

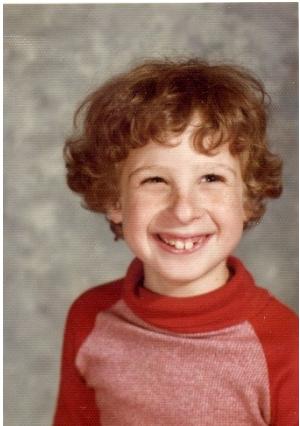


# **ONE GREAT PUZZLE**

## **A Mother's Memories**

**September 2017**





Although I'm rather certain that my life will lead me into writing and/or publishing something, I'm not sure what that something will be. Whatever it is, though, I'm certain I'll treat it as a challenge. In a sense, life is just one big challenge, one mammoth enigma to be solved.  
One great puzzle.

MICHAEL SELINKER, age 16





Dear Michael,

I know that you are acutely aware of your upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. I'm sure it will be an occasion for reflection on what your life has been so far and what directions you might wish to pursue. From the time you were quite young, I trusted you to make decisions for yourself, whether it was the clothes you wore or the middle school you would attend. I have no advice to offer you on how to have a good life because you have already discovered it on your own.

As I have been preparing for my own downsized future, I have come across photographs, report cards, awards, and other Michael-related things which I have saved since you were born. They have induced so many memories of the years when I had the most contact with you and I thought I would pass some of them on to you for your birthday.

I am reminded of a story that your dad told me about the time he gave a lecture at a university in Beijing, China some years back. When his talk was over, a small crowd gathered around him to thank him and discuss the topic further. One of the students approached him nervously and asked, "Professor, are you by any chance related to Mike Selinker?"

Coincidentally, I had a similar experience at a national legal services conference. A younger person familiar with your puzzles in Games magazine came up to me to ask if I was your mother. Despite our many years of education and work in our respective professions, your dad and I are proud that our claim to fame is sometimes as your parents.

What has it been like to be your parent? In short, indescribably delicious! Do we take credit for your many achievements? Absolutely not! As parents, we mainly provided the room (sprinkled with unconditional love and support) for your creative mind to soar and your personality to develop. We stayed out of your way as you chose the paths of your life. We allowed you to fail as well as succeed. And we have "schepped nachas" (been filled with pride and joy) all the way.

For your 45<sup>th</sup> birthday, I emailed you that I had read an article about findings that a male son's DNA can migrate to a mother's brain during pregnancy. I said, "I don't know if I have any of yours, but I do know this:

my smile is much broader  
my eyes sparkle more  
my heart beams with pride more

and my soul has been forever changed  
because of you.

Keep being you for another year and many more to follow, and I will keep living vicariously."

Happy 50<sup>th</sup>, Mike. You are loved beyond measure for the warm, loving, compassionate, and generous person that you are. What you have achieved is simply the frosting on the cake.

Mom

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## THE WORLD TRAVELER

Your dad and I spent the early years of our marriage preparing for and living a life in other countries. We taught English in a newly-independent French-speaking West African country and also spent time in Israel doing research for Larry's Ph.D. dissertation. When you were born in Seattle in 1967 we pondered how our lives would change, especially regarding world travel.

We had our first test when your dad was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to teach at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland for the 1968-69 academic year. Under a year old when we left our Seattle home, you thrilled to the train ride across the country, the boat ride to England aboard the S.S. United States, and the train ride in the U.K.

Scotland was where you learned to walk and thus see the world on a higher plane than is afforded one who only knows how to crawl. And that world was filled with castles and historic churches, lakes and mountains, opulent color-rich gardens, double-decker buses and lorries. You took in everything with curiosity and joy and made your first friends in Edinburgh.

During that year we had the opportunity to visit the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, Israel, and France. New physical landscapes for a toddler to take in and new languages as well. I have told the story before of riding on a train with you to meet your dad in Belgrade, watching you stare intently at the other four passengers in our cabin who were sharing food and conversing in Italian. I thought that you might be hungry, but then you turned to me with a big smile on your face and said, "Languages!"

Because we traveled so much, you didn't have a lot of toys, especially big toys. Matchbox cars, crayons and paper, pick-up sticks, and picture books became your entertainment. You learned how to adapt to changes in your schedule and environment and to relate to new people. Your sunny, easy-going disposition brought you friends everywhere.

When you were four years old we had an opportunity to return to Yugoslavia and also visit Poland when Larry was invited to teach English to college students. Your dad became your main international travel partner after we were divorced. You flew to Israel by yourself when you were seven to spend time with your dad who was teaching there. Your entire second-grade class wrote you letters as a geography project.

I loved reading about the trips you were later able to take together to Vienna, Finland, Russia, and especially to Sarajevo after a 40-year absence. Although I wasn't with you, I have been to all of those places and therefore enjoyed seeing your take on familiar places. But the true telling of the impact of travel in your life was the article which you wrote for the *Chicago Tribune* in 1993 called "Travel Rules." You wrote about 10 rules your dad taught you and 10 rules you taught your dad and your conclusion was great:

...my uncodified 11<sup>th</sup> rule. You're there to have fun  
and learn a few things about the world, so don't  
let anything – not disease, not economic chaos,  
not bathroom hell – dissuade you. ...even at 20 cents  
a visa, travel's too valuable to let it slip away.

## Travel Rules - tribunedigital-chicagotribune

September 05, 1993|By Michael Selinker. Special to the Tribune.

5-6 minutes

### Unorthodox Wisdom Is Born Of 55 Combined Years Of Globe Trotting

For 30 years my father Larry, a linguistics professor, has explored every nook and cranny of this world. For 25 of those years, I've been at his side. His travel rules are quite strict, but they've saved us from getting sick and getting fleeced. And somehow I've managed to teach him a thing or two myself.

Ten rules my dad taught me

#### 1. Never get sick.

There is nothing like Western medical care anywhere else. Since you don't speak the language or know what chewing gum holds the local hospital together, you don't want to end up there. In 1974, Dad collapsed in Jerusalem, leaving 7-year-old me to deal with the Israeli medicos. Don't let this happen.

#### 2. Refuse the local hospitality.

This can be very awkward, but you've never met the bacteria your hosts are used to. They may be fine, but you could end up in the hospital. Have seconds of what you know you can eat; this worked for us in Mexico, where a fourth enchilada excused the jalapenos left on the plate.

#### 3. He who holds the mineral water is king.

Disease is everywhere in non-Western countries, especially in the water. Buy as much as you can carry in the last Western country you visit, and adopt a rationing plan. And never brush your teeth in the local water; that's the surest way to find out just what's in it.

#### 4. You can't pack too many Handi-Wipes.

You must clean your hands before every meal and after each restroom visit, but if the water's risky, you'll need at least six moist towelettes a day. The Europeans have this one right; you can't go anywhere without having a towelette shoved in your face. Export their example.

#### 5. Milk does a body bad.

I know you wouldn't drink unpasteurized milk a month past its expiration date. So why would you assume that tempting Indian ice cream is safe? My dad's colleague did in Hyderabad and was quickly laid low. Calcium comes in convenient tablet form these days; pick some up.

#### 6. If it's raw, it stays on the plate.

Fresh fruits and vegetables, unless peelable, are out of the question in many countries. In Russia, we ate every bite of a scrumptious meal-except the tomatoes. It pained the hostess to take up untouched food, but rules are rules.

#### 7. Drink when you hit the ground.

Jet lag is never a problem for us. After landing, we stay up till late

evening, then down a couple drinks before retiring. The alcohol lets us sleep through the night, and we wake up 10 hours later instantly on local time. It works for adults. (Nothing works for kids.)

(Editor's note: Moderate drinking may help induce sleep, but alcohol can also disrupt sleep patterns in many people.)

8. Cash is trash, but plastic's fantastic.

Exchange fees nail you instantly in converting currency. But if you use a credit card, you bypass the fees.

9. The Ugly American stereotype works.

It should be used sparingly, but it's very effective. When an Estonian port wouldn't honor our vouchers as the hydrofoil was preparing to pull out, Dad shouted, "We paid in dollars!" Crude, but it got us on the boat.

10. Make all arrangements stateside.

Usually, this seems to involve getting your son to do all the work. There's no substitute for a crack travel agent and an expense account, both of which require an itinerary. But you'll reduce the chaos and the amount of vacation time spent standing in line.

Ten rules I taught my dad:

1. Leave some arrangements for later.

This contradicts Dad's Rule 10, but an example: The Estonian Embassy in D.C. wanted \$30 a visa. At 3 a.m. on the Russian-Estonian border, I bought visas for three people from a guy in a 4-foot tall wooden box for about 60 cents.

2. When handed worthless currency, spend it all.

In Brazil, Dad got paid in cruzeiros, which in the early '80s-and today-had the value of paper. He bemoaned this, but I reminded him that Rio had plenty of uses for that many cruzeiros. We came home with several bags of souvenirs, certainly much more valuable than the cash.

3. Big bills never get collected.

When I took many \$1 bills to Russia, Dad asked why. I showed him: In five days we spent all of \$40. A top-flight meal for four in Estonia cost \$5, or a third of most residents' monthly wages. In a devalued-currency market, you can't get change for a fifty, but \$1 gets you whatever you want.

4. You can't solve a nation's troubles in a weekend.

I know the last sentence of Rule 3 sounds heartless, but you can only help a soft-money country like Russia by leaving behind as much hard currency in as many places as you can. Complaining that a knickknack dealer won't take rubles ignores what your \$5 bill can do for him.

5. Whenever allowed, tip.

That extra buck won't kill you, but it might save your neck. In St. Petersburg, I gave a cabbie a \$1 tip and told him to leave it off his receipt, so he got all of it. A few hours later he was at my hotel with a smile and the wallet I had left in his cab. A wise investment in my own stupidity.

6. Avoid-don't confront-the bureaucracy.

## Travel Rules - Page 2

September 05, 1993|By Michael Selinker. Special to the Tribune.

2-3 minutes

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### Unorthodox Wisdom Is Born Of 55 Combined Years Of Globe Trotting

The Russian translation of "maybe" is "it's not my problem," as in "Maybe the bank will open today." Once you're in this maze, you can't get out, so it's best not to enter it at all. If where you're supposed to go is open, use it; if not, get what you need elsewhere.

#### 7. Dinner is not when you want it.

Every country has its own dinner hour, and it's probably not yours. My girlfriend and I hit Prague at 6:30 p.m., when all the restaurants had closed for the night. We contented ourselves with a beer hall, but dinner was not forthcoming except from a bad post-Communist fast food counter.

#### 8. Stay alert near train stations.

With a five-hour gap between our arrival in Frankfurt Station and our plane home, my girlfriend and I crashed in a hotel by the train depot. We should have been suspicious when they offered hourly rates, or that the room had a shower but no toilet. Seems we were not their typical clientele.

#### 9. When in Rome, make sure you're not in Nome.

The topless beaches of Helsinki are what you'd expect, with plenty of young blonds and blondettes. The nude beaches are sex-segregated, and for senior citizens. The beaches in Jyvaskyla, a bit north, are not topless at all. Know where you are to avoid snickers and stares.

#### 10. Treat each bathroom as an adventure.

Dad hates surprises in this arena, but they're everywhere. In a Finnish hotel he protested the lack of a shower. We finally puzzled out that the sink detached from the wall and the faucet became a nozzle, turning the whole bathroom into a shower. Neat, I thought. Refund, Dad thought.

And that's my uncodified 11th rule. You're there to have fun and learn a few things about the world, so don't let anything—not disease, not economic chaos, not bathroom hell—dissuade you. Even at 20 cents a visa, travel's too valuable to let it slip away.



## THE VORACIOUS READER

We began reading books to you when you were just an infant: rhyming books at first, picture books when you could sit up, sturdy books whose pages were easy for a child to turn and could withstand occasional chewing or drooling on. The sounds of words in French and Hebrew were music to your ears as well as English. As a toddler in Edinburgh in 1968-69, you began memorizing the poems and stories which were read to you.

Back in Seattle at age two, we were having breakfast when you pointed to the cereal box on the table and asked, "What's that?" I answered, "That's your box of cereal." Wrong! I tried again with "Tony the Tiger." Wrong again! The third time I said, "That's the letter F" and was gifted with a big smile. We then identified all the letters that spelled out "FROSTED FLAKES."

After that morning every food box, sign, and book became an ABCs lesson. Putting the letters together to make words followed swiftly and by the time we visited my parents on the East Coast, two-and-a-half-year-old you could read practically everything in sight. When you asked for your own menu at a restaurant where we dined, you were most unhappy with the disbelieving waitress who challenged your abilities. Didn't everybody know how to read?

Your habit was to wake up around 5:30 or 6:00 AM and read. You called it your "work." Sometimes you had stories in your head by the time that I woke up. Since you hadn't shown any interest in learning to write, I sometimes served as your scribe. Two of those stories written in the pre-school years survive: the story about the three elves and "The Adventures of Double Letter Man."

Shortly before your 5<sup>th</sup> birthday you began kindergarten at Stevens Elementary School on Capitol Hill. Teacher Denise Dalton called you "a delightful, brilliant child" and noted that you were reading at level 6. The following year in an ungraded 1-4 class, teacher Phyllis King noted that you progressed to level 11 in a 12-level program for the four grades. Finding books at your interest level that would challenge your abilities was sometimes a problem, but she also noted that you weren't bored because you were very social and loved to read with your friends. My favorite teacher's comment was "...his very young and energetic innocence, with his mature mind, have added a delightful touch to our class."

Although you excelled in all areas throughout your school years, it was the appreciation of the written word that likely had the most impact on you. Books such as *Watership Down*, *A Separate Peace*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *One Across, Two Down*. Your massive comic book collection. The magazine subscriptions Grandma Sylvia purchased for you. My law school books when I needed coaching for exams. Road signs. You read everything with intensity and gusto and your imagination soared.

You could not have become the writer that you are without having first been such a hungry yet grateful reader. I look forward to increasing my own reading appetite with your continued blogs, Facebook posts, letters, books, etc. And perhaps the novel you have been wanting to write since your Chicago days.

Once upon a time there were three elves. And one was named Kathy, and another was named Daniel, and the third one was named Tarzan. And one of them had the most beautiful shine in the world. The next one had the ugliest face in the whole world. And the last one had an iron throat.

The first one had a horse that could glow when it was night time. And when it was Thursday night the horse glowed. And the second elf could look ugly when he looked in the mirror. And when they threw him in the water, he would not be bitten by the crabs and sharks.

THE END

THE ADVENTURES OF DOUBLE LETTER MAN

by Michael and Phyllis

Michael's mommy wanted him to take a nap, but Michael wasn't sleepy. It was very sunny out and he wanted to go to Volunteer Park to look for double letter words. Michael put on his funny shorts and you could see his knees. Phyllis wore a pretty dress. They skipped down the sidewalk and crossed the street carefully. First they saw lots of trees. They walked on the grass and then on the pebbles and they almost walked in the dog poop.

Next they went to the playground. Someone was wrecking up the pool. They saw a woman reading a book and children playing on the swings. One swing was a buffalo, one was a missile, and the last one was a rooster.

Michael had to pee so he went up the hill to find the bathroom. He saw a man with glasses. Everyone in the park was happy and they were running and skipping.

Michael wanted to hurry home and he fell down on the grass near the yellow flowers. He saw some squirrels and a rose tree. On the way home they met Larry on a hill. They all said hello. How cool it was to meet Michael's daddy. Michael and Larry started acting silly, so Phyllis went home. Goodbye! Then Michael went home to watch Sesame Street. Poor Larry was left all alone.





## THE MUSIC AFFICIONADO

Not long after you came into the world, I became aware that I didn't know the first thing about being a mother. I slept with Dr. Benjamin Spock's book under my pillow hoping I would learn by osmosis. One prevalent philosophy was that babies should be trained to sleep through the night after a requisite number of months of immediately responding to their middle-of-the-night cries of hunger.

We lived in old World War II barracks that had been converted into housing for University of Washington faculty and the walls between us and our neighbor were extremely thin. Rather than have my neighbors hear you crying (and conclude that I was a terrible mother), I played music. Especially music by The Beatles. "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" had been released that year and I played it every single night to calm your crying. I am sure it is in your DNA.

After we moved to Edinburgh you latched onto "Mary Had a Little Lamb" as the song you would sing every morning upon awakening. I was happy when you graduated a couple of years later to "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head." When Larry taught an English language course in Poland in part by using the lyrics from Beatles' songs, the students thrilled to our four-year-old singing "Our House" and "Hey Jude."

