

2017

Our Travel Log – Stuck in Florida



Paul Grenier

[Company name]

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APRIL 2017:

4.15.2017 Del-Raton RV Park:

We were very lucky to find an RV park within ten miles of Dennis' condo. We officially took back our coach on April 15th, Yes, Easter weekend. It was a weekend of mixed feelings.



This is our spot and we'll most likely be here till at least the end of the year or longer. Del-Raton is basically a small family-operated RV Park. In total it looks like they have about seventy RV sites. As a sideline these folks sell and service trailers. The campground has no perks, except for laundry and game room.

4.04.2017, Celebrating Dennis' Birthday:

Well yesterday was Dennis' birthday. We all got together and had a nice celebration. The big gift was a new VCR for the main TV in the house. The previous one could take eternity thinking about getting going. This one, surprisingly had a very simple and fast setup, wish we had it. The other big gift coming in a couple of days would be a transport chair. Not that he hasn't got enough wheelchairs already, this one comes in at only nineteen pounds, great for getting him to his appointments and shopping with Miss Camille.

MAY 2017

5.05.2017 We await the arrival of Tom and Sue Ward.



Very good friends we got to know well on our Alaskan Tour. We've mentioned them before, but this time they're coming way out of their way to spend a few days with us as they trek to Tennessee eventually. Nice to see our friends crisscrossing the states in their motorhome. At last, after a month of anticipation, Tom and Sue arrived and met with us at our motorhome in Delray, FL. It was a great night sharing stories and experiences, the good and the not so good workings of our coaches and talk about meeting again tomorrow night.

5.06.2017 Sat. "Two Georges" Delray Beach, Florida



I must apologize for the sharpness of the picture, since it is a picture of a picture. For some reason Bluehost does not like phone pictures any more. Two Georges in Delray Beach is right on the intercostal waterway. Beautiful breezes and great food were enjoyed by all. If anyone is ever in driving distance of this great eatery I recommend it highly.



We finished the evening with a walk along the docks looking at boats only the One-per centers could possibly afford. It wasn't too long before the mosquitoes found us and we called it an evening.

5.07.2017 Sun. We visited the Ward's at their motorhome.

As you can tell from just the size of this coach, it's big. It's a 2017 Tour by Winnebago. Top of the line, and from the picture below, it's just as pretty on the inside. We enjoyed an awesome dinner with Tom and Sue then watched Sue do dishes. Not necessary in this motorhome since it comes with a dishwasher. Even ours comes with a dishwasher...me! John Prince Park, a Florida State Park. We took a little time to visit this beautiful park. We might even plan to stay there come November of this year. Just checked my phone and we have no pictures of this park. Guess everyone will have to wait till Nov.

5.20.2017 Sat Nine Lives

Not much to say about this great flick except it should be seen by everyone. Yes, it's about a cat. Sounds like a dumb show, but trust me, you will enjoy it.

5.23.2017 Tuesday Finding Neverland -

We watched this movie two years ago and my opinion hasn't changed. This movie, by far in my opinion, is the best movie Johnny Depp has ever starred in.

5.24.2017. Carla finishes her radiation treatments.

This is a six-week regimen, every day except weekends. She did well. At the end of the



course of treatment is the official "Ring of the Bell." We are both very positive about the 5-year outlook. We can only pray that this is all behind us and it's time to get back to our original lives.

25th Thurs Trip to La Mesa

There's always something that needs fixing; definition on a motorhome. We're still trying to have the dash A/C fixed, the by-product damage of a trip to Alaska. Another A/C damaged part, but no A/C person to work on it. Guess we'll have to take another field trip next month.



Memorial Day and tomorrow will be the end of another month. This is the first month since September on 2016 that I've gotten back to this blog, and it feels good. Began this special day with a call to our extended family in Iowa, Don and Joyce MacDougall. In our travels we've discovered that almost everywhere we'd decided to travel, mysteriously intersected in Iowa. Our plans are to, hopefully, take some time to ourselves in September and possibly travel North to NY now the construction is

completed. It would be nice to do a side trip to Don and Joyce on the way to NY; it might be a stretch. It's been eight months since we've travelled anywhere except to have repairs or improvements done to the coach, we're experiencing travel-withdrawals. We pray each day this will happen. I don't expect to add anything useful the rest of the day and same for the 31st, so we'll get together again next month, and hopefully months to follow.

5.31.2017- This blog has lately evolved into a personal diary as opposed to a travel blog but it will have to continue this way until at least September. But getting back to the picture above. This is a group shot the remaining Grenier elders clan. Starting from the right side of the picture my son Michael then Christine and her husband Richard. Left side first is Dennis, myself and Carla. The only elders here are really Rich, Dennis and myself. For Michael, it might be a "father thing," but I always envision him around eighteen; even at this age he's grown up to be a very impressive adult. Having all three brothers together on a given day is rare for our family; having Michael there as well was a real bonus.

