

Every life's a story, every story a book, but most are never written. We're encouraged to share our story, including successes and failures. So much to learn, yet failure is not terminal. This book helps you navigate your journey.

Crooked Sidewalks "New Revision"

By Ronald P. Carr

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CROOKED SIDEWALKS

NEW REVISION



LIFE LESSONS LEARNED

RONALD P CARR

What others are saying about Crooked Sidewalks

“In his book, Ron speaks of wisdom and its applications. After diving into the book, I couldn’t put it down. It was as if Ron knew what I needed to read, so many life lessons that applied to me. We are always taught that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Ron’s words will challenge and encourage you to look for the life’s “Crooked Sidewalks.” because around every curve, there is a new adventure or something of value you don’t want to miss.”

Les “PeeWee” Harrison
Author, Speaker, Harlem All-Stars

“Crooked Sidewalks is an entertaining and very personal jaunt down memory lane for the author and his family. It’s a collection of experiences and life stories, not unlike many shared by most people, but the difference is that the author took the time to write it down (something we all have said we are going to do ‘someday’) and to share it with all and to gift us with the vicarious thrill of his experiences while at the same time, reminding us all of our own adventures in life and the value they brought to our existence. Ron Carr’s writing style is whimsical, breezy, warm and from the heart. It makes for an easy and enjoyable read and feels like a day of catching up and swapping stories with an old friend.

Crooked Sidewalks is not just an acknowledgement to family and friends he has made over his lifetime, but is also a love letter to God to whom the author gives glory to throughout his book. I highly recommend Crooked Sidewalks for those quiet times that most of us look forward to spending on the couch on a lazy afternoon away from

Ronald P. Carr

our normal fast paced routines to enjoy being 'alone' and totally lost in our thoughts without any outside stimulation or interference. I found Crooked Sidewalks to be positive, incredibly open-hearted and authentic, encouraging and inspirational. Well done, Ron."

Esmond Chung
Actor, Entertainer, Entrepreneur

"In his book, Ron quotes an Old Persian Proverb that says: 'He who knows and knows that he knows, is wise. Follow him.' His insightful and exciting trip through life proves that Ron knows that he knows, and his life is living proof that we should follow him."

Chuck Whitlock
Best Selling Author, Television Personality

"Crooked Sidewalks" takes the reader on a meandering, introspective and perceptive journey, filled with insights that, if personally applied, will make the journey so much more fulfilling and enjoyable. From the first page, I found myself caught up in this unique pilgrimage with Ron, suddenly stumbling upon those insightful "Aha!" moments. It's an enjoyable read, the underlying message always leading the reader down the right path!

Joe Noland - Commissioner
The Salvation Army
Author, Executive Producer

Crooked Sidewalks

“A thoroughly entertaining, educational, and delightfully woven tapestry of heart-warming stories, inspiring the hope that many, many more miles of 'crooked sidewalk' vignettes will be made available for sharing and exploring.”

James Townley - Captain, USCG(r)

“A good memoir is both entertaining and enlightening, offering insight into the life and times of the author After reading Crooked Sidewalks, the words 'faith,' 'hope' and 'character' come to mind. In a world that needs much more of all three it is both refreshing and fun to read about a man honest enough to show his softer side while talking about the most macho of topics, including military service, athletic pursuits, and leadership in business and family. Crooked Sidewalks shines with sincerity and is filled with memorable recollections and sage advice from someone who believes that everyone has a story to tell. Thank goodness he took the time to tell his own!”

“Ron Carr's sometimes hilarious and often inspired reflections will leave you wanting to read more.” For someone not as fortunate as I am to be able to call Ron both a colleague and a friend, this collection of stories from his life reveals him to be a man of humor, humility and most of all, faith--faith in Family, Country and God. And best of all, it's fun to read!”

Marilyn Clint - Author, COO,
Portland Rose Festival Foundation

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Push Through the Stall

“You don’t get to choose how or when you are going to die, you can only decide on how you are going to live.”

Joan Baez

Ever since I was a small child, it had always been my dream to fly. My desire was so strong that I would regularly have dreams that I could fly, unassisted. It wasn’t like I was Superman or some other super hero, but I could decide to take off with sheer willpower, and soar above the ground up to heights of twenty or thirty feet. I was growing up on a farm during those days and I can remember my most vivid dreams of taking off and flying around and over the barn. The feeling was absolutely exhilarating in every sense of the imagination. I couldn’t think of anything that felt better than the ability to launch myself into the air and look down at the barn, corrals and orchards below.

