

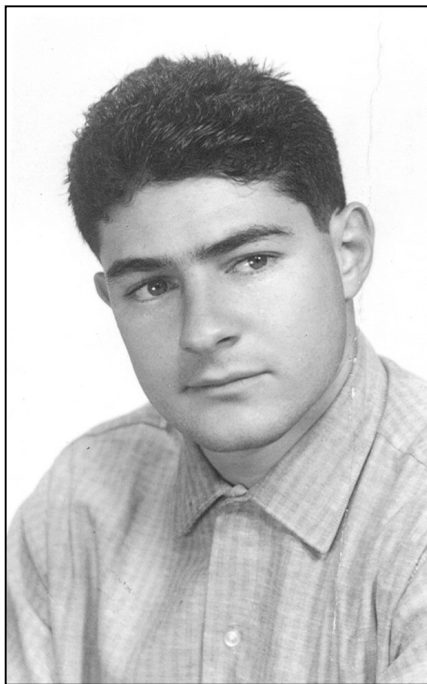
## Martin Lewis Griss - A “short” history

(Dec 2013; Updated Oct 2014)

My life has been shaped by a few crucial events, and a number of subsequently opportunistic decisions: *going to London in 1962, going to Israel in 1963, marrying an Israeli girl, losing our first child to Tay-Sachs, and adopting our two kids.*

While I planned many things, life had its own ideas. As they say in Yiddish ...”Man plans and God laughs” – לאַכט גאָט און טראַכט מענטש דער. (*Der mensch tract un Got lakht.*) “Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans.” – John Lennon (in his song:” Beautiful Boy -Darling Boy”)

I used to have a phenomenal memory, and a voracious appetite for reading– I would read and remember tons of books and magazines: Archimedes, Popular Science, Popular Mechanics, and many others; I would go the Jo’burg main library every Saturday morning and take out a stack of books (I had a special card for extra books). I remember Ian Kennedy and I doing a Math Wizards demonstration (computing dates and square roots of big numbers), and this



memory helped. It’s still pretty good, though TV, Internet and advancing age have taken their toll - So I do not remember all the interesting things we did in school or later. -☺

**<- Me, taken late 1962/early 1963**

In 1962, after I returned from my two weeks in England at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Youth Science Fortnight (sent after I and three others won South Africa’s “Archimedes” magazine science competition – helped by aforementioned memory), I decided to study somewhere overseas. This was my first trip overseas, and first time I talked to an educated black man. It opened my eyes to so many new things. I decided to pursue my studies overseas,

changing from my original plan of going to Wits with many of you.

I immediately applied for several scholarships in the USA and Israel; the opportunity to study at the Technion in Haifa showed up first, because one had to master enough Hebrew to study. Despite being a dunce in Hebrew school, and poor in learning Afrikaans, it sounded exciting and exotic, and I was accepted. I arrived in Haifa in January 1963, with a plan to study Electrical Engineering.

I studied a ton of Hebrew, Israeli culture, bible studies, and extra math and physics (from Lindeman's book in Dutch! Afrikaans to the rescue!) in order to pass the very competitive entrance exam. Estelle Kagan's class in Mechanics was crucial. I did very well in the exams, and was accepted to the Physics department, though the BSc degree I received was a combination of Math and Physics. So much for plans to become an Electrical Engineer ...



I lived in Haifa until 1967, first staying in a group house for the many foreign student entrance exam candidates, then in a shared apartment across from campus, and finally in the dormitories on the Technion campus - it was a great experience.

***<- Hitchhiking near the Kinneret in Israel, late 1963***

I loved Israel – the food, the language, the scenery, the girls; I hitchhiked and camped, spent time on a kibbutz, slept on the beach. I love hummus, tahini, kebabs and hot peppers.

I met my wife Pnina Shchori at a student dance club after just a few months in Israel and we started dating extensively, to the consternation of my parents who did not meet her until after we got married, and given my prior (lack of) track record with girls, did not understand this sudden infatuation. Quite a tumultuous relationship – we were both quite stubborn – drove our friends crazy - “Get married already!” they said. And we did in 1967. We rented a little house in Haifa for 6 months – we called it the “hovel!” Pnina is the love of my life. In March 2013 we celebrated knowing each other 50 years, and in Feb 2014, we celebrated 47 years of marriage. While dating, we took several art classes together, and still share a strong interest in all things artistic – she in quilting, I in metal work. While in college in Illinois, we did pottery together.

