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Ridl, Meridith Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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Oral History Interview with
Meridith Ridl

Conducted June 20, 1997
by Ann Paeth

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
"150 Stories for 150 Years"
AP:  The first thing, if you could just state your name and when and where you were born, and then when and how long you've been in Holland. Just kind of your little history.

MR:  I'm Meridith Ridl and I was born in Holland, [date removed], 1975. Then I've mostly been here on the summers every year since then.

AP:  What has that been like just living here part of the time?

MR:  I know when I would drive into Holland State Park coming out here, it was always this--pick what has changed since the last time. The building and all the different things, the surf shops that weren't there when I was little and this kind of thing. I was realizing, last night as I was out with someone in downtown, that, really, my world is right here. It's Auburn Avenue. I mean, we would go to galleries or go to Saugatuck and Holland sometimes. But a lot of it was just running around on the dunes and playing on the beach and being on this street with my friends around here. Really, I don't know where that much stuff is in Holland. Someone was saying, "Have you hung out here and here and here?" Usually it was just these really concentrated weeks to be with my friends and family in this whole world within a world right here.

AP:  This is a really interesting little community out here. How would you describe it?

MR:  It's definitely a bunch of characters for sure. Max Milo (Michael Milanowski), and next door is Gail and Buddy. I felt like I was hanging out with a lot of adults when I
was little, but they did so many fun things. They were playing in the clubhouse, and I could go up there and hang around and play a round of poker or whatever in our back yard.

AP: Talk about who Max Milo is, because some of these peoples are mentioning are these characters in the art community around here, and they’re kind of legendary in a way.

MR: Let me try. Well, Max is one of my dad’s best friends. He definitely made a lot of little magical things for me when I was little, and still now. I remember this one Bastille Day, this July 14th. It might have been their bicentennial, but for some reason it was a big day. So my dad sort of woke me up, "Max said it’s Bastille Day, we have to go down." He had this whole thing set up on his porch—he has a cottage on the lower boardwalk, too, so he has this "summer in Holland" thing going on, too, because he lives in Grand Rapids—but he had this huge Marie Antoinette picture that he had found who knows where, in the midst of his house which is full of all these wonderful toys and just crazy stuff, and French’s Mustard, and french fries. That was our French celebration for the morning. Maybe we had crepes, I can’t remember. He had this beret on. He’s known to do spontaneous puppet shows once in a while, which is really fun. His house is so fun. There’s all of these sculptures outside and toys. He’s good at finding a holiday out of nothing. The one time when I went down, one of his puppet shows that I remember the most, one of the puppets was a C-clamp, like you would use on a table. All of a sudden, there were these puppets that he had from Burr Tillstrom’s Storytime. Have you ever heard of this guy? He was one of the first puppeteers, but he was from Saugatuck, and Max
worked with him for a while, so he had this whole thing with puppets going on. In fact, he even gave him one of his puppets. Jim Henson got a lot of ideas from him. So Max had these regular puppets, and all of a sudden this C-clamp came up, and it's like, "I am a C-clamp." He's really fun. I know he sleeps out on the beach a lot, and one time we saw the Northern Lights here and that was a big event.

AP: Really! When was that?

MR: I'm trying to think. It was probably six years ago. It was a while ago. But I remember just watching it on the beach, and that was the first time I had ever seen that, which was wonderful, too. We had heard they were forecast. It was so clear, there were a million stars, and the beach was there, and it was a warm summer night. My friend, Brenda, used to come up and visit with me a lot when I was little, too, for a week. We ended up sleeping out under the stars, and these Northern Lights are shooting up, and it was so wonderful. It was great.

AP: Have they developed this area a lot, since you've been coming here? I imagine if you were gone and then you come back, then all of a sudden you're like, oh, there's a building there. Have they done a lot to develop the waterfront area?

MR: The main things I remember is there's that little bunch of condos right at the end of the private boardwalk. None of that was there. I remember sort of being like, oh, there's these gigantic houses. On the other hand, it's probably neat that it is the state park, so there's a certain amount of protection, which I kind of like. Because I'd be sad if I couldn't suddenly run up into the dunes; we used to always play in the dunes. The surf shop, and just those little things that just plunk up here and there, it
definitely has changed. I’ve been noticing big houses here and there, but it seems like that’s everywhere, more and more. It’s nice that there’s still a certain sense of roughness. You look back and there’s trees, and Lake Michigan’s really pretty.

AP: What kind of a neighborhood is this? I know this house was basically condemned, because things were built on sand out here. So how did this neighborhood spring up, or what kind of neighborhood did it turn out to be? How would you describe it?

MR: I don’t even know if I quite know, because by the time I came here it was no longer condemned. They’re definitely all really old cottages. Frankly, I don’t really quite know the history of the neighborhood. I know that this wall, they just had to jack up the one wall because it was falling down. Literally, they had to put a new foundation in. Again, I think it’s kind of interesting, just because there are about four families here all year around, and other cottages just kind of wait through the winter.

AP: So there’s this summer community that comes together?

MR: Yes. I think some of the people that I think about hanging out with in the summer are people that are here all the time, so they’re close with my dad and Julie.

AP: What kind of involvement there is with the neighbors? These houses are quite close together and they just kind of...

MR: ...fall into each other. I think people are really pretty close. I know our one path wanders into next door to Abigail’s. It’s pretty friendly. I don’t know everyone on this street or anything. There are a couple of houses that are rented, so those people are changing every week. Other than that, I’ve always felt really welcomed. People just walk down the street, and I like that there’s a lot of front porches. I feel like
that's an old thing that is good, because people are out there and they wave. This is my own personal theory, but so many houses now, they build decks on the back, and I wonder if that's a commentary on people being more... Like the privatization of the American home or something like that.

AP: Yeah, they build these subdivisions and they’re all split off.

MR: It doesn’t have that, I can sit out on the front porch and see who goes by and figure out what they’re doing, be a little nosy, and it’s OK.

AP: Do you know how your father usually describes the house when he’s giving directions? He says it’s out on Auburn, and it’s the one with all the porches. That’s how he describes it, "Our house is the one with all the porches."

MR: I was thinking about, when I remember summers, too, you could almost say it was a migration from porch to porch. Because I would go sit on Max’s porch, then I’d sit on our porch, then I’d sit on someone else’s porch. All these porches that I know.

AP: That’s a neat little culture that we don’t think of. A lot of the other neighborhoods popping up around Holland, because there’s a lot of development going on, there’s something that seems so sterile about them. Do you know what I mean?

MR: No, I definitely do.

