

ABOUT MY BOY

David's life, Birth to 18 years

“Good morning, good yawning said the boy to the patchwork cat”. I hear the voice of my young son David; he is about three years old and is reading his favorite book to me, “The Patchwork Cat”. David has memorized the book, and as he sits in my lap, recites the story word for word as I turn the pages. Then I wake up. I am in bed with my loving wife, but I realize I was dreaming. I realize that the object of my dream, my son David, has been dead for six months. David died on December 13th, 2005, just two days before his 23rd birthday. After waking up from the dream I realize that I am beginning to forget some aspects of our life together. I am worried that I will lose more as I get older. So, I decide that day to write the story of David from his birth until he went off to college. Of course these are my memories from my perspective. I wish we could ask David what he remembers, but he is no longer with us. Hopefully this remembrance will suffice.

THE BABY

David was born at Mission Hospital on December 15th, 1982. The doctor and nurses were very impressed with David's full head of hair! He was a cute baby. Well behaved. At the time David was born I was starting a new business, so I was quite busy. Most of his care fell to his mom. Patty was a great mom, always taking him to the store or the park, or for rides in his stroller. I helped out some. I enjoyed helping with baths, and yes I did change a few diapers in my time. David was a funny baby when he was very young. He did not like to move around under his own power. He liked to roll around, be carried or held, but at first did not want to crawl around a lot. After a while he figured out that to get places he had to crawl and began to do so. Of course the next logical step was walking, but at first he did not want to do that either! He would get up holding a rail or the back of his push car, look around, and sit back down. I don't know if he was afraid, or just lazy. Like crawling, he eventually decided that if he wanted to get around, he had to walk, and he did. Talking was the same thing, by 14 months he still was not talking; we were getting a little worried. Patty talked to the pediatrician, who said, yes, he was late in talking, but to give him a little more time. Finally, at about 16 months he began to talk. When he finally talked he talked really well, he kind of skipped the baby talk stage! David's walking and talking progression indicated the personality he would display all his life, he was thoughtful and deliberate. He would study a path before embarking on it, but once he decided to embark on a path, he did so in a mature and professional manner, rarely straying, and learning along the way.

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

Patty and I were still relatively young parents, but had the advantage of being established for almost ten years before David came. This gave us the resources to give him many experiences as a baby. We would take him to stores, restaurants, and the mall. But we were also able to take him on nice trips to Death Valley, Sequoia National Park, San Louis Obispo, San Diego, etc. He accompanied us back to Detroit to meet our parents and other relatives when he was only six months old.

David had very interesting eyes when he was very young. Like most babies his eyes were blue, but they were shaped like an Asian child's eyes, almond shaped, not round. At first this worried me; I thought he might have autism. I asked the doctor and he said there must be some Asian genes in the family and I agreed. My mother's family defiantly had some Mongolian blood mixed in at some point. The doctor said he might grow out of it and sure enough by the time he was two years old his eyes became round.

David had a photographic memory. Patty read to him every night from the time he was about three weeks old. I loved to read to him also, and if I was home from work before his bedtime I often picked up a book and propped him in my lap. We soon discovered David had an almost photographic memory. Once he began to talk he could recite back the stories to us, based on the pictures on the page! Both Patty and I took this opportunity to link the words with his memory. By the time he was three years old he could sound out words and read. He knew all his ABC's and numbers before he ever got to Kindergarten.

Between the ages of two and five David was like a sponge. He was active, but not hyper in any way. He tended to "study" things. He would often come up with his own words for things he observed. When he was about two or three we took him on a trip to the Giant Forest in Sequoia National Park. We stayed in a little cabin in the middle of a grove of the giant redwood trees. Around our cabin were many small chipmunks with tan bodies and a black and white stripe on there backs. They were darting all around and under our cabin. David was outside, chasing them without much success. Patty and I asked him what he was doing and he said he was trying to catch a "go-go". He did not know the name of the animal but he knew it was fast and ran around in all different directions, hence the name "go-go".

I had a nickname for David that stuck for the first three or four years, "Owie". Although he was generally mild mannered, he was very sensitive to bumps and bruises. Of course that might be our fault; we were very protective of him. When he got a bump he would scream out "OWIE", so we called him "Owie". As he grew older, he outgrew his sensitivity and we eventually stopped calling "Owie" by the time his new baby brother Jonathan arrived just after David turned 4 years old.