That dream stayed with me well into my college years and one day during my junior year, I made the decision to take flying lessons. Not too far from my college, there was an airstrip called Brackett Field. I went over to learn about what was involved and how much money it would cost to have lessons and get my private license. I’m sure the price was reasonable, but it didn’t matter to me. I wanted to fly. Between a couple of my scholarships and loans, I was able to put together enough money to start taking lessons. I couldn’t have been happier.

First, I had to get my flight physical to make sure I was healthy enough to fly. This is required by law. Then I started taking the ground classes to prepare me for all aspects of flying from the theoretical and practical perspective. It is important to understand how to navigate and

get from point A to point B. This was initially learned in a classroom setting.

Finally, the day came when I started my flying lessons with my instructor. He was a patient and experienced man in his mid-fifties and was clearly qualified and experienced to teach me how to take off, fly and land safely, that last part being the most critical in my mind. I once heard someone say, "I love to fly United, and land the same way." We used a small Cessna One Fifty as our trainer. I think it was about as basic an aircraft that you could get into.

One day, when I'd completed seven hours of flight training, we spent the day doing "touch and goes", which are take offs and landings, and then going around and doing it over and over again. Each approach was slightly different, but my confidence was building, and I began to make some very decent landings. As we were about to go around again, I pulled off onto the taxiway, and my instructor told me to stop the plane. I did as directed, at which point he opened the door and got out. My eyes widened and I asked him where he was going? He told me I was going to do, by myself, what we had been doing over the last hour. He said "you are ready for your first solo flight." At that moment, I think he had more confidence in me than I had in myself. However, he was the instructor and I trusted him.

I taxied over to the start of the runway and notified the tower I was ready to take off. I waited for their clearance, shoved the throttle forward and headed down the runway. At the appropriate time I pulled back on the controls and I was airborne. It was such an incredible feeling of freedom and a personal achievement I've never forgotten. I climbed to the appropriate altitude, turned left until I could start my downwind leg, start my descent and continue onto my base leg and then the final approach. The focus is to line up on the runway with a pre-determined touch down point, and time the descent and reduction in power to arrive at the point with a very soft touch of the wheels as they

reached the runway. Safely down, I taxied back to the school where my instructor was waiting.

What I didn't know is that my dad had come to pick me up and was there as well when I shut the engine down. He told me he was surprised and a bit concerned when he saw the instructor get out of the aircraft. It was a wonderful feeling to achieve that level of success. When I got out of the plane, my instructor and dad met me. Then another member of the flight school came out and they cut away almost the entire back of my long sleeve dress shirt. I learned this was a long-standing tradition for pilots when they complete their first solo flight. My name and date, the school and the name of the CFI (Certified Flight Instructor) were written on the cloth, and I took it home as a souvenir of this important flying milestone.

My lessons continued for the next few months as I added to my flight time and preparation for the eventual written test to qualify for my license. One of the most personally challenging lessons for me to master, because it was the scariest, was the lesson of learning how to pull out of a stall. It is not only important, but critical. The stall is created when, for whatever reason, there is no longer enough air speed and lift under the wings to keep the plane flying. This causes it to stall, and in essence, fall out of the sky. The sudden and uncontrollable drop is the scariest thing I can ever recall experiencing. The plane is spinning and falling toward the ground. Depending on your elevation, you have to quickly gain control and get your airspeed back up or you are going to impact the ground. One of the main reasons planes crash from stalls is the lack of pilot training and practice for responding to this situation, and the most common causes for the pilot is panic. Our tendency is to try to pull back on the controls and keep the plane flying. It doesn't work without the required airspeed.



On the day of my first solo flight, I was wearing a nice cotton, powder blue, long sleeve dress shirt. In the tradition of pilots completing this milestone, they cut off the back of my shirt I was wearing to commemorate this accomplishment. It was a very good feeling and my confidence soared, so to speak.