JUNE 2017:



As you can see from the images above the entire facility is paved almost all the sites are pull-through and it is very clean. What you don't see, unless you're lucky enough to be here at the right time is the rail-road tracks that can be found less than one-hundred feet from the back side of the property. We're getting used to the sounds and whistles in the middle to the night.

6.04.2017- I know, this is out of sequence, but its relevant to the park. I'm bored. Just wanted to note that we're now in site #32 overlooking the back storage/parking-lot of the Delray Hyundai/Genesis Dealership. This is nothing to brag about, but it does give me an opportunity to write, even if it's just a line of two.

18th...It's been so long since I've sat down and written an new entry to the Blog. For the last seven months Carla and I have been keeping busy tending to my brother and his obligations. At one time or another we might all have the challenge of trying to step into someone else's shoes and do the best we can to expedite the many demands he had to face daily when he was well, but for us we try to handle the ups and downs of his life and let him concentrate on his recovery.

Long story short back in September "16" Richard, my brother from San Jose, and I were witness to Dennis just lying in the hospital bed totally motionless. He had lost his ability to control his left arm and left leg.

I can't even imagine what was going through his mind. He knew he had a problem, and he was aware that we were there with him in this dilemma, but the shock of his situation must have been mind boggling to him.

After nine days in the hospital he was sent to HealthSouth to recuperate in a friendlier environment. HealthSouth did not improve his situation very much so once they felt he was in no more danger of another stroke he was released to Carla and I for home

rehab. His physical well-being did not improve much at HealthSouth. At home he would embark on home rehab for six weeks. His diet, since his stroke, consisted mostly of macerated food items which in no way resembled what was being served. By the time we got him his chances for choking and another stroke had been minimized, salt was permitted, and the food presented looked edible.

His new life at home would turn out to be quite different from what he was hoping for. He was unable still to sit up on his own, had to be carried from bed to wheelchair and wheelchair to car. Then to make things even worse he had Carla feverishly trying to improve his diet of seventy years and me yapping at him to exercise or else. To make things worse his junk food diet would be a dream. With all this to cope with, medications had to be given all day long.

After enduring home rehab for about six weeks and patiently watching Carla and I, mostly Carla, trying to untangle and understand the rules and procedures that had to be followed for Dennis to continue receiving cash benefits to pay for all that he needed, we were fortunate to learn that Boca Regional Hospital ran its own out-patient rehab and Dennis was permitted to participate. Boca Regional was also the hospital he was brought to at the time of his stroke. This happens to be one of the finest facilities in all South Florida. It's now been seven months and Dennis can sit up on his own even in a regular chair, can stand mostly on his own for a minute or two and is beginning to re-learn how to walk again with considerable help. Guess you could say things are looking up. However, Dennis has always been on his own same as with Carla and me. It was only a matter of time before we realized Dennis needed a little more space and we did as well so we'd decided to relocate back in our coach. Delray is only a ten-minute ride to Dennis' home so I can check in on him daily and be available to him for his appointments. We appreciate the space as well. We're staying at the Del-Raton RV Park. This is a great little park just off US 1 in Delray, FL.

So why do I tell the details of Dennis' trials these last few months; simple!

I would like everyone reading this to realize just how taxing on everyone a stroke can be especially on the victim. After a discussion with one of Dennis' neurologist he told me that many kinds of strokes are predictable. The best start is diagnosis, through a series of four types of tests and MRI's. These tests are affordable, and, for us, our Medicare is paying for it. The cost of these four procedures is a no-brainer if it can either relieve you of most concerns if they come out negative or make you aware of a potential problem you might be able to avert under a doctor's care.

It's what I've decided to do. The last thing I would wish on anyone is the difficult days my brother has had to endure. Another consideration is the cost of care. Dennis had made an excellent decision about twenty-five years ago with the Disability Insurance he purchased. Daily he has thirteen hours a day of home help care. Believe it or not that comes out to around \$250 dollars a day or about \$8000 a month.

Thank you.

Paul

23rd... Devine Mercy Sunday, once again.

I guess we were asking too much. We were looking for a Sunday Service at 2:30 so we drove about twelve miles to go to a service at that time. Trouble with the location it was basically Hispanic. There was enough English to keep us on the right page, but I should have more diligent in checking out a new church.