I spent three months in 1965, hitchhiking in Europe (Greece, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, England). I celebrated my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in Salzburg, Austria.

We went through the Six Day War in 1967 – quite an experience – air raid shelters, sand bags everywhere, planes flying over-head, ominous news on radio. We volunteered to help in some way, but it was over before we were

accepted.

Due to the 6-day war, my graduation from the Technion was delayed by over a month. And I missed the award ceremony, since I had been accepted for my PhD in the USA and needed to get to the University of Illinois for start of class. Our planned long honeymoon back in South Africa was cut short, but we still managed a first trip to the game reserve. We then flew on a cheap and slow airline to New York, via Angola, Barcelona, Luxembourg and Iceland. We spent 24 hours in Barcelona, went to a flamenco club – great fun.

Spent 1967-1971 in Champaign-Urbana at the University of the Illinois; did my PhD in High-Energy Theoretical Physics, with tons of computing and modeling. This was our first experience with snow, very cold and icy in the winter – freezing cold, let me tell you for folks from South Africa and Israel – I swear my head would shrink when I stepped outside in mid-winter. But there were some great places nearby in Indiana and Southern Illinois to camp in the spring and summer.

During my time in Illinois we had many interesting and fun experiences – notable was an elementary particle physics summer school in Brookhaven, Long Island (drove cross country in an old station wagon) – managed to meet Leslie Lasker while there. Pnina later flew to join me, and we toured a big part of New York State, the Finger Lakes, and Niagara Falls. Also went to a physics workshop in the French Alps (Méribel les Allues), where I learned to ski – and also fell and cracked a rib. Other great trips to Kentucky and Saint Louis.

Also, during that time, our first child, daughter Orlie was born in 1968; sadly, we later discovered she had Tay-Sachs disease (as it turned out both Pnina and I are carriers), and she died at 19 months. This was traumatic event, amplified by the absence of any family around us.

After my graduation in 1971, I worked as physics post-doc for 2 years at Caltech in Pasadena, doing large-scale computer models of elementary particle scattering. Had the opportunity to meet and talk with Richard Feynman, Murray Gell-Mann and George Zweig – amazing days. I fell in love with computing, and decided to switch fields. Pnina completed her BS in Biology at Cal State Los Angeles. While we liked the weather in Los Angeles and travel around Southern California (Anzo Borrego Desert, Palm Springs, Death Valley, San Diego), we disliked the heavy smog in LA, so we decided to move on.

In 1973 we went to the University of Utah in Salt Lake City; I started in Computational Physics, teaching numerical methods and developing LISP-based computer algebra systems for physicists. I then moved over to the Computer Science Department, ending up as a tenured Associate Professor working on software engineering, symbolic software, compilers and portable software. Pnina completed her MS in Molecular Biology there and worked for the Howard-Hughes Medical Institute. We also ski'd a lot, and camped a lot in southern Utah. I am an ardent programmer, developing all kinds of applications and systems in

languages as diverse as Fortran, LISP, Pascal, C++, Java, assembly language for many machines, micro-code, PERL, HTML and most recently Python.

While living in Salt Lake, I became involved with community theater (reprise of some of our high-school experiences). I played the younger son, Buddy, in Neil Simon's "Come Blow Your Horn" – found it much harder learning lines than when I was in high school, and now had a full-time job.

The highlight of the 9 years we spent in Utah was a decision to adopt kids when we realized with Tay-Sachs and other complications we could not do it the traditional way.

Both of our kids were born in Salt Lake City. Doron joined us as 3 days old, and Shelli at 5 days old. It is a totally amazing experience to get a phone call from the agency out of the blue, and with no warning or preparation have them say "Your son is here, come pick him up." Same with Shelli. Shelli is now 31, married to James, from Brazil (she met him at a kibbutz in Israel), and Doron, 35, is not married, though has long time girl-friend, Sandra. In November 2013 our first grandson was born – Logan Lavi Griss Bueno – which is fantastic, since my brother-in-law in Israel has 14 grand-kids!! We see Logan every day, and see all kids and partners for Shabbat dinner nearly every week. Shelli lived in the Haifa apartment for several years during the 4 years she spent in Israel after graduating from UCLA.

