

# Robert Parker





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# Introduction



**T**his book is a collection of questions about my life and answers written by me over the course of the year 2020. This was my 72nd year of life that was dominated by a Covid 19 pandemic, the first in the USA since 1918 I am told. No need to write much about that as plenty will be published about this pandemic.

I felt an introduction would be useful to anyone reading this collection . So here we go.

I was born to William and Irene (Stempinski) Parker. They were married after Dad returned from the WWII and they started a family. Dad had gone to Seneca Vocational High School to learn electronics and put it to practical use in the Army Air Force during the war. Mom was a sewing wizard and worked at Wilson Sporting goods sewing footballs, baseball gloves, and like products. I remember us all living with Grandmother Stempinski on Grote St, as Dad saved for a house while working on a Sylvania TV production line. Enough money saved, he bought the

## Robert Parker

house at 132 Newfield after I was born. I sort of remember Catherine being born just after we moved there so I was only 1 year old.

These were simple and frugal times. Grandmother Stempinski had a wood burning cooking stove and an Ice box for refrigeration. Newfield St had new technology; a gas stove and an electric fridge. These were the times that dads worked and moms stayed home and took care of the kids. Mom did work part time early on to help with the budgets. There were corner stores back then. If you needed something, you went to the corner store, picked things out and told them to put it on your tab. When Dad got paid, Mom would settle up at the store.

I was a whiz in school, in the top of the class. Skipped 6th grade, and went to Hutch Tech High School where I took electronics and college prep courses. I was awarded the Jesse Ketchum medal for the highest science grading over the 4 years. I see it is now given to top 8th graders these days. Here is a link but no telling how long the link will be good.  
<https://buffalostreets.com/tag/jesse-ketchum-medal/>

I met the love of my life in the summer after my junior year, and she patiently waited for my graduation from UB with my Degree in Electrical Engineering.



## Robert Parker

I had an excellent career in Engineering spending many extra hours at my work. Mary did an excellent job raising the children. I do regret not helping as much as I should, and disappointing the kids by not being available as much as they would have liked.

So that is it for the introduction. A little background on my life to set the stage for a bunch of randomly selected questions. I hope my ramblings in the following pages will be useful to someone at some time in the future.

Robert Parker

Robert Parker

# Was there anything unusual about your birth?



**T**ry as i might, I can not recall anything unusual. My memory of my birth somehow eludes me.

Robert Parker

# Did you have any serious accidents as a child?



**A**s a toddler, i did climb up to taste the meds in the bathroom medicine cabinet. It was taboo so I guess i just had to see. I think i puked pretty good soon after. Society eventually created the child proof cap for those things.

Also wanted to see what would happen if i stuck the table knife into the electrical socket. Got a good jolt out of that. Society eventually came up with those plastic plugs you could put into the empty sockets.

I was a pioneer!

Those probables are covered today. We had them for the kids and the grand kids. Also we added those cabinet clips to keep them out of the places where there was dangerous stuff.

Robert Parker

I wasn't a fan of getting hurt once i knew what was what. Being cautious isn't a guarantee you won't get hurt but it did help.

# What is one of your favorite children's stories?



**T**hat is a tough one. Thinking back to my childhood, i don't ever remember reading any books or being told any stories. Not to say we never did but that was long ago.

We watched a lot of cartoons though, Popeye, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and the like. I always wondered why anyone would want Olive Oil? My fav was Wimpy. Then there was Howdy Doody on Saturdays. Flub-a-dub was a hoot. All black and white TV.

I don't ever remember reading anything before we got into Dick, Jane, Sally, and Spot in first grade. I guess my favorite was when i read that Spot did run, run run. Run Spot, run, run, run! Picked up reading real quick. That i remember.

IMHO, childhood stories are over rated. I did like the nursery rhymes though. Mary had a little lamb don't you know, and ba ba black sheep, and that old women who lived in a shoe and had too

Robert Parker

many children. Who doesn't love anyone who lived in a shoe?



# Playing with Toys as a Kid



**W**e had toys back in the day, but no where near what kids have today. Maybe we would get 4 or 5 for Christmas, and maybe a couple on our birthday.

As a kid, it was fun playing outside in the summer. I remember playing with cars and trucks in the dirt around the trees. Easier to run the cars on the dirt than in the grass. That was before the Matchbox cars, so the cars were sometimes iron, perhaps with a little lead in them, or some other kind of metal. The people were made out of a bulky rubber compound i think. I kind of remember smashing the cars with a brick. Wish i had kept them now. They might be worth something.

We had a bag of marbles. You drew a ring with chalk and shot your marble into the ring and you got what you knocked outside the ring. We just kept a final count and then you got your marbles back. The gamblers played for keeps. That reminds me. I want a bag of marbles so i can say i still have them.

## Robert Parker

In the winter we had our indoor toys. We had mini bricks, kind of the building block Legos of our day. I had an erector set which was cool and there were always the Lincoln Logs.

One of my favorite games is hard to describe these days. Football cards. I would have 2 teams. I would place the linemen slightly overlapping each other on the floor. In back was the QB and 3 running backs. All the cards overlapped each other. The defense was set up similar. Then I held the top card, usually the QB, and flicked the FB with my finger as hard as i could. Then you see where the FB ended up and moved the line forward. I don't think there was passing, but if there was i don't remember.

I had one of those vibrating football games but they were never fun.

The favorite was the hockey game. Man could i make that puck fly around. I was as fast as lightening. A weird buddy of mine got into it and we would play for hours and kept a list of which player scored a goal. Mom didn't like him much. Too much swearing when he messed up. He was kind of a hot head Irish guy. I tried to avoid him as much as i could.

Grandmother Parker kept a box of toys for when we were over, but they were kind of lame. Cars mostly.

