



*Aerial view of Iron City Fishing Club on Georgian Bay.*

## Georgian Bay To Las Vegas

I had been friends with the Macfarlanes for as long as I could remember. Like all of the families in camp, they had been coming to Iron City nearly every summer for their entire lives. Liz Macfarlane was my age. She was smart and attractive and I had always been captivated by her personality. We had become pretty good friends over the years and occasionally our friendship would cross a line and try to be something more. Invariably though, for one reason or another, we would return to our friendship which was generally solid and comfortable.

At the time, Liz lived in Burlington, Vermont, which wasn't that far from Stowe. We visited each other from time to time, but she was generally involved in a relationship when I was available and vice versa, so our intersections were quite often platonic. She was nevertheless a soulmate.

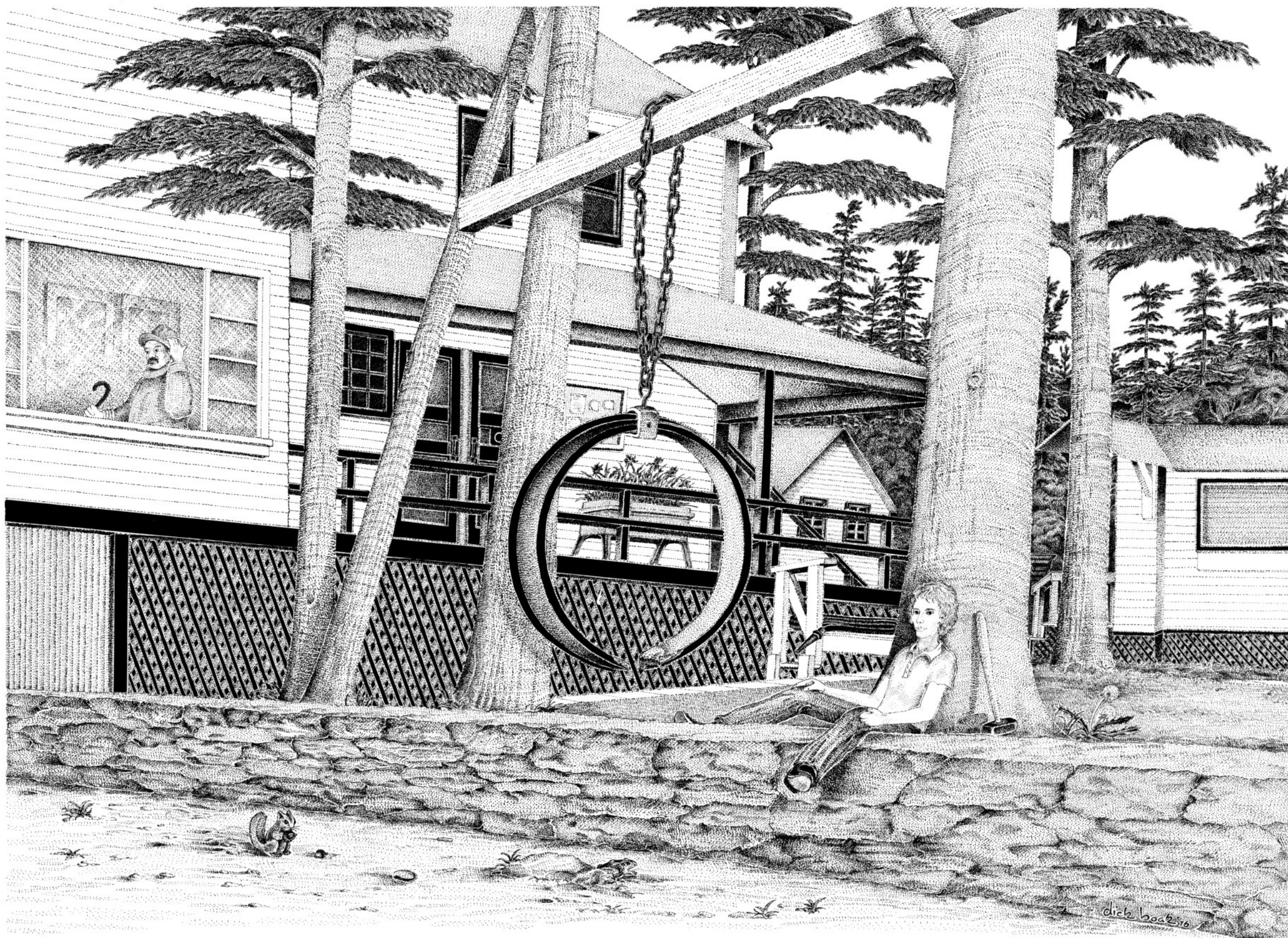
Liz was at Iron City when I arrived. She had planned a trip out west for several months and I was entertaining the idea of going with her part way. I had sold quite a few prints, plus a number of original drawings of the local surroundings, so my finances were in better shape. After nearly two weeks in Iron City, we left together in Liz's car heading north along the top edge of Georgian Bay toward Sudbury. We racked up as many miles as possible by day and camped by night, edging our way along the North Bay to Sault Saint Marie, then up and over the endless expanse of Lake Superior. We planned to reenter the United States just below Thunder Bay.

As we approached the border, we were greeted by a rather large, overly-buxom Customs agent in a sour mood. Her grey uniform perfectly matched the color

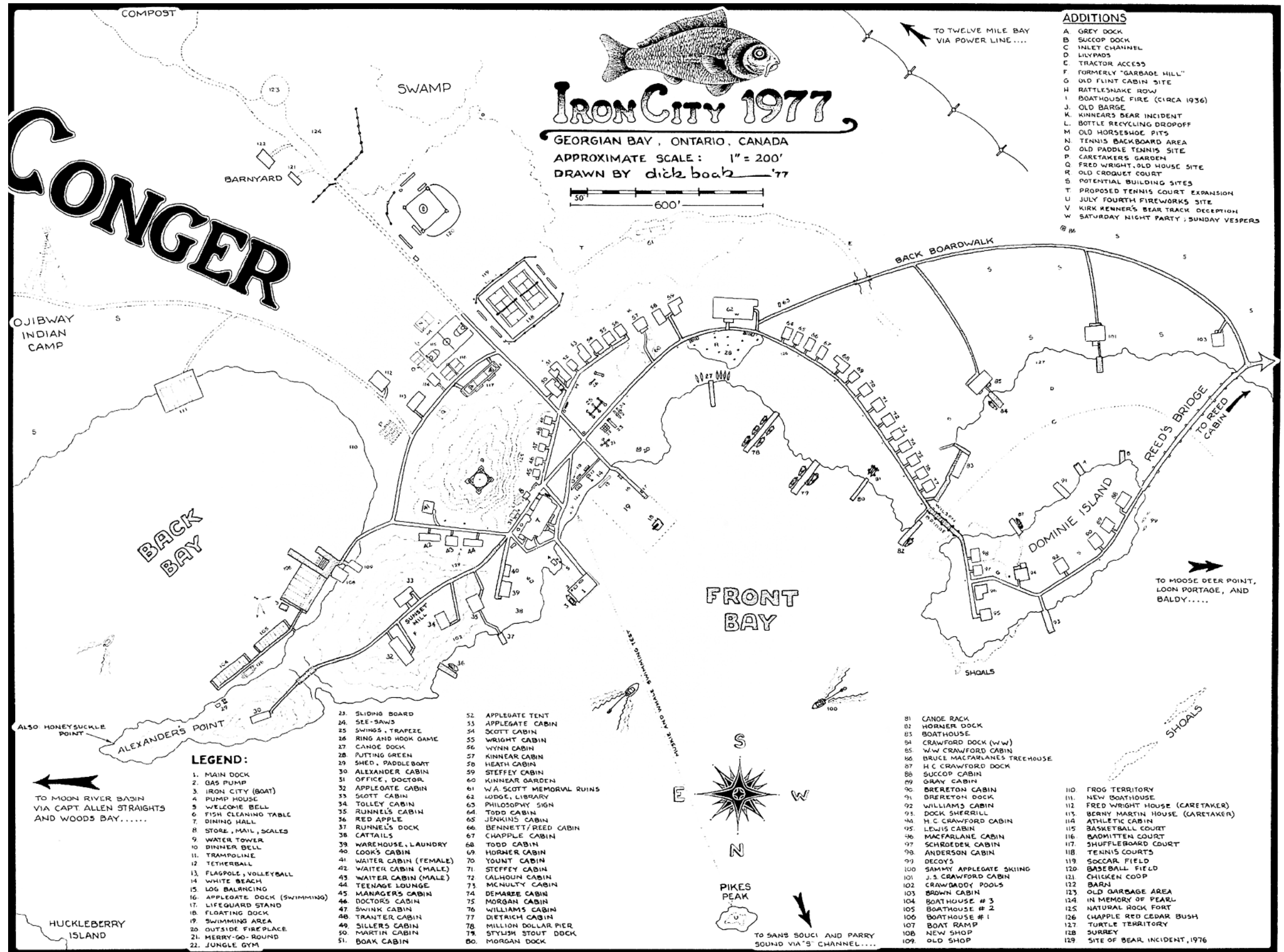


*The West Wind Bends The Pine, Pen & Ink, 1975*





*Iron City Bell, Pen & Ink. 1976*



Map for Iron City Fishing Club, Pen & Ink, 1977





Departing Iron City with Liz, 1976

of her hair, skin and eyes.

The interior of our car was a mishmash of dishoveled sleeping bags, tent stakes, food wrappers, wrinkled clothes, sketchbooks and roadmaps. She instructed me to open the door and get out of the car, which I promptly did, after which she knelt down for a close inspection of the rug on the passenger side of the car. Miraculously, she emerged instantaneously with a tiny seed pinched between her thumb and forefinger.

"This looks like a marijuana seed to me!" she boldly blurted. Liz was ushered out of the car. We were informed that our vehicle would be impounded and that a group of Customs officials would be searching the contents thoroughly. I was assigned to a male agent who led me to a toiletless bathroom stall where I was prompted to remove my garments one by one and hand them out to the agent for his scrutiny: pants, shirt, socks, shoes. When I got down to my skivvies, I figured it might be time to come clean with the agent. I did in fact have a very small quantity of pot in a film canister

and a tiny pipe, both tucked away in the front flap of my Fruit Of The Looms.

Busted! "Ya got anything else?" he threatened. If I did have anything else, it seemed it might be a good idea to let him know right then and there, but the fortunate fact was, I didn't.

Liz made it through a similarly invasive inspection with our unpleasant female agent. Eventually, the team that was tearing the car apart came inside holding a small prescription bottle of unidentified pills from deep within Liz's suitcase. She explained that they were just Tylenols, Benedryls, lozenges and aspirins, and that was the truth. Our credibility, however, had been tainted.

After three hours of suspicion, interrogation and processing, a fee of three hundred and ten U.S. dollars was extracted as payment in full for my indiscretion. Our impounded automobile was eventually released and our conviction documents were permanently sealed. Off we sputtered, proud citizens, heading south toward Duluth.

There was a beautiful campground near Silver Bay along the tall western cliffs of Lake Superior. There we reestablished our emotional bearings, drank a bottle of wine, went swimming, and treated ourselves to a good meal.

The next morning we headed west to the small strip mining town of Hibbing, Minnesota, the home of Robert Zimmerman (aka Bob Dylan). I wanted to pay tribute to Dylan and see if I could discover any local clues that might unlock some of the mystery. We stopped at a drugstore on Main Street and asked whether anyone knew where the legendary folksinger had grown up.

"Sure, Zimmerman's place." and they pointed us over a few blocks to an address in a small residential area. The house was typical and nondescript, painted lime green with a side door that entered a screened in porch. I sat on the curbstone next to a fire hydrant with Liz and played *Love Minus Zero No Limit* and *It's All Over Now Baby Blue* with my autoharp and harmonica. That was sufficient.

We headed northwest to Fargo, then to Bismarck and Billings before veering south into the grandeur of Yellowstone, the Grand Tetons and Jackson Hole. With our sights set on Denver, we drove south to Steamboat Springs where for some odd reason, I bought myself a Stetson hat that fit perfectly, but

didn't really suit me.

My cousin Carol lived in Denver with her family. Carol knew Liz very well from Canada. She provided a calm and relaxing oasis for us, then she drove us up to the gorge of the Green River where we rafted in the sun and the furious rapids. Several days later, we stood atop the lateral arch of the Hoover Dam with the neon lights of Las Vegas beckoning. There, I gambled for the first time in my life, losing \$14 in the slots next to an endless row of pathetic overweight women depositing their hard-earned sustenance into the bottomless one-armed bandits. We said our goodbyes at the Las Vegas airport. Liz continued driving west to California and I boarded a plane to Detroit. There, sporting my new Stetson like a rhinestone cowboy, I boarded a bus for Ann Arbor where my cousin JC was firmly located. After leaving the MC5, he had done a successful stint as one of the top DJs for WKNR in Detroit, but his real passion was the music. His house had become the communal headquarters of his latest endeavor, *The*

### Song For One Who Wishes To Remain Anonymous

the first time i stood before you i was no more than a boy  
my destiny evaded you i was sensitive and coy  
in fear of my mortality in fear i fled the womb  
and i hung my pride in effigy inside your lover's room  
yes i wanted to possess you  
among the other things that i planned  
but you were far beyond my ragged reach with a mirror  
in your hand

the coincidence of confidence that placed me in your way  
is crystalized and clarified and magnetized each day  
your eyes reflect so honestly the images you see  
disguised in all of my modesty i seek your mystery  
impressed with all of your fantasies i tried to understand  
as you sat right there in front of me with a prism  
in your hand

impressed with your intensity i sacrificed my shield  
impressed with my creativity you invited me to yield  
our skin is what contains us and keeps us from being one  
though slowly all the clothes of our desires came undone  
infinity is what sets us free as resistance takes the stand  
weren't you lying there so innocently with my trials  
in your hand

(chorus)  
and i've witnessed the mountains of granite and gold  
wash down to the beaches of sand  
you've watched the cold winds and the winter ice melt  
as the sun lends it's warmth unto the land  
now shouldn't we also exist this way \*  
isn't it instinctually planned

\* now shouldn't we also resist this way (after 2nd verse)  
\* now shouldn't we also persist in this way (after 3rd verse)



## Three Observations

1.

After you leave  
I have to pull all your long gold strands  
of knarled hair  
from my brush, one by one.  
This reminds me of the time  
you left three copper pennies  
stuck to bubble gum  
in my ashtray.  
Do you leave this much gold everywhere you go ?

When you left  
I walked into my bathroom  
picked up my hair brush of black polyethylene  
and smiled.  
It's nice of you to leave such delicate parts of your body  
above my sink.  
I know you won't be angry  
if I throw them into my garbage  
with the peach pits  
and banana peels.

Before you arrive  
I will retrieve seven long gold strands of your hair.  
I will tie one around my injured finger like a ring  
so it will heal quicker,  
then I will take the remaining six  
and string them patiently on my broken guitar  
and sing you this poem.

2.

Remember  
when you stooped at the edge of my bed  
with the clicking toenail clippers  
and you shot them off in all directions  
like ricocheting moon-shaped missiles.

Three days after you left  
I watched a gigantic ant  
cart away the tiny sliver from your little toe.  
It was a burden for him  
pulling it through the crack in the baseboards.

I watched him like a missionary  
hovering in a self-righteous helicopter  
over a tribe of restless African natives  
dancing.

I'm sure the ant  
laid his offering before his queen  
like a huge ivory elephant tusk  
or an aborigine boomerang  
or a sword blade of white steel.

Think once  
of how much  
you have to give.

3.

tediously  
I scraped the traces of lipstick  
that you left on my coffee cup  
and the fleshy filters of thirty five menthol cigarette butts  
that lay like innocent cadavers in various ashtray coffins  
and waste basket mausoleums  
and using a few strands of hair  
that you left in my comb  
I made a tiny paint brush  
and painted your face in red lipstick pigment  
on my left thumbnail.  
As I buried the image under a thick coat of fingernail polish  
that you left behind  
I titled it: "Lipstick Insomnia (part one)"  
and woke up.



*Liz Over Taurus, Pen & Ink, 1974*



*Mojo Boogie Band*. There were amps, drums, guitars and stage equipment everywhere and a healthy hoard of band-related partiers. I stayed for two days – long enough to hear JC's band perform their hard-edged Detroit blues at a local club, have my precious short-lived Stetson stolen from the hat rack, and temporarily bond with my charismatic cousin. I hitchhiked back to Detroit where I boarded a plane for Bethlehem. There I picked up my dented Mustang and rushed back to Stowe in time for the pre-school summer trek.

Photo by John Nielsen



Early stages of the Ten Foot Cube model assembly. 1976

## Stowe (Part II)

My second year of teaching came with much greater freedom to fashion courses to my liking. I had always been interested in architecture and wanted to offer a tangible course in the effective use of space. Each of my students was asked to design a ten foot cubicle living space. Every element of the space was to have multiple purposes. After their draftings were complete, we took all the ideas and combined them into a final composite of the best ideas, then a model was initiated to work out any lingering technical problems. Upon completion of the model, we had hoped to construct the full scale design up on the hillside with two-by-fours and plywood, but the cash ran out.

I had been studying animation and had always wanted to try it myself, so I offered a course. We went to Burlington as a class, bought a decent movie camera with single frame capability, fabricated a vertical floor-to-ceiling camera mount, and laid out a

### *The Dancer*

*a dancer sits alone backstage – she's lost her age  
she's waiting for a cue  
in the second line she hears here note – she starts to float  
she throws her soul at you*

*my arms are loose like liquid knives  
and like the breeze she sighs – and bends her knees  
a life of conscious motion flows within her wings  
in everything she's free*

*now she's dancing out in the open air – without a care  
her flowing hair – it flies  
and even though you sit out there – she is unaware  
her body never lies*

*(chorus)  
but the the music throws my voice away – what can i say  
the dancer says it all  
and the music needs no words today – she makes her play  
she beckons to my call*

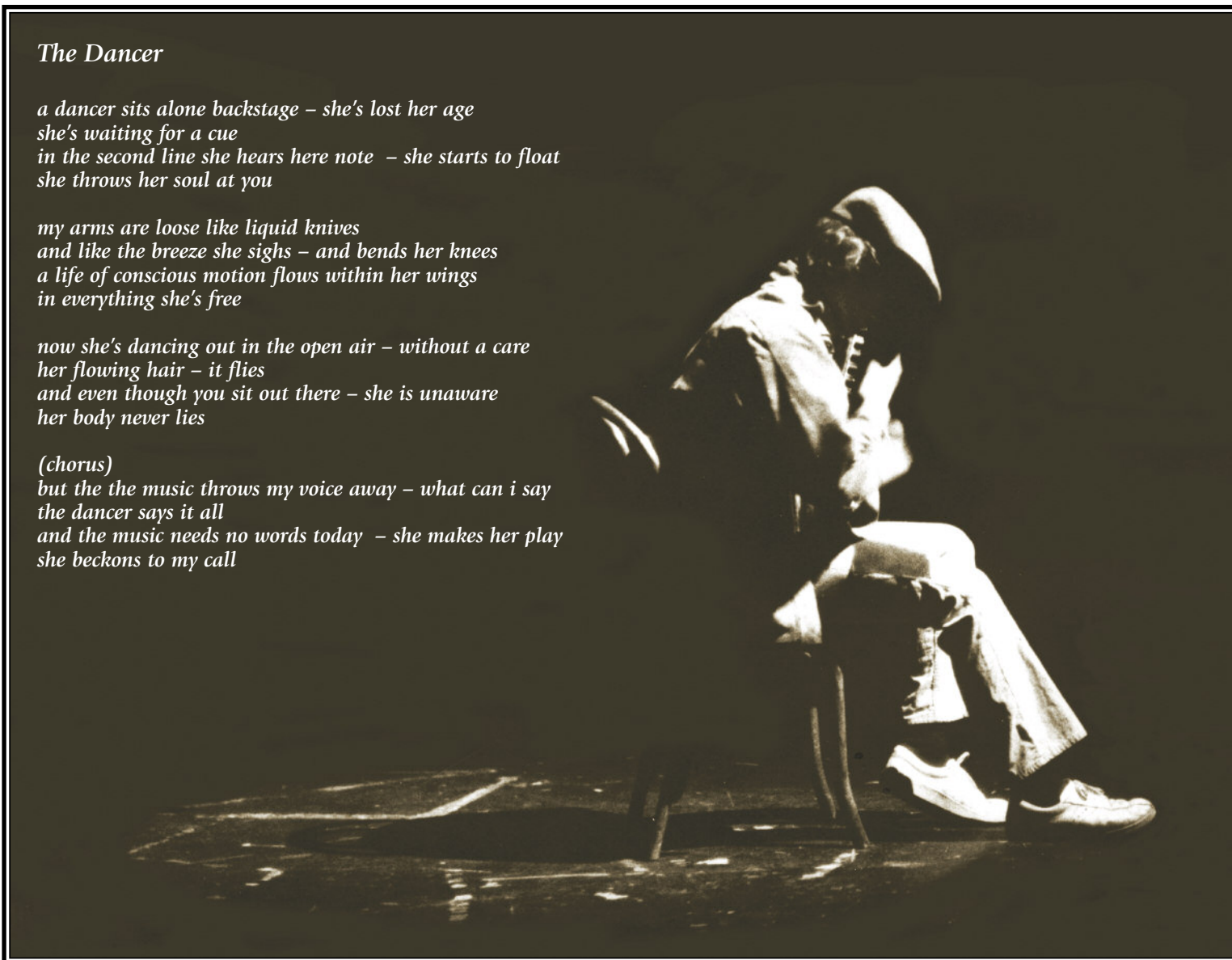


Photo by John Nielsen

Live performance of "The Dancer" in collaboration with Eugenia Haney. Stowe, 1976

simple animation table that enabled continuous backgrounds. We worked primarily with colored paper and produced a fifteen minute 35mm animated film complete with a somewhat synchronized sound track. The final result had plenty of obvious technical errors, but it was an enlightening and unforgettable experience for all of us.

Eugenia Haney taught modern dance with a fervor and commitment that I had not seen in many other instructors. We were good friends. I was writing and performing a lot of songs informally on the autoharp during my time at Stowe and Eugenia invited me to compose a piece that she in turn would choreograph. I took this very seriously and

wrote *The Dancer*, a song that attempted to describe the dance and the dancer in literal and emotional terms. Eugenia liked the lyrics enough to include my performance on stage as a integral part of the dance. It was a special experience for me.

I was never much of a skier. This was unfortunate given that I was living in one of the ski capitals of the world. When school opened, one of the slopes was offering free season lift passes to the Stowe faculty and I willingly snatched one up. I didn't have my own skis, but there were many extra pairs at the school. One afternoon after classes had concluded, I decided to head over to the mountain and try my luck. I had a great run, which bolstered my confidence enough to return again to the mountain





*Driftwood Visions, Pen & Ink, 1973*

several days later. My classes finished later than expected that day and I knew I'd have to hurry to get there before the lifts closed. I threw on a lightweight parka, grabbed a pair of skis and sped over to the slope. I was the last person onto the chair lift before they closed it down for the night.

As I approached the top, I saw three ski instructors zig-zag underneath me as they began their final sweep of the mountain. This was slightly disconcerting, as it was getting dark and cold. Apparently, they didn't know I was behind them.

When I reached the very top, the lift jerked to a stop before I had a good opportunity to jump off. It was only about a five foot drop, so I simply edged my way off the lift, landing gently in the snow. It was

nearly dark at this point and getting colder by the minute, but I trusted that the exertion from skiing would warm me up quickly. I started down a gradual slope, but by mistake I turned left where I was supposed to turn right, ending up on the most difficult and treacherous incline of all, the notorious *Nose Dive*.

I was moving too fast. I lost my balance and fell, sliding to a stop, but one of my borrowed skis had come loose and the safety strap was not attached. I watched in horror as that single ski slipped and darted like lightning toward the bottom.

