expecting to meet Julie Andrews' doppelganger residing on a rural, Vermont farm, I chatted excitedly, despite the hour, with the man sitting next to me. He told me he was a potter. (In the 60s and early 70s, it seemed as if 60% of any show was populated by potters of all sizes, shapes and abilities.)

My fedora-clad traveling companion explained that he was also a ceramics professor, one of the crafts- people invited to a meeting ten months earlier on Cape Cod to discuss the idea of beginning this show. He was also one of the volunteers running the show.

Having been raised with the notion that teaching, particularly teaching at the college level, was not only an honorable profession but one that paid well, I was amazed to learn that many of the show's founders were university educators who felt the need to supplement their incomes. The event was scheduled for August to allow everyone time to create work after the school year ended. The meetings were considered necessary exercises because the educators and other exhibitors knew little about wholesale or retail selling. (In retrospect, I wish I'd had the foresight to remember the ceramics professor's name and ask him why this event was named "Confrontation.")

We approached an oddly shaped wooden building. Someone said it was a ski lodge. "Exotic," I thought. I had seen people skiing in the movies but there wasn't a lot of opportunity to ski in Baltimore.

Peter, leaning awkwardly out of the wagon's window, spoke to a big man busily filling roadside ditches with gravel. Cloaked in dust and grease-stained work bibs, the

gravel man looked like a stevedore but sounded like the kosher butcher whose shop stood across from Goldie's Liquors on Baltimore's Lombard Street.

"The barn, further up the road," I heard him say, as gravel-man shifted his frame and went back to work.

Minutes later we approached a creosote-stained barn, topped by a patched metal roof. A small group of people stood watching us approach, with battered tin mugs in hand. An imposingly large, black bull on a worn hemp lead stood in a nearby field, eyeing us.

So far, no Julie Andrews.

Tumbling out of the wagon, the ceramics professor approached the group at the barn. A compact individual to the left of the group, arms akimbo, nodded sharply in the direction of the bull. Short-lived haggling commenced. Money was exchanged. Tin cups were set on the ground and hands shaken. Minutes later I had returned

to the way-back seat. The Ford ground into gear and moved away, the barn, bull and farmers receding slowly.

Peter, silent for only a moment, shifted in the front seat. With a Cheshire-cat grin on his face, he asked me, "Did you see the fella on the left of the group?"

"The one with the hands on his hips?" I replied. He nodded, adding, "That was Maria von Trapp."

We returned at 11 am. The show, scheduled to open at 1 pm, was already coming alive. A small crowd had gathered at the carney-like ticket tent. I passed men in sport coats and ties, women in flowered dresses and floppy hats. Moving directly to my display, I extracted a warm, slightly flat Coke from under my table. After a deep slug, I sat back.

My neighbor, Byron, arranged his pottery in stacks of well-used wooden milk crates, their open faces pointing outward. He had transported his work in the milk crates. After removing the work, he and a helper carefully stacked each crate to form six, open-sided milk-crate pillars, six feet high. Uniformly precise clay cylinders sealed with oversized corks filled the uppermost parts of the display. Straight-sided bowls in assorted sizes, along with unadorned canisters bearing yarmulke-shaped tops took up

residence on the lower shelves. Each piece was glazed in two or three wide, horizontal strips, in muted earth tones. I found it immensely comforting, enjoying the sense of calm his pottery exuded. I resolved to buy a piece if I sold work during retail.

"Someone unplugged my tumbler!"

My lapidarist neighbor was complaining loudly. Those nearby rushed to his booth.

"What's wrong?" asked a weaver.

"Tumbler unplugged!" the lapidarist stammered.

"You mean your tumbler has been unplugged?" asked the man who had been demonstrating glassblowing.

"So plug it back in," a potter from Syracuse said matter-of-factly.

"Can't!" the lapidarist whined.

“Why?” asked the weaver.

“He unplugged my tumbler and plugged in his light,” whimpered the lapidarist.