I was in the technology business. I had a strong conviction (and still do today) that technology can really enhance learning. I began experimenting on David. At the time the company I founded, Future Domain Corporation was making SCSI controllers for the IBM PC. IBM had just introduced the IBM PC Junior, designed for home use. I purchased one for home and set it up for David. We started with two games, 'Mouser'

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

and 'King's Quest'. 'Mouser' was a simple maze game; you moved your man through the maze and shot enemies before they shot you. David had a good time with the game, but was much more intrigued with 'King's Quest'. In 'King's Quest' you had to use the keyboard, not the joystick. He had to type commands in English to get his character to do things. David's love for words and reading really took a quantum leap with this game. He had to read the dialog and react by typing simple commands. He would run to me or Patty and ask how to spell something or read something on the screen. He basically learned third grade or better vocabulary from this game. He also enjoyed the puzzle solving aspect of the game, as did Patty. The two of them created a large map from several sheets of paper taped together, mapping the entire game. 'King's Quest' was a great success and we followed it with several more educational games over the years. I think David's adult skills for reading, writing, and problem solving were clearly enhanced by learning and playing these games. Clearly from our experience of reading to him and the way his mind worked he had an innate ability in those areas. I think the computer games helped develop them to a higher level, and besides, we all had a lot of fun solving the mysteries and puzzles of the games together.

Even in those early days, with all the pressure of my new business, I tried to be home every day for dinner with the family. I made it about 60% of the time by my recollection. I usually missed dinner when I traveled or needed to entertain clients. I enjoyed talking with Patty and David and finding out about their day. In the early days Patty would put David in his car seat and bring him down to our office on Parkway loop in Tustin to visit. Sometimes we would go to lunch and other times it was just for a visit because that day I might have a trip planned or would be home late. The main rail line from San Diego to LA ran by there, and David loved to see the trains. He became obsessed with trains from about 3 to 5 years old, and could identify all the engine types. Sometimes I would go down with Patty and David to look at the trains for a while before they headed home. It was during one of those times that something happened that had a very strong impact on me but I don't think it really register with David. He was only about three, and it had been a very stressful day for some reason, and I was going to be leaving for a trip that evening. We looked at the trains, but for some reason David started to cry. I put him in the car seat in the back seat of the car, and tried to calm him with a balloon in the car, but he kept crying. I got angry, and began to shake him. After a couple of shakes Patty saw and asked what I was doing. I stopped right then and a chill ran through me. I asked myself, "what was I doing shaking my little boy!" I then got very angry with myself. How could I let the pressures of work and business cause me to lose control. After Patty left I was in tears. David did nothing wrong. He was upset for some reason. It was I who did something wrong. I vowed from that day on never to lay a hand on my kids. Now they will tell you I threatened them several times, but I NEVER hit them. Just a couple of years ago, after David had become a young adult I asked him if he remembered that incident. He looked at me quizzically and said, "No Sir!" He did not believe that it had ever happened based on our relationship over the years. That made me very happy.

When David was little he used to love flying in my arms. I would take him in the back yard and tell him to make like an airplane and whisk him around in a circle. He

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

would ask me so many times I would get dizzy and tell him we had to stop. No problem, he would push his little car all around the backyard.

At bath time I would hold him in the mirror and he would 'dance'. I would sing the song from 'Oklahoma', "The Farmer and the Cowman should be friends", and prance him on the bathroom counter. He would laugh and laugh.

He enjoyed mechanical things. In those days I cut our lawn and had a lawn mower. He loved to work on it with me. I would give him a wrench and while I was taking the motor apart to repair something he would pound on it with his wrench. This was the beginning of the love he had for cars and mechanical things in general.

David would come up with novel names for things. After he was about three we bought him a 'big boy' bed. The model name of the mattress was 'Golden Beauty' and David picked up on that. Instead of calling it his bed, he would call it his 'Golden Beauty'. I would ask him how his bed was to sleep on. He would caress the mattress and say how wonderful he loved his 'Golden Beauty'.

David was also curious about things. We had a salt water aquarium when he was born. Patty and I both enjoyed taking care of it and buying fish for it. David found the fish very interesting. One day I came home and looked in the tank and saw something strange. It was full of crayons. I asked David about it, and he said that Mommy had taught him how to color with crayons and he thought the fish would enjoy coloring to! I tried to explain to him that fish don't have hands, and even if they did it would be difficult for them to color under water. Well, David had other ideas and a few days later more pencils and crayons were in the tank. Unfortunately, the crayons and pencils seem to have been toxic to the fish because a few days later most were dead. After that Patty and I figured that little boys and fish don't mix really well, so I dismantled the tank, and we have not had an aquarium since.