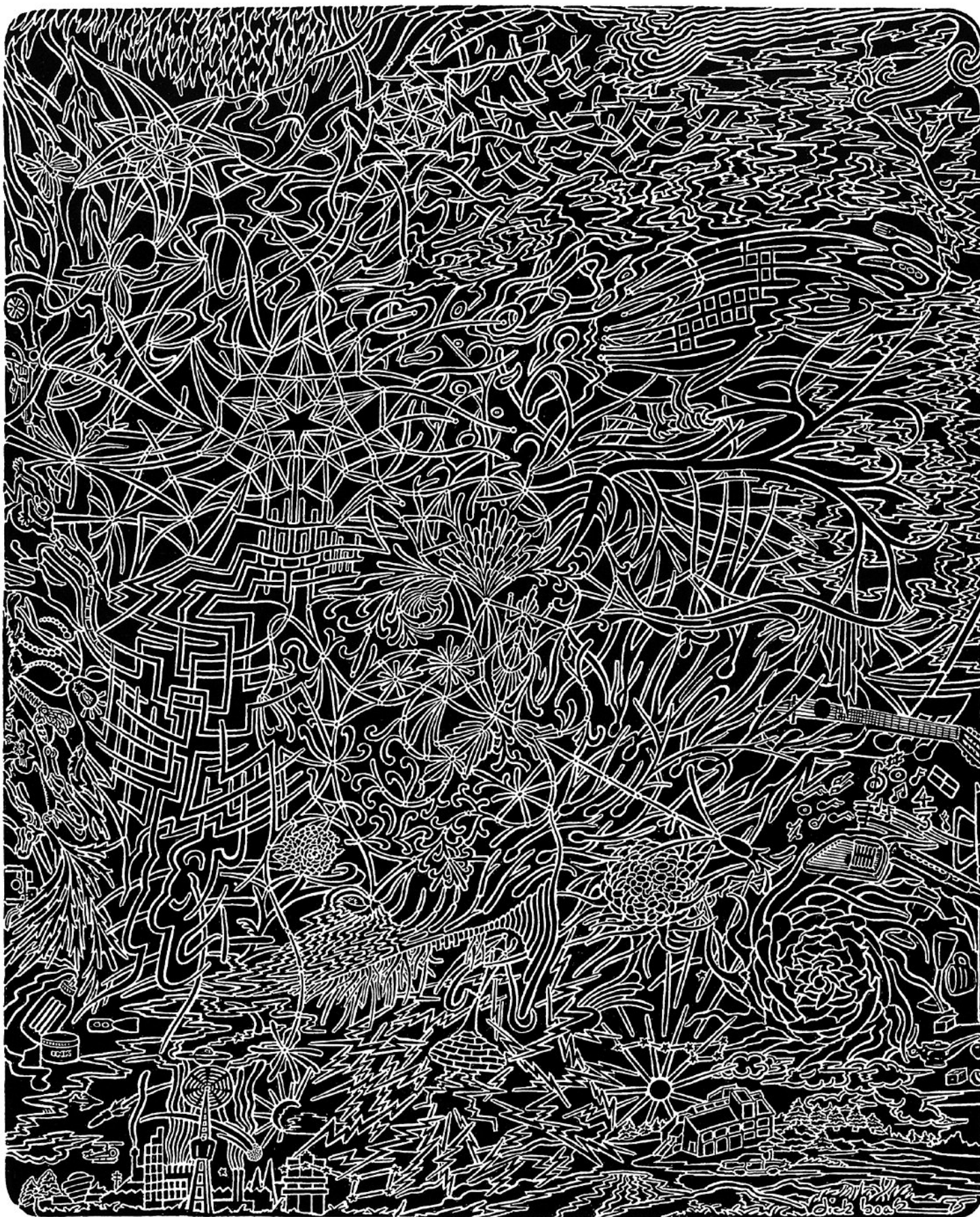
I was stuck a mile up the mountain in the dark freezing cold with inadequate clothing and one useless ski. I had no choice but to hike down on

foot. I picked a route that was as tightly packed and direct as possible. Forty minutes later, I made it to the parking lot where my lone car awaited. The heater helped to thaw me back to some semblance of safety and comfort, though I suffered some nominal frostbite. This experience eradicated any lingering desire to ski. The next day I relinquished my season pass to an appreciative student.

As Thanksgiving approached, I worked hard on a one man show at the tiny Moscow Art Gallery just west of town. Surprisingly, this little multimedia happening drew more than two hundred people on opening night and the local newspaper gave me a kind review.

For fear of repeating my previous year's winter





*Stowe Mirage, Pen & Ink, 1975*

## Life work of local artist to highlight open house

In an attempt to put the Moscow Art Gallery back on the map, there will be an Exhibition entitled "Approximations of Impossibilities" by Dick Boak. This exhibit includes more than 100 drawings and assorted light sculptures, woodworkings, and multi-media hand made objects.

Although this exhibit is open to the public now through December, it may be of special interest to attend the climax of the exhibition, which will take place on Friday night, Nov. 21st, featuring live and recorded music, an animated film, free food and drink, an Extremely Artistic Atmosphere and The Cumulative Vibrations of many, many important people, hopefully you.

The Moscow Art Gallery is located one mile south of Stowe off Route 100 on the Moscow Road. For further information call Dick at 253-4861.

trek catastrophe, I planned a much gentler hike on Vermont's picturesque Green Mountain Trail northeast of Rutland. This was still physically challenging, but the students who signed up appreciated the fact that they wouldn't be risking their necks to save my life this time around.

## Kentucky

The school was experimenting with trimesters instead of semesters and the faculty was asked to plan hands-on Non-Resident Terms away from the confines of the school. Weed and Sandy, Marty and Duane, Ike and Nancy, their cumulative offspring, plus several other friends from Morningstar Ranch, had moved to "God's Land" in southern Kentucky. This area was rural enough that there was no risk of neighbor uprisings as had occurred in California. I was very curious about this last ditch effort at communal living and planned a course around my desire to visit. Seven of the more bohemian students signed up, but I became increasingly worried that they were expecting me to join them in a month of unruly partying. After all of our gear was fully tied atop the luggage rack of the school station wagon, I sat them all down for a very serious pre-departure lecture about the rules. I explained to them that I didn't really care what they did as long as they didn't do it in front of me. I asked for their cooperation in not jeopardizing my necessary and important role as instructor and authoritarian. They seemed to understand the seriousness of my little pep talk. We all hopped in the car and headed out of town.

Less than five miles into our journey, I heard giggles coming from the back seat, then came the pungent





*Noel's log cabin in Murphy's Holler, Kettle Creek, Kentucky.*

billowing of pot smoke. One of them had popped the tab on a can of Bud. I stopped the car.

John Nielsen, who I must admit was often genuinely funny, explained that they were going to party no matter what I did or said. I could relax and accept it or drive them all down to the police station. They didn't care.

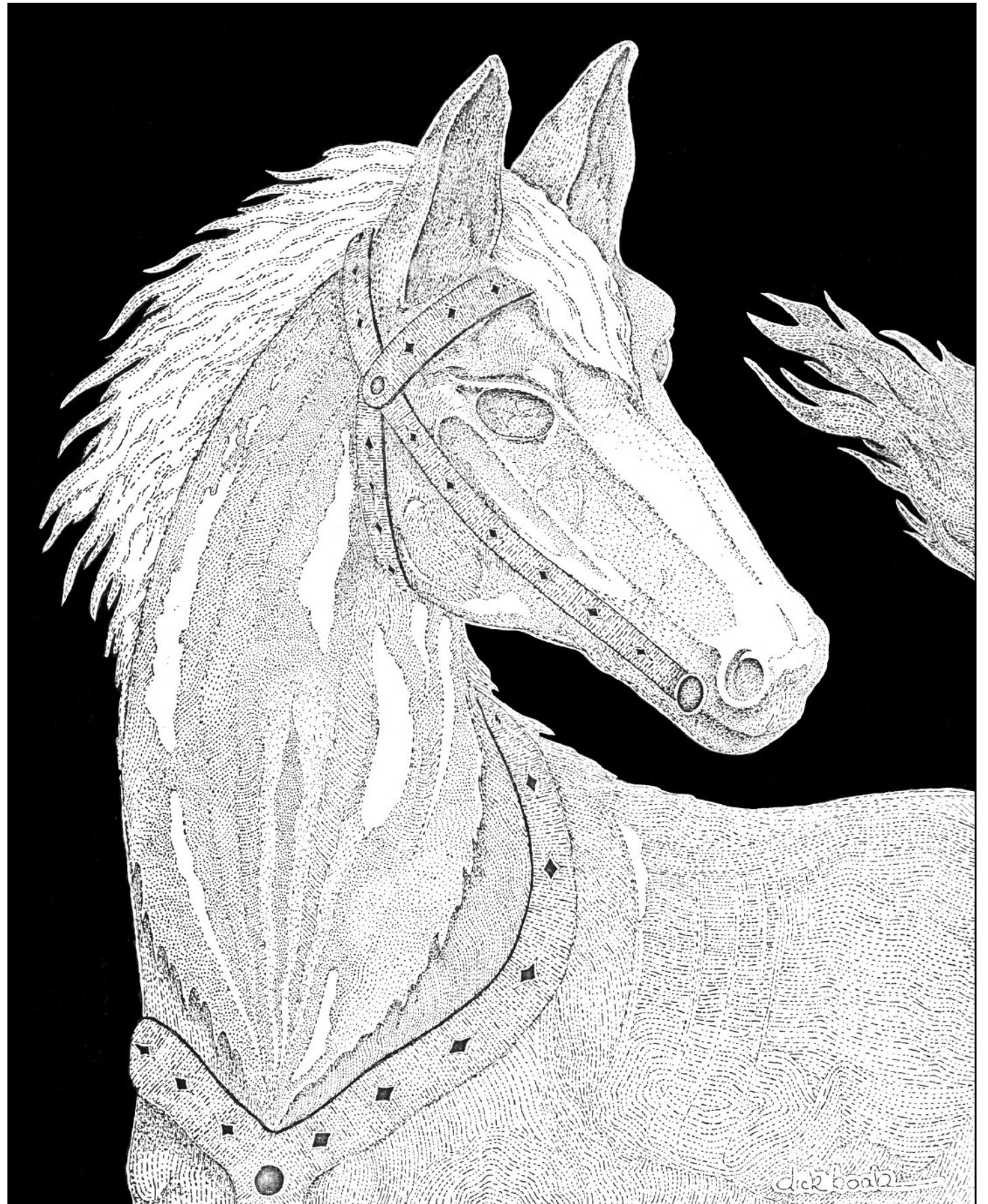
Regardless, they swore that they would maintain full confidentiality and never implicate me as encouraging or allowing them to indulge. They suggested that I get on with the driving.

I told them I wouldn't drive an inch if there was any pot smoking in the car. For several moments there was an uneasy Mexican standoff. Then by some stroke of luck, they bought into my reasoning and struck a compromise.

With slight trepidation about what the next several weeks might bring, we headed down the Interstate toward Kentucky. To get to the remote property in the tiny town of Kettle Creek, we had to cross the Cumberland River Ferry.

When we arrived at the land, things seemed calmer and more workable. Noel and Anne, who had owned the property prior to deeding it to God, had just had their first child. They were living in town for the sake of the baby and had agreed to let us use their freshly-built cabin for the month in exchange for some cash and some general improvements. This included completing some rough log construction, the fabrication of some interior furnishings, and the stockpiling of several cords of firewood.

We all kept extensive journals and had intense discussions about life and school in the candlelit evenings by the potbelly stove. I was moderately successful in limiting their natural urges toward escapism. The biggest challenge



*Platinum Horse, Pen & Ink, 1976*





*The Stowe School Kentucky NRT group. Clockwise from top: fearless leader, Andrè George, Jeanne Werle, Bob Harris, Maurice Reed and Steve Blair.*

was controlling the amount and quality of the food we were eating. Left to their own devices, this group would have returned to the school in a state of thorough obesity, fattened by a constant onslaught of hot dogs, potato chips and beef jerky. They nearly mutinied during my crusade to feed them granola bars, lentils and collard greens.

We survived tornado warnings, unseasonal cold weather and torrential rains. The downpour was so inundating that for several days we were forced to leave our car by the road and ford the creek to get to



*With Nancy Eichenlaub in Kettle Creek.*

our cabin. The floods turned that gurgling trickle into a horrifying chest-high cascade that nearly swept a pair of resident mothers away – let alone their babies, hoisted head high.

Our adventures in Kentucky soon came to an end. To the horror of my brother Bill and his wife Jody, we descended upon their home in Indianapolis completely waterlogged, filthy and possibly worm-ridden. There we decompressed, showered, shaved and enjoyed a luxurious overnight before tackling the long drive back to Stowe. As we departed, Jody donned the disinfectant in a concerned yet futile effort to sterilize her beautiful home.

## The Breaking Point

Back in Stowe, I started to slip into a pre-winter depression. I had very little privacy in my dormitory apartment. Living in the same space with a hundred students could be emotionally and physically draining. My weekends were not being used for rest. I had little to no time to explore my own artwork. My courses were extremely demanding. In proportion to the amount of energy I was expending, I felt under-appreciated and under-paid.

One of my cronies was in the process of breaking up with his girlfriend, who was also my good friend. While attempting to see her through her difficult transition, I became emotionally entangled. My interference backfired and put a serious strain on the triangularity of our relationship. As autumn surrendered to the impending winter, my loneliness seemed to deepen with each successive layer of snow that blanketed the valley, but I was energized and outgoing, not only with my fellow faculty members, but also with many of the more motivated students. Between them, I suppose they helped me to fill the void.

Jodi was certainly one of the most engaging students at the school. She was smart, creative, mature, musical and full of joy. Though we teased each other openly, we managed, at least for the first half of the school year, to keep a respectable physical

## The Cumberland River Ferry

the water strider,  
unaware of the liquid force beneath him,  
resists the current when he wishes to remain  
and rests...  
when he wants to go.

## Observations From A Dark Window

Lee is raking leaves below the window.  
If he looked up he would see black glass.  
He doesn't know anyone is watching.  
Every now and then he finds a piece of useful trash  
discarded from above like the leaves,  
and carrying it over to the step,  
he brushes it off carefully,  
scrapes away tiny chunks of encrusted dirt with his  
thumbnail,  
wipes it off on his shirt tail,  
then sets it in a pile on top of his coat.  
He just found a white plastic cylinder.  
It obviously does not belong in a pile of leaves.  
His face says he does not know what it could be used for.  
There is probably a small drawer in his basement  
overflowing with items like these.

## Refrigerator Vision 3:00 AM

*Wonders Of Modern Science: Part I (delirium)*

My refrigerator has a tiny thermostatic mind of its own  
implanted surgically on some assembly line in Minneapolis  
by a Maytag man in a khaki uniform.  
Yesterday I set the coolness control to number six.  
This means that whenever the temperature varies  
even half a degree  
a tiny Sears transistor has to wake up,  
defrost its code number,  
jump over to the motor switch,  
click it on,  
yawn,  
and return to its sealed circuit  
while some neon green ammonia solution  
flows tirelessly through a thousand invisible tubes  
grabbing up little particles of flagrant heat  
and spewing them carelessly on my carpet.

How thoughtless.

And after five minutes or so  
when the temperature returns to normal  
the whole process has to repeat itself in reverse.  
The poor transistor never rests  
and the motor makes a noise  
like a broken dental drill.

At night  
when I dream  
my cavities rebel by escaping through my parted lips  
at the peak of a snore  
to short circuit the refrigerator plug  
with smuggled saliva.

All this for an open pack of Green Giant Frozen Giblet Corn,  
two leaky polyethylene icetrays,  
and a moldy grapefruit.



## Thorns Of Christ

treading in my pagan boots  
on whitewashed rocks and knarled roots  
I can hear red cardinals sing like flutes  
confessing to the stream

water rushes like a preacher  
it magnifies each liquid feature  
nourishing each plant and creature  
thriving from the stream

I scaled the ivy coated wall  
baptized by the waterfall  
rock to rock that satin sermon  
calls me to the stream

the path was dark and thinly iced  
as razor steeples neatly sliced  
my skin with poisoned thorns of christ  
betraying near the stream

the mantis prayed as my hands bled  
the broken thorns oozed scars of red  
and crouching down in pain I fed  
my blood into the stream

so when you hear the serpent hiss  
disguised as natures subtle kiss  
some lesson could be learned from this  
find it at the stream

## Letter To A Friend Potentially Lost

You, my friend, jealous martyred moping lover . . .  
I wish I could at least help you to uncover  
the onioned layers of this unsubtle childish reality  
that you have managed, in your blind hypocrisy,  
to hide; and your motivations with this girl  
seem like an oyster, a piece of sand, and a pearl.  
Enclosed, spat out, abandoned, and reclaimed . . .  
as if desires and weaknesses could all be renamed.  
It is selfish and cruel "to call an ax, a spade"  
when all you want is to have your body laid  
between two white sheets - playing hide and seek,  
then immediately you fall asleep.  
Sullen and slick like some bird of prey  
you spit your cherry seeds away.  
Turn to me and tell me you enjoy this taste,  
that all your empty spaces have been replaced,  
and I will tell you that I love her too . . .  
unselfishly, in spite of you.

And if this poem would mark the end of that love  
I would not remove my memories like a glove.  
I will save my thoughts like precious shriveled seeds  
and plant them as the satisfaction of my needs  
as if to nourish and observe, to prune and care  
for the fragrant remnants of this affair.

I suppose, I will look you directly in the eyes.  
Your avoidance will betray any personal lies,  
and perhaps in a year these scars will heal  
as you dive into some new ordeal.  
Until then let this stand as my message from within:  
to incorporate, change, and grow from what you have been,  
that this irrationality and lack of reason might end  
leaving you with what you had at first . . . .  
a friend.

distance. But as the winter grew colder and darker, we began to acknowledge our mutual affection. Soon we fell into a deeper relationship – a good relationship – one that we succeeded, at least for a time, in keeping secret.

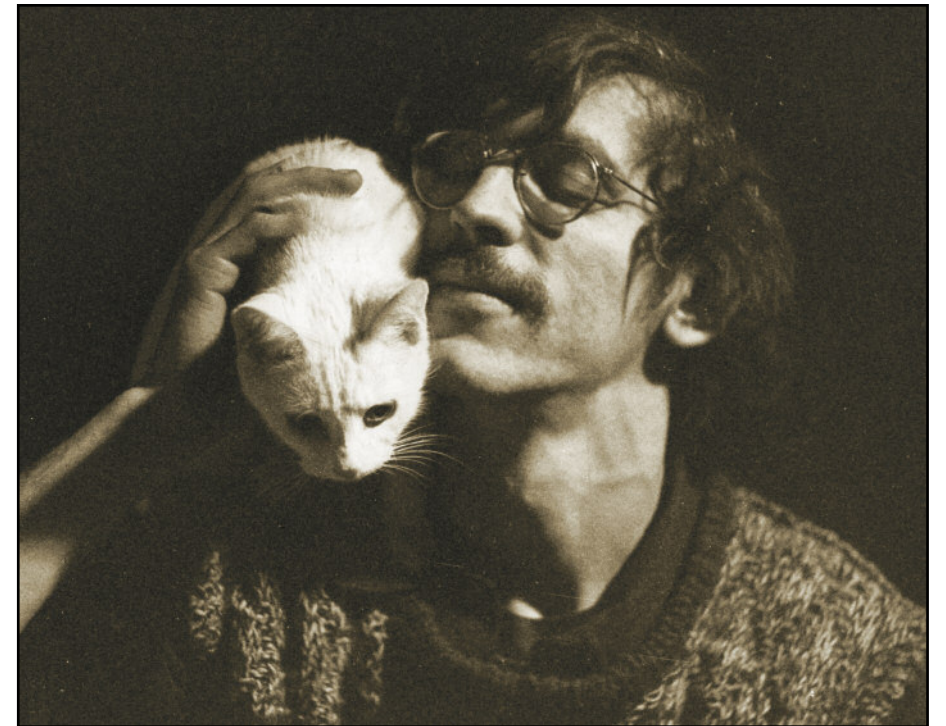
Truth that is imprisoned typically finds a way to escape, especially within the walls of such a tight community. I wasn't that scared about losing my job. I did however fear the guilt and shame that would accompany the eventuality of being discovered. The bigger paradox was that the school as a whole had been focused on honesty. And what about Jodi's well being? Something had to give. Eventually, I came away knowing what had to be done.

One morning I went to the school offices to talk with Tino, the headmaster, with the intent of telling him the truth. Instead I found him in need of assistance. His dog Layla had gotten into a tussle outside with a porcupine and Layla had gotten the worst of it. The dog's face and nose were pierced with more than a dozen quills.

Tino asked me to hold the dog steady while he tried to remove the quills with a pair of pliers. We struggled with Layla for the better part of twenty-five minutes, but we were completely unsuccessful. Tino and I looked at each other with futility and frustration. He made an intelligent choice to relinquish Layla to the more humane care of the local veterinarian, where the quills could be removed under anesthesia.

For some reason, I found this experience with Tino and Layla to be symbolic of my personal dilemma. I saw Layla as the school and myself as the quills, and I realized that a similar extraction might be necessary and painful. The easiest anesthesia from my vantage point was honesty.

The next day was March 15th – the Ides of March. In a moment of confidence and resolve, I explained my situation in a short but emotional emergency faculty meeting. I offered my resignation. It was accepted with a sense of sadness and failure on both sides. I packed my essentials and moved to Dan and Mary Batcheldor's log cabin in Moscow, not far from the parcel of land where Buckminster Fuller had spoken. I needed a place to decompress and figure out how to recover and get back on track.



*With Tupelo. 1976*

## Fingernails

*("He leaves behind opinions on his fingernails.....")*

if...  
you find  
a dirty moon-shaped  
fingernail  
lying blatantly  
on the formica surface  
of the average  
one-dimensional  
boomerang-universe-type  
howard johnson's  
quality restaurant table  
then please don't be alarmed  
or perplexed or disgusted  
it was not placed there  
by the snickering waitress  
or the demented busboy  
or the cheezy cashier  
perhaps it was overlooked  
by everyone as  
everyone else sat  
on itching rearends  
throbbing fat businessmen  
skinny nervous secretaries  
squirming bug-eyed tourists  
screaming kiddie parades  
five minute fuel stops  
turn into one hour catas-  
trophies  
and gritting teeth  
chew digital symmetry  
into the dirty  
moon-shaped  
fingernail  
you find  
if...





## Exile In Moscow

Dan and Mary had built themselves a cabin. It was rustic but substantial. There were a lot of finishing touches needed and I was offered lodging in exchange for chopping firewood, constructing shelves and bookcases, and occasional babysitting for their young son Jed.

Jodi came to visit me there intermittently, but this was an uneasy arrangement for Dan and Mary, Jodi, and the school. So I immersed myself in carpentry, odd jobs, daily entries in my journal, maple sugaring at the farm down the road, and introspective conversations with Dan and Mary. I felt appreciated and accepted, but I was also conscious of my potential imposition.

The valley was beautiful and saturated with color. White snow across the long meadow receded into pale stands of tall grass and dried cornstalks. The only visible dwelling was Nathan Adam's old cabin and sugaring lodge with its weather-beaten exterior. It was mostly concealed by a thick stand of dark evergreens. A wisp of smoke rose and merged with the cloudy haze of the mountains rising to the high horizon. Patches of crimson, pastel green, birch and ivory fell down in angular patterns, tucking their hues into the crevices of sun and shade.

The crisp air had a healing effect upon that part of me that was damaged. It was difficult to leave, but Jeff, a friend of Dan's with a good-sized pickup truck, was driving to Pennsylvania. He offered to drop a full load of my belongings off in Pennsylvania. It was too convenient an offer. I followed him in my car and I paid for his gasoline.

## Homeward Bound

During the turmoil, I had called my parents to let them know that I was leaving the Stowe School. I didn't furnish any details except to say that I was looking forward to being able to focus on my artwork. I felt as if I had walked too far out onto a tree branch and it had snapped. My parents knew that something had gone wrong, but they were kind enough to not dig beneath the surface.

There was an active counterculture scene going on in the southside of Bethlehem. An underground book and record shop had sprouted on the same street as an alternative health food restaurant. Dave Fry and Cindy Dinsmore had started *Godfrey Daniels*, a coffeehouse and stage that featured a surprising array of folk talent, among them David Bromberg, Rosalee Sorrells, John Sebastian, Eric Frandsen, Norman Blake, Utah Phillips and Steve Goodman. On Sunday nights they held open microphone, encouraging budding talent to get the feel of the stage. Accompanied by my electric autoharp and harmonica, I became a regular open mike performer and occasional host of these amateur nights.