One advantage of having my own law practice was that I could structure my hours to be at home when you came home from school. Each afternoon we would turn on the record player and dance to the songs of J.J. Cale, the Eagles, the Doors, and Santana, to name a few. When we weren't dancing, you could be found using your fingers to pound out drumbeats of whatever was playing. After we moved our bedrooms from the upstairs floors of our communal household to the finished basement, I bought you a trap set and set you up with a dedicated music room.

You were my partner for many concerts, including the wonderful James Brown and Tina Turner, and we spent many Labor Day weekends at Seattle's then free Bumbershoot music festival. I enjoyed attending your band concerts at South Shore Middle School when you played in the percussion section along with best friend Jason Finn.

I never got to hear you play the guitar which you decided to learn when you were at Northwestern, but I wasn't surprised that you could just teach yourself. I remember being so impressed with your extensive music collection when I visited the Chicago apartment you shared with Jim Wade in 1988.

You wrote articles about the Beatles, Duran Duran, and Talking Heads for your high school newspaper. Your eclectic taste in music is very evident in your blog "The Most Beautiful Things" with no fewer than 20 segments covering types of music (opera, country music, reggae, nerd-rock), instrumentalists and vocalists, and songs about things. From your later "Schrödinger's Blog" I learned that you had written two songs:

“w00tstock” (with music by Joni Mitchell) in 2013 and “Tom Lehrer’s The Elements II” which you sang with Marian Call in 2014.

I love that you hang out with musicians such as Marian, The Doubleclicks, Molly Lewis, Austin Wintory, and Jonathon Coulton — all people with whom I would not otherwise have become familiar. Amy Vorpah’s musical ode to Thornwatch is precious. I have no doubt that music will be a most important part of the rest of your life.

# Certificate of Award

Mike Selinker

Has earned special recognition and is hereby granted this Certificate of Award for

Most Dedicated - Advanced Band

In Witness Whereof our signatures are hereto affixed.

Given this 22th day of May nineteen hundred and 81

*Robert E. Scott*    *Bethel Gray*



## THE FEMINIST

I never had a conversation with you about why you should be a feminist. I believed that the way boys learn about women, gender, and the relationship between the sexes is within their own families. What they observe about their parents — how they talk to each other, how they divide up household duties, how they talk about themselves — these are the building blocks.

I have told you before two stories from your early years that are dear to me. The first took place in Edinburgh in 1969 as I was pushing you in a stroller across The Meadows, a large grassy field. We came across a group of boys playing soccer ("football" in the U.K.) and you stared at them intently. And then you said, "Where are the girls?" When you were four years old, I was accepted to law school along with my friend and next-door neighbor Sara. When I told you that a male friend of mine was also accepted, you said, "How can he go to law school? He's not a girl!" Throughout most of your life we have had women in law schools and girls and women playing soccer, but you were certainly ahead of your time.

In the years your dad and I were together, you saw each of us moving beyond stereotypical sex roles. Your dad shared child care from the time you were an infant. He learned to cook and had his night of the week on the schedule in our first communal household. For most of your childhood, I worked outside the home. We gave you models, but we also taught you how to cook, do laundry, and take care of yourself. You learned to take care of others as well.

We were part of a day care movement that treated young boys and girls equally, allowing them to play in a gender-neutral environment and dress up in any costume. We encouraged your friendships with the "gang of girls" at Stevens Elementary and praised you for speaking up when others were intolerant. You were encouraged to have a full range of emotions and to be compassionate as well as smart.

One of my favorite pieces in your blog "The Most Beautiful Things" is about Title IX which disallowed sex discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. In the section on your personal connection, you wrote:

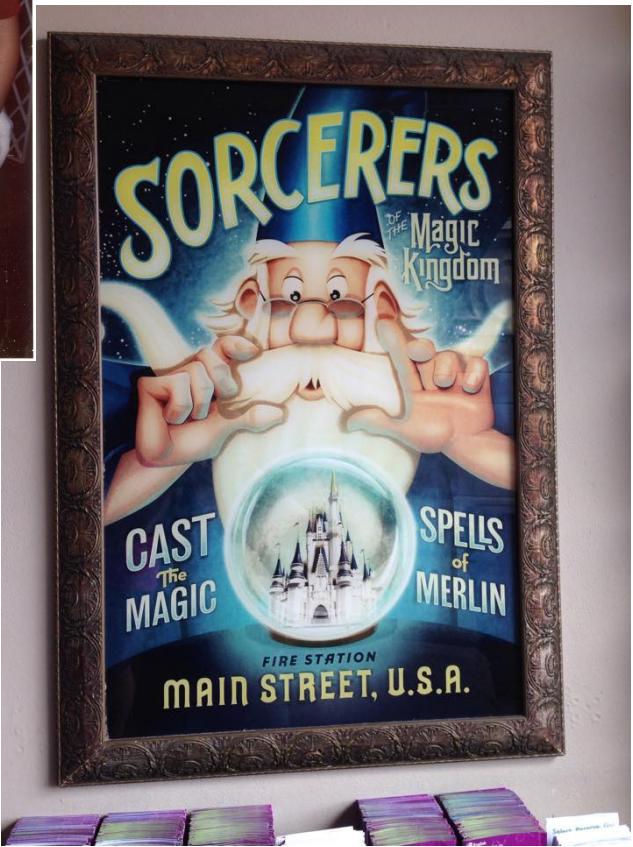
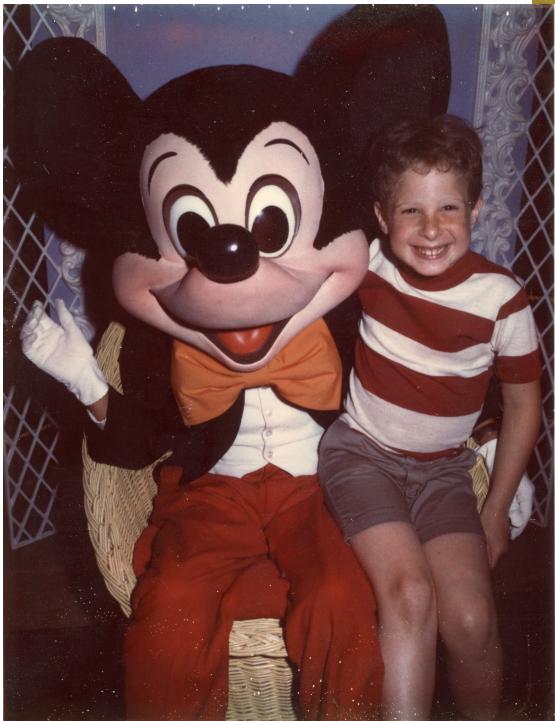
I am of the right age to have seen American girls change because of Title IX. In the late 1970s, girls in my school became among the first to expect the opportunity to play. In high school, the girls I hung out with played basketball because they could. In college, the women I dated built a national championship in lacrosse because they could. And now that those women have daughters, the games that I make are expected to be played by everyone. A game designer can write a game for boys, but it will be played by girls. And boys, I hate like the dickens to break

it to you, but they will beat you. Because they can.

I am not surprised to learn that your design team at Lone Shark Games is more than half female and that it is not an accident. I love that you tell people in the gaming industry to stop reading resumes, stop issuing design tests, stop putting people through processes designed by white males to weed out those who aren't white males. You tell them instead to invite potential applicants over to play games and watch their drive, their competitiveness, their analytical skill. Just play and observe.

I love that you aren't afraid to blog about abortion rights or sexual harassment of women at gaming conventions. I love that you were asked to write the foreword for Elisa Teague's *Girls on Games. A Look at the Fairer Side of the Tabletop Industry*. You own up to the mistakes you may have made. You have learned from them and have done so much to create a diverse working environment which allows you to "produce the best games on earth" and to influence others in your industry. Where are the girls? They are at Lone Shark Games and other companies because of your values.





## THE DISNEYPHILE

Grandpa Murray and Grandma Sylvia moved to Hollywood, Florida in 1970, and when Disney World Resort opened in 1971 we were among its first visitors. What we thought would be a child's delight turned out to be in part a terrifying experience for my little four-year-old. On the ride called Snow White's Adventure, lovely Snow White was nowhere to be seen. The cute seven dwarfs appeared only once. The whole ride was initially about the evil queen who transformed into a witch, stirring her cauldron and cackling ceaselessly. The tears of fear flowed.

That might have been the end of Disney for you had it not been for two things. One was that we took another trip there when you were almost eight and better able to deal with scary rides and lots of stimulation. The second was the movie *Fantasia*. The rich classical music score, outstanding animation, and fantasy all fueled your imagination: dinosaurs roaming the earth, hippos and ostriches and alligators dancing, and your "friend" Mickey Mouse as the sorcerer's apprentice. We watched it over and over and over and never tired of it.

You can imagine my thrill when later in life you were asked to participate in the design of The Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom for Disney World, an adventure to unlock the magic portals and fight villains. So many hush-hush trips produced a multitude of beautiful cards, some of which have become collectors' items and fetch a bundle on eBay. I was privileged to view the mock-ups of most of the cards before the game officially opened in February 2012. As a mother, I am sad that you didn't publicly get credit for your contributions to this extremely popular and money-producing (for Disney) endeavor, but I am positive that you enjoyed being a part of this.

I understand you had yet another chance to work with Disney in 2014, and on something to do with your beloved *Fantasia*. For the launch of Disney's musical motion video game for Xbox, Disney Fantasia: Music Evolved, Lone Shark created four different rooms at PAX West, each of them modeled after a different realm in *Fantasia*.

Your collaboration with Disney seems to be still on-going and I look forward to hearing about what will be coming down the pike in the near future.

[vinylimationworld.com](http://vinylimationworld.com)

## Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom Game is Growing in Popularity Everyday

VM World

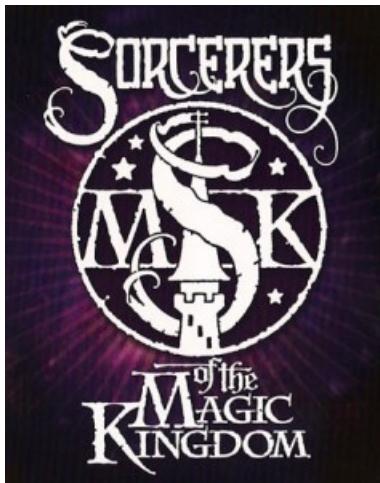
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Posted by in [News, Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom](#) | Comments Off on Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom Game is Growing in Popularity Everyday

Magic shoes.

You'll need them, along with a few of the 70 cards that make up the Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom game only at Magic Kingdom at the Walt Disney World resort.



While the cards may look nice, they serve a purpose than just being aesthetically pleasing. You will need these cards to help Merlin battle evil villains all over the Magic Kingdom Park.

This highly addicting card game started on February 22, 2012 to guests at Magic Kingdom. Recruits can go to the Main Street Fire House located just before the Emporium on Main Street, USA to pick up their pack of cards, map, and instructions from Merlin himself, through a portal.



Photo courtesy  
of [@AtDisneyAgain](#)

Sometimes, the recruit lines at the Fire Station can get a bit long. If you are anxious to help Merlin battle the Villains, you might be able to find shorter lines at the Ye Olde Christmas Shoppe in Liberty Square.

From there, Merlin will send you on a mission throughout Magic Kingdom park to battle Disney Villains that Hades has sent out throughout Magic Kingdom's lands (Main Street, USA, Adventureland, Fantasyland and Frontierland/Liberty Square).

Using the Spell cards, you can help Merlin defeat these evil Disney Villains.

But HOW?



You are going to use a keycard, that is YOUR personal keycard, to unlock the magic portals. These portals will then open up, and allow you to fight the villains. Hold up the Spell cards to cast a spell to fend off the Disney Villains. Cast a powerful spell and defeat the villains! But be warned, the Villains do not give up easily, and you may be defeated.

Hint: You can use several cards at once! And you'll need to do that,

the higher up in difficulty you'll climb.

There are three difficulties: Easy, Medium and Hard. In order to advance levels, you will have to defeat 8 different Villains.



There are NINE different types of Spells to be found: Toy Spell, Machine Spell, Animal Spell, Fairy Spell, Hero Spell, Princess Spell, Warrior Spell, Monster Spell and Mystic Spell.

There are also different types of Rarities: Star, Moon, Planet and Lightning Bolt.

A Star means that the card is Rare.

A Moon means that the card is Uncommon.

A Planet means that the card is Common.

A Lightning Bolt (Cards 61-70) means that the card is Super Rare. Very few of these cards are in circulation right now, and there are many rumors about the future of these cards.

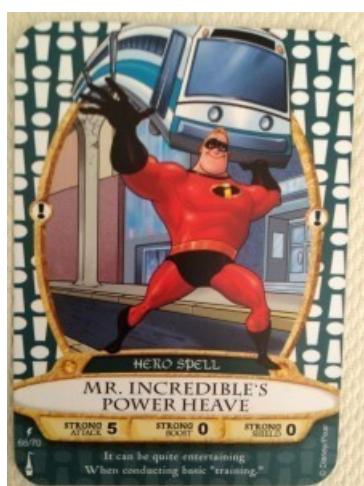


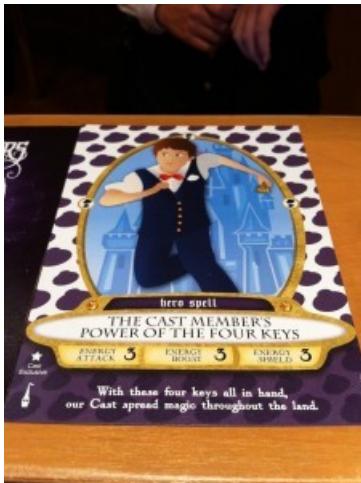
Photo courtesy of [@AtDisneyAgain](#)

Many of these cards can be found very easily on eBay, mostly for a

few bucks apiece. Except for the Lightning Bolt cards. These seem to fetch an average of \$80. But there are even MORE hidden collectible goodies within the Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom world!

Card #22: Woody. It has a Star, so it's Rare. Well, hold on Partner, because this is where it gets good. The card seemingly shows Woody with a Lasso. But, there's a second variation out there. This variation includes Slinky Dog. Good luck finding this puppy!

Disney's weekly Cast Member newspaper Eyes and Ears recently did a story on the Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom game, and included a sheet of 5 cards that can be punched out and used for battle against the Villains. These newspapers disappeared SUPER fast once word broke out. These five cards are Lumiere (48), Mr. Toad (50), The Woozles (58), Rafiki (56), and Prince Naveen (53). Expect these uncut sheets to be HIGHLY collectible in the future!



And there's one more treasure that cannot be found in any pack. On the day of the debut of the Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom game, Cast Members were given a rare Cast Member Spell Card. This card is bigger than the regular spell cards, measuring 5"x7". Currently, NONE of these cards have sold on eBay, so expect these to be highly collectable as well, as very few will be in circulation.



Facebook groups, such as [Merlin's Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom Trading page](#) help other guests by trading for cards they are looking

for. The members of the group also share secrets and tips that have helped them defeat Villains.

Disney has certainly hit another gold mine with the Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom game. Not only are the cards collectible, they are useful on your journey around the Magic Kingdom Park. Good Luck!







## THE SPORTS ENTHUSIAST

I think it is fair to say that you were primarily an indoor child growing up in Seattle, preferring your basement “cave” to sunshine. While you did okay in P.E. classes at school, you didn’t seem to show a real interest in what we traditionally label “sports.” I was therefore surprised when you returned home from your dad’s house in Ann Arbor one summer and showed me your certificates from Camp Birkett. You demonstrated “prodigious determination” on the archery field and became a member of the Bulls Eye Club. You also mastered the art of rowing “commendably” and became a Viking Oarsperson. An athlete was born.

My next memory of your athleticism was many years later when you decided to take up curling, which you have called the “platypus” of sports. Apparently you and Evon first saw this game of ice, brooms, and stones in the 2002 Olympics and subsequently made your way to your local curling club. You write in “The Most Beautiful Things” that you were so taken with your own infallibility after scoring a bullseye that you forgot one sneaker had grippers and one was slick. You stood up on your slick foot, pirouetted through the air, and broke your arm on the ice. I might not have known about it at the time except for the fact that you were then unable to fly out for the Fox Family Reunion in the New York Catskill Mountains.