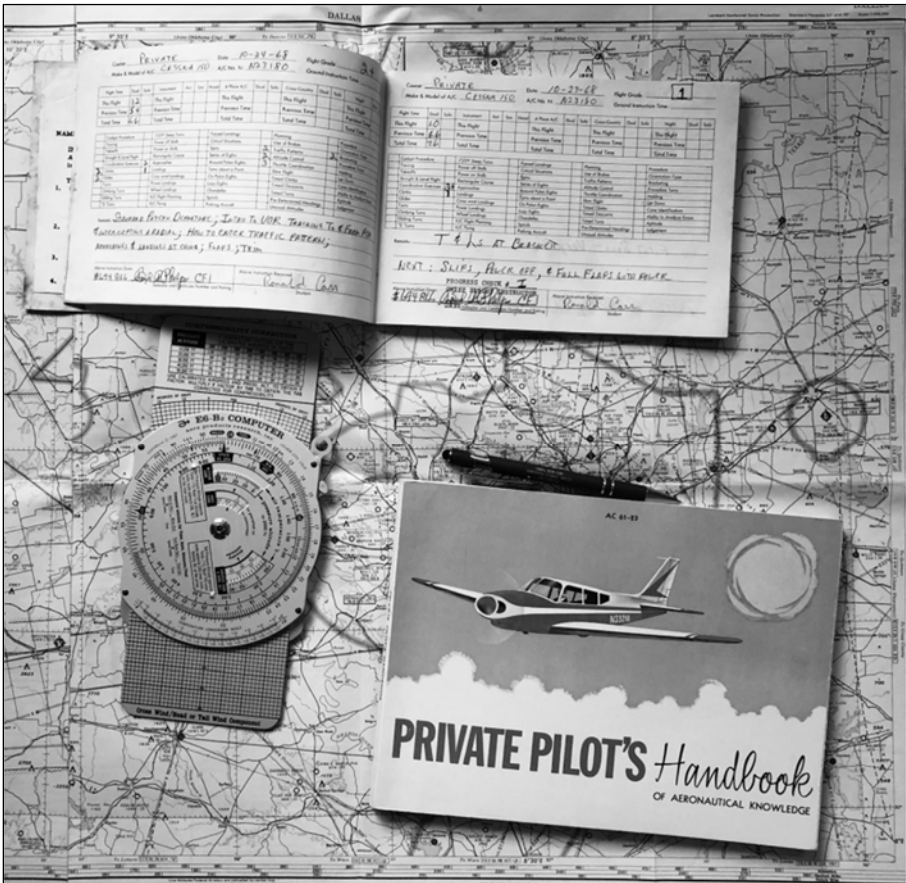
My school and instructor made this a regular requirement during the training to practice stalls and build confidence in the pilot to be able to pull out of a stall if it ever occurred. We practiced and practiced, and each time, my stomach jumped into my throat from the fear that I was dealing with. I learned from my instructor that the key to overcoming that fear and regaining my airspeed was to push through the stall.

Instead of pulling back on the controls, I had to face my fear and push the controls forward. This forced the nose of the plane down, albeit toward the ground and allowed it to quickly gain the airspeed it needed for me to again be able to fly and control the plane. “Push through the stall,” I said to myself over and over again. “Push through the stall.” Eventually I overcame my fear and developed the level of confidence to deal with a stall however it occurs, including intentionally pulling the plane up into a climbing turn to the point where it fell out of the sky to one side or the other. The recovery process was the same. “Push through the stall.” I did. I learned and passed my flight exam and received my flying certificate, or license. It was a good and satisfying day.

That lesson came back to my mind many times throughout my life. “Push through the stall.” Regardless of what the challenge was, or the amount of fear that came with it, I knew I had to overcome that fear and again, “push through the stall.” In other words, use your training, face the fear head on and regain control of your life. Don’t let fear control you.

I’ve also since heard that FEAR is an acronym for “**F**alse **E**vidence **A**ppearing **R**eal.” How many times do we not do something or try something new for fear of failure? Sometimes we don’t even start because we are afraid we might fail. Fear paralyzes many people who haven’t learned to accept fear as a fact of life, and that through practice we can face our fears and move forward toward our successes. We learn more from our failures than we do from our successes, so I believe we should learn to celebrate our successes and our failures. Face the fact that we are human and we are going to fail some times. That is ok for most things because we can learn from our failures and grow. “It is better to try something and fail than it is to try nothing and succeed.” I’m not one to want to try nothing and succeed. I want to “push through the stall” and be responsible for the success that follows. There is so

much to gain and enjoy in life if we learn this lesson. Try it. “Push through the stalls” in your life. Let me know how it goes. I’ll celebrate with you.



Here is my flight chart, Private Pilot's handbook, flight calculator and log book. That day, I made a “perfect” landing, and my instructor awarded me a Flight Score of “1”, located in the top right corner of my log book. A score of “1” is the highest grade possible. Yes, I was flying high that day!

Jan and the Monkee

“Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the things you did. So, throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor, catch the trade winds in your sails.

Explore. Dream. Discover.

