

COSMIC CHRONICLE #5

2003

Mario and James moved into the back house, later to become another in the series of troublesome tenants.

*Big bunker-buster bombs batter Baghdad.
Powerful passions provoked
Alliteration abounds among anchors*

The Iraq attack

Not only is it considered wrong and unjustifiable by most to initiate war, but it puts one at a disadvantage. The attacker must go to the attackee's home ground. And, thoughts of being hailed as a liberator by most of the people are delusional. No one wants their territory invaded. Even if they intellectually believe the result will be an improvement, ridding themselves of a hated dictator, resentment remains.

Iraq was portrayed as a threat by Bush and Cheney, inventing the suspicion of "weapons of mass destruction", and demanding inspection. Sadaam was reluctant to prove he didn't have any, as unknown weapons, even if nonexistent, were a regional deterrence. So, the Bush lie enabled him to invade Iraq, That was foolish. It further alienated Arab nations, destabilized the region, and gained nothing, not even for Iraq itself.

The French were right-- it was a bad idea to abandon unfinished negotiation for inspections, and to ignore the UN. The UN has a major advantage in influencing nations: it has an implied legitimate authority that may be considered acceptable to defer to. No combination of single nations can claim this, and are much more likely to be opposed.

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My TLC taxi became a 2000 Daewoo Leganza.

Would Hunter S. Thompson drive one?

Is a Leganza a French female gonzo? A relative of the garbanzo? Or, an extravaganza of legs?

Is the information superhighway paved with virtual concrete? Does it have a multimedia median? Software shoulders?

April, 2003

Entropy in the non-physical world: Love, loyalty, and character fall apart with time.

Shari drops the bomb. I was aware of her online virtual infidelity, but she followed that by departing to Denmark for a Dane. It was expected, but disappointing anyway. She feels no responsibility for her own actions, thinking only of herself. She is unwilling to expend any effort to make life better-- it has to be handed to her. Could I have been so wrong from the beginning, or has she changed, drastically, from the woman I married?

2/2005 Started at Desertrose

Finally, a good dispatching position. Unlike the previous limo/towncar companies, D/R wasn't fly-by-night or about to fail.

9/2005 Visited Pat in Tampa

This was my first visit to the Tampa-St. Petersburg area since my birth. At that time, I was unable to get to know the area. This time I was able to look around at the unique landscape and seascape. Bob, Pat's husband, was a pleasant and friendly guy. I hadn't interacted with Pat much since we were children.

A year or 2 later, a tragedy occurred when Bob killed himself. I never found out the exact reason. Maybe Pat knows, and didn't want to say.

10/2005 Had breakfast with Jill.

2009

On The Cosmic Road

This the tale of cosmic travels. Every trip, even if it includes some of the same places, is a little different. It has been said one cannot cross the same river twice. That is also true of crossing the land. Both water and land may look the same, but they are not.

2009 HANNIBAL HIGH SCHOOL REUNION TRIP

I flew from Phoenix to Kansas City on Oct. 14, via Southwest Airlines, where Geoff picked me up. We went to his house in Lee's Summit, where we could visit until I headed for the reunion in Hannibal.

FRIDAY, NOT AS PLANNED (October 16)

Some days just don't go the way you plan them. That's why I try not to plan them. I had reserved a rental car starting Friday morning at 10:00, thinking it best to get an early start on the 4-hour drive to Hannibal. I woke up a little after 11:00, and proceeded to coffee myself to full consciousness by around noon. Whenever I sleep later than planned, I tell myself *I must have needed that*. I'm probably right.

The car rental people, as promised, came to pick me up when I called them. However, they, unlike most businesses, seem to have a hangup with debit cards. In addition to the usual driver's license and proof of insurance, they wanted proof of employment, and proof that I had a plane ticket back to Phoenix. For the latter, they had to take me back to my son's house where I'd left my airline printout, then back to the rental place. Finally, after all paperwork was duly noted and copied, and they were reasonably sure I wasn't a terrorist or car thief, they introduced me to my little red Aveo. It was perfect, red being my favorite color...except for one thing: the gas-door wouldn't stay closed. That was a problem. I didn't want to delay even longer while they called in a specialist to perform a gas-door transplant, but I also didn't want to drive around with my gas-door flapping in the breeze. I knew what would happen-- I'd be driving along, looking cool in my bright redness and drivers on my right would be pointing and yelling *Your gas-hole!*, and the drivers on my left would misunderstand that and assume I did something wrong. I didn't want that. Suddenly, I had an idea. I opened the driver's door and found the little lever that you pull to open the gas door. I pushed it back down. Miraculously, the gas door would now stay closed. The car rental people were amazed and grateful. I drove away.

By about 16:30 I was packed and ready to go. The drive to Hannibal went smoothly enough. Interstate 70 has a speed limit of 70 mph, which means most people do 80. Things slow down when you turn north at Kingdom City (capital of the only county that never officially rejoined the Union after the Civil War), because the highways are 2-lane, and pass through Mexico and other small towns on the way. At New London I join the famous Highway 61 (Bob Dylan wrote and sang a song about it), and cruise on in to Hannibal.

Right there on the highway was my hotel, the Day Sinn. (4070 Market Street) I checked in and received 2 magnetic-card type door keys. When I slid one in the slot, all I got was a little red light and no entry. I tried the other key, then each of them in all possible

positions. If this had been sex it would have been good foreplay, but the door, she wasn't responding.

Finally I walked back to the office. The clerk said maybe my cellphone killed the magnetic strip. He zapped 2 new cards, which I kept far from my phone on the way back. They didn't work either. On the third try the clerk created keys that let me enter. Perhaps room 133 is sitting atop an electromagnetic vortex that wreaks havoc on modern technology. I was soon to discover more evidence of that.

The inn had promised wireless internet access, and I had counted on having it for some information about the reunion among other things, but though the signal was detected, it would never connect me to the internet. For the moment I was disconnected from the world.

By the time I got ready and reached the Quality Inn out on Highway 36, it was a little after 11:00 pm, some 4 or 5 hours after the designated time for it to start. Yes, I was late to the Ball. I thought sure it would be ongoing til 1 or 2 am, whichever Missouri bar closing is these days, but it seems many of my classmates think they're too old to stay up late, or else they just got bored. There were just a few sitting and standing around. I was issued my official ID badge.

Reunions are always slightly confusing, the more so as years advance, because not everyone resembles their former selves enough to be sure who they are. The name tags are useful, of course, and no one needs to feel awkward about peering at that first instead of their real face, nor by being peered at in return. Some, of course (out of over 250 class members) you didn't know to begin with, so you certainly wouldn't know them now, but you have to check to find that out, too.

Tomorrow, as Scarlet O'Hara once said, will be another day, complete with a riverboat ride and a chance to see people in broad daylight.

Famous Hannibal Natives

Jake Beckley, Born August 4, 1867 in Hannibal major league baseball player 1888 to 1907-- Most putouts by a first baseman (23,709) A career .308 hitter, he was elected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1971

James Carroll Beckwith, Born: September 23, 1852 in Hannibal. Impressionist artist specializing in landscape, portrait and genre paintings. Among his paintings was a semi-nude portrait of Evelyn Nesbit, a beautiful model and actress who led a very active, tumultuous life

Margaret Brown, passenger on the RMS Titanic, the unsinkable Molly Brown.

George Poage, first African American athlete to win a medal in the Olympic Games, winning the bronze in both the 200-yard and 400-yard hurdles. He later became a teacher and head of the English department at segregated Charles Sumner High School in St. Louis

Larry Thompson became Deputy US Attorney General under President George W Bush

Blanche Kelso Bruce, Born into slavery in Prince Edward County, Virginia to Polly Bruce, a Black woman who served as a domestic slave. His father was his master, Pettis Perkinson, a white Virginia planter. he gained his freedom by moving to Kansas as soon as hostilities broke out in the Civil War. *In 1864, he moved to Hannibal, Missouri, where he established a school for Black children.* In 1868, during Reconstruction, he moved to Mississippi, eventually become the first Black man to serve a full term as Senator from 1875 to 1881.

This reunion featured a riverboat ride on the Mississippi.

Sandy, who had been a classmate at Clear Creek elementary as well as high school, owned and ran the tour boat. It was a beautiful experience. I would have enjoyed traveling down the river all the way to New Orleans if I could.

Hannibal was having a Folk Festival as well, featuring all sorts of traditional crafts, food, and music. I especially enjoyed Carl and his wife both playing the hammered dulcimer, a unique and pleasant musical instrument.

2009 had been an eventful and meaningful year. President Obama began his first term. He strongly condemned Bush and Cheney’s use of torture on detainees. He also began working on what would become the best healthcare reform so far: the Affordable Care Act.

Israel bombed Gaza to achieve “peace and tranquility” according to them. People called for a cease-fire. It was a smaller massacre than would happen later, in 2023.

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For the next two years, I didn’t travel, mostly for economic reasons. Then, in 2013, I met my traveling companion, Anne. We met, actually, in virtual space, also known as Facebook, discussing genealogy. Becoming friends, we decided to meet, go places, and see things.

COSMIC TRIP 2013

November is an odd time for a vacation, but I'd spent four years looking for the right time. No, it really had nothing to do with time. What I needed was a motive. I could have taken two weeks off each of the last three years and gone anywhere, alone. That just didn't have enough appeal.

I'm used to being alone. I'd even say I prefer it most of the time, for

the freedom of it. But there's something about traveling just to enjoy the trip that calls for a companion. It doesn't have to be a sexual relationship; just a friend, someone to whom you can say, 'Hey, did you see that?' So, when the opportunity to share a vacation with Anne, who also felt the need for someone to travel with, I announced to my boss, "I'd like to take November off". After a moment of silence, his reply was "Are you serious?" I knew that a whole month would be an inconvenience in a small office, so I compromised on the middle two weeks.

Day 1: Saturday 11/9

The Heard Museum has a very extensive collection of native American artifacts and art, much of it beautiful and fascinating. They remind one visually of the dynamic civilizations, in which art and useful designs coexisted harmoniously. What struck me most, though, was the reminder of one of the cruelest and most culturally devastating practices toward the Indian tribes: the Indian Schools.

It was devastating enough that Indians were defeated by the land-greed and superior technology of the European invaders, but then the proud nations were further insulted by attempts to deprive them of their past, and the way of life that had served them well for many centuries. The Indian Schools were intended to strip the children of their culture and religion, and "Americanize" and Christianize them. They were severely punished for even speaking their own language to one another. Many were no doubt eager to learn what their conquerors knew, and how they thought. Some already had, seeking the knowledge on their own, seeing the need to understand for the good of their people. But the price of the schools was far too high. Education should expand the mind, not brainwash it.

Dinner

After knowing of Durant's Restaurant for 20 years, and taking customers to and from there in my cab countless times, I finally ate there. My friend and I entered its legendary "humble rear entrance", which takes one through the kitchen area, and had a delicious meal. It is far from cheap, but there is a wide range of prices, some almost affordable, and some only for those with too much money who want to eat too much good steak. The experience was worth it, though. Durants isn't elitist or restrictive; my ultimate in formality is a clean pair of jeans. The service seemed genuinely friendly, and the food was excellent and unpretentious.

Day 2: Sunday 11/10

Talliesin West, whether one is interested in architecture or the unique, renegade personality of Frank Lloyd Wright himself, is enjoyable to tour. Our guide was not one to idolize FLW. He clearly appreciated his creative achievements, while acknowledging the drawbacks to his designs, which tend to dominate the occupants in their own living

space.

The ideal of a building belonging in its environment can be best understood by actually seeing one of his designs like Taliesin West and its surroundings.

At the Desert Botanical gardens, the designer is nature itself, evolving tough plants for a harsh dry climate, plants which still possess beauty both because and in spite of their toughness. Added to that just the day before is a collection of glass sculptures, blending and contrasting nicely with the cacti and other flora.

Monte's La Casa Vieja, a restaurant in the oldest house in Tempe, serves history with its steak, and does both with good taste.

Day 3, Monday 11/11

We rented a white Toyota and set off for the coast, during which transition I managed to leave my phone in my car, over 350 miles behind. I wasn't expecting any phone calls, but its camera function would have been handier than that of my tablet, which only photographs what faces the screen.

The Del Mar Inn has its good and bad points. I can't smoke in the room, but it has a balcony.. There is a bit of a walk to the beach, but the exercise is good for us.

Day 4: Tuesday 11/12

Fog and clouds dampened the beach experience, but the area has good restaurants, including a Peruvian one that serves a very nicely spiced raw halibut. Not all raw fish is Japanese, it seems.

Day 5: Wednesday 11/13

Day 6: Thursday 11/14

These two sunny days were perfect for walking on the beach, a fine, smooth sand, waves washing in to cool the feet and leave intricate patterns on the sand as they recede, sea birds searching for food and conversing among themselves, unafraid of the people walking by. The surf was tame, a good place for young beginners to practice. A beach-side restaurant has outdoor tables as well as indoor. While I munched my bagels and lox, we watched fowl behavior. Sea birds are very social. After all, one good tern deserves another. They seemed to be holding meetings or lectures. One would stand facing a group of others. Was it a school of fishing, or a political rally? It was hard to tell.

