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As I sit here late at night on the eve of the deadline for this “paper,” my shoulders feel the same weight of tired limbs and reluctant fingers felt so many times in New Haven all those years ago. The only solace is that I know I am not alone tonight, and that Word Perfect was invented in the interim.

My mood, more than anything, is of gratitude for the time at Yale and for the good fortunes that have come my way since graduation. Although life has gotten so incredibly more complex than it was back then, my wife, my two kids, my work, and my home each and all contribute to a life that is so much more than I should have hoped for in life at forty-six.

As in many of my pursuits, I got a late start in marriage and in my career, and didn’t really settle into what I now call my life until twelve years ago. Before that time I continued to live the relatively carefree life of a bachelor, following graduation with three years in the Navy, two years of business school, and six years of additional thrashing around in banking before I set on a longer-term course with some purpose to it. During that time I was essentially still growing up, rarely looking back, and only occasionally planning much ahead.

Today I am a planner, very much enjoying running my own business and being more or less in control of my own destiny. Although the venture capital business, which I love so much, defies most attempts at predictability, the managers of the businesses I am involved in allow me to live (somewhat vicariously) the more devil-be-damned life on the fringe. Somehow I have found just the right mix to make the building of my business the kind of challenge that I find extremely rewarding and fun.

Increasingly, though, I remember more and more about the years at Yale and some of the simpler (and most often less responsible) pleasures of those four magic years. I have to confess to remembering less about the academic challenges (except of course the late-night/single-draft paper routines without a word processor!). While sailing and the Bail for Yale Yacht Club were clearly the focal point for most of my best friends and great memories, the single most outstanding memory for me has to be the first-ever win by the “Shitty JV” Hockey Team over the Bridgeport Home Oilers at the Whale.

It is perhaps of significance only to those who were there and who had suffered so many humiliating defeats at the hands of “The Crusher” and his gang of semipro French Canadian thugs from down the Merritt Turnpike. Somehow, someway, in our senior year, the Shitty JV found itself tied with the feared Home Oilers at the end of regulation time and ready to head for the locker room with a moral victory. Still hurting from the emptiness of the 29-29 football tie with Harvard, the seniors voted to risk the moral victory for a highly unlikely outcome. The Norton/Palmer/Coit line, whom nobody ever feared, was on the ice for the memorable last goal of the overtime game. In the end, as the Crusher took him to the corner for one last heavy check to the boards, it was Norton’s pinpoint pass onto Coit’s stick at the crease that provided the margin for victory.

It wasn’t an event that changed the world much, but it was a memory that belongs to my piece of the Yale experience. As in my business, it was the challenge and the attitude of the team, and of course the success of the venture at the end, that made that event so memorable and so representative of the friends and experiences that I remember as an undergraduate at Yale.

Npow for the Spellchecker!