The individual he pointed to was an enamelist positioned across the aisle from me. His display, a small card table in a dark corner, held several dozen tiny bowls enameled in black and grey. For two days, no one had been able to see his unlighted work. The enamelist had taken it upon himself to travel to a general store, purchase a single 40-watt shop light and a brown, lightweight extension cord. The sole outlet near his booth had been occupied by the lapidarist’s tumbler for the last two days. Reasoning that the several thousand tumbled stones presently filling numerous bowls on the lapidarist’s table were sufficient for this and several more shows, the enamelist had, without requesting permission, unplugged the tumbler and plugged in his light.

“What if everyone wants electricity? Then what would we do?” moaned the lapidarist.

Seeing no true emergency, the gathered crafts- people smiled, shook their heads, and rolled their eyes at the absurdity of the lapidarist’s plight, as well as his concern that all exhibitors might want electricity.[2] Every- one returned to their displays.

At the exhibitor meeting that evening, issue number one on the agenda was the lapidarist's unplugged tumbler. A solution was quickly found. The lapidarist

could tumble his stones for the eighteen hours the show was closed. The enamelist could use the outlet during the six hours the show was open. In the future, if anyone wanted electricity for any reason, the show would invest in a multi-outlet extension cord that could be shared by all.

"Someone has to dig a pit for the bull roast," the ceramics professor said, his fedora still sitting at a jaunty angle.

"Maybe first we should discuss how retail went today," suggested a weaver from Maryland.

"I'm sold out," a tailgating weaver who exhibited hand- made pillows in the trunk of her car responded, "and I'm leaving as soon as I can."

A thin man in tennis shorts and white knit shirt jumped up, "We need to vote on whether anyone can leave before the end of the show." Pleased with his self-assured performance, he returned to his seat.

"Let's vote on it," several exhibitors agreed.

"Can I have your space?" A tiny woman with waist- length, strawberry-blonde hair was speaking. "I'll pay for it." The young woman was very small and very pregnant. Already she had one baby, swathed in blankets on the floor at her feet. Rising slowly from her chair, she clenched her teeth, arched her lower back, and steadied herself with the chair for balance. Maintaining this precarious stance with some difficulty, she began, "Her space is near mine. I could move my tent from the field so my baby is closer to my display. If I can have her space, I vote 'yes.'"

The vote was a unanimous "Yes." A reasonable precedent had been set. In the future, tailgating exhibitors could pack up and leave at day's end, if they sold out. Whether a pregnant woman needed the space or not was not part of the conversation. Several exhibitors offered to move the young mother's tent the next

morning, after her baby's morning feeding, but before the show opened.

"We need food for lunch," offered a stocky woman who had installed herself by the ski lodge's deserted snack bar. She spoke slowly, as her fingers interlocked behind her large head and her eyes studied the ceiling.

"I'm by myself. I can't be driving to town for lunch each day." Lowering her hands, the woman began to rub her stomach while spitting out each syllable, to assure the others of her dire predicament.

A short silence ensued.

Everyone was considering the request when another, less forceful voice volunteered, "I could use food for breakfast."

Silence. **"I need packaging,** boxes and newspaper," said another. Voices were pouring in from all directions. **"Are we supposed to collect tax?"** "Tax? Why should we be collecting tax?" I frowned.

"The woman's bathroom is disgusting. Someone needs to clean it and we need to keep a supply of toilet paper close by," a broad, brusque woman in a Hawaiian

floral tent-like garment said. "Someone has to empty the trash."

"Parking is a mess. If it rains, we'll all be stuck."

"His boxes are behind my table. I thought that was my space," the papermaker was on her feet.

"She bought her display in New York. I thought all displays were supposed to be made by hand. Store-bought displays look too commercial!"

Sunday, August 27, 1966 - 5 am

The camping area was small. Anyone who was interested knew when it was time to reposition the tent. At 4:30 am, the baby cried. By 5:30, nursing was complete and we could move the tent. Ten craftspeople showed up, more than were required. The move progressed quickly. By 6 am, mother and child were settled into their new space and several people wondered what else needed doing.

"The pit for the bull roast needs to be dug and we'll need firewood stacked," said

Professor Fedora.