In 1982 I came to Hewlett-Packard Laboratories (HP Labs) in Palo Alto California for my sabbatical. I spent time at HP and also a bit at Stanford, planning to return to U of Utah as a prof. But, seduced by the wonderful Northern California weather, and the excitement of Silicon Valley, we decided to stay. I joined HP Labs, and worked as a researcher and several levels of manager until 2002; towards the end I was director of a 70 person Software Technology Laboratory and a principal laboratory scientist. We bought our first small house in Palo Alto, soon to be replaced by a larger two story house just down the road from Steve Jobs of Apple fame, once we managed to sell our houses (one we lived in, one we rented out) in Utah.

To celebrate my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1994, I learned to play clarinet, (a lifelong dream, inspired by seeing Acker Bilk of "Stranger on the Shore" fame on my second trip to London) and played a few jazz standards at my 50<sup>th</sup> party (not well, but sort of OK); I also play saxophone (very badly), and harmonica (after a fashion). When I practice, I am allowed to play clarinet in the bathroom, but have to go outside with the saxophone –JJ

In 1997, I published a well-respected book on Software Reuse, with two colleagues. Translated into Chinese and Japanese, and widely quoted. In addition, I have published some 100 articles and book chapters, and some 45 conference papers.

Around 1999 or so, we thought peace was breaking out in the Middle East, and we had the “brilliant” idea of buying an apartment in Haifa, on the beach, with a plan of spending up to 6mths a year there; HP had an office at the Technion, I did spend a first extended period living in Haifa and working in that HP office. Fabulous time, walking and eating on the beach. Then came the second intifada in 2000 and the 9-11 disaster in 2001; I was actually on my way back from South Africa, and got stuck in Atlanta for 3 days because all planes were grounded.

I left HP in 2002, planning to be retired, travel and pursue my hobbies. Had a great retirement party. And this changed my plans re working for HP in Israel.

After about 6 months retirement and ramping up my hobbies, I returned to academia seeking the intellectual stimulation of working with students at the University of California, Santa Cruz, for about 18 months building a group around software agents.



When commuting became too tedious, I joined Carnegie Mellon University, building a new campus in the heart of Mountain View (branch of the famous Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania University see <http://sv.cmu.edu/>), where I still am for a while longer.

**<- Director of CMU Silicon Valley campus, 2012**

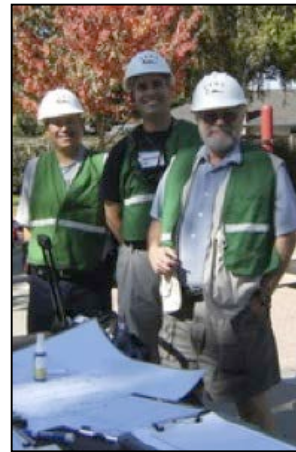
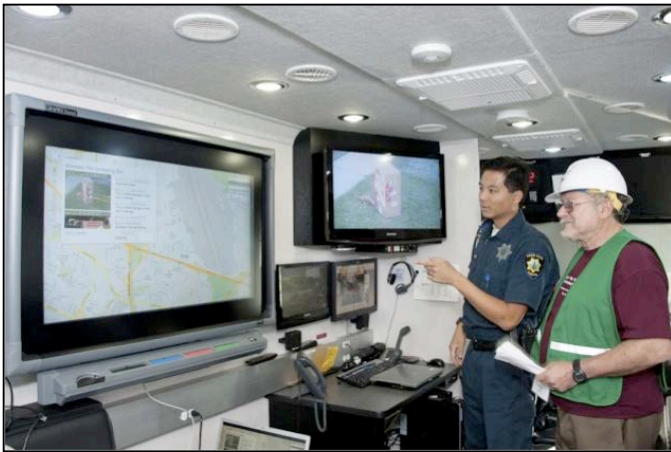
I had multiple roles, as director of parts of the program, and ultimately as Director of the Campus.

When both kids grew up and left home, we sold our larger two-story house in Palo Alto, and moved to a single-story house in Mountain View California. A few years before, both of my Achilles tendons, one after other, developed severe tendinitis requiring surgery after trying extensive physio-therapy (15 minutes of surgery, 1 year recovery!!), prompting the move to a single story house. Last year we sold the Haifa apartment, when travel and remote maintenance became too much of a hassle.