Mark Twain

We had just arrived in Japan, and more specifically, at the US Navy base in the city of Yokosuka, just about two hours south of Tokyo. What a wonderfully new and exciting adventure this was going to be for me and my beautiful bride as we start out our marriage living in this exotic foreign land. Since I didn’t yet have a home for us to move into, we settled in at the little motel located on the base, which would only be temporary until Base Housing found us a residence. The good news is that we were here together. The bad news is that two days later, I left Japan to catch my ship off the coast of Viet Nam. Okay, maybe it wasn’t the best transition to our new life together, especially for her, and I realized I would have a lot to do and to make up for when I got back to my home port of Yokosuka.

I’d left my wife alone, at twenty years of age, in a small motel, on a military base in a foreign country, half way around the world. Oops! If that wasn’t enough, she was still on crutches from an accident she had running through a sliding glass door just a few days before we were to leave for Japan. Okay. Maybe this adventure didn’t start out as we’d hoped. Regardless, we are here. Or, SHE is here.

They say it is not the challenges you run into in life, but how you deal with them, or respond to those challenges. I wouldn’t know for a

while how Jan was going to adjust, because I would be gone for the next two months, and she would be alone to fend for herself. I would learn later what an amazing woman I had married because she did just that, and started fending, or making the best of where she had landed. I won't tell you everything I learned when I returned home to Yokosuka, but there is one story I have to share with you. We still talk about it today.

Although Jan was young, and somewhat of a shy person, she was not one to just sit around in a motel and wait for someone to provide for her. She was also not an especially outgoing person but was rather more of an introvert up to that point. An introvert yes, but a curious one. As an officer's wife, with whatever privileges or amenities were available to her, she had heard there was a swimming pool at the Officers Club on base. So, being a southern California girl all her life, she ventured out to find the pool and see what else she could find.

When Jan entered the O'Club and was looking around, she heard some music coming from some place in the building. She recognized the songs and went in search of the source. As she followed the sound, walking down the comfortably carpeted hallway, she came to a set of double doors. There she could hear the music filtering out from that room. She slowly and carefully opened the door, but just enough so she could look inside to discover what was going on. Much to her delight, a rock band was rehearsing for an on-base Fourth of July concert the following day.

Still being covert to learn more, she looked around at the band and noticed the lead singer, who was discussing the number they were working on. When he turned around, Jan realized it was actually him. It was the real Davy Jones of the world famous, "Hey, hey, we're the Monkees", Monkees rock band.

Right there, on the other side of the world from home, within thirty feet, was her favorite rock group, and the adorable Davy Jones, her

teenage heart throb. It took every restraint she could muster not to scream out loud and rush the band. Instead, she closed the door and returned to the motel to retrieve her camera and hurry back to the O'Club, hopefully in time to maybe, possibly, get a picture. "Please, please, please."

This time, with a little more boldness, Jan slipped into the small meeting room and settled just inside the door and started taking photos with her camera. Suddenly, she became aware of a rather big man walking in her direction. Uh, ohh! It didn't seem right. Was she in trouble?

The enormous man approaching her was large enough that she realized he was either security or a bodyguard for the band. Now, she began to get nervous about being there and became anxious for what she feared was about to happen. When the guard approached her, he asked her who she was and what she was doing there. When she told me this story later, her response took me very much by surprise. Jan stood up and blurted out, "I'm a photographer from the Stars and Stripes newspaper, and I am here to get photos of Davy Jones and the band for an article about tomorrow's concert," or something to that effect, as best I can recall how the story was told to me.

I had to laugh in amazement at her quick thinking, but we both knew that was a lie. A lie? My innocent, young wife just told a lie? I didn't know that was even possible. However, the security guy seemed satisfied and turned around to walk back to his duty station near the band.

Jan was heaving a sigh of relief and was settling in to enjoy the rest of the rehearsal, when half way there, the gentleman stopped, turned around, and headed back in Jan's direction. Uh, ohh, again. Busted!

Now she was in trouble, with no escape. As he approached, he asked: "Don't professional news photographers use thirty-five millimeter cameras?" Jan's face went blank as she looked down at her

tiny Kodak Instamatic Camera, and stuttered out, “a what?” She knew she was caught and began a very quiet, humble and sincere barrage of explanation in the form of an apology. “I am so sorry” she repeated over and over as he stopped in front of her, arms crossed and physically imposing. “I love the Monkees and have always been a fan, and my favorite has always been Davy Jones. I’m sorry. I just wanted to hear the music and watch the rehearsal.” Apparently, her efforts, charm, meekness and beauty softened the guard who chuckled, smiled and said she could stay if she would sit down and not make any noise. She does have charm and a magic about her that way. It always worked on me. Jan didn’t need any more encouragement to be completely submissive and comply with his instructions. The story continues.