## Robert Parker

There was pickup baseball of course. Street football too. One two three red light was also a good game to play sitting on the porch steps.

Robert Parker

# What were your favorite toys as a child?



**M**y all time favorite toy was a metal cannon 6 to 8 inches long with a spring firing mechanism. It had some little plastic projectiles but i found that it would shoot needles if you loaded them right. I would sit on the floor around one of the corners of the living room and set them off at my sisters legs. It was so cool.

i was always careful to keep all the projectiles low and away from faces. No animals were injured either.

Robert Parker

# Was there a story or fairytale that scared you as a child?



**A**mazing what scares you. The children's shows were not well thought out back in the day. I remember seeing Bambi in grade school auditorium. A whole school full of kids grade 1 to 8 realizing Bambi's mother was shot dead? OMG.

The worst show i watched was Lassie when a lion escaped from the circus or circus train? Timmy or was it Tommy was home alone and the lion was trying to get into the house. Well Lassie ended up saving the day, but I was scared for many years after.

My room was on the 3d floor and sometimes i heard the house creak and figured the lion was on his way up the stairs to eat me. Of course the lion would have had to pass by the closed bedroom doors of mom and dad, sister and brother to come up the stairs to get me. I left that door always open in order to get some heat

Robert Parker

up there, so i was easy pickings. The fact that were hundreds of houses in the hood and much more easy prey never crossed my mind.



# Where did you go on vacations as a child?



Vacations? Well, there was not much money for vacations back then with the four of us kids. A lot of our entertainment was low cost. The Riverside Park pools. Parades on the 4th. Sheridan Park picnics. Rides and ice cream along River Road. We went to Beaver Island to picnic and swim over on Grand Island. We played horseshoes and walked the beach too. All you had to pay was parking.

Once a year we would pile in the car and go to Crystal Beach, Canada where they has amusement rides. I wasn't much for the daring or circular rides. Went to the fun house and drove the antique cars, sometimes mini golf. That was the expensive treat for the summer. There was another small amusement park in Williamsville called Glen Park. Went there once or twice a year perhaps.

Robert Parker

The most fun was had on day trips to Toronto Canada. We might stop at a Museum but we most likely took the ferry out to the Toronto Islands, where we would either canoe or take a row boat through the islands.

I had forgotten about our trips to Michigan. Grandma Stempinski had a sister in Lansing Michigan and some offspring of hers, Aunt Elizabeth, had a cottage at Gunn Lake. I believe we made a few trips there, since there was very little cost besides gas. I went out on the lake a few times with cousin Joe to fish. We caught mostly blue gills. I remember going twice, although the family made some without me. Joe didn't make it too long, becoming a motorcycle statistic sometime later.

# Did you ever get lost as a child?



**I** do not ever remember being lost.

I was always playing it safe as a kid. Nothing doing when it came to anything I thought was dangerous. Didn't know any better when i stuck the knife into the outlet. Anyway, i always stayed close by.

Robert Parker

# How is life different today compared to when you were a child?



I think that with the news today, parents see much more of the world's problems than we ever saw and are more protective now. As kids, we were so much more free to roam than kids are today.

I remember heading down to the baseball field mid morning and playing baseball all day long till dinner time. The field was maybe 1/2 a mile away down on Vulcan and Skillen. Many times, I would bike to my cousins 4 or 5 miles away and then we would leave there and bike around all day before heading back home. Sometimes, old buddy Greg, whose parents moved out to the boonies would bike in too.

The basic evening rule was when the street lights turned on, it was time to head home. Our parents were even less protected when they were young.

Robert Parker

Times certainly have changed. I think the Rolling Stones wrote a song about that.

# How did you get to school as a child?



**A**ll us kids had to walk to school. I would say  $1 \frac{3}{4}$  blocks away. We had to walk the extra  $\frac{3}{4}$  block to get to the school crossing guard to cross the street, then the boys had to head back to the far side to get in. There was a girls door and a boys door. Walked it 4 times a day since we came home for lunch.

It was more fun when there were snowbanks along the road, We got to walk along on their top ridge all the way except when someone had shoveled out their driveway. If you slipped, it was best to slip toward the sidewalk and not the street where you had to hope you did not get run over. Had to wait till they opened the door too. So no use going early and waiting out in the cold.

High school was easy. The bus stop was 200 yds away. If it was cold, you could put your back on the building on the corner. UB was tougher. Walk all the way to Ontario st and stand in the cold.

Robert Parker



Robert Parker

# What was your favorite lunch to bring to school?



**M**eat Loaf with mustard was my favorite. Usually had 2-3 bologna sandwichin High School and College so meat loaf was a treat. The thicker the better!

Robert Parker

# Do you have any particularly vivid memories of your grandparents?



**M**y Grandparents were way too boring. Grandfather Parker just sat in his chair when ever I was over. So did Grandmother Parker. Spent some Saturday nights there but pretty boring stuff. Of course she watched us a lot, but it was mostly don't do this or don't do that. Babchi on my mothers side had nothing on them. She was a major bore too. I certainly hope i won't be remembered like that. They were always nice and we loved them, but they were major boring.

Now Mary's grandparents were a little livelier. Her Grandfather took care of her Grandmother, who was bed ridden due to a stroke. They did not know they could retrain your brain back then. So sad. He was an old railroad guy and always said by-golly

Robert Parker

all the time. Her Grandmother Schnell always watched the wrestling and would get into it, booing the Iron Sheik.

# Childhood link to the past Generations



I can't put an age to some of my early memories but they are interesting. The first thing I can remember is being a toddler at 132 Newfield. I remember the new baby Catherine's arrival so I must have been 1 or 2 yrs old.