The Del Mar Inn advertises a bit deceptively when it claims to be "2 blocks from the beach", not mentioning that that distance is as the crow flies. One cannot walk to the beach as the crow flies, because there are buildings, a cliff, and a railroad track to cross, so a walking crow would

travel 6 blocks north, then 2 blocks west to reach the beach. Perhaps it's all for the best, since the additional exercise is beneficial, especially because the walk takes us by several excellent restaurants. Vietnamese curry chicken is quite different from the Indian variety, but delicious in its own way.

This vacation has included a lot more restaurant eating than I might have chosen, but there's nothing wrong with good food. It does seem that all of them tend to serve more than most people need to eat at one sitting, probably for the psychological effect of giving good value for the price.

TV news seemed to be obsessed with a tale out of Toronto that started with a video of the mayor smoking crack. Other accusations, and his own responses only made the story even more interesting. The phony CNN talking heads like Blitz Wolfers pretend to be shocked at the mayor of Toronto when he denied having said to a female staffer "I'd like to eat your pussy", commenting that he'd never say that because "I have plenty to eat at home". We all know very well that they are far from shocked, and were probably mildly amused. It was a good comeback.

Who really cares if the Toronto mayor smokes crack? It's his business. If the people of Toronto don't like the way he runs the city, they can elect someone else next time. Criticism of public officials should be about the way they do their jobs, not their personal life.
Meanwhile, there are real criminals in the US Congress doing real harm to real people. Call them Republicans. Call them sociopaths. Report that.

Day 7: Friday 11/15,

has clouded on the California coast, chilly breezes blow. It might rain. We may explore up or down the coast in the car. The coast highway is no longer officially US 101, though it's designated as historic 101. It's now State 21. For some distance north from Del Mar, it stays in sight of the ocean as it meanders through the coastal towns. The wind, though chilly, brought more surfers out to try the bigger waves it stirred up. In some places, houses along the road are depressingly identical, stamped from the same developer's cookie-cutter. Where older ones predominate, though, houses are creatively designed individual expressions, many with beautiful designs.

Passing what was apparently Oceanside (though city name signs seem to be missing), one suddenly finds the road to be entering Camp Pendleton, complete with a military checkpoint. The one lane that looked to be a bypass was closed. I asked the Marine at the booth how to get on I-5 instead, and he said to take a right at one of 2 side-roads, with no signs. The first turned out to be the wrong one, and the second was taking us deeper into uncharted Marine base territory. We could

only hope they weren't doing artillery practice in the area. Finally, heading back the way we'd come led to a road with an I-5 south entrance ramp. During this time no MP's seemed to take notice that we were driving into the facility without evident purpose. Traffic was too heavy to allow for much individual scrutiny..

Friday evening traffic on I-5 was a massive sea of lights, 6 to 8 lanes both ways, a bit congested but flowing just short of 65 on the average. We circled around the Del Mar horse track, just to see it, then returned to our hotel. Tomorrow will also be cloudy, so the plan is to head back to Phoenix, then, on Monday, Jerome and Sedona, staying in Cottonwood. Toyota Camry seems to make a decent car. I wonder if the motivation for eliminating the right front door keyhole, and the one in the trunk as well, is to save the cost. It seems petty to deprive the buyer of the flexibility just to save a few dollars.

There are, inside the trunk, levers to pull to flip the rear seats down, which would enable one trapped in the trunk to escape to the car. That is thoughtful. Waiting for my clothes to wash in the hotel's coin machine, I wandered to its oddly placed lobby, furnished nicely but unoccupied. Its library contained about 8 books. I didn't have that much time.

Day 8: Saturday 11/16

For a slightly different set of views on the way back, we headed north on I-5 to LA, there to catch I-10 to Phoenix. For a Saturday afternoon, Orange County and LA traffic was quite heavy, exacerbated by construction. If it had been a little lighter, I would have liked to revisit Santa Monica, Venice, Hollywood, just for the hell of it. But as it was, we made reasonably good time. Sunday we will try to find the grave of the train accident victim buried in Greenwood Memory Lawn. With luck, we will track him down.

Day 9: Sunday, 11/17,

The location of the crypt was decrypted. It was not a grave, because the victim was cremated after death. I had never been in a mausoleum, a building of walls of compartments for bodies and urns of ashes, each neatly labeled with the names they bore. It seems a little odd that we warehouse dead bodies, underground or in vaults. Even religious believers don't think the actual body will resurrect. Perhaps it's just a matter of accounting for everyone. What is the figure on top of the AZ capitol building? We ate in Cave Creek surrounded by screens of football.

Day 10: Monday, 11/18

After a pleasant scenic drive north, we arrived in Sedona, the hotel, originally thought to be in Cottonwood, is in Sedona. An internet search revealed that the best restaurant in all of Sedona, #1 of 143, is Simon's

Hot Dogs. It is also a bit hard for the stranger to find, but worth the search. It is located inside the Oak Creek Brewery, and even when you drive up the road it's on, all you see is a dark side of an industrial style building. You enter the driveway leading to the front, where some colored light strings indicate something is going on. Simon is a friendly guy with a menu of about 8 different hot dog styles, and a choice of beef or vegetarian. Mine ("cowboy style", with chili), was delicious, though messy to eat, and the brewery's dark smooth ale went perfectly.

Day 11: Tuesday, 11/19

There is a chapel on a high rock overlooking Sedona and surrounded by more high red rocks. It has an interesting design, not by Frank L. Wright but two other architects, though it has some Wrightlike qualities. But the view from the area around it is worth the climb for the non-superstitious. It also affords a view of 503 chapel road, Ioan & Elena Comescu's house. An impressive dwelling, rumored by some to belong to Nicholas Cage and others, but actually the Comescus, Romanian owners of a Phoenix medical device company, IC Medical, own the 8000+ square foot, \$29 million home.

Day 12: Wednesday, 11/20.

The last train from Clarkdale. (until the next one). The Verde Canyon Railroad is not a fast train, and though it travels 40 miles, you end up back where you started in 4 hours. But it was the most worthwhile trip I have taken in a long time. The track meanders along the Verde River next to towering red rocky canyon walls, rock formations, and riverside trees.

In this valley, great bald eagles live and breed. We strained our eyes at the cliff-tops, hoping to see one perching there, perhaps posing for a photo. None were quite so obliging, but once, directly over the train, an eagle flew, its huge wings working, accelerating purposefully, a few seconds in sight and then too far to see.

Through the dark curved tunnel and over the trestle, we soon arrived at Perkinsville. It is not a town, but an old station, no longer used, and a house, belonging to a ranch. There's a side-track enabling the engine to switch to the other end of the train for the trip back. The train has pleasant enclosed cars, alternating with open observation cars to enjoy and photograph the scenery. They were the place to be, despite a chilly rain, rather than trying to peer out of glass windows. Four hours traveling through natural beauty, with no roads and few dwellings in sight: it was a good trip.

Day 13: Thursday 11/21, Jerome.

This is the town that hippies rebuilt, better than before. Of course, a town would not have been built here, on the side of a mountain, if it were not for the copper mines. But clinging to the mountainside on

giant steps, its main street zigzagging ever upward, each zig and zag a higher level than the last, it cannot help being picturesque and fascinating. Yet, when the mine stopped being profitable, the town had declined nearly to ghost status, most of its buildings abandoned and falling into disrepair.

It was then that the greatest American subculture in history, born of the peace movement and the civil rights movement, coming of age in the 1960's and '70's, consisting of the brightest, most original and compassionate young thinkers of the age, came to the rescue.

Hippies were eager to create new and more natural lifestyles, often in places away from the ordinary routines of the cities, places that needed their creativity and challenged their ingenuity. Jerome was just such a place. Artists, craftspersons, builders, and nonconformists of all sort migrated to Jerome and re-created it. Its history and its natural architecture are preserved. The town seems to have an almost organic unity with the mountain itself.

Visitors can browse for hours in the shops, offering a combination of antique artifacts and original creations. The two taverns often feature live music, and there are a number of good restaurants. The Haunted Hamburger is one of them. The hamburger is especially good, but its menu offers a full variety of food. We ate there twice. It also serves Oak Creek Brewery's Nut Brown Ale. Our first waitress had recently moved to Jerome from Kentucky. She seemed delighted to have done so; her smile was real, not one merely designed to enhance tips.

Day 14: Friday, 11/22.

Jerome again. It rained, a light but persistent drizzle, each day, and fog shrouded some of the magnificent view from the mountain overlooking the valley below. We ate Soup and home-made bread at The Grape. At a shop called Cleopatra's, we talked with the friendly young lady who worked there, learning more about the culture and life in present-day Jerome. She told us she prefers not to leave the town, even to Clarkdale a few miles away for groceries.

Her friend, a builder by trade, is an enthusiastic hang-glider pilot, and there is a place higher up the mountain that is often perfect for takeoffs. He told us stories of extended flights, soaring on thermal updrafts. Once he landed at the Sedona airport some 20 miles away, startling its air traffic controller, who said he should have filed a flight plan. Helicopter pilots, who held back as he approached, did not mind at all. Often a glider will end up landing in the middle of nowhere, where it is often hard to find a ride. A friend of his, he told us, invented a method for such situations. He dresses in a clown outfit, complete with a rubber nose. People, even young women who seldom offer rides, pick him up out of amused curiosity.

Day 15: Saturday 11/23

We checked out of the Arroryo Pinon Ho in Sedona, and visited Jerome again one last time. Instead of going back to Phoenix the way we came, I decided to go through the Prescott National forest. At the higher altitudes, snow covered the surrounding hills, trees, and mountainsides. The road was clear, though with its constant twists and turns, high speed was out of the question.

My friend's GPS smartphone program kept saying "make the next legal U-turn", as if it could not understand why anyone would want to take the long and scenic way home. No matter. As I expected, we eventually passed through Wickenburg and then to Phoenix from the northwest, on Grand Avenue, the famous hypotenuse that proves the Pythagorean Theorem useful.

2014: REUNIONING AGAIN

The occasion in October 2014 was my 50th Hannibal High reunion, but my trip to the midwest was a reunion in more ways than that. As a student of history, I know the importance of connecting to the past, learning about it to enhance one's understanding of the present. I have sought to examine my ancestry, not just for the relative facts but to glimpse into the lives and stories of those who have gone before. While the distant past is fascinating, there have been aspects of those who created me that were unknown to me. In some ways I was seeking a reunion with myself. My first stop was Chicago—by plane.

Anne helped me immensely in exploring my ancestry, and in particular helped locate my half-brother, and where my mother had been buried.

We found my mother's grave in **Chicago** at St. Mary's Cemetery

There is no marker on her grave. We found it via a map provided by the cemetery office, between two other graves that were marked.

She died the day I was born, over half a century ago and I only recently learned where she was buried. This was the first time I have seen it.

I was last in this city in 1958, at age 11. The buildings were tall then, and they still are. I think they're intended to be phallic symbols, consciously or unconsciously

Objects seen in the mirror may be closer than they appear

I stood in a glass box, high over Chicago, in the former Sears Tower. Now called Willis. It's a great view, almost like a live satellite map.

Hannibal, Missouri: My paternal grandparents' house once stood on Bird Street, near Mark Twain School. I went there my first two years. Mark Twain School bought it and made it a playground and parking lot.

Clear Creek School, my one-room one-teacher 8-graded country school, still stands, a private residence now.

The Class Reunion #50

The value of a reunion is only to be able to say later that you were there. The actual experience is not very enjoyable. The older versions of people known in high school are usually different or unconnected to their former selves. A few of them I see on Facebook, and that's enough.

Lees Summit My son, Geoffrey, the computer technician. At the time, he had a Friendly Computing office in downtown Lee's Summit. Then it seemed like a prosperous thing to do. Things change quickly in technology, and things to fix one day are not the task tomorrow. Now he installs home automation systems for rich folks.

Springfield, Illinois The word reunion has another meaning. Lincoln brought the Union back together. It could not be restored perfectly, but he saved it, and brought freedom to the slaves. His presidential library and museum are in Springfield, and there is much there to learn about him and that crucial era.

Lincoln got an extreme amount of criticism in the press while President, documented in the museum.

There was another reunion, with my half-brother Keith, who I last met in 1958. His mother was my mother. He had memories of our mother, and I had none. His were from the point of view of one very young, distorted by his limited perspective. It helped fill in my mental picture, though. And there were photographs.

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2015

At the end of February we visited Tombstone, the town to tough to wi-fi. Most of the area had little or no cell signal. There were stagecoaches to see, pulled by impressive horses, fake gunfights, Crazy Annies, the Soap Suds Tap room, and Big Nose Kates.

JULY 2015-- the Truck Trip

Having recently acquired a white Chevy S10 pickup, I drove it on the 2015 trip. Leaving on July 24, I headed to I-40, Chambers, AZ, and made OK City the next day, Mt. Vernon MO on the 26th.