At the end of the rehearsal, the kind man came back and told Jan that Davy wanted to meet her. So, he escorted her across the room and she had a brief “meet and greet” with this amazing superstar. Davy was so accommodating and welcoming and prompted Jan to hand her camera to the guard so he could take a few pictures of her with Davy. He even put his arm around her and snuggled her in close.

Was this a dream come true, or what? Since Mr. Jones was supposed to have dinner with the base Commander and his daughter that evening, I believe he was hoping Jan was the Admiral’s daughter. Unfortunately for him, she wasn’t. When the Admiral finally arrived with his twelve-year-old daughter, I’m guessing Davy was also a little disappointed. I suspect Jan was also disappointed she wasn’t invited to join them. The story continues.

As Jan thanked Mr. Jones and was saying good bye, he surprised her once more with some very special instructions. He asked her if she was coming to the show the next day and she excitedly confirmed that she was. So, in his kindness, he instructed her that when she came to the concert, a bit early, she should go to the stairs at the left side of the

stage and meet up with his security guard, and that he would have a seat for her.



Here is Jan with Davy Jones on July 3, 1972 after “crashing” the band rehearsal for the concert on the Navy Base in Yokosuka, Japan base the following day. He invited her to attend the July 4th concert and treated her to a front row, center, VIP seat. You go girl!

On the Fourth of July, 1972, on the US Navy base in Yokosuka, Japan, Jan arrived early and found the security guard waiting for her at the stairs, as instructed. He escorted her over to the front row to a reserved VIP seat, immediately in front of the center stage. During the “concert of a lifetime,” she fired off the remaining photos of her now

infamous, Kodak Instamatic camera. I was very happy for her, and to this day, I am grateful to Davy Jones and an unnamed security guard for their kindness. For her, it was one of the most memorable experiences of her life, up to that point, and a great start to her new adventure in a foreign land, so far, far from home. After hearing the memorable and exciting story upon my return back to Yokosuka, I thought to myself, “I don’t need to worry about her. She will be okay.”



July 4th, 1972 Concert at US Naval Base in Yokosuka, Japan, with headliner and teenage heart throb Davy Jones of the world famous Monkees, Jan’s newest best friend.

The story continues.

Almost forty years later, as Jan and I were coming up on our anniversary, our children surprised us with tickets to a Monkees concert at the beautiful Clark County Amphitheatre here in Washington State, just north of Vancouver. I contacted the local newspaper, The Columbian, and spoke to a reporter I had worked with before. He was very interested in telling the story. We provided him the pictures Jan had taken back in Yokosuka, Japan, both during the band’s rehearsal,

and the following day during the actual concert on the base. However, the reporter also wanted to add a photo of Jan and Davy Jones meeting these forty years later. I was on a new mission.

Since the concert was just months away, I contacted the Amphitheatre and tried to buy backstage passes, or to the “Meet and Greet” held after the concert. There were no more passes available. So, I got in touch with Davy Jones office and they said I would need to contact his publisher. I did that through email, and that office said I needed to get in touch with his “next level” gatekeeper. So, I emailed that office. They told me I needed to get in touch with his manager. I still had yet to hear from his manager, or assistant, and the concert was upon us.

Jan and I arrived early to the amphitheater ahead of the start of the concert. I spoke to anyone who appeared to be someone on staff, but still hadn’t found anyone who could help. I may have missed the majority of the concert in my quest, but managed to get back to Jan during the encore. The show was over. Jan asked me what she should do. Undaunted, I told her to follow the other people and wait at the back of the line to the Meet and Greet and I would get to her as soon as I could. I wasn’t done.

I finally joined her at the end of the line, but still hadn’t connected with anyone who could help. Almost ready to give in, I noticed a staff member I had talked to earlier. At this point, he already knew what I was trying to accomplish, yet, he didn’t tell me to “go away!” He graciously and patiently listened to my final appeal. I reminded him that I was not trying to crash the party. I was only trying to get one minute with Davy Jones and to take a picture that the Columbian newspaper wanted to complete the story that was already written. I again showed him the photos and the email trail I had acquired over the past two months in trying to get to Davy Jones manager, which I was never able to do. I was still hopeful, and I could see the man’s face and

imagined the wheels turning in his mind as to what he could do. After a moment of silence, he said he would be right back.