Imagine my surprise when you told me that the only thing you watch on TV is sports. I thought about where this interest may have originated and recalled our many visits to Florida where you sat on the bed with Grandpa Murray watching tennis matches, golf and bowling competitions, and baseball. And no doubt all your years of studying and working in Chicago, a city with such outstanding sports teams, would make a sports fan out of anyone.

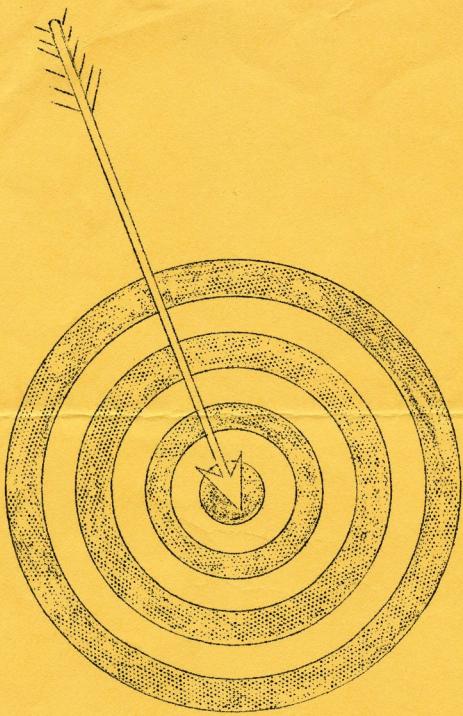
I love that you and Evon have been such consummate supporters of Seattle women’s basketball team, the Seattle Storm. I wasn’t surprised when you travelled up to Vancouver, B.C. when the Winter Olympics were held there. You (and Guybrush) are avid Seahawks fans and you support other local teams such as the Sounders and the Mariners. “The Most Beautiful Things” has ten posts on sports (beat out only by music and food) and is full of arcane sports information that only a true fan would know.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether the activity of geocaching (of which you, Evon, and Guybrush are great fans) can be defined as a sport. It is an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against one another or others for entertainment. The Adventure Sports Center International

considers it so. While locating a hidden cache with a GPS could involve merely a Sunday stroll, your posts seem to lean toward using wilderness travelling skills to navigate the Olympic Peninsula Forest and other difficult terrain.

I'm glad that no one squelched your interest in sports just because that was not an area in which you shined. Sports has given you an appreciation for both individual excellence and teamwork. It has reinforced your competitiveness which helps make your products be the best they can be. Three cheers for you; you are my champion.

DAY CAMP  
BIRKETT



Y

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT Mike Selmer B-4  
HAS DEMONSTRATED FRODIOUS DETERMINATION ON THE ARCHERY FIELD  
AT ANN ARBOR "Y" 'S DAY CAMP BIRKETT, SESS #

8/4/13 P. Chottingy  
DATE INSTRUCTOR



## THE GOURMAND

Solid food was likely your first real joy in life. Gerber's baby food in little jars elicited big smiles no matter who was doing the feeding. Our international travels when you were between ages 1-2 gave you a taste for delicacies from many countries and an understanding of how children were supposed to behave in restaurants.

Like most young children learning how to assert their individuality, you went through stages of discernment (i.e. pickiness) about some foods, particularly vegetables. Therefore, it was surprising for the adults in our communal household on 20<sup>th</sup> Ave. East when in first grade you announced that your name would heretofore be "Red Wing" and that you were a vegetarian. Surprising to us because at the time there were only two vegetables that you liked: peas and carrots.

When you learned how to cook and had a night once a month on the household cooking schedule, you became appreciative of the effort everyone made in the preparation of food and began to eat almost everything. We all loved the baked halibut entrée you made as well as other dishes you experimented with. During one of your summers at your dad's house, you made me a 28-page booklet called "Phyllis' Recipe Book" (your first book!) with both clipped-out and handwritten recipes including meat loaf, asparagus vinaigrette, and "banana soup."

Living on campus during your first year of college was a challenge. You could eat anything you wanted on the prepaid cafeteria meal plan, and some days what you wanted as dinner was four desserts. But the move the following year to a shared apartment in a very diverse neighborhood spiced up your palate. I remember visiting you in November 1988 and being taken to your favorite restaurants: Vietnamese, Greek, and pizza. You introduced me to foods I had never before eaten and I was charmed by your sophistication.

I was not surprised that you chose as your wife someone who is a most excellent cook and baker. And I loved your written description of your kitchen:

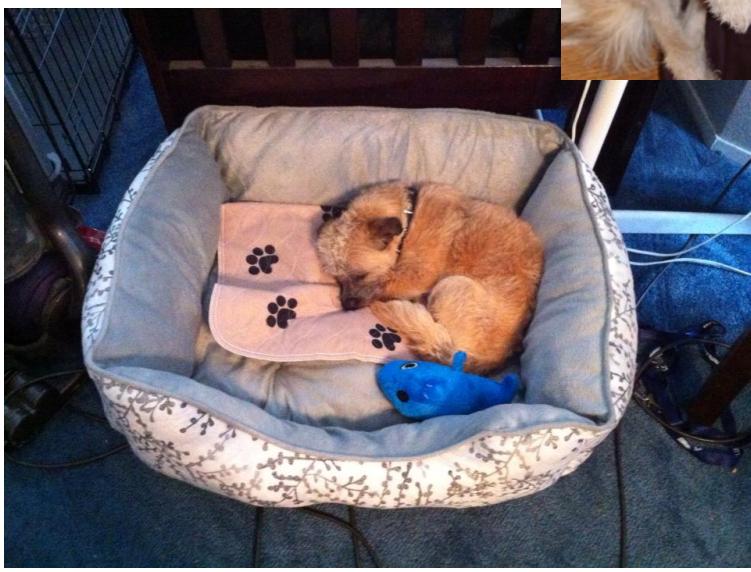
Our kitchen has gradually become a testament to  
the wisdom of Alton Brown. A well-worn copy of his  
*I'm Just Here for the Food* lives above the stove. A cast-  
iron skillet stays in our oven because he taught us how  
to cure iron. We now use kosher salt almost exclusively.

Gone are the single-use items like garlic presses; now there are multi-tools everywhere.

I have enjoyed reading your blog and Facebook posts about your favorite foods and your restaurant experiences. I understood your love for *sachertorte* in Vienna but was surprised when you waxed eloquent about Chinese broccoli. Was this the same person who only ate peas and carrots?

Reading about your palate has been surpassed by enjoying a meal with you. Whether it has been at one of our region's great ethnic restaurants or at your home or mine, sitting at a table with you conversing over fine food has been one of my favorite delights.





## THE ANIMAL LOVER

There is a big place in your heart for animals. On our many visits to Florida, Grandma and Grandpa took you to the Miami Seaquarium, the Monkey Jungle, the Parrot Jungle, and the Jungle Safari. We moved too many times in your early years for you to have a pet, but when you were seven years old you began to share your living space with animals. Cats were provided by Christine and Abbie; dogs by Joan and Rick. Joan's black Labrador named "Sealy" was the animal you were most attached to until you left for college.

After you purchased your own home in Renton, you were settled enough to have animals living with you. The two hedgehogs were a very special addition to your family. I had never before known anything about these creatures and delighted in seeing them (and trying to pet them in spite of their quills) every time I visited you. And you continued writing about your fascination with exotic animals: meercats, sloths, pangolins, and wombats.

Animals appear in many of your card games — animated animal characters from the world of Disney, stained glass representations in 12 Days, monstrous Cthulhu creations in Unspeakable Words. Even the most bizarre ones have lovable characteristics and are thoughtfully developed.

I recall receiving a goat from you one Christmas. Well, not an actual goat for me but a donated one to provide a livelihood for a needy family on another continent. Helping to eliminate poverty and hunger was the best present I could receive. Since that time, I have also made donations to Heifer International. You have used your voice to encourage people to help save endangered species.

And, of course, there is Guybrush (more specifically Guybrush Ulysses Threepwood), your rescued Norfolk terrier "plus" who has stolen my heart and everyone else's. He has become such an integral part of your life. He causes you to exercise every day; he comforts you when you are injured; he is excited to see you when you arrive home. He is your "best bud." He allows you to don him with sunglasses and medals and all manners of nerdy paraphernalia. He even has a spiffy outfit for National Lobster Day. When you enter a room with him, I can see humility and pride in your visage. He gives you one more reason to write interesting stories.



## THE ENTERTAINER

Singing and telling stories were your principal modes of entertaining people when you were young. A few years after we moved to the house on 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue East with its beautiful sliding wooden doors, you decided it made the perfect setting for a play. And you also decided to write the play. I no longer have the script (did I give it to you previously?) but I think it was a mystery with perhaps a doctor as a character. It had numerous acts to maximize the sliding doors effect. We set up rows of chairs in the dining room and invited the neighbors in.

My favorite entertainment involving you was your wedding to Evon in 1995 in Milwaukee, a city that neither you nor any of your family members lived in. With only five weeks to plan the event because of a new job at Wizards of the Coast, you chose this venue because your friends were going there to attend Gen Con. Milwaukee also offered the beautiful 100-year old Pabst Theater for the ceremony and the Safe House for the reception. In “The Day We Got Married” — a blog post on your 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary — you said, “We were crazy kids, and I was in my element: onstage, orchestrating an epic.” The wedding party entered and took the stage to the strains of Pachelbel’s “Canon in D.” As your attendants read passages and sang songs, they ensconced you and Evon in different colored ribbons, creating a rainbow that served as a covenant with God. Passwords were needed to enter the spy-themed bar after the ceremony. Although you thought you knew the password, all the rest of us got to watch you on TV as they made you go through hoops to enter.

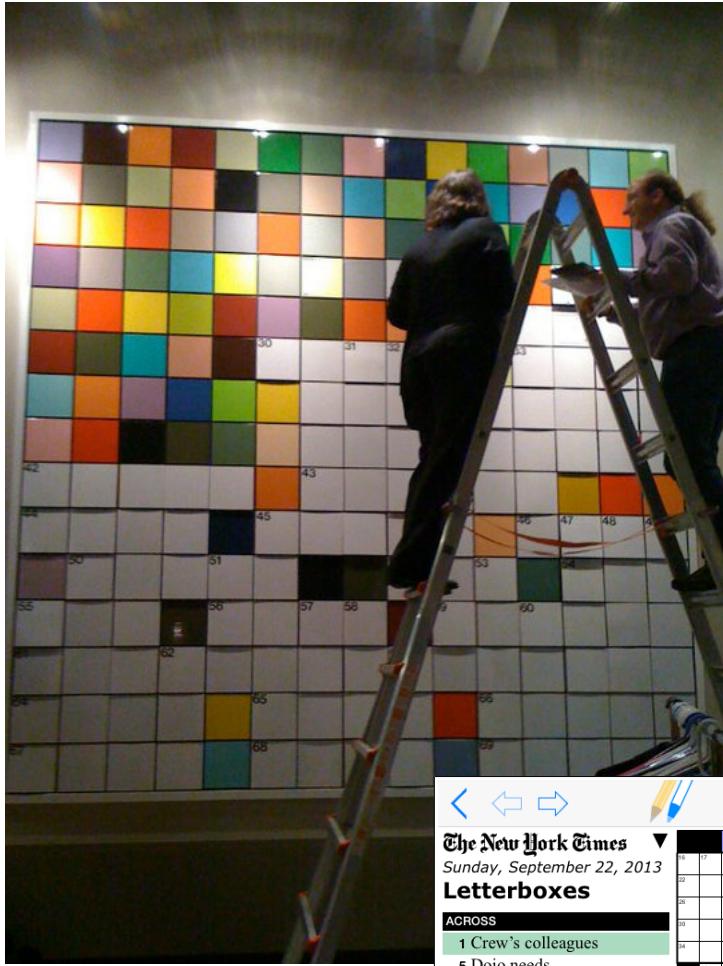
Over the years you have entertained people with your puzzles, games, and many events. But I sometimes wondered whether you might have had a stage career? You can imagine how proud I was to be invited to Seattle’s Moore Theater in May 2010 to see w00tstock 2.0 with Wil Wheaton, Paul and Storm, and Molly Lewis. I didn’t know what talent you and James would display, but as Mr. Woot and Mr. Stock you entertained us all with a hilarious “juzzling” (juggling and puzzles) routine.

Since that time, I have seen various video clips of you hosting the ENnies at Gen Con, performing at The Triple Door, and the like. Your stage presence is masterful and your sparkly ties and formal outfits are classy. Recently I was entertained by a clip of your telling of “Gary Gygax’s Vodka Skull Mug and Other Stories” at Pax South in San Antonio.

You are usually the family member who plans the entertainment for our Thanksgiving get-togethers. But it doesn’t take a lot to entertain your mother; I could

listen to you tell me a story about almost anything and it would have a flair that would be otherwise lacking if somebody else told it.





**The New York Times**
Sunday, September 22, 2013

## Letterboxes

**ACROSS**
**DOWN**

**1 Crew's colleagues**

**5 Dojo needs**

**9 Classic sci-fi film billed as "a horror horde of crawl-and-crush giants"**

**13 "La-La" lead-in in a 1974 Al Green hit**

**16 Iberian wine city**

**18 "Vincent & \_\_\_" (film about the van Gogh brothers)**

**19 Rings of angels**

**21 What X-O-X lacks?**

**22 "Macbeth" king**

**23 Words on a fragile package**

**26 Irascible**

**27 "Mona Lisa," e.g.**

**28 Thumbs-up**

**29 Harridan**

**30 Orchestra section**

**31 Mouthpiece for the head?**

**34 Jiffy**

**35 Not post-**

**37 Old piece**

**38 Little dog, for short**

**39 \_\_\_ Aviv**

**40 Strawberry blond sister of Barbie**

**43 Hindu "Mr."**

**44 "Swans Reflecting Elephants" and others**

**46 1960s-'70s series starring Efrem Zimbalist Jr.**

**49 Oscar winner Hathaway**

**51 Material beyond the terrestrial plane in**

**1 With 97-Down, classic puzzle type**

**2 Like eyebrows**

**3 Ones getting the red-carpet treatment, say**

**4 "The Spiderwick Chronicles" co-author DiTerlizzi**

**5 Antarctic summit between peaks named for faith and charity**

**6 Words after "win by" or "hang by"**

**7 What lobsters and crabs have**

**8 Nursery purchase**

**9 Baltimore club, for short**

**10 Ethan of "Before Sunrise"**

**11 Giant Manning**

**12 Company that pioneered walkie-talkies**

**13 "\_\_\_ Mater" (hymn)**

**14 African capital**

**15 Organic chemistry group**

**16 Lilac and lavender**

**17 Turns into mush**

**20 Oaf**

**24 Not ephemeral**

**25 All ChiSox home games are played on it**

**32 \_\_\_ Lee**

**33 Pro with books, for short**

**35 Slapstick prop**

**36 Play watcher**

## THE PUZZLEMAKER

When I was a teenager, one of my favorite activities was watching Grandpa Murray do the weekend crossword puzzle from *The Washington Post*. In ink. I thought he was the smartest person on earth. I can't remember when I became an ardent crossword puzzle solver myself, but it was certainly before you were born. After we moved into the house on 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, the morning routine was established. Joan being the earliest riser started the daily puzzle in the *Seattle P.I.* What she entered was generally right but she left a lot unsolved. Abbie took over and got some right but more wrong. And she used a pen! Then it was my turn to make the needed corrections and finish the darn thing. The half-penciled, half-inked page with erasures and marked-over entries in three different printing styles was definitely inelegant but we didn't care.

Perhaps you started constructing your own puzzles because we selfishly left you nothing to solve. You created a puzzle for the Stevens Elementary School newspaper. You would leave a trail of puzzling clues and fill-in-the-blanks index cards for me to find my birthday present. You solved puzzles in myriad magazines and constructed quite a few. At one point, I suggested that you write a letter to Merl Reagle, asking him to critique one of your puzzles and give you his expert advice. Rather than say, "Oh, Mom, that's so lame," you did exactly that. With his encouragement, you began to think about publishing your puzzles.