My brother's old friend Barry Frey had left his position as a staff writer for the *Globe Times* and had opened a popular southside eatery called *The Wine Cellar*. I had dinner there one night and he asked what I had been up to. I told him about my illustrations and brought some prints in from the car to show him. There was a flurry of interest around



*Ready to open The Gallery in southside Bethlehem.*

our table and within moments I had sold all of the prints I had with me. Barry promptly ordered a full assortment of my illustrations for the restaurant walls. With so prominent a display, I soon had my hands full with orders for framed prints.

Next to the restaurant, there was a very small storefront that Barry owned. He was using the space for storage. I asked whether he would rent it to me as a small studio and gallery. He agreed.

I promptly moved my drawings, musical instruments, jewelry boxes, ceramics and lathe turnings into the space, committing myself to a regular daytime schedule. My meager sales barely covered the cost of rent, but I did produce a significant amount of new work and established some important contacts.

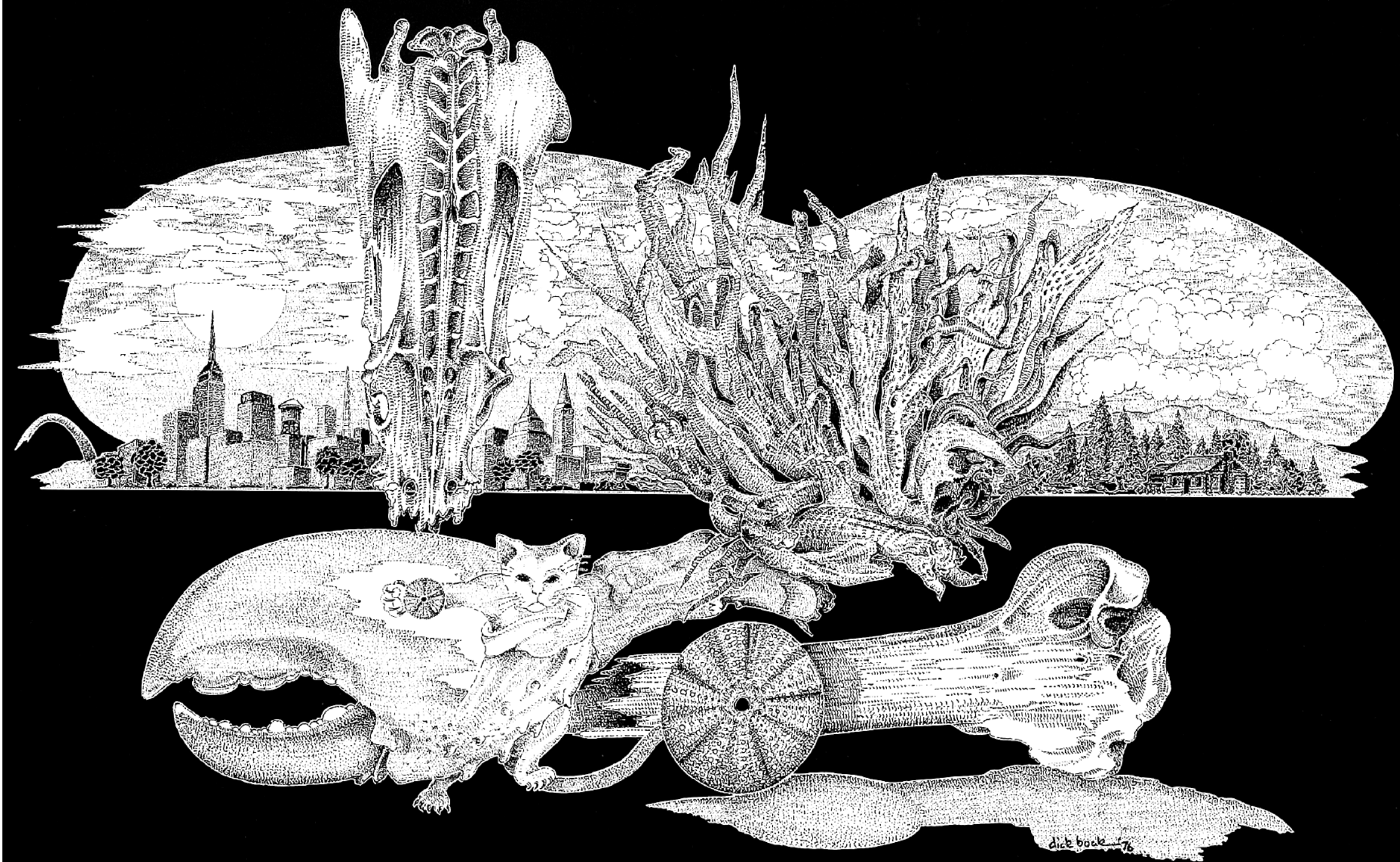


*Performing open mike at Godfrey Daniels Coffeehouse.*



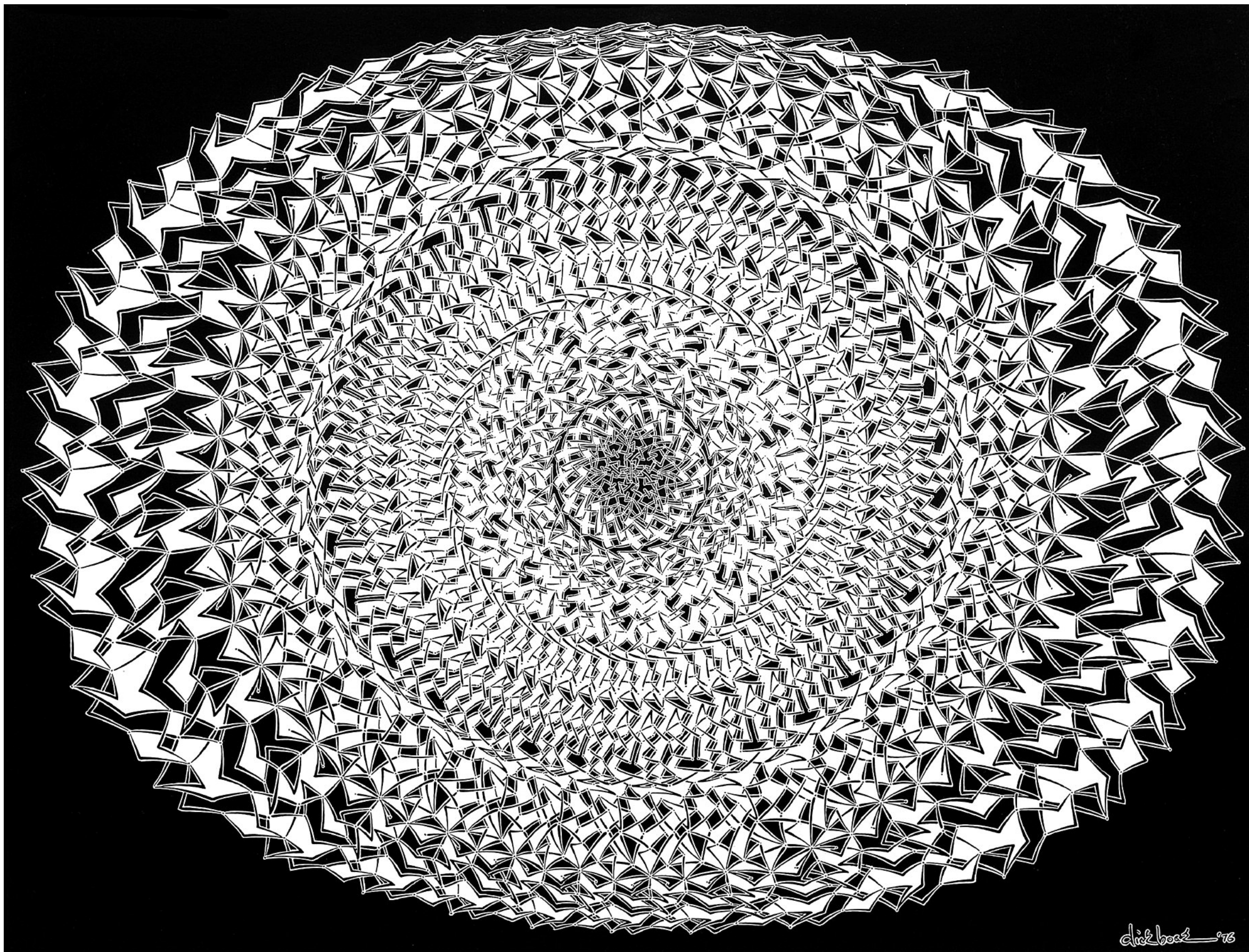
*Lathe-turned bowl of maple and cherry. 1975*





*Tupelo: New York City to Nova Scotia, Pen & Ink, 1976*





*Freehand Yantra, Pen & Ink, 1976*



## Oil & Water

I was busy drawing in my cozy southside *Gallery* when in through the door came a police officer. My natural reaction was to wonder what crime I had committed. I was relieved to find that creativity was not against the law. He ended up buying a few prints, thanked me and left.

The next day he was back with the Chief of Police who explained that the department was tired of the antiquated city seal that had been used on the police vehicles for decades. The younger officer showed his chief my drawings and suggested that I would be a good candidate to design a new city seal. I was of course very receptive.

I started laying out the basic grid for the drawing. A few days passed and I received a call from the chief's office asking me to come in for a meeting with the newly elected mayor. We discussed the seal and the mayor liked the idea of a fresh new change for the city.

I proceeded with the commission, adhering to what I perceived were the basic categories covered on the original seal: labor and industry, religion, culture (art and music), education, and sports. In choosing the symbology for these categories, I'm afraid I took some small liberties, but felt that the finished product was strong.

When I completed the seal, I was excited. I called the chief and took it down to the department to show him. He was excited. He took it over to the mayor's office. He was excited. The mayor took it to the city council meeting. They were not as excited.

The city council thought that the culture committee should have handled this. The culture committee decided that the arts council should have been involved. When the arts council was notified, they were infuriated that no one had consulted with them.

The arts council was largely comprised of middle-aged women. One objected to my inclusion of the Star of David. Another didn't understand what the Yin-Yang symbol meant. Still another didn't think that popular sports like golf, baseball and football should be represented. I think the whole bunch of them suspected that the leaves at the top and bottom were marijuana. After several weeks of meetings, they decided it would be much fairer to hold a contest in the school system where art students would be invited to submit city seal designs to a jury of arts council members. Word came back to me through the layers of the city bureaucracy that I would be allowed to submit my design together with the students. I waited, but they never held the contest.

Given that I never received remuneration, I remain in official possession of the *Unofficial Seal of the City of Bethlehem*.



*City Seal. Pen & Ink, 1977*





*Calling Card (Reduced to business card size), Pen & Ink, 1976*

## Dumpster Diving (Part Two)

Back in Bethlehem, my passion for woodworking was peaking. My wooden creations were selling and I was getting some nice commissions for larger pieces like end tables, coffee tables and specialty shelves. Of course, I always managed to underprice these creations so that the customer would have no grounds for ever being disappointed.

My fascination with wood turning led to the purchase of a good quality lathe. I had found an obscure architectural lumber company on the outside of town that had spectacular planks of Ponderosa and sugar pine in thicknesses up to 4". In exchange for one of my turned bowls, they saved appropriately sized cutoffs for me that were perfect for goblets and cannisters.

Regular visits to the Martin dumpster were yielding materials that were ideal for jewelry boxes and stack laminated turnings. The workers near the dumpster door started to recognize me. I was startled one day when one of the workers came

outside while I was picking through the rosewood scraps. His name was Harvey Samuels. He was the assistant foreman of the machine room where all the raw wood was cut into parts. He spoke in a very heavy Pennsylvania Dutch accent.

"I saved some stuff for ya," said Harvey, and he handed out a sizeable stack of bookmatched spruce soundboards that had been rejected for small knots and imperfections. I graciously accepted and thanked him.

"What ah ya doo with dis stuff anyhow?"

I had a couple of odd instruments in the car. I reached in and grabbed a mando-guitar with a rosewood top and a strange drone banjo with a doorknob tuning machine on the headstock for lead runs. Harvey took these inside and paraded them around to the workers. Mr. Martin, who must have been eighty at the time, was walking around the plant and Harvey showed him the "Boak-struments."

"That fellow ought to apply for a job," said C.F.

After several minutes had passed, Harvey brought my instruments back to the dumpster platform and handed them down.



*Small tablesaw box from assorted Martin scraps. 1976*

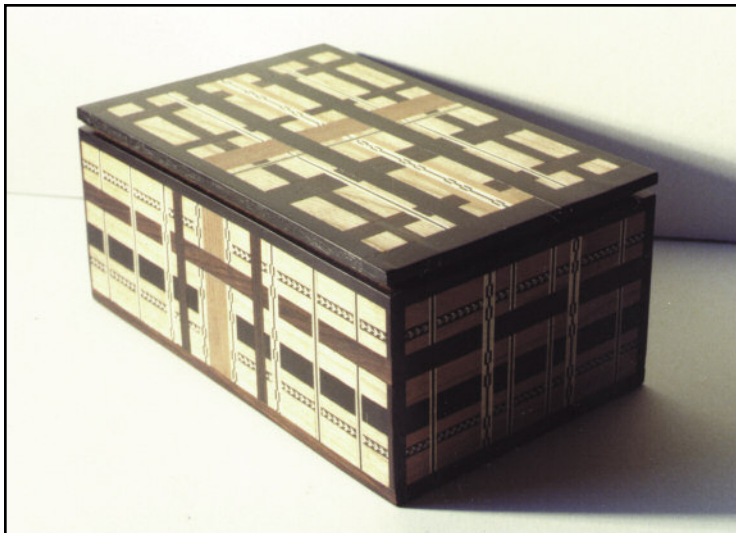


*Detail of criss-cross marquetry and box interior.*



*Spittoon. Walnut, sugar pine, mahogany, rosewood. 1976*





Box of maple, ebony, assorted Martin marquetry scraps. 1977



Detail of opened box with interior compartment.



Turned bowl. Walnut, rosewood, mahogany, sugar pine. 1977



Counter Card (Reduced to business card size), Pen & Ink, 1976

"The old man says you should apply for a job." He pronounced job with a "ch" in front, like "chob."

I was definitely not dressed for job hunting. In fact, my bluejeans were torn and covered with sawdust from the dumpster. My hair was long and somewhat unruly. My flannel shirt was faded and I needed a shave, but Harvey's encouraging words prompted me to check job availability with the receptionist. I drove around to the front of the building, brushed myself off, and walked in.

"Are there any job openings?" I smiled.

The receptionist was not amused. In a slightly aloof tone she replied: "We have one opening but it's very specific. I doubt that you would be qualified."

"What's the position?" I tried to cancel her snottiness with a firm and confident reply.

"Well, it's a design drafting position. We were actually looking for a college student with some engineering or drafting background." She expected that this would end the conversation.

"I've been teaching drafting for three years. In fact, I have some examples of my ink on mylar work in the car. That's a specialty of mine."

Disappointment was showing on her face. She rose to the next level of her defensiveness.

"Well, we're actually looking for someone with some substantial woodworking background." She picked up her emery board and smoothed out a rough edge on her thumbnail.

"Actually, I've been an avid woodworker since I was a boy. I've been teaching woodworking, too, and I've got some jewelry boxes and lathe turnings in the car. Should I bring them in?"

She was livid. She gave it one last shot. "You know, it really will be necessary for any applicant to have a working knowledge of musical instrument making, and a familiarity with the materials we use."

Ah-hah! She was playing right into my hands. "I've been making musical instruments and teaching instrument making for several years. I have a few instruments in the car that I made from your scraps. Harvey at the back door told me that Mr. Martin suggested that I apply for a 'chob.'" I was pushing my luck, but it was worth my strongest push.

"All right. Bring your things in. I'll see whether Personnel can send someone up front to see you."





*Five pre-Martin "Boak-struments" made primarily with Martin dumpster dropoffs.*

Several moments later, I was seated at a table with Ken Murdock, the Assistant Personnel Manager. With pride and excitement, I showed him my draftings, some inlaid jewelry boxes, a few goblets, and three instruments. He was quite impressed.

"Can you start tomorrow? He was convinced.

"No. I'm going to see Bob Dylan tomorrow in Philadelphia, but I can come in on Wednesday." His eyes rolled, but he swallowed his better judgement and handed me the necessary employment forms. I filled them out, packed my wares and headed toward the door. As I passed the receptionist, she strained a fake smile.

"I'll see you on Wednesday!" I waved.

Her jaw dropped in disbelief. She really did turn out to be nicer than she had seemed. Her name was Rita. She greeted me upon my arrival two days later. She was pleased to see that I had better clothes and was capable of bathing. We soon became friends.

## The New Kid In Town

On my first day, I was shown to a small room in the front offices close to sales. There, a large drafting table was set up with a desk and chair. Ken Murdock introduced me to a few of the engineers and plant foremen. I started in the machine room with a somewhat reluctant foreman named Carl Miksch. He gave me a box of dovetail blocks from the tiniest soprano ukulele to the full-sized 12-fret Dreadnought. I would carefully measure these parts and catalog the dimensions in both inches and millimeters on carefully inked mylar draftings. When I finished with dovetail blocks, I would go back to Carl for other parts: braces, ribbons, soundboards, bridge plates, backs, marquetry strips, necks, heelcaps, fingerboards, headplates, bindings, bridges and pickguards, until gradually all of the components were archived.

The Martin business had been in the family ever since its founder, Christian Frederick Martin, had emigrated from Markneukirchen, Germany to New York City in 1833. C. F. Martin III, the fourth generation of Martins to run the business, had seen the company through two world wars and a depression. Though he was in his eighties, he maintained his position as Chairman of the Board. He came to work every day. The workers had tremendous respect for him and rightly so.

Mr. Martin's son Frank was a different story. Frank had apparently been pretty spoiled as a child. He had expensive tastes, especially in cars, and he was used to getting his way.

Frank had developed some bad habits as well. He had a hot temper and he discarded his women with the same tenacity that he sought them out. Frank did have some redeeming qualities. He certainly was loyal to his friends, but his good points were generally masked by his predisposition for alcohol.

To satiate Frank's fixation with sports, the company sponsored a local racing team and a minor league professional basketball franchise. These extravagances provided a reasonable outlet for Frank's temper, but they were very costly and eventually abandoned.



*The Martin dumpster, ripe for the picking.*



Mr. Martin wanted Frank to succeed. At the same time, he was weak when it came to standing up to Frank's aggressiveness and occasional belligerence. When Frank demanded a more prominent role in the company, C.F. eventually succumbed and made him the President.

It was fortunate that Frank's tenure as President coincided with an unprecedented boom in the demand for Martin guitars. Under Frank's direction, the company built a new modern factory at Sycamore Street, abandoning the old facility at North Street. In many ways, the new factory was Frank's crowning achievement.

Such was the situation when I arrived on the scene. I was the "new kid in town," at least that was the *Eagles* song that the secretaries sang to me in jest. Soon, I became acquainted with Mr. Martin and Frank, and the other key figures in the company.

Within a month of my hiring, a company Christmas party was held at the Hotel Bethlehem. Frank found out that I was a musician. On the day of the party, he came into my office slightly inebriated and asked me to make sure to bring my autoharp with me. I did.



Counter card and business card (reduced) for local woodworker and friend, Glenn Snyder of Snyder's Woodcraft.



Frank Martin (glasses) with cronies and Martin racing car.

It was a raucous night. Frank had enlisted a fifties rock and roll band made up of several employees. Everyone was doing the twist. An hour and a half into the dancing and drinking, the band took a break. Frank went to the microphone and summoned me up to the stage. With shy reluctance, I took the stool in front of two hundred Martin employees and their spouses and started to play.

The planets must have been aligned correctly because I was "on" that night. They were eating right out of the palm of my hand. When I finished, they wanted more and that's how I left it. It was a great way to introduce myself to all of the people at Martin. The following Monday morning, I felt like a celebrity.

A few weeks passed. I was hard at work in the early afternoon when the switchboard rang my extension. "It's Frank Martin for you." said Rita abruptly, and she transferred the call over to me.

"Frank?" I greeted him with mild arrhythmia.

"Dick. You won't believe it. I'm over at the Moorestown Bar with some of the big wheels at Columbia Records. I told them all about you. They

want to sign a record deal with you!" I couldn't believe my ears. Had my time really come?

"Ya gotta bring that thing you play out here right away," he urged.

"Frank. My autoharp is at my apartment. Is it OK to leave?"

He interrupted. "Go right now. Get your instrument and meet me out here as soon as you can!" Click. He hung up. I rushed out to the switchboard and told Rita that I had to go meet with Frank Martin right away. She looked skeptical, but she didn't stop me.

I rushed home and retrieved my autoharp. I took the harmonica as well, and its holder just in case. I sped all the way back to Moorestown and took a deep breath before rushing in.

Frank was at the bar sure enough. He raised his hand and motioned for me to come over. He had his arm around a somewhat seedy-looking blonde in a tight red dress. Frank was tanked. So was the blonde.

"I'd like you to meet Angie," he slurred. "Angie. This is the fellow that I was telling you about." I acknowledged the introduction with a weak smile.



"So, you're with Columbia Records?" I tried to initiate my inevitable record deal.

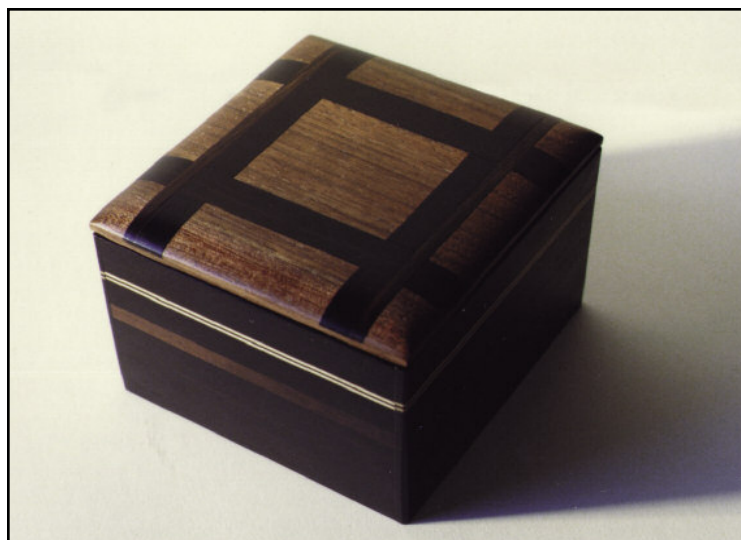
"Well, actually, I have a brother that used to work over at Columbia in the industrial park. They press the records over there, I think."

As she volunteered this information, my dreams crashed and shattered just like the long ash from her lipstick-stained cigarette that was perched awkwardly in the V of her fingers. As she brushed the ashes off her thigh, Frank saw a tinge of disappointment start to form around the corners of my mouth. He jumped right in, hoping to divert the conversation away from my recording hopes.

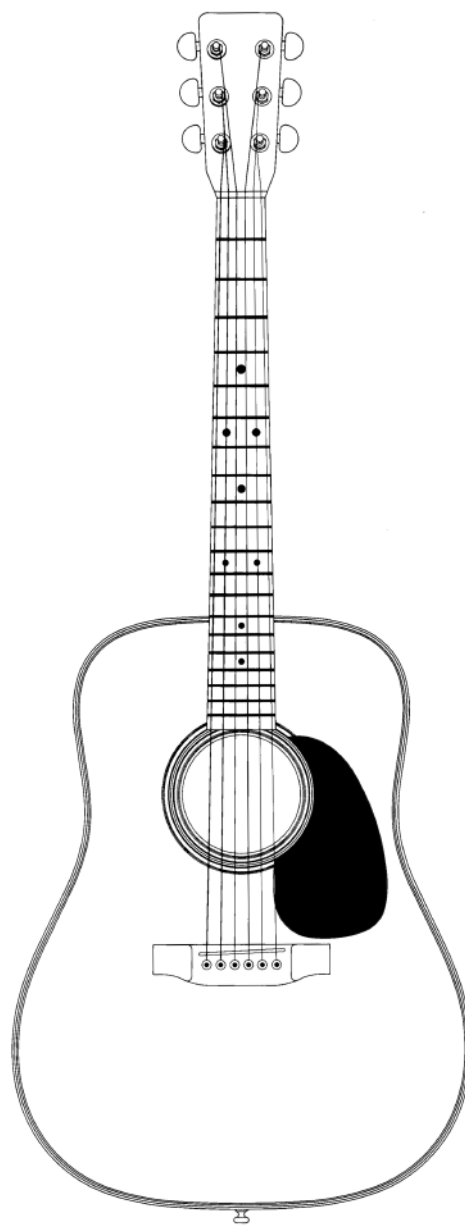
"Play us a few songs. How about that *Do Re Me* song you played at the party?" I was starting to get it. I was to be the featured entertainment for Frank's seduction of the lady in red. I weighed my options quickly. Since I had come all that distance and since he was after all the boss, I unpacked the autoharp, propped myself up on a barstool, and started to play. After a half hour or so, I slipped out the side door and returned to work.