Me and Jan with Davy Jones at the backstage, "Meet & Greet", following the Monkees' concert in Vancouver, WA. My efforts made me a hero with Jan, and for at least two weeks, I could do no wrong in my house. Mr. Jones was a warm, gracious and welcoming gentleman, making us both feel very special.

A few minutes later, he came back and stopped about thirty feet away, and was engaged in conversation with someone I hadn't met. This went on for a few minutes, and I could see them talking, looking and gesturing towards me and Jan. Finally, the new man came over to me and asked: "How can I help you?" I repeated my appeal for the photo, and shared with him the folder with the photos and emails summarizing my efforts to possibly have Jan meet with Davy Jones and

get a picture with him for the newspaper article. He looked me in the face, and said: “If you didn’t have these pictures and emails, we wouldn’t be talking.” Okay. I understood that and was willing to abide by his decision. I could live with a “no”, knowing that I had tried my best to make this happen. Then he told me that he was going to allow Jan and I to be the last couple in the line in order to meet Mr. Jones and get the picture needed. It turns out that this gentleman was the tour coordinator for major bands coming to the northwest, including the Monkees’ concert tour. We were overjoyed and grateful for his consideration and his willingness to accommodate our request. He made it happen. Mission accomplished.

When we finally met Davy, he was gracious and very accommodating to speaking with Jan as she told him the story of their meeting in Yokosuka so many years ago. He commented he had only been to Japan twice in his life and was trying to recall the visit and Jan’s interruption of the band’s rehearsal. As Jan shared the large photos of that long ago encounter and what a special experience it had been for her, he autographed the photos. He even appeared to be remembering the encounter. In the original photo, Davy was wearing a green and white, thick striped jacket, and Jan was wearing a flowery pink blouse. When he was looking at the photo, he said: “I still have that jacket.” Jan responded: “I still have that blouse.” At that point, I think it all clicked.



This is the article that appeared in The Columbian newspaper, with the headline:

"Nearly 4 decades later, local woman still believes in Dreams."

In this process, I confirmed the value of persistence and was rewarded with achieving the goal. We even had a chance to meet and talk with Peter Tork of the Monkees. But, for you married or dating men, the best part for me was that Jan got to meet Davy Jones and get that picture for the Columbian and for us. For at least two weeks following the concert, I was a hero to my wife, and I could do no wrong. The warmth and memory of that concert...that meeting... the whole

experience, and that one moment in time, is still with us today and a fun story to share. Isn't life good? We think so.

still believes in daydreams

"Davy wants to meet you."

They posed for some photos, then Jones gave Jan a front-row ticket to the concert.

Ron says he appreciated how graciously his wife was treated.

"That was a real high point for a 20-year-old who was alone in Japan, halfway around the world from home," he said.

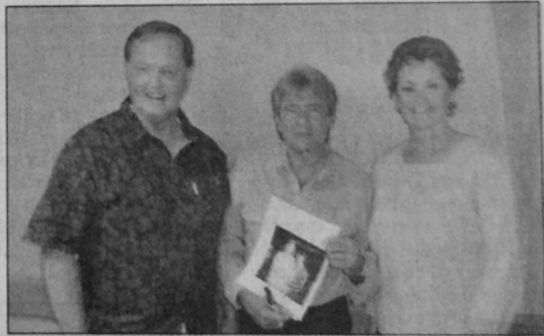
Like Jan's 1972 concert seat, Saturday's tickets didn't cost the Carrs anything. It shows how much has changed for the Vancouver couple since 1972.

"Our kids bought the tickets," Ron said, "as a combined Mother's Day-Father's Day gift."

And at the end of the show, the Carrs got a photo with Jones.

"A real high point for a 20-year-old who was alone in Japan, halfway around the world from home."

Ron Carr



Courtesy of Ron Carr

Ron Carr, Davy Jones and Jan Carr on Saturday at Sleep Country Amphitheater in Ridgefield.

Off Beat lets members of The Columbian news team step back from our newspaper beats to write the story behind the story, fill in the story or just tell a story.

I Love Julia Roberts

Truth is always the strongest argument.”

Sophocles

I don't think it is a big stretch to assume that almost everyone who has ever spent time in a theatre or in front of a television has developed an appreciation for a favorite actor or two, whether male or female. Some men fall in love with a female character and are drawn to her in some magical or fantasy way. I certainly have and could spend a great deal of time telling you about all my favorite performers, male and female. The males are usually the “hero” types with strengths that I want to see in me. The females are the ones that I want to save and take care of in some way.