Then I met up with Anne and continued in her car, leaving the pickup in Lees Summit. We visited Evanna (now Nolan), Dani, and Jonathan in Jefferson City, went through Warrensburg, home of my once-college, Lee's Summit, Sheboygan, Hannibal, Winslow, and back to Phoenix.

It was a 3251 mile round trip for the truck. Gas mileage wasn't bad, from 35 to 40 mpg. My route was from Phoenix through Chambers, AZ, San Juan NM, Oklahoma City, Mount Vernon MO, Lee's Summit, then back through Victoria, Kansas, Colorado, Las Vegas, NM, and Winslow, AZ.

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2016

In 2016, I flew to Chicago and arranged for my mother's gravestone. The stonecutters had come from Russia many years ago. The lady who took my order was the daughter of the artisan himself. It was exactly the memorial I wanted. And it was the only gravestone I have ever cared about; it meant more because it was decades late.

Anne and I picked up her new 2012 Nissan Sentra and drove it back to Phoenix, stopping for gas in California Missouri, Salina Kansas, Limon Colorado, and Grand Junction.

2017

Intrigued by predictions that on August 21, 2017, the sun would be completely obscured by the moon, as viewed from a band of land stretching across the continental US from northwest to southeast, I began to plan to stand on the band of land when the time was at hand.

My eclipse trip would take me to the state where resided the three generations I initiated some 42 years ago. Though that genetic journey began on a warm Southern California night, all three are now in the midwest where winters remain cold, at least until machines pack more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The dark band crossed Missouri.

I expanded my horizon to include my two half sisters, one in Tampa and the other in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and in Chicago I might have visited my half brother, if he had lived a little longer. Chicago was also the site of my mother's grave. In a way, five generations were part of this journey, including myself.

With me was my best friend, Anne, who is also an excellent traveling companion.

The plan as it currently stands:

August 10-- fly to Tampa

August 15-- fly to Chicago

August 17-- drive to Sheboygan Falls, WI

August 18-- return to Chicago

August 19-- drive to Jefferson City, MO

August 20- drive to KC

August 21-- see solar eclipse

August 24-26 drive to Phoenix

8/10/2017

The answer, when looking for a place to smoke or vape at Sky Harbor is, just as the Beatles told us: Number Nine! I learned that from a wise old oracle in a 3rd level oracle booth.

"Take the elevator to level 9" she said. That's the top parking level, for those who wish only sky above their spot. There is also a rather nice view from there.

Security was smooth. I prepared by stashing my heavy metal in my briefcase, leaving a manageable number of items to be trayed. I still needed a separate tray for each laptop, and one for two tablets, plus a miscellaneous one for belt, sandals, and cellphone.

This Chromebook has proved to be a very good traveling computer, despite its limitations running locally-based applications. Tablets have been annoying, sometimes absurdly slow. Android needs to find a way.

By the time I get to Tampa, Anne will have been waiting about 3 or 4 hours. There's always airport people-watching to stay entertained. 574 and 53 from Phoenix and Chicago.

I should try to keep all my travel notes in one place, so I don't have to wonder where I wandered and when.

This is a relatively nice plane- smooth and quiet, and not noticeably crowded. I have a wing seat, handy for making sure the wing is still attached, but it blocks the downward view a bit. The sky is hazy, though, so it would be hard to observe the terrain anyway.

The arrival is around 22:00, which makes it 19:00 in MST. Around 2.25 hours from now Almost halfway, by time estimate. The pilot announced zigging and zagging to avoid weather. I wonder if zigs are left or right. Zags would be the opposite, of course. You seldom hear of anyone doing one without the other.

Reid said not to send him any eclipse pictures, since he wouldn't be able to look directly at them anyway.

8/10 Anne and I flew to Tampa, from Chicago and Phoenix respectively, rented a Kia, and stayed at the Comfort on Adamo.

8/11 Friday dinner at Pat's: She said, "I plan to cook dinner that evening say 6:00 pm??? Then if we want to do something else, we will still have time. I get home around 5 pm so you can come any time before that. "

8/12 Saturday: alligator and shrimp at the Hurricane at John's Beach in St Petersburg & Bubba Gump's

8/13 Sunday: We skipped the Dali gallery. Pizza at Pat's

8/14 Monday: burgers at Pat's

8/15 Tuesday: Anne and I Flew to Chicago

8/16 Wednesday We tried to go to cemetery, too late; so we drove to Sheboygan and checked in the Sleep Inn

8/17 Thursday with Sheila to Twisted Restaurant & Bar

8/18 Friday: i with Sheila to Twisted Restaurant & Bar

8/19 Saturday to Jeff City,

8/20 Sunday lunch with Josh & Evanna Then we headed to Platte City Quality Inn. Cat Stevens sang that he was being followed by a moon shadow. I, on the other hand, was trying to follow one.

8/21 Monday The eclipse occurred behind thick clouds. The sun, the moon, and the moon shadow were hidden from view. I had picked the exact wrong spot along its path. We went to an Irish pub in Weston, near Platte City. It began thunder-storming and rained.

8/22 Tuesday: sunny day dinner with Geoff at Stewy McBrew's, Lees Summit

8/23 Wednesday to Jeff City to see Dani, Evanna, and Josh-- took Lee's Chicken, drove to Tulsa

8/24 drove from Tulsa to Albuquerque.

8/25 Albuquerque to Cottonwood, stayed at the Iron Horse

8/26 Stayed at the Iron Horse, went to Jerome, then home.

Prior to the trip, I wrote this email to email to those to be visited.

The Great Eclipse Trip of 2017

I'm assuming you're aware of the eclipse to come soon, which of course should not be confused with e-clips, which are those little paper clips you click on to attach something to an email.

Naturally, I feel compelled to observe this cosmic phenomenon.

Besides this astronomical event, I plan to explore relativity. That is, I want to visit relatives en route.

All relatives, including those from Tampa, Chicago, and Wisconsin, are invited to join in the eclipsebration (a new word meaning "celebration of the eclipse") north of Kansas City. However, I'll understand if only the Missouri relatives come. It's a long way to travel for a 10-minute experience. Still, it will be a long time before the next one.

My travel path is designed so that I, unlike the eclipse, can go where you are. Let me know if this schedule works for you. Of course, you will be able to see a PARTIAL eclipse. If you do, be sure you have the proper eclipse eyewear.

See you on the dark side!

Then I wroted Keith and Betty

August 1 2017

Keith and Betty Dehmer

13424 South Magnolia Drive

Plainfield IL 60544

Dear Keith & Betty,

Do you have any plans for August 15, 16 or 18?

I'll be in Chicago, and Anne and I would like to get together with you.

Here's the plan:

The Great Eclipse Trip of 2017

I'm assuming you're aware of the eclipse to come soon, which of course should not be confused with e-clips, which are those little paper clips you click on to attach something to an email.

Naturally, I feel compelled to observe this cosmic phenomenon.

Besides this astronomical event, I plan to explore relativity. That is, I want to visit relatives en route. My travel path is designed so that I, unlike the eclipse, can go where you are. Let me know if this schedule works for you.

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2018

August 11

I flew to Chicago on AA 630, traveling lightly with my briefcase and a carry-on (not to be confused with a vulture's carrion luggage). American offered \$210 for volunteers not to go. I declined, leaving about 7 pm. Sitting by the emergency exit door gave me extra legroom (about what all seats should provide for comfort).

Not having to go to baggage claim, I could stay on the level where I disembarked, just walking the long hallway until I found a portal to the exterior, free to vape. From there it was surprisingly easy to merge Anne's and my coordinates.

It was good to see Anne. Though I know how to be alone, and have had lots of practice at it, she has, more and more, made me not to prefer it. When love and trust can coexist mutually between two people, there is no reason to choose solitude.

My mother, who did not survive past the day I was born, has always been important to me, whether knew it or not. Until I was old enough to understand what a mother was, and to be told of her demise, of course I didn't know. My father didn't tell me much; I imagine he still missed her too much. After he died, much too soon, I was left with a stepmother recently acquired. It was not a bad childhood.

But I knew that I once, however briefly, had a real mother. Today, August 12, Anne and I went to visit her grave.

Then we saw The Bean at the art institute and other sights around it.

8/13 We drove to Sheboygan and checked into Sleep.

8/14 Visited Sheila, went to dinner at the Hops in Sheboygan.

8/15 West to dinner with Sheila at the Twisted.

8/16 Drove west, angling down to I88 then I80 through Iowa, then south on US 63, which goes through Macon, Columbia, and Jeff City/ Stopped at Macon at the Comfort.

8/17 Visited the Friendship Baptist Cemetery where several ancestors are buried.

Drove to Jeff City, checked into the Comfort.

8/18 Brunch with Evanna and Dani. Evanna had to work, so we kept Dani all day.

Went to nature park, later to mall. Much fun. Lost Horsie? (later Evanna found horsie at the nature park)

8/19 Drove to Lee's Summit, checked in Comfort. (323) Texted Geoff.

8/20 Geoff answered text. He said we'd meet for drinks after work. He texted after work. Needed to rest first.

8/21 Rest lasted all night. Geoff came to our hotel after work, where we drank Shiners and talked. His job is going well and Jamie has a better job too. Good to hear.

Longwire Co. installs home automation and security systems in high-dollar homes. Geoff said he now makes \$17.50 an hour. It requires both physical installation and custom programming. Jamie is a paralegal for an attorney in Kansas. They're catching up financially now.

8/22 We met Geoff and Jamie at the Smoke Brewery for dinner, then went to the 3rd St Social for dessert.

8/23 Head back home, taking I-35 to US 54, going southwest, staying night at Dalhart TX Econolodge. (125). Although 54 is not 4-lane much of the way, it is a pleasant change from the interstate, no heavy traffic. A fair number of big trucks use it, but don't usually slow it too much.

8/24 Continued US 54 to Albuquerque, then I-40 to Holbrook AZ, home of the Bucket of Blood saloon. Stayed at Quality Inn. (116)

8/25 The saloon has been closed for 50 years, but there is an excellent museum. Bought petrified wood at rock shop, ate a Navaho taco at a local restaurant. Took US 77 through mountains & forest, through Snowflake, Show Low, Globe. Great scenery. Took US 60 which becomes Superstition fwy to I-10. Home about 21:45.

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2019

A vacation, as the name suggests, is ideally vacating one's usual location and traveling to an unusual one. At least a bit of it ought to be somewhere new, or an old place in a new way.

It occurred to me that sometimes place names are pronounced certain ways only by habit, as there is no real authority to decide. For example, what if America were pronounced to rhyme with "Costa Rica"? Ah-me Rica.

This time I flew to Missouri by first flying to DFW, then riding a train to the other end of the huge airport to squeeze into a smaller plane headed to Columbia (managing to avoid the mistake of flying to Bogata, Colombia).

The ground beneath the planes was nicely photogenic, and the weather was clear. I got some excellent pictures on the way.

On arrival we were advised to avoid wandering behind the wings as we walked to the terminal. Anne met me there, having driven from Chicago via Hannibal, and we drove the short distance to Jeff City. The next day we visited with Evanna (now Nolan) and Dani, drove to Columbia where there is a large child-play dinosaur park. Dani is very active and acrobatic. She might be a gymnast one day. Evanna (now Nolan) was working at Paddy Malone's Irish Pub in Jefferson City, a pleasant casual Irish tavern.

We stopped in Hannibal and drove out the old River Road, taking some good train pictures as one went by, and watched the river flow. Freight cars are a good canvas for grafitti. I talked to my old classmate Sandy Bush. She and her husband run the local riverboat. Of course we drove by my old boyhood home to see the family Walnut Tree. Lee's Summit to see Geoff. Then, on to Chicago to see my mother's grave, now with a stone marker. Sheboygan to visit my sister Sheila. Then we visited St Louis, staying at a Hyatt there.

The drive back to Phoenix took us through Colorado-- Teluride and other nice places.

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2020

It's a nice even number to remember. Why not make it the year I retire? It wasn't planned, of course. It took a pandemic to set it in motion, though years of saving has made it conceivable. The luxury transportation business for which I have dispatched for 15 continuous years turned out to be vulnerable to a contagious disease that keeps smart people from gathering in public places like conventions and airplanes.

The pandemic itself has been needlessly lengthened by the worst President in US history. Though many countries got it under control intelligently, this, the world's richest nation, handled it worst of all.

My furlough due to lack of business, which might otherwise have been temporary, looks to be permanent, and the company is likely to fail, partly due to the death of the owner of brain cancer, leaving it to his much less competent wife and son.

As employers go, I rather enjoyed my 15 years working for Tony at Desert Rose. I'll miss my co-workers. Will I miss working? That's hard to say.

After months of being paid to stay home, I decided that I could stay home away from home just as well.

My vacation/retirement/unemployment trip

Monday July 27, 2020

Most of Monday was spent gathering things and packing them into empty things, with which I gradually filled the car. It seemed like work, not especially fun in anticipation of the adventure to come. About 21:00 all items seemed to be aboard, ready to embark.