In the early 1980s "Sixers," an acrostic puzzle made entirely of six-letter words, was published by *The Four-Star Puzzler*. The 21x21 crossword puzzle "Monster in the Middle" came out in *Dragon* magazine shortly thereafter. Early in life you found a way to get paid for doing the things you loved. It didn't take too many years before I was having to pay to do your regularly-published puzzles in *Games* magazine. I loved going to Barnes and Noble, making a beeline to the rack holding the current issue of *Games*, and flipping the pages to see if one of your puzzles was inside. If anyone approached the area, I would tell them that "my son is in here."

I haven't been able to solve all of your puzzles, but I have thoroughly enjoyed trying to. I mostly do traditional crossword puzzles, but because of you I have branched out and tried others. I especially enjoyed the rich variety of puzzle types in "Murder Most Irrational" (1995) and "Lieutenant Nodumbo of the Mounties" (2003), both published by *Games*. I missed doing your puzzles in the *Chicago Tribune*, but kept up with those in *Wired* and *The New York Times Magazine*. I have recommended your book

*Puzzle Craft: The Ultimate Guide on How to Construct Every Kind of Puzzle* to many people.

My favorite puzzles of yours have been the 99 somewhat easy but utterly entertaining “Crosswords of Wisdom” that you and your friends have done for the Eltana Bagel Shop on Capitol Hill. The ultimate experience was celebrating my birthday with you with a yummy meal under the ten-foot high 15x15 crossword built on a multi-colored mural. But I was also happy with downloading the new puzzle each week from Eltana’s website. The philosophical gems — taken from Jewish literature, history, and customs — make you feel good about yourself after having completed the puzzles.

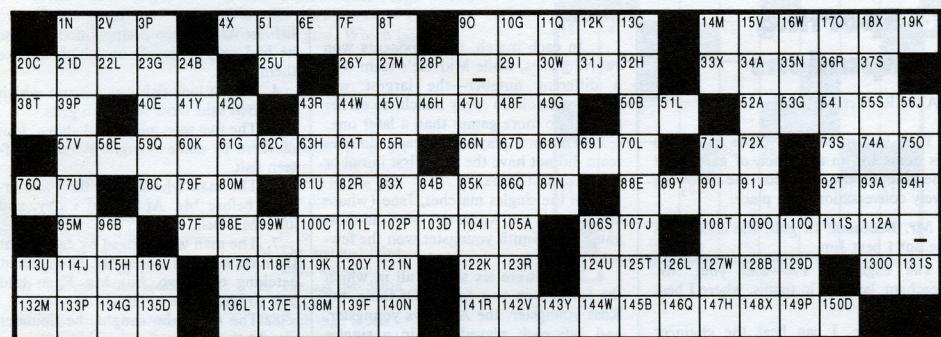
From the time that you attended your first National Puzzler’s League annual meet in Stamford, Connecticut as a teenager, you have been surrounded by an incredible community of people who love to solve and construct puzzles. No one is in it for the money and the camaraderie is wonderful. You called NPL con the most beautiful game convention in your blog “The Most Beautiful Things,” describing the official games led by Will Shortz and the unofficial games: walkaround puzzlehunts, homemade Jeopardy! games, insane charades, and puzzling till all hours.

Your puzzling *piece de resistance* has to be *The Maze of Games* which came out a few years ago after a highly successful Kickstarter campaign. Inspired by a live puzzlehunt of the same name and first held at Origins in 1995, it is a story of two Victorian-era siblings who have been trapped in a series of puzzle-laden mazes by a skeletal Gatekeeper. But the pages are not in order and you have to solve the puzzles in order to find the next pages. Puzzle geeks have called the puzzles an extravaganza, a series of puzzles that feed into one or more higher level, or meta, puzzles. I still have not finished the book, but I have also not stopped trying.

Your range of your creativity astounds me. Crosswords, acrostics, cryptics, and variety puzzles such as rows gardens. Metapuzzles, puzzle hunts, puzzle novels, ARGs. I still recall you stretching out on my old white couch with a pencil and a piece of paper balanced on a book. I saw you clearly in front of me, but what I really wanted to see was the brain inside of your head. And I definitely pondered the question answered in Puzzle #5 in *Puzzle Craft*: do you write the crossword grid or the clues first? Thanks for answering it, Slik.

**15 Sixers****Acrostic Puzzle**

MICHAEL D. SELINKER



Answer the clues for words to be entered on the numbered dashes. Then transfer the letters on the dashes to the correspondingly numbered squares in the puzzle grid to spell a quotation reading left to right. Black squares separate words in the quotation. Work back and forth between grid and word list to complete the puzzle. When you are done, the initial letters of the words in the word list will spell the name of the author and the source of the quotation.

**Clues****Word List**

<b>A.</b> Secure wealth foxyly	74 34 52 112 93 105	<b>L.</b> Clumsy, stupid	101 126 51 22 70 136
<b>B.</b> Uneven "square"	96 145 128 50 84 24	<b>M.</b> Corded cotton fabric	80 14 138 27 95 132
<b>C.</b> Dragon Sigurd killed	117 78 62 13 20 100	<b>N.</b> Winter liquid	121 35 66 140 1 87
<b>D.</b> Muslim leader	21 67 150 129 103 135	<b>O.</b> Fafhrd/Mouser author	9 75 109 130 42 17
<b>E.</b> Hubbub	88 137 98 6 58 40	<b>P.</b> Solemn prayer (hyphen.)	3 28 102 133 149 39
<b>F.</b> Simple closed curves	139 48 79 118 7 97	<b>Q.</b> Mahres' career	76 11 146 59 86 110
<b>G.</b> Having repast	61 10 23 53 134 49	<b>R.</b> Canine	141 36 123 43 82 65
<b>H.</b> Public "cabler"	32 115 63 94 147 46	<b>S.</b> Greeks' divine female wizard	111 37 73 106 55 131
<b>I.</b> Unmask	69 54 29 5 104 90	<b>T.</b> Highly joyful	108 64 92 38 125 8
<b>J.</b> Gypsy's tongue	31 71 91 114 107 56	<b>U.</b> Manual cutter	124 47 113 77 25 81
<b>K.</b> Submit (2 words)	119 85 19 12 122 60	<b>V.</b> Robin's mentor	57 142 116 15 45 2
		<b>W.</b> Dismay	144 16 99 30 44 127
		<b>X.</b> Burial casket	4 18 33 72 148 83
		<b>Y.</b> Snorts; utters doubts	41 120 68 143 89 26



## THE SUPERHERO

Just by saying SHAZAM!, young Billy Batson transformed into a magical flying adult superhero wearing a red costume with gold trim. He possessed the genius of Solomon, the strength of Hercules, the unbreakable will of Atlas, the lightning blasts of Zeus, the power of Achilles, and the speed of Mercury. It definitely was the ticket for you as the only child living with a passel of attorneys who thought they were smarter than everyone.

Your D.C. Comics collection became huge, thanks to the periodic visits we made to Golden Age Collectibles in the Pike Place Market. The Justice League of America superhero team joined our family both in comic books and miniatures: Superman, Batman, the Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, among others. I may have been the “righter of wrongs” in the courtroom, but you were saving the world from its most dangerous enemies. By the time you left for college, the many boxes of comics — all preserved for posterity by being encased in plastic — were of a size that could not accompany you anywhere until you bought a home in Renton.

You must have had a great time working on the Marvel Superheroes Adventure Game while working at Wizards of the Coast, even though you said in an interview that you didn’t know Marvel comics all that well. You wanted it to play like a comic book — fast, not obsessed with details, the action put in front of the rules, exhausting. I heard you once say that *The Reed Richards Guide to Everything*, officially authored by Reed Richards as told to Mike Selinker, was your favorite of all the books you have published. One reviewer gave it ten cosmic rays out of ten! That you were so drawn to Reed Richards — Mr. Fantastic of The Fantastic Four — is no surprise since you value intelligence so much. Using newspaper columns as a vehicle for Reed Richards to answer questions made this a highly unusual game rulebook.

I haven’t been able to keep up with all the iterations of Captain Marvel (when did he become a she?) or the battles between D.C. and Marvel comics or all of the many proteges of various superheroes. But I recently had the opportunity to see the movie *Wonder Woman* and it is terrific. And one of my favorite pictures of you is standing next to Deadpool with your arms crossed, taken at the New York Comic Con in 2012. It must be a thrill for you to have become part of the lives of your childhood “friends” in such a meaningful way.

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Jaime Lawrence  
(Hida Mann)



**Dear Doctor Richards,**

**What makes your book so cool?**

**- James Lawrenson**  
**Age 13**  
**Melbourne, Australia**

James, perhaps your question would be better phrased as 'what makes my book so great?' - remember, for scientists, words like cool have a specific, technical meaning. All confusion aside, my book isn't all that great, it's scientific curiosity that makes it engaging and exciting.

You see, my book couldn't exist without stimulating questions like yours, from people all over the world. In fact, without them, it'd just be 128 pages of softcover-bound paper, printed mostly in black and white, but with a few glossy colour pages and liberally splashed with some excellent art taken from Marvel Comics. I doubt many people would be interested in such a book!

Certainly, when writing the book, I tried to do a few things that I thought would make it more appealing; for example, I used many laymen's terms to explain the super-science I was dealing with, hoping that this would make it more readable for people. I also thought that this format, where I answer questions asked by intelligent young people like yourself in my newspaper column, would appeal. I tried to mix up some real world examples with discussions of all the superheroes and villains that we are familiar with, both so that the book would stimulate the imagination and so that all those villains who keep harassing my family and the good citizens of the world, like you, James, would know that I understand how their powers work and how to defeat them.

Of course, it's also a misnomer to call it 'my' book; Mike Selinker put some very interesting ideas about the Marvel Adventure Game into the book, expanding the rules greatly, offering insights into the use of the cards and the different powers available to players. He cleverly matched these up thematically with the letters I was answering, giving the book a good flow. My son Franklin really enjoys the game, as I'm guessing you do, from the tone of your letter.

The final thing that I did to give the book appeal was use one of my many senses; my sense of humour. I certainly could have answered some more scientific questions than "why does my Baby brother look like a hairy monkey?" or "what does it feel like to be hit by the Ever-Lovin', Blue-Eyed Thing?" (though credit for getting me to answer THAT one must go to Ben...), but I looked for questions that would make people smile, as well as open up valuable opportunities for scientific discussion.

James, I'm very glad you enjoyed the book. I'm very proud of it myself and it did receive some great feedback. In fact, one reviewer gave it ten cosmic rays out of ten! That's almost as exciting to me as your letter!

Posted Tue Jan 8, 2013 1:36 pm  
[QuickReply](#) [QuickQuote](#) [Reply](#) [Quote](#)

Mike Selinker  
(mike.selinker)



This is my favorite review of my books ever.

Mike

Posted Mon Jan 27, 2014 7:13 am  
[QuickReply](#) [QuickQuote](#) [Reply](#) [Quote](#)



Midwest

# BE A PART OF HISTORY AGAIN.

'74

**R**emember that first d4 you kept in your dad's purple Crown Royal bag? How about the name of your first fighter, and the first time you rolled a critical hit?

The **Dungeons & Dragons**® adventure game leapt into our lives twenty-five years ago and has led the roleplaying industry it created ever since. Each new adventure and supplement keeps the game as compelling as the day you bought your first *Player's Handbook*.

Check out TSR's Silver Anniversary events at the **Gen Con**® Game Fair and experience a quarter century of gaming excellence.

## Dungeons & Dragons

TIME TO PLAY.

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## THE DUNGEON MASTER

When you were 30 years old, the following appeared in *Polyhedron* magazine: "Mike Selinker has been an RPGA fixture for so long, there's a Time/Life book series on repairing him." You had been into role playing games already for close to two decades.

It all started with your 11<sup>th</sup> birthday party. You had been an avid science fiction fan, having watched endless reruns of the original *Star Trek* TV series, seen the movie *Star Wars* when you were 10, and become intrigued by the new *Battlestar Gallactica* TV show. For the 11<sup>th</sup> birthday of Starfleet Commander michael d. selinker, we had an intergalactic costume party. Abbie created a number of very original costumes and the rest of us did our best. Charlie and John came and brought you two presents: a chess set and something in a big box called Dungeons and Dragons Fantasy Adventure Game.

This very first role-playing game, a TSR creation, was to eclipse your interest in science fiction, comic books, and just about everything else. You had a big table in the largest of your three rooms which became suitable for friends to gather around to play this new game with its many-sided die. You ran "campaigns" and became the "dungeon master." Rules ruled. The game concepts included abilities (strength, intelligence, dexterity), character classes (fighting-man, magic-user, cleric), races (human, dwarf, elf, halfling), and alignments (lawful, neutral, chaotic). There were magic items, monsters, and dungeons. You later purchased many miniatures of these characters and painted them all with great deliberation. You tried to give me a character; I remember I was definitely "lawful good."

Your continued interest in D&D made you want to go to Gen Con, the annual role-playing game convention, when you were 14 years old. Your dad went with you, describing it as being stuck in an airport for three days. You became a member of TSR's Role Playing Game Association (RPGA) Network. You found another national community of which you became a beloved member.

You had a fantasy crossword puzzle published in *Dragon Magazine* in 1983 and later wrote both lighthearted ("The Camel's Nose") and murder mystery ("Death of an Arch-Mage") adventures for Advanced Dungeons and Dragons. Your contributions to role-playing games brought you to the attention of Wizards of the Coast, who tempted you mightily to leave the field of investigative reporting and become their Creative Director. After WotC purchased TSR you continued to enhance D&D by writing *Masters of the Wild: A Guidebook to Barbarians, Druids, and Rangers* as well as other contributions.

During the TSR acquisition, you helped write a scene for an episode of The X-Files called “Unusual Suspects,” in which Dean Haglund’s character Richard Langly plays Dungeons and Dragons. I wish I had seen it and heard the line “Come on, natural 20! Daddy needs a new sword of wounding!” That is so reminiscent of the banter I heard in our house in the late 70s and 80s.

There is no better inclusion in this segment than the “love letter to Dungeons and Dragons” which you wrote in your blog on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D&D. It is one of the most beautiful “memoirish” pieces I have ever read. I recall all of the public hysteria when D&D first became popular: articles and letters about how it was going to warp kids’ minds and make mass murderers out of them. You found it not only to be fun but to be educational, confidence-building, career-building, a way to find an awesome wife and to name an awesome dog. So I join you in saying “thank you, D&D” for making you into who you are.

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RPGA™ COORDINATOR  
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# Schrödinger's Blog

ONE RADIOACTIVE ATOM, SOME HYDROGEN CYANIDE, AND A LACK OF MORAL TERPIITUDE.

January 26, 2014

49 notes

## a love letter to Dungeons & Dragons

I can list the most powerful creative influences on my life thusly:

1. My parents
2. Dungeons & Dragons

There is nothing else in the cultural landscape that has had as powerful an effect on my life. Star Wars, comics, Games magazine, the Beatles, Watership Down, the NFL, Fantasia—so much else has permeated the creative I have become. But Dungeons & Dragons stands alone, on top, reinventing everything that passes through my mind.

Because of D&D, I no longer view the world passively. There is nothing I see that I cannot imagine being inside of, controlling, shaping into my own creation. You may look at D&D and see elves and wizards and things with claws. I see none of those things. I see worlds.

Because of D&D, I have confidence. I know how people think. I know how to work a room. I know why people need other people's help. I know how teams function. I know when and why to split the party.

Because of D&D, I understand how words work. I devour history. I know how probability functions. I know every mythology and religion under the sun. I can create languages. I have read about everything. I know which way north is on a map.

Because of D&D, I know what is right for one person is not right for everyone. I know evil is real, but can be moderated by law. I know power corrupts. I know people just want to be good. I know that working hard at something makes you higher level.

Because of D&D, I know that violence can be abstracted. I know that trying to acquire things is a temporary high. I know that portraying evil is not the same as being evil yourself. I know that there are people who are unclear about these things.

Because of D&D, I can tell stories. Really good ones. I know that when I write them down, other people can tell them too. And they can make even better stories out of my stories. And so we create our folklore.

Because of D&D, I have made hundreds of great friends. I have met movie stars and musicians and novelists and directors and millionaires and artists and game designers and ordinary, extraordinary people, all inspired to do what they do by D&D. This week, I sat in the house of one such person and taught him to play one of my games, and it felt like we'd been playing D&D together all our lives.

Because of D&D, I have a career. I have written for and about Dungeons & Dragons many times. I helped creatively direct an edition of it. I made puzzles for it. I made a thirty-foot Player's Handbook cover descend from the heavens. I wrote an adventure card game highly influenced by it. I spoke in front of thousands about how it matters. I spread the virus. I helped give meaning to their lives, the way other D&D creatives helped give meaning to mine.