Our other pets were our cats. We usually had one or two, depending on how active the coyotes were at any given time. David loved the cat and was curious about them. One of our cats, 'Checkers', was a tabby that was a typical cat. She tolerated David, but she never let him get too close. When David chased after Checkers she kept one step ahead. If she did not want to be bothered with him she would find a cat hidey hole for herself. Our other cat at that time was 'Boris', a big long haired cat. I think Boris thought he was part dog; he liked David and let David abuse him mightily. I would come home to find David with both hands firmly grasping Boris's tail, and Boris dragging David around the house by the tail! David was having a great time, but I was worried that Boris would get mad and claw him. But that was the farthest thing from Boris's mind. He seemed to really enjoy playing with David, and I never saw him bit or claw him.

Our neighborhood had some young families, but most of the kids were a few years older than David. When David was about six a family moved in across the street with a young son David's age. His name was Russell. Russell was also a very smart young

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

child, and David and Russell became good friends quickly. Through early elementary school years they considered themselves best friends.

DAVID GOES TO SCHOOL

When David was about three we enrolled him in a pre-school that met for two hours, twice a week. We felt it was a chance for him to meet more kids his own age and have a different experience. The school was at the Mount of Olives Church, but was open to all faiths. David seemed to enjoy it very much. I remember going to several 'Pageants' the kids put on at holidays and for special occasions. When he was four years old he went three days a week for mornings, and at five he started kindergarten.

He attended kindergarten at Linda Vista Elementary School, a few blocks from our home on Terreno Drive. Mrs. Bachelor was his teacher. One problem David had was that he was much more advanced than many of the children as far as reading and writing. He could already read and write, but many of the kids did not even know their ABC's. We considered private school or home schooling. Patty and I met with Mrs. Bachelor at the beginning of the school year and talked to her about it. We did not want David to be turned off by school because it was boring. Mrs. Bachelor assured us she would keep him challenged. While most kids would be learning ABC's, David and a couple of other kids like him would be reading. She was good to her word, and David had a wonderful kindergarten experience.

The next summer a new family moved across the street from us. They had two daughters and one son, Russell, who was David's age. We introduced ourselves and David and Russell became best friends. They entered first grade together. Shortly after David and Russell met and school had started Patty and I noticed David became unhappy. We asked him why. He told us that Russell's mom had told Russell not to spend so much time with David, and that he should spend more time with the child of a family they had met in church. David had run into his first case of discrimination because he was Jewish. Not being shy, Patty talked to Russell's mom. She denied she had any prejudice against Jews, but that she just wanted her son to have more than one "good" friend. We believed Russell's story. David and Russell remained friends through high school, but it would never be the same again. David learned to distrust friendships, and as a result he picked his friends carefully and was not interested in being "popular". Although this caused us some concern when he was young, it turned out to be a very good thing as he became older. He had only a few friends, but they were good ones he could count on.

In second grade David joined Cub Scouts and Patty got very involved in scouting at this time. I was very busy with the business, so while I did participate in some events, Cub Scouts was really Patty's passion. Later, both Patty and I were very involved in Boy Scouts. David was a serious child, and I think he really took the lessons of scouting to heart at a young age. That really helped form his character. One of our fun Cub Scout activities was the Pinewood Derby. Being an engineer my natural inclination was to take over the project, but I saw what happened when other dads did that. The child didn't

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

really participate. So I tried to make sure David did most of the work. I would ask him to design the car and build it. I would help him when he became stuck, and I would help “tune up” the car. As a result we never won first place, but placed second twice. David and I really enjoyed working on those cars, and he kept them until he went to college, when he left them to us for safe keeping. We still have them today.

David did very well in first grade. At the end of first grade he was tested for the gifted program, and was found to be gifted. So in second grade he was in a gifted class. The school did not have enough students to form a class that was all gifted, so it was mixed, but the teacher was supposed to provide additional content for the dozen or so gifted students. It seemed to work in the first grade, but the school district had a different idea in the second grade. David and Russell started the second grade and right away were unhappy. Patty and I meet with the teacher to find out what the problem was. The teacher explained there were about a dozen GATE kids in the school for second grade, and about a dozen “English language learners” in second grade. The school thought it was a good idea to put them together! So here you had kids that needed a lot of extra attention because they could not speak or read English, and kids who wanted advanced work. It was too much for the teacher, so she decided to spend most of her time with the English learners, and let the GATE kids fend for themselves. Russell’s mom and Patty researched what could be done, and found there was a school in our district that offered classes that were 100% gifted (GATE). This school had a third grade that was all gifted. We applied for a transfer, as did the Russell’s family. Starting third grade on David was at De Portola School until sixth grade. We noticed the difference right away. David was much happier at the new school and enjoyed it much more than Linda Vista.