I can remember the coal being delivered. The truck parked out front. The coal man loaded a wheelbarrow, wheeled to the back cellar window (we called it a cellar, not a basement), and dumped it down the chute into our coal room. He made several trips. The coal room was in the back of the house and maybe 15x15 and was sometimes very full.

Dad would stoke the fire at night and then start shoveling it into the furnace in the morning. Sometimes mom would start the gas oven in the kitchen till the furnace warmed the place up.

Robert Parker

The other amazing memory was my grandmother Bapchi still had an ice box over on Grote St where i was born. I remember the ice man bringing an ice block and hauling it up the stairs where she lived. I sort of think she had a wood burning stove to cook with but am not sure of that.

Later on, i do remember the milk man delivering to the house and the vegetable man selling off his truck in the street. If i recall any other interesting stuff I may update this post.

Pretty amazing the changes that occur in my lifetime, Hope it stays the same for the grand kids.

# Which sports teams were you a fan of as a child?



**T**here were not many teams back in the day. Mainly rooted for the local Buffalo Bisons baseball team of the international League, a step down from the major league. What was exciting was i had made my own crystal radio. I would lay in bed (we always were sent to bed early) and listen on my headphones. In those days, travel was not cheap. The away games were reported over the old teletypes. You could hear the machine going ticka ticka ticka and then the radio guy would make up the play just like he was there. "Here is the pitch, it's a line drive through the right side, Caffie rounds first then goes back to the bag for a single making it 2 for 3 for him today." And so it went. The home games were live of course, but the ticker was used in the games from Rochester, Miami, Richmond, Havana (yes Cuba!), Toronto and maybe a few other cities.

## Robert Parker

I remember a few players: Joe Caffie, Glen Cox, and the best of all Luke Easter. Caffie was lead off and stole a bunch of basis. Cox pitched so-so but could pound it out of the park, a rarity for pitchers. Luke still brings tears to my eyes. He was a brute and hit some of the longest home runs ever in baseball. From Wikipedia: Finally, during his twilight days with the Bisons, he became the first player to hit a home run over the center field scoreboard at Buffalo's home park, Offermann Stadium [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offermann\\_Stadium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offermann_Stadium)], doing so twice in 1957. On June 14 he cleared the board, and newspapers reported the blow at an estimated 500 feet. Sadly, he was robbed and shot to death in Cleveland in 1979. Cleveland has a dedicated a park with his name. I think it was the most exciting sports of my childhood before the Buffalo Bills were created in 1960 when i was 12.

Before the Bills, the local TV choices were the NY Giants and the Cleveland Browns. My dad rooted for the Browns. I rooted for the Washington Redskins. The Redskins were the underdogs, typically winning 2 or 3 games a year. Eddie LeBaron was the QB, a small guy for football and another underdog. They improved quite a bit with Sonny Jurgeson at the helm. I liked him too. I guess i always seem to be rooting for the underdog. Must be a character flaw.



# What was the neighborhood you grew up in like?



**T**he neighborhood was a quiet one. Most of the houses were big tall two stories with an attic and basement with very steep roofs. They were a nightmare to work on and working on the roof was flat out out of the question. Painting was a dangerous undertaking on tall ladders.

There really was not an ethnic dominance. Sure was a mix of nationalities around. Most everyone was frendly and helpful if need be. Most cars parked on the street because the driveways and the space between houses was too small for the modern cars. The main recreation area was the school yards or Riverside Park about 1/2 mile away. We walked over there a lot. The pools were there. There was also an empty field at Vulcan St we walked to for day long summer pickup baseball games.

## Robert Parker

The neighborhood was safe. There were a few bullies here and there and you had to walk quickly by the "Projects" on Skillen St where a lot of rowdies lived. The Projects were low cost housing and an area often visited by the Police. We never had any issues passing by there but you were always on your guard when you passed by.

Oddly, i remember the sounds of the neighborhood the most. As there was no air conditioning back in the day, we always had the windows opened. Once a week in the summer you could hear the produce man working his way down the street. Someone drove his truck slowly down the street as he hawked his produce. "Fresh corn today" he would shout, or "Fresh lettuce", sometimes calling out all the stuff he had to sell. You could hear him louder and louder as he worked down the street and then faded away as he passed.

Another common sound in the middle of the night was a motorcycle roaring down the street. You could hear them coming from 1/2 mile away and another 1/2 mile as they gunned their bikes to the max. The sounds were what i remember the most.

# Which sports did you play in high school?



## Sports?

I was a nerdy kind of guy in High School. Besides that, I had a 40 minute bus ride on public transportation each way. We did have gym and swimming.

We had to swim nude in the all boys school. We had to walk through the shower which was in the pool area separated by a shower wall. Buddy and I would linger there to avoid getting into the cold pool. Sometimes we got caught, sometimes not.

Summers, we went to play pickup baseball down on Vulcan St but i think that was grade school. Golf for sure. It was cheap then. Dad would drop Jim and I off on his way to work and pick us up on his way home. I think we played for \$0.75 for 18.

Robert Parker

# Are you still friends with any of your friends from high school? How have they changed since then?



**H**igh school graduation was 1965 so that is 55 years ago. My my my.

Best friend Steve now lives in Kent. We have been buddies since 7th grade, so that is 61 years. My my my my. He has not changed a bit. Still the weird nerd he was back then and just as frugal. I keep trying to get him to retire but i think he is afraid to. He does not seem to have any outside interests and maybe thinks he would be lost without "work", if you can call it that. He teaches math at Kent State, so i am not sure that qualifies as real work. Steve went to Riverside HS but he just lived 2 blocks away and we hung out often.

## Robert Parker

Old buddy Greg went to Hutch Tech with me and i also have know him since 7th grade. Greg and i skipped 6th and Steve transferred into the same class. We were all outcasts as such and we bonded together for survival. Amazing that this must have been a strong bond between the 3 of us. I keep in touch with Greg mostly by emails. He did attend Mom's funeral in 2014, as did Steve. He has had his struggles over the years but has managed to come back from bankruptcy, and divorce. Now remarried he still looks pretty much the same. Don't know his full story but i keep in touch and will as long as i can.