Because of D&D, I have an audience. I write blogs that people read. I make silly videos, and ones that matter. I stand on stage and entertain. I write songs and books and screeds to politicians. I rally people around charities and crowdfunding creations and games they'd never see otherwise. I treat the world as if I am behind a screen, and everyone else is in a 10x10 room of my invention. That room grows a little larger every day.

Because of D&D, I have an awesome wife whom I met across a table at a roleplaying game convention. We got married at another game convention, in front of hundreds of people who entered my life because of D&D. Because of D&D, Tim Schafer made Monkey Island, and now my dog is named Guybrush.

Because of D&D, I am who I am. I can neither hypothesize nor fathom my life without it. Dungeons & Dragons is 40 years old today. From the point at which my mom's boyfriend gave me a copy of the blue box in 1978, D&D and I have been close friends. I sometimes take it for granted; I haven't played a regular campaign for almost a decade, but I aim to change that soon.

I've told Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson how I feel, but I've never talked directly to the game itself. So, Dungeons & Dragons: I just want you to know I love you, and thank you for making me into me.

### About this thing

A blog that sometimes exists and sometimes doesn't, by Mike Selinker.



[Ask me anything](#)

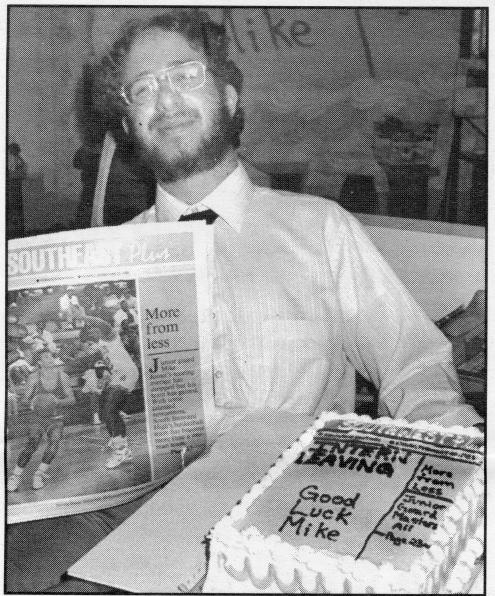
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Photo/BEVERLY STRACHER

Mike Selinker at South Broward

## Intern gets a sweet send-off

South Broward's editorial staff said farewell in high-calorie style to intern Mike Selinker when he ended his stint there as Pembroke Park reporter. A final copy of *Southeast Plus* to go with the cake, and Selinker was off to the Fort Lauderdale copy desk. He recently returned to Northwestern University.



## THE JOURNALIST

The morning newspaper was an indispensable part of our household. It was our connection to the outside world after a good night's sleep. We felt uneasy if we didn't know what had occurred during our absence, what to talk about with friends and colleagues, what facts we needed to make informed decisions. Good reporting was respected. As third or fourth graders, you, Connie Piper, and Angel O'Leary produced the first newspaper for Stevens Elementary School.

Fast forward to Garfield High School. The entire process of print journalism fascinated you. As Ad Manager for *The Messenger* in your sophomore year, you not only handled the ad sales but also wrote articles and crossword puzzles and did editing and layout. In your senior year you were the Managing Editor, but in reality performed the job of the Editor-in-Chief as well. You worked on the newspaper anywhere from 15-40 hours a week, bringing your own people to the staff and your own style to the newspaper. You were demanding of others and of yourself. You frequently butted heads. You were at times manic. You thrived on deadlines.

One of your reporters described the scene in an article entitled "A Glimpse into *Messenger* Madness":

...journalism at Garfield is not a pretty thing. It is chaotic, and crazy, and unorganized. We are a staff of writers and producers. Of loud and meek. Of energetic and mellow. Of sports fans and debate fans. We are a haphazard group of mismatched personalities thrown together to create something remotely readable, maybe even entertaining. And sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. But we always try, and once in awhile we have a good time doing it.

You were accepted to Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University after writing an essay for your college application about what it was like to meet a newspaper publication deadline in spite of having three wisdom teeth pulled that day. You became a staff reporter on your school paper *The Daily Northwestern*. Having grown up in a diverse neighborhood and attended public schools with mixed races and ethnicities, you were acutely aware of (and disturbed by) how "white" Northwestern and even Evanston were. My favorites among your articles in the newspaper were about

racial violence plaguing college campuses and anti-Semitic vandalism at the Holocaust Memorial in Skokie.

I was delighted when you decided to do your journalism internship in Florida and live with Grandma Sylvia and Grandpa Murray for three months. Armed with your first car and some decent clothes, you covered local politics for *The Sun-Sentinel*. I received a telephone call from Grandma one day telling me that she observed you whistling early one morning while ironing your shirt. She had never before met anyone who was so happy to be going to work.

You elected to remain in Chicago after graduation and secured a position as a reporter on *The Chicago Reporter*. There you were able to write well-researched and in-depth articles about how local laws and policies discriminated against blacks, Hispanics, poor women, undocumented immigrants. Your articles on hate crimes contributed much to my understanding of the subtleties involved and why this continues to be a major problem to this day. Your work several years later for *Catalyst* allowed you even more space to explore racial tension in Chicago's public schools and the rise of gangs, guns, and violence.

I had hoped that a position at the now-defunct *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* would bring you back to the Pacific Northwest, but it was a job in the gaming industry that provided for your return. That, of course, changed the trajectory of your life. But your career in journalism set the stage for much that continues: your ability to handle responsibility and work under great pressure, your desire and ability to collaborate with other people to put out a good product, your confidence in putting your ideas out to the universe and your handling of negative feedback, and the refinement of your political views. And, without doubt, your incredible writing skills.

# THE CHICAGO REPORTER

## POLICE RESPONSE KEY TO FIGHTING HATE CRIMES

By Michael Selinker



Police recruits in Chicago receive only two hours of bias crime training.

## BIAS CRIME REVERSES FIRE

**N**OON, RUSH STREET. A MAN GETS into a cab, asks to go to North and Wells. The driver is Pakistani. The passenger is white. And drunk.

He starts in at once, spitting at the driver, cursing, telling him, "Go back to your country, you camel jockey." The driver tells him to be quiet. The driver goes out of the cab.



- SAFETY**
- 1 in 4 students fear violence** A survey of 31 high schools around the state. **page 2**
  - Kids, parents, cops, Angels stand guard** How schools fight troublemakers. **page 6**
  - Knowing gang symbols first step to deterrence** A gang guide. **page 8**
  - 'Listen to students'** A discussion among 3 student leaders. **page 10**

**Opinions** What's to blame: poverty or bureaucracy? A debate. **page 14**

**Elsewhere** A new section looks at Detroit, Denver, Milwaukee. **page 27**

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# Catalyst

VOICES OF CHICAGO SCHOOL REFORM

## Gangs, guns, violence challenge schools

by Michael Selinker

**J**aimie Villagomez has a year to go at Wells High School, 936 N. Ashland. He's a good student who hasn't been out of gangs, but he might soon make it.

Jaime has been intimidated by gangs around his school and neighborhood so often that his mother, Ana, is thinking of taking him back to Puerto Rico, a move Jaime favors.

"I just can't even walk across the street without being scared," he explains. "There's always a teenager on the corner, and I always have to watch out because I don't know if he's in a gang. In Puerto Rico, you don't have to worry about [gang] colors."

Says Ana: "I'd have to leave my job, my car and my house, but what good are they if I lose my son?"

Jaime's fear of gangs and violence is common among public high school students. It also is well founded.

Just ask the 10-year-old girl who was raped in February by a 14-year-old in a hallway of O'Keeffe Elementary School, 6940 S. Merrill. Just ask the 8-year-old girl who was shot in the back in March by another 8-year-old in a classroom of Sharon Christa McAuliffe Elementary School, 1841 N. Springfield.

Just ask the kids. That's what the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority did in a survey released earlier this school year. Researchers

for the authority questioned 2,693 students and 1,379 teachers in Illinois public high schools; about a quarter of those surveyed were from Chicago.

What the researchers found was that one in four students were afraid some of the time that they would be hurt or bothered in school. Almost one in five said they were afraid they would be hurt going to and from school. In a recent survey of Chicago elementary school teachers, one in three said their children did not feel safe coming and going to school. (See CATALYST, October 1991.)

### LSCs respond

Some Chicago principals and local school councils (LSCs) refuse to acknowledge problems in their schools, crime fighters say. But there has been a marked increase in attention to school security since the advent of school reform.

The Board of Education doubled its security budget in the past two years, from \$12 million to \$24 million a year. Much of that increase has gone toward Operation SAFE, which placed police officers in every high school. (Since September 1990, they have arrested an average of one student per school per day.) The board



## THE GAME DESIGNER

"So You Want to Be a Pharaoh" was the first game you designed and constructed. As a student at South Shore Middle School in a track for gifted students, you had the opportunity to participate in a creative workshop sponsored by Centrum. It wasn't a Monopoly or a Scrabble, but it had a certain flair.

You were, of course, an avid game player throughout your school years. You had a real sense of what made a game not only fun but also elegant. And your interests were diverse: role-playing games, card games, board games. I was delighted that everything you played contributed to socialization with others and that you did not sit home alone in front of a computer playing video games.

Your eight-year stint at Wizards of the Coast gave wings to your talent for game design. Alpha Blitz, a deck of cards constituting a word game with letter cards that you could reuse and lightning bolt cards to destroy the letters, was an early favorite of mine in 1998. It was a favorite of many others as well and became *Games* magazine 1998 Word Game of the Year. It was fun making big words like "senselessness" out of the four letters in "lens."

I never played many of the games that you worked on in the early days at Wizards. You were the creative director for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Dungeons and Dragons and contributed mightily to the Marvel Superheroes Adventure Game. In 2001, I was excited by The Harry Potter Trading Card Game, the strategy and collectible card game which was based in the magical world of J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels that I had been reading with my grandchildren. I remember you bringing the game to Michael and Melanie's wedding reception and playing it with the kiddies. They were so excited that their Uncle Mike had met J.K. Rowling. I understand it was at one time the second best-selling toy in the U.S.

I recall when you were thinking of leaving WotC, they proposed allowing you to stay home and simply give them your good ideas periodically. You brought to life some amazing games after they acquired Avalon Hill: Risk Godstorm, Axis and Allies D-Day (winner of the Origins Gamers Choice Award in 2004), and Betrayal at the House on the Hill (winner of the 2004 Gamers Choice Award for best board game).

But you were ready to branch out on your own, creating Lone Shark Games with James Ernest. Pirates of the Spanish Main, a constructible strategy game for Wiz Kids, was one of the first games. As I punched out my tokens and ships and other pieces, I

wondered whether you were indeed moving forward. There was no box! In fact, I still have my pieces in a little Ziploc bag. But the big box games weren't too far in the future: Key Largo, Stonehenge, Gloria Mundi, Unspeakable Words, and Lords of Vegas. My very favorite game in your collaboration with James is the lovely 12 Days card game. I have played it often with Izabel and I hang Echo Chernik's beautiful artwork representing each day of Christmas on the fridge every year.

Lone Shark kept it going gangbusters by its collaboration with Paizo for The Pathfinder Adventure Card Game. I read that Rise of the Runelords, the first base set, premiered at Gen Con Indy 2013 and sold out in four hours. New base sets have been produced each year for this popular award-winning game. Your team brought an expansion to the long-popular Betrayal at the House on the Hill with Widows Walk. The recently introduced Apocrypha seems to be a hit and we are awaiting the launch of both Thornwatch and the Ninth World.

In an interview with you more than 10 years ago, Tom Vasel wrote that "Mike Selinker is hovering somewhere between the stages of a wunderkind game designer and grand old man of gaming." Bruno Faidutti called you "a game designing one man band." Although your individual creative talent is huge and duly recognized throughout the gaming industry, you always give your team and other collaborators much credit for the final project. And you give wonderful advice to aspiring game designers:

Find some other great game designers, and make games with them. That's what I've done my whole career. I can't think of any game I've done from start to finish without some major help from at least one of my peers.

Thanks for letting me support your work through your recent Kickstarters. Thanks for all the free copies of your games over the years. I haven't personally played them all, but one of my greatest joys is watching you and the rest of our family sitting around my dining room table at Thanksgiving playing your games. I will always be grateful to Wizards of the Coast for bringing you back to the Pacific Northwest.

## Renton home to Lone Shark Game Design Studio

TRACEY COMPTON ([HTTP://WWW.RENTONREPORTER.COM/AUTHOR/TRACEY-COMPTON/](http://WWW.RENTONREPORTER.COM/AUTHOR/TRACEY-COMPTON/)) • Fri

Jul 26th, 2013 4:22pm • [BUSINESS](#) ([HTTP://WWW.RENTONREPORTER.COM/BUSINESS/](http://WWW.RENTONREPORTER.COM/BUSINESS/))

Mike Selinker Seattle may be well known as a creative incubator for the game industry, but Renton is also on the map as home to innovative game companies too. Lone Shark Game Design Studio has had success in Renton and boasts clients like Disney, Sony, Lucasfilm and Microsoft, to name a few.

President and CEO Mike Selinker in 10 years has turned a hobby project into a thriving business.

He started Lone Shark Game Design Studio with friend James Ernest in October 2003. Based in Renton, Selinker now has a core team of seven full-time staffers, other offices and locations in Seattle and a creative network of contributors who span the country and abroad.

Previously, Selinker was a Wizards of the Coast creative director and lead designer for eight years. When he left that Renton firm, he started Lone Shark, thinking it would be lucky to just get a couple years out of his small business venture.

"We ended up being the company that can do everything, which is not where we intended to be," Selinker said. "But now we're the company people call when they've gotten their project in a bit of a jam or they're not sure which way to go."

The busy entrepreneur shared some insight on his company in an interview Monday at Common Ground Coffee & Cupcakes in downtown Renton.

When he left Wizards of the Coast, Selinker knew how to create card games, board games and role-playing games. Lone Shark started creating more interesting and bigger

versions of those types of games, he said. Then the company was asked to work on online and computer games, launch company events and all sorts of other projects. Fundamentally, Lone Shark's primary activities are making board and card games, puzzles, puzzle events and puzzle books.

"We host events that take place all over the place, whether they are in large conventions, or in the community, or at company, corporation headquarters," Selinker said.

For four years, Lone Shark has also hosted the Renton River Days Rubber Duck scavenger hunt throughout the city. Selinker's wife Evon came up with the idea.

"When we're at River Days, people from the town we live in tell us how much they like us, which is really great," Selinker said. "That's a great way to feel after doing a project, is to have your fellow community members tell us that they think you did something good. So it (the duck hunt) is a great project and we love doing it."

Staff at Lone Shark is excited about the company's latest project that's due for release later this year. It's the puzzle book "The Maze of Games." The pages of the book are out of order and readers must solve the puzzles to work their way through the book. The project included the work of 35 contributors from all over the U.S. and England, including work by Will Shortz, New York Times crossword puzzle editor.

"The great thing about having this company is I can work with whoever I want on whatever I want them to do, assuming they're interested," Selinker said.

Lone Shark has a big Rolodex of contacts with a thousand different skills to do everything from creating and building games to staffing events and conventions, the business owner said.

"It's just exciting to be right in the center of the time when games are bigger than sports, bigger than movies, bigger than rock music," Selinker said. "Everybody plays something."

He remembers when the game industry was a small portion of the economy and a very niche audience. Today he notices that the top-selling product on Amazon is a game.