One of the scariest incidents we had with David was in second grade. David was a very health kid; he was five years old before he even had to have his first antibiotic. One day he came home from school with a headache. By that evening he had 104 temperature. We took him to the Mission Hospital emergency and were very worried. The Doctor suspected meningitis, but wanted to do a spinal tap to make sure and to find out what type it was. We felt so bad for David. The spinal tap was so painful for him but he took it like a trooper. The test showed he had viral meningitis. We were very worried because there was no drug treatment. About 20% of kids who get it suffer some damage, and it can be fatal to some. David missed a month of school recovering. Luckily, David recovered completely but it was scary for us.

ATHLETICS

Because of what happened with Russell, I think David was much more interested in looking for companionship in his own family. His younger brother was four years younger and was now at an age where he could be a real playmate. David loved his brother and really enjoyed playing with him and protecting him. We used to go by nicknames. My nickname was “Sir”, Jonathan began calling David “Buffman” because David was the buff guy that always protected him, and our nickname for Jonathan was “Bushman” (because he was small). We tried to provide the kids with a normal

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

American childhood experience, and I think that we succeeded in that. David quickly progressed through elementary school. It all seemed to go by so fast looking back. One area we tried to instill in them was health and athletics. I did not really care what sport they chose, just that they stuck with it. However, like there Dad, both kids were not born athletes. I wanted to be involved with the kids in there athletic endeavors. When David was a baby we started him in swimming lessons. Mission Viejo was (and still is) known for there Olympic swim team, and they had many programs for kids, starting at just a couple of years old. Patty took David to 'Mommy and me' swimming when he was just 9 months old, and I did the same when he was a little older. But it was clear by the time he was five that swimming was not going to be his sport. Next we tried Little League. I volunteered to be an assistant coach and was at all the games and practices when I was not traveling for business. David played a couple of years, but again it became clear baseball was not his love. We tried soccer, one year I was assistant coach and the second I was head coach. We won third place in the league, but again it was not David's cup of tea. Patty suggested gymnastics. We began taking him to a gymnastics school. David loved it, and he stuck with it until he got to high school. The only bad thing was the part Patty and I could have was that of spectator. But we loved that part, and David used to enjoy showing us his moves during competitions. We gave Jon the same athletic experiences, but he also chose gymnastics, probably in part because he enjoyed being with David. Jon was not as skilled in gymnastics, but he enjoyed it, and it helped keep both kids healthy, as did scouting.

David was on a good track, doing well in school, scouting to build character, and gymnastics to keep his body in shape. When David was in third grade things changed for both kids. I got sick with arthritis, which knocked me out bad. We had our own business, and with me out of commission Patty had to step in. She had been a full time mom, and the kids loved that, but we had to get a nanny and our attention shifted to keeping our livelihood afloat. In no way did the kids get ignored, we still made sure to go to all the school functions, were active with the scouts (especially Patty), and the kids were active in gymnastics. But in talking to David in later years they did feel some shift in our attention over the next three or four years. After I got back on my feet I had to focus my energy on the business as it had fallen behind in my absence. Again this took me away from some of the kid's activities. In 1994, when David was 12 years old and starting Boy Scouts I decided that I needed to allocate more time to him. He was getting older and I felt Boy Scouts was a perfect opportunity to reconnect more strongly. By this time I had been getting better for almost four years so I went on an easy outing with David and a scout troop we were considering. I barely made it home alive. Even though I had the arthritis under control, I was not in good physical shape. About this time we also were getting inquires from companies that wanted to buy our company. I decided that if I could sell the company, I would dedicate myself to getting into shape and spending time with the kids. I felt David was entering his teen years now and I remember that by the time I was 16 I was not interested in hanging around with my parents anymore. I felt I had four or five good years left and wanted to make the most of them.

SCOUTING

We were able to sell the company in the middle of 1995 and I made good on my promise to myself. First, we had decided on a Troop 603 which we picked for the reason that they did a lot of outdoor hiking and camping activities. Second, I volunteered to run high adventure which is the person that plans the hikes and outings. Finally I started a rigorous exercise and health program. David seemed to be happy to have me around at scouts. He was a good hiker and backpacker. He enjoyed the outdoors and camping with his friends. His patrol included Russell, who also joined the same troop. We hiked to the top of all the local mountains together except one, Mount San Jacinto. I led two trips up there with David, but on each one some scout (my own son Jon on the last trip) became ill or could not make it to the peak. David would go on with the other scouts, but as high adventure leader I was responsible for staying with the ones who could not make it. It became a joke between David and I if we would ever make it to the top together. A few years later on one of our family trips to Palm Springs, David and I took the tram up and did a day hike together to the top and finally we made it together as we had tried several times before.