Like butter hitting a hot pan, the crowd sizzled, then melted to a tiny pool of four.

“Wait,” the Professor said. The teacher in him surfaced quickly. He pointed at two women. Perhaps having anticipated a summons, they had stationed themselves as far from him as possible.

“You two, you have cars?”

“Yes!”

“Please come here.” They did. “This is a list of what needs to be picked up in town. Here’s money. Be back by ten.”

The two, pleased with their painless assignment, moved quickly before the Professor had time to change his mind.

“He has a list!” I thought, “Oy!” Images of my father swept over me.

The Professor continued, pointed at two other craftspeople. “You two, today is your day to sweep the hall. The brooms are by the door.”

“And you!” His gaze settled on me. “Go wake up all the people in those tents.” He swept his hand in an arc that included all visible tents and vehicles. “Tell them to get their asses out of bed. I’m serving breakfast at seven, over there. At seven-thirty, everyone works, breakfast or not.”

Sunday, August 25,1966 - 9 am

By Sunday, I had gathered the nerve to ask Ronald Hayes Pearson to look at my work. We had been introduced earlier in the week while playing chess. Ron, a respected jeweler and metalsmith, was a tall man, soft-spoken with a flattop of thick black hair, who had been particularly kind to me. During a break in our game, he agreed to stop by my table later that day to look at my work.

I rearranged my display, putting my best work out

and removing everything else. When Ron arrived, he carefully examined the work for several minutes. Looking me in the eye, he told me that my technique was fine. I was thrilled. I had taught myself to cast small bronze and silver miniatures, abstract figurative pieces, employing an old dental casting machine and a burnout oven that doubled as my enameling kiln.

“But,” he stated flatly, “this work won’t sell.”

“Really? I’ve been selling it for three years. I took orders this week! People seem to like my work.” I tried to meet his gaze but inside I was crumbling.

“I wouldn’t depend on that continuing. You should consider changing your approach. Why did you choose to make this type of work?”

“Because I like making it.”

Ron chuckled. Shaking his head, he bade me goodbye, wishing me good luck. He strode away, smiling to himself.

In retrospect, I suppose he was laughing at the self-confident, brash, very foolish kid standing in front of him. In total ignorance of who Ron was or what his experience and achievements had been, I honestly believed, even after the crit, that I knew better than he did.

Over the next six years, I continued to create and sell similar figures, eventually selling sufficient pieces to put myself through college, buy my wife's engagement ring, pay for our honeymoon and some of our apartment costs. Ron's lesson was one of the most important I was to

learn that week, but it took several years and a re-reading of Harper Lee before I knew what the lesson had been.

Ron was an experienced jeweler, educator, and a designer for Kirk Steiff Silver. His work was displayed and sold with some of the greatest crafts artists of the century, at a shop that he had helped found. I, on the other hand, had not yet applied to college

and certainly did not teach or design for anyone. But I had been selling work for several years and had been mentored by men who had much more experience in the field of retailing than Ron.

I had learned by participating in local craft shows,

with guidance from my father and grandfather, who my clients were and what they could afford to spend. At Stowe, I met my wholesale clients: underfinanced, overly-enthusiastic amateurs who learned their first lessons in wholesale business practices right there at Stowe.

I understood, eventually, that my work appealed to specific people: my clients, no one else's. My work needed to be appropriate for the context in which it was to be displayed and sold. Ron's point of view and work was appropriate to the context in which he lived, worked, and sold his jewelry. But, his point of view was not appropriate for me at this juncture in my progress. The two bodies of work, his and mine, though opposite in many ways, served the same contextual purpose. In truth, our two bodies of work were complementary because their meaning was derived from the specific contexts and paradigms in which they flourished.

