

Whatever Happened to Beth (Holden) Tobias

Then	Capsule Summary	Now
	<p>Born in: New York City Grew Up in: Bronx, Rockville Centre, Flushing (all NY) High School: Flushing High School Undergraduate Degree: BA Math, Queens College 1968 Entered Purdue: Fall, 1968 Purdue Degrees: - MS CS May 1970 Lived/Worked in: Poughkeepsie NY & environs, Austin, TX (current residence) Married to: Kent Burghard (Beaver) 1971-1980 Paul Tobias 1982-present</p>	
<p>Purdue Highlights</p>	<p>Post-Purdue Highlights</p>	
<p>I came to Purdue in Fall, 1968 having discovered as a math undergraduate that I was not a mathematician. I had however taken and loved a FORTRAN II course. That and a half machine language/half numerical analysis course were the only background in CS that I had before entering Purdue.</p> <p>My assistantship was as a consultant and I quickly learned that the only truly useful question to ask somebody was “what did you change”. They invariably protested that the change that they had made could not possibly be the reason their code no longer worked. They were invariably wrong.</p> <p>Since I had gone to college at a commuter school, I learned as much from my years at Purdue about life and being on my own as I did about computers. My most lasting memories are not of the coursework, which although providing some fundamentals soon became obsolete, but of the wonderful group of people who both helped each other and enjoyed each other..</p>	<p>After Purdue, I went to work for IBM in the Mid-Hudson Valley and stayed there in different division, locations and capacities (development and management) until 1993. I variously worked on a graphics package (before graphics packages existed), an indexed access method, device allocation, system recovery systems and some others I no longer remember.</p> <p>In 1993, when IBM had its first and best retirement offer, my husband (a statistician at IBM) got one of those “do you know anybody who would be interested” calls from Sematech in Austin, TX. He came home and asked me what I thought – and what I thought was that I was sick and tired of winter. I’d done enough 360s on ice to last the rest of my life. So, he took the job and I went to work for the City of Austin. Again, I acted in various departments and capacities, though in this case almost entirely as management. Over time I managed programming development of systems related to land development (such as a GIS system and permitting) and design of networks and security.</p> <p>I retired in 2004 (my husband had retired in 2003) and have kept busy ever since. We do a lot of traveling (any excuse to avoid Austin in the summer will do). I play a lot of duplicate bridge and soon after I retired several of us decided to form a small corporation to rent a permanent space (rather than bouncing around from one city facility, church, etc. to another). I was president of the corporation for 6 years before I decided I’d better step down before I became “president for life”. I’m still on the board of directors and I create and maintain relevant databases & spreadsheets and audit accounting sheets, etc. so I’m still very busy with the administrative side of bridge</p> <p>I’m also involved with a “third age” (read: “retired folk”) education group associated with the University of Texas. I’ve served as both membership chair and secretary. In an attempt to do something worthwhile, I also do reading for the blind & dyslexic – mostly math textbooks. Overall, I’m baffled as to how I ever had time to work.</p>	