Rita greeted me. "How'd it go?" She very well knew the answer. I just rolled my eyes.

In the weeks that followed, I received other urgent phone calls from Frank, generally in the early to mid-afternoon. There was always a great sense of urgency in his voice. I learned to quickly assure him that I was on my way immediately. Of course, I didn't go anywhere. He never remembered making the calls, or perhaps reached someone else naive enough to take the bait.



Trinket box of ebony, rosewood, walnut, and back inlay. 1976



D-28 Dreadnought face view drafting. Ink on mylar, 1977.

## Trial & Error

Back in my drafting area, there were so many models and variations that my task seemed daunting, but I was hungry to learn what made these great guitars tick. As my daily knowledge of guitar dynamics expanded, I began to experiment in my shop at home. I certainly had plenty of scraps to play with.

As I settled into the security of a full time job, I arranged to move out from underneath my parents' gracious but limiting wing. There was a large house for rent on the south side of Bethlehem. The owner was separating from his wife Amy, who I had met at

Godfrey Daniels. Amy's brother, Jay Black, was very interested in guitars. When he found that I had a connection with Martin and that I was actively immersed in guitarmaking, he approached me about the possibility of an apprenticeship. We hit it off immediately and started to work evenings and weekends on an assortment of odd tonal experiments.

Jay had a particular interest in sprayed finishes. I was thrilled about this since I knew very little about lacquer, which was such a critical aspect of the process. He purchased a compressor and set it up on the third floor of the house where we proceeded to coat the entire floor with the fine powdery overspray.

The results of our experiments were tenuous at best. Our bracing was too thin, our shapes were unintentionally asymmetric, our necks were pitched at irregular angles, our bridges were too high or too low, and our fretting was deplorable. Even our finishes had pockmarks. We did however learn a great deal. Soon Jay landed a job with a well-known guitar repair shop where he really shined. In due course, he ended up in New York City working with my friend Roger Sadowsky, one of the most respected luthiers in the country. Having become an expert at electric guitar work, Jay was eventually lured to the Fender Custom Shop in Southern California, where he earned a great reputation and respect in the industry, making me proud that I had had a small part in his beginnings.

During the days, I was doing my best to keep up with the drafting demands at Martin. I probably could have taken my time and stretched the completion of these drawings out for several years. Instead, I became obsessed with every step of the process. In nine short months, all of the guitar drawings were inked, flat-filed, part-numbered and cross-referenced.

THE CF MARTIN ORGANISATION • NAZARETH, PA • 18064 •			
TOLERANCES (EXCEPT AS NOTED)	TITLE • EXPLODED VIEW • D-45 • CFM.		
DECIMAL ±.005"	SCALE • FULL SIZE •	DRAWING BY dick boak	
FRACTION ± 1/64th"	DRAWING NO. • #11D45 •	APPROVED BY 6/10 JWG. ✓	
ANGLE ± 0°15'	PART NO. • 14 EXP016 •	DATE 6.13.77	

Personal title box for Martin drafting projects.



## Watch Out For That Ax, Eugene

In the meantime, the company had hired an engineer who had recently lost his position with a well-known cosmetics manufacturer. His name was Eugene. The rumor was that he had engineered both parts of a popular lipstick container with lefthanded threads, making them unusable.

Eugene was hired to supervise me and develop new and efficient guitarmaking methods. One slight problem was that he had absolutely no concept of what guitars were all about or how they were made. A special office out in production was erected and I moved my drafting table into one corner. In the opposite corner, both literally and symbolically, Eugene marked his territory. Within the confines of that tiny space, he took complete control of my entire world. In the process, my job quickly turned from inspirational to nightmarish.

With all of the guitar drawings completed, I had begun to draft the wooden and metal components for Martin's Vega banjo models. These instruments were equally fascinating. Martin did all of the woodworking, but the metal parts were outsourced to a local fabricator, then sent out for plating. One of the primary banjo rings was called the notched tension hoop. It was made of 1/4" solid brass stock, rolled into a circle and brazed. After plating, the unsightly seam was hidden carefully under the banjo's tailpiece. Directly opposite the tailpiece, a notch the width of the fingerboard was cut to allow the strings to clear the tension hoop. Then around the circular perimeter, the banjo head was secured with several dozen tension hooks, each individually tightened with a banjo key. It was a very elegant system, that is until Eugene asked to review one of my drawings and added his two cents. He called me over with his usual gruffness and inquisitioned:



Equipment ID tag for Martin machinist Mitch Perez.



Stack laminated turned vessel. Rosewood, mahogany and maple with abalone pearl banding. 1977

"Why'd you put the braze joint at this end?"

"It needs to be there." I explained. "That's where it has traditionally been. It gets hidden under the tailpiece."

"No. No. No. Hogwash! Move it over to this end." He pointed to the notched area by the fingerboard.

"But it'll break if you do that," I pleaded. "The ring is under a lot of tension and it's very thin up there. It won't hold up." My voice was beginning to quiver.

"Make the change. That's an order."

I looked at him in disbelief. For the first time, I noticed that he had absolutely no neck whatsoever. It was as if his spinal cord was missing several vertebrae. His head was resting directly upon his rib cage. His chin seemed to attach itself to his collar bones. There was no Adam's apple. All of a sudden I began to feel tremendous pity for Eugene. He was obviously missing a major portion of his brain stem. This was creating unprecedented incompetency and causing him to make absolutely absurd decisions.

I went back to my drafting table, took my electric eraser to the mylar, and as ordered, I removed the brazing seam and altered the instructions to conform to "No-Neck's" wishes. As I made the changes, he came over to my desk and dropped a completed purchase order in front of me.

"When that drawing's done, attach a blueprint to this P.O. and give it to purchasing." He spun around

and exited like a military general. I looked carefully at the purchase order. It referenced my revised drawing and called for 500 tension hoops to be fabricated and platinex-plated at a cost of \$32.00 per hoop. I did the quick math. That was more than fifteen grand. Every one of them would break.

Overnight, I tossed and turned. It was driving me crazy that this guy was going to ruin one of our products. This wasn't the first time. He had already chopped up the aluminum neck masters from a gunstock carving machine that had the potential to carve guitar neck blanks very efficiently. Our talented machinist, Mitch Perez, had spent a lot of time making those masters. This banjo hoop alteration was an even more obvious blunder. I couldn't contain my frustration.

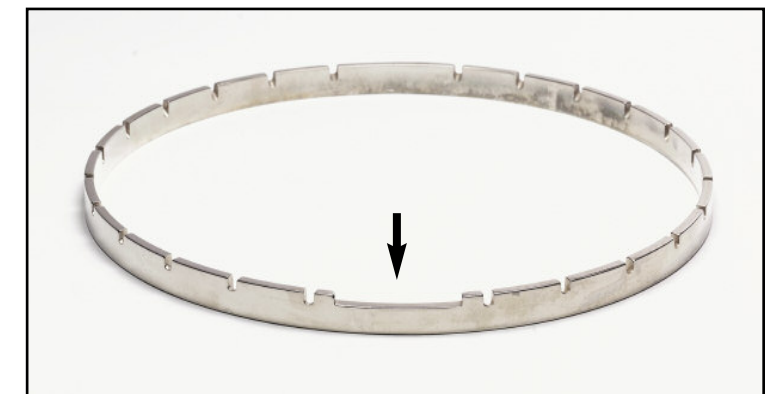
The next morning, I spoke candidly with Ken Murdock about my frustration. He was upset with what I told him and called in his boss. I relayed the entire story, voicing my concern that the company stood to lose more than \$15,000 plus lost production time as a result of this change. The Personnel Manager smiled reassuringly and listened with great interest. What I did not know was that he and Eugene had been neighbors and great fishing buddies for years.

Later that afternoon, old No-Neck strolled nonchalantly into our shared office with an empty box. He plopped it down in front of me.

"Pack your things. You're fired."

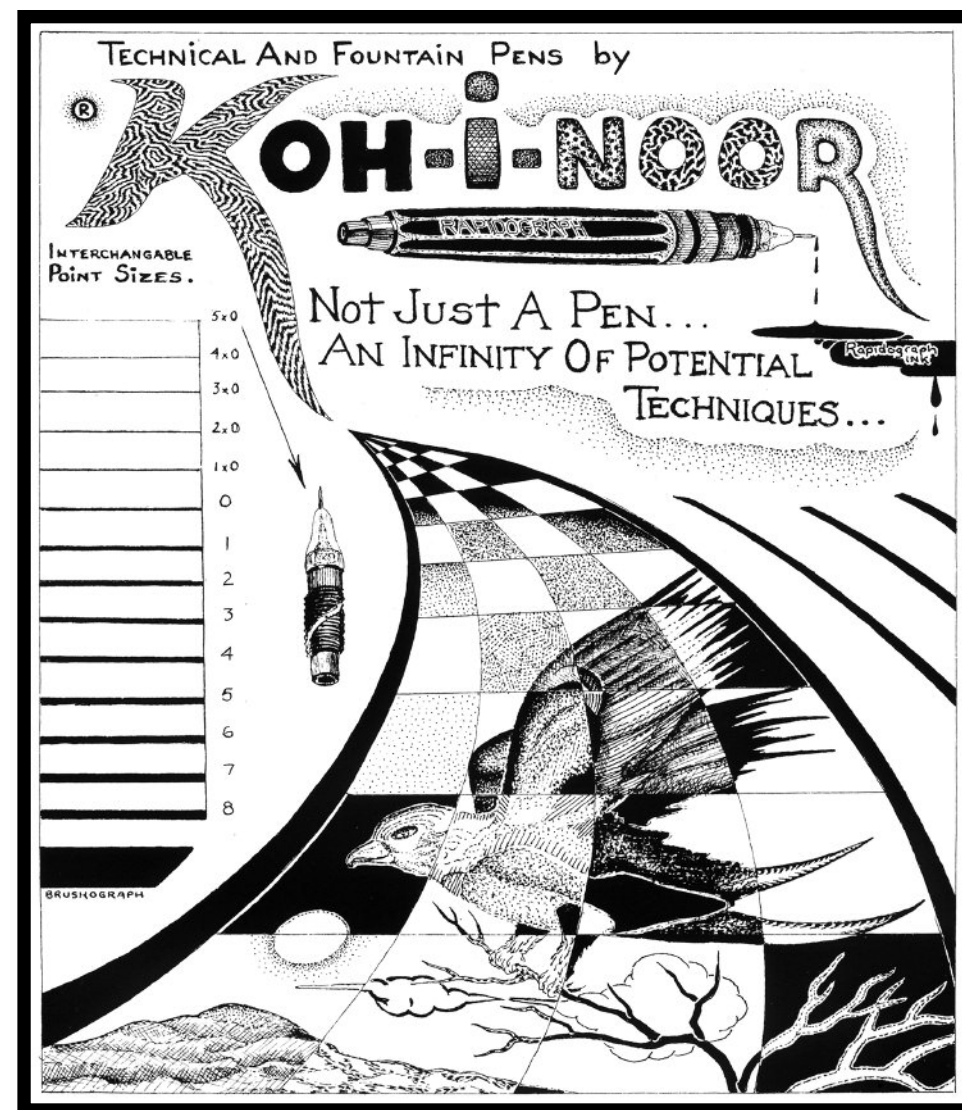
"What?" I turned as white as a sheet.

"You went over my head. You don't do that." He shut the door behind him as tears welled up in my eyes. I packed my pens and french curves. Box in hand, I quietly slipped away in order to avoid further humiliation.



Notched tension hoop.





Above: Unused ad for Rapidograph Technical Pens, 1975

Left: D-28, Pen & Ink, 1977

## Strike

I was devastated. Finally I had found an occupation that was challenging, and then kaboom! I was finished. I just couldn't accept it.

In my apartment, I had already begun working on a large drawing of the legendary Martin D-28 model. The idea evolved from a front view drafting of the full guitar. I rendered the textures of the top in my pointillist style, then embellished the space around the guitar with symmetrical eagles, ocean waves, abalone shells, and sunsets. The edges were bordered with Martin herringbone. I was pleased with the final result and without question proceeded to publish an edition of prints.

While I was waiting for Russ Borman to complete the job, I received an unexpected call from Frank Martin. Over the course of the previous six months, the *Cement, Lime & Gypsum Workers Of*





First "Artist Series" sales brochure for Koh-I-Noor Rapidograph Technical Pens, 1977

America had successfully organized a union at Martin. Now they had voted to immediately go out on strike. Frank was livid. He was also very worried that trucks attempting to make deliveries would honor the picket lines unless he took some action. Frank seemed genuinely sorry that I had been fired. He had just found out about it and I think he was throwing me a bone. He asked me to make four large banners that could be hung on the outside of our building in several locations. The signs were to say: "We Are Not On Strike!" I finished these signs in a matter of a few days and delivered them personally to Frank. He was pleased.

Before I could get out the door, he asked whether I could make a cement guitar. I thought about it for a moment, then I politely asked him why. He wanted to put it on display in the factory with a sign that said: "Who Wants A Cement Guitar?" This was intended to be a morale booster for the salaried foremen, managers and office workers who were keeping the plant running.

I went home and started to figure out how to make the casting forms. It wasn't going to be easy. I picked up three bags of cement, some wire mesh and a few reinforcement rods. Using some rejected guitar sides as an exterior mold, I poured the slurry of cement. It took days to dry completely. Finally it was ready to stand upright. It weighed a ton and was quite ugly. The neck had cracked right where it joined the body but the rebar kept it from falling apart. I wheel-barreled it to my car and drove it out to Martin with my makeshift sign. "Who wants a cement guitar with a broken neck?" it read, the message slightly modified due to circumstance. Frank loved it and we put it on display in the cafeteria. He vowed to bury it under the lawn at the front of the factory the minute that the strike was over. While I was in the plant, Eugene saw me and was visually disturbed by my presence. I feared he was going to make trouble.

The following week the prints of my guitar drawing were done. I matted and framed one for Mr.

Martin. After numbering it as the first print and signing it at the bottom, I wrote an inscription: "Please consider this my reapplication for employment." When I arrived, I asked to see Mr. Martin. While I was waiting, my friend John Arndt, the head of quality control, was leaving. He asked me where I'd been for the past several weeks. I think he thought I had been on vacation.

I explained to John that I had been fired. He was shocked. Personnel and my former boss had kept my dismissal very secret. John promised to try to get me back just as Mr. Martin arrived in the reception area. John addressed him: "Mr. Martin. Did you know that Eugene fired this fellow?"

"I had no idea," said C.F.

"Well, we should try to get him back in, don't you think? I sure could use him in the final assembly area." John was doing his best to keep fifteen guitars a day moving through the plant. Office workers were sanding bodies and scraping bindings. There was such a skeleton crew during the strike that anyone capable of doing any of the key jobs was worth their weight in gold.

"I agree," Mr. Martin said. "Let's get him back."

I shook Mr. Martin's hand and showed him the framed drawing. "This is for your office."

"Why, thank you. I'll have Gregor hang it right away. Thank you very much."

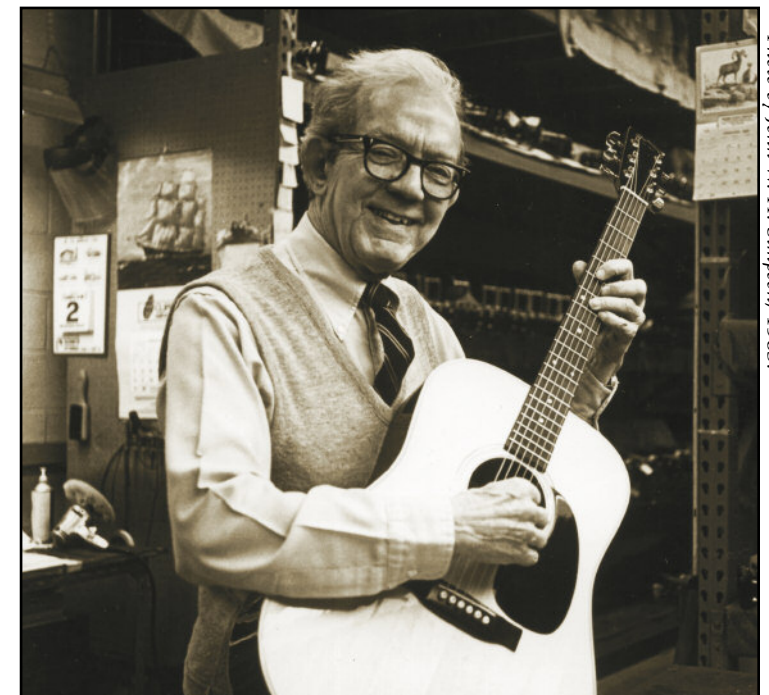


Photo by John W. H. Simpson, 1983.

C. F. Martin III at the final inspection bench.



## Scabbing

The next day, I received a call from John Arndt. He had discussed my situation with Frank and C. F. and they wanted me to come back and work in production. I was elated and back in the factory within the hour. John took me to the bridge gluing area where Blaine Rodgers had worked for decades prior to the strike. Blaine could do fifty bridges a day. There was no one better, but like many others, Blaine was on strike against his will. He wasn't present on the picket line.

John showed me the bridge gluing procedure with great care. I tried a few bridges while he watched. I was slow, but I'd get better. John was working the final neck fitting bench next to mine in the event that I needed to be rescued. I quickly got up to speed and soon John put me on other jobs in the area: regulating saddles, installing tuning machines, stringing and tuning.

I was happy to be back, but the repetitiveness of production was tedious. I longed for any diversion and one day it arrived. Frank Martin wanted to introduce a line of electric guitars. With my drafting and guitarmaking experience, he thought I could come up with some ideas that he could show to the Board of Directors.



*Frank Martin in one of his finer moments.*



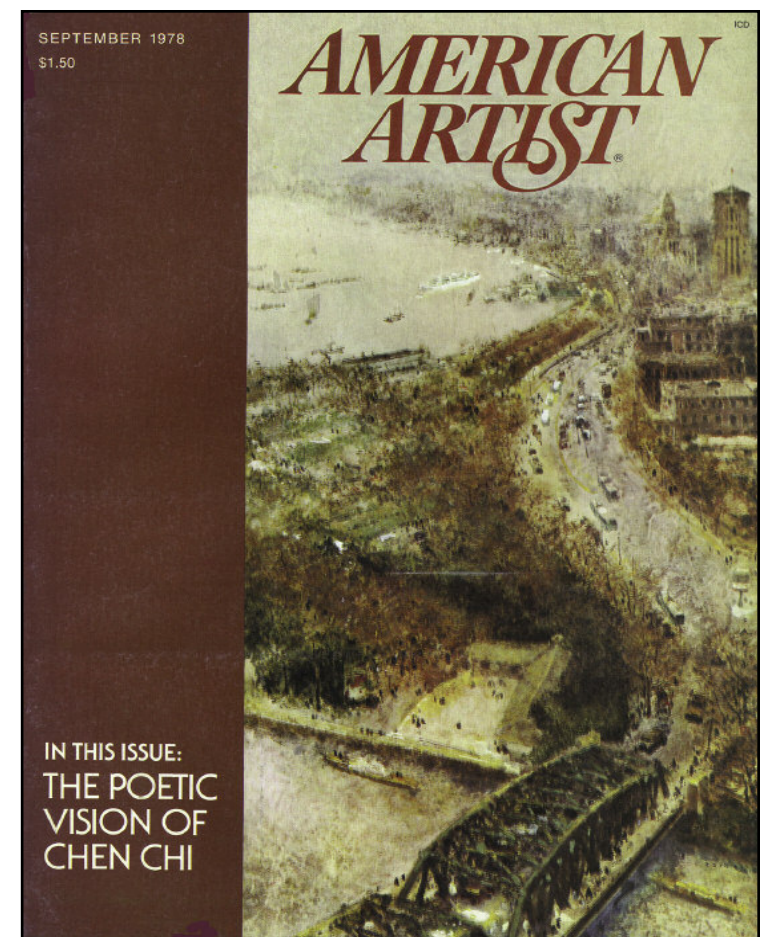
*Swan Headstock*

I was very excited to do it, but I made it clear that I didn't want to be in the same area as Eugene, who was avoiding me like the plague. I was given my own room plus Carl Miksch's help in the machine room. First, I drafted dozens of separate headstock, body, and neck designs. Some of these were outrageous. Others were quite traditional. Frank liked one particular headstock that looked remotely like the Martin/Stauffer shape that Leo Fender had incorporated for his headstocks. I started a short scale prototype with a maple fingerboard and headplate. I dubbed it *The Swan* for its purity, color, and graceful inlay that seemed to nest well in the otherwise awkward top area of the headstock.

The Directors liked it too, but wanted to see some more traditional body shapes in a long scale format. The second batch of four prototype bodies were laminated from rejected rosewood bridge blank stock and guitar side scraps. When combined with white maple wings, the bodies were unusually striking. My idea was to laminate the center section of the body, perform all of the machining operations to that section, then apply the wings of the body and the neck. It was a sensible and efficient plan and the

Board liked the new body design. I had consulted with Roger Sadowsky about what he considered to be the optimum hardware for electric guitars. We chose the best of everything for the prototypes. It was a challenging project, even though production needed me to assist John Arndt with bridge gluing for several hours a day.

I started a third batch of twelve prototypes that were all identical in configuration. I had efficiently completed the machining and body lamination when I saw Eugene holding one of twelve bodies. He was taking to Carl Miksch near the spindle-shaping machine. After they finished, I asked Carl what was up. Eugene had had an idea for a shaping fixture to cut out the electric bodies. Carl was very skeptical and so was I, but No-Neck was awfully bullheaded. He returned with a poorly-crafted half-inch slab of heavy steel, cut to the rough contour of our electric guitar shape. There was a plastic handle sticking straight up out of the fixture.



*Kohinoor Rapidograph continued their ad campaign in this September 1978 issue of American Artist featuring a two page spread about the pen and ink artwork of dick boak.*



Carl was so appalled and protective of his equipment that he flatly refused to do the operation. Eugene stubbornly decided to do it himself. He mounted my best body blank onto his contraption, tightened the plastic handle and pushed it hard into the cutter. There was a loud crack. It happened so quickly. Carl and I watched from a distance in amazement. The whole fixture, all fifty-five pounds of it with the body attached, went flying through the air at jet propulsion speed and embedded itself in a sheetrock wall thirty feet away. Had anyone been in its path, they would have surely been laid to a quick rest. Carl walked over to Eugene and physically removed him from the department.

The next day, I found the test body in the garbage. The shaper blade had taken a nice chunk out of it, but with a little creativity and inlay, it was salvageable. I retrieved it and took it home. It became a lovely fretless bass that for obvious reasons, I called "The Maverick."



*Maverick Bass*



*E-18 and EM-18 Electric Guitars with EB-18 Electric Bass.*

It was obvious that Eugene and I were going to come to blows. I ran into Helen Hontz from Sales in the hallway and told her of my frustration. She had always been my advocate. She suggested that I get myself completely out of No-Neck's domain. She had some ideas about how to accomplish this.

The next day, Frank called me in. He'd been talking with Helen. There was a small area next to the museum in the front of the plant that was ideal for a small factory gift shop. A mail order flyer with Martin T-shirts, belt buckles and key chains had been fairly successful in bringing in some orders. Frank suggested that if I were interested in starting *The 1833 Shop*, it might provide a convenient way to get out of Eugene's way. If he was as bad as I knew he was, he would seal his own fate in due time. I didn't want to abandon my prototyping project, but it seemed a good solution. I took the job.