The crucial lesson derived from my conversation with Ron, one clarified by Harper Lee's protagonist Atticus Finch, was this: most of us filter others' actions through a contextual sieve woven to our standards, without consideration of their needs or reasoning. Until we take the time to think of what may be influencing others' decisions, to "climb into their skins" no one can ever fully and accurately evaluate what someone else has created.[3]

Sunday, August 25, 1966 - 2 pm

Not far from the parking area, several men, with the aid of a backhoe, had excavated an 18" deep oval of ground measuring 10' x 25'. The depression had been piled to the threshold with kindling and fire- wood, and Professor Fedora ignited the dry boughs with his Zippo. Crack! Fireworks of exploding wood and pine needles punctuated the afternoon, as bright white embers landed heavily on the depression's perimeter. Six cords

of stout oak splits were added slowly. The pit glowed with fluorescent red logs, thick as a blacksmith's forearm.

In preparation for the barbecue, black steel pipe had been laid across the trench and a 27' iron and pipe spit erected. Nearby, sitting atop milk cans filled to overflowing with 35 gallons of homemade basting sauce, were long, wood-handled floor mops, purchased for basting the gargantuan roast.

A shy man, his long neck protruding from his well- worn shirt, volunteered for the first shift at the spit. Two others joined him, providing weathered wood boxes for seating, Luckys and beer. The rest of us returned to our booths to complete business and await our turns with "Red" the ox.

I had met Jean around the potter's wheel on day one. Now, she and several others moved slowly from person to person, collecting names, addresses and media. At a recent meeting, it had been proposed that a list of craftspeople attending the event be compiled. The proposal had been approved. Data had to be gathered immediately, since craftspeople who sold out could be leaving.

Monday, August 26, 1966 - 1pm

"Need a smoke!" the potter, now with a pomade of clay in his hair and an ox-roast-soiled-and-sauced tee-shirt demanded of no one in particular.

"What do you smoke?" "Anything." "Hand me the mop," a short-necked bull of a man ordered. "I just mopped that side," said the Prof. **"Here's a butt."** "Needs more basting, she's a-burnin'." "It's supposed to char a bit." **"Not like that!" "Yeah, it is!"** "Bullshit!"

"Have a beer and calm down," slurred the young man with the drooping, Pancho Villa-like mustache. He was

wearing a battered cowboy hat festooned with recently-discovered turkey feathers and new work boots. The man-bull emptied the beer, crushed the can and tossed it.

"This is supposed to be fun," said the Professor "Enjoy yourselves."

The res had been tended, the spit turned, and the meat basted for 27

hours. Shifts of men and women volunteers had abandoned their displays on Saturday and their beds Saturday night to share stories, stiff drinks, grass and food. The ox was almost ready for his debut.

"Let's check it again," said the man-bull.

Professor Fedora pulled a handmade knife with a deer antler handle from his belt and skillfully trimmed a piece of ox.

"Done!"

"Oh yeah!"

"Call the troops!"

"Is everything out?" asked a woman I didn't remember seeing until now. With short auburn hair and particularly large sunglasses, she moved purposefully toward the serving tables.

"I think so," answered the weaver from Maryland.

"Serving spoons! We need serving spoons!" a high-pitched wisp of a man exclaimed. I looked his way, mumbling, "What's wrong with those big stainless spatulas we prepared the salads and sides with?"

He didn't hear me, or if he did, he ignored my comment and continued to search for spoons.

"We can serve with the spatulas we used to mix the salads," stated the auburn-sunglasses, definitively.

Within minutes, a line of new acquaintances, now friends, wound round the banked fire pit, preparing to break bread, share wine and pass salt.

Monday, August 29, 1966 - 4 pm "Damn that meat was good!"

"Is there any more bourbon?" I asked.

"Dick, pass him the bottle." "Hey! You! Kid! Stick with soda." **"Why?"**

"Because you've had enough." Ever since our shared rumble-seat ride to the von Trapp's place, the Prof had been keeping his eye on me.

"What should we do with the carcass?" asked the glass- blower.

"I want the head!" Peter barked. "What the hell for?"

"I'm going to bury it at my place and let time clean it. I think he broke his horn."

"Whose horn broke?" "The ox. Who'd you think? Any of us have horns?"

"It's yours. Take it," snapped the Prof, ending the budding horn debate.

