

Ah, the Memories (or Lack Thereof)

I lost a decade somewhere. If you see it, let me know.

I didn't even realize it was gone until I was at a Rotary meeting last week and all the members were instructed to remove a coin from our pockets or purses and recall a significant even in our lives that occurred during the year the coin was minted.

I hate to jingle when I walk, so I never carry change – if a salesclerk hands me some I'll dump it in whatever charity box is on the counter. The quarter I borrowed from the person sitting next to me said 1988, and it didn't take me long to realize I couldn't remember a thing from that year. It didn't take much longer for me to realize that I couldn't recall a single notable personal event from that entire decade.

Eventually I remembered that my family business built a new building in 1983, but that was all I could come up with. I'm sure LuAnn and I went on some great vacations and maybe I set a personal record in computer solitaire or something, but it's all a blur.

As fate would have it, I recently found a five-year diary that I kept from 1981 to 1986. I was 27 years old in 1981, and I wrote a couple of paragraphs every day - something I haven't done before or since. It took me about an hour and a half to read what I wrote from January to June 1981; you might be interested in the highlights. Or not.

The vast majority of the entries documented mundane daily occurrences. For example, on January 3rd, 1981, "Gringo's ice machine was broken so LuAnn and I couldn't order frozen daiquiris with our dinners." 1/7: "Hung the fire extinguisher that I received for Christmas 1979 in the kitchen." 1/13: "Got a haircut - \$6.75" (I don't know if that included the tip). 1/14: "Subbed in a recreational league basketball game, playing the second half and helping my team lose 90-52. Not my game."

1/24: "The guy I hired to insulate the house drilled holes in the outside walls and blew in cellulose insulation. Tonight, I happened to open the doors in the cabinet beneath my kitchen sink to find it packed solid with cellulose" (he had accidentally drilled through the interior wall as well in that spot).

2/1: "Don't order the enchilada platter at Senor Pablo's – they use too much epoxy." 2/12: Paid \$9.50 to see Hal Holbrook live in "Mark Twain Tonight." 3/13: "Skied from 9 a.m. straight through to 4:30 p.m. at Keystone, Colorado" (My knees are only good for half-days now).

4/2, 7, 9, 14: "Waterbed sprung another leak. Might have something to do with the cat." 4/13: "The houses on both sides of us are for sale. What does that mean?" 4/16: "Looking for a new house – First National Bank will loan me the money I need at 16¾% interest."

(LuAnn and I did end up moving later that year from our house on Rundell Street to the one we still live in on 7th Avenue - how did I forget that? If you ever wondered who painted the three-foot-high house numbers by the front door at 711 Rundell, that was me).

5/13: "Pope shot today – should be OK." 6/3: "A little tipsy as I write this – had 8 beers at Mum's." 6/8: (One of our less-couth friends had given an X-rated inflatable doll to another one as a birthday present). "LuAnn said, "Who would ever want to 'spend time' with one of those things?" Before I could stop myself, I replied, "Anyone who has ever 'spent time' with you." (No mention about the all-but-certain fallout).

There were dozens of references to people I don't remember at all, friends I used to have at the time, businesses that no longer exist, meetings I use to attend (such as ICAUG – Iowa City Apple User's Group). I could evidently hold my own in racquetball against my brother back then.

I don't know if I'll take the time to read the rest of my journal's 4 ½ years of entries – rereading even the highlights above I can see why it all slipped my mind. But it's good to have at least part of that decade back.

Writers Group member Dave Parsons often remembers to go to work at the business he co-owns on the Coralville Strip.