The long strike finally came to an abrupt end. Half of the strikers broke ranks, resigned from the union and returned to work. The rest followed soon after. With shovel in hand, I buried the cement guitar

five feet deep in the front lawn as Frank and a group of his cronies looked on ceremoniously. I can only imagine some archeologist digging up that abomination in a thousand years and wondering what in the hell someone was thinking.

*The 1833 Shop* began to thrive quickly. The electric guitars didn't fare as well. Eugene had stripped away virtually all of the attributes that I had tried to design into the instrument. I kept my distance, though.

It wasn't long before the order of notched tension hoops for the banjos arrived. One by one, their weak braze joints failed. There were several boxes of rejected or broken hoops just outside of Eugene's office. Eventually, John Arndt alerted the higher-ups that my prophecy had come true. Soon someone brought an empty box into No-Neck's office and told him to pack his things. The Personnel Manager vanished shortly thereafter and slowly things at Martin started to look brighter.



*E-18 Early Prototype Body Detail*





*"Swan" Electric Guitar by dick boak, 1978  
Cedar, mahogany, maple, ebony, rosewood, pearl.*

## Swans and Stripes

Though my woodworking skills were reasonably well developed, I was really too young and inexperienced to tackle the development of a new line of electric guitars for Martin. Unfortunately, I didn't know that and neither did Frank Martin. So I forged ahead in the investigation of many designs on paper. Frank was flanked with his board cronies and VPs. They would review my drawings and offer their feedback. Clearly, they wanted to come up with a product that would give Fender and Gibson a run for their money.

When a tentative design was agreed upon, there was discussion about having samples made at one of the Japanese factories from which the Sigmas were imported, but this would have been a tedious process. I had made it quite clear that I was eager and capable of creating prototypes at the plant.

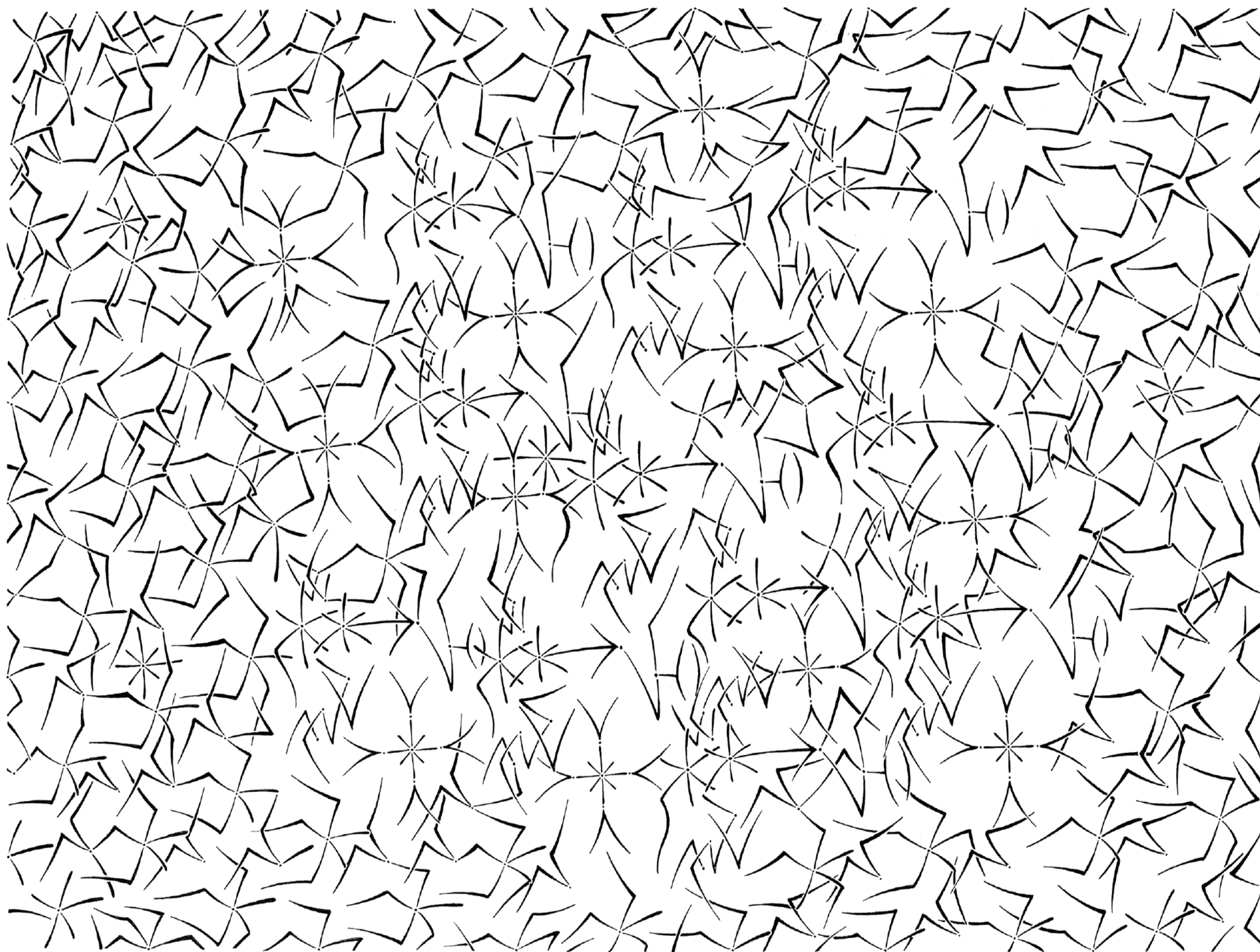
*The Swan* was the first guitar to emerge. The somewhat graceful inlay in the headstock drove my desire to have the entire instrument be swan-like in color, but Carl Miksch had a convenient one-piece slab of Spanish cedar in the machine room that gave the body a more leathery look. The finished instrument was tiny, lightweight and too dissimilar from traditional Telecaster and Les Paul designs to satisfy the higher-ups, but it sounded great.

I was incredibly fortunate to be allowed to bring my drawings to life at work, but more often than not, I desired to experiment beyond the limits of what Martin tradition might allow. Fascinated by the premise of blending artistic form with practical function, I built bolder variations of my Martin prototypes at home in my basement. After the neck and body blanks were laminated and resurfaced, I would sketch out cerebral shapes directly onto the wood. After the excess was trimmed on the bandsaw, I sculpted the hard edges with a rasp, paying particular attention to how the contours nested into a player's arms. These early efforts would have been quite ergonomic if I hadn't felt the personal need to use such dense hardwood. The extra weight lends stability and sustain, but the reality is that softer wood allows for greater absorption of string vibration resulting in warmer, less harsh tone, and the lighter weight is certainly easier on the musicians who have to lug these beasts around on stage.



*Parabola Sculpted Electric Guitar by dick boak, 1978  
Hard maple, mahogany, rosewood.*





*Asymmetric Expansion Yantra, Pen & Ink, 1980*

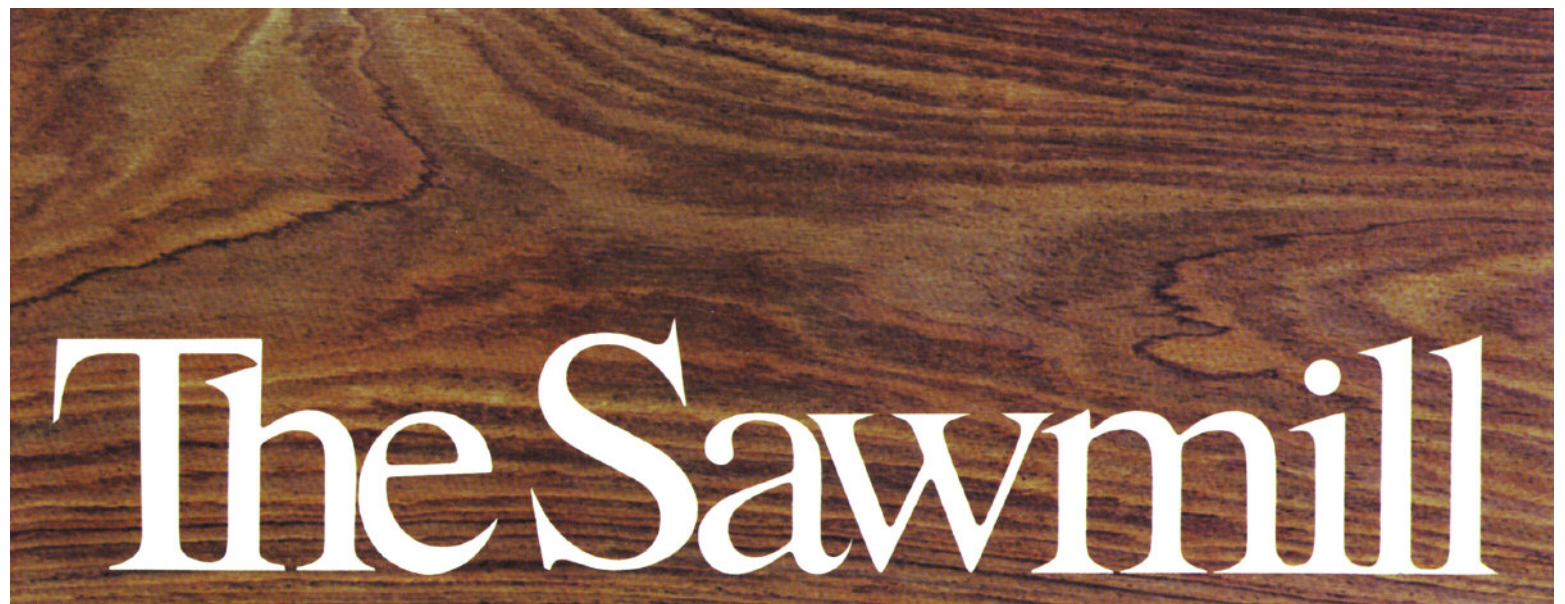




*Scroll-cut and hand-shaped mahogany letters solidified the store logo in this early "The 1833 Shop" catalog.*

## The 1833 Shop

There was a small room just inside the front door of Martin's Sycamore Street factory. It had been emptied in anticipation of my moving in. On the first day, we brought in a desk and chair with a small cash register. Quickly, the array of Martin trademarked products were organized – racks of T-shirts separated by size, the Martin history book, key chains, bumper stickers, coffee mugs, Sterling silver guitar shaped earrings, belt buckles, and a smattering of guitar strings, straps, and polish. The offering was very limited at first, but gradually each category grew. Gregor Unger in the Maintenance Department built a beautiful cubby-hole display that held the many different guitar string identities. I was



*Brochure Cover for "The Sawmill," shot against an appropriate background of Honduras rosewood.*

able to expand the line of publications to include guitar instructional books, books about the evolution of the guitar as an instrument, books for guitar collectors, and books about guitar repair and construction. The line of Martin memorabilia expanded to include beach towels, hats, license plates, umbrellas, jacket patches, playing cards, and baby bibs, just to name a few. The more than occasional seconds generated in the Sigma guitar line were stripped of their logos and given a stick-on "Avalon" brand that I was allowed to sell to recover cost.

Access to the dumpster was a bit different from an inside perspective. The Sales Department was paranoid that releasing guitar parts into the marketplace would cannibalize Martin guitar sales, but Frank Martin jumped in to back me up. He liked the idea of generating cash from garbage and soon I had amassed enough parts to offer an assortment of do-it-yourself guitar kits.

By the end of the first year, 1833 Shop sales hit \$60,000 and then, bolstered by a huge increase in kit sales, my numbers began to double and triple. I needed more space and once again Frank came through by clearing an adjacent office and instructing Gregor to knock out the common wall. Now visiting guitar aficionados had a place to shop after taking the factory tour, and budding luthiers from around the world were flocking to Nazareth to try their hand at the instrument maker's craft.



*Opening day at "Woodworker's Dream."*



## Woodworker's Dream

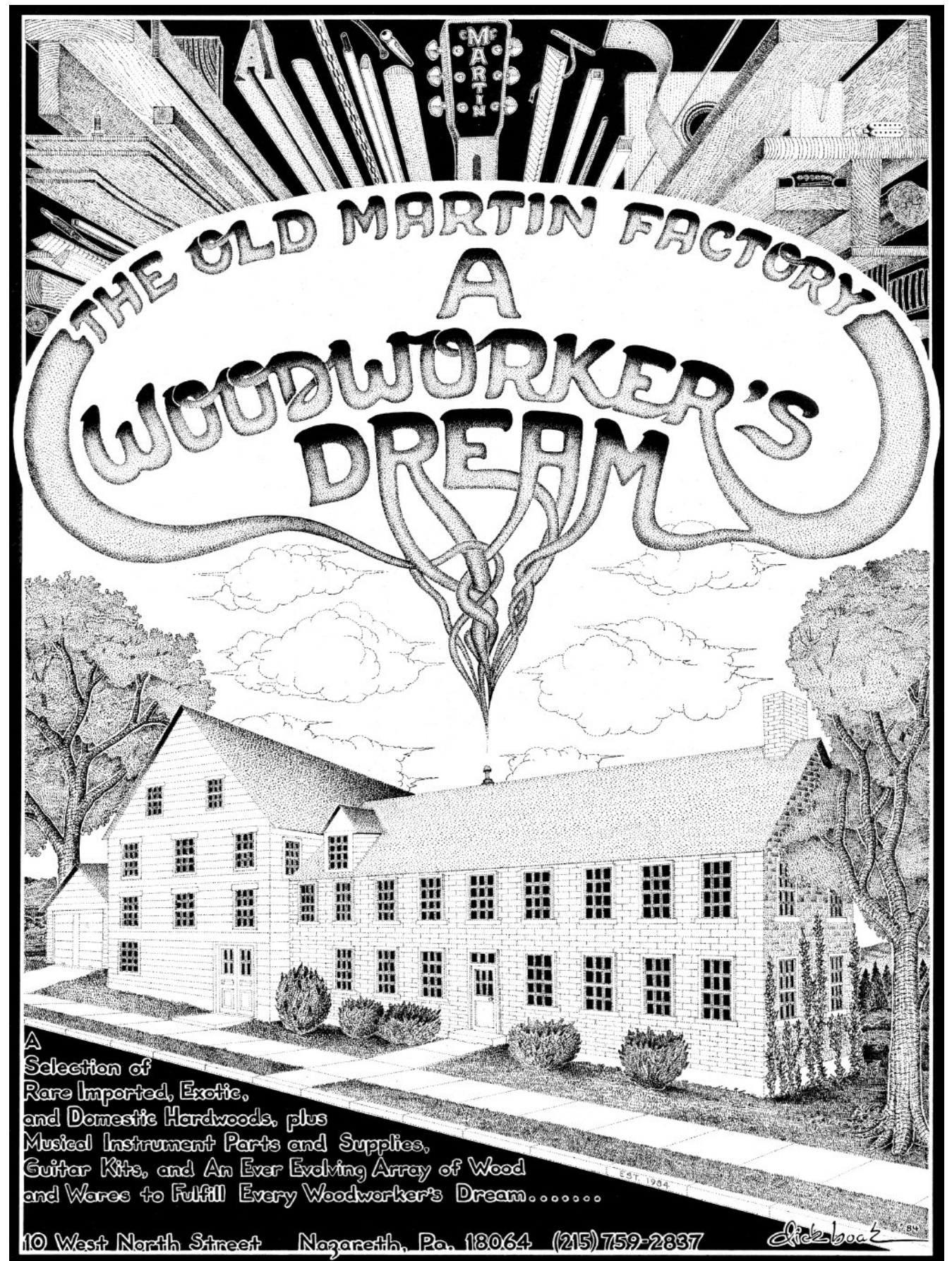
The Old Martin Factory at 10 West North Street in Nazareth had been the magical place where Martin guitars had been made from 1859 to 1964. With its creaky wooden floors, it was special place, but it had gradually become little more than a storage facility. In the years that followed the strike, money was tight. There was a gasoline crunch, a recession, and people just weren't spending their money on leisure time products like acoustic guitars.

Martin had built a substantial sawmill to cut rosewood and mahogany logs. Within a year of *The Sawmill's* completion, India suspended export of rosewood and Brazil stopped trading in mahogany logs. In an attempt to keep the mill running, Martin entered the specialty wholesale lumber business, importing logs and lumber in many exotic species from around the world. Woods like cocobola, padauk, wenge, purpleheart, zebrawood, ebony, shedua, prima vera, lignum vitae, blackwood, koa, bubinga, morado and kingwood were just a few of the unusual and rare species that Martin was importing. Sales were primarily made to custom furniture makers, jewelry box makers and woodturners. The wholesale business was dog-eat-dog and *The Sawmill* was struggling. I had always felt that there was an untapped retail market for exotic wood and I voiced that opinion to my immediate supervisor, Bill Minnich.

*The 1833 Shop* was bursting at the seams with a smattering of these timbers, seconds in Martin's Sigma guitar line, guitar parts and kits salvaged from the best of Martin's rejected materials, books about guitars and guitarmaking, related strings and accessories, and a wide array of Martin memorabilia.

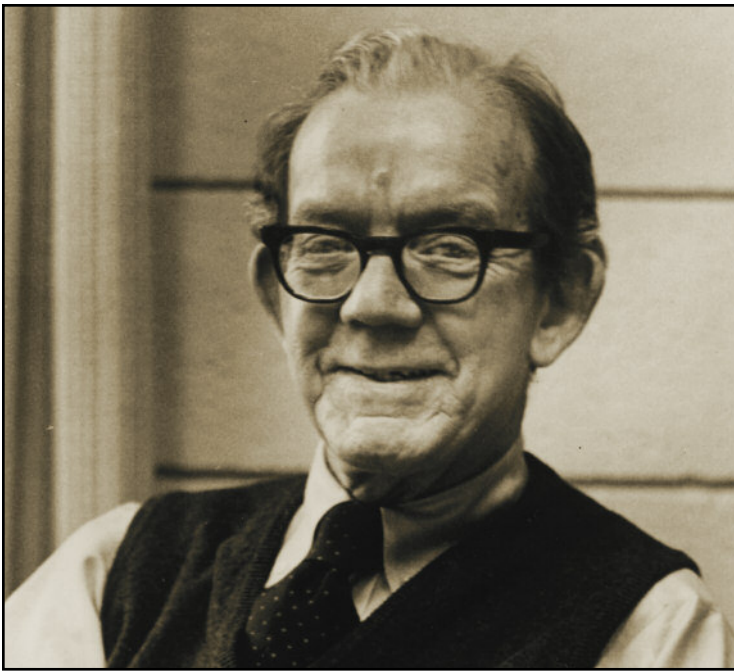
It was costing a lot of money to heat North Street and management wanted to explore alternate uses for the old building that would help justify the expenditure. My proposal was to split the very successful *1833 Shop* in two. Items that had strong appeal to the people touring the factory such as Martin memorabilia, accessories, books and posters would remain at the new factory under *The 1833 Shop* mantle.

The new store would occupy the first floor of the North Street plant. It would be called *A Woodworker's Dream*. The focus of the store would be to develop a market for retail exotic wood sales, guitar kits and parts, and second quality Sigma guitars. Everyone seemed to like the idea. I left *The 1833 Shop* in the hands of my assistant Doug French and took the helm at *Woodworker's Dream*. After renovating the downstairs, installing some heavy duty woodworking equipment, and fabricating sturdy display racks for the exotic sawn veneers, we held a grand opening. Guitarmaker, musician and inlay artist Grit Laskin came down from Toronto to perform. The Board of Directors and the mayor of Nazareth attended and a sizeable quantity of wine was consumed. All in all, it was a fitting and appropriate christening.



*Woodworker's Dream* (Promotional Poster), Pen & Ink. 1984 (Collection of Walter & Margaret Peters.)





## Driving Mr. Martin

C. F. Martin III had taken a liking to me and one day, he called me into his office.

"You wanted to see me, Mr. Martin?" I stammered.

"You don't have to be so formal." He motioned for me to sit down. He exuded respect. I couldn't imagine calling him Fred or Fritz. No one else did.

"I'd like to invite you to join the Nazareth Lions Club. I'm a charter member. It's a nice group of men, and I'll sponsor you. What do you think?" His voice crackled like John Beresford Tipton on the 60s TV show *The Millionaire*.

I hesitated for an instant, then realizing that it was my turn to talk, I caught up. "I'd be very honored, Mr. Martin." There I went again with the Mr. Martin thing. I figured it might be a good idea to accept this offer.

"The next meeting is Tuesday. Would you be so kind as to pick me up? The doctors don't think it's such a good idea for me to drive."

"I'd be delighted." We made the necessary arrangements. I made sure to wash and vacuum my car prior to retrieving such precious cargo. I rang his doorbell, helped him with his cane, and held his arm to steady him to the curbside.

"This cane is nothing but trouble," he complained. "It's too short and it has no weight to it."

"I'd be glad to make you one on the lathe," I

offered. "How much longer should it be?"

In the week that followed, I turned a shaft of East Indian rosewood and with a scrap of rosewood burl, I mounted a top section to the cane with epoxy and a concealed threaded rod. I had watched him hold his cane. He liked to drape his index finger pointing downward toward the shaft, so when I hand-shaped the handle with my rasp, I made a special trough to accommodate his hand positioning. As a finishing touch, I inlayed an abalone maltese cross guitar inlay and installed a heavy duty non-slip rubber tip. My reward was the expression on his face when he first saw the cane, and of course seeing him actually benefit from its use.

We had wonderful discussions about his vivid experiences throughout the course of the century. I felt very privileged to have had this special time with him, driving back and forth between our bimonthly Lions Club gatherings.

## Joining The IRS

The location of Lions Club meetings had moved repeatedly since I had been invited to join. A new restaurant called Sabatini's had added a banquet room to the side of their building and had quoted the club a price that the decision makers could not refuse. I was enjoying the new location. The food was fair and the atmosphere was brighter than the previous dungeon.

The restaurant advertised happy hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 to 6:00 pm. They had one of those portable flashing signs outside. During this short window, drinks were offered two for the price of one. One particular Tuesday, Mr. Martin and I arrived at 5:45 pm for our 6:00 meeting. I went to the bar, sat next to some happy hour participants and ordered a glass of white wine.

The bartender, Mr. Sabatini, was also the owner. He had run out of wine glasses and quickly washed an assortment of different sized glasses so that he could pour my wine. He filled a very small cocktail glass three-fifths full, set it on the bar and

said: "That will be \$4.75."

I was slightly shocked at the price. I had watched the fellow next to me, a non-Lion member, order red wine, pay \$3.00 and be served two glasses. To top it off, his glasses were larger in size and each filled nearly seven-eighths full. Details, details.

I'm not cheap and I don't think I was nitpicking, but out of politeness, I gave him a five dollar bill. He assumed I was going to tip him the remaining quarter and didn't bring me change. When I went to take a sip of my wine, the glass was so wet on the outside that it slipped through my fingers and smashed on the bar. I suppose it was my fault, but it wouldn't have happened had the glass been wiped dry. I was embarrassed.

Mr. Sabatini came over, sneered at my apparent clumsiness, threw the broken glass away, wiped the counter clean and asked whether I wanted another glass of wine. I did. When he brought me the new glass, it was as wet as the first. I wiped it dry and looked up. He was waiting in front of me. "That'll be \$4.75," he barked.

"You son of a bitch!" I thought it. I didn't say it. I couldn't believe his arrogance. I should have made a scene. Instead, I swallowed my pride, paid my bill and sat there approaching the boiling point with each sip. In the meetings that followed, I noticed that Mr. Sabatini was charging the Lions Club members a completely different set of prices for drinks than he was the other customers. He was also working out of an open cash register, not ringing any of the transactions onto the tape. One week, I asked whether there was a price list for drinks. There was not. He just kept it in his head and charged erratically depending on his particular whim.

As I observed these blatant injustices at each successive meeting, my anger grew to the extent that I decided to do something about it. I pondered what action I should take, finally deciding to write an anonymous letter. I spent several days drafting it, making revisions, then redrafting it until I was satisfied:



Cane, East Indian rosewood,  
abalone pearl. 1982



To the owner(s) of Sabatini's Restaurant,

As an accountant and auditor for the Internal Revenue Service, I travel a great deal in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Accordingly, at the end of my business day, I like to relax and unwind. Toward that end, I have stopped into your establishment on several occasions over the course of the past year and a half. While you operate a relatively pleasant restaurant, I have quickly become aware of several incongruities with respect to the honest and fair operation of your business.

