

August 29, 2006

Dear Edward,

Thank you for the pictures and the article. I recognized a few friends besides George Dwight. The address you gave for him, by the way, is the same one that keeps coming back to me, though I sent him a postcard lately which has not been returned.

I remember Roger Evans who was a pre-med student; Dennis Swift, son of a wildlife biologist from Wisconsin; and two of the older ones: Gorsuch and Thorsrud. I think the reason I wasn't in the pictures is that they are of one plane-load. I don't recall ever being in such a group photo. Also missing is Bob Skidmore from Utah.

I believe you and I were there for the same two summers. In both years we had a 60-man jump on the Salmon River. In the second summer I went with a contingent to Cave Junction OR to work on two fires in northern CA.

Once when I was in Spokane a few years ago for the Bloomsday run I ran into a nurse from Missoula who was somehow associated with the Loft and gave me news of all the faculty there.

Yes, I remember the dark-suited men recruiting for some nefarious project. (I seem to recall they wanted college graduates who were willing to make night drops). I'm sorry now that I didn't talk to them just to see what they had to say. In any case, I was already committed to another career.

We did read and appreciate *Mountains Beyond Mountains*. I once spent a couple of months helping Peace Corps volunteers in Haiti with some agroforestry projects. Such a land of deforestation and poverty with the corresponding unemployment and unrest. I loved the wonderful Creole French they speak there. Much work could be done in soil erosion control, reforestation, and agricultural training.

I can't remember what I told you about my volunteer days with VOCA in DC after I "retired". Among other assignments were three

with Peace Corps (Haiti, Mauritania, and the Philippines). What I wanted to say about this is that I think Peace Corps is the best export the US has ever had. Such a vast improvement over guns and fighter jets and military personnel. I'm losing some of my usual optimism for the world's improvement as I see the short-sightedness, incompetence, (and may I add corruption?) that pervades our present administration.

Well, let's conclude on a more positive note. I'll include a photo of one of my present interests. Besides twice-weekly days with Habitat, I get to work on trails in the North Cascades twice a month in the summer.

Are you still with Oregon Public Broadcasting? Your career sounds interesting.

Yes, let's stay in touch. We rarely get to Portland since the demise of a cousin who lived in Troutdale. By all means keep Mount Vernon on your list for a visit. Latchstring is out!

Best regards, Lester

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