


# Substantial Disruption



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## 45 Years Between Games

By Mike Tully

December 29, 1977 was our first wedding anniversary. Kris and I got married one year earlier in Ted DeGrazia's hand-built chapel near North Swan Road, with his permission.

We visited Kris' Mother and Step-Father in Chico, California for the 1977 holidays. Kris was a high school teacher and I had just completed my first semester of law school, so we had ample time off. But it was time to return and we had breakfast in Chico before heading to I-5 southbound for our two-day drive back to Tucson.

We detoured to San Francisco and enjoyed lunch in the Mission District. Afterward, we departed for Los Angeles. We approached the city in the early evening and I saw the turnoff for Westwood. I then remembered the University of Arizona Men's basketball team was scheduled to play mighty UCLA in Pauley Pavilion that evening. So, we decided to venture into Westwood, locate Pauley Pavilion, and see if there were tickets available.

We had breakfast in northern California, lunch in San Francisco, and took in a basketball game in Westwood on the same day. Did I mention that we were still in our twenties?

The Arizona basketball team was coached by the charismatic Fred Snowden, who brought an exciting brand of basketball to the U of A the season McKale Center opened. Arizona was still in the Western Athletic Conference. UCLA, coached by Gene Bartow, was a dominant force in the mighty PAC-8.

We easily found Pauley Pavilion and parked in a nearby parking garage. We had no tickets and the box office was sold out. Then Kris commented, "Look. There's a scalper." I looked and replied, "That's not a scalper. That's George Kalil!" Kalil, whose family owned the Kalil Bottling Company, was a huge U of A fan, in both senses of the word. A big man with a big heart, he was holding game tickets in the air. We walked up and I said, "George, Mike and Kris Tully from Tucson. Do you have any tickets?" He sold them to us at cost. As I said, George was not a scalper. His purpose was not to make money on tickets, but to have them available for vagabond fans like Kris and I, who dropped in spontaneously on the evening of our first anniversary. George Kalil was that kind of guy.

The Wildcats lost 85-63. We were not yet a match for the mighty Bruins. Years later, the teams are equals and rivals and Kris and I celebrate every win against UCLA with a particular vengeance. They dampened our first anniversary celebration, the bastards!

That was the only U of A basketball game we took in on our anniversary until last month. Our daughter, Meg, purchased tickets for the U of A Women's team's game against ASU. Unlike in Pauley Pavilion 45 years earlier, Arizona won easily.

Wedding anniversaries are life markers. Some celebrate a continuing love affair and some a truce, but they're all significant. Our first anniversary was a raucous day that included a drive from Chico, California to Los Angeles, with lunch in San Francisco and a college basketball game along the way.

We returned to our small, two-bedroom house on what used to be North Maddux Avenue. It was an unpaved stretch between Limberlost and Wetmore. So much changed during those 45 years.

Maddux Avenue became an extension of Stone Avenue. The large empty property north of Wetmore saw the construction of the Tucson Mall. That construction probably saved our home, because 100 million tons of soil were moved onto the site to construct a base for the new mall. That took us out of the flood plain before the Great Flood of 1983 that would surely have swamped our little house.

After the game last week against ASU, we returned to a different home. We replaced our boxy little house with a home in the foothills that's just a few blocks from the chapel we were married in. We were not yet parents in 1977. In 2023, we have a two-year old grandchild. In 1977, we shared our household with cats. Shortly after moving to the foothills, where coyotes and owls reign, we became dog parents. Dog parents we have remained.

The world has changed as well, and not for the better. People were already warning about global climate change in the late 1970s. (Saturday Night Live had several skits based on the pending threat of global warming.) The world has gotten more crowded. The planet's population was 4,229,506,060 in 1977. Today, there are more than eight billion, increasing by 200,000 a day. The 1977 figure will be doubled by the end of this decade. That growth, coupled with the effects of climate change, is creating a global migration that will destabilize governments – including our own – for decades.

I wish our generation was leaving a better world to my grandson and the other heirs of our greed and ignorance. Fortunately, Joey is too young to know about, much less worry about, the Earth's pressing needs. He'll learn all that eventually. He has to. But not yet.

He and I spent much of yesterday afternoon ignoring global warming, migration and immigration, Covid-19, the war in Ukraine, domestic political upheaval and so on. We escaped to our happy place.

We played basketball.