AP: All the houses look the same. It’s like when people were building all those three bedroom ranches a long time ago, and you look at all these houses and you say, there’s another one of those. And there’s no character...

MR: ...character. For sure. It’s weird, because they’re no longer the three bedrooms. They’re these monsters half the time, they’re huge.
AP: Then you walk in and they have beige carpeting and the matched furniture set and little fire place with two candles.

MR: It's so true. Everything's very predictable.

AP: You don't want to mess anything up.

MR: Exactly. There's no lived in feeling.

AP: Do you notice any differences in the community compared to the different places you've been, either at home, or the different places you lived at school or through school? How do you compare all of those communities? Are there things that set each apart? Are there things that you really are thankful for in each one, or things you come to and think, gee, this is a headache?

MR: For me, this does feel different to me than a lot of places. I really feel really relaxed here. I don't know if it's just on the beach. It's not like there's no one who's uptight in Holland.

AP: Is it this community or this area or the city? It's hard to...

MR: I don't know if it's just because half the time when I'm here I'm on vacation, so it's just such a welcome break. But I don't think it could just be anywhere. It's like another home, too. But also, I just really love being by the water. The docks and the dunes, I think it's really beautiful. I kind of like the rough and tumble feel of it, too. Michigan gets a beating in the winter, and there's something kind of weathered, and I've always really liked that. I noticed, even when I was in New York, I used to take the Staten Island Ferry sometimes, when it started to be springtime, and I was like, why am I so attracted to being by docks? I don't go out on boats. I'm not like
a sailor. But I really think it’s just this tie to memories and summers. I always feel really comfortable in some nostalgic way when I’m in the water. I think that’s part of being here.

AP: A lot of Michigan towns are really built up on that. I don’t even know how to swim, I don’t go in the water.

MR: Really?

AP: But I’m going to Ohio next year, and I’m looking at the map and I’m just like: there’s just this whole area in the whole United States and there’s just no water, there’s no lakes or anything. Everybody’s like, yeah, it’s good you realized that before you left.

MR: It is kind of a different thing. I remember thinking that when I would go home after being here, and I would hear these certain winds through the trees at home that sounded like water, and I would just try to lay there and pretend that I was still by the water.

AP: Obviously people love coming here, all the resorters. It’s always had a huge resort history. I’ve filled in a lot of these details from talking to lots of people, like on Lake Macatawa, there was the Hotel.

MR: Isn’t there an old foundation that’s still there.

AP: Yes, there was a big hotel and it burned down. There was a big boardwalk, too, that actually collapsed once. But there were a lot of boats that used to come up from Chicago and other places. So it’s always been this water. I live on the east side on the state, and there’s not so much of that rush for everybody. We’re not always like,
oh, let’s drive to the shore and up to the thumb, like everybody here wants to be close to Lake Michigan. I don’t think we have as many sandy beaches.

MR: The beach, yes, that’s always the real attraction. That’s a whole other feel, too, because there’s the whole surf shop ocean kind of feel, too. Which it doesn’t really feel like that to me. It doesn’t feel like the super beach town. When you’re at the ocean, there’s that whole touristy thing going on. There definitely is that here.

AP: But some of the beach towns, that’s all they are. Except for the summer, they don’t exist. So there’s a stable community behind it, all these people want to put up with that winter.

MR: I think that’s true. Exactly. It’s like a comfort zone, in a certain way.

AP: This might not be the best question, because, like you said, it’s a summer, vacation feel for you, but is the pace of life slower here in general? Obviously compared to the time spent in New York.

MR: Yes, definitely. I think when I’m here with my dad, it is this really laid back, calm, magical time. It really kind of is. That’s a lucky thing for him to have the summers off. Usually, we just kind of free schedule, so that is definitely slower. Especially summer, the whole eating dinner at 8:30 at night kind of things, I love that. I don’t know when you go into town, I’m not sure if that’s necessarily a depiction of Holland.

AP: What kind of things do you do in town? Favorite places to eat or shop?

MR: I always go to the Art Annex now. My dad and I usually just go and look at CD’s and we go eat lunch, or we go around Saugatuck a lot and look at the galleries, which
is fun.

AP: Do you go downtown a lot?

MR: I don’t know if I’d say a lot. I was there yesterday. It’s a sweet downtown. There’s actually good restaurants and stores.

AP: Do you remember that changing a lot? People talk about how much it’s changed, but you might have been really little when they started developing it.

MR: I think I was pretty young. But I remember my mom saying, because she hadn’t been here in a really long time, saying how when my dad and my mom first moved here, it was so much more tumble down. It’s pretty spiffed up these days.

AP: What are her memories of Holland? Did she not care for it?

MR: Oh no, I think she liked it a lot.

AP: Where is she now?

MR: In Pennsylvania, which is where I grew up. No, I think she liked it a lot, the beach and, she liked it a lot.

AP: What was that like splitting your time between the two homes?

MR: I definitely say that, and with the water, there’s a sense of missing where ever you are. It’s not like, oh, I’m so morose, kind of thing. But just transitions and switching back and forth and wanting to be in two places at once, which is definitely true. There are things I love about Pennsylvania, and things I love about here. I think that’s why I was always really excited to come back to the beach, and then missed it when I went back. The main thing that I can see is there’s always this sense of home in two places and not really wanting to change it. Because I would
think if my dad would live closer then I wouldn’t have this wonderful little community here.

AP: I think even without that split, there are a lot of people in this area that have that. A lot of people vacation here all summer, they just move here. There is that sub-community here in Holland, out here and in Castle Park, and there are these little groups of people that are in Holland, but don’t live there. That’s a lot of the summer community. A lot of the college students go out, but then it’s the tourists that come in.

MR: Do people feel a big influx of tourists? I always wonder what that’s like.

AP: I don’t think so. I think during Tulip Time, obviously.

MR: Oh, sure. Right. I haven’t been here for that.

AP: All these buses… People are like, I’m not going out.

MR: It’s kind of surreal.

AP: Yes. But this neighborhood, it’s right by the water, but during the winter, it’s probably pretty vacant, but it’s removed from town.

MR: Because people have a place to go. Maybe that’s what it is. It’s not imposing so much, they have a cottage to come to.