First, you have no published or available prices at your bar. During the course of my visits, I have observed great disparity in the prices that you charge to me as well as to other patrons. There is also considerable disparity in the erratic portions that you serve.

Second, I have noticed that the required Pennsylvania tax stamps were missing from virtually all of the liquor bottles that you dispense. I can accurately assume that you have purchased your stock from out of state to avoid paying Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board taxes.

Third, and perhaps most disturbing, I note that you are neither ringing in your cash register transactions, nor issuing receipts to your customers. I can assume that this is a convenient way to avoid the declaration of cash income.

As a result of witnessing these incongruities, I have decided to write to you as a customer first to give you an opportunity to rectify your practices.

So it is my hope that this letter will serve as a mild warning to you. Given that your future business practices show a marked improvement, I am more than willing to dismiss everything I have seen. If however, on a subsequent visit, I see further evidence of tax infractions or even a perception of unfairness to your customers, I will feel obligated to file a formal report at my offices in Philadelphia which will result in a full auditing of your records.

I'm sure you agree that this would be a most unfortunate occurrence for your business.

With hope that this letter will serve its intended purpose, I sincerely remain,

An Anonymous Customer

I actually didn't intend for the letter to be as effective as it seemed to be. Within weeks, there was a remarkable change. The cash register was ringing with every transaction, prices were published and prominently displayed. Even the liquor bottles had the appropriate tax stamps. The owner did however, appear to be under considerable stress.

I was especially surprised and slightly guilty when I drove by Sabatino's several months later to see the windows boarded up and a realtor's *For Sale* sign pounded into the front turf. The Lions would have to search for another restaurant to ruin.



(Continued from page 14)

Cousin J.C. Crawford drumming for the Mojo Boogie Band.

## Burn And Learn

Cousin JC's Mojo Boogie bandmate Bill Lynn had developed a nice business providing stage sound and lighting for the local concert scene, but in time he sold his equipment and moved to Fort Lauderdale. With the Ann Arbor commune breaking up, JC headed off to California, then swung down to Florida to visit his friend. Bill had resuscitated his stage sound and lighting enterprise there and JC decided to stay and join the business.

While visiting a girlfriend in Jamaica, JC got into an interesting conversation with a couple from the States who were sailing in the Caribbean and had moored at the Montego Bay Yacht Club. By sheer coincidence, the husband, Bart Whitehead, was the brother of one of JC's close college classmates. They cordially exchanged cards and JC returned to Florida.

About a week later, JC received a call from Captain Bart who explained that his wife was too sick to continue sailing. She was taking a plane home and Bart needed help commandeering the boat back to the USA.

The money offered was good and JC accepted the offer, flying down to the Bahamas to assume his temporary position as ship's mate. Within days of setting sail in Bahamian waters, the craft was stopped by the US Coast Guard and ordered to "Heave to!"

The officers came aboard and requested permission to inspect the vessel. A reluctant Captain

Bart agreed and after an hour of intensive searching, the officers again requested permission, this time to drill holes in the interior hull. To JC's horror, the officers came back with a handful of a green leafy substance that they believed to be marijuana.

"Bart, are 'we' smuggling something?" JC recoiled.

The boat was put under tow with Bart and JC under arrest. There turned out to be 300 pounds of pot packed in vacuum-sealed plastic. The contraband had been completely fiberglassed over inside the hull. This was a well-planned and calculated endeavor and obviously Captain Bart was at the heart of the matter.

Back in Fort Lauderdale, Captain Bart and JC were taken into custody and arraigned. JC posted \$5,000 bail with a bail bondsman and set out to defend his innocence. At first, Captain Bart was little help, but with a little leverage, he eventually testified on JC's behalf. Nonetheless, the jury simply didn't buy the story. They were both found guilty.

Between conviction and sentencing, JC assessed his situation and would have been quite all right with serving time had he actually committed a crime, but the notion of significant jail time for something that he didn't do just wasn't going to sit well. One afternoon, he told Bill he was going out for a walk and he didn't come back.

Vanished.

In fact, JC had done his research and purchased plane fare back to Jamaica – one of the few countries that had no extradition treaty with the US. He knew the lay of the land there and thought it was worth a shot.



(JC's story continues on page 215.)





*Chris Martin in bad pants with his grandfather.*

## Fishing For Blues

C. F. Martin IV (Chris) was born the first and only son of Frank Herbert Martin and Joan Simms Martin. The marriage, Frank's first of four, had little chance of survival. Joan remarried a doctor and Chris's last name was changed to Greth. During his childhood, he knew little of the Martin family's guitarmaking heritage.

In his early teens, Chris visited Nazareth and became enamored with his grandfather, C. F. Martin III. Through their conversations, Chris learned about the family's incredible legacy and the significance of his original last name.

For several summers, Chris worked at the factory at an assortment of odd jobs. Then while attending school in Southern California, he worked in a music store, assembling his own guitar from a kit. Gradually, the notion of who he was emerged and he made the decision to change his name back to C. F. Martin IV.

It was during this tumultuous time that I first met Chris. At the time, we were both die-hard bohemians and we became friends quickly. Chris had finished college and was working in the Martin Sales Department. He had a natural propensity for mischief that occasionally centered around his fascination with cannabis. He was cultivating a thriving pair of plants named Homer & Jethro in the office. Helen, who had worked in sales for many years, thought the plants were very attractive. No one seemed to be aware of what marijuana plants looked like. It was really quite hilarious until his secret was

revealed. Then, of course, there was a flurry of scandal and controversy.

Chris found himself in a similar predicament when he brought a plate full of special brownies to work. Realizing what they were, I tried one. They packed a wallop, but several people tried them without being prepared and once again, Chris was the bad boy. At the time, that was a part of his natural charm.

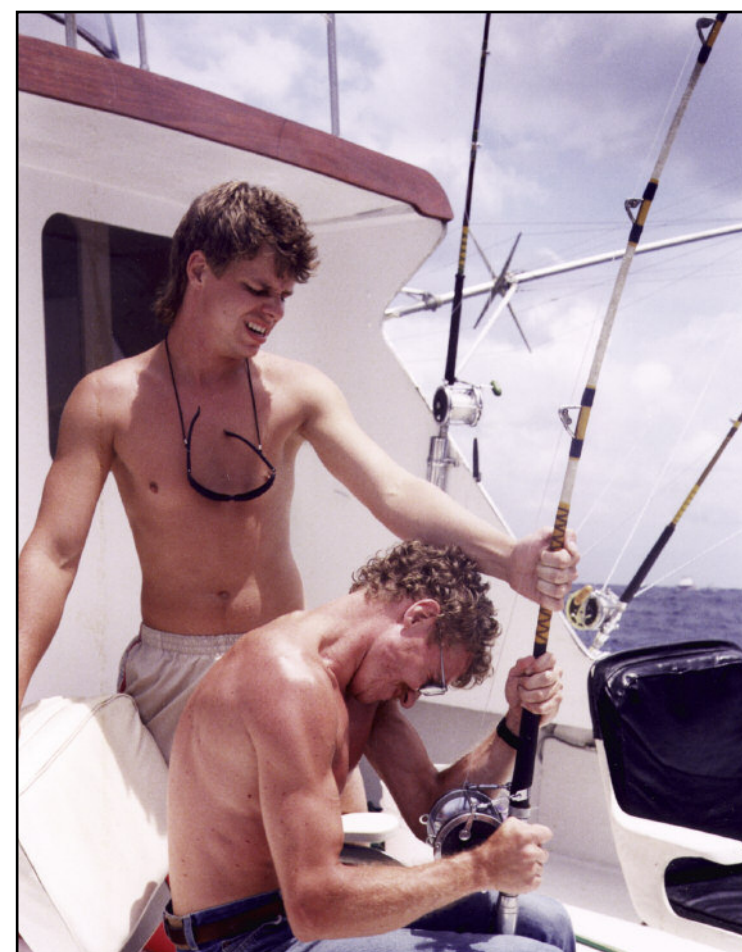
Steve Geigas roomed with Chris in college and they had remained great friends. Steve loved to go night fishing and he invited Chris and me to troll for bluefish out along the central Jersey coast. Chris's half brother Doug and cousin Albert joined us. Late on a Friday after work, we drove down to the outskirts of Philadelphia, picked Steve up, and raced to Barnegat Bay to board our boat before its scheduled departure. We made it just in time.

The boat was a big metal clunker. Two by two, several dozen burly-bearded ruffians in yellow raingear lugged huge coolers packed to the gills with Budweiser onto the deck. The testosterone was running rampant.

I'm not a beer drinker. I'm not much of a fisherman either. Timidly, I boarded with my Jordache suitcase. I had packed it hastily with my olive green V-neck sweater, an extra pair of khakis, my penny loafers, a chilled bottle of Chardonnay, a twist of fresh mozzarella and a baguette of French bread. By the looks of things, I sensed that I was in deep trouble.



*Chris looking slightly skeptical at the Guild Of American Luthiers Convention in Boston.*



*Chris reeling, with support from brother Douglas.*

The captain was a huge tobacco-chewing unshaven thug with hairy arms, two missing teeth and black boots up to his knees. He steered us out of the harbor into the heaving waves. I took Dramamine number one as the others chugged their first six packs. Not wanting to miss a second of fishing, all on board were preparing their rods, tying their hooks, fitting their sinkers and baiting up with chum (a pleasant term for rotten stinking pieces of dismembered fish guts).

I wasn't anxious to dive right into the fishing routine so I uncorked my bottle of Chardonnay in one of the inside cabins and sliced up some mozzarella. The constant pitching and slamming of the ship in the waves was making it difficult for my unsettled stomach to enjoy the wine and cheese so instead, I took Dramamine number two and decided to join Chris, Steve and the boys out on deck.

The captain was doing his rounds, making sure that everyone was pulling in the fish. Every few minutes someone's rod would flex under the





*CFM IV with the catch of the day.*

tension. The reels would whirl and monster bluefish would clear the railing and slam down onto the metal deck. The captain had seen me at my table inside and I'm sure he thought I was a bit light in the loafers. He took pity on me though and pulled an extra rod down off of the wall for me.

"Here. This'll do," he grunted.

He reached deep in his pocket and came up with a pair of filthy pliers and a sinker the size of a chickpea. He slapped the sinker on my line a few yards from the hook and crimped it tight. Grabbing my arm like a toothpick, he dragged me over to the starboard side rail and flung my line out with a nice fluid cast into the blackness.

"Thank you, Captain." I tried my best to convey as much base masculinity as I could muster up.

It didn't take long for my line to become entangled with four or five of my adjacent fishermen. They weren't amused. The captain saw what had happened and wasted no time. He yanked the rod away from me like a misbehaved child, took

out a gigantic serrated pocketknife, and cut my line loose.

"Sorry, fellas." He apologized to the starboard anglers who were gradually getting back to business. A few of them took the opportunity to chug another six-pack before reaching back into their buckets of chum.

I was humiliated.

I stood there unsure of exactly what to do, then retired to my back quarters for some refreshments. The Dramamine was kicking in big time. I dozed off for about an hour and a half, and then shuffled back out to check the progress. It was amazing. There were bluefish everywhere, a pair of small sharks, a few stripers and a tuna. Everyone was hockerin' and chewing tobacco, smokin' stogies or burros, chuggin' the brew and cussin', throwin' chum like it was goin' outta style, pissin' over the side, havin' a hell of a time.

The captain caught a glimpse of me and wandered over.

"You're gonna catch a fish tonight or else!"

He gave me his own rod this time and with pliers in his teeth, he opened his tackle box and retrieved a sinker the size of a golf ball.

"This'll keep yer line from tanglin' up."

He was right about that. He led me over to the stern of the boat where he dropped my line straight down over the back rail, 90° to the water. The sinker was so heavy it was actually a chore to keep it away from the propeller. I stood there obediently, however, holding the rod steady awaiting further instruction.

Half an hour went by. The captain came over to check my line. He reeled it up with an impatient sigh.

"Yer outta chum. Bait 'er up."

Reluctantly, I reached into the disgusting bucket and reloaded my hook, carefully edging it back down into the sea. Ten more minutes passed. The captain returned.

"Here. Gimme that!" He pulled the rod out of my hands, reeled it up, slapped some fresh chum onto the hook, cast it out, tugged the line to the left, tugged the line to the right, let it out, reeled it back in, then yanked it tight.

"There. You got one. Reel her in."

He handed me the rod with a cocky sneer. I took it and mimicking my fellow fisherman, I pulled and

reeled, pulled and reeled. All eyes were on me. The fish was coming up fighting all the way. I gave a hefty pull and that sucker came flying up over the rail, up over my head against the cabin wall, missing the captain's face by an inch. He spit out his tobacco wad and turned to me.

"Yer done." He was so mad I think he was ready to take out his serrated knife and chop me up for chum. I thought it best to sit out the remainder of

## How Not To Prepare Bluefish While Dinner Guests Are Watching.

1. Attempt to filet the bluefish without any prior experience at filleting and without a proper filleting knife. Miscalculate the timing of the meal so that dinner guests arrive during this step.
2. Try not to appear flustered when the filets completely disintegrate into a mishmash of tiny bones and fish slivers.
3. Retrieve the blender with an air of confidence as if this had somehow been part of the plan from the start.
4. Separate any salvageable chunks of bone-free fish. Deposit the remaining 90% into the blender.

### Ingredients:

- 1 Unusual looking bowl of blender pulverized bluefish
- 1 Small plate of boneless bluefish chunks
- 1 Stick of salted butter
- 1 Bowl of mashed potatoes
- 1 Brick of Cracker Barrel cheddar cheese, fully grated
- 1 Container of bread crumbs
- 1/4 Cup of sesame seeds
- 1/4 Cup of fresh parsley
- 1/4 Teaspoon of paprika
- Salt & Pepper to taste

In a casserole dish, spread a half inch deep layer of mashed potatoes. Arrange the boneless bluefish chunks on top of the mashed potatoes, pressing them firmly into position. Cut and arrange several small pads of butter, then sprinkle grated cheese, bread crumbs, parsley and sesame seeds to complete first layer.

Add second thinner layer of mashed potatoes topped with 1/4" thick layer of bluefish "puree." Repeat layering of butter, cheese, bread crumbs, parsley and sesame seeds.

Repeat layers until casserole is full or ingredients are depleted, saving enough cheese to completely cover the top. Garnish with remaining parsley and paprika. Cover with foil.

**Bake:** 30 minutes at 275° F.

**Broil:** Approx. 5 minutes until cheese turns golden brown.

**Serve:** To the amazement of your horrified guests.



the excursion in the cabin sipping my wine and polishing off the mozzarella. Chris, Steve and the rest were trying to pretend they didn't know me. It was better that way.

When we got back to the dock, I had had a nice Dramamine-induced snooze. Everyone else was either shit-faced or exhausted. I offered to drive. It was my last ditch chance to make myself somewhat useful.

I was making great time cruising down Route 72, a two lane highway that slices a straight line from Barnegat to Buddtown. Everyone else was asleep except for Chris, who was riding shotgun and keeping one drowsy eye on my driving.

"Slow down," Chris mumbled in a low monotone. I didn't really hear what he said. I was so focused on the road. Then I saw it. Eighty miles an hour and I was coming right into one of those



*Martin quartersawn white oak Dreadnought prototype.  
(From the collection of Steve Geigas)*



*Diane Repyneck and Chris Martin at their wedding.*

famous New Jersey traffic circles. Chris reached over and grabbed the wheel. He pulled it hard to the right and the van screeched up on two tires. The tires hit the curb and I pulled the wheel back the other direction, then Chris yanked it back again, then we swerved back onto the highway. We were through it. It was a wonder we didn't flip.

I pulled over to the shoulder. Without a word, Chris and I got out of the van and switched positions.

He drove back to Philly where we dropped Steve off, then back to Nazareth where we divvied up more bluefish filets than any of us could possibly have consumed. The remains were conveniently bequeathed to Martin's North Street dumpster just up the street from Chris's house. This final act was committed to the great surprise and ultimate dismay of Ron Flick, the North Street building manager, who discovered the dumpster full of anonymously deposited rotting chum on Monday morning after the contents had fermented in the hot 90° sun for 48 hours.

Two decades later, that dumpster still reeks out a steady testament to my full indoctrination into the alien world of blue fishing.

## Amish Ice Adventure

Steve Geigas was in the pallet business. It was inevitable that our common interest in sawmills would eventually collide. There was an Amish pallet mill northwest of Harrisburg that upon Steve's request was setting aside special planks of highly figured birdseye maple and quartersawn white oak. Chris and I thought the wood might make some special guitars. We secured the beat-up company Dodge station wagon and headed west on I-78 in the frostbitten January cold.

We met up with Steve at the mill. The saws were slicing up pallet stock like there was no tomorrow. Everyone's breath was hovering in white puffs. Things were moving so quickly, there was barely enough time to stop and separate a special plank here and there. With the reluctant assistance of the Amish mill foreman, we suffered over a few hundred planks, picked out some unusual looking boards, loaded them up, said our goodbyes to Steve, and headed out before dusk.

Heading east on the Interstate, the wind picked up and thick snow pummeled us in waves at a 45° angle. Cognizant of my prior vehicular shortcomings, Chris opted to drive. We were slicing through the blizzard at 70 miles an hour when an immense tractor trailer passed us doing 80. When the truck was about a football field ahead of us we were both horrified to see a gigantic inch-thick sheet of solid ice lift off the top of the trailer like a 4' x 8' sheet of plywood. It hovered and rotated effortlessly in the wind, flying through the cold black air and crashed headon into our windshield!

The glass in front of us shattered and fractured in a spiderweb of a million broken fragments. With no visibility, Chris slowed long enough to expose a small flap in the safety glass. Peering through the tiny opening, we sped up and chased the truck for five miles, finally catching up long enough to jot the license number down on a napkin, then we pulled over to assess our situation.

The damage was extreme and we were frozen to the bone, but we decided to forge ahead, the heater pumping hot air with minimal results. For ninety miles we crept. I supported the weakened windshield with both hands to keep it from collapsing. We arrived home petrified and in shock. It was a bit



difficult explaining the damage to Francis, the traffic manager. I'm not sure he believed us. Who would have?

The planks made it home intact and a pair of spectacular white oak prototypes emerged, setting the stage for future Martin guitars made with sustainable Pennsylvania hardwoods. Steve owns one of those prototypes and it has a cold dry icy sound that seems to whistle through the long pores and radial striations of the acrid white oak. It's an unusual sound that conjures up strange memories.

## Life Sentence

One of the attributes that Chris inherited from his father was an affinity for fast automobiles. One balmy evening, he was testing the capacity of his new Porsche within the boundaries of the notorious hamlet of Hellertown. All of a sudden the flashing red lights were upon him. The resulting speeding ticket was severe and placed his driving privileges in jeopardy.

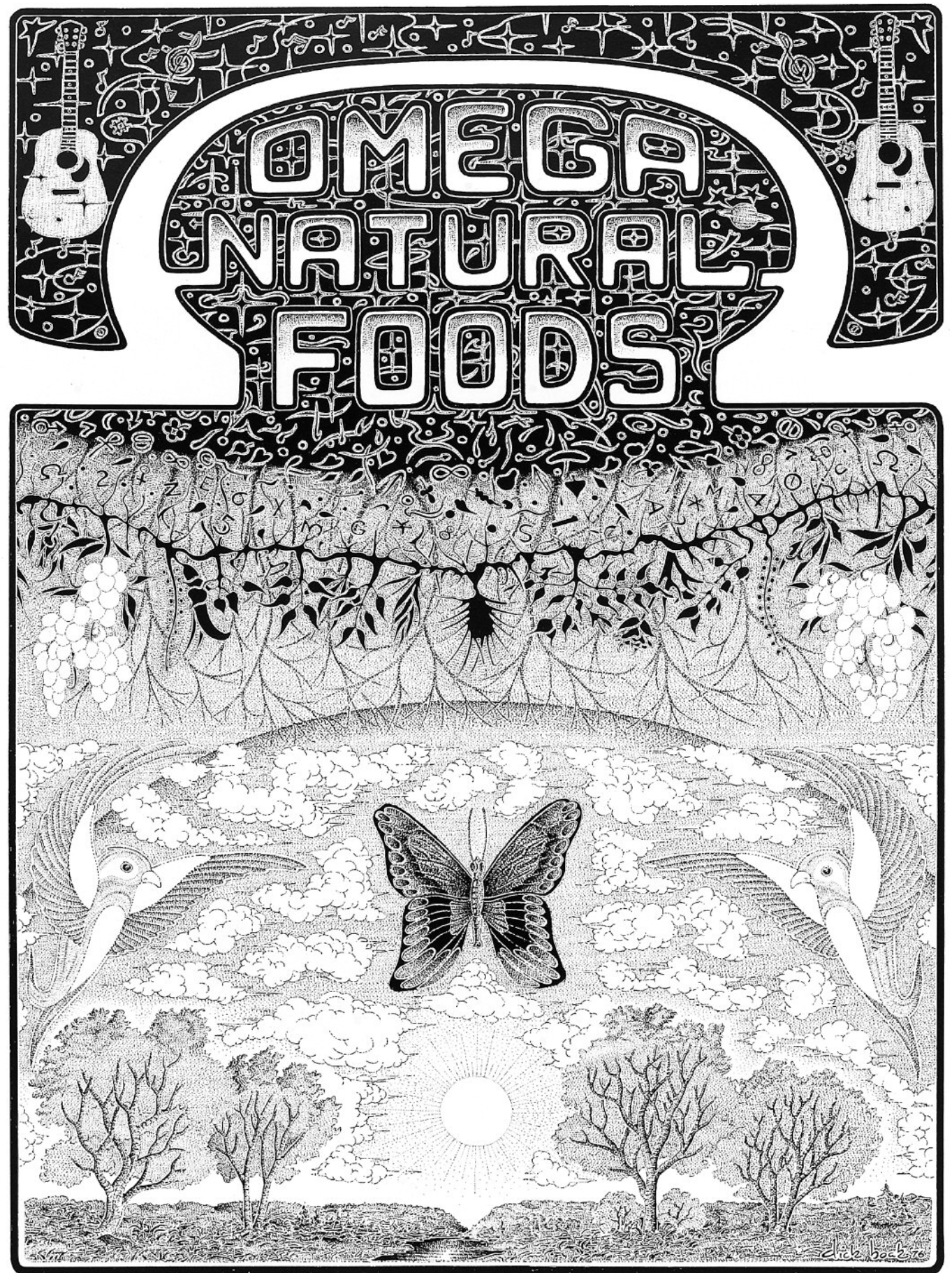
Chris's strategy had always been to contest such offenses with a not-guilty plea. He arrived at the district justice's office for the hearing, well equipped with an easel and illustration board which neatly depicted the site of his violation. An older distinguished looking gentleman sat at a desk in the corner of the room. Chris assumed this was the judge. There was also an attractive brunette in the room, who it seemed was most likely the court secretary. Chris flirted with her until a clerk called all parties into the hearing room. The brunette turned out to be the honorable Diane Repynck, District Magistrate. She donned her robes and listened to his testimony.

With tiny matchbox replicas of the police vehicle and his stone metallic grey Porsche, a self-represented Chris re-enacted the incident for the magistrate. The gist of his case was that the speed limit signs were inadequately posted. Though she was somewhat impressed with his unorthodox presentation, she was skeptical about the validity of his claims. She drove out and measured the distance between signs.

Without any real evidence to justify an acquittal, she pronounced him guilty and levied the appropriate fine. She did, however, withhold giving him any points and Chris sped away with a sense of exhilaration.

Several days later, Diane received a phone call from Chris asking her whether she would consider having dinner with a convicted felon. She accepted. It wasn't long before they were married. Chris says she gave him a life sentence. He's serving it out, albeit under great scrutiny of his daily accelerations.

*Commissioned but never remunerated poster for Omega Natural Foods store, Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania. Pen & Ink, 1976*







*Negative Landscape, Pen & Ink, 1976*



*John Saylor, Blindfolded & Rendered Portrait, Pencil, 1977*



## The Crux Of Art

Artists become cognizant that their tension, emptiness, anger, and distress can provide an effective fuel for the unleashing of creative energy. I don't mean to suggest that one should seek out these anxieties for inspiration, rather that the individual be aware of and ready to redirect emotional turbulence or overflow toward technically pre-developed intuitive outlets, thereby nurturing, strengthening, and accelerating one's sense of purpose while creating a positive and aesthetic visual object that records the tangible history of that individual and of that time.