Skilled actors have the ability to take a role and bring that character to life in such a way that you are completely absorbed into the story line and develop a relationship with that character. It's not realistic, but it does provide a place to escape to, even if only for short periods of time. These respites into the world of “make believe” provide time to get away, to escape, to regroup mentally, and sometimes gain the encouragement needed to deal with the challenges of every-day living. These fantasy adventures are many times in contrast to our own lives and give us a change from our day to day routines

This is a perfectly normal and entertaining way to keep us healthy and exercise our imaginations. Like anything in moderation, this is probably a good thing. A story and a character may hit us the strongest at a time when we may need to feel some specific emotion, so we relate in a way that makes most sense at the time.

I believe that my wife's all-time favorite male actor is Tom Selleck. We've all enjoyed his characters over the years, but I know

that Jan is drawn to his good looks for sure, his cuteness and whimsical smile, from the days of Magnum PI. Her cell phone ring is the theme from the Magnum PI television show. One day, my wife told me that if Tom Selleck ever called her, she was out the door. I asked her if she had his phone number so I could call him and let him know. She was joking, I'm sure, and so was I. However, I don't know that I would ever make that call if I was so inclined. Jan is an incredibly and naturally beautiful, strong and intelligent woman, and if Mr. Selleck knew how incredible she is, he might make the call himself. I don't want to take that chance.

Over the years, Jan's also developed a fondness for other good-looking performers like Shawn Cassidy, Robert Redford, Christopher Reeves, and most recently, Johnny Depp. I can't argue that she certainly has good taste. She fell in love with Robert Redford a long time ago when she saw him in his white Navy service dress uniform in the movie, "The Way We Were." I've never been as good looking as Robert Redford, but she related that image to me in my identical navy white uniform when I was a young Naval officer during the Viet Nam war. My hair was also blond and combed in the same way as Redford in that movie. I'm the lucky guy.

For most people, these kinds of fantasies from afar are harmless and normal, and healthy people enjoy the idea, but are mostly content in their own life and relationships. Jan and I certainly are, and the occasional bantering back and forth is a fun game we play. Fortunately, our lives are full and we don't have the time or the inclination to run away with these fictional characters. If we did, in reality, I'm sure we'd be disappointed.

Now, going back to my original thought where I had once proclaimed that "I love Julia Roberts." I wasn't really serious. It was more a case of appreciation than and actual fantasy to run away with her. I was just caught up in the latest incredible performance of the

talented Julia. As I thought about it, I came to the realization, “no I don’t! I don’t love Julia Roberts.” The fact is I don’t even know Julia Roberts. Except for what is shared in the tabloids or celebrity type magazines, which I rarely read, I don’t know anything about her as a real person.

The truth is that I love “*Pretty Woman*,” the role she played in that first film with Richard Geer in 1990. I loved Vivian Ward, the character Julia played, and the innocence and vulnerability she portrayed so well. This was another Cinderella story where every guy in the country, including me, just wanted to be her knight in shining armor, even riding to her rescue in a beautiful white stretch limousine.

I also love “*Erin Brockovich*”, her character in the film of the same name where Julia Roberts won an Oscar in 2001 for her leading role. Again, she was the beautiful, although rough-around-the-edges, white-trash single mom trying to make a difference against impossible odds as an assistant in a small-town law firm. I just admired the character so much and the strength and determination that made her successful, I couldn’t help but love her too. She was beautiful, as usual. Come to think of it, I can’t recall a movie where Julia Roberts wasn’t absolutely gorgeous and didn’t cause in me a heavy sigh. It was the realization that she was such a magnificent actor playing a new role, and that was the only way I would ever see her.

I loved Darby Shaw, the lead character in the 1993 movie “*The Pelican Brief*”, playing opposite one of my all-time favorite male lead characters, Denzel Washington. Again, she was another beautiful, strong and brilliant “damsel in distress” trying to survive against the political and corporate corruption that tried to silence her. She just draws you in and makes you want to be the one to help save and protect her. Maybe I am a hopeless romantic, but I am so easily caught up in the story of her characters and her struggles to make a point. Ohh boy....another heavy sigh for this guy. Be still, my heart.