One of our best trips was to Mono Pass in the Sierras. It was a small group. Paul Hennessey and I were the adult leaders, David, Russell, Paul's son Kenny, and two other boys. It was only four days, a long summer weekend trip, but it was in my mind the best trip we did together. David was the leader of the trek and he did a great job. We started at 9000 feet, and hiked up to 12000 feet and over a glacier still full of ice in August. Usually the boys and adults cooked separately but since the group was small David wanted the scouts to cook for the adult leaders. The kids cooked us some great meals. The scenery was majestic! On the second day we camped at a lake at 10,000 feet with a waterfall cascading down from 12000 feet at the other end of the lake. We all caught trout which the boys pan fried for us. On the way out a thunderstorm developed and we all high tailed it down the mountain.

Unfortunately that was the high point of David's experience in Troop 603. A couple of years before a woman who was kicked out of another Cub Scout troop was accepted by Patty into her Cub Scout troop. She followed us to the Boy Scout troop. The way she repaid Patty for her kindness was to make trouble for us in the Troop. She made false accusations about us showing favoritism for David and discriminating against her kids. This was totally false, and it made it so we could not do our jobs in the Troop. In the end, we told the troop either she had to leave or we would. They would not ask her to leave, so we did. I know this was tough on David. I talked to him, and he did not want to leave his friends. I told him that in life you sometimes had to stand for your principals and make difficult decisions. The unknown was scary but the known might be scarier. By this time David was also ready to try something new. We had heard about a Troop that was supposed to be great in Lake Forest, Troop 634. It turned out that it was the best decision we could have made. Both David and I made some life long friends in that troop; they turned out to be a higher class of people. David met Sean and Mike Schuetz, Matt Miller (who was his best man at his wedding), and Aaron Cristaldi among others.

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

Later David told me he learned a very important lesson from that incident. Don't settle; be ready to move on to look for the best.

In Troop 634 I eventually became High Adventure Coordinator and Patty became Troop Chairperson. We had a number of great trips including a couple of four-wheel drive off road adventures, camping at the Glamus Dunes in California, and canoeing on the Colorado River. David also went to the National Jamboree in Virginia shortly after we joined the troop. I had a high adventure trip planned for just a few days after he got back, and I told him that I thought he might be tired after the travel to the East Coast, but he wanted to go. He got back from Jamboree and just two days later we were driving up to the Emigrant Wilderness on the eastern Sierra north of Yosemite for a nine day trek. The first night we were there David developed a fever. The next morning he was not better. It was not a high temperature, but he could not hike. I told him we needed to go home. Like the Mono Pass trip, there were only two adults on this trip, myself and Bob Roth and his two sons and one other boy. Scout rules require at least two adults on a trip, so if I left then the hike would be canceled. Bob Roth and the other boys begged me to go on the trip, but I told them no, that my son was sick. David said, "Dad, why don't you just call Mom and she can come pick me up. You need to go on with the others. You promised to do this trip with them". I said OK. I called Patty and she said she would drive up from our home in Mission Viejo (about a eight hour drive). David said he would stay at the campsite and I would take them in about four miles to the first campsite and then come back. I did exactly that but began regretting it within an hour. What was I doing? David was 14 by then, but I still thought of him as a kid. I left my son alone? I pushed the others to get to the campsite quickly, dropped my pack, and began to run back. Ryan, one of Bob's sons, said he would come along so we had the rule of two people together on any hike maintained. I did those four miles faster than anything. I got back and David was fine, resting in the car, and shortly after that Patty drove up. She had Jonathan in the car and had flown up there in our Jaguar. David was feeling a little better and he was happy I was going to help the scouts make the trip. After they were heading back I hiked that four miles again (now doing 12 miles) with Ryan and did the hike, but I was miserable. I enjoyed the scenery and the kids were great company, but it was clear to me now. I did this for my kids, not me, and without them it was not fun.

I was not able to go with David on perhaps his two biggest outings, the National Jamboree in Virginia, and Philmont in New Mexico, but they were great for him. He really developed his friendship with Matt, Sean, and Aaron at these outings. Philmont, an 84 mile two week trek really crowned his backpacking experience. It gave him a lot of confidence that he could make it on his own. He said it was the best experience of his life.

I also went with David to every scout camp in the summer. With Troop 603 we went to the Mt. Baldy camp in Holcomb Valley. With Troop 634 we went to Emerald Bay and Cherry Valley on Catalina Island, the Sierras, and Hawaii. I got to see David grow from a kid to an adult with strong leadership ability over these years.