AP: I think the beaches get pretty crowded, but most of the people that come here are actually by a private beach. So it’s all the Holland people on the beach. If you notice on a private beach, there’s a couple of people, and you look down the shore a little bit…

MR: And the State Park’s packed. I just thought of another building in terms of things
changing. The old boat house. There used to be this wonderful, old boat house on Lake Macatawa. That they just tore down a couple of years ago. But it was really neat. The old wood... I actually wasn’t here when they tore it down, but I know my dad and Max had this vigil for the boat house. Max went in and he had this little row boat in there with all of these candles lit around, sort of homage to the boat house before it disappeared, because they loved it. It was sort of a magical spot. That was just another thing I was thinking of that used to be there.

AP: Last year we were out here on the beach and they were raking it. They had this big machine, moving out sand or something. What is that?

MR: I think they do that every year. Have you been out here in the winter at all? I don’t think I had been here in the winter since I was three and four and lived here. Then I wasn’t here again until I was 17, and I was here in the winter and I was like, "Oh my gosh, it’s this whole other world."

AP: How is it different?

MR: Well, there was 10,000 feet of snow. No, never mind. There was a ton of snow, like three feet of snow. The beach freezes over and the waves keep hitting, so they make these huge glaciers on the water twelve feet high, really high. You can climb up on them. But the sand gets blown around so much it makes other little mountains, so they smooth that out. That’s what the big machines come in and kind of do.

AP: We would go out to look at Lake Michigan to look at the lake during the winter, but we had a really foggy winter, so we’d walk out there and you could see a couple feet, and then it was just white, and you couldn’t see anything. It was really weird.
MR: Like a tundra.

AP: Because you knew there was this huge body of water behind it, so you couldn’t see it at all.

MR: When I could drive, suddenly I could be here in different seasons, because we would do this whole meeting thing in the summer when I was little. Recently I’ve been here more smaller chunks of time, but different times in the year, just because of jobs. But is such a cozy, book reading, play games place to be. That’s the way I think about it.

AP: You just graduated? And next year what are you doing?

MR: Next year I’m going to France for a year to make art work or figure out what’s going on there.

AP: Will you be over there for a solid year?

MR: It is actually. In fact, we’re not allowed to come back, unless it’s an emergency. You have to be there for twelve months.

AP: How do you feel about that?

MR: It’s weird. I think I’m most intimidated about the language. But also there’s this whole, totally on your own kind of thing. Which, New York kind of gave me an introduction to that. But you knew a few people there.

AP: And they spoke English. Well...

MR: Well, kind of. (laughs) But I’m nervous about that, but I’m excited about having all that time that’s just up to you to figure out how you’re spending it, which is intimidating and exciting at the same time, I think. Sort of not having a schedule,
which is weird.

AP: It's kind of at the point in life where you... I don't know. A lot of people are thinking about where they're going to go, where they're going to schedule. Are you at a point where you think about that yet? Do you have any ideas about what communities...?

MR: I definitely think about it, and feel like I have no way to even make up my mind at all. Sometimes I do think I would love to be here. Again, it's kind of the water thing. I like these beautiful summers, and I actually really like snow. I really like places where you feel like can curl in, have a little nest. That's attractive. I thought about New York for a little while, and sometimes I think I could live there for maybe a couple years, but then it'd be too much.

AP: I got the impression it's not a place where you could settle.

MR: No.

AP: I don't want to be here yet, but I couldn't settle in another place.

MR: Me too. I just thought, it's exciting, there are so many things to see, and that's neat, but I'm not so sure I could be there forever. It seems to me that people who have grown up there maybe don't miss the green and the gardens and the land and the water. I feel like after a while I would really be craving that.

AP: I worked for somebody there who had grown up there her entire life, and she's in her fifties now. She had lived other places for a while, but she was back there. There were just some things, I'd be like, have you ever done this, or have you ever been to a store like this? Just the concept of Meijer. When I lived there K-mart was moving
in and everybody in Manhattan was so upset because K-mart was invading the Village, it was two blocks away from the Village Voice office.


AP: Yeah. There were very upset, and I said, but you don't understand the concept, it's great. You walk in, they have everything you need, right there, you just walk in this big store... That's what people do on Friday nights when they're bored. And they were like, what...?

MR: "What are you talking about, we are too chic for this."

AP: It's seems like everything bores them there now. There's nothing left to shock them with, or nothing to excite them with, because they've seen everything.

MR: Yes, I think that gets a little tiresome after a while. Sometimes I joke about both here and at home, because I live in the smallest town in the world in Pennsylvania...

AP: In the world?

MR: Well maybe not. We used to do the lamest things, you know, you had to figure out stuff to do. But there's something kind of nice, too, about making you notice little things. Maybe that's just my own little goal. What I'd love to do in France is just feel like you're really observing everything a lot, really intensely. It's neat to be able to go out and be excited by simple things. I think you can do that in the city, but I really like being by land.

AP: I think it takes so much effort in the city, with commuting and the subway. You get up and you're out for the day. You can't come back home, you just can't stop off, you never know exactly how long it will take you to get somewhere. It's just this
constant go go go, be on guard. You can never just appreciate it.

MR: In some ways it’s just really neat, but like I said, I think I could do it for a little while and love it, and then just burn out.

AP: As far as museums and shows, I could go to so much, and see what other people were producing, but I myself didn’t produce anything.

MR: Oh, me either. Nothing.

AP: As an artist, I didn’t produce anything myself.

MR: I think that’s OK, though.

AP: But now I have all this input, like those little things you talk about seeing, and now I can produce so much more.

MR: In some ways, that makes me realize that I’d like to just be in all these different places. I’m happy to travel. Maybe I’d like to go back to New York for a while, but then I feel like, ideally, I kind of need to have a place away from wherever it is that I’m getting all this stuff to assimilate everything. That makes complete sense to me. I definitely didn’t make anything while I was in New York, I couldn’t. That makes me nervous about France. Hopefully I’ll have enough time that I can be there for a while and do that. I still want to be making stuff while in France.

AP: Will you be all throughout France, or just a specific place, or will you be in Paris?

MR: In Paris at the beginning, and then probably around Aix en Provence in southern France. Probably Paris around three months, and then somewhere in southern France for the other time. I’d like to travel in between there, but those are sort of the home bases where I’ll actually probably have a place to stay.
AP: From what I hear of Paris, they kind of have a slower pace of life, even though it's such a big city. It's a little more relaxed.

MR: Time is maybe a different thing.

AP: Meals you take a long time, and they don't think anything of that.

MR: Good idea. (laughs)

AP: Like in New York, you eat on the go, and they consider that really rude, to be walking and eating. My friend who went there for a semester described Paris to me, and I want to go there. It sounds so perfect.

MR: Oh great, that makes me excited.

AP: It sounds like a very good combination of things going on.


AP: I have a professor who still calls the Thrifty.