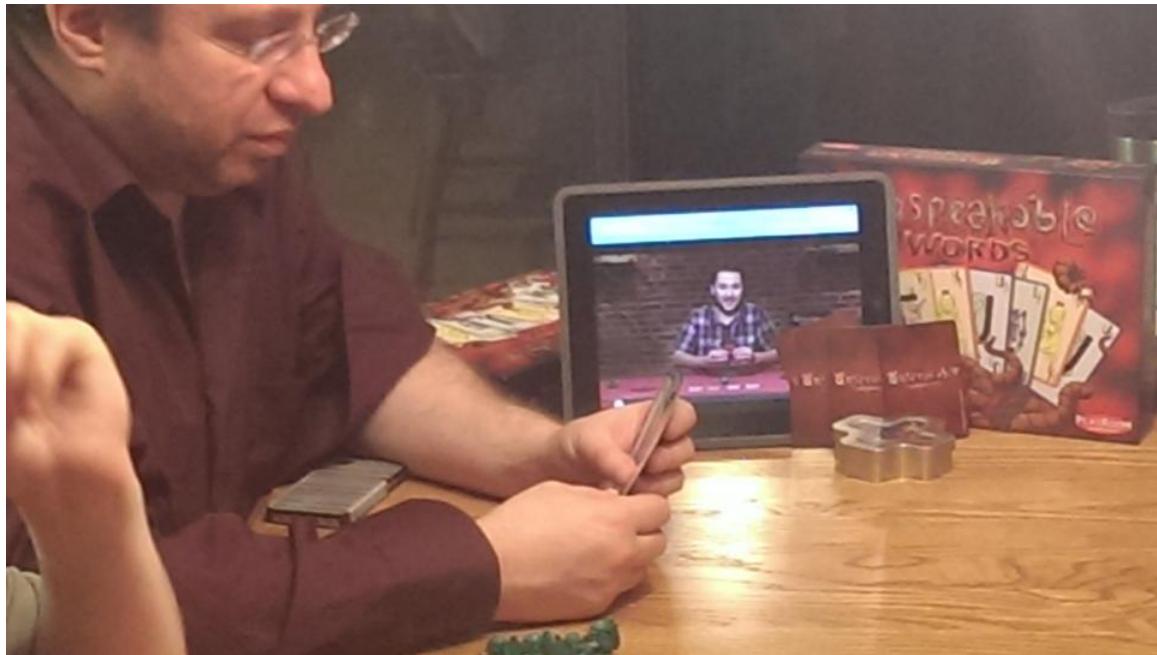
"It used to be mostly men who played games; now it's more women than men who play games," Selinker said. "It used to be thought of as a kid thing; more adults than kids play games (now)."

Lone Shark is “pretty unique,” said Selinker, and has formed partnerships with freelancers based on his efforts to be socially active all the time. He’s met his business partners through his hobbies, events, conventions in the game industry and gotten to know them personally over time.

Over Labor Day Weekend, Lone Shark Game Design Studio will host a lot of events at the Penny Arcade Expo or PAX 2013. Selinker is a curator at PAX DEV, the developer convention for PAX.

For more information about Lone Shark Game Design Studio, visit [www.lonesharkgames.com](http://www.lonesharkgames.com).

*Tracey Compton can be reached at 425-455-3484, ext. 5052.*



## THE CARD SHARK

Like most young American children, your first competitive card game was Go Fish. When that got boring, you and I played War. A deck of cards was small enough to carry on any trip and the airlines almost always gave you a new one.

You were introduced to card-playing as a real social event on our many trips to Florida. Grandma and Grandpa both played card games, but never with each other. Grandma played canasta with three other women once a week in The Library. Grandpa and his cronies from the Men's Club played poker every morning in The Card Room. You passed by them every morning on your way to the pool, and couldn't help but observe through the large glass walls how much fun they were having.

You had many opportunities to travel to Las Vegas as a game designer and how could you not play poker? When asked a few years back what were your own favorite games, you answered:

It's hard to beat poker. Most games are about one thing, but poker's about a lot of things: math, psychology, luck, skill, everything. Plus, if you play it well, it pays you back. Sometimes.

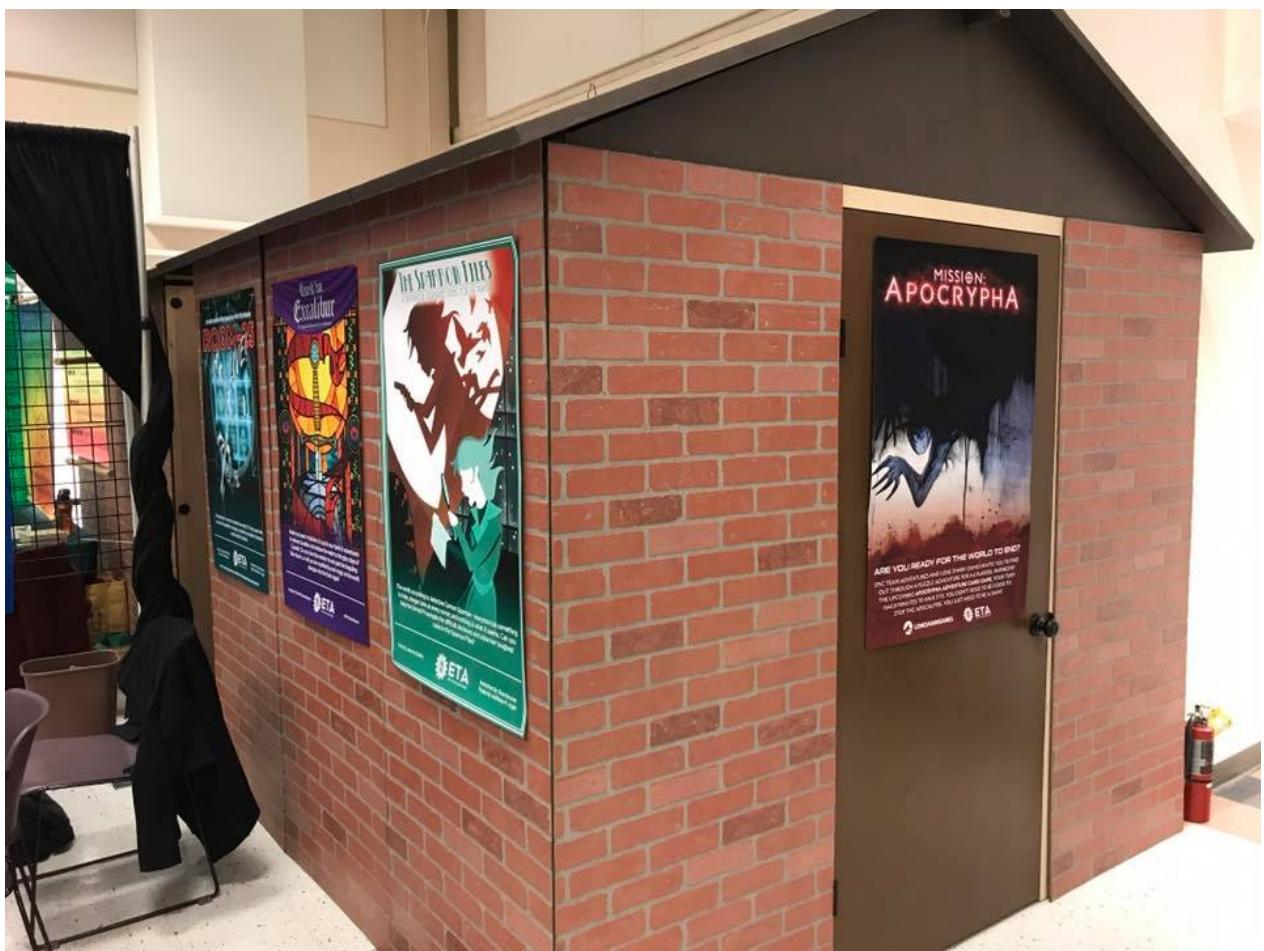
I wasn't too surprised to hear that you had a regular card game going at your home in Renton. And like so many other things that you do, you became pretty good at it and decided to share your wisdom with the world. One of my favorites of your books is the humorous *Dealer's Choice: The Complete Handbook of Saturday Night Poker* that you co-wrote with James Ernest and Phil Foglio in 2005. Full of advice a beginner will need to know before swimming with the sharks, it also contains 200 different poker games ("most of them good") for someone who wants a little variety in life. My favorite chapter is "Hosting a Poker Party," with its tips on what kind of food to serve.

*The Art of Texas Hold'em* followed quickly after; my copy was purloined by a California relative addicted to the game. As I recall, it had a very different flavor to it, much more serious and focusing a lot on game theory. The different approaches that you take in your poker books are a good expression of your personality: the serious researcher and the guy who likes to have fun.

Card games have evolved from the traditional 52-card deck with number, suits, colors, and royalty. And you have contributed mightily to that evolution. Cards to play word games, cards to unlock mysteries of Disney's Magic Kingdom, cards that are incredible works of art, trading card games, and cards that are integral parts of role-playing and adventure games.

But as I've mentioned previously, two of my favorite games that you created were AlphaBlitz and 12 Days. I love how much enjoyment can be packed in something so small. But mostly I love the memories they bring back of the sweet times you and I had playing cards together.





## THE EVENT ORGANIZER

I have been amazed at your ability to organize huge events. From the early days of attending gaming conventions, you were able to look at a room and imagine things others could not. When you were only in your early 20s, I was telling friends that I thought you should organize the presidential convention for the Democrats.

You and the team at Lone Shark, along with some of your collaborators, have hosted events that take place in many settings: large conventions, in the community, or at corporate headquarters. I was astounded to learn recently that you helped write and produce three Magic: The Gathering escape rooms on three continents (Australia, Europe, and U.S.), all taking place on the same weekend. Thousands of players around the world worked to unravel the mysteries of Innistrad and discover new cards and puzzles.

Puzzle hunts that you've created have been part of the M.I.T. Mystery Hunt, gaming conventions local and national, the JoCo cruise, and other settings. I enjoyed following the month-long "Hunt for Evan Ratcliff" in 2009 where *Wired* magazine hired you to feed the internet with a regular dose of puzzles that clued the location of an elusive reporter trying hard to disappear. What started as an exercise in escape in the digital age quickly became a massive multiplayer online game and reality show. Lone Shark, *Wired* and Universal Studios collaborated the next year to send people on an interstate manhunt in connection with Universal's movie *Repo Men*.

You recreated the planet of Tatooine for thousands of costumed Star Wars fans gathered in L.A. At PAX a 12-foot octahedron with cryptic runes floated overhead and only after the players' handstamps lit up under a black light were they able to decode the runes. At a Microsoft picnic with 40,000 people in attendance, you shrank people with a ray gun and let them loose among giant flowers, birds' nests, and wishing wells.

For Renton River Days 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, you created the Rubber Duck Scavenger Hunt with 30 giant rubber ducklings "hiding in conspicuous sight" in businesses around town that decorated them. Clues were posted in the Renton Reporter and the community had a great time looking for the ducks and getting to know one another. I recall you also did something for the Chinese New Year celebration in Seattle's International District.

One of my favorite local events was the 2010 GeoCrush, a geocaching event in which twenty caches were laid at places like the Seattle Art Museum, the Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Opera, Tacoma Art Museum, the Seattle Symphony, and over a dozen other sites. It took place over four weeks, combining the thrill of the hunt with tons of cultural information to learn at each place. Players were encouraged to leave mementoes behind at each location.

You have bragged about the size of your rolodex, having contacts with a thousand different skills that allow you to do everything from creating and building games to staffing events and conventions. I can't imagine the pressure to create these massive events and objects with deadlines looming. But it's clear that you do it with panache and the events keep getting bigger and bigger.

Community Corner (/washington/renton/around-town)

## Have A Ducky Day!

The second annual rubber duck hunt has kids and adults searching the town for the little yellow quackers.

By Susan Bressler (Patch Poster) - (<https://patch.com/users/susan-bressler>) Updated July 6, 2011 7:10 am ET

0



Here a quack, there a quack, everywhere a quack, quack. Oh, wait; wrong nursery rhyme.

"Duck, Duck, Goose" is the driving theme behind the second annual duck scavenger hunt for .

If you've been out and about Renton lately, you have probably spotted the little yellow duckies dressed up and dotting the town for Renton River Days.

Not exactly sure what all these ducks are about? The Duck Hunt game goes like this:

Thirty ducks are "hiding in conspicuous sight" in businesses around town. You must go online (<http://www.facebook.com/rentonriverdays>) and find the clues about where the ducks have been dressed up and placed.

There is a Theta Duck, a Nathaniel Duck, a Blaine Duck, a Cookie Duck, a Fluffy Duck, and a Xeno Duck. The Blaine Duck is hiding in a place you probably don't want to find yourself; but that's part of the clue.

The Nathaniel Duck "has an identity problem" according to the owner of the store where the duck is displayed. Acapulco Duck is dressed in religious garb, and another one is a cowboy.

There is also a "decoy" duck in a store window in downtown Renton.

But one duck, is not a duck at all. Instead, it's a goose.

Great fun.

Lone Shark Games created the Duck Hunt event, said coordinator Mike Selinker, after the IKEA Renton River Days board sought a signature event to celebrate last year's 25th anniversary.

"I liked the idea of a scavenger hunt for animals, like Seattle did with pigs a while back," he said, adding that his wife, Evon Fuerst, suggested rubber ducks. "Because Renton River Days has had a rubber duck race for decades, it was a perfect match," he said.

"When we started the game last year we got a hugely enthusiastic response from businesses and residents. We had a great time, and were thrilled when they asked us to do it again," Selinker said.

Gary Slotnik, owner of Garland Jewelers has participated in the Duck Hunt twice, and he loves the people who get out and about searching, and, of course, stop in the store. Oops, did I just give away a clue?

The hunt runs from June 22 to July 20.

At that point, Selinker said, "we will collect all the ducks and bring them to Renton River Days on July 22. Then there will be a "Ducklings & Dragons" scavenger hunt every day at the festival, where you can find even more ducklings."

Prizes for the duck hunt will be formally announced soon, but include a Nintendo Wii, boots from Renton Western Wear (<http://www.rentonwesternwear.com>), and more.

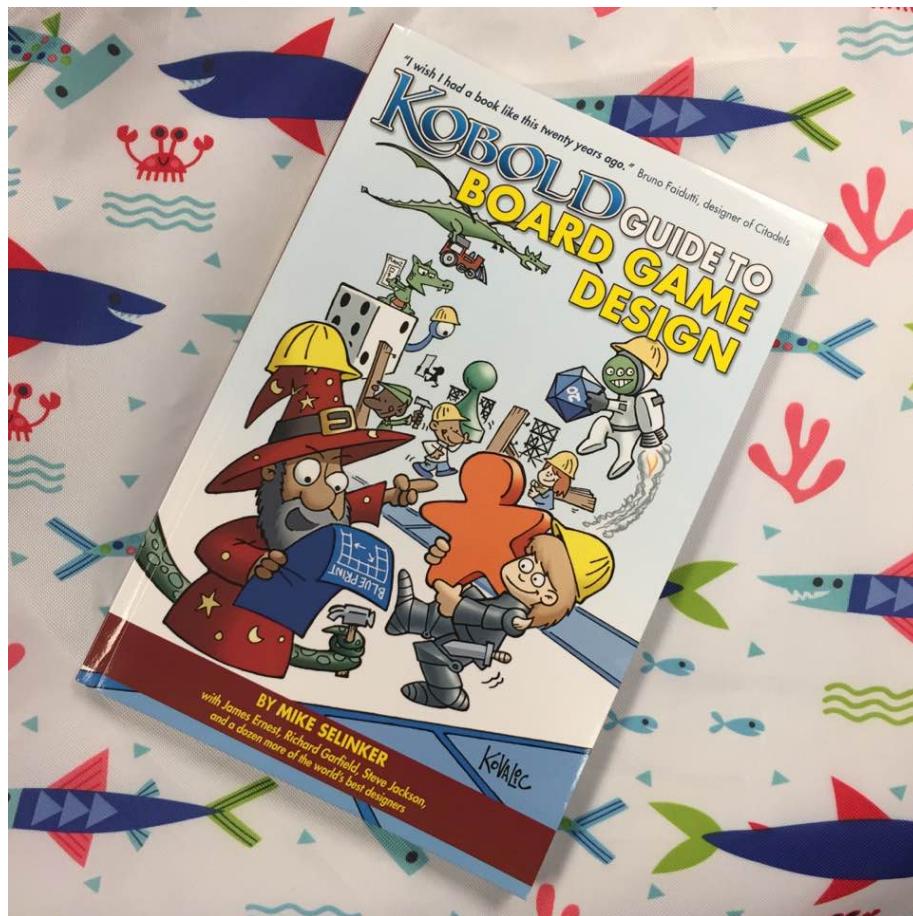
The sponsor for the duck hunt is .

To get your duck hunt form, click here (<http://www.fsbnw.com/PDF/duckhunt.pdf>).

What did you think?  (/)

Originally published June 28, 2011. This post is contributed by a community member. The views expressed in this post are the author's. Registered users are welcome to post on Patch (<https://my.patch.com>).