Mile 65116

Once I was on the road, tankfull and highway bound, my energy and enthusiasm was restored. I cruised up I-17 to I-40 and pointed my

nose eastward. I was soon in Gallup, at 3:02, mile 65407, for my first gas stop.

New Mexico, unlike Arizona and other Republican-encumbered states, mandates masks in public places, and announces it on each freeway lighted sign along the way.

I got to Albuquerque at sunrise, an event I seldom witness. I-25 north from there toward Santa Fe, mile 65610, at 6:40.

At Trinidad Colorado (65817) at 12:14, I-25 took me to US 160, which went to US 350, and finally, US 50.

Colorado has a county named Bent. It wasn't named for its shape, evidently, but for a historic Fort Bent there. I entered the town of Hasty at a leisurely pace, stopping to photograph its post office.

Rest stops were few along my chosen highways, but finally one appeared at mile 65983, 867 miles from Phoenix. It was a pleasant enough place under a shade tree for a short nap, except for the flies. It was about 15:00, and it was sunny and warm. After a little more than an hour, I was ready to press on.

Cimarron, Kansas 66097.

By the time I found rest stop #2, it was getting dark. Mile 66192 near Stafford, Kansas. As I was enjoying a bagel and salmon sandwich (salm-wich?), I spotted a family of cats gathered around. No doubt the salmon scent had wafted out to lead them. I shared a small bit with mother cat. Later I discovered under a tree that someone had provided them a shelter and some cat food and water.

I've noticed a recent trend for Republicans to refer to the Chinese Communist Party, rather than simply China, as a not-so-subtle hint of their increased hostility toward that country's government.

How many political parties are there in China? Just one. It IS the government. So, what's the point? They could save some syllables and say "China."

The pointlessness of including "communist" is further evidenced by the fact that China's government is not very communist anymore. In some ways they are more capitalist than the US. That is the basis of some of the complaints against China-- their unrestrained competitiveness, similar to that of the US as we rose to become the dominant world economic power. It's different, of course, when it's another country doing it.

Chinese workers' pay is kept low, and hours long, to undercut foreign competition. Not very communist, or even socialist, is it? Of course their growing economy has raised living standards for millions, and even produced millionaires and billionaires. Housing, once provided at nominal cost as a human right, has turned into a housing market.

Women's equal rights, once a basic principle of Marxism, has become a paternalistic male-dominated social system. Racism is not communist, either, yet their treatment of Uighers is at least as much about their ethnicity as it is their religion. Han Chinese are the "white supremacists" of China.

The authoritarianism hasn't changed, There is much to dislike about the Chinese government, but the problem is not the label its ruling party still uses, and no one should base their criticism or opposition to it on an ideology that is no longer relevant.

July 29

Strong City Kansas mile 66323 Gas is only \$1.94 here.

In Khazikstan, there is a mating game for young people, wherein the boy chases the girl on horseback. If he catches her, he gets to kiss her. If he fails, the girl can whip the boy.

Hérons use bait and lures to catch fish. They have learned to drop insects and bits of matter that look like them in the water, wait for them to come to the surface, and grab them.

Entering the Kansas City area around 14:50 (mile 66441), I encountered both rain and congested traffic for the first time on the trip. I noticed my phone said 111 F. in Phoenix, and 77 here. I was in Lee's Summit by 16:00, mile 66474.

After beer, wings, and tacos with my son Geoff at an uncrowded tavern, I napped in parking lots until the morning. I paid too much for coffee at Starbucks, though sitting in their parking lot gave me some free wi-fi. I ate some fruit for breakfast, took a walk around the parking lot, and headed for the KC airport. Locally they call it KCI, though it is officially MCI, From "Mid-continent International.

It is far out. North Kansas City is about 40 minutes by freeway. Once there, I found it easy to navigate, and parking was quite near the terminal. There was no congestion due to the sharply reduced air traffic from the pandemic. At the first parking spot XM radio was blocked, but at another it worked. I had a little over two hours to wait for the flight from DC.

Any Trump speech or press conference could be termed an FCE: Fact-Checking-Event. While waiting I heard yet another statement of misinformation by Trump on the news.

Flight 4587 arrived 20 minutes early, and my friend and I, reunited, headed for Jefferson City.

We stayed at the Best Western Capitol Inn. It was a nice room, located near side door, The hotel pool & hot tub were enjoyable--entertaining Dani, who loved to splash and bounce, and exercise for me, swimming.

On Thurs. 8/6 we set out for Sheboygan. It turned out the usual Choice hotel convenience was a bit less customer friendly-- they tried to charge more than advertised and got some details wrong.

The Quality Inn room itself was ok The wifi didn't actually require the sheboygan1 password. Internet is a bit slow here, though. Second floor, but conveniently near a side door. Kohler plumbing, which is not impressive. The toilet couldn't handle my shit. After many flushings didn't budge it, I had to borrow a plunger.

We chose the restaurant for its outdoor patio seating. The Fat Cow had excellent service and fish on Fri., but Saturday was understaffed and fishless.

Notes from Sheila's information on family history

Uncle Jim Owens: Wife: Anna They had 2 kids: Virginia (now in Staton, WI) and James, who died of diabetes.

Uncle Joe: wife Betty-- 3 kids Thomas, Donald, Kathleen (who he doesn't claim as his)

Sheila worked for Bank of America in San Diego. She first married Whit Ravell, son of Aldrish Ravelle (who was born in Panama) and Stella Whitefield

Returned to Madison to help her friend who had polio, with a wedding and leg operation. She stayed a while, and her husband was angry. Returning to San Diego, her husband said "don't come back". Then she had car trouble.

She returned to Madison, got a job with the U of Wisconsin as a bookkeeper with chemists & biology researchers under a govt. funded program.

Theresa long outlived Thomas, to nearly 100, died in a nursing home, She was senile in her last years.

Sunday 8/9

On to Chicago; we needed to stop to test and register the Nissan, and some other things..

So, where do we go tomorrow (Thurs 8/13)? East makes sense, to avoid air travel. Driving we can determine and limit our distances.

Blue tooth bites.

Looks like it will be Friday the 14th. Another day was needed to add headphone capability to two TV's.

Joe picked Kamala, the right one I think. Predictably, the Trumpist insults and lies started. Someone claiming a daughter of immigrants isn't eligible, obviously untrue, but just to blow the dog whistle.

A reporter finally asked Trump why he's lied so much. He had nothing to say, for once. He doesn't really care that anyone with a brain knows he lies, or that he has no ethics, morals, or sense of propriety. His base doesn't care, and he knows it. He's hoping that there are still just enough of them to pull off an electoral college win, but he knows he can't count on that. He doesn't have the misogynists, and the idiots who thought it didn't matter. The "purists" who thought Hillary wasn't "left" enough and voted for Stein aren't being heard from this time.

Those who thought owning guns would protect them from tyrants never realized how wrong they were, and they don't recognize one when they see him, possibly because they think he supports their owning guns.

The tyrant who willingly accepted the help of an adversary nation, then used his office to solicit a phony smear of his next opponent is now trying to de-legitimize the coming election, and deliberately making it more difficult to vote safely.

Friday 8/14

We visited my mother's grave in St. Mary's, then headed east. On the Interstate a piece of metal was lying in wait for us to run over, so it could damage the left rear tire and rim. It didn't cause a flat, but the damage, noted at a later stop, looked hazardous. The tires were from Costco, so I searched and found one in Merrillville Indiana. They would replace the tire, but the rim damage needed to be fixed. We stayed the night.

Saturday, 8/15

The next day Discount Tires didn't have a replacement rim, but fortunately there was an expert rim repair shop in town called Custom Butiek. They showed examples of their work in welding allow wheels, and did an excellent job on ours, the previous damage was undetectable. Then Costco replaced the tire, allowing us to move on.

Soon, like Prince Charles, we were no longer In Diana, but Ohio. We decided to stop outside Toledo at a BW in Maumee, on Kit Lane.

Sunday, 8/16

The next day we encountered heavy rain. Later, it cleared. We decided on Intercourse for the night.

The BW in Intercourse PA is a puzzle to find. Where Newport Road is is uncertain on a phone-sized GPS map. The desk clerk walked down the road to find us.

The town includes Amish traffic in horse-drawn buggies, with lights at night. They moved slowly at night, but quicker in the daytime.

There is a certain value in having visited places with interesting names like Intercourse-- that is, I can say I was there once. It is not important, but if it isn't difficult, why not do it?

As it happened, the room was large, with two TVs, a “living room” area and a “bedroom”. The extra space was unneeded, but it was there.

Hotel rooms vary in their layouts, annoyances, and conveniences. One important factor is toilet flushability. The Quality in Sheboygan, being near Kohler, Wisconsin, used Kohler plumbing fixtures. It's Kohler toilet failed the shit test. After multiple flush attempts, I had to borrow a plunger from the front desk. That solved the problem, but there is no excuse for a poorly designed toilet, especially in a hotel or public facility. There was one other hotel with such a problem on this trip. It also had an A/C unit that suddenly started clanking loudly and then quit.

Many hotels have eliminated the annoyance of the bathroom fan coming on when the light is turned on. They use a different switch. So far all but the Clarion in Ocean City were fine.

Monday, 8/17

We de-Intercoasted and set a course for the sea, on the coast of Maryland. Ocean City, the Clarion hotel. It has many more floors than we're used to-- usually 3 or 4 at most. It seems solidly built, with heavy steel room doors, perhaps intended to withstand hurricanes if they happen along. It's near the beach, a wide expanse of fine sand lapped by waves, moderately surfable, with cool but pleasant water to wade in.

It's a good place to watch the Democratic Convention, though of course anywhere would be fine for that, given a working TV. The virtual convention is actually a smoother presentation than physical ones could manage.

Wednesday 8/19, Gabby Giffords spoke on Gun control. If anyone should be listened to on the subject, it is her. She was doing her job as a Congresswoman, speaking with and listening to her constituents, when she was shot in the head and nearly killed, enduring a long recovery from brain injury, by a deranged man who should never have owned a gun. She learned first-hand about the urgent need to regulate firearms.

Climate change. *This is another prime reason to dump Trump, who is actively doing everything wrong about the environment in general, and refuses to address clean energy.*

Billie Eilish sang "My Future", though it did not seem relevant to the convention, it was a pleasant interlude. It didn't relate much to me, but I liked it.

can't seem to focus
And you don't seem to notice I'm not here
I'm just a mirror
You check your complexion
To find your reflection's all alone
I had to go
Can't you hear me?
I'm not comin' home
Do you understand?
I've changed my plans
Can't wait to meet her
And I (I), I'm in love
But not with anybody else
Just wanna get to know myself
I know supposedly I'm lonely now (Lonely now)
Know I'm supposed to be unhappy
Without someone (Someone)
But aren't I someone? (Aren't I someone? Yeah)
I'd (I'd) like to be your answer (Be your answer)
'Cause you're so handsome (You're so handsome)

Immigration

Another issue on which Trump is totally wrong. Insulting immigrants and refugees
Refusing to value their immense contributions to our society and our economy.
Fomenting hate.

Prince Royce sang "Stand by Me".

Kerry Washington - actress in "Scandal" is moderating

Speaking:

Hillary Clinton

Nancy Pelosi

Elizabeth Warren

Barack Obama gave a speech that was probably the most important one he ever gave.
He didn't exaggerate when he said the future of our democracy is at stake.

Ocean City Clarion, Monday 8/17---Sun 8/23 (leaving 8/24)

Though the room seems pleasant enough, it has design deficiencies.

There are 2 queen beds, but only one nightstand between them.

There is no outlet near the coffee table, requiring the computer power

cord to be run over one bed (and an extra 3-outlet attachment), or, as I'm doing now, placing the laptop on the bed and using it there. That didn't seem ergonomic, so I moved back to the coffee table, but ran the power cord across the floor to the opposite wall, still not ideal because it's necessary to watch to avoid tripping on it. The furniture layout has other deficiencies: the two beds are directly in front of the TV, which is fine if you only want to watch from bed, but the couch is over to one side, further away, and the desk is on the same wall as the TV, making a direct view from there awkward.

The bathroom, too, has flaws. The toilet paper dispenser is very close to the toilet, but lower than the seat. One might have to scrunch sideways on the seat to unroll it.

Also, the shower, intended to be handicapped-accessible, has a low lip to hold the falling water inside, and a shower curtain that is barely long enough to stay inside it. Extreme care is needed not to flood the bathroom floor.

Another flaw was the bathroom door itself. When left open, it can block the room entrance door from opening enough to enter, or even to reach in to push it out of the way.

It has a tiny balcony on which one person can lie prone for a suntan. From the balcony, one can see a small section of the ocean over the top of the restaurant/bar wing of the hotel. Technically, that means it has an ocean view.

The hotel does not have a laundromat. One must drive a few miles up the road to find one. Due to the high humidity and storage in a suitcase, it would be nice to wash my clothes after 3 weeks.

The beach is not so crowded as to make it unsafe. Distance can be maintained, walking or sitting. The weather has been pleasant, and the water is not too cold, but the weather wasn't quite warm enough to invite jumping in the ocean, though a few young people were surfing and splashing. Wading in the waves is pleasant, and walking along the wet sand. There were several kites being flown in the steady incoming breeze.