I always have told my kids and grand kids not to worry about what any of the kids in their high school think. You will hardly ever cross paths with any of them the rest of your lives. Two of them. That is it, just two of them.

# How did you get your first job?



**W**ow, that is a long time ago. If i remember correctly, UB had a job fair on campus. GE, Westinghouse, and others took resumes and talked to you for a while. After that, i got several calls from GE inviting me to visit. I kind of remember flying to Utica, Philadelphia, Syracuse, and maybe 1 or 2 of their other sites. I decided to take the Utica offer of \$10,800 a year because the work they did there looked interesting. That was good money in 1969. It was very close to what Dad made after working 20 years. If you look that up it is \$70,700 in today's dollars.

Robert Parker



# How did you decide when to change jobs?



**C**hanging jobs, eh? Well, i did not do that very often so i don't think this will be of help to anyone. Out of school, my first job was with GE as i have previously talked about. They cut back shortly after i was hired, so i moved on. That one was made for me.

Goodyear Aerospace was a job #2. I learned how to be a good engineer, all about power and ground, cross coupling, signal integrity, digital logic and more. As long as i was learning and treated well, money was not a consideration. I learned integrated circuit design and was on top of the world when Loral bought the company from Goodyear at a fire sale price. Goodyear needed the money to fight off a corporate raider. Loral sucked all the money out of the company and pretty much shut down what i was doing and what the whole department was doing. I have often thought that if anyone was going straight to Hell, it would be the Loral

people who stole our money and put hundreds out of work. I looked around and thought of leaving if i could find a good skills fit. Nothing came up right away. Lockheed bought Loral out, so there was hope. That didn't result in much of a change so i was still looking. When i left it was 31 years that went quickly.

Then i got a good break as Cisco was looking for an integrated circuit manager to grow their team. Jane Smith recommended me, returning a favor when she was at Loral. After Loral had shut down our chip work, she found other work there that was not as interesting. She had an opportunity at Telxon and, as i could see what Loral was doing, i encouraged her to leave. I was spot on and the move was good for her.

Got the job at Cisco. Easy decision as it was the dream job of a lifetime. After a couple of years, my new boss in San Jose was such a dud he got all the chip work cancelled and I was on my own again after 7 years there. Another choice made for me. One of the Cisco employees, Mike Dollard took a job at Viasat in Cleveland.

I had seen they were looking for an ASIC Manager for a long time. Wondered why it was so long, so I checked with Mike. It was a small company named ECC, just bought out by Viasat, looking to expand their chip capability and add staff. Another perfect fit so i walked right out the Cisco door and right in at

## Robert Parker

Viasat. It was rough getting things started there till I talked Jane into joining me from Cisco. Spent 3 years before retiring. Loved the job but not the 2 hrs in the car every day.

In summary, some decisions are made for you and some you make yourself. I used to feel sorry for people let go. Surprisingly, it usually turns out for the best. You start a new job with a clean slate and get to create new value in your career. Also, you should notice that there are great opportunities out there and they are better found through your network of friends and co-workers. It pays to work hard, treat people with respect and fairness. Not every person that you earn respect from will be able to help you someday, but the more you have positively influenced, the better your odds are. Basically, try to cultivate respect and go easy on creating enemies.

Robert Parker

# If you had to go back in time and start a brand new career, what would it be?



**F**or some time now, i have thought that work would be interesting as a Geologist. Guessing there would be a certain amount of time in an office analyzing data, reports, and maps. But there would be traveling to sites and outdoor activity to break things up a little. Who doesn't like spending time outdoors?

I also thought i would be a good teacher. I did some of that in training new people to do integrated circuit design and seemed to be useful doing so. Sure would not like teaching HS kids with no desire to learn. Teaching those that really wanted to learn would be great.

Robert Parker

# What are your favorite musicians, bands or albums?



**H**ard to talk favorites. Since i like so many types of music, there are a plethora of them. In my teens, it was Rock, R&B, and Jazz. Most days it was WKBW for rock, WBLK? for R&B, and WBEN on Saturday night for Jazz. Favorites were Rolling Stones, James Brown, and Brubeck and Louis Armstrong. Same favorites and as time marched on, added George Clinton to the group as James Brown slowed, and Quincy Jones and Wynton Marsalis for jazz.

Around the early 2000s, i added the Doo Wop, Oldies, and Trance music groups. As to Doo Wop, i am totally amazed that songs made while they were young kids in the 50s and 60s are so revered today. I fact these simple songs will last for 100s of years and will be long remembered than anything i have ever done.

Robert Parker

Wow. Some of the love songs remain awesome. Smoky and the Temptations and the Duprees to name a few. As to Trance, i do not recall how i ran into it but i dig the repetition and simplicity of the music. Paul VanDyk and Armond Van Buren got me started but now i am really into Miss Monque.

So there you go. Lots and lots of favs.



# Why do we not sleep well?



**L**ast month, golf buddy Bill was explaining he had a poor night's sleep. He put his finger on why. He said that his furniture order came the other day and they had delivered the wrong item. The delivery people left the item and the store promised to right the problem the next day. Since he had to wait another day, the issue was "unsettled" he called it. The fact that it was unsettled weighed on his mind all night and he had gone through a bunch of what ifs in his mind all night.

I remember lots of work issues that came up from time to time that I never stopped thinking about. Sometimes coming up with ideas sitting on the toilet, or in the shower, or trying to sleep at night.