### Containers

*(Key of G. Sing with feeling!)*

Since you're sitting there and you're asking  
let me tell you how I feel.  
My heart thrives on starvation  
but my stomach needs a meal.  
No I'm not the one in question.  
I just do the things I must;  
erecting all of my fantasies  
out of relics in the dust.  
Your tools are what are important.  
Don't let them go to rust.....

I considered keeping my mouth shut  
until I reached that age  
when I found that all of my freedom  
still stayed with me in the cage.  
And so my voice is getting louder now  
but my song remains unsung,  
and though I'm weary from this journey  
I've really only just begun.  
I'm tired of all this walking.  
I think I'll start to run.....

Running around in circles  
doesn't get you anywhere,  
because you can't stay under the water  
without coming up for air.  
The past has not been easy  
but it's carried you this far,  
and you can't remain on a mountain-top  
without searching for a star.  
I wonder how long it might be my friend  
'til we see just who we are.....

So don't speak to me of incompetence;  
your voice is what you bring.  
Blend it in with some harmony  
and let your instinct sing.  
There is plenty I could tell you now  
but the words just can't begin  
to describe to you what I'm feeling now  
or what's happening within.  
These words are just the containers  
that I put my feelings in.....

*Repeat and fade...*

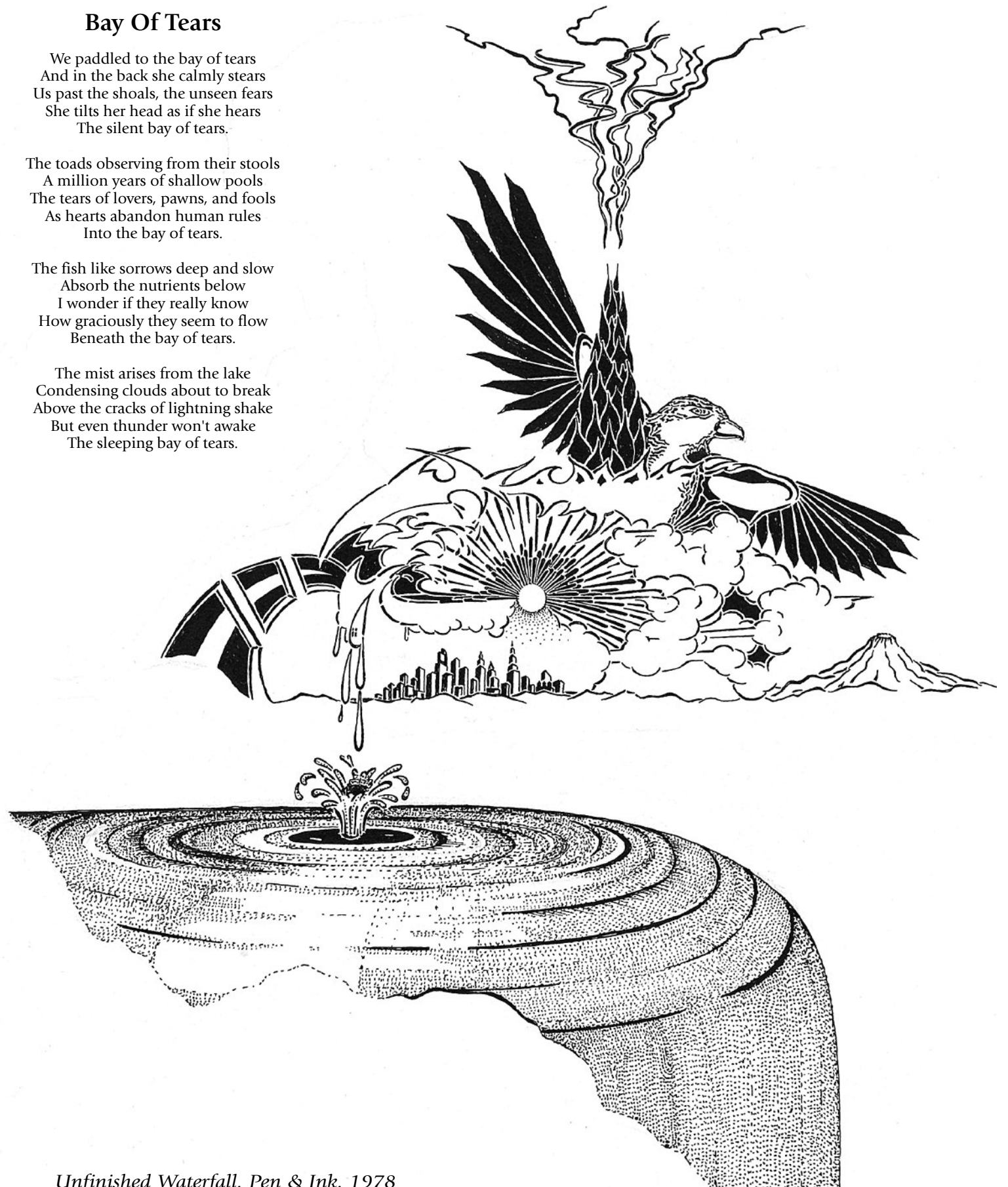
### Bay Of Tears

We paddled to the bay of tears  
And in the back she calmly steers  
Us past the shoals, the unseen fears  
She tilts her head as if she hears  
The silent bay of tears.

The toads observing from their stools  
A million years of shallow pools  
The tears of lovers, pawns, and fools  
As hearts abandon human rules  
Into the bay of tears.

The fish like sorrows deep and slow  
Absorb the nutrients below  
I wonder if they really know  
How graciously they seem to flow  
Beneath the bay of tears.

The mist arises from the lake  
Condensing clouds about to break  
Above the cracks of lightning shake  
But even thunder won't awake  
The sleeping bay of tears.



*Unfinished Waterfall. Pen & Ink. 1978*



## Practicing Piano

she plays piano  
her back is firm  
there is a rip in her jeans  
right down the back  
a patch of red panties with white dots  
shows through the tear  
she is embarrassed when the old woman  
sees her carrying the laundry downstairs  
in her torn pants.

she is playing a slow song  
it rambles and falls  
it is as if she were combing her hair  
it starts out rough  
the comb tugs  
her hands jerk  
but she plays and plays  
and the snarls come out  
the sound becomes smooth and refined  
and so does she

## The Seconds Of Your Love (A Song)

My heart has open caverns but they're all caving in  
And the walls of my distinction are wearing pretty thin.  
This dizziness is terrible;  
It's set me in a spin.  
Was it worth it for a second of your love?

It wouldn't be so painful but I know that you're alive.  
Telepathy screams out to you in hopes you might revive  
The memories of our depths together;  
Listen to them thrive.  
Reaching for the seconds of your love.

I knew that I was vulnerable but I didn't seem to care.  
Intangibly I felt as if we made a decent pair.  
Our laughter and our passion  
Still lingers in the air.  
Savoring the seconds of your love.

I rarely write my thoughts out when they surface in my mind  
But it's late and I am restless. I'm trying to unwind  
The coils of my loneliness  
In the words you left behind.  
Questioning the seconds of your love?

It's funny how this paradox works something like a key.  
The only way to conquer is to set the cages free;  
To open up those locked doors  
For all eternity.  
It was worth it for a second of your love.

Sixty seconds in a minute, sixty minutes in an hour.  
Time consumes my deepest wounds left open to devour.  
The days stack up so graciously  
Reaching like a tower  
Constructed with the seconds of your love.

## Candy

I'd just completed the melody and lyrics for a song called "Containers." It was about words being the containers for feelings. I was excited to perform the song in front of a live audience and I headed down to *Godfrey Daniels Coffeehouse* in Bethlehem for their weekly Sunday night open mike. There wasn't much of a crowd that night. Half way through the song, I noticed an interesting woman sitting alone at a table close to the stage. For the remainder of the song, I focused my lyrics on her and after my set she introduced herself. Her name was Candy. She liked my lyrics. She was engaging and serene. I was more uncontained and rough around the edges, but Candy didn't seem to have any "edges."

Our conversations revealed a certain degree of turmoil in Candy's life. She was going through a difficult divorce and that was taking a toll. She spent her weekdays teaching underprivileged elementary school children in Allentown – a job that was both challenging and draining for her. I showed her empathy and cautiously, she allowed me into her guarded world. I was falling into an abyss as she was reaching upward and climbing out.

Her apartment was immaculate. She took great pride in having everything in its proper place. My world was India ink, sawdust and autoharp strings. Clearly we were very different, but she was drawn to the artist in me and I was captivated with her tenderness. It was a creative time for me. I used my illustration, woodworking, poetry and music to record our relationship. It seemed to me a kind of giving, though in hindsight I think I was trying to capture and preserve something for myself. She had a porcelain Lladro figurine on a glass shelf. Her husband had given it to her. One day I accidentally bumped it and it smashed into a dozen pieces. Such a symbol – nothing could replace it.

I always had the feeling that Candy longed to be elsewhere and one day, I watched her pack her car. She had sought a new career in upstate New York with an educational book publisher. It was a brand new life for her, like a freshly wrapped figurine. I knew she was making a good choice, but I was too weakened to arrive at the decision on my own. I followed her for a distance on the turnpike the day that she left. She never looked back.

## Autumn

the leaves have all turned  
and most have fallen  
black branches emerge  
like pitch forks with bent prongs  
snow fences are stretched like tourniquets  
tightening upon the swelling cornfield  
to prevent the amber essence  
from bleeding out onto the highway



Candy

## Candy's Giant Potato

Candy bought a giant potato  
No doubt she discovered it  
at the supermarket  
bulging out  
from within the cellophane bag.  
She brought it home  
and put it on her shelf  
between the teabags  
and the milkbones.  
Then she invited me to dinner.

For dinner,  
Candy cooked the giant potato  
and served it to me on a plate  
with rare roast beef cold cuts,  
bite sized carrots,  
and strawberries dowsed in whipped cream.

There were chunks of cold yellow butter  
on the potato.  
Candy brought salt and pepper.  
I think she was excited  
that she had found such a giant potato.  
I think she was proud.

We ate our dinner.  
The potato was delicious.  
Candy was pleased.





Candy



## The Church Of Art

I was so tired of pouring \$300 of monthly rent down a black hole that I started looking at properties. Old barns were interesting to me, but they were all parceled up with farm houses that were way out of my meager price range. So I started looking at cheaper houses that needed fixing up. That was depressing. Just as the futility of my search began to sink in, Chris Martin stopped me in the hallway and asked me whether I had looked at the abandoned Mennonite Church building that was for sale right on South Broad Street in the center of town.

I had passed this property every day on the way to work; in fact I had had an unfortunate fender bender there with the high school French teacher. There was no question that the accident was my fault, but fuming in her beehive hairdo, the teacher demanded my immediate incarceration. She was so overly boisterous that the police became quickly annoyed with her and began to take my side. This infuriated her even more. They ended up carting her away. So that particular corner held some interesting karma for me, but somehow I had never taken notice of the tiny red brick church with *Jesus Saves* in neon above the front window, or the *For Sale* sign wired to the rusted wrought iron hand railing.

I called the realtor and made an appointment. One step inside the door and I knew that I had found what I was looking for. There was one large room with 20 foot ceilings on the main floor. The oak pews were still fastened to the floor. A balcony overlooked the “congregational” area. The whole place was wainscoted. There was a full basement for my shop. The price: a whopping \$25,000. I put down my deposit and proceeded toward settlement.

The day that the documents were signed, I took my sleeping bag and slept between the pews. There was no kitchen. The only running water was a sink in the tiny bathroom in the rear of the basement. I had a lot of work to do.

## Reverend Dick

The whole idea of living in a church was unusual and novel. From the start I felt that the place deserved a name. One evening I took a roll of masking tape and applied it to the inside of the window that faced Broad Street, spelling out *The Church Of Intuitive Art & Music* in bold letters. The interior lights made the silhouetted lettering stand out prominently for the cars passing by. The name seemed to cover the general theme of what I had in mind.

Somehow, the town’s people didn’t get it. I don’t think that the people of Nazareth knew exactly what the word intuitive meant. Even if they did, its juxtaposition with art and music was just a bit too much. I think they thought that a hippie religious cult had moved in, something on the order of *Charles Manson* or the *Symbionese Liberation Army*.

Word reached me from a number of different avenues that the title I had chosen just wasn’t cutting it. I buckled to the pressure. After much deliberation, I axed the offensive word, shortening the name to simply *The Church Of Art*. For the most part, this placated the community. There were always going to be those who thought that anyone choosing to live in a church must be considered either sacrilegious or dangerous.

All of my friends joked with me about my new church affiliation. I must admit that I found tremendous humor in this and played right into their hands. Soon I was widely and irreverently dubbed *Reverend Dick*.



*Church Of Art, Oil on canvas by artist Kevin Broad.*



There was considerable confusion about my official tax status as well. Most everyone assumed that since I lived in a church, I would automatically be exempt from paying taxes. No one wished this to be the case more than myself. The fact was, I didn't really know how the tax laws worked. So I inquired.

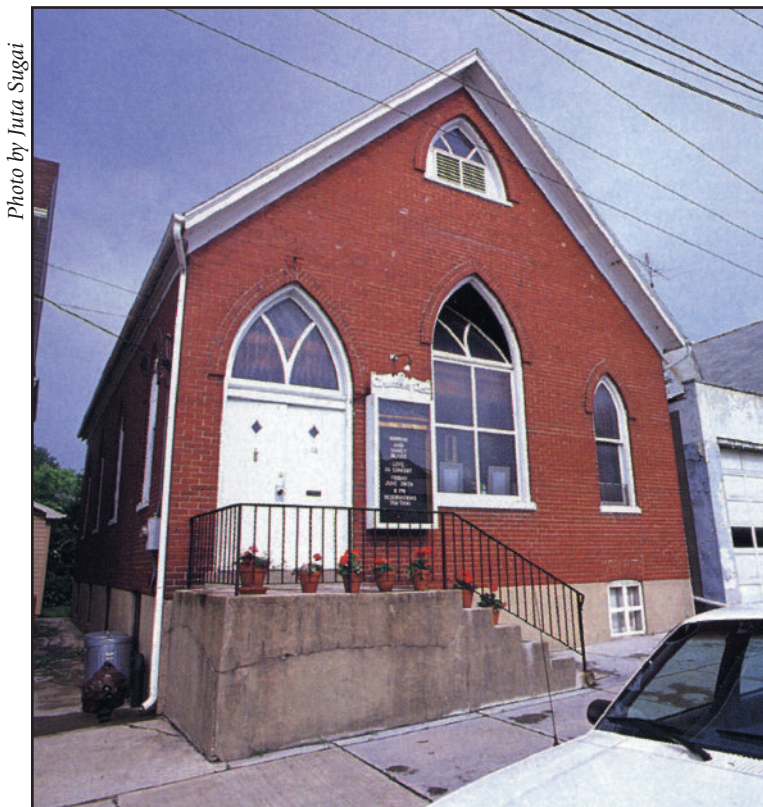
It seems that in order for the state or the federal government to recognize a church, there needs to be a church charter. Ideally, there is an affiliation with a larger officially recognized religious entity. Then there is the matter of a congregation and regular services. Attendance records and schedules must be kept in order to qualify. There seemed to be an awful lot involved.

During this mild spirituality crisis, I found myself sitting on my couch reading, of all things, *The Mother Earth News*. There in the classified section was the answer to my dilemma:

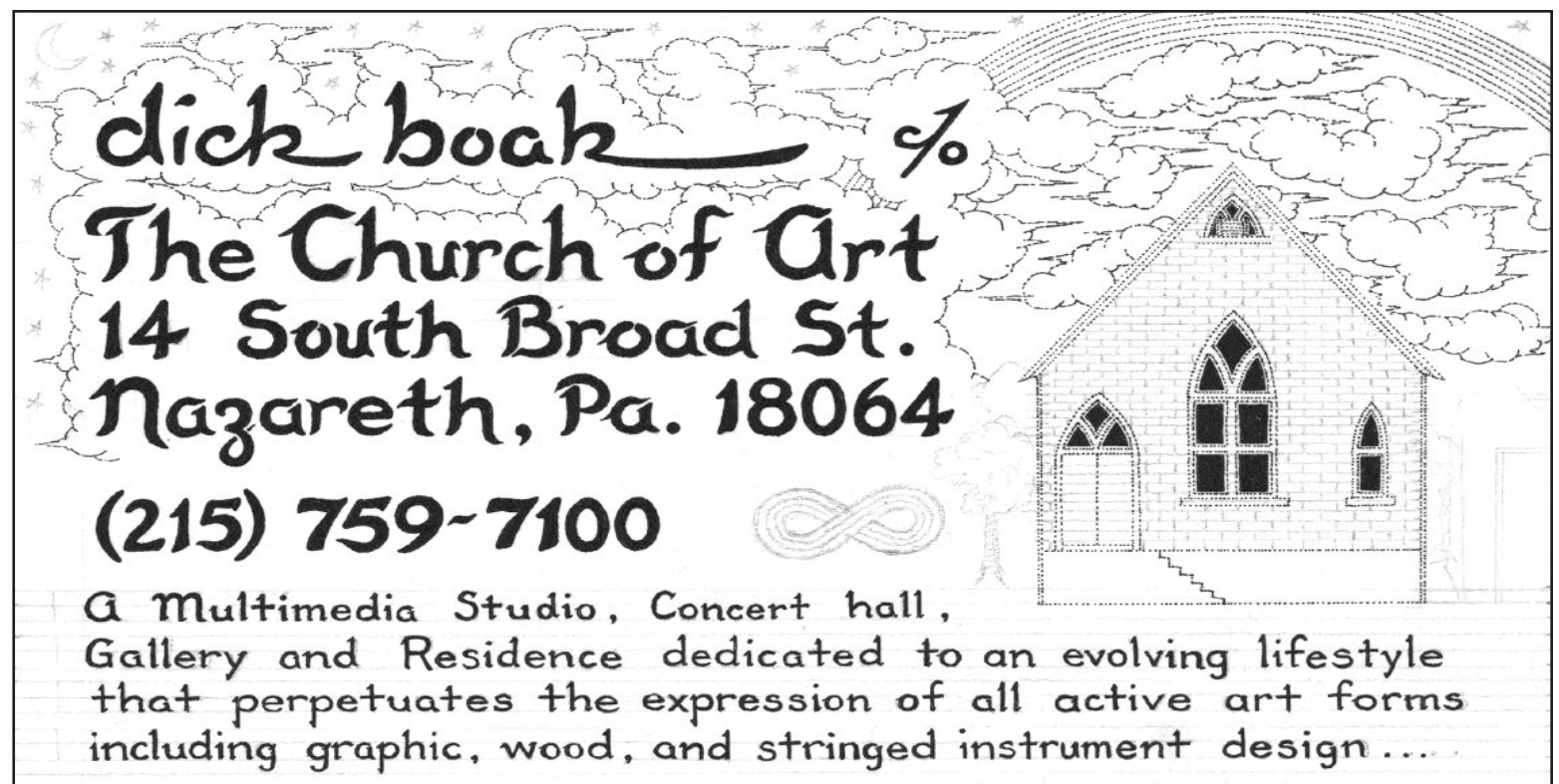
**Become An Officially Ordained Minister Of  
The Mother Earth Church.**

For complete details, church charter information,  
ordination documents, marriage licenses, and more,  
send \$15 to:

The Mother Earth Church, Inc.  
469 Pacific Street, Monterey, California 93940



Church Of Art exterior, circa 1982.



Unfinished Calling Card for the Church Of Art, pencil, pen and ink, 1980.

Of course, I promptly sent in my \$15 and soon received my *Certificate of Ordination*. This was clearly a joke, but an enjoyable one at that. The odd thing is that the very concept of *Art as Religion* is one that I am quite capable of grasping. I genuinely agree with the idea that creativity is the imitation of God. With all this tongue-in-cheek humor about the Church of Art and Reverend Dick, there was a real spirit about the place, and I made a concerted effort to encourage and promote creativity and multimedia art as a way of life.

My father had retired from the Sales Department of Bethlehem Steel. He was extremely thrilled that I was finally settling into a place of my own. Seeing the daunting task in front of me, he offered to help. He was a great house painter and he loved working with his hands. I think there was a part of him that longed for a simpler grassroots kind of life, where hands-on craftsmanship held more importance

than stressful business negotiation.

While I was busy during the day at Martin, my father was hard at work in the church. He repaired the cracks in the ceiling and gave all of the plaster a fresh coat of eggshell paint. He sanded and refinished the floors, then he stained and varnished all the yellow pine wainscoting.

When he was done on the inside, he started scraping the window trim on the outside. The best thing about my father's help was the bond that was created between us. We didn't really need to talk about it, but we both felt it. He was proud of what I was becoming.

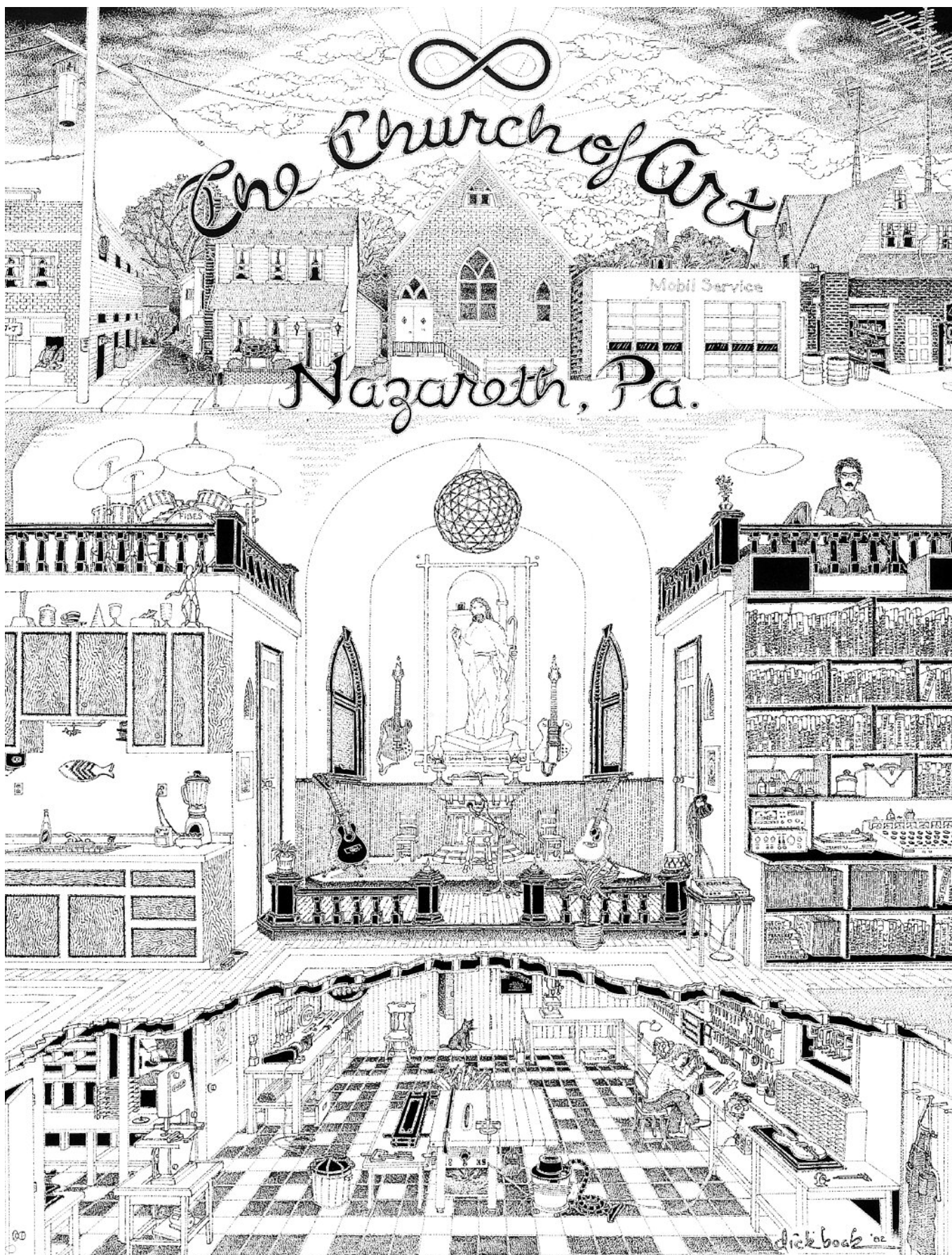
I think he was vicariously experiencing an aspect of life that had evaded him during his career. I was certainly appreciative of his unlimited willingness to share in the sweat of my project. He left large pieces of his soul and pride on the many surfaces of that building.