MR: We call it Thrifty, too. That was my favorite. They had these horses that you could ride for a penny. Has anyone told you about those?

AP: They still do.

MR: Do they still have those? I was really afraid they didn't have them.

AP: That's one of their gimmicks, now. They say, it's always a penny, always will be a penny.

MR: Oh good. That was definitely an exciting thing, to go ride the penny horse.

AP: Meijer is a chain just through this area, so they don't have it every where. Did they have a store like Meijer, or did anything compare?
MR: In Pennsylvania? You know what, I think nothing compares. (laughs) They have K-mart and Walmart, now that’s everywhere. But nothing was quite like Meijer with the whole grocery plus pets plus cosmetics.

AP: Because even K-mart doesn’t have the groceries.

MR: No, so that’s why it’s kind of legendary.

AP: Yesterday I had them make some paint for me, because I’m painting these chairs, and then I got some plants, and some egg rolls.

MR: Yeah, see, right there, that’s really good.

AP: A lot of people complain about Meijer. Do you think it’s a bad way of life? What do you think of it? In your generation?

MR: I feel like a bad person for being like, oh, it’s fun. I don’t know if I can figure out what I think about that. I kind of get made sick by all of the Walmarts that are coming up and this kind of thing. But then part of me is like, that’s just been there. Which is maybe too accepting.

AP: See, Walmart’s not the same to me.

MR: No, it really is not the same to me either. There was already Meijer, and we don’t need both.

AP: Well, and everybody says that Walmart moves into small town and drives out all of the other business, and the closes, or something like that. So it’s actually bad for the economy. I don’t think Meijer does that.

MR: No, it’s kind of just been there. It’s kind of just entertaining to me in some ways.

AP: Some people are like, you walk in and you get sucked in, and you see all this stuff,
and you start buying it, you can never get out.

MR: It sort of lures you in, because then there’s the stuff at the check out...

AP: Did you ever play the Meijer Game? Some one described it to me that you go with friends and you have teams, and then you have to get three items from the store, random item, and you bring them up and you swap carts, and the goal is to see who can put them back in the right spot the fastest.

MR: Oh, that’s fun.

AP: We needed matches the other day, and we had no idea where to get them. We’re walking up and down the aisles, and, of course, they don’t have a little sign that say "matches." Like it doesn’t say: Q-tips, Matches...

MR: Right, on the little thing. You have to figure out what category that falls under.

AP: Right. They were by the sponges.

MR: Oh, well of course. Oh no. That’s funny. You sort of try to skip a few aisles, and then you end up having to go back anyway. I never played that at Meijer. I actually did kind of play this grocery store game, but that was at school, later, in Ohio.

AP: Well, what kind of things did you do as a teenager. You were talking about how, in small towns, you needed to find something. I think it’s the same from small town to small town. I talked to some older people, and they try to compare what they did as kids, and they think the kids don’t do the same things, but I think they do. I’m just wondering what kinds of things you would do when you had to create something to do.

MR: We definitely played outside a lot and ran around. We roller bladed and that kind of
thing. This is more when I’m younger than pre-teen, but we would make up a lot of weird hide and seek games and play in the dunes doing that. I know it was this big deal—this was a cool Michigan thing—because I would go around looking, when I was pretty little, for aluminum can, because you get money for the deposit. That was a whole new thing for me.

AP: Right, because we just do that in Michigan. In fact, they reran the Seinfeld last night, I don’t know if you’ve seen this...

MR: I probably have, I love it.

AP: Kramer and Newman get the idea that if they can get a whole bunch of cans, because in New York they’re five cents, and in Michigan they’re ten cents. If they could get a whole truck load of cans, they could drive to Michigan and get ten cents. They were trying to get this whole plan worked out.

MR: That’s so funny, we used to talk about that. Can you do that? Because I used to always talk about that in Pennsylvania.

AP: I don’t know. We used to try to sneak other cans that we’d get if we were on vacation, or iced tea cans. But now they have the machines, and you can’t do that, they only take the ones that will read it. If they’re not made in that state, it won’t read it. It’s only carbonated beverages, if you’ve ever wondered why it’s not the iced tea, only carbonated beverages have a deposit. It’s a strange law. If you wanted us to recycle, why wouldn’t you have everything with a deposit.

MR: So we would go walking up on the dune and hiking around and stuff like that, and it was this big deal if we found a can, because then we would run to the general store
and we could get candy. Because, then, we didn’t have any money in our pockets, and we’d be like, ten cents, ooh, ten pieces of gum.

AP: Bazooka Joe?

MR: Exactly. The general store’s kind of a staple of hanging out. We would always go. I’m so glad it’s still there. We would always go get donuts or get candy and buy fireworks and stupid stuff there. I’m trying to think what else. This road is kind of the scoping area, too. On Fridays and Saturdays, Southshore is the big thing to walk around. It’s so cheesy, people would kind of pull over and talk to you.

AP: Like go cruising?

MR: Yes. Looping through the State Park. Which was funny. I always kind of got a kick out of that.

AP: I think every town does that. I’ve been seeing in recent years news reports on how they’ve been trying to eliminate cruising in certain towns when they know what the strip is.

MR: Oh really? It’s really pretty innocent.

AP: It’s not like anybody even ever meets anybody or switches cars.

MR: Oh, I know. Our stories would consist of: this guy said hi to us. That was a big deal.

AP: Yeah: these guys drove by, and then they stopped and then they left.

MR: What are their names—oh, I don’t know. At home we would just go to dumb diners and hang out and go get ice cream.

AP: Some older people have said that they would just talk and hang out and they think that
kids didn’t do that.

MR: Oh my gosh, we would totally do that.

AP: We would stay up really late and just talk.

MR: That’s still what I do. We just get junk food...

AP: We’d come home late and our parents would be like, what were you doing and we were like, we were just talking.

MR: We would just go to someone’s house and hang out for a long time and eat popcorn and talk.

AP: Or did you ever make bonfires at the beach and sit around the fire?

MR: Actually, I really haven’t. I’ve had more bonfires at home. Maybe you’re not allowed to on the beach.

AP: I don’t know. Because I know where I’m from you can only do it outside city limits. So that could be it, too.

MR: I know we have a couple of times. I think on the fourth of July one time.

AP: Oh, I just remembered something. (laughs)

MR: Oh, go ahead. (laughs)

AP: Well, we used to, every year before our big rival foot ball game in high school, they had a hugh bonfire in one of the parking lots next to our school. That was a school event, come to the fire. The band would play around it and everybody could just run around the fire and hang out.