I fell in love again with Anna Scott as the well-known celebrity trying to have a simple, anonymous relationship in “*Notting Hill*.” I believed, and still do, that a person of her celebrity status and world-renowned notoriety, would long for a more simple and anonymous existence away from the paparazzi and constant harassment by the media and general public. That is certainly understandable, if not for a long time, at least on an occasion where she could disappear into the landscape and be a normal person, free of the constant scrutiny and spotlight. Again, me and every other straight guy, wanted to be the schmuck that came to her rescue.

As Julianne Potter in “*My Best Friend’s Wedding*,” she was the perfect girl-next-door friend that her best male friend should have seen as “the one.” What is the matter with these guys who don’t see what is so obvious, but just bumble their way through life looking at the greener pastures in other women. Are they crazy? Don’t they see this is Julia Roberts? It is perfectly clear to me from my comfortable arm chair. And, no matter how many times I watch the movie, the guy never figures it out. What a dummy!

I can’t cover all the Julia Roberts movies I’ve seen, but I just wanted to make one more short comment about how much I enjoy watching her perform. I even loved her as Tinkerbell in the movie “*Hook*.” She brings a magic to all her performances, and there is usually no ferry dust involved, just solid character acting at its finest. She is just so believable and fun to watch in any role, and her choice of movies guarantees success. Her beauty is timeless and she has such magical skills of engaging the audience, and in particular, me. By the way, have I told you I’m an incurable Julia Roberts fan? Hmmm. I don’t know how you missed it.

I could spend a lot of time reviewing all the Julia Roberts movies I have seen over the years, but I can’t do it and keep this chapter down to just a few pages. Ms. Roberts is such a skilled performer that I would

be caught up in just about any role she took on. I think that what it comes down to is that I am in love with the brilliance of Julia Roberts' acting performances, for her characters and how she draws me into each and every story. I just want to defend or rescue her, sweeping her off her feet and carrying her away into a perfect fantasy life. Not going to happen. Again, my chest expresses another heavy sigh. No worries. I'll be okay. I'll be okay. Really!

No, I'm really not in love with Julia Roberts. However, I love her incredible acting skills and her effectiveness in bringing characters to life on the screen. Again, thank you Julia, for all the emotions you've brought out in me through your amazing gift of performing. You move me, and I love you for that.

Short Biography

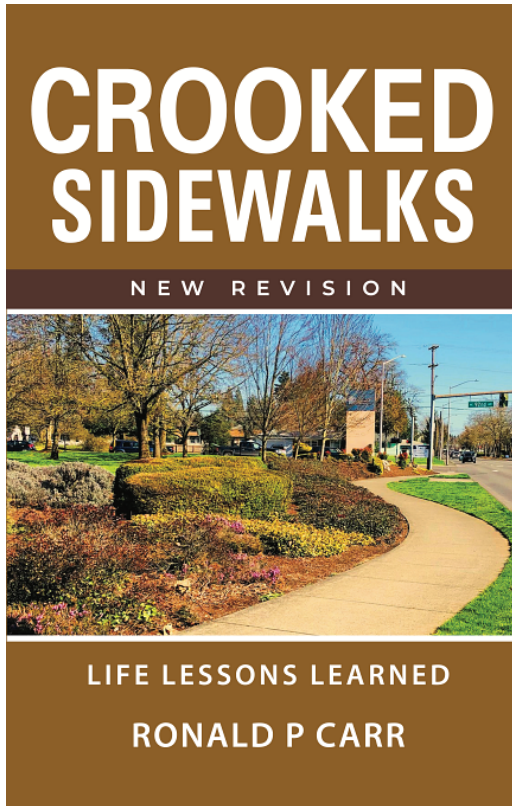


After graduating from the University of La Verne with a degree in Biology, Ron served in the US Navy during the Viet Nam war, later joining the US Coast Guard Reserves, retiring as a Lt. Commander after 22 years of combined service to the country

In civilian life, Ron established himself as a professional Development Officer for numerous not-for-profit organizations, specializing in Marketing, Public Relations and Fundraising. Ron

distinguished himself as a nationally recognized Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE), and is credited with raising tens of millions of dollars for numerous charities. He has also served on the Board of the Portland Rose Festival Foundation for the past 20 years, and is still serving.

Ron has authored three non-fiction books, and composed an original song called “**From One Rose**”, a tribute to the beauty and majesty of the great Pacific Northwest. The song was arranged for symphony by Emmy Award Winning Hollywood composer, Bruce Broughton, and was premiered in May of 2022 by the Oregon Symphony at the beautiful and historic Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland.



Every life's a story, every story a book, but most are never written. We're encouraged to share our story, including successes and failures. So much to learn, yet failure is not terminal. This book helps you navigate your journey.

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