And there he remains.



Thomas Dickson Boak, Sr.





Church Of Art, Pen & Ink. 1982



## Deacon Dale

After the room was restored to its modest grandeur, the need for a bathroom, kitchen and storage closet became increasingly evident. To top it off, the rainspouts were clogged and water was seeping down the sides of the building into the basement. Several inches had accumulated and the toilet wasn't functioning. The place needed a small miracle.

In the trusty Yellow Pages, I found *Unger & Sons Plumbing & Heating*. Early the next morning, they dispatched a truck that came out to Martin to pick up the key to my front door. I met briefly with the fellow and gave him directions and instructions.

After work, I returned to the Church to find the plumber standing on the altar, plugged into my amplifier and wailing on one of my electric guitars. It was a little weird. He was slightly embarrassed.

We talked for a while. He explained that he had always wanted to learn how to build guitars. He proposed that I teach him guitarmaking and in exchange, he would help me with some of the plumbing work. I wasn't really looking for another apprentice, but he was persistent. We made a deal.

His name was Dale Unger. It didn't take long before we were best friends. We worked every available hour on outfitting the Church of Art and building an assortment of acoustic and electric guitars together.

I often frequented *Godfrey Daniels*, a thriving coffee house and folk music stage in south Bethlehem. There I had become good friends with Jay Thomas who was part of local band called *Little Known Diseases*. I temporarily added my own autoharp and vocal "malady" to their instrument mix. Jay was running sound for



several local bands and with his help, I purchased a BiAmp 12-channel powered mixing board for the Church. After completing an oak console to hold the board (*see photo at left*), Dale, Jay and I ran a snake down along the ceiling of the basement and up to the altar/stage and hard-wired a substantial patch bay for microphones and direct boxes.

The general operating principle at the Church of Art was that every possible feature and fixture should be handcrafted wherever possible out of wood. The speakers for the sound system were no exception. With Jay's help and expertise, I designed two pairs of speaker enclosures, then spent several weeks crafting the cabinets out of several beautiful wide planks of 3/4" African padauk, a reddish-orange wood that like ziricote, yields a sawdust that adheres to anything and everything it contacts. It also turns clothing an indelible shade of orange, but I was thoroughly accustomed to dealing with sawdust. It fit nicely with my deluded philosophy that ingesting airborne particulates through the nostrils was somehow soulful and nutritious. The speakers were a great success though and they were more than adequate for the concerts that would follow.

Photo by Ronnie Simpson



Lois Brownsey and Kent Heckman of "Ruby" at the first Church of Art concert.



Photo by Julia Sngai

Church Of Art interior from balcony prior to altar renovation. 1982

## Live In Concert

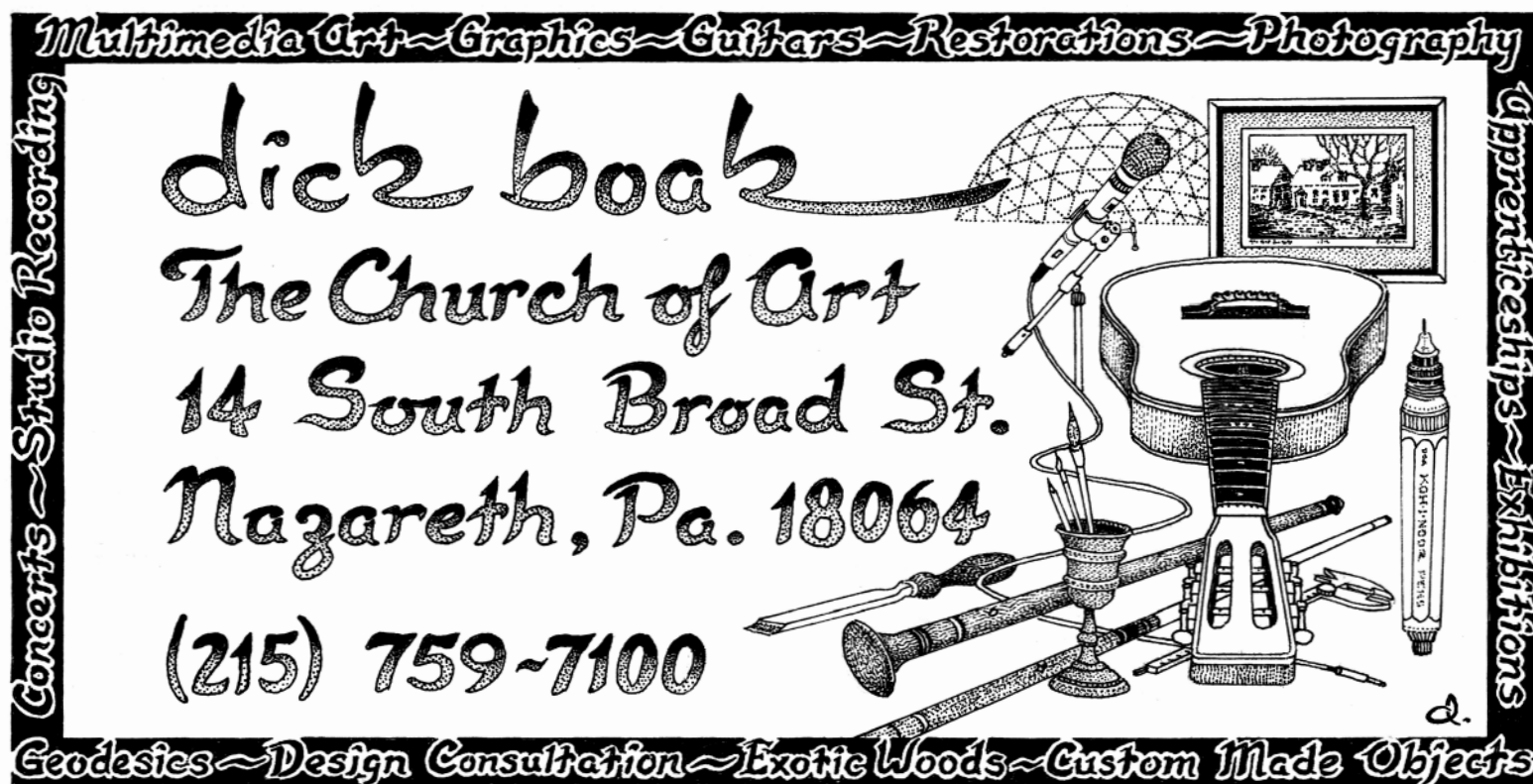
When Dale Unger saw that I had installed a mixing board and semi-professional concert sound system, he joined in my excitement about the prospect of putting on some shows. Dale was very interested and well versed in running sound for concerts. He had close ties with Kent Heckman and Lois Brownsey, local musicians who ran *Red Rock Recording Studios* up in Sciota. They also had a pretty successful rock band named *Ruby*. Kent played electric guitar, Lois played bass, and they shared vocals. The other members of the band handled keyboards, percussion, saxophone, and believe it or not... car parts. Dale often accompanied Kent and Lois on gigs and helped with their sound.

It seemed logical that the first concert at the Church of Art would be *Ruby*. About a month in advance, I made up a small poster and distributed Xerox copies to my friends,

Dale took a stack and so did Kent and Lois. Tickets were \$5.00, reservations were encouraged, and guests were invited to BYOB. I had bought about thirty folding chairs at a local auction, plus I had saved a half dozen church pews. Combined with the regular furniture and extra space up in the balcony, it was possible to arrange the space to accommodate more than one hundred people, so that's what we did. Dale ran the sound, recording the mix onto cassettes and I assumed the role of host and master of ceremonies. Word spread pretty effectively and *The Ruby Sessions* concert was a big success. We packed the church, had a great party, and paid the band \$500. It was satisfying for me to have people see what a cool concept the Church of Art could be. It was also a great vehicle to promote music and art and to display my drawings, guitars, and woodworking.

And so Dale and I planned more concerts, generally spaced about a month or two apart.





Calling Card for the Church Of Art, pen and ink, 1981.

Between concerts we built guitars. Ruby was soon reincarnated in the form of a fusion/rock band called *The Steamin' Jimmies*, and local guitarist Rick Levy had formed a 60s retro rock band called *The Limits*. Both of these concerts ended with the pews being moved aside to make room for some raucous dancing.

I was fortunate to meet another pair of remarkable musicians local to the Lehigh Valley. Electric guitarist Mike Krisukas and special effects violinist Mark Golin were just beginning their unique instrumental collaboration when in a burst of spontaneity they showed up at the Church for a Sunday afternoon jam session. This was a memorable afternoon given that right in the middle of the impromptu rehearsal, in walked a thoroughly intoxicated fellow who had mistaken the Church of Art for an actual "religious" institution. He was there to be saved, but we were too into the music to stop. Our fresh convert picked up a nearby yardstick and using it as a baton, conducted our music in an amusing drunken stupor for more than an hour. At that point the alcohol began to wear off enough for him to realize that we were in no better position to save his soul than he was in directing our music. So

off he went, a better, though perhaps more confused wretch for the experience.

It was clear that Krisikus and Golin had a fabulous dynamic and I enthusiastically booked them for the first of many Church of Art performances. Eventually they added a woodwind/horn player and began calling themselves *Interlaken*. Finally, they took on a notorious glitter band vocalist named T. Roth and toured as *Zen For Primates*. These incredible shows were original and memorable.

I met Roy Book Binder one day at Martin and summoned him for the first of several authentic blues shows, one of which combined the talents of Blind Jim Brewer and Andy Cohen on guitar with the right Reverend Dan Smith on harmonica. That was a sight Nazareth had never seen!

I would occasionally meet touring musicians at work and book them, and as time went on agents started calling me. A string of folk concerts followed with some pretty well known acts such as Buzze Linhart, Jamie Brockett, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, and one of my personal heros – autoharp master and humorist Bryan Bowers.

Eric Schoenberg was highly regarded in music

## Marquis Quotes From The Church of Art

M  
G O D  
V  
E  
D

"Never make the same mistake once."

Mike Longworth

"A dollar saved is a quarter earned."

John Ciardi

"I don't believe in an afterlife, but I'm taking a change of underwear just in case."

Woody Allen

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler."

Albert Einstein

"I don't want to achieve mortality through my work. I want to achieve it through not dying."

Woody Allen

"A man is what he does.  
A woman is what she is."

Doris Dörrie

"It's not that I'm afraid to die.  
I just don't want to be there when it happens."

Woody Allen

"Christ died for our sins. Dare we make his martyrdom meaningless by not committing them?"

James Feiffer

"There's no underestimating the intelligence of the American public."

H. L. Mencken

"Without art, the crudeness of reality would make the world unbearable."

George Bernard Shaw

"No one tests the depths of a river with both feet."

Anonymous

"Originality is the art of concealing your source."

Franklin P. Jones

"Consistency requires you to be as ignorant today as you were a year ago."

Bernard Berenson

"If Christ were here now there is one thing he would not be – a Christian."

Mark Twain

"It often shows a fine command of language to say nothing."

Unknown

"You can give without loving,  
but you can't love without giving."

Amy Carmichael

"Education means developing the mind,  
not stuffing the memory."

Anonymous

"A man snores to protect his woman from wild animals."

Unknown

"Our souls were clean, but the grass didn't grow."

Van Morrison

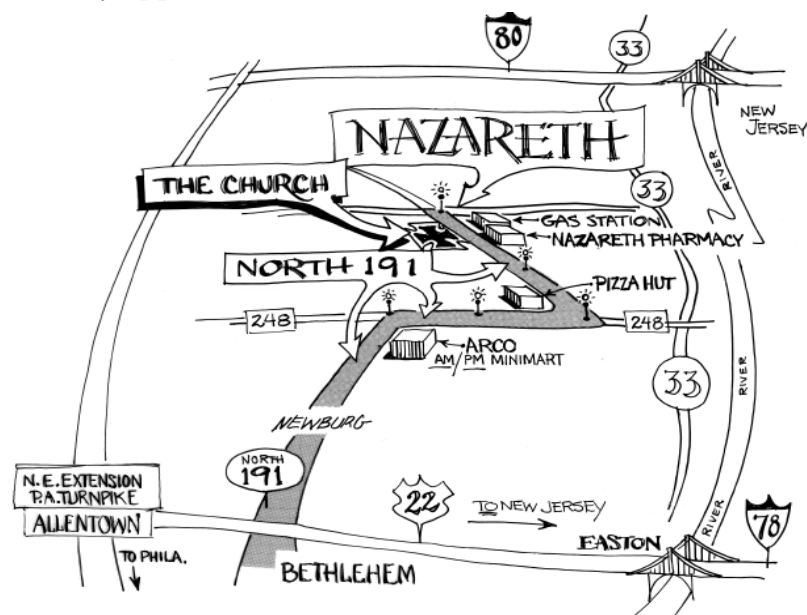


circles as a master of fingerstyle guitar as well as an expert in OM-sized "orchestra models." Eric was involved with Martin in the construction of specially made Schoenberg Soloist guitars, a collaboration that brought him to Nazareth on a fairly regular basis. Eventually, I booked him for a concert and gained a special appreciation for fingerstyle technique.

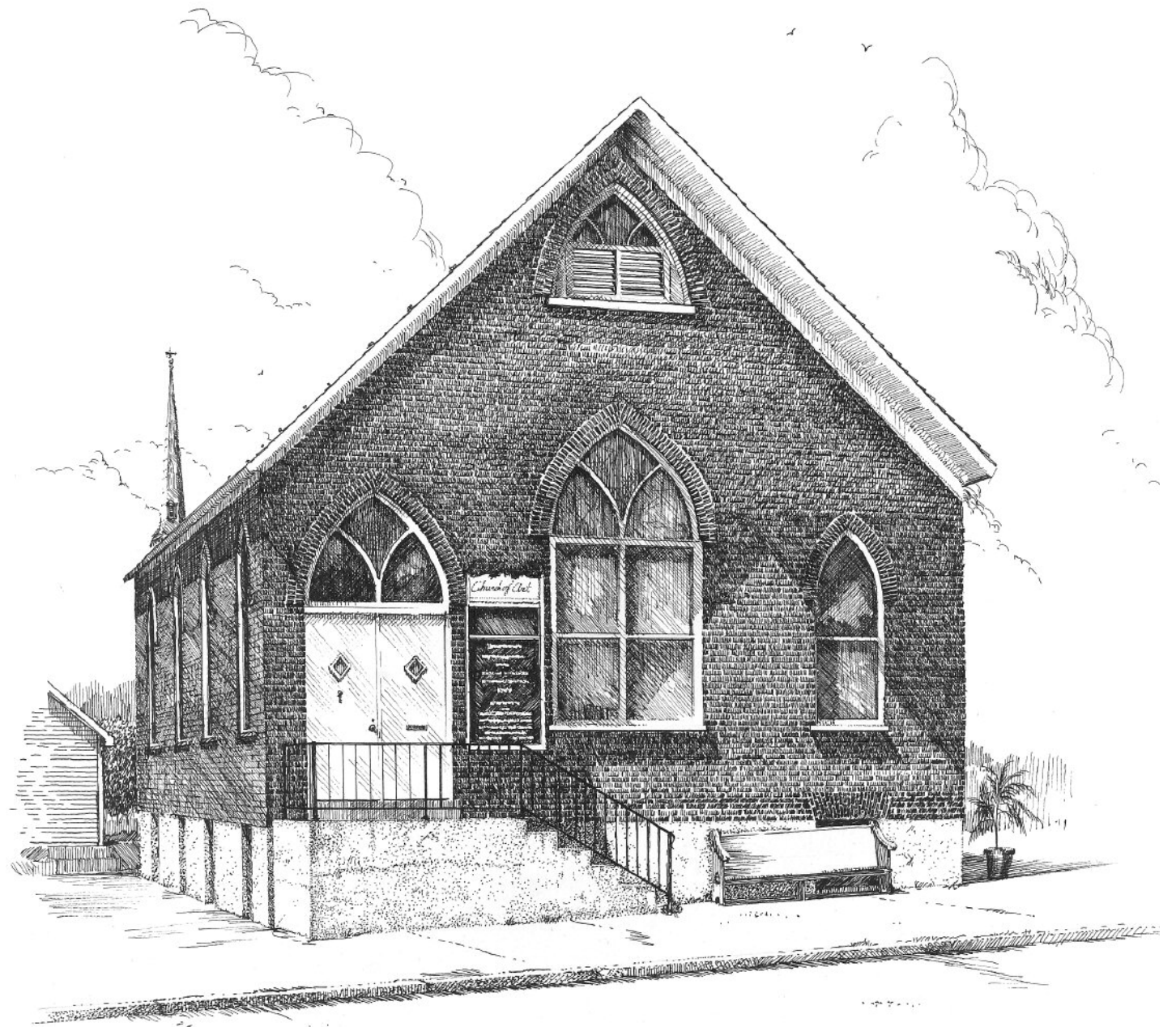
In the bluegrass genre, the National Flatpicking Champion Orrin Starr was joined by Gary Mehalick for an evening of rip-roaring acoustic picking and one day Norman Blake visited Martin and agreed to try to schedule the Church on an upcoming tour. He and his wife Nancy put on an incredible show. They enjoyed it enough to return the following year for a second performance, this time with the full *Rising Fawn String Ensemble*. I was so honored to have musicians of that caliber in my concert hall/church/home.

I must confess that the reputation of the Church was having a positive effect upon my social life. I had become friends with a really nice bank teller from across the street named Amy who had heard about our concerts. She was curious about the place and one afternoon I took her on a tour. Soon we were a regular couple. She was a great and special friend and a key part of my early Church of Art days. I just wasn't mature enough at the time to make any full commitments. That didn't stop me from enjoying life or focusing on the evolving woodworking, guitar, and concert scene at the Church of Art.

Back at work, Chris Martin's best friend Matt McFadden was a proficient bass player. He had joined forces with David and Bryan Becker to form *The David Becker Tribune*. That was the first real sampling of contemporary jazz at the Church and it whet my appetite for more.



Cartoonist Gene Mater's Directions To The Church Of Art



*R. W. Lichtenwalner*  
June 12, 1985 Nazareth, Pa.  
59/85

Church Of Art Illustration by R. W. Lichtenwalner. Pen & Ink..1985





*Kitchen Sink. Mahogany, plywood, urethane. 1980*

## Outfitting The Sanctuary

From the onset, the concept of the Church of Art was to provide a vehicle within which art could flourish. More specifically, I wanted to fabricate a culture, or at least gather it together with the help of my friends.

So each need that was encountered became an artistic challenge. I had enlisted the help of Ken Dieterly, a master cabinetmaker, to build the kitchen cabinets according to my basic design. It took a while but he did a fantastic job. The facade of the cabinets was solid maple and all of the doors were trimmed with black walnut. My friend Mike Mode had really become an expert at lathe turning and he produced the drawer pulls and cabinet knobs from walnut, boxwood, ebony and pearl. Ken Dieterly had acquired maple butcher block counter tops from Bally Block, but I still needed a kitchen sink. The notion of having everything, wherever possible, fashioned out of wood really appealed to me. I ripped 2" wide strips of marine plywood and using

waterproof glue, I laminated the side and bottom panels and trimmed the top surface with a cap of mahogany. After multiple coats of urethane, I crossed my fingers about the effectiveness of wood and its ability to coexist in constant contact with water.

I encountered a much greater challenge with the bathtub. I had had a brainstorm while shopping around at a flea market. One of the vendors had a large cedar chest that seemed about shower size and I bartered a pair of church pews for it – a good deal given that I had about thirty pews to spare. With the top of the chest removed, I cut four tall triangular posts from 4" x 4" yellow pine, affixed them to the inside corners of the chest, and mounted the top lid of the chest on top of the posts to create a ceiling.



*Bowl. Mahogany, rosewood, persimmon. 1979*

Three large panes of 1/4" tempered plate glass served as the sides and a notch cut in the front side of the chest made it easy to step in and out. The last step was to seal all the seams and cut a light panel into the ceiling. The kitchen sink had been in service for more than six months and it was becoming evident that urethane was an ineffective waterproof finish. With some leftover fiberglass from Martin's defunct Fibes Drum Company, I mixed catalyst and poured the resin into the interior. It was a nightmare. The gloppy mixture was hot to the touch for several days and when it finally cured, the resin shrank and cracked like a parched riverbed. I shrugged and for the time being, gave up.



*Cup & Saucer. Mahogany, rosewood, black walnut. 1978*

The very next week, Shogo Terada, the son of one of Martin's Sigma guitar vendors in Japan, arrived for a month of internship at the factory. He had arranged to lodge close by and it became my responsibility to entertain him in the evenings – a difficult task since he spoke virtually no English.

Shogo (soon to be dubbed Sho-gun) was adept at the Japanese art of sharpening and in a few days he had put razor sharp edges on all of my chisels. With



*Tea Cup & Saucer. Mahogany, rosewood, black walnut. 1978*





*Main House Speakers. African Padauk. 1979*

a blank look in his eyes, he came to me looking for more projects. I showed him the bathtub catastrophe, held up a chisel, and miracle of miracles, he began chipping away with an incredible burst of Asian energy. The sound of the hardened resin breaking away made a sort of chink-chink sound. Dale and I were working on guitars in the basement and we found Shogo's diligence quite amusing. Without intending any ethnic slur, we soon adopted that sound as our primarily salutation.

Shogo finished the tub in record time. I had found a hopeful waterproofing product named Gluevit at the marine store and proceeded to coat the tub with this milky mixture that had the consistency and odor of vomit. It was a bad choice,



*Stage Monitors. African Padauk. 1979*

especially since it seemed to be incompatible with fiberglass residue. Sho-go to the rescue! Armed with flexible scrapers, he patiently purged all of the Gluevit from the tub interior, just in time for me to pour, to Sho-go's horror, my next concoction of clear two-part marine epoxy, and at considerable expense, I might add.

It would seem that marine epoxy isn't quite compatible with Gluevit residue. The epoxy didn't dry. It remained the consistency of molasses. A demoralized but loyal-to-the-death Shogo donned his trusty scrapers and with rubber gloves, he tackled the tub one last time before his departure back to Japan. I can't imagine what he told his friends when they asked him how he had spent the bulk of his free time in America.

Dale's brother-in-law Billy is a tile contractor. With the cleanly scraped tub in its final position, he poured a half a ton of "mud" (compatible with just about anything) into the bottom of the tub and layed a lovely pattern of tile – a fitting finale to the Sho-gun Memorial Cedar Shower.

Chink!

During the months that followed, I immersed myself in sawdust downstairs on the wood lathe turning dozens of plates, bowls, goblets and urns. I met the director of Moravian College's Student Center at *Godfrey Daniels* and he arranged for me to have a perhaps premature "retrospective" exhibit during a week-long artist-in-residency program. I lugged my lathe down to the college, together with all of my framed drawings, odd Boakstruments, and white plexiglass backlit light boxes constructed to display framed negatives of my illustrations. After a great opening night extravaganza, I demonstrated a week of lathe turning for the curious student body. This was particularly effective in depositing a fine layer of ziricote-wood sawdust on every horizontal and vertical surface in the entire Student Union building. Where was Shogo when I needed him!

July 4th came soon thereafter. I threw a rather large party wherein all of the participants consumed what in today's standards would be considered a criminal amount of alcohol and in the process became rather boisterous, myself included. I had been give a set of miniature flare gun cuff links that were really quite remarkable. They fired caps unless you wished to add the flare muzzle. What better time



*At work in the sawdust.*

than July 4th to try them out. From the balcony window I aimed the amazing piece of Swiss craftsmanship onto Broad Street and pulled the tiny trigger. The flare shot out in a streaming red rocket trail – up, up, up – then down, down, down, right toward the gasoline pumps at Terry's Mobil across the street. Everyone gasped as it landed, inches from the finger hole in the brass plate that housed the fuel tanks. Slowly the flare died out and a massive sigh of relief followed.

An hour later the torrential rains began and a group of die-hards watched in drenched disbelief as I shouted at the top of my lungs: "If there's a God up there, strike me now!"



*Building the 8-String Ebony Acoustic.*