MR: Oh, that’s fun. That’s kind of a good event.

AP: I guess they had special permission.
MR: I know we had a huge fire this year on New Years, which was fun.

AP: I saved some sparklers, because I wanted to have them on New Years.

MR: Fun!

AP: Because you can never find them in the wintertime. We had them one time with my friends. There was a scavenger hunt we had, and one of the items was sparklers. We thought, who'd going to find sparklers, it was January. We found, and we used them. My friend had this hugh house with iron gates around them. The front yard was covered with snow, and we just had sparklers. It was a busy road and all these cars would come by and honk.

MR: That's perfect.

AP: ...sparklers are so much better in the wintertime...

MR: ...winter... That's such a good idea, I think I'm going to have to do that now. Because it kind of makes more sense. Fourth of July is really beautiful because all of the boats go out.

AP: Do they have the fireworks over the lake?

MR: Yes, they set them off on the end of the pier.

AP: Do they have a couple of different displays?

MR: I think they do, because I know VanAndel, he has them. This one summer we watched them down at the beach, and it's really beautiful because all the boats go out and a lot of them have little Christmas lights around their boats. Then we climbed the dunes, and then we saw two more displays going off over Macatawa. It was neat, three in one.
AP: I remember there were three displays last year. I was confused.

MR: Yes, I don’t know where you go. Where do you sit?

AP: Everyone has there own ideas. You need to go here and...

MR: ...get there early.

AP: What other kinds of things did kids do?

MR: It’s sort of also different, too, when I’d come up, because one of my best friends Brenda would come up and hang out with me, but it was mostly the two of us running around. I really don’t have too many friends my age here. There were a couple people who live in town who I had known since I was three. We’d usually get together a day or a couple of days if they were on vacation while I was here. Actually my neighbors, Alissa and Rachel, I would play with them a lot. They’re one year older and one year younger than me. So the four of us, me, Brenda, Alissa, and Rachel, would all play together at times. Those were really the only people I knew that were my age. So it wasn’t the same as hanging out with your friends at home when there’s all your friends. That’s kind of different as a little kid. So Brenda and I were always making up stupid stuff and building stuff on the beach and we’d collect driftwood and make pictures.

AP: Did you ever collect rocks or sea shells?

MR: Yeah. There aren’t that many shells here, that was always a really big deal if you found shells here. (tape ends) Again, it makes it weird that I hung out with these adults, but I never really felt lack of entertainment.

AP: Right. Well, I think it’s an interesting group.
MR: I played scientist with my cousins. I was remembering that. They have these really cool pieces of grass, you can pull them apart and put them back together. It’s the coolest plant. I definitely need to show you this place. We would look for that stuff. One time when I was seven or eight, I was pretty little, I remember being obsessed with this dead fish that was floating around in the water. I was pushing it around with the paddle and pretending to do all this stuff: "I have this amazing dead fish," and it’s so gross. I thought that was pretty exciting. Simple entertainment.

AP: Was the beach or the water ever polluted a lot?

MR: No, I don’t think so. Well, dead fish can be a sign of that.

AP: It used to be a lot more, I think, because I think a lot of factories had been on the lake, and used that as their reservoir.

MR: That’s probably right.

AP: I know what has happened with some properties on other lake front properties, they pulled the water in to cool their machinery, and they put it out and it’s hot and they can’t do that. So they have to put it in holding tanks until it’s back down to its normal temperature.

MR: But I know that Lake Erie was really disgusting, but it’s really been cleaned up a lot. ___ ________, it’s a state park with beaches. When I was little I just remember it being disgusting. There were tons of dead fish, and it’s really bad. People are swimming now. You can, it’s OK.

AP: My friend from high school, her grandmother had a really nice house on the lake over there. So we would go out there and here these people had spent all this money
for these great lake front properties and you’d walk out on their beach, and there are just all this dead fish washed up on shore. So in some parts you’re like, oh, it’s so nice. Then you walk down another part, and you’re like, oh, it stinks. I think they’ve been trying to clean it up. Someone told me a long time ago they used to call Lake Mac, Lake Macasewer. It’s come a long way. She said also that it doesn’t have a light sand bottom, so it was always dark because of that… That’s when you play all of your best games, in the summer. You have to make up all this stuff. Even where I lived, you would go home for summer, and nobody from my school lived by me, so there were two other girls in the neighborhood, and everyday we would do something together, so we had to make it up.

MR: I remember one game that we played was called "Boredom," made out of desperation, which is kind of a variation on Hide and Go Seek. Which was really fun at our neighbor’s, because this house doesn’t have a circle. This was rainy day game when we couldn’t go outside. But their house is one that you can go around in a whole circle. Plus they had a run through closet upstairs. It was a pretty big cottage, so we would hide and run around in there and play until this "Boredom Monster" would come after us. That was the person who was it, the Boredom Monster. That was pretty fun. The space between these two houses was really close, and our bedrooms, we talked through the windows. I don’t know how we got each other’s attention, or if we just tended to wake up at the same time, then we’d yell across, "Rachel." We always wanted to rig up a pulley across. We tried to throw things across, but it doesn’t work very well. That was really fun. We used to put on little shows and
make up shows. We would dress up. I remember one time we were watching
ballroom dancing, and Brenda and I ended up dressing up, and we came down and
did this whole thing for my dad and Julie. We were so silly.

AP: Did you ever do puppet shows?

MR: Yes. I know that we did. We played with our dolls pretty hard core. We were
always making up stuff for them. I remember trying to draw sets and making them
little houses and that kind of thing. I had a ton of puppets, and I know we definitely
played with them.

AP: We would take these little Fisher Price action figure people, not the roly poly one,
but they had furniture and cars, and we used to make houses and floor plans with
them with Legos.

MR: Oh, yeah, completely. We used to spend so much time setting up, and then we’d
play with it for a few minutes.

AP: Did you have Legos?

MR: Yes, I loved them.

AP: I know my parents bought Legos because they thought they were so neat.

MR: My parents still own them! The other thing we’d do is we’d throw blankets up in the
air. This was for these little creatures that we had. Do you remember those little
puff balls that had eyes on them, they were really weird.

AP: Yes, they had feet and they would stick on things, and they would have little antennas
sometimes.

MR: We made some of those, too, and we called them our little creatures. We would
throw these blankets up in the air, and all the little folds would become their dens and houses, and they would wander around the mountains of this blanket.

AP: I had a shelf above my bed and I had two of those stuck upside down on the bottom of the shelf. I remember those. Those are pre-Troll dolls.