When you are retired, one would think those things go away, but they really do not. Stuff like Bill's unsettled issues for example. Other things like advice I have given to Wes or Carolyn churn when I should be sleeping. Should I think of something I had

Robert Parker

missed, I get up and text them if it is not too late. That gets it off my mind. If it is too late, I will churn on it more instead of sleeping.

I think we all want to solve problems at the earliest possible moment, so sleeping can wait. Well, that is my thought for today. I came up with it last night while remembering items I missed in the 2 stories already posted. I edited both today and now they are “settled”.

# What was your first big trip?



I had quite a few significant trips from work. There were important trips to Phoenix to learn microchip design. Later on, many trips to the Universities doing leading research in microelectronics, especially UC Berkley where i met some of the pioneers in design software like Don Pederson. Also a great workshop in Texas where i participated in a small breakout group with the legendary Jack Kilby, who produced the first integrated circuit.

Those were important trips, but I always take pride in the family trips to Orlando and to Hawaii. Have a lot of home movies of the Hawaii trip. I had airline perks from so much travel, the whole family flew for free and we had 3 free nights in Honolulu. We flew to Maui after 3 days and I remember Carolyn asking why there was a plane with a tarp on it at the end of the runway. That was shortly after one of the plane's cabin was ripped open during

Robert Parker

it's flight. I think i told her maybe it blew a tire and they needed to tow it out of there. We were supposed to get adjoining rooms on Maui, but they were out of those rooms. They finally switched us to a 2 bedroom unit right on the ocean and it was awesome. It was so close i think you could toss a stone from the balcony and hit the ocean. The kids had a good time. We filmed the sunset the last day and hummed a Hawaiian song.

# Tell me about an adventure you've been on.



I never was an adventurous type, so there is really nothing to tell you about that involves any excitement. As far as recent adventures, I might describe my searches for monuments to Commodore Perry, as he is a local hero in the War of 1812. Daughter-in-law Kaetchen lived on South Bass Island where one of the monuments to him is, so she is very familiar with his exploits in the famous Battle of Lake Erie.

I have read much about the war and the famous battle, so i read what the Wikipedia had to say and checked the list of monuments to him. It looked like i could easily get to most of them so Mary and I visited most of them between June 2018 and August 2019.

As Erie is on the way to Buffalo we stopped to see the rebuilt Niagara that was in the battle and the Maritime Museum. The

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Niagara was not in port so we missed that. On the way back from our Buffalo trip 6/20/18 we drove out on Presque Isle to see the monument to Perry located there. Perry built his ships there as the bay was protected by a sand bar. The monument is a very tall, similar in shape to the Washington Monument and has some nice plaques at the base. The monument looks like out as it guards the magnificent bay.

We traveled back to Buffalo in August, so on 9/7/2018 we stopped near the Peace Bridge and visited Front Park where there is an awesome sculpture overlooking the Niagara river. It is a powerful sculpture erected there in 1915 by a NY centennial commission. This is my favorite sculpture of him. He has a serious look on his face and is carrying a sword in it's sheath parallel to the ground. The handle is in front and the point to the rear.

On 9/30/18 we found our way to Cleveland's Huntington Park. It is just south of the stadium and a parking garage. If you look at a satellite view of the area you can pick out the park easy. It is a square block of green space in the midst of concrete and buildings. Here is replacement sculpture of the original work that is now here after being at two other sites and in storage for some time. When the original work was in disrepair, 3 new copies were made. One is in his home state of Rhode Island, the other is here, and the 3d is located in Perrysburg Hood Park along the river. This sculpture of him has him leaning on a post

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with a couple of chain links attached (likely of a pier). He is looking over his left shoulder with his left arm across his body. His right hand holds a sword with the point on the ground.

The adventure continued on another trip to Buffalo. We stopped in Erie to view a different statue of the man in Perry Square near downtown. This one has him standing tall with one hand raised high in the air like he was barking orders. This is a nice park where it looks like they hold local events.

July was the adventure ending. We made a special trip to Perrysburg Hood Park to see the 3d replica, then finished with a trip to Put-In -Bay on 7/28/19. We took Carolyn, Jacob and Jenna and did a lot of walking. I sent the two young ones and Mary on a helicopter tour of the island for a reasonable price. We finally got to the monument and went up for a wonderful view of the area. We also stopped into the monument national visitor center to see the restored original. This belongs to Perrysburg but is on permanent loan to the visitor center.

So there you have it. Tracked down the locations of all the monuments and went on several road trips the see them. I made a 39 page powerpoint of all the info i have accumulated on Perry Monuments. If you want a copy, lets me know. It contains references, photos, and some of the information i researched.

Robert Parker



Robert Parker

# What are some of your pet peeves?



**I** absolutely hate - It is what it is.

Robert Parker

# What was your best boss like?



**M**y first boss, section leader Charlie Blust, was very bright and a nice guy, but he got cancer a year or two after i started at Goodyear Aerospace and did not make it.

Mel Davis took over for him and was a good boss. Mel was the best engineer i have ever known. I always told him he was very intelligent as opposed to smart. If he was smart, he would be the President of some small startup and be making a heck of a lot more money. He always helped when asked but was prone to let everyone struggle along until they asked for help. He had great faith in me and helped me grow into a good engineer and eventually an ASIC designer and manager.

When Mel took the Loral bailout package and abandoned us, John Tsoras stepped up. John and I did not always see eye to eye but we got along fine. John was a people person. He would go to

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bat for his people to every extent possible. He often asked my opinion on issues on interest to all. He kept me on the payroll thru tough times, allowing me to stay till I picked up the Cisco job.

My first boss at Cisco was Jim Cisar. He just did pass away last year from years of fighting stomach cancer. He was a great supporter of the ASIC group and let me run my own show. That was really fun. When we were reorganized, I had to report to David Bokaie in San Jose. He was one incompetent jerk. His indecision in starting a new project wore thin on his bosses and they shut down the entire effort at Akron and in San Jose.