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

During these trips we did many things together; swimming, boating, snorkeling, shooting, bike riding, hikes, and sightseeing. Of course most activities were with other scouts and his friends, but David always made time “for the old man”. I enjoyed doing things with him, and he seemed to enjoy spending time with me.

DRIVING

Of course during this time he was transitioning from teenager to young man, with all the rights of passage. When he turned 15 he took Driver’s Ed in school and then began his behind the wheel experience with me. He liked to drive and we did a lot of driving together to get him the experience he needed. We started in the high school parking lot where I taught him the basics; how to turn, break, and park. Then we moved onto local streets, and finally freeways. He loved cars, and took auto shop in high school. We let him use our old 1989 Oldsmobile and he learned how to do maintenance like oil changes, tires, and even brakes himself. He was so proficient that during the senior year open house the auto shop teacher had David do demonstrations for the parents on brake repair.

David was supposed to use the Oldsmobile until he was 18, but it was not a cool car. The summer of his senior year he had saved enough money to meet our agreement of us paying half of the value of his first car, and he paid the other half plus one dollar. He asked me then if he could get a car early. Patty and I agreed. So we began car shopping. I had him do the legwork. He began researching and learned a lot. First, he was interested in a 1965-69 Mustang. He found a couple of cars in the Autotrader, and off we went to take a look. The first car was a good looking 1969, but after a closer inspection I showed him where there was evidence of major repair, new body panels and ‘bondo’. We then saw a 1965 Mustang. We went for a test drive and it did not drive as well as the ‘89 Olds. I explained to him the major changes in engine control technology that happened in the mid-80’s into the early 90’s. Basically, if he bought a car that was older than the mid 80’s, he would be spending a lot of time and money keeping it running well. These cars were really antiques and not for daily driving. So he shifted his emphasis. He looked at Corvettes for a while, but then he learned about budgets. He could not afford that kind of car. In the end, he found a Pontiac Firebird 1992 owned by a young lady in Costa Mesa. It was new enough that it would be reliable, it was sporty, and because it was a V6 it was economical. We took it on a test drive, and then I negotiated the price down about 20%. David enjoyed seeing how I negotiated with the woman, “leaving” twice, only to be called back. I explained to him that negotiation was an important art that he needed to learn if he was going to do well in life. He had a cool car now and he loved it. He drove it to school, did several mods to it, both at the school shop and at home. He had the car for three years and it served him well.

HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

Of course during the school year a big part of his time was taken up by school, but I managed to be part of his life there also. I tried to be careful not to be too obvious, to stay in the background. The two areas I got involved with were Model United Nations (MUN) and technology. David had tried music and sports but they were not his cup of tea. I had told him about my high school days and how I enjoyed the debating. His school did not have a debate team, but it did have MUN, run by the late Laurie Elowe. David really enjoyed MUN and became an accomplished debater. He was often given some of the most difficult and challenging positions to handle. I chaperoned on several competitions and got to see him work first hand. He was serious and dedicated. In the last year of high school he became disenchanted by MUN because of some of the clicks that developed. By this time Russell was not that close to David. Russell had stayed in Troop 603 and still associated with boys whose families seemed to have a grudge against us, either because of our economic success or religion. David ran for Secretary General of the MUN that year, and based on his record he was the one that should have been elected. Russell had missed a lot of MUN activities because he stayed in music through his junior year. Russell joined this block of boys and they proceeded to slander David. David would not play that game. He lost the election. The teacher offered him some ceremonial position in the MUN directorate, but David refused. He still was active in competitions and did his duty running an important committee, but he did not want to have anything to do with the politics. In fact, he went to many more competitions than most of the students elected to the directorate. It was somewhat of a scandal. But it did not bother David; he enjoyed doing his work and as a result had a good time and learned a lot. Along with the local competitions in cities such as Los Angeles (at UCLA), Long Beach, San Diego, and Pasadena, he also participated in trips out of state, and out of the country. In his Junior year he participated in the Harvard competition at Harvard University. He had a great experience, and I enjoyed being with the students as a chaperone. As I will explain later, Laurie Elowe also used these trips to introduce the students to the local universities. She had never taken the kids to MIT, but that was my alma mater and I suggested to her we visit it. She was a little perturbed. After all MIT was just a “technical” university, not a bastion of liberal thinking but she finally relented. The visit would be voluntary, not mandatory. The kids could choose the MIT visit or a visit to Boston College of the Arts. I went about setting it up. Her college visits consisted of an official tour, usually guided by the tour office, and a meeting with the admissions office. I thought it might be better to meet with some of the professors and researchers. I called my old thesis professor, Dr. Jon Allan, and asked if he could help me. He said sure but did not tell me exactly what he was going to do. About half the kids decided to go with me, as did Laurie Elowe. We were met by admissions and giving some information and a student gave us a brief tour, ending at the Laboratory of Research Electronics, my former department. Dr. Allan greeted us, and then led us to a conference room and three Professors came in. Two were Nobel Prize winners, the third was nominated. They broke us up and took us right into the labs where the kids got to see the latest research in areas like robotics, machine vision, and machine speech. After the visit Laurie was flabbergasted. She asked, “How did you do that? I have never been so impressed!” I told her I did it for the students. Years after that visit I would still get