On Monday 8/24 we ventured into the area of Little Monie Creek, to the west of Princess Anne. So far we haven't found anything to

exactly pinpoint the location of Waller's Adventure, but references to the creek put us in the neighborhood. It was interesting to see the combination of land, bays, rivers, and creeks that no doubt appealed to John D. Waller as a good place to settle down and grow something.

The next stop was the Best Western in Rockville. Unfortunately it was a six-story hotel crammed into an overly-urbanized suburb. Parts of it were under some sort of renovation, and we ended up in another 2-queen (actually mini-queen) room with unopenable windows. Still, it seemed tolerable, until someone started smoking something somewhere, probably on the same floor.

Hotels should NEVER use central air cooling/heating systems. You get whatever others put into it. There should be individual units in each room, bringing in outside air. If the BW had those, like every other hotel we have stayed in, there may not have been a problem. The smoke, which was probably not just pot or tobacco, but may have included those, bothered my companion more than me.

We checked out the next day and went to The Bethesda, a 17-story Hilton, where they charge extra for a parking garage, and \$3.00 each if you drink the bottled water in the room. Sixth floor again, and a balcony, but we can't use it because the windows don't open. There is the 17th-floor open rooftop, with a high iron fence to discourage defenestration.

Finally I was able to do my laundry. The washer and dryer take credit cards.

It's fascinating what hotels will come up with in the name of efficiency. This one has a bathroom/kitchen. I'd call that a bitchen.

It's not really a full kitchen, since it lacks a microwave (there's one down the hall in its own little room), but the fridge and the sink are there. It may be logical to conclude that two people who are sharing a bed don't need privacy to take a shit while the other is fixing dinner, I suppose.

In hotels, you can't take taking a shit for granted, if you expect it to flush. In 3 hotels, I stopped up the toilet. The one in Wisconsin was a

Kohler. This one in Bethesda finally freed up after several re-flushes. Perhaps the secret is to flush each turd separately.

We rode the 2nd longest escalator in the western hemisphere. 212 feet. The longest is in the Wheaton Metro subway station 5 miles away-- 230 feet

Elsewhere:

St Petersburg, Russia-- 435 feet, with a rise of 226 feet.

Hong Kong-- 800 meters(about 2640 feet), but not continuous-- it's a series of 20, with moving walkways.

Kiev, Ukraine 432 feet 216 elevation

Moscow 416 feet 208 ft. elevation

Istanbul 400 feet /200

Tblisi, Georgia 395 /197

Chonqing Chiina 367 /173

Baku, Azerbaijan 328 /160

Budapest 290

Prague 285 ft.

hamburg 269

Helsinki 249 ft.

August 31, Monday Mile 68842

Heading west to Arizona, I-70. Very soon I encountered a multi-house-pet rain. Not just cats and dogs, but parakeets, goldfish, and hamsters as well. Visibility was so poor that I pulled off and waited for clarity.

By mile 69129, 287 miles, I had reached Ohio, and fueled-- 8.9 gallons. Unintentionally I skipped West Virginia by angling north on I 76. Once I noticed that, I caught I 71 which angled me back to 70 at 69288, about 01:00 on 9/1.

At 03:19, mile 69420, I reached the Indiana welcome center (AKA rest stop) near Greens Fork. (a salad success) I had come 578 miles. I took a Nissan nap.

Political labels:

Protests for racial equality get labeled "radical left".

If equal treatment under law and equal justice are leftist (and not just American principles), then so-called conservatives' position must be white supremacy. That was once called "alt-right", but I guess it's THE right.

*9 of the 10 amendments of the Bill of Rights are now left wing.
(except the 2nd) Should we call the 9 the Bill of Lefts"*

Sept 1 9:00 CDT

I awoke to fogginess

The frogs said "Time is fun when you're having flies"

The flies said "Onward through the frog."

69449-- fuel again, 9.3 gallons

Illinois 12:30. I stopped at 12:52 at the Cumberland Road rest stop, the last one for 122 miles, said the sign. 69573. 731 miles so far

In St. Louis, 69771, 18:00, fuel 9.5 gallons. I crossed both rivers.

Lee's Summit around 22:00 Comfort Inn 211

9/3

Heading west mile 69981 \$14.34 6.8 gallons

Oddly, a sign said I-70 was closed west of KC. No reason was given, nor was there clear detour info. I found myself on I-35 south. I got off at Shawnee Mission Parkway, took it west to 435 north, which took me to I-70.

Kansas is careless about lane-end warnings. The lanes just suddenly end, and you just have to react.

A sign pointed to a Scenic View, which turned out to be just north on the highway to Manhattan. I wondered what could be scenic in Kansas. There was a slight rise, looking down on "grasslands". I was less than impressed, but it served as a rest stop, and a place to walk around a little.

In Salina, mile 70196, at 18:00, I bought a Rainbow Capuchino. It was blue. It looked bluer than it tasted, but it wasn't bad.

At the intersection of 281, mile 70263, I gassed up. 8.8 gallons, \$17.53. On to Quinter by 21:00, mile 70340. A little further down the road I found a rest stop near Colby and Levant, Kansas. Time for a nap.

Sept. 4 8:30 Onward.

Obama restored the economy and set it on a steady growth. Trump tried to claim it as his, until his poor pandemic performance fucked it up.

White fear is a delusion. It is fear of desegregation and equality.

Denver has the only toll roads in Colorado. Why not avoid it?
I took US 24 southwest to I-25 south.
Limon, CO. mile 70534. 9.6 gallons \$23.22

At Sana Fe I refueled, 11.3 gallons, \$27.79, mile 70920. At the Petrified Forest I made my own rest stop- a wide spot in the road off the freeway, mile 71183.
At 5:00 MST on 9/5 I unpetrified. By 7:40 I'd made Flagstaff-- 10.8 gallons, \$25.56, mile 71302.

Home. 71443.

Anne's packing list for the above

(If we don't have any of these items do not buy them we will purchase later if necessary) These are just things I'm thinking of.....

*See if you can bring the dildo for my smaller mouse.....I think we got it mixed up with the keyboard one.

Under my bed

1 pkg sheets in the pkg and box of Kleenex
Ream of paper

Bedroom

2 pillows
Rubber gloves in a drawer in my bedroom
Distilled water 2 gallon by sliding door
In dresser drawer under the TV is a cylindrical container for distilled water
One is large, the other is small.....I need the smaller one.
Shampoo (black bottle on shelf by door) I think they may not have those little samples now.

*CPAP

Bathroom

My mouth wash (we can share)
Toothpaste to share

Pantry ? anything to avoid restaurants

Sardines with mustard

Tuna (?) in pkg
Drinks (energy juice)
****Green Cabinet** (I think hotel is eliminating these things)

Paper cups
Paper plates
Plastic silverware

hall closet

Paper towel 2
Toilet paper 2
Alcohol

2 blankets I made

Dani and Nolan (wallet)

Ream of paper (or some)

Colored pencils/ crayons (?) think we saved from last year

Stuffed animals

Other Dani things in closet or shed

Kitchen

Garbage bag (lg and small) small to fit in 5 gallon bucket (things can be stored inside until we might need it)

2 forks and 2 spoons

My purple knife from the kitchen drawer

Hand sanitizer bottle on file cabinet and any other sanitizer?

George gave us a tube of wipes and some disinfectant spray

Bottle of Clorox

Can opener

Drinking water

Water to wash hands, etc.

Box I left to be kept cool

Look for alcohol wipes-may be in drawers also

2 boxes of Sambucus Elderberry

Your suitcase

Multiple outlet plug

Vitamins for a month

Jackets for layering

Tooth paste for us

Your Briefcase?

*** the power bank I bought from Geoff.

*** the tablet I have from Verizon

*** 3 way outlet plugs

Hats

Sunglasses

Patio

Pkg of rope

Handy tools

Lowe's bucket (for emergency toilet)

EVICTORY AT LAST

At last, on **March 9, 2021**, the exceedingly long struggle to evict a tenant, perhaps the worst in my history as a landlord, was over.

The word "landlord" evokes thoughts of nobility and serfs, or at least housing moguls and apartment tenants struggling to pay high rents. It's easy to sympathize with underdogs, and during a pandemic, more of them are under-doggie than usual. But the mandates that apply to the Snidely Whiplashes also inhibit the people who rent a single house behind their own residence to help defray the mortgage.

An eviction that would normally take a month or so has ended up taking several. By March 1, the tenant owed 10 months rent: \$7500. The eviction was not simply about the rent, though.

The 1-bedroom house, located separately on the back part of my lot with its own fenced yard, had been repaired, painted, and re-equipped with Anne's help in the spring of 2019. We worked hard on it. I had to evict the previous tenant of several years because she lost her Section Eight assistance. It wasn't really her fault-- HUD had a Republican running it.

My new tenant, picked from among several who answered the Craigslist ad, was Sharon and her boyfriend Lawrence, to be joined soon by her son. She was a home health aide, and he was a cook. They seemed like good people. For the first year, from July 2019 to June 2020, the rent was paid, though the situation had become uncertain due to the pandemic, and Sharon reportedly having been beaten up by Lawrence for an unknown reason.

Lawrence was gone, presumably doing jail time, and Sharon's sister and brother-in-law came to "help out", along with several kids. That created a crowded living situation, and some squabbles. From June on, rent stopped coming. I was willing to give her time, considering the Covid 19 unemployment problem. I thought the eviction moratorium was a reasonable response. Sharon was evidently unable to get unemployment compensation. Her health aide jobs came from a temporary agency.

The squabbles became more severe, and the sister and family departed. They were soon replaced by a stream of friends and guests, frequently coming and going on bicycles, on foot, and in cars. It became a 24-hour operation, likely involving drug dealing and stolen property. The noise of constant traffic was annoying and disturbing.

Sharon changed from apologetic about not having rent to defiant. She knew that eviction was harder to do, and used that to her advantage, seeming to believe that I "owed" her free rent. She would strut up and down the driveway, the queen of her gang, feeling empowered by her den of thieves. They were only using her as a base of operations, of course.

We kept track of activities with my security cameras (one Amazon Cloudcam and 3 Wyzes), ranging from suspicious, probable stolen cars, to an actual recorded theft of a package from my porch only minutes after Amazon delivered it. That merited a police report, and she and her co-thief are being charged.

As if that weren't enough, she had one of her gang members snatch one of my cameras from its mount, again caught on another camera. This time when the police came, she returned it, and the officer didn't file an actual theft report. I did learn from him that the gang had hooked up a battery-inverter to the house wiring after the power company had cut them off. He said it didn't look very safe.

My first eviction filing, at the hearing in January, was dismissed, supposedly because of the wrong version of a form, though I think the Justice was just being careful not to violate the moratorium. The second one, not based on unpaid rent, finally succeeded.

Now I'm left with a house and yard full of bicycle frames and parts and piles of flotsam and jetsam, most of which I must wait for March 23 to discard. The interior can only be described as squalid, with graffiti including gang symbols painted on the wall. There will be work to do.

I do not plan to rent the place again. When cleaned and fixed it will be a guest house for family visitors, and extra space.

March 24: The aftermath

Sharon came about 3 times from the 10th to the 24th, asking to be let in to gather her things. None of those times was she accompanied with a vehicle other than a bicycle. Once she and a helper left with a grocery cart, the other times only hand-carried items. On the 23rd, she didn't show. Today, the 24th, she arrived with a friend, asked to be let in a little after noon. The friend left, and she has been there all day. It is now dark.

Hours later, it was obvious she was not going to leave on her own. Nothing had been moved out. Finally, after turning my extension-corded light on and off several times, I went back to loudly shout "Sharon! It's time for you to leave!" 2 or 3 times, finally saying, "Then you'll have to talk to the police." No response. I called the police, telling them I needed a trespasser removed. A cop arrived in a while. After going back to the house, he returned to ask where the main entrance was. Later I found why-- she had piled up so much clutter in both doorways that would have to be shoveled out of the way to even close the doors. She was firmly ordered out, whining that she had only fallen asleep.

That ends the moving-out period. I now have multiple truckloads of furniture, bicycle parts, TV's (probably not working), clothing, and garbage to clean out.

Some would say the mess that was left is unbelievable. I believe it. I expected it. Not just the piles of probably stolen bicycles, disassembled, a large collection of probably stolen TV's and other devices, huge piles of clothing, furniture, junk, food...and ugly graffiti on the walls, doors, mirrors, appliances, and chairs.

That was no longer a poor unfortunate victim of pandemic unemployment who couldn't pay her rent. She hadn't been that for months. She was a malevolent user of people, an exploiter of others' misfortunes. She gathered a gang of petty thieves and drug dealers and called them friends and lovers, pretending she was the queen of the hive. They were, of course, allowing her pretense because they needed the space, all the better because it was secluded in the rear.