## THE MENTOR

One of the things I admire most about you is your willingness to share with others the knowledge you have accumulated through your experiences and endeavors. Your dad has been a tremendous role model for you during his career as a university professor and author. I have also tried in my career as an attorney to give my clients the tools to advocate for themselves and to train other attorneys in various areas of law. The three of us are part of a long Jewish tradition that values teaching others.

I have a boxful of old issues of *Games* magazine which not only contain puzzles you created but also a several-years-running series called “PuzzleCraft” in which you give people instructions on how to create various types of puzzles: cryptics, set puzzles, kakuro, hedgehogs and worms, and waterfall, to name a few. This ultimately gave way to the publication in 2013 of your book *Puzzle Craft: The Ultimate Guide on How to Construct Every Kind of Puzzle* which you co-wrote with Thomas Snyder. I have previously mentioned your poker books *Dealers Choice* and *The Art of Texas Hold'em* which tell people how to win at poker and have fun doing so.

Likewise, in the gaming field, your book *The Kobold Guide to Board Design* published in 2011 has become a classic. It pulls together the ideas and secrets of 15 of the world’s best game designers (including you) about game conception, design, development, and presentation. I have also watched videos of many of the lectures on game design that you have given at conventions and been impressed with your ability to make your subject matter interesting, fun, and crystal-clear. You are a born teacher.

I was proud when you joined the faculty in the Department of Game Software Design and Production at DigiPen Institute of Technology. Despite the reach to large audiences that your books have had, the up close and personal student/teacher experience is more likely to be life-changing for someone. I know that you put great effort into preparing for your classes and that you have helped many people afterwards.

You have employed many interns at Lone Shark Games and it is heartening to see how they have come into their own in the gaming community, especially Gaby. I know that your expectation of people is high and that you can’t always be easy to work for, but what an incredible experience you are providing to the next generation of would-be designers.

## News &amp; Events

News   Events   Calendar

## Game Design Grads Look Back on Group Internship Experience at Lone Shark Games

Posted Jan 30, 2017

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A group of recent graduates from the [Bachelor of Arts in Game Design](#) program had a chance to work together on *Widow's Walk*, the expansion to the classic tabletop game *Betrayal at House on the Hill*, when they interned earlier this year at Lone Shark Games in Redmond.



Renowned caricaturist Len Peralta's portrait of the Lone Shark intern squad.

Lone Shark Games is a major player in the tabletop game industry, and they're just down the road from DigiPen's Redmond campus. Thus, it makes sense that their first-ever crop of interns — Lucy Tibbits, Javier Quintero, Aviva Schecterson, and Thomas Ball — would be drawn from DigiPen's student body.

It makes even more sense when you consider that [Mike Selinker](#), Lone Shark's President and Chief Creative Officer, and Gaby Weidling, one of the company's event/game designers specializing in puzzles, taught an elective course on puzzle design during the 2015 fall semester. "They got everyone in the class who had gotten an A, and sent out an email that was basically like, 'Hey, we are interested in you as an intern,'" says Ball. The four students were selected, they say, because of their work on their final project, a campus-wide puzzle hunt.

"It quickly became obvious that some of our students really liked what we did, so we brought some seniors on board," Selinker says. "They got to work on games they loved, and we got some great help from them."

The internship ran from January to April, during which the four did extensive design work and playtesting on *Widow's Walk*, among other games.

*Betrayal* is a horror-themed board game in which players explore a creepy haunted mansion together. It was popular for its inventive and extremely replayable dynamics, which center around different game scenarios called "haunts." When a haunt starts, its unique rules take effect, and one player is designated as the traitor, now working against their former compatriots, usually enhanced with special powers unique to the particular haunt scenario.

For the *Widow's Walk* expansion, several of the 50 new haunt scenarios were written by prominent game industry figures like Zoë Quinn, Anita Sarkeesian, and Pendleton Ward.

Taking those writers' haunts and making them work as a game scenario was a difficult but rewarding task, they say. Even the best writers, they joke, aren't necessarily the best game designers.

"A lot of the haunts were really funny," Javier says. "We were sort of just trying to make the mechanics work well enough that people could enjoy the funny." He says that his favorite haunts were actually the ones that needed the most work. Aviva cited Liz Spain's "Sushi Night" as her favorite. In Sushi Night, the traitor is a mermaid, and the players' objective is to devour the mermaid before the house floods. Some haunts, they say, were a bit more trying.

"There was a haunt that involved players turning into babies, which wasn't necessarily my favorite haunt," Thomas says. "But it led to some of the most hilarious dialogue! Like, 'Oh, I need to get this baby through this window, so it can fall down.'"

"They have a giant stuffed unicorn, and as soon as you come in the door they have this massive dungeon table. It's an interesting, fun place."



Initially, that haunt scenario included a requirement for players who were babies to actually talk like a baby, which was funny, Javier says, but only for one play session. As design interns, the team had to play through each of the new scenarios multiple times.

While being paid to playtest might sound fun to the average gamer, it can actually be a pretty tedious process, the graduates said. Lucy describes it as trying to “break” every little part of a game, and Thomas adds that it often takes lots of repetition to isolate and identify those broken parts of the game.

“The playtesting we [did at DigiPen] was very useful, because it’s very much in our hands.”

“Sometimes it’s like, ‘I am making positive changes to this and it feels great,’ he says. “Other times it’s like, ‘We’ve played this 20 times now.’”

All tedium aside, they are all quick to agree that extensive playtesting is absolutely essential to making good games.

“The playtesting we [did at DigiPen] was very useful, because it’s very much in

our hands,” Thomas says. “Professors would say time and time again how important playtesting is, but it’s never a thing you’re graded on. It’s just a matter of the final project that you make and hand in. And it’s obvious based on that final product that you hand in whether you’ve done playtesting.”

At Lone Shark, they got the chance to playtest with the pros, running games and trading feedback with Selinker and the other Lone Shark designers. They even got to playtest with the occasional game celebrity. For the game *Thornwatch*, which is a collaboration between Lone Shark and Penny Arcade, the graduates found themselves playtesting alongside Penny Arcade co-creator Mike Krahulik. Indeed, the entire Lone Shark experience, they say, was pretty darn cool.



Clockwise from top left: Javier Quintero, Thomas Ball, Lucy Tibbits, and Aviva Schecterson.

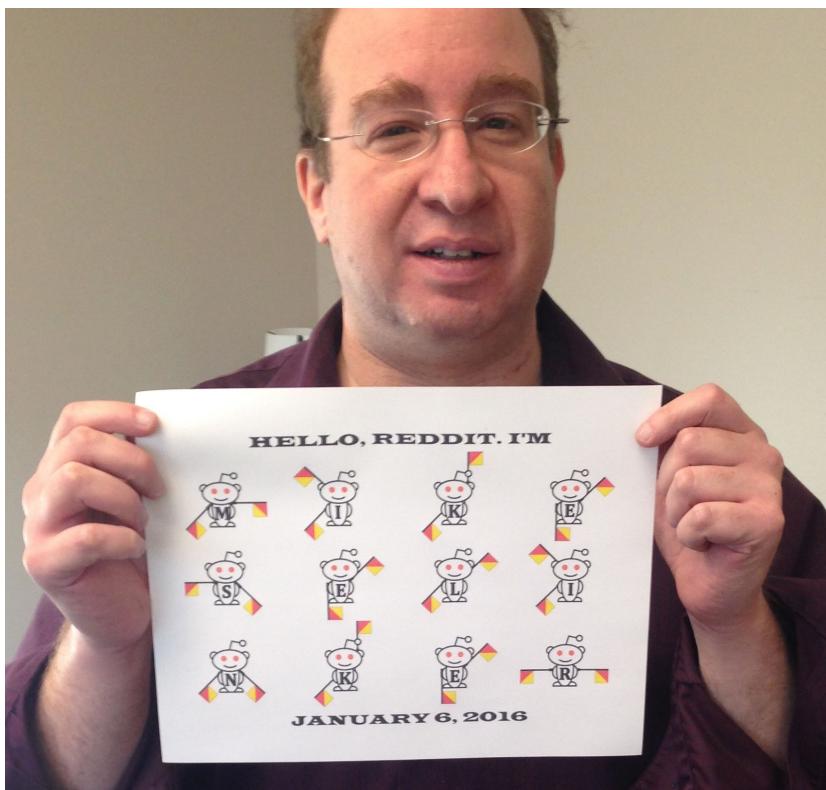
“They have a giant stuffed unicorn, and as soon as you come in the door they have this massive dungeon table,” says Thomas. “It’s an interesting, fun place.”

While each of the interns has since graduated, they still keep in touch. Interestingly enough, they’re all still working in puzzle games, in some fashion or another. Aviva was hired on as a full-time game editor at Lone Shark.

Thomas and Lucy worked together at Epic Team Adventures, a puzzle and escape-room company in Seattle, before Thomas left to join Javier on his indie project. That project, in keeping with the interns' puzzle obsession, is a game in which players must attempt deliveries within the tortuous headquarters of a company that makes intentionally confusing signage.

On the Lone Shark website, the interns still have their own entry on the staff page, thanking them for their time and noting that theirs will be “big chairs to fill.” Given how helpful they say their DigiPen education was for their work at Lone Shark, it makes sense that those chairs will be filled with two more DigiPen students, Sarah Shuler and Linus Chan, whose internships started last week!





••••• Verizon 3:23 PM 21% 🔋

23 Likes 8 Comments

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Comment

Share



Zija Lubin-West with Angelo  
Jacob Heimowitz

3 hrs · New York, NY ·

That time when you're at NYCC and Whoopi Goldberg passes by with an entire camera team...

24 Likes

Like

Comment

Share



Mike Selinker

3 hrs ·

And then Whoopi Goldberg caused an immense traffic jam at the CBLDF booth.

4 Likes 3 Comments

Like

Comment

Share



Jim Wilson

Yesterday at 8:17 PM

News Feed Requests Messenger Notifications More

## THE SOCIAL NETWORKER

I am a late arrival to the age of electronic communication, particularly the Internet. I forget to carry my cell phone, I don't know how to text, and I don't know what Instagram and Snapchat are. I only learned to use a computer in this millennium after I retired from full-time work. I have a Facebook account because of you.

My introduction to social media was reading your blog "The Most Beautiful Things." I loved reading your thoughts about a wide variety of things on a regular basis. Occasionally I would send you an email about your post and share a story. Sometimes you would include it in your blog comments. But unlike the process of reading your newspaper articles, I was also reading other people's comments about the things you wrote about. Not only was I learning so much about you as an adult, I was learning about your friends. Sometimes I learned what they thought about you. This was something most parents I knew never got to experience.

One day you posted a link in your blog to your Facebook page. And that opened it up big-time for me. Because on Facebook you were posting every day, sometimes many times a day. And getting very instant responses from people. At the beginning, I felt like I was spying on you and stopped doing it a few times. But I was so taken by the way that you used this new medium as a means of interacting with other people by sharing information with them. Eventually I stopped "spying," got my own Facebook account, and became your "friend."

Through your second blog, "Schrödinger's Blog," I have become acquainted with [tumblr.com](#) and have enjoyed reading the much more in-depth posts that you previously posted on [livejournal.com](#). I have also been entertained by a number of your [reddit.com](#) Ask Me Anything sessions which promote your games but also cover advice to would-be designers and anything else people are interested in.

I was impressed with how you made use of social media for Lone Shark's collaboration with *Wired* magazine in "The Hunt for Evan Ratliff" and the subsequent collaboration with them and Universal Studios for the Repo Man cross-country manhunt. I loved the interview in which you talked about Usman Akeju having visited his mother's house prior to being captured and you quipped "It proves what I've been saying for years: nothing good can come from bringing a girl over to your mom's house."

Perhaps my favorite event using social media was Lone Shark's "White Heffalump Gift Exchange" which was held on Twitter and Facebook on December 20, 2013. You enlisted 50+ friends and colleagues to design imaginary viral gifts, give them to each other, and then steal them from one another. It captured my imagination for the entire time. It was followed up with "Pink Heffalump Gift Exchange" for Valentine's Day in 2015, with participants including some of Lone Shark's favorite musicians, artists, authors, and game and puzzle designers. The bargaining, backstabbing, and thievery stole my heart as well.

Through your Facebook account I have been able to watch videos of some of your talks at gaming conventions. I have been so impressed with your organization, your use of Power Point, your sense of humor, and your knowledge of what's important to your audience. I have been able to follow your travels, your adventures with Evon and Guybrush, your political views, your triumphs, your pain. I rarely interact with you on social media (other than using the "Like" button), preferring a phone call instead. But watching you network and interact with others on social media has added a depth to our relationship that would be hard to otherwise have.

[forbeck.com](http://forbeck.com)

## The Great Heffalump Exchange | Forbeck.com

2-3 minutes

Earlier this week, my pal Mike Selinker—the head of Lone Shark Games—asked a bunch of the people he regularly works with to join him in a holiday gift swap, something often called a white elephant exchange. Being Mike, he had a few twists on it.

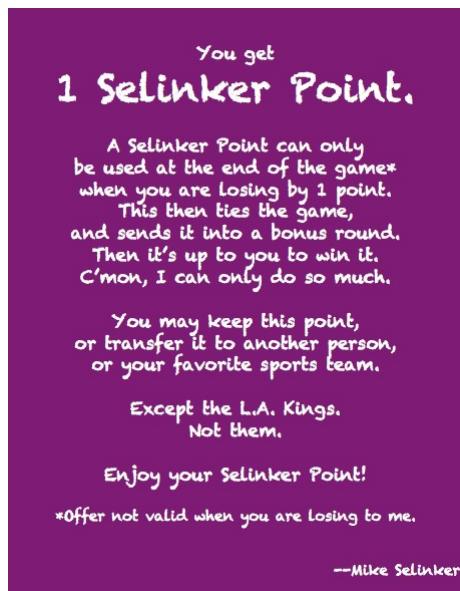
1. Since few of us live in the same city, we'd do the exchange virtually.
2. Since this was short notice and meant for fun, we'd trade imaginary gifts, things we made up that didn't cost us a thing.
3. We'd do it in public, on Twitter.

He called it the First Possibly Annual Lone Shark Games White Heffalump Exchange. Mike explains it pretty well here:

He also [lists all the participants](#) on his website. It includes world-renowned puzzle masters, game designers, and artists. If you know me, you likely know many of them, and honestly I was honored and delighted to be grouped with them in any way.

Anyhow, the event ran on Twitter yesterday afternoon, and it was an absolute blast. Just head over to Twitter, [search for #whiteheffalump](#), and prepare to be delighted. It got to be so fast and furious at one point that #whiteheffalump actually trended on Twitter.

For my part, I picked up a Selinker Point from Mike himself. You can witness it here in all its glory.



For my gift, I created Treasure Table X(Mas): The Random White Heffalump Generator of Greatness. Although John Kovalic ended up with it, I'm posting it here to share with you all too. While it has my name at the bottom, I need to credit my son Marty with staying up late to help me concoct some of the goofiness. If there's blame to go around, though, that's all mine.

**Treasure Table X(Mas)**

Random  
White  
Heffalump  
Generator of  
Greatness

1. Roll twice, once for column A and once for column B.
2. Connect them with the word "of."
3. Enjoy.

Roll	Column A	of	Column B
1	Ugly Christmas sweater	of	the finest mithril
2	(Fruit) Cake	of	lies
3	(Antlered) Pony	of	friendship
4	Cheezburger	of	can haz
5	Freezing sharknado	of	snowpocalypse
6	Snow golem	of	feels
7	Jolly old elf	of	judgment
8	Holiday ghost	of	redemption

Matt Forbeck

Pass it around and enjoy. And I hope all your holiday parties go as well as the First Possibly Annual Lone Shark Games White Heffalump Exchange.





## THE PHILANTHROPIST

One of my favorite quotes is by Winston Churchill: “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” I admire so much the ways in which you have used your talents, your time, and your resources to help those in need and make the world a better place to live. Your passion in this regard was exhibited at an early age raising money for “The March of Dimes” and has continued in creative and innovative ways.