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

emails from students on that tour saying it really changed their lives and helped them with their career decisions. David really enjoyed Boston. He and his friends had the run of the city. A few years before we had taken the kids to Boston, so David knew his way around the city.

During David's senior year we had our next big MUN trip to China. The International High School of China in Beijing was holding an MUN competition. Laurie had a ten day trip planned. We would spend seven days visiting major tourist sites in Shanghai, Xian and Beijing, followed by a two day MUN competition and then home. I wanted to take the group to Hong Kong, but Laurie was not willing to vary from the preplanned itinerary, so David and I flew to Hong Kong the Friday before and spent two days in Hong Kong seeing the sights. David was very impressed with Hong Kong and said he wanted to come back and study there when he was in college. We saw many sights and had dinner with one of my distributors when I had conducted business there in the past. David and I then flew to Shanghai and met the MUN group. The trip was wonderful and David seemed to have a great time. This was the first time that I saw the girls paying attention to him. He did have a girlfriend and had taken girls to school dances and proms, but he always kept it low key. One of the girls wanted to pluck his eyebrows. David had bushy eyebrows. Another wanted to give him a facial. A few days later I noticed David's eyebrows were thinner. He told me the girls had got to him! After we got to Beijing, David and two of the girls came to my room to ask me a question. At the time I was having a massage from the hotel masseuse. The practice in Asia is you must leave the door open when getting a massage (to make sure there is no funny stuff going on). David was at the door and knocked, and I told them to come in. They asked what was going on and I told them I was getting a massage after all the travel. I answered their questions and they left. Later David came by with a big smile on his face. I asked him what was up. Well, after they left the two girls asked if he wanted a massage, and he said "sure", so they went back to the room and gave him a nice massage! He was a handsome young man, and after that trip I was sure he would not have trouble with attracting a great woman as a wife in college. It turned out I was correct, a couple of years later he met Meghann.

Not being on the MUN secretariat was in a way a blessing because David wanted to concentrate on getting his Eagle Scout rank. He picked a difficult project. Most eagle projects were building planter boxes for elementary schools or clearing a camping area at a local park. David did a technology project. A year before as head of the technology committee it came to my attention that a grant was available to add several computers to science and other classrooms. Several teachers wrote proposals and as a result our high school won the lion's share of the grant, about sixty computers. The problem was the school district said it would take about six months for them to wire and install the computers! I suggested to David that he take that on as his Eagle project, and even though it was much different and in many ways much more work than most eagle projects, he agreed to do it. The goal was to get all the computers installed in one weekend. To do the two weeks of prep work, an hour or two most days after school was required. He had to plan for unboxing, staging, software installation, and classroom

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

installation. He needed about twenty scouts to get the job done. It took him about three months of planning, talking with each of the eight teachers who were getting the eight computers each, how they wanted the computers configured, and where they wanted to have them installed. He had to meet with facilities people from the school to make sure there was power and with IT people to make sure he had access to network wiring. Finally he had to make sure he had enough labor the weekend of the installation. In the end he pulled it off, almost every computer was installed, and with a week of follow-up what could not be done over the weekend was completed. The teachers were generally very happy, since they had expected to have to wait as long as six months to get there computers installed. Instead everything was done in less than a month.

Along with his eagle project and MUN David was also busy deciding which college to attend. During his Junior year I traveled with him and the MUN team as a chaperone to the East Coast. Laurie Elowe had the juniors travel back east not only to debate, but to get a taste of east coast schools. We visited Harvard, MIT, Boston University in Boston, and George Washington University in Washington D.C. After that trip David decided he was not interested in an east coast schools. He wanted to stay on the west coast. I went with him to visit Claremont College, University of California at Irvine and San Diego, Chapman University, and Pepperdine University. David's grades and SAT's were good so he was accepted at most top schools. The one he liked the most, and one of the most difficult to get into was Pepperdine. Chapman gave him a large scholarship but he really wanted to go to Pepperdine. We talked and even thought the cost for us was much higher, we encouraged him to go with his first choice, Pepperdine.