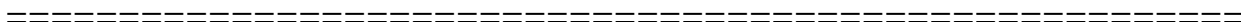
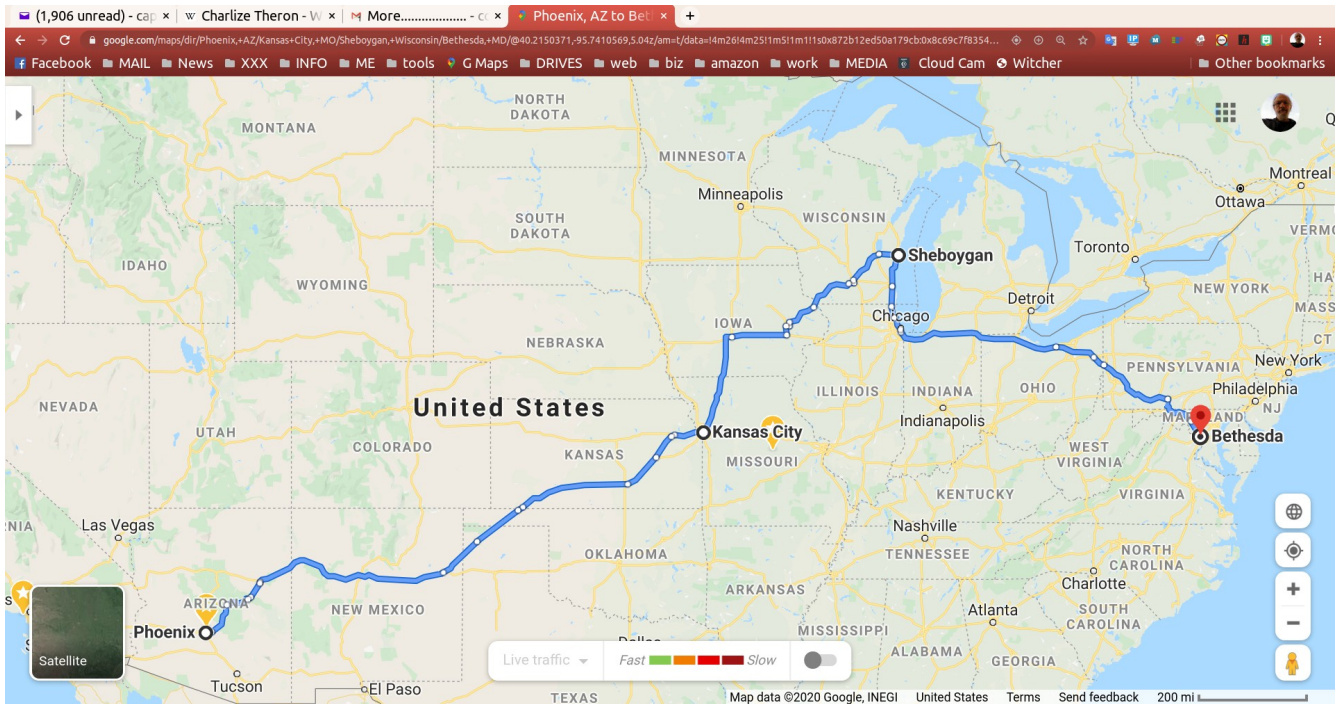
Whatever is useful to others will be given away. The few things that I can use, I'll keep.

The Giveaway

There was a mountain of clothing several feet wide, most of it in good wearable condition, enough shoes to fill the bed of my pickup, several soles deep, also wearable. Where all this came from is unknown, but I hated to see it wasted, so I piled it all in my driveway along with boxes of canned and packaged food, a large pile of bicycle frames, wheels, and parts, 5 or 6 large flat-screen TV's, and various other items. I posted a sign saying "free" and advertised the giveaway on Craigslist.

There were some takers, but by the April 19 bulk-trash pickup, a large stack remained, including a large couch, a broken bathtub, a queen-sized bed, and most of the clothes and shoes. Nine trash-bins had been filled and collected over 3 weeks.

It was a welcome relief when the city's trash-monster arrived and ate the remains, leaving my driveway clear at last.



2021

PACKED

jeans SHIRTS SOX SHOES SCISSORS-PKG cat milk pkg. keys Pkg of rope
Paper towels Toilet paper KLEENEX Alcohol SHAMPOO HAIR OIL TOOTHPASTE ETC. MOUSEWASH WATERPIC
IN COOLER Tuna Salmon Paper cups and bowls Paper plates Plastic silverware
CAN OPENER BLANKETS PILLOWS JACKETS power bank tablet and computer 3 way outlet plugs Sunglasses
vape juice batteries, charger

LEAVE HOME 6/25 around 14:00

The route: 1278 MI 19 HR.

i-17 TO i-40 i-25 AT Albuquerque Santa Fe, Las Vegas, Wagon Mound, Springer (HALFWAY-9.5 HR
647 MILES) (might have stopped there (BROKEN ARROW MOTEL), but didn't; might have caught
US 56 to Clayton, but went through Raton, took US 64 to Clayton, then US 56 (taking 87 by mistake
would take one into Texas) to Boise City OK home of a dinosaur, Cimaronosaurus, a 9 ton 65-foot
critter found in the 1930's, named "Cimmy", and the Longhorn Motel, in which I got a room.

Nissan miles began 72672. At 16:26 the McGuireville rest stop, mile 72761, At 72842 there was the
Meteor Crater, which I was told I might look at for \$18 with my senior discount. I decided to just
imagine what it looks like.

Passed by Leupp. Later exited at Pinta Rd, an exit with "no outlet", 72928.

Revised Lees Summit ETA to 6/28. I-40 through much of New Mexico was under construction,
resulting in slow and stopped traffic in the middle of the night.

Gallup, 72988 at 22:46. About 25 miles from Albuquerque (73123), traffic & I-40 cleared up.
The extra day may have been too much extra time, but better than not enough.

Air is no longer 25 cents, but \$2.00, and it takes credit cards, when it's working.

A brief light rain at 56 degrees.

Then back to warm.

Wagon Mound (a big mound that may or may not look wagonlike) 73292

Boise City 73509 home of "Cimmy", and the Longhorn Motel, into which I checked in the afternoon
of 6/26. It was time for a rest from driving.

Driving a long distance is not as much fun as it used to be. Perhaps it is driving alone. Stopping at
motels upsets the timing. Rest stops are harder to find these days

On the morning of the 27th I checked out of the Lengthy Honker, continuing on US 56 past Hugoton
Dodge City, and Sublette KS
73639

I stopped to admire the Gray County **windmill farm**. Kansas is the #3 state with highest potential
wind kilowatts, with a high average wind speed.

Most of the 3-bladed turbines high atop their majestic concrete masts were rotating, lazily it might
seem, though the power doesn't depend on a fast spin. At the ground level I could barely feel a breeze
at all.

I thought of the fact that there is a long list of things that human beings have fucked up, tried to do and
gotten them wrong. Here above me was one thing that humans got very right. It gave me just a little
more pride to be a human.

You can hear the sound of marching ants over contact microphones.
There are endangered sounds. Rotary dial phones, for example.
Would endangered species shit endangered feces?
The Quiet Americans (a book about early CIA)

I've been to the Mackville KS rest stop before. I remember the cats who live there, which are provided a cat-house and bowls where someone feeds them. Mile 73754

I stopped at Stafford for gas and a snack. The clerk said, "At least it's not too hot out."
I said, "I left Phoenix a couple of days ago, and I haven't been hot since then"
She was amused.

June 28

I arrived in Lee's Summit about 6:00 am, though with the new plan I didn't have a room until 14:30. Under the old reservation I would have been 8 hours too late, and now I was over 8 hours too early. So, I nap in parking lots, snack and piss at gas stations. Hotel/motels do it wrong.

Like last time, though nearly everywhere else was sunny, it rained. And Geoff isn't getting my texts. I wonder why. (He got them the next day.)

Actual distance driven 1359 74031 ending mile.
Within 100 of the projected Google distance.

One can hear the sound of Wikipedia being edited.

WORLD GOVERNMENT BILL OF RIGHTS

We need a world government, eventually, when we can get it done. It probably won't happen quickly, unless there is a perception that we need it to avert global disaster. The first step would be the writing of a World Constitution, with a Bill of Human Rights. There is already an International Court, which may become the world supreme court, its authority extended to review any national law for compliance with the Bill of Human rights.

It might be pointed out that our own US supreme court does an imperfect job of this; it could only be hoped the world can do better. Nations large and small routinely decimate basic human rights in their territories. Women do not have equal rights, including reproductive. Sexual preferences and gender identities are subject to persecution or discrimination. Races and religions are set in conflict by governments seeking to divide and exploit the population. Having its first purpose to protect the rights of the people, the WG should attract the approval of populations everywhere.

WG, essentially a refined UN with authority, would also deal with potential conflicts between national interests, making wars unlikely, and facilitate trade to the benefit of all.

RACISM PAST AND PRESENT

The study of history, including that of relations between the races, and its effect on the nature of the political and social institutions that were created and continue to strongly affect relative rights and opportunities today, brings a great deal of comprehension to the reasons and need for systemic changes. The blame for the racism that created those persistent systems belongs to those of the past and their faulty beliefs, not on those of today.

What is more difficult to understand is the resistance from “conservatives” to this study, understanding, and reform. We should be able to presume that the awareness that all human beings are born equally human, and none are inherently superior or inferior, is universal. So, why is there a sector of the public who resist learning all of the history, and would prefer no one else learns or tries to change the inequities?

A racist of today, or one who is willing to exploit racism for political influence, is far more offensive than many in the long past, because the mistaken beliefs of the past are no longer valid excuses today. Some may deny they are racist, and speak with civil-sounding arguments, yet do all they can to perpetuate the structures that produce inequality.

Can they not realize that, whatever power their white privilege provides them, the cost is living in a society that is rightly resented by the oppressed, with turmoil and violence reducing the quality of life and the stability of society?

Note regarding packing lists: more than a minimum of paper products is unneeded, and takes up space. Blankets aren't needed in the summer. In general, less is more when traveling in a compact car.

June 29

Anne arrived on AA 3560 from DCA at about 11:45 at MCI. Geoff got my texts from last night-- don't know why the delay. Perhaps my phone is trying to tell me it would like to retire, or maybe it's too full.

We went for dinner and beers at Llewellyns, which has an outdoor patio, and excellent food. The Adult Cheese Sandwich. Perfect.

On 6/30 we went to the Smoke Brewery restaurant. Also good, but inside and noisier.

Thursday July 1 Geoff, having had to work all week, didn't feel up to another night out, so we stayed in the room (211).

July 2

We headed for Sheboygan, which G-maps says is 9.5 hours. I mapped a route going north on I-35 to Des Moines, then I-80 east. The original plan was then I-380 north to US 30 east, to US 151, which slants nicely through Madison almost to Sheboygan, taking W-23 from Fon du Lac in.

I learned fon du lac means “far end of the lake”

However, around Madison the GPS re-routed us taking I-80 all the way to Milwaukee, then I-43 north to Sheboygan. It seemed to disregard the Pythagorean theorem.

We arrived at the Sleep Inn at 0:30 on 7/3.

July 3

We had dinner with Sheila at the Texas Roadhouse. The food's OK, but it was a bit crowded and noisy. Their prime rib was unacceptably tough for Sheila, so she got a steak instead. Coffee wasn't hot. It was good to see my favorite half-sister, though.

July 4

The Family Restaurant (Sheila calls it the "Old Folks Home") Good food. Baked Cod was nicely coddled. Sheila gave us both a Wisconsin face mask.

July 5

We're in Chicago. We stopped at the Cheese Castle on the way, but bought no cheese. The plan is to reduce bulk in the packing, visit the cemetery tomorrow, then stop in Hannibal. Visiting my mother's grave, where her body has rested almost 75 years, still means something. Trimming the grass around the stone, leaving flowers, touching the ground-- it feels virtually connecting, one generation to another.

Next will be Columbia, seeing Nolan and Dani, and on July 12, the trip to AZ

Hannibal: Quality Inn, room 223. Back to the town of our upbringings. It's changed, with roads I never heard of when living here, seeming awkwardly planned and added. Some years I've enjoyed driving by the old home, taking pictures. That didn't appeal this time.

Mexican food (Mexico Missouri; the 54 Diner.)

On to Columbia. Best Western, 118.

Saudi Arabia was more a force behind the 9/11 attack than has been revealed. Some facts remain secret; survivors are determined to find the answer.

The country which murdered and dismembered a journalist in Turkey, that didn't let women drive for years, that commits ruthless war crime in Yemen, that promotes Wahabbism, the most extreme form of Islam-- no surprise they foment terror, far more serious than Iran. All facts should be known, and we should no more sell them weapons than we would North Korea.

The same people resisting vaccinations are buying guns. Protections from a virus with an AR-15?

Assassination of Haiti's President. Who were those "DEA Agents"?

Columbia:

The original plans needed to be changed. Dani, it turned out, had caught the RSV virus, common enough and relatively harmless to children, but potentially deadly to us ancient beings. So, we decided to skip the visit and the trip to AZ with all 4 of us. Disappointing, but when everyone's healthy we can fly them out for a visit.