It doesn’t take having gobs of money to be a philanthropist. In “The Most Beautiful Things” you pointed out that even when times are hard, anyone can donate blood. (Well, I can’t because I’ve had malaria and hepatitis, but that’s not the point.) You’ve donated your “super blood” many times and gotten much more out of it than juice and cookies. You buy Newman’s Own salad dressing and Sockarooni! spaghetti sauce not just because they are tasty but because 100% of the company’s profits go to educational and charitable endeavors. You’ve purchased goats through Heifer International for families or villages in poverty-stricken countries. And you’ve encouraged lots of other people to do these things as well.

Lone Shark Games organized a Scrabble Walk for the Seattle Arthritis Foundation. Players were given Scrabble tiles at seven checkpoints along the route and tried to outscore others at the end of the walk with words made up with their tiles. You raised money for the Eastside Montessori Foundation by creating puzzles leading up to an auction event.

You participate in Dungeons and Dragon’s Extra Life every year which raises money for Seattle Children’s Hospital. Recently Lone Shark put together the Humble Bundle puzzle project, offering \$342 of puzzle books by well-known constructors for a donation amount set by the donor. The charitable beneficiaries were Child’s Play (Penny Arcade’s charity which raises money for children’s hospitals), It Gets Better (a charity providing support for LGBTQ children and teens), and Worldbuilders (a charity supporting Heifer International).

Child’s Play has raised \$44 million for children with terminal conditions since its inception in 2003. Lone Shark Games raised \$15,000 at the 2015 auction, including \$2,100 that you raised by selling some gems from your D&D collection which were used in a scene you helped write for an episode of The X-Files.

There are so many other instances of your generosity that could be mentioned. More than one person in your gaming community has called you “a real *mensch*,” the highest compliment that can be paid in the Jewish religion. It embodies many qualities, but the chief among them is generosity.

[facebook.com](http://facebook.com)

## (1) why my D&D books are up for auction at Child's Play

2-3 minutes



In 1997, I helped write a scene for an episode of The X-Files called "Unusual Suspects." In it, Dean Haglund's character Richard Langly plays Dungeons & Dragons. The scene contains the line "Come on, natural 20! Daddy needs a new sword of wounding!" Which I kind of wrote.

The D&D books and materials in that scenario were contributed by me and Evon, with an assist from Peter Adkison. Particularly notable are my battered 1st edition Dungeon Master's Guide, Peter's 2nd edition Player's Handbook\*, and Evon's magnificent blue velvet dice bag. There's a set-layout sketch by D&D artist Sam Wood, and a letter of provenance from WotC chief counsel Brian Lewis. The story of this dice bag and its appearance on The X-Files was told in Will Hindmarch's book *The Bones*.

Fifteen years later, I've decided to auction the items for Child's Play at the dinner on Thursday night. Child's Play is an amazing charity started by the Penny Arcade guys, and administered by the talented Kristin Lindsay and Jamie Dillion. The charity provides toys and games to children with terminal conditions in hospitals across the country. It's raised over \$2 million this year alone.



The complete list of items:

\*Mike's 1st edition game-used Dungeon Master's Guide, DM's screen, Player's Handbook (later edition), Dungeon Master's Guide (later edition), Manual of the Planes, Dungeoneer's Survival Guide, Unearthed Arcana, Judge's Guild character sheets, Dragon #145, Polyhedron #42

\*Peter's 2nd edition Player's Handbook

\*Evon's handmade blue velvet dice bag and dice

\*Sam's set layout sketch

\*Brian's provenance letter

\*Mike's autographed copy of *The Bones*

Most of these are items I played with hundreds of times. They are not mint condition, of course. They really couldn't be.

Jerry and Mike from Penny Arcade will be auctioning this lot of onstage at the Child's Play Dinner. We hope to raise a lot of money for kids in hospitals that night. If you think anyone attending would be interested in bidding on this one-of-a-kind auction item, please pass this note onto them.

Thanks!

Mike Selinker



## THE POLITICO

You have never been afraid to speak up/speak out when you felt something was wrong. Certainly not to your parents or others that you lived with. You wrote an impassioned letter to your high school journalism teacher telling him why you believed you should have received a higher grade. As a college journalism student and later as a reporter, you were drawn to local politics, covering important issues such as racial discrimination, hate crimes, and laws that were blatantly unfair to vulnerable populations.

As a visible member of the puzzle making and gaming communities, you asked your wide audience to spread the word on social media and boycott *USA Today* and Universal Uclick after accusations of an ongoing plagiarism scandal involving their crossword editor. Although both organizations are important as a source of business exposure and referrals, you felt it was more important that people in the community weren't getting their work stolen.

For several years you have taken on the proponents of Gamergate, with their widespread vicious harassment of women in the gaming industry. You have been vocal about discrimination of all types, calling it out when you see it but also modeling positive and politically correct behavior. I especially like the "It Gets Better" videos that you and Steptoe made to support LGBTQ youth.

One of my favorite political pieces that you wrote was "An Open Letter to Speaker Boehner from a Game Designer" when a government shutdown loomed in 2013. Latching onto Boehner's statement that "This isn't some damn game!", you patiently explained why the Republican-orchestrated shutdown wasn't a game but instead it was a puzzle. And one he didn't know how to solve.

For the 2016 Presidential election, you wrote "#gamers for her," calling on gamers to support Hillary Clinton. Over 300 people signed on to your humorous but persuasive letter. Your political support for her and your fears about a potential Trump presidency were expressed in the publication of *The Ghastly Trump Tinies*, a parody on Edward Gorey's work in which you wrote some awesome poetry for each letter of the alphabet and enlisted the talents of well-known artists to illustrate it. In the process, you raised thousands of dollars for the Clinton campaign and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Your political views have resulted in personal attacks on social media, loss of business for your company, and a loss of your time and energy dealing with those ready to do battle with you. The results of the election have left you, like so many of us, full of anger at each new outrage, betrayal, and moral low ground. It is exhausting. But you have inspired many others by the way that you have stood up for your principles and used your platform for something other than selling your games.

There is no doubt in my mind that you will always find some reservoir of energy to support the Muslims, women, disabled, African Americans, Latinos, LGBTQs, and Jews targeted by mean-spirited policies of the current administration. You may not be as vocal as you have been this past year, but I have no doubt that you will continue to protest against what you believe is unfair. You can't do otherwise because it's in your DNA.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2004

*Seattle Times*

# Watch out! He's packin' an almanac

**NICOLE BRODEUR**

*Seattle Times staff columnist*



I should be safe here, at a table by the window.

Any number of passers-by would surely see if Mike Selinker jumped

up from his jambalaya to cover my mouth with chloroform.

It could happen, if you believe what the FBI tells us.

Selinker is a successful game inventor whose eight years at Wizards of the Coast included the launch of everything from *Pokémon* to *Simpsons* card games, endless crossword puzzles and even a trip to London, where he met with author J.K. Rowling to develop the Harry Potter trading-card game.

But Selinker, 36, is also a suspected terrorist: He carries an almanac.

Late last month, the FBI warned police nationwide to "be on the alert" for people carrying almanacs, cautioning that the reference books could be used for terrorist planning.

"I was outraged," said Selinker.

He flies some 15 times a year to attend gaming events around the country — events that often require an almanac to solve puzzles.

"An almanac contains knowledge," Selinker said, "not instructions on how to create a nuclear bomb or things that relate to terrorism."

The FBI disagrees. Its intelligence bulletin acknowledged that almanacs may be used for "legitimate recreational and commercial activities" but noted that the practice of using them to research potential targets — dams, for instance — "is consistent with known methods of al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations."

Selinker scoffs: "That's like saying that what I do, because it involves the increasing of knowledge, means that I am dangerous."

"That isn't the America that I signed up for," he continued. "I don't like living in a climate of fear-mongering."

Better get used to it, my friend. The global is getting more personal every day.

Not long ago, I called my insurance company. After taking my name and member number, the rep asked: "Are you a U.S. citizen?"

"Sorry?"

"We're updating our system," the woman said. "Something having to do with the Patriot Act. I suppose someone thinks it will help."

Help ... how? Other than to make me feel as breezy as a New York rabbi at a Carolina pig-pickin'?

"I don't know," the woman sighed.

I caught a clip in her voice.

"Where were you born?" I asked.

"Trinidad," she said. "But that's a whole different issue."

Not really. All of us are now seeing the suspect in ourselves, since we're being painted with the government's "you seem fine, but ..." brush.

Even an admitted geek like Selinker.

He will test the new policy soon, when he flies to Boston for a gaming event.

Selinker is the only one on his team who will pack an almanac. The rest, he said, don't want the hassle.

Selinker understands but refuses to play the government's game: One that requires him to give up what he sees as legitimate, harmless behavior — and his freedom.

*Nicole Brodeur's column appears Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. Reach her at 206-464-2334 or nbrodeur@seattletimes.com. More columns at [www.seattletimes.com/columnists](http://www.seattletimes.com/columnists). Her heart belongs to Spiderman.*



## THE DREAM CHILD

As you know, I have a running subject line for my emails to you that says "Congratulations again!". The volume of your achievements is mind-blowing. But as I said in my introductory letter in this booklet, it is the person that you are that is the engine of my love for you. I trust that you have felt it strongly for the whole of your life. As your mother, I have been blessed with a child who never gave me a moment's grief, who practically raised himself, and who has made me feel appreciated over and over again.

In kindergarten in 1973, your drawing of me and the following quote was the first page in a Mother's Day booklet your class made: "I love my Mom because she does nice things. Because she cooks breakfast and brings it up to me real early in the morning." When I was studying for the bar exam in 1974, you were living with your dad. I came home from Volunteer Park (my favorite place to study) and found a small envelope from you in my mailbox containing a spray of wildflowers and a hand-printed note about what "love" is.

You got all dressed up in a suit and took me out to dinner for Mother's Day with your saved allowance when you were 10. On another Mother's Day, you hid my present and created a series of puzzles that I had to solve in order to find it. The last one said: "By now your brain is hurtin'. So check behind the \_H\_ \_ER C\_ \_T\_IN." When I took a sabbatical leave in 1979 to get healthier, my birthday note from my loving son ended with the P.S. "Keep up the jogging."

My relationship with you has been the envy of many family relatives and close friends. Your Aunt Patricia called me after visiting Florida when you were there as a journalism intern to tell me all the things you told her regarding your gratitude for your upbringing. And you have continued to publicly express that gratitude for your parenting.

In "A Love Letter to Dungeons and Dragons" on your blog in 2014, you listed your parents as one of the two most powerful creative influences on your life (the other being D&D). In an interview with Matt Forbeck in 2013, you said:

For my entire life, I've been challenged by my parents to solve things. Larry Selinker, my dad, is a world-famous linguist, and Phyllis Selinker, my mom, is an attorney specializing in pro bono services. I think that combination —

love of the properties of words, respect for the effects of rules — made a game and puzzle designer out of me.

You thanked me in your *Puzzle Craft* acknowledgments for encouraging you to submit your puzzles to *Games and Dragon* when you were 13, and for stopping you from dropping out of high school when you proved you could make a living at it. You asked for my help for a tiny piece in of *The Maze of Games* and credited me as The Maternal Figure.

But nothing moved me more than your blog post in 2015 called “Apocrypha: What Memories Are Made Of.” You described how you came to make a game about memory fragments. You let yourself be vulnerable by expressing your fear of losing control of your brain. You talked about my 5-year journey with a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease which was subsequently reversed; how I threw everything I could at my brain, including some of your puzzles and games. And you brought me to tears as I read “My mom is a goddamned hero, and when I grow up I want to be just like her.”

You **are** just like me and just like your dad as well. You’ve managed to model our good points and leave behind the bad ones. You are smarter than either of us, with an incredible breadth of knowledge. You are more self-confident and more driven. You are more sociable and have a wicked sense of humor. In growing up, you have created a being that is wholly unique and wholly wonderful — a being who is loved and respected and is an inspiration to many. How did you turn out the way you did? It’s one great puzzle.

Whatever I may have provided you with in your first 18 years, I have been repaid many times over. You have made parenting rewarding and fun and immensely satisfying on the deepest emotional level. I look forward to many more years with you, my son.



"I love my Mom because she does nice things  
Because she cooks breakfast and brings it  
up to me real early in the morning!"

By Michael Selinker



by Mike Selinker

*"As the mother, so her daughter," says the Book of Ezekiel. As Mother's Day approaches, now's a good time to reflect on what you'd be like without your mom. Well, nonexistent, obviously. But more than that, mothers give us a path to follow. The six daughters in this grid did just that, following their famous mothers into the acting business. Follow their lead and you'll see.*

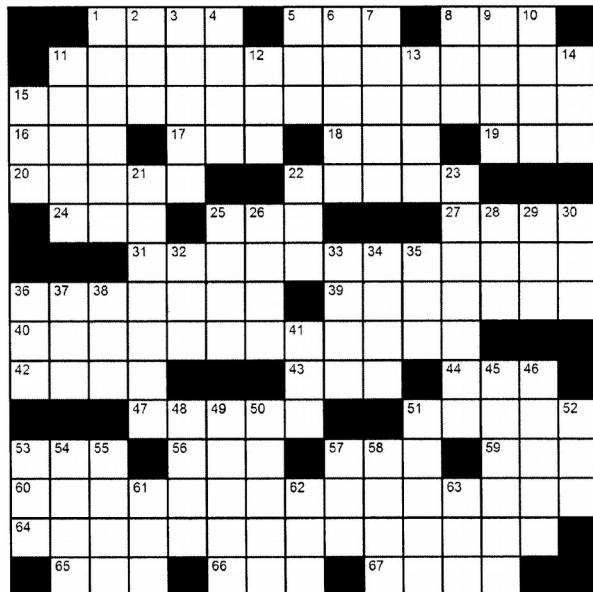
**ACROSS**

- 1 King of the pasture
- 5 Frat letter
- 8 Poisonous slitherer
- 11 Actress daughter of Janet Leigh
- 15 Actress daughter of Tippi Hedren
- 16 Long fish
- 17 Tony, Peter, Eddie, Vincente, Mickey, or Bruce, to the long entries
- 18 See 67-Across
- 19 Deli option
- 20 Word after "Yours"
- 22 Goth emotion
- 24 Steamy locale
- 25 Not bright
- 27 Aftermath of a workout
- 31 Actress daughter of Debbie Reynolds
- 36 Neighbor of Ethiopia
- 39 Every flower's unfortunate destiny
- 40 Actress daughter of Judy Garland
- 42 "No kidding!"
- 43 Suffix for liberal or hero
- 44 Frat letter
- 47 Inbox contents
- 51 TV mom Carol
- 53 Slightly spoiled
- 56 LA school
- 57 Stooge name
- 59 \_\_\_-la-la
- 60 Actress daughter of Jayne Mansfield
- 64 Actress daughter of Blythe Danner
- 65 US cryptological org.
- 66 Iron-\_\_\_ (jacket embellishments)
- 67 With 18-Across, mother of Sean Lennon

## Crosswords of Wisdom

No. 63

### This Week's Wisdom: BE LIKE YOUR MOM



**DOWN**

- 1 Crumple, as paper
- 2 Actress Thurman
- 3 Variety of hop
- 4 Role for 31-Across
- 5 It grounds a tent
- 6 Egret, for example
- 7 Cakemaker's supply
- 8 "Bark!"
- 9 Use a spoon
- 10 Show sympathy toward
- 11 Mocking remarks
- 12 Brought along
- 13 Some "weather balloons," perhaps
- 14 Pronoun for any of the long entries
- 15 Encountered
- 21 Emulate a mammal, perhaps
- 22 French friend
- 23 More scrumptious
- 25 A crowd in Berlin?
- 26 Ahmadinejad's land
- 28 Frat letter
- 29 Mother on a farm
- 30 Unit of work
- 32 Supply with weapons
- 33 Mothers on a farm
- 34 Spielberg production
- 35 Poorly
- 36 Biblical judge
- 37 Sternum attachment
- 38 Suffix for demon or social
- 41 Zero
- 45 One is on Mike Tyson's face
- 46 "Let's call it \_\_\_"
- 48 Any of nine Greek goddesses of the arts
- 49 Request one's presence at
- 50 Corporate raider Carl
- 51 "I \_\_\_ differ!"
- 52 Palindromic cheer
- 53 Gasp in a text
- 54 Son of a doe
- 55 Electronics store chain
- 57 How a goat calls its mother?
- 58 Aéroport de Paris
- 61 Talking Heads' "Once \_\_\_ Lifetime"
- 62 Some PCs
- 63 Tick off

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND  
CONTINUATION, MIKE!