I moved on to Viasat, reporting to the local group president Russell Fierst. He was a smart business guy but got along with very few people. Luckily I was one of them. He sometimes gave me bad direction. When this happened, i nodded my head and did what was best anyway. Of course, I was Teflon Bob by then.

# How do you like to spend a lazy day?



**N**ot sure what a lazy day is.

I think one should keep moving and do something useful every day. There is usually something that needs attention. In the spring there are always flowers or projects waiting for warmer weather to do. In the summer, the same. In the fall there is always some type of cleanup to do. Winter is for indoor projects. When those are done, winter really sucks. Much better to be in the southern USA where you can get out and walk the beach. Staying active is good medicine.

Keeping your mind active is also good medicine. Without any work related tasks to do anymore, i find puzzles, chess, and reading history books is about all i have left. Unfortunately it is hard to fill all the time with that so TV fills the empty time. That is really not helpful but what else is there?

Robert Parker

The only really lazy days should be the ones where you don't feel well, or are just plumb worn out for working hard the other day. That said, it is a real joy to visit or picnic with family to stay in touch.

# Do you have any keepsakes or heirlooms from your father?



I do have a few items from my dad. In the photo albums, I have some of his paper award and class certificates. As to personal items, I have his 25 year Bulova watch. That is pretty much all except for some of his tools and Radar books he studied while in the Army.

The Radar books were pretty ancient, so I eventually tossed them. I still have the tools though. Lots of sentimental value in the tools. I have his long black handled skinny screwdriver. He had that to reach down into TVs for repair activities. Also kept some big huge screwdrivers we used as pry bars when doing stuff around the house. I was always his assistant and learned how to put in outlets and other electrical stuff. He had an old ragged soldering iron I still have. Kids should help their dads.

Robert Parker



Robert Parker

# Do you believe in love at first sight?



**I** sure do. That is what happened in my case. Happened the very first time I ever saw Mary. There she was just a walking down the street singing “do wa diddy diddy dum diddy do”.

Robert Parker

# Who inspires you?



**A**t the age of 72, there are really no particular individuals who inspire me.

I am inspired when i see the whistle blowers come forth and report questionable acts that people like Trump are up to or report corporate wrong doing at great risk to themselves as, they are obligated to report illegal behavior. Gives you faith in your fellow humans.

Robert Parker

# What is your best advice when it comes to raising children?



**R**aising children is something one is never prepared for. There is nothing taught in school on the subject, so you either read about the conventional wisdom, depend on your own upbringing and life experience, or just wing it. The "conventional wisdom" keeps changing over time, so be aware of that. Something recommended back then can be frowned upon today.

I can offer two ideas on the subject. First, don't let the kids play mom against dad. When a question comes up, discuss it with each other and present a united front. You don't want them playing you two against each other.

Second, I never realized how important it is to get them some religious training and let the kids decide on their own to whether to believe or not. As I see my children deal with difficult times

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and situations, I wonder how anyone can go through such tough times without the faith there is a higher being they can call on to get them through this. Life throws you some severe stuff that is very hard to deal with alone. In school these days, suicide is on the rise. And that's mostly due to many things that really just don't matter in the big scheme of things. They seem overwhelming at the time but are really trivial events in life. Faith in God can be a huge difference on how one handles disappointment and adversity. Do not discount that.

# More on Child Raising



I don't know when I realized it, but I began to make my own decisions somewhere between the age of 10-11. Stopped letting my parents make all the decisions. Thinking about it, my advice would be to instill your best wisdom in your children as soon as possible and hope they have learned well.

After some young age they still hear your advice but will do what they see fit. I suppose that age differs depending on each individual, but it is a lot younger than you would expect.

It still makes sense to repeat and repeat your beliefs and advice, but if they have not bought in to your opinion by then, it might be too late. Doesn't hurt though to let them know where you stand.

Robert Parker



# What have you changed your mind about over the years?



**N**ow that is an interesting question. I had to think back and dig deep to find something.

Politically, I have always leaned to the Democratic side, as the Republicans always seemed like it was fend for yourselves. I figured the little guy was in need of help so i leaned Democratic side despite paying higher taxes for the programs they championed. I do feel that there are many out there that just figure the Government will take care of them and don't make a reasonable effort to find work. That i don't like. But to penalize all the needy people out there for those that look for a free ride isn't right either.

My opinions have not really changed a lot for a long long time now. Perhaps my thoughts on religion have softened. I always

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felt Catholics are too regimented in their repetitive prayers and customs, but i have softened on that over the years. To be a believer in a higher power is most important, and how one worships seems less important now.

I do believe in family more than ever. Although we don't always see eye to eye, nor constantly support each other, when the chips are down you can always count on family to be there for you.

# What are your favorite songs?



Well, i like many many songs. The two that stand out for Mary and I are My Girl, by Smokey Robinson, and Brown Eye Girl, by Van Morrison.

The first is how I felt about her at the time we were dating. Same for the second, although she does have blue eyes. They just seemed to be on target with my feelings. We still get that feeling after 50+ years when we hear them playing.

Another favorite that came later is that short little love song, You are so Beautiful, by Joe Cocker. I can't imagine anyone who doesn't like that one. One that surprises me is La La La La (Means I Love You) from the Delfonics. That came out when we were dating but i guess it was too silly at the time.

Have not come across any rock songs recently but there are a few awesome ones on the Polka show that are incredibly romantic.

Robert Parker

The Waltz of the Angels is one and I don't know the names of the other but it asks if they can have this dance for the rest of our lives.