We headed for Lees Summit for another visit with Geoff. The restaurant was crowded, noisy, and overpriced, but it was good to spend time with him regardless. We had a couple of beers at the room afterward.

Heading west on US 50, we caught US 54 in Hutchinson. Anne found that my old friend Gypsy Claar died in 2019. There was a good obituary about her.

Tracy Elizabeth 'Gypsy' Claar

July 13, 1945 - June 11, 2019

Tracy Elizabeth 'Gypsy' Claar, 73, of Hutchinson, passed away peacefully in her home on June 11, 2019. She was born July 13, 1945, to Clifford and Dorothy Claar (Schuster), in Hutchinson. Tracy was a homeless advocate, writer, photographer and free spirit.

She is survived by: daughters, Elizabeth 'Kathy' Renner, Wichita, Christina 'Teena' Effenbeck, Mt. Hope, and Mariah Claar, Wichita; six grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Cremation has taken place. Services will be 6 p.m. Thursday, June 20, 2019, on the lawn of Riverwalk Church of Christ, 225 N. Waco, Wichita. Please bring a chair. Celebration of Life service will be held on Saturday, June 29, 2019, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., at the New Stadium, 620 W. Maple, Wichita. A potluck dinner will take place and persons are encouraged to bring their musical instruments.

Local arrangements by Elliott Mortuary.

Ironically, it was jst 2 days from Gypsy's birthday when I learned of her death

We followed US 54 through Liberal, Kansas, home of Dorothy of Wizard of Oz fame. Her official home and museum is there. And a nearby street is named Yellow Brick Road.

There was also an informal display of farm equipment from the early 1900's next to it. Spent the night at a Liberal hotel, then on through Dalhart TX and US 285 toward Roswell, New Mexico.

\$19+ gas at Santa Rosa (no receipt)

Around 18:30 mdt, approaching Vaughn NM, we encountered a hailstorm on US 54. By 19:00 it was subsided as we headed south on US 285. It was a good road, but cell service was very spotty.

We stayed the night in Roswell, (Clarion Inn-- the first well-setup TV system I've seen on this trip.then visited the UFO museum, which documented the 1947 alien ship crash and discovery....and coverup.

“The debris recovered by rancher WW Mack Brazel was gathered by the military from the Roswell Army Air Field under the direction of base intelligence officer Major Jesse Marcel. On July 8, 1947, public information officer Lt. Walter Haut issued a press release under orders from base commander Col. William Blanchard, which said basically that we have in our possession a flying saucer. The next day another press release was issued, this time from Gen. Roger Ramey, stating it was a weather balloon. That was the start of the best known and well-documented UFO coverup.

Once it became public, the event known as The Roswell Incident - the crash of an alleged flying saucer, the recovery of debris and bodies and the ensuing cover up by the military - was of such magnitude and so shrouded in mystery that, 70 years later, there are still more questions than answers. Books have been written and TV documentaries have been filmed. Witnesses have come forward. Skeptics have issued rebuttals to the Incident, and the debate continues.

The [International UFO Museum & Research Center](#), located at 114 N. Main Street, is a nonprofit corporation founded in the fall of 1991 by Walter Haut, Glenn Dennis and Max Littell. The museum opened to visitors in the fall of 1992. The UFO museum was organized to inform the public about what has come to be known as "The Roswell Incident" as well as all other aspects of the UFO phenomena. The corporation's mission statement includes the goal to educate, not convince, the general public about the Roswell Incident and all aspects of the UFO phenomena.

People from all around the world travel to Roswell to what the UFO Museum has to offer. some of the exhibits include information on the Roswell Incident, crop circles, UFO sightings, ancient astronauts and extraterrestrial abductions. The exhibits are designed to encourage visitors to ask questions and to think outside the box.”

From Roswell we took US 380 west, which connects to US 60 at Socorro, where I-25 intersects, We stayed at the Comfort here, since Springerville AZ wasn't a good hotel deal. There's around 400 miles to go, through Show Low.

The Route through New Mexico has been open fields, likely ranch land, green but having mostly small trees and bushes. It's cooler and gets more rain than central AZ. It's great that there is so much unspoiled land with vegetation. Going west it becomes more hilly, mountainous, but the same green grass and shrubs.

In Capitan we discovered the birthplace of the original Smokey the Bear. He was a real cub rescued from a fire and kept in a zoo until becoming the symbol for forest fire prevention. Smokey Bear Restaurant: excellent coffee and cheesecake.

Pie Town, New Mexico. I last stopped there on my 1985 motorcycle trip on the Ratster, for coffee and, of course, a piece of pie. I was hoping to repeat the pie, but alas, it was closed on Tuesdays, and Tuesday it was.

The highway through the mountains in eastern AZ was curvy and scenic. US 60 eventually straightens and becomes the Superstition Freeway through the East Valley into Phoenix.

Emails:

Oh I really like the idea of you coming to Columbia, picking up Nolan and Dani and then we can do some of the Chicago museums, etc!!!

Then we could take them to Sheila and from there back to KC? Am I getting that right? Thats a great idea!

Order # 866334824 I'll let you know when the order is ready for pick-up.

I think some of the attractions need reservations and we need to have a plan. I would like to get the city plan because it allows access to all places for a better price.

I need to get reservations for a hotel close by so you can stay there. I'll stay at 414 at night.

Oh but I guess we need to ask Nolan about a time frame to take this vacation next I think. This will be a crowded time in Chicago but I think we can swing it. Here's tentative schedule to share with Nolan....

June 28 Leave Phoenix

July 1 KC for Geoff (would he like Chicago visit?)

July 3 Columbia to pick up Nolan and Dani

July 4 Hannibal (you can show Dani your house) great fireworks!

July 10 Chicago cemetery

July 12 Sheboygan

July 14 Chicago (downtown attractions)

We would have several days to do our touring.

I would like to fly from here to my grandson's birthday on July 19. We can save our personal trip for the fall.

let me know if you see a better plan.....

Look up Chicago City Pass:-)

June 28 Leave Phoenix

July 1 KC for Geoff (would he like Chicago visit?)

July 3 Columbia to pick up Nolan and Dani

July 4 Hannibal (you can show Dani your house) great fireworks!

I could meet you here because I have some business to do

July 6 Chicago cemetery

July 7 Sheboygan

July 9 Chicago (downtown attractions)

We would have several days to do our touring.

I would like to fly from here to my grandson's birthday on July 19. We can save our personal trip for the fall.

let me know if you see a better plan.....

Is oldham parkway ok for LS It is only one available? from Choice

Better share schedule with Geoff first.....Kay may be having them all down to the Lake for July 4.....

Sheboygan hotel rates/points look good for that time frame

Tell Geoff and Nolan we have to get something going soon before rates change.

After we said good morning, I reclined and napped for 2 or 3 hours, not having gone to sleep very early Friday night.

Then I checked the email. "Wow!" I thought.

The 'bring them to Chicago' idea was just an off the wall(er) thought, a variation of the plan to pick you up in Chicago so you wouldn't need to bring things to Bethesda that you would need to take to Phoenix (and which would allow a round trip airfare instead of 2 different 1-ways)

I hadn't put much detail into that variation, figuring at most a visit to the Willis/Sears tower and the cemetery, then Sheila, and we'd all head to Phoenix together.

I realize that would complicate the hotel requirements at any stop, and I was figuring one night in Chicago, one in Sheboygan, and I suppose a couple from there to Phoenix.

I haven't proposed anything to Nolan yet, and don't know if that would appeal at all, anyway. It might be adding more to this trip than necessary.

I was thinking that you would be riding with us to Phoenix if I picked them up on our way westward. I hadn't thought about your going to Bethesda for July 19, which sort of limits the time available.

I've been feeling a little lazy since finishing the LR tile. Not exactly tired, just feeling like a break before starting the next project. The bedroom job will be just as big.

I don't know about the timing that works for Nolan yet, whether it involves time off work, or how long.

I hadn't thought about Geoff coming along, since I know he'd have to schedule time off. Visiting him in Lees Summit works fine, of course.

Perhaps I'll meditate on it all a little longer.

=====

2022

JOURNEY TO THE MIDWEST

July 19 to July 22 2022

PLACE mile TIME GAS \$/GAL GAL dist mpg

Glendale	78626	17:00	26.82	\$5.60	4.79		
Payson	78712	19:00			0.00	86	
Navajo	78847	22:00	36.11	\$5.08	7.11	135	31.09
Las Vegas NM	79165	04:09	45.87	\$4.80	9.56	318	33.28
Springfield CO	79421	10:46	32.36	\$4.93	6.56	256	39.00
Ulysses KS	79497					76	
Dodge City	79577	12:46				80	
Stafford County	79651	15:59				74	
? KS	79710	17:41	37.78	\$4.48	8.43	289	34.27
McPherson	79766	18:25				56	
Rest Stop	79799	20:19				33	
Lees Summit	80037	01:29				238	
total			178.94	4.91	36.45	1411	

Gas prices were higher than normal, partly due to the boycott of Russian oil because of its invasion of Ukraine, and partly due to pandemic-caused supply chain problems. The Nissan has good fuel economy, however.

The journey of 2022 began the afternoon of 6/19, the Nissan packed with what would be needed, though not more, for about a month of travel. Three jeans, 5 shirts, 2 pairs of shoes, 1 pair of sandals, 2 computers, some food, some tools.

I headed out Shea to the Beeline (AZ-87), toward Payson, then at Holbrook, I caught I-40 to I-25 over the Raton pass into Colorado. At Trinidad I got on Us 160, crossing southern Colorado where it's flat I wanted to avoid passing through Texas and Oklahoma, two states that violate human rights, just on principle. AT&T has a weak signal all along there, not enough for data.. At Springfield I stopped, got a room at the Starlite Inn, around noon, and rested.

Next day at 9:23 I left Springfield; on toward Dodge City Kansas. After the third rest stop, I found myself unintentionally on US 81, which took me north to US 24, a slow highway through the small Kansas towns. Finally I arrived in Lees Summit, sleeping at the Comfort until time to pick up Anne at MCI, arriving about 17:00.

Though some hotels seem to be wired for ethernet, I found none that worked. My laptop seems unable to do WIFI, though my Chromebook can.

We had a beer with my son Geoff before heading to Hannibal, and the Main Street B & B, an ex-bank with 3 rooms upstairs. The ceilings are unusually high in the old style architecture, and the room was comfortable, though a little too well air conditioned. Breakfast consisted of baskets of fruit and snacks, some banana-type bread, prepared by the owner who lived in the lower floor of the old bank. It had a jacuzzi tub as well as a shower. It was a good location in downtown Hannibal. There is no elevator, but the stairs were good for exercise. As hotel rooms often have, this one had a combination kitchen and bathroom, which might be called a "bitchen".

Seeing Hannibal as a tourist, sort of, was a different approach than revisiting it as a former residence. The Mississippi is the same wide river as ever, but a relaxing ride up and down it, and dinner on board, was a serene and relaxing way to spend a day. Another evening a live musical concert in the Bluff City theater, a converted bank building, was a different experience. On weekends downtown seems more lively than it used to be, with live music in a bar or two and people gathered in front of them.

As it approached time to leave, we noticed the noise was getting louder. I thought it might be the plastic under-cover, which had come loose on one corner. I wired it back in place, but the noise remained. The next theory was a CV joint. If it was bad, no one in Hannibal could likely fix it, but there was a Nissan dealer in Columbia, our next stop.

We spent a week, July 23 to 30 there, then on to Columbia. The Comfort was disappointing, lacking a working pool. We'd been hoping Dani could come swim with us.

We got a diagnosis on the Nissan: a transmission mount. They could order one, but it wouldn't hurt to drive it till then. The diagnosis was wrong. After the fireworks display, we rerouted to Lee's Summit on July 7 rather than Chicago, figuring we could come back to Columbia when the part was in.

The noise got worse. Then, just a couple of miles from the hotel, it started feeling like it had a flat. The front left wheel popped one of the 4 lug nuts completely off, broken. I got the lug wrench from under

all the luggage and tightened the other 3. Even going slow, they kept loosening again, and I'd stop to re-tighten them.

We managed to make it to the Nissan dealer on Oldham Pkwy that was about a quarter mile from the hotel. It turned out the hub was bad, not the transmission mount.

We had dinner with Geoff at Stewy McBrews and Johnny's Tavern.

Heading to Chicago on the 10th, we stopped on the way at the Bloomington IL Comfort, so as to reach St. Mary's cemetery early enough in the day. Trimmed the grass around my mother's stone and left her some inorganic flowers. We got a new set of tires, got the Nissan emission-checked, and headed to Sheboygan on the 13th.

We stayed at the usual Sleep Inn and went to dinner with Sheila at Luigi's and the Texas Roadhouse.