23rd ...We must treat ourselves occasionally. This steak was just sitting in the Walmart cooler with a bright yellow sticker saying 40% off, outdates next day. Well that was two months ago and today we thawed it out and gutted it down to the bone...Delicious! What made it even better was the Lambrusco wine that we enjoyed the main course with. To



make the day just about perfect was a call from my daughter, Cheryl, returned my call. Always a refreshing call. It's rewarding to see your child and her husband living a very responsible life,



savings are a mainstay in how they live; so very different from the examples I set for her as a child. Now, as a senior, I must reconcile myself to the fact that if I had lived a little more frugally finances might be a little easier these days, although I'm not complaining, not much I would change even if I could.

July:

July, 3rd, 2nd anniversary of mom's passing.



I picked up Dennis from his home and attended a Mass being celebrated for her and a couple of other families. The mass was held in the Chapel of St. John's CC in Boca, a small but very beautiful venue. Mom wanted so much to hit the One-Hundred-year mark, but 97 was as far as she got, besides three more years might have been too much for Dennis who had been by her side for so many years.

4th. And for the first time, if I recall correctly, we got through the day and night without viewing any fireworks, I'm now sounding like my parents. After all, after seventy years of viewing fireworks there's very little that's new to be viewed. On the 10th we have an appointment with Trail Tires to have the tires on the coach balanced. Hopefully with a few days after that we'll be, once again, trucking north to La Mesa to have a new compressor installed which we need for the dash A/C to operate. It's not vital for us to live comfortably but leaving it broken is asking for trouble in the future.

5th. Hard to believe we're still here but here we are, the beginning of another month. Our goal is still jacks-up on September 15th, hopefully, about 2 months away. Even as full-time RVers we still must take care of business, health business. On the 3rd Carla went in for dental brushing and I followed her on the 5th. We both walked away with good marks. My appointments are finished, and I'm good to go for, hopefully, another ten years, we'll see. Carla is finishing up as well. An appointment today in a couple before the 9/15 deadline and she'll be done for the first year, we're very optimistic so we pray to Him for continued good health for both of us.

8th. Saturday...Desperate to write something...Tomorrow being Saturday it's visit Dennis, Mass, pizza and beer. On another note on Monday we take a short field-trip to Trail Tire to have the tires on the coach balanced; this should be relatively inexpensive. Tires for the coach cost around seven-hundred dollars each and are only good for seven years so we must watch over them. Then on Friday it's back to LaMesa to have the compressor installed. Just got through fighting with Ticketmaster, did not win.

Tried to create an account and it said I did but when I went back to sign in, it said password or username did not match; I get that a lot these days. Purpose for the Ticketmaster is for our Anniversary coming up next week on the 14th; Yes, I remembered, at least I remembered today. We don't usually do anything special, go out to eat and occasionally go to a movie, but this year we're going to attend the musical "Into the Woods." A musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine being performed at Florida Atlantic University, which happens to be just down the street from us in Boca Raton, FL. It should be a very nice night. Sunday, weather is like the Bahamas. Today's weather will be like yesterdays, and last weeks for the next 2 months. 85 in the morning going to 92 but feels like 103 degrees, that's all. If LaMesa does not come through with a compressor by Friday, we have an appointment with Ryan to give us some options for satellite TV. Right now, it sounds like the upgrade should cost between 600 and \$2200 depending on what we choose.

10th. Today, as usual opened at 78 degrees and topped out at 93 feeling like 105 degrees. Good day for a field trip, and we did. Off to Trail Tire to have the tires balanced. For a change a cheap fix, until the mechanic looked at the problem. No can fix, and it's off to Excel Freight so they can replace a "king-pin", replace shocks, new alignment and two new tires for the front. No idea on the cost, will know more on the 13th when we're scheduled for the fix. We're told that this is not an unusual repair. Later this month LaMesa on the 28th will replace the compressor for the dash-A/C, at least most of that is warrantee work. Carla and I have begun taking walks, not big ones, too hot, but at least some exercise.

July 14th. Twenty Seventh Anniversary. Imagine that, 27 years, and best of all 27 happy years. It's difficult remembering that almost that long ago we both decided to give up winters in Connecticut and try living in "Paradise." We moved all our belongings and began renting again. We sunk every dime we had, which wasn't much, into a Child Care Center, and had a big mortgage on the center as well as a private loan needed for the down payment; What were we thinking? Two Corporations and 27 years later were just about the same as from the beginning. So, few arguments, not that we haven't ever disagreed, no trust issues but most of all no jealousies. In a past life I could not imagine this being everyday living; LIFE is good. 27 is an odd number of years, unlike 25 or, let's say 50, which we'll never experience; more like a dinner and movie anniversary night. It would be a little more interesting than that. For the past four days I've been down with some type of gastro problem, not eating, loss some weight and not that anxious to go out for the evening. We will go out to dinner possibly next week, if I ever get better, but last night was very entertaining. Please go to the blog for the 14th for a little more into on the evening.