By the way, i really like this one as well  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDkV\\_41qEVM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDkV_41qEVM)

# What were your least favorite courses in college?



Ah, there were many. I spent all my time on math and engineering courses. All the others were just distractions. I mostly went to class, took notes and never opened the book till a week before the tests. I read the 150 pages, took some notes, and hoped for the best. Pretty much got Cs on all of them.

I was sorry i did so with the 2 history courses. They were interesting but i had no time for them. Never had a clue with Economics. Of them all the two that stand out were my first literature class and a sociology course.

The first literature class was taught by a hippie dude and held in an overflow trailer and was 8am Tues/Thurs/Sat. OMG was it tough to show up 8am Saturday after being out late Friday night. And sometimes he never showed on Saturdays. Imagine waiting for the bus in the middle of winter, taking a 20 minute ride,

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getting off 1/2 mile from the class room, and walking through the snow against the wind to a trailer and waiting for dude to show up. We read and discussed Moby Dick and i never had a clue what they were talking about.

The second nightmare was the sociology course. Taught by a socialist Italian, it was hard to sit quietly through her class. Then she gave my written project an F? I immediately challenged her on it and she said no one could possible write that bad. She had thought i just copied stuff from different places. She did sit down with me and go over it and changed it to a C after realizing that i really was a terrible writer. Well, i never did learn to write until i sat thru a writing class at Goodyear Aerospace. I became a very good writer after that. Grade school, high school, and college sure had failed me in that respect.

# What foods do you dislike? Have these changed over time?



**N**ot a fan of anything bitter. Like the neutral and sweet stuff. Main items that come to mind are green veggies. The only green I like is green beans. As a kid, cooked spinach and asparagus made me gag. They were so mushy, bitter, and horrible. Spinach is OK uncooked in a salad period. Don't like the mushy stuff either. No squash, yams, zucchini, mushy peas, and no mayo. Why anyone would want to put milky mushy mayo on any meat is beyond me. Finally, forget creamed anything. It all looks like barf to me.

Robert Parker



# What is your best advice when it comes to work?



**W**ell, I started at Goodyear Aerospace after getting my degree, and started to gain practical knowledge at a good pace. My engineering degree basically taught me how to learn but did not provide me with much practical knowledge. I felt like I was a fish out of water. Thankfully, most employers really wants you to succeed and become a valuable employee.

Such was the case at Aerospace and the senior engineers provided much guidance. I slowly found out they did not have all the answers. As I researched things under their guidance, i found out that sometimes you have to discover information that leads you to the next step. Kind of like a detective. It was a little frustrating being asked to do some testing and when the results were learned, go do some more testing. Why didn't he ask for that in the first place? Basically because we were both sneaking up on the answers one step at a time.

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This was a bit eye opening. If you don't have the answer, learn something, try an idea, then learn more, and then more again. Eventually the answer stands out. I don't know how many times the engineers working for me got frustrated when hitting roadblocks. I gave them some encouragement and guess what? They found a breakthrough! Some took longer than others but I was always confident that this stick to it process would work and the roadblocks would fall. Going to my 1812 history; "Don't give up the ship".

Another piece of advice I can give everyone is to give it your best and work hard. My dad always repeated his high school motto. "Whatever you do, let it be done best", or something like that. At Aerospace, it was a long time to my first promotion. Turns out that was a strategy for govt work. Jr. Engineers were billed at lower costs to the govt, so their company costs were more competitive. So my attitude became, don't care what my title is, just keep giving me raises.

I worked hard for several years and was always learning and becoming a better engineer with great experience. Don't think the hard work isn't noticed, because it is. Work hard! When the opportunity comes, you will be at the top of the list and all the hard work pays off. One of my mottoes and a leader was "The reward for hard work, is more hard work". And I told my workers

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that that was good for their future and future earnings. Don't you forget it! Always has been true and always will.

Finally, don't be afraid to take on challenging projects. One must keep improving their skills. If you are stuck in a job where you learn nothing and not improving your skills, it is time to move on, or find a way to do so.

Robert Parker

# What has made your faith stronger?



**G**ood question.

I mulled it over for a day and had a few thoughts, but a TV segment on New Day Cleveland about Hospice hit me. First off was my bypass in 2015. Got all the important papers together and put them all in one box so Mary would be able to find them. It is a common and well understood operation so I was not worried at all, just cautious since anything could go wrong.

Well, I came out of it with much pain with a case of the hiccups making it much worse. The pain and the slow recovery were worrisome but certainly strengthened my faith.

Later that year or more likely early the next we put mom into Hospice. The people were very good at what they do. At that point, mom really cut back on her eating and drinking water. We felt control of her swallowing reflexes were waning. A few

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months after starting, they sent a reverend to the house. He came in and said the Lord's Prayer with us, then launched into a few songs. They were either popular church songs or some of the religious Christmas songs. I can't remember which. He was an outstanding singer for sure. After a few bars, mom, who didn't even know exactly who we were, tried to sing along with him. It was so moving, I had to get up and leave so as not to disturb the moment. My tears flowed, and I am tearing up while writing this.

As i said before, I don't know how non-believers get through life. Without knowing there is a God looking out for you, how can you stay positive in the face of all the adversities you face throughout your life?

# How is your faith different from your parents' faith?



Well, i really can't answer this question. Mary's family was Roman Catholic and she continued with that to this day. In her case, they were much more stricter back then. As time went on many Catholics disregarded some very rigid views and the church has softened on many of those. Some examples are birth control and women priests. One always needed to cover their head and everyone fasted on Fridays. But to the very personal beliefs, i doubt we really knew what our parents firm beliefs were. I don't think anyone ever believes every church doctrine.

I was brought up Baptist, and the beliefs of our church were very strict. Never do anything that could be misinterpreted. No dancing, no gambling, no racy movies. Well, once again views have softened. Basically, Baptists believe in the words of the Bible, not the priest, nor pope, and i feel free to interpret it for myself.