On the 15th, we headed west on I-90, passing through La Crosse where we crossed the upper Mississippi. It looked a bit like the lower one, except cleaner. Through Minnesota, we turned southwest. We considered Sioux Falls SD for a stop, but hotels were priced high. We descended into Iowa and found a reasonable one in Sibley. The Sibley Inn had pleasant service, but no elevator and no coffee in the room. On the 16th, we followed IA-60/US-75 to US-30 toward Grand Island (which oddly has very little water around it), then US-281 to I-80 to I-76. Stopping in Sterling CO at the Comfort, which had one of those unquenchable bathroom fans.

Most of the hotels have dumped those fans, which noisily come on with the bathroom light, but this one hadn't. Sheboygan Sleep still had one, too.

There is a nightmare for Elm Street. Dutch Elm disease. Dead elms stood out among living non-Elms. Someone should make them a vaccine.

Two of the hotels had excessively high beds. A folding step-stool solved the problem.

South on I-25, we crossed the Raton Pass, stopping in Santa Fe, NM. Wilson Plowman, a Facebook friend I'd never met personally, originally from Hannibal, lived there and we met for coffee the next morning.

By evening we were in Flagstaff, staying at the Quality, which ironically was the least-quality room of the whole trip. Opening the door, it hit the corner of the desk, which had no chair. We had to ask for one at the office. Later I found a shower-chair sitting outside, which I nabbed for a second one. Wi-fi was weak, and the TV was set up wrong, requiring another visit from the desk clerk.

We returned to Glendale a month after I had left. The weather was warm.

Text notes

HANNIBAL HISTORY NOTE

Twain's first two stops — to his boyhood home and Mount Olivet Cemetery — symbolized his internal struggle, according to Sorrentino.

“Whereas the home represented his youth and the imaginative world of Huck and Tom, the cemetery — the burial ground of his parents, his brothers Henry and Orion, and most of ‘the boys’ from his past — reminded him of the painful reality of the present,” --Sorrentino, in an issue of the biannual “Mark Twain Journal.”

July 4th

What are we actually celebrating? Declaring independence later won? I it has been called the American revolution, but mere independence is not a revolution. Different government, same class. But I it was the beginning of a revolution, which is not yet over 246 years later. It won the ability to start a revolution, a wheel of change that would revolve slowly in many steps, each of which enabled the next or revealed an error to be corrected before going on to the next step. There have been plenty of errors, some repeated many times before a better direction was clear.

2022 packing list

box of Kleenex
shampoo black
mouth wash
toothpaste
Hair oil
tuna & salmon in packages
bagels 1 pkg.
Paper towel 2
Toilet paper 1
Alcohol
peroxide
first aid kit
Garbage bags -a few
Can opener
Drinking water 1 gallon
Multiple outlet plug for USB's
Vitamins for a month
5 volt power bank
tablet and computer
3 way outlet plugs
Sunglasses
vape juice batteries, charger
Pkg of rope
Handy tools
Lowe's bucket (for emergency toilet)
Cooler-case
green knife
3 pairs jeans
5 shirts
jackets
hats
sox
1 pair shoes
1 pair sandals
1 swim shorts
1 regular shorts
towel
stuff for Dani

Old Packing List 2021

2 pillows
Gallon of Distilled water
*CPAP (already packed in case)
box of Kleenex (some in my closet)
shampoo
mouth wash (new Colgate in closet) and my Listerine
toothpaste
Hair oil
Anne's water pic
Sardines with mustard
Tuna (?) in pkg
Salmon

Paper cups and bowls
Paper plates
Plastic silverware
Paper towels
Toilet paper
Alcohol
2 blankets
Ream of paper
Colored pencils/ crayons & things for Dani
Garbage bag to fit in 5 gallon bucket
Hand sanitizer
Can opener
Drinking water
Water to wash hands, etc.
Multiple outlet plug for USB's
Vitamins for a month
Jackets for layering
Hats
5 volt power bank
tablet and computer
3 way outlet plugs
Sunglasses
vape juice batteries, charger
Pkg of rope
Handy tools
Lowe's bucket (for emergency toilet)
Cooler-case
car key
hdmi cable ethernet cable chromebook laptop

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VENICE

September 2023

Facebook: Though I know there is a city in Italy named Venice, older and more distant, it is this special place in California that I visit, with its wide sandy beach on the Pacific, its adjacent line of shops selling art, crafts, clothing, books, music, marijuana and food, throngs of people walking, skating, skateboarding, and bicycling, mural art everywhere on the sides of buildings, performers in costumes and musicians entertaining on the side, including one man playing a grand piano.

I lived in this great place for a year in the early 80's. It is still full of creativity, good humor, and perhaps hope and desire for a better world.

Monday Sept 19-- Anne and I headed to LA, checking in the Comfort Cockatoo just off Imperial Hwy near the LAX, that being the more reasonable rate hotel area.

Tuesday we visited Venice Beach. The weather was sunny and mild. The mural artists had some new creations. In addition to all the clothing, art & craft stores were marijuana shops, now legal. Lots of people walking, biking, rollerboarding, etc. The sand was soft and the Pacific wet and salty.

Wednesday: Santa Monica. We walked on the SM pier, which has been expanded since the original, widened and a ferris wheel, roller coaster and other rides added, and several carnival-type games. There is also a Bubba Gump's Shrimp restaurant, where we ate-- very good. It's part of a chain inspired by the Forrest Gump movie. We walked to the beach and waded in the surf a bit. I pissed in the Pacific, by one of the pier support posts. Considering the ocean's vastness and my volume of urination, I don't think I polluted it much.

Thursday: Griffith Park, visiting the observatory and viewing LA from the mountain-- also the famous Hollywood sign. Nice drive through the park. Then, Hollywood and Vine, looking at a few sidewalk stars. Also found that Le Sexe Shoppe at Hollywood & Wilton Place is no longer there. We ate at a restaurant near Vine called Wood and Vine. The food and service were good; prices a bit high. Then at the Pantages Theatre we saw a live production of Jagged Little Pill, a musical based on Alanis Morissette's songs, which deals with several social issues. Well done, though it sometimes seemed a bit unorganized.

Friday, we rested.

Saturday: We went to see my old houses in Frogtown, 2814 Coolidge and 2820 Newell. Unexpectedly, there was a community art-walk festival happening, making parking hard to find. We found one at Coolidge & Ripple, where we met a very helpful local resident named Jesse. He even invited us in his home to use the rest room, offered a beer, and gave us a ride down to the river where the festival and the Newell house was.

The house is no more, replaced by concrete, used by the adjacent commercial businesses. At the end of Newel is a new Starbucks-wannabe coffee shop. We spoke to a woman who is an urban planner for LA County, very interesting info about gentrification, homelessness, and neighborhood issues.

2814 Coolidge is still there, fixed up very nicely with an iron fence and green trees and plants, a carport shelter on the driveway, where a BMW was parked.

The LA river now has islands and a river-like water flow-- looks much nicer than the bleak concrete canal it used to resemble. There's some concern about having reduced the ability to handle a flood, though.

Afterward we went to Santa Monica and ate at a restaurant called Lula on Main, Mexican food. Very good. We were going to walk to the beach, but it was dark and decided to wait till tomorrow.

Sunday: We returned to Venice Beach for more sand, ocean, and sights and sounds of the people and their art.

Monday: the plan is to return to Phoenix.

The trip went smoothly until one point on I-10 when all traffic slowed to a crawl. We learned there was a closure, which would require a detour at the next exit. Traffic crawled toward that exit, but by the time we reached it, they had reopened I-10. Never found out exactly what the problem had been-- accident or spilled load perhaps. All went well after that.

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Tucson is not just a little Phoenix. Just a little over 500,000 people, the U of AZ, and what seems like a relaxed attitude add up to a rather nice place to visit. The Congress Hotel, built in the early 1900's, is right downtown. Its rates are not too unreasonable, and it features three bars within-- a restaurant with an outdoor patio called the Cup Cafe, the Century Room, usually hosting jazz, and the Tap Room. Adjoining that is the Club Congress, a venue for a variety of live music.

There are no elevators, but only 3 floors. The staircase is pleasantly carpeted, The windows actually open. There's no TV in the room. They furnish an imitation antique radio, a phone with a dial...but WIFI for your computer. Being downtown, with nearby train tracks, traffic, music, and people out and about, it isn't a quiet place, but that's part of its appeal. For an extra \$9 you can park in an underground garage, or chance the 2-hour parking meters. John Dillinger once stayed here, and got caught and arrested. The room key is an actual key, not a card, with a big brass tag on it.

About 40 miles away is Mount Lemmon (one of the citrus mountains, no doubt.) Drive up its 8000 feet and you see great views and rock formations. There's a little snow left in April. In the winter people ski on stuff like that. There is also a Desert Museum, with a variety of local plants and animals-- mountain lion, ocelot, wolf, fox, bear. Their natural enclosures afford them places to hide, however, and most of them did.

The Century Room one night featured some Ambiance Music, which seems to be a new form of musical expression, often without such old-fashioned elements as rhythm and melody. It reminds one of a movie sound track, the background meant to evoke anticipation of a coming scene. Parts of it were not altogether unpleasant; somewhat interesting. During parts of it, I dozed.

There is a lot of mural art downtown, much of it quite good. Walls of buildings are the ideal medium for art, which should be seen by the people, not hidden away in museums. Creation should not have to be bought and sold; artists should be publicly funded.

The Congress Club had an excellent performance by Charlie Stout, and a slide-guitarist named John. They were much better than the second act, Gabe Lee, who had an annoying voice and mumbled his lyrics. Charlie is a singer/songwriter in a folk/country style, with interesting lyrics and a good performer personality.

Tucson was enjoyable, and quite different from Phoenix. It manages to retain a more human-sized charm, with a downtown that is nice to walk around in.

The Great Toilet Adventure of 2024

Flushing, never really perfect, finally gurgled to a stop. The flow must go on, I proclaimed. The toilet snake, about 3 feet and designed to thread the trap, found no clog that close. The chemical likewise moved nothing. The main pipe out to the city sewer, replaced a few years ago, was doing fine. Only the toilet, not the kitchen sink, and not the drains in the rear house, had the problem. It should have been a straight pipe from the toilet out to the junction beside the house.

I bought a flat steel snake, removed the toilet, and snaked. It went about 20 feet and ran in to a hard stop. That had to be a turn it couldn't navigate. That was about the distance to the junction as the crow flies. Next I had to find the other end, if that's where the clog was. I dug, feeling like an archeologist looking for lost bones.

Nothing straight from the toilet came to connect. What route could it be taking? More digging was on the agenda. Long, hard excavation. Finally, days into the project, I found a pipe curving into the junction area, coming along the side of the house. The pipe had gone out from the toilet, then straight down, took a right, then out to the yard, took a left. Then eventually into the curve, another left. With all those turns, it was no wonder it clogged.

I dug down to an area just before the curve, and discovered the pipe had a hole in it-- a fairly large one. It seems that as water flowed, the clay soil around it was being washed in, making a clog worse than shit could. From the hole, I snaked both ways, and it seemed to be clear. I made a temporary transparent cover for the hole by cutting a water bottle and wiring it on. Running water into the toilet hole, it seemed to flow.

At that point, I should have made that patch more permanent and declared victory. Instead I spent another day or two, and more money, cutting the pipe and inserting a piece into it. The problem was the pipe was an old material called Orangeburg, that hasn't been used since 1970 or so. The house was built in 1946, the same year I was.

After I cut it, a piece broke off, so I had to cut it again. Finally, with rubber splicers I managed to wedge in a good pipe between them. Will it work? Stay tuned.

Feb 8, 2024

Restoring the toilet was delayed due to an infection from a scrape on my leg that I got while working in and over the excavations. A doctor and an ER visit was needed, antibiotics prescribed. Two days later, it seemed not improving. Another visit to the Glendale Dignity (St. Joseph's) ER, more antibiotics IV, and a transfer to their Chandler branch.

The most annoying thing about that experience was that I was unable to vape. I refused a nicotine patch. The assholes did not understand it was NOT about nicotine (even though my vape contains some), but about the relaxation and enjoyment from the process. I could have stepped outside, but they had a rule about that, too.

Other than that, the hospital provided relatively good treatment. However, they outrageously proposed I take an ambulance to Chandler, which would have been VERY costly and not Medicare-covered. The IV connector in my arm seemed to be an object they obsessed over. No ambulance. We drove, in the rain.

The transfer was about a specialist Glendale didn't have- an orthopedist, just in case my knee joint needed one. Chandler Dignity was well-run too. Being leashed to a rolling pole for an IV is not fun, but it could be worse.

They drained the infected wound with a needle. Then, a day or so later, cut it open and washed it out. Next day, back home with more antibiotics.

A few days later I began the rest of the toilet project, building a strong floor for it using 2 x 4's, replacing the water-weakened section that had allowed the toilet to tilt if not braced with concrete blocks on either side. The toilet and tank were re-installed and connected. Flushing seemed to work, but the patient was kept on a liquid diet for several days. The rear house toilet works fine, so, appropriately enough, we pissed in front and shat in the rear. Gradually, solid shit was introduced to the main toilet. So far, so good.

On the rest of the floor I laid ceramic tiles to replace the old carpet, and made some other improvements. The bathroom looks better than it ever has.