The feast over, I finished loading the Galaxy. I'd been invited to stay in Vermont for a couple of days after the show. A new friend, made during a lull at the wholesale information meeting on Wednesday, explained that he and his girlfriend had purchased an old farmstead, where they raised chickens, vegetables and grass. They also brewed their own beer. My great-grandmother had, for as long as I could remember, brewed beer, wine and root beer in her basement, so the beer was no big deal. But I was hooked when they told me about the swimming hole on the property, where everyone went skinny-dipping. The beer would be the icing on the cake.

I spent as much time as I could with my Vermont friends. Many of their neighbors were also craftspeople. I asked as many questions concerning lifestyle and income as I thought acceptable. Days, I helped with the harvest, canning, sharing meals and skinny-dipping. Evenings, when everyone else had retired, I pored through my friends' copy of Scott Nearing's recently released *The Conscience of a Radical*. (Note to self: go to Abe Sherman's place —Baltimore's best bookstore— and buy a copy of Nearing ASAP.)

Nearing wrote that the roadblocks to a good life were ignorance, indifference and inertia:

"most universal of all the obstacles to human advancement and social improvement is the failure of most human beings to play a rational, energetic and conscious part in the direction of their own lives and of the social groups to which they belong. We attribute this failure to ignorance (not understanding or knowing); to indifference (not caring sufficiently to translate discomfort into

action), and [to] inertia (continuing in the established ruts of tradition, custom and habit)." [4]

I spent the next several weeks researching the acronyms of various university names, and planning how to broach the subject of art school with my parents. Dad was attending an apparel show in New York City. His company had rented a suite of rooms, and I determined he needed help setting up his booth. After all, lugging a dozen heavy sample bags and setting up a booth was no job for a 42-year-old man!

On the way to New York, I cautiously brought up the issue of art school. I quoted Scott Nearing. My father listened, unspeaking, allowing me to complete my thoughts. He drove in silence for the remainder of the trip, quietly smoking.

We set up the display and headed out to eat, stopping first at a small bookstore.

Dad extracted a Tennyson anthology. Opening the book to Ulysses, he handed it to me, asking me to read the lines of the poem aloud.

"it little profits that an idle king by this still hearth, among these barren crags...."

Shit! I could see a "Dad lesson" coming. Sensing my lack of enthusiasm, he said, "Skip to the end. Begin at the capital T."

"t'is not too late to seek a newer world. push off, and sitting well in order smite the sounding furrows; for my purpose holds to sail beyond the sunset, and the baths of all the western stars, until I die. it may be that the gulfs will wash us down:

it may be we shall touch the happy isles, and see the great Achilles, whom we knew. tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho' We are not now that strength which in old days moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are; one equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate, but strong in will to strive, to seek, to and, and not to yield."

I held out the book. My father didn't move.

He smiled gently. "Take it from me Dave, life will drop a lot of obstacles in your path. The road is rarely straight. But, if you're serious about this craft thing, memorize those last sentences."

1. The lecturer noted that the business model for craft shop owners and fair exhibitors was composed of three overlapping components: family, the business owner and the needs of the business. The family of the shop owner or craftsperson (the entire family, including those that do not participate in the business), generally placed priority on family stability and welfare, and to some extent, income. The owners were interested in being able to spend their days at home or nearby, working, but because they were also business owners, that desire was often mediated by the requirements of the business and its financial success. The needs of running this type of business required a method to balance the needs of family, with the practical necessities of the business.

2. In 1966, the craft event at Stowe consumed an estimated 5,000 watts of electricity for the facility's lighting. Forty of those watts went to powering a single light bulb in an exhibitor booth; it was the only booth with lighting. There was no air conditioning, not even fans, and only one coffee urn. In 2015, a national craft show in an East Coast convention center consumed an estimated 1,000,000 watts of electricity to fulfill facility electrical requirements each day. Fully one-third of the wattage was devoted to lighting the 200 exhibitor booths.

3. Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1960), p. 30.

4. Scott Nearing, *The Conscience of a Radical* (Harborside, ME: Social Science Institute, 1965), p. 61.