MR: My dad put these big pieces of paper on the wall by our beds, so we could draw on the walls, supposedly. That was fun, we would write all this stuff. We had separate rooms, when Brenda would come, but we always ended up sleeping in the same room half the time, anyway. But Legos rock, those are the coolest toy.

AP: Now I look at the new ones... I remember I got the castle set when I was little for my birthday, the first, yellow one. I was really excited. My brother said, you don't really think they're going to get you anything that big. He was psyching me out. But they got it for me. It had little horses and knights, but you had to build the horses out of all these little pieces. Now the horses come just as horses.

MR: Kind of not pure Legos. We're purists with Legos. It's kind of already made for you.

AP: They have these huge branches and trees. Now I bet the little men aren't going to come apart, either.

MR: Those men that had those Swiss cheese legs.

AP: My sister collects now, one series of them. Ships. You get the whole hull of the boat. I'm like, I think you should have to build that all out of Legos. And we only had like three different colors.

MR: That's right, because now there's pink.
AP: The castle are gray.

MR: Yes, I've seen those. They have the whole pattern thing going on. It's crazy.

AP: Now they have surreal sets, so they'll show you how to make things that aren't anything, they're just wired things.

MR: They're trying to say, "Stop making ____?____ stuff."

AP: They have pieces with eyes on them and all different colors and arches and they show you to make really wired things like a "flying dragon house."

MR: It works. I remember climbing up on the dune. This is so funny, we thought we were so bad. We were little. There were these other kids, these boys at the top. Their shoes were at the bottom of the dune, and we thought we were so bad because we filled them with sand and sort of through them in the woods a little bit. That was it. But we were like, "That was so bad." We were eight. "Uh oh, we better run fast." We had to run away. Also, this is kind of funny, I don't know if anyone's told this, there's supposedly an alien landing site behind... There's this nut guy.

AP: I'll tell you what I have heard. I was watching something on A&E one night, a special on aliens, and they spent twenty minutes on Holland, Michigan, talking about a sighting of these three lights, they thought they were three hover crafts. One of the meteorologists tracked them on radar in the same paths that people described. There were three things that would hover, and one would disappear and be over here, and then the other two would join it in a triangle. So they think it's the first hard core evidence that they had, although others dispute it. But they interviewed all these people on the lake that said they saw them over the lake. They spent twenty minutes
of this hour long show on Holland.

MR: Wow. Were you freaking out? That’s so fun, I want to see that. Well, this guy really believed. I’m not sure, I think he lived somewhere around here. For a while, there was all this weird stuff up behind my dad’s house and in the dunes, just weird symbols of birds and triangles.

AP: Written in the sand?

MR: No. Do you know those Dutch hex signs? They’re kind of like that, on wooden circles and stuff like that, and nailed up in trees, and there’d be these weird ropes and all this weird stuff. I just remember pictures of birds, and maybe triangles, which would make sense if it was like that thing. Actually, I think there might have been a Dutch hex sign, maybe I’m making that up, but I kind of remember that. Just really random stuff, so we would go up there and explore, we thought that was a big deal. I remember one time this guy yelling at us, and he was like, get out of there, which was stupid, because it’s just the dunes. But we ran, and we were all afraid. There’s also, some guy had a million bird houses, too, but I don’t know if that’s connected to the alien landing site. (laughs)

AP: I know kids have these characters in their neighborhoods, like people you don’t even know, but there’s this one guy living in his house alone and you make up a name for him. Were there any legendary people?

MR: I’m trying to think. I know this one kid was the made up bad kid. He had this crazy red hair and he was always getting in trouble. We’d be like, that’s Andy, and he’s being that bad kid again. We’d see him and be like, we better take the upper
boardwalk, like if he was on the lower boardwalk. Then part of me thinks, uh oh, probably the people they talked about and made into the characters were the people I was hanging out with: Max, my dad...

AP: Your dad and Julie hang out with a lot of the artists from Hope and the area, did you get to know a lot of them?

MR: There are a lot of students. In fact, we just saw this one woman, Elona VanGent, who I remember. She’s probably about Julie’s age. But when she was still a student, she gave me this huge canvas and let me play with all her stuff. They were really neat that way. That was really fun. I knew Billy Mayer and Del Michel. Sometimes it was weird because I would hear all these stories about people, so maybe I’d meet them one time, so I don’t know if I really knew them, but you felt like you kind of did. So I’d be like, oh, I kind of know who that is. Or I’d be like, where did you get that thing.

AP: Do you think any of them had an influence on them?

MR: Yes, I think I would definitely say...

AP: I don’t know if we stated it, but you were an art major, and you’re studying studio art.

MR: I would say yes. That’s another thing from summers, I remember coming up here and between making up games, we made stuff a lot. That’s partly those people and partly my dad and Julie and Brenda. We would always draw silly stuff, or we had this whole box of wood we could glue together and make these weird sculptures. So it wasn’t like, OK, now it’s time to do art work, but there was just all this stuff to
mess around with. When I went to college, I had no clue what I was going to major in. But I’m sure just that always wanting to make stuff thing...

AP: And probably just the acceptance. For most kids who want any major in any of the arts, it’s really scary, and most parents are like, what are you doing?

MR: Disapproving. Yes, because some people I know who suddenly decided they were going to do that, and they were freaked out to even tell their parents, which is sad. I feel really lucky not to have them be like that, have them be thinking what you do is OK. I think that’s a huge influence, just having some support all the time. Plus, my dad and I took a drawing class here together one time. John Saurer, he was a former Hope student, and he was helping with the summer theater. That was another thing, I used to do that a lot, go to shows.

AP: The HSRT stuff? I think they’re just opening for this season.

MR: We’re going to see Annie, I think.

AP: I hope the theater is done. Last year I got season tickets, that was fun. This year, I’m probably going to usher. I’m kind of mad, they didn’t send me anything, though.

MR: You know what, they didn’t send my dad anything.

AP: Did you have any favorite shows?

MR: Oh gosh, so many things. I think it was Merry Wives of Windsor, and we still have these certain lines memorized, which is just silly, because we saw it when we were so young. Peter Pan, and I loved Twelfth Night. We also would go to the children’s outdoor stuff, that was fun.

AP: Were did they do the children’s stuff.
MR: Centennial Park, one time they did it there.

AP: Did they ever do anything at the amphitheater in Castle Park? It's like all stone, like a Greek amphitheater.