VACATIONING

In addition to the scouting trips and school trips, we took David and Jonathan on several trips after we sold the business in 1995. Before that most of our trips were restricted to California, Hawaii, or back to Michigan to visit relatives.

Our first trip with David was to Lone Pine and Death Valley just six months after he was born. We rented a four wheel drive station wagon and headed out. Looking back it was a little strange. We were used to going on our own but now we had a little baby. We did not think what would happen if we broke down or were stuck until after the fact. As it turned out we did not have any problems, David enjoyed the trip and was a good, well behaved baby. He enjoyed being in the car. When he was not looking around he was sleeping.

A year later we took him to Kings Canyon and Yosemite. We rented a cabin in the Giant Forest of Kings Canyon. We would go for hikes with him, he would walk a little, then we would put him in a baby backpack on my back and Patty and I, with David on my back would go for short day hikes. This was the trip where David discovered the "go-go's" (chipmunks).

About my Boy, The life of David Alexander Allweiss

David loved trains and we took several trips to places where there were lots of trains when he was three to seven years old. We went to the Los Angeles Union Station, the Barstow Union Pacific train yards, and San Juan Capistrano many times. We would take the train from San Juan down the coast the San Diego and back. David loved these trips. Patty bought him several books on trains, and before he was five he could identify most types of trains. My office at this time was right by the main line from San Diego to Los Angeles, and often Patty would bring him down to have lunch with me, and then they would spend an hour or so looking at the trains go by.

We also liked Hawaii and that was a good break from the stresses of business. Patty and I went with the kid at least four times to Hawaii, and Patty took them herself once. Our favorite Island is Lanai, and we went there twice, staying at both resorts on the island. We also enjoyed Kauai, Maui, Oahu, and Hawaii.

After we sold the business in 1995 we decided to take the kids on some big trips. Our first trip was to Japan for two weeks. David really enjoyed the Japanese culture, and he and Jon actually did some exploring on there own from our hotels. They would go out and find a Seven Eleven and buy some strange food or candy and bring it back for all of us to try.

After that we decided to try Europe and we booked a guided tour of Switzerland. We were the only family on the trip. Most others were older couples. They continually remarked at how behaved the boys were, and how they enjoyed talking to David and Jon.

After that we decided to visit New England to give the kids a taste of the East Coast. We started in Boston and visited Patty's and my old stomping grounds when we were in school, plus all the historic spots like the Freedom Trail. We also toured MIT and David declared at that time that he had decided to be an engineer and to attend MIT. This was the first of many careers David decided on, until he finally settled on Business and Corporate Location Management. After MIT and Boston we headed up to Vermont and New Hampshire and had a wonderful fall tour of New England.

The next year we decided to visit Israel and Jordon. Being Jewish, we felt it was important for David and Jon to get a feeling for their heritage. We had a private tour, and David really enjoyed it. We visited all the historic sites in Israel, and David, Jon and I snorkeled in the Gulf of Aqaba in Eilat. We then headed across the border to Jordan and visited Petra, which was quite impressive.

By this time David was getting ready for college, so our opportunities for family vacations became limited. We did do family trips, but they usually were for family functions, not vacation.

SUMMER JOBS

One thing that I insisted on was that after David became 16 he work during the summer. I felt that it was important that he earn some of his own money, but the main reason I wanted him to work was to get some idea of what type of careers would be available to him after college. The summer he was 16 he worked for Medicine-Net.com, an Internet startup by my friend Dr. Bill Shiel and Dr. Dennis Lee. David enjoyed working there and they gave him several raises, but the work was menial data entry, so he wanted something better the next year. The next summer I lined him up with my friend Greg Presson, who ran an investment banking firm. David was initially very interested in investment banking, but after a summer their he decided it was not for him. The last summer before college he wanted to find something himself, and worked in the stockroom at Restoration Hardware. It was also a good experience; he learned why an education was so important. He also worked two of the three summers he was in college, at Wells Fargo and Merrill Lynch, so he had many experiences in the work world before graduating.

In 2001 David graduated from Mission Viejo High School. That summer he worked and prepared to go off to college in August. It was an exciting time for him and for us. We sent him on his way, on what we expected to be a life long journey. Unfortunately, the trip ended just four and a half years later. All I can say is that his childhood years, from birth to eighteen years, were great for him and for us. If I had it to do over, I probably would not change a thing, and if you could ask David, he would probably tell you the same thing in his own serious, thoughtful way.

Jack Allweiss
December 2006.