July 14th: Into the Woods was being presented at Studio-1 at FAU. We both decided it would be a break from the routine. We arrived on the FAU grounds in plenty of time and signs directed up to the parking garage just down the campus road from Studio 1. As we approached the entrance to the garage, and not sure how to get to the theater, we asked a "professor looking" young man how to find Studio-1. He was very knowledgeable and introduced himself as Bruce Linser, Director of the Production. The play was more than anyone could ask for; entertaining, exciting and beautifully performed. I would love to input a dozen pictures on the production but "no pictures allowed." Do not pass up the opportunity to view this production.

31st. Here I am again, end of another month. Right now, we're at 50 days and counting

before we can pick up and leave. For the most part it's gone by as slowly as I thought it would. Months ago, Dennis decided there was little I could do to help him along. But in our defense, back in September, Dennis was lying in a bed motionless. I have no doubt he was possibly in shock, not really knowing what had happened and only praying that the powers in charge of his life would be there for him and help bring him back to the real world. Dennis has overseen his life now for a couple of months and doing well. He and his day caregiver, Keisha, watch his schedule daily so as not to miss any appointments. He's probably Boston Market's best customer. The refrigerator is always full as well as the junk food draw, but things are as he wants them to be.

August - Our parking site at DelRaton RV Park.



It's just a 2.5-acre parking lot but it's location has served us well.

Aug. 2nd. Today, like most of the previous 120-days is just plain hot. Tomorrow will be a special day. We join the masses that possess satellite TV. We're having a local company, 1st Choice, do the installation. We've decided on Dish as the provider and will be signing up for the "News" package. The cost per month should be acceptable and be in budget. So

in two days we'll be having morning coffee with Morning Joe.

8.12. The picture above is not a bad shot of our site. If I had a drone with a camera and flew it above the DelRaton RV property, the picture would look more like a very small Walmart parking lot. But time marches on. About one month from today Carla will be on her to pick up her sister Mary Ann and drive her back from Derby, VT. Not sure if she'll not want to go back to Vermont when she feels both the heat and humidity. Her days up there begin in the low sixties and go up to the seventies, I could handle that for a couple of weeks. On another front my brother Richard has sold his properties in San Jose and can now concentrate on retirement. His first move was to his previous rental property in Naples. This property was far too nice to rent out. He and wife Christine are blissfully emptying boxes and arranging furniture in their Naples home. Naples is awesome but currently he plans to remain there for a while and possibly move again. I think he'll find Naples-living a very nice town to live in. For now, Carla and I will continue marking time, checking in on Dennis and enduring the heat and humidity until September 20th.

8.20. It is totally hard to believe that so many months have come to pass. Eleven months ago Dennis had his stroke and his life would be changed forever. Ours also would deviate from our norm to try to assist him in whatever way we could. Next month, at this time we will be on the road again. I have just updated our travel schedule beginning on the 19th of September. The last time we travelled seriously was Sept 2016, the "Cruiser is longing to be in motion again.

8.25. I know, I sound like a kid waiting for Christmas, but it does feel like that. At this point

we're twenty-four days and counting 'till we're on the road again. Dennis is very well organized and is accepting the fact that we're leaving pretty well. Our new Dish Satellite television system is doing very well also. We find ourselves staying up later to see the Rachel Maddos show, good bye the 9:15 bedtime and getting up around 8am to catch a little Morning Joe. Do miss the sleeping late. Right now it's pouring outside and as everyone knows, satellite TV is non-existing with this condition, but we're good. Just finished doing a little shopping before the rain started and I'm happing typing here with my Pepsi and pretzels. I have little to add after this. The sound of the rain on the roof is deafening, but, at the same time, it's a comforting sound, much like a fire in the fireplace on a snowy, chilly day. Guess I'll leave you and go finish my Sudoku. Just an afterthought before I go, hurricane Harvey will be baring down on Corpus Christie this afternoon and later this evening. Cannot understand why so many feel that staying at home in their small home and some in travel trailers thinking they are going to wait out the storm at home, fools! Even in a coach as heavy as ours would have left two days ago.

September- Hurricane Harvey

9.1 Well, a brand new month. First we have Hurricane Harvey and , of course, Hurricane Irma has her sights set for Florida. We're still here in DelRaton RV Park, or the parking lot. Weather station has one bar from Irma going to Miami then North through the state of Florida. All the other twelve bars are veering North going up the East coast of Florida; sounds good enough for me. The one going through the state