About 4 years ago, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer – after some deliberation, had the prostate removed with a Davinci surgical robot – very cool, like being attacked by a large spider (I was of course asleep, but have seen a demo of the machine). I have almost fully recovered – some minor glitches...

I decided to slow down and retire from CMU, and indeed, was again away for some months, and had another great retirement party – but then was called back in 2009 to become the director of the campus. Until August 2013, I was director of the 250-person Carnegie Mellon University, Silicon Valley campus and associate dean in the College of Engineering. In September, I relinquished that post and returned to research and programming as Principal Research Scientist. I and PhD students work on mobile computing and disaster response using mobile smartphones.

To support this research, I took several exams to get my amateur radio license (KJ6MIN, now extra class) and also first level community emergency response team (CERT) training – we learned to triage victims, search a building, put out a fire, communicate with police and fire officers, provide basic first aid, and organize a responder team. And I have a green jacket and white hardhat. The pictures were taken at a large workshop we ran on campus.



I am fluent in Hebrew; still manage in B-grade Afrikaans, which I use in Holland, and have a useful bit of French and Brazilian Portuguese (to talk my son-in-law's family). Even trying to learn some Chinese using Rosetta Stone. I still remember a lot of the Esperanto some of us learned while at North View. It's funny that I now like learning languages – I was terrible in Latin and Afrikaans at school.

We have visited Brazil, China, England, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, and Taiwan, some of them multiple times over the years, for both work and pleasure. Back in South Africa a few years ago we did a Safari (Mala Mala) and had a great tour with family up the garden route.





In January 2014 we took Shelli, James and new grandson Logan Lavi Bueno for a trip to Hawaii – Logan's first flight.

**<- Martin with 11 week old grandson, Logan**

In August 2013 we took our first cruise with Doron, Shelli and partners. A wonderful 10 days from San Francisco to Alaska.

***On boat near Golden Gate Bridge -> on way to Alaska***



We also took a helicopter ride to a glacier, a seaplane ride to a misty fjord, and a ride on a

dog sled. Amazing scenery!

Want to go back, and we plan to cruise elsewhere, perhaps Panama Canal, or Caribbean or Greek Isles.



***<- Martin & Pnina on glacier after helicopter flight***

Our houses have always been full of animals – multiple dogs and cats; we have had birds, rats, lizards and fish. We are down to one dog, Abigail, and one cat, Mookie; both kids live near by (2 miles and 7 miles) and have 7 cats between them.

My main hobby (when I have time) is metal work – I started with silver and



copper jewelry about 12 years ago, and have sold several pieces at shows (see <http://rocks-n-rags.com> for some earlier work).

### **<- My steel sculptures**

More recently I have expanded into steel welded sculpture, making a flock of whimsical birds and a few other creatures for

the back yard.

In December 2013, two of CMU my students got their PhD's and two more early this year. Early in 2014, Doron got married to his long-time amorata, Sandra, they were blessed with a son Oliver Conrad Griss, and they are in the process of remodeling and moving into their first house. I am progressing towards retirement (but see above about plans -JJ).



In September, I celebrated my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, with the theme "Everything is Purple" – food, décor and clothing! I had all the guests wear something purple too. And I finally got to wear a purple zoot suit.

### **<- Purple to the max!**

I first went part-time in April, and hope to retire in in early 2015 – If I plan it well and am lucky, I will get a both a 70<sup>th</sup> birthday bash a retirement party and – though Pnina swears she will not give me a 3<sup>rd</sup> retirement party...

Pnina's hobby is quilting; last year won a blue ribbon for a very creative design. We have recently started work on a mixed media project for a show – she will quilt and trapunto a fabric panel and I will repossé and chase a matching piece in copper. My other hobbies are ham radio, airbrush painting, music and reading sci-fi.





**Our (pre-Logan) family on the boat to Alaska**

**James, Pnina, Martin, Doron**

**Shelli, Sandra**

Lets keep in touch – time is rushing by. Keep up the good fight. " *Do not go gentle into that good night; Old age should burn and rave at close of day; Rage, rage against the dying of the light, ...*" – Dylan Thomas

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