MR: I think I might have seen something there when I was really small. One time I know they did it at this house in a neighborhood around Lake Mac. I don't know why they did it there, in someone's front yard basically. That was kind of random. But with John Saurer and the shows... Sometimes we'd go up to the Ox Bow, and they'd sort of have this little arts camp thing, not planned, but just a lot of fun stuff like that to do. My dad and I went and drew with him, and we went and made clay stuff. At Ox Bow they had this one day thing that you could go and do that. I really like seeing the Aerial Dance Company. That's really fun. I've gone a lot to see those shows.

AP: I've only really talked to one person about the artistic community here. It's not what people bring up, which is surprising, because it's a lot stronger than other average towns.

MR: It really is. That's a real attraction for me.

AP: I don't know why it is. I don't know if Hope has a lot to do with it, because a lot of the artists are connected with and teach through Hope. I don't know if it's having that campus here.

MR: I'm sure that doesn't hurt.

AP: But even the stuff for kids, I think, there's a lot of stuff.

MR: There's a lot of stuff, and that art building downtown. And Saugatuck's sort of an arts community, too.
AP: There are a lot of galleries around, that towns this size don't usually have, Sagautuck and Holland, too.

MR: For me that seems sort of like there's this Christian Reformed Church, and then there's all these art things. It seems contradictory sometimes. I'm surprised that there's really a lot of cool art stuff around here.

AP: Did you ever feel the religious impact when you were around here?

MR: I think I was pretty apart from it. I probably more heard just complaints about it, to tell you the truth. Just when it's seeming to infringe on the arts and that kind of thing.

[Jack Ridl brings out a photo album with a picture of Mimi as a child at Thrifty Acres on the pony ride she described]

MR: Hey, it's Thrifty Acres. That's me. Oh my gosh, that's hilarious. There you go.

AP: That's the one penny ride.

MR: There it is. This is my dad's old house on Lake Mac. I was very afraid of spiders when I was little. That was my big thing. I'd always want to play in the woods and on the wood pile, and find cool stuff, but then I'd find a spider and freak out.

AP: It's such a cultural phenomenon [Meijer]. I talked to someone and she'd go at different time, like one time in the summer she went at 9 or 10 in the morning, and there were all these retired people around the coffee bar, and then you go at Friday night, and she was like, you can get a Spanish lesson. If you go really late at night, you see college students. The week everybody moves in, all you see are college students.
MR: I forgot sheets, duh.

AP: I need paper and a little sticky hook and a phone cord.

MR: And now that I’m here, I need these pens that have eyes that stick off the end of them.

AP: And you can get it all... What is it like with your dad’s work, because he writes a lot about spending time with you? What is that like?

MR: I don’t know if I can process all of that. It’s neat. He’s really low key about his writing, though. I don’t know if that’s just around me, or in general. But it’s sort of this thing in the background. It’s neat when I read stuff. It’s sort of weird. He was always telling me, especially when I was younger: this is kind of about you, but it’s also not. You could sort of start freaking out, just because of the concentration of a poem. They’re always kind of true and not true. He was, when I was younger, always making sure that just because he’s writing these sad poems, not think that he’s constantly sad, so I wouldn’t internalize these things and think, oh no. He was really good at checking in with me about these kind of things. But he tells really great stories. That was a big thing. We had these bed time stories, and he’d tell me these Charlie the Giraffe stories. They still appear every once in a while when needed. That was just great, because he’s a fabulous story teller. That was really fun, because I rode on this giraffe. I still have this place in my heart for giraffes, always, because of the Charlie the Giraffe stories. Sometimes we would write stuff together and make up silly things. Not necessarily poems, just making up stuff. Those would be like he was telling them, but I would make up little pieces, so it was back and
forth, that kind of a thing.

AP: We tend to talk to people a lot who are older, and we say, what was it like as a kid growing up, and they think way back, and then they all tell me about how ice was delivered. So, why wouldn’t we want to preserve these things now. There are parts of it that are so similar to what kids always did. A lot of times people tend to think of a different generation, they think...

MR: Right, that they don’t do that anymore. The one thing I think is different about this place, I feel like as I’ve gotten older, more people came here. This is less when I’m here, but when I’m home, this is like that mystery spot where Meridith goes for a little while. Except for Brenda, who would come visit me and be my playmate and have a lot of fun here for a few weeks, none of my other friends had ever been here. Of course, my mom had. But she really hadn’t for a really long time, because we would meet in Toledo, so it was sort of like this total warp zone, which, of course, is not for the people that are here, but it’s like these pretty separate worlds. Then, as I got a little bit older, I drove up here with a couple other friends, or someone from school, and it was sort of like, these worlds are getting thrown together and getting mixed up a little. It’s neat to take people out of context. It’s like when someone you knew from college suddenly comes home with you, and now they’re with my friends from high school. But I felt like this was sort of this little oasis where I went. This discovery thing is kind of fun when someone new gets to come. Which, I guess, is anyone’s vacation spot, where they get to show someone else they care about.

AP: Do you think there’s a generation gap? That’s one of the questions we usually ask.
You spent a lot of time with grown ups, too. Do you think you relate differently than your friends do to other ages?

MR: Maybe. I definitely think there are differences. But part of me feels like it’s just personality differences. Maybe it’s just that I have nutty older people to hang around with. Like, my grandmother goes to Bruce Springsteen concerts. I don’t know if there’s a generation gap, she’s hipper than me. (laughs) I think what happens is when people don’t really relate to one another and they’re not really together. I do agree that there are certain things that so many people do, that are really similar. Little kids still like to run around.

AP: Do you think there’s a generation X? Do you buy into that?

MR: What is it? I want to know.

AP: What is your perception of it? Somebody used the term Gen-X the other day, and it took me way too long to get what they meant, and they were way older than me.

MR: That’s so funny.

AP: I don’t know what people think of our generation. Sometimes I wonder how they perceive it. I think it’s so different than how we perceive it.

MR: I think it is. I’m always confused. Who falls into the Gen-X thing? It seems like that’s supposed to be a little older than us.

AP: It seems they’ve always said it’s twenty-something, but they’ve been saying that for a while.

MR: Since we’ve been sixteen. I think we’re kind of on the tail end of that, but what does that mean? You kind of think Gen-X, and i guess it’s slackers, that kind of picture I
get. If you want to say, generation gap, I do think there’s a difference in terms of jobs. I sort of feel that in both ways. In some ways, like different opportunities for women. That is just different. I’m sure my grandmother wasn’t even considering certain things that maybe we would.