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Always loved listening to Brother Oliver B Greene back then. Straight talk. Believe in Jesus and be saved. That simple. It hit me in church one day and I was baptized sometime around the age of 14? I don't know how others get to this without going to a church service or revival. Take your kids, family, BF, GF, or friend to church and give them a chance.



# 2019 Christmas



**T**was the night before Christmas. Sister Catherine (Santa) arrived and we put her gifts under the tree. She is called Santa cause she brings so many many gifts and so much candy, as many as her car can carry. Wes' family wasn't coming till the day after so Christmas would focus on sister Sue and husband Ed's visit tomorrow. They arrived 12:30ish and we opened gifts. Carolyn and Jenna and Wes arrived without the kids to visit.

Carolyn and Jenna were gong to wait till the day after to open gifts but got caught up in the moment. Pretty soon, all the gifts were opened so we sat down to dine on the roast beast. I took some pics and sent them out. It was a good day, and we cleaned up and got ready for the kids tomorrow.

In the morning, we went to a memorial service for Ken Batcher. He had passed away in August but donated his body to science. The family had chosen his birthday to hold the memorial so family could attend. There was not much notice so the gathering

Robert Parker

was small. I would say it was the immediate family plus maybe 20 of us that knew him during his career.

We got home and summoned the family around 1pm and waited for the little ones. They were so cute. Kalix wore her She Ra outfit. Zander had a Zelda shirt, I think, and Lincoln was something too ( i don't recall). I took some cute pics again.

Later on, I transferred them to the ipad from the ipod wirelessly, then deleted the photos. Sadly when i deleted them from the ipod, they were also deleted from the ipad. Boo Hoo, no kids pics of Christmas this year. So sad. Guess i better figure out how that all works. Better get that done before the next round of pictures In February.

The next day, I will call it the 3d day of Christmas, Jacob and Lindsey came over with Carolyn and Jenna to open their gifts. Jacob had been working at IHOP the last 2 days. Now we are finally done. I don't ever remember 3 days of Christmas.

# Some of My Greatest Ideas for the Future



**T**he year of this book, developed in 2020, the year of the Pandemic, is quickly coming to an end. We have survived it so far and anticipate getting vaccinated next March or April. Till then we will stay in our bubble to try and avoid it.

Before the book ends, just wanted to document some of my thoughts on the future and some ideas that might come alive sometime down the road.

My best idea was to save Social Security and Medicaid. My proposal is that the government provide all retirees a lump sum payment and relocate you to a 3d world country where you can live like a king. Win-win, eh? You live like a king and you come off the rolls. When you are no longer to take care of yourself, you are not a drag on Medicaid, as you are on your own.

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Gave a lot of thought to how fair taxes can be raised. My idea is to tax air. I know, I know. Seems crazy. But you never would have thought you would be buying water either, eh? So the tax formula would take into account where you live. Crappy air quality? You would be charged much less. Small people would also get a break. They don't suck up as much air as others. You can adjust the cost based on other factors too. I didn't work it all out. Just an idea.

Big brother Predictions. As the government gets involved with more and more of our lives, i predict that they will conduct surprise visits to your home to check your fire alarm batteries. Those with dead batteries or non working units will face a stiff fine. It's for your own good, just like seat belts. Another prediction is in child raising. They are going to weigh your kids in school every month. Parents of overweight kids will only get so many warnings, before you are fined, and only so many fines before they take away your kids. Medical issues would be exempt of course.

Anyway, i am glad to document my innovative ideas for the future. Wonder how many will be adopted.

# 2020 Christmas



What a horrible year 2020 was! It started out good as we visited St Augustine, Fl for the month of February. We saw lots of historic places and the hot tub was just 10 feet outside our door! Catherine spent 2 weeks with us and Mary's sister Ginny and husband John spent 5 or so days with us. Four trips to the Jacksonville AP to pick them up and drop them off. We made a short trip south for Marti Gra for a smallish celebration in one of the small towns down there.

On the way up and back, we stayed in Charlotte, NC. Once back we started back at the Y. But it was only for a week. Then we bailed due to the Covid virus scare. They were talking hundreds of thousands of deaths. Mind boggling since there had only been a few thousand deaths by then.

Right they were as there have been close to 400,000 deaths since. Most deaths have been of people 65 and over as they predicted. Well Carolyn and Wes did stay away to keep us safe.

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we missed them and the grand kids all year long and likely will for another 3-6 months until we all get the new vaccines.

We cooked Easter dinner and then delivered to the houses of Carolyn, Wes, and Steve. We didn't bother for Thanksgiving, dining on frozen turkey dinners. Same for Christmas. Only this time it was Raman noodles.

Christmas gifts were shuttled from Buffalo to Sue in PA and then to us in Columbiana. Those from here went in reverse. We celebrated both using video link Zoom both at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Let us all hope this never happens again.

# Wrap Up



**S**o this is the end of the year full of random questions and answers. Hope you enjoyed it or learned something about me. I have been around a long time, had a great life, and hope to enjoy the rest of it alongside the love of my life and long time friend Mary (Maloney) Parker.

I would like to get back to visiting historical sites of the War of 1812, watching the grand kids grow and prosper. Other than that, I only have 1 other item on my bucket list.

In November, we elected a new President, Joe Biden. This ends the disaster of 4 year term of Donald J Chump. For 4 years I have ranted about his behavior and have called him T-Rump as he is one sick bastard.

He set out to destroy and undo everything that our previous president had done. He was an international embarrassment, he destroyed the State Department, ripped apart the CIA, FBI, and

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Defense Department, persecuted immigrants,, and violated countless laws. He was out for himself and himself only. History will judge him harshly.

My goal is to outlive him and make a special pilgrimage to his grave site and spit on his grave. Wish me luck.