AP: I think there are some major changes that they don’t even recognize or appreciate. Like just the fact that we will have very different types of jobs, and a different kind of job turnover. Maybe they wouldn’t have the same job all their life because a factory closed. But we have to have a different amount of education to get different kinds of jobs that didn’t exist. We’re one of the first generation that is looking at not having that financial stability that our parents had.

MR: That’s what I was just going to say.

AP: Which has never really happened. Everyone’s been doing better. We don’t have that...

MR: …even maybe as an option. So, I guess that is kind of the generation gap.

AP: I don’t know if that makes the perception that we are slackers, because maybe we’re not sticking with a job or pulling in as much money, but I feel like they don’t understand how hard it is.

MR: That’s where I kind of tend to be in defense of the slacker, because the whole self-made man kind of thing isn’t really going to happen as much.

AP: I think the way the economy is set up, it really can’t anymore.

MR: In some ways, some kids have done a ton of stuff by a really age and know a lot of stuff and are really intelligent, but it’s really confusing about what’s going to actually
make you make it.

AP: Do you run into people that are like, oh, an art major? What are you going to do?
But I kind of feel like they say that with every single major. I get that with English
major. And, well, philosophy. Then they’re like, history major, psychology,
anything, what are they going to do with that. Like they think a biology major is so
much better.

MR: Totally. Yes. That’s so funny because, in fact, I was thinking that, because I felt the
exact same thing, when I chose to be an art major. But then I just went through all
the majors, and it’s not any more or less practical than if you said... I think biology
or chemistry were the only ones that really tripped me up, because if you’re going to
be a doctor.

AP: But then I think about all the people that say they’re pre-med and don’t get into
medical school.

MR: There are tons.

AP: Or law school. So, great, you can go all through college and say, I’m going to be a
lawyer, but if you don’t make it into a school and then pass your bar and do really
well on it, you’re not going to do it. Then what are you going to do. It’s like,
psychology, if you can’t go on in school, there’s not as much you can do with it. So
it’s kind of warped. I always try to...

MR: Try to rationalize: so, it’s OK if I’m an artist and don’t know what the heck I’m
doing.

AP: Right, if I learn how to write, I can market myself.
MR: But don’t you kind of think there is a certain, unless you want to be a doctor and you are going to be a doctor and you become a doctor, like those ceratin nameable jobs, like a teacher, I feel like you can’t have this sole preparation for a job.

AP: I think it’s harder to qualify what success is. Like, you’re successful if: fill in the blank. I think it’s so different for a lot of us. If we’re happy and we’re stable, now we feel successful.

MR: Yes. Do you think part of it, too, maybe is so many of us have so much stuff already. When I think about the sole possessions my grandmother would have had starting out.

AP: I know, going to college, I lived in an apartment two years in college, my mom was like, oh, you need pots and pans and dishes and measuring cups and a cake pan, and she buys it.

MR: So even before you have your own place, you have a lot of things.

AP: We’re starting out a lot older. My mom got married at 19.

MR: That’s a whole other generation gap, too. I think about that a lot. Even when I was little, I kind of thought after college, that would be when you probably would get married. It was like an oppressive thing, I know that I kind of thought about it, because that’s when your parents did, or before.

AP: My mom looks at friends of mine getting married now, and, "They’re so young." They’re not. They’re 22. Mom, you had two kids. "I know, but they seem young." There’s a switch in values. People are getting married in late 20s, and a lot more people are living together. I don’t know what you think about that? People from a
MR: That's interesting, because when I start thinking about these things, I'm totally naive to say that there's no generation gap. There are a lot of differences. In terms of daily dealings with people, I still have a lot of fun. But if you started pinpointing them on, how do you feel about this or this or this, I think we would be all over the board. I even feel that with my grandmothers. I have quite a good time with them, but I'm not sure, if I sat them down and asked them about certain things, we'd just be coming from different directions, I think. But then when you start realizing how different, of course, my grandmother got married and then had kids, and wouldn't have even thought about living with her husband before they were married. On the other hand, then I'm really impressed when older people can see how things are different. That's a huge round of things they've seen that have switched.

AP: I was thinking about this the other day. I was glancing at these magazines at the checkout, and they'll have articles about living with your boyfriend, and I was thinking about how different that was. That's just so common. That's what all the magazines would talk about. Then, just how few years ago, they wouldn't put anything in there like that at all. Or my house mate has these bridal magazines, and they have all these different sections like, second marriage, bride and groom are already living together marriage, and all the different protocol you should follow for those different scenarios.

MR: The new etiquette.
AP: It really blew my mind, because I was thinking about what kind of bride book my mom would look at when she got married. She was 19 when she got married, and she couldn’t even have a champaign toast at her wedding, they only let her have punch. She went with her future mother-in-law to visit my dad one time and they were in a hotel room and they were going to watch a home movie he had taken, and there were no couches, so that sat down next to each other on a double bed, and she just freaked out. I was thinking about how different that is.

MR: That’s a switch. You can see how all the things just seem so bad by the old codes, but I don’t feel like it is.

AP: I think something interesting you mentioned earlier was about starting out with more stuff. I’ve noticed a trend that a lot more kids our age want to start out with the quality of life they had with their parents in their parents’ household. I was talking to a woman the other day my mother’s age, they got married during Vietnam, and they moved into a trailer together. We seem to want to start out with more.

MR: It’s like these weird things. In some ways, people are saying, you need to achieve more and you’re in this slacker mode. On the other had, you already have as much or more when we started out. So how can we be expected to have more.

AP: But then a lot of people do expect... My friends that are getting married, and they’ll have showers, and they’ll have this list, so they’re like, here’s the item number, buy me this. That’s something that changed a lot. They used to have small showers with themes, like kitchen stuff, and they’d just say, they’re going to decorate their home in this color or that color. Where now you don’t even have a home. So now you’re
like, I want this spatula, and I want this air bake cookie sheet. I was kind of on this kick. Next year, I'm going to a strange city, I'm starting a new life, I don't even have friends there, I'm going to have my new apartment, how come nobody buys me stuff?

MR: And have your own shower. Yeah, everyone who starts out should just get some stuff.

AP: We're putting marriage off more and more, and the point was kind of like, you're starting out. My parents have younger cousins or nieces or nephews getting married, and they feel funny about getting them shower gifts, because they usually get them stuff for their home, but they've already set up their household.

MR: That's true. It does seem like everything takes longer to start out. There are some things that it seems people grow up faster, but then these other things...

AP: I still look at my friends my age and I think, they're getting married, what are they doing.

MR: Right. I still don't feel in that position. I guess it just depends on who you are. I feel like I was a little kid for quite a while. But then again, I always feel that, I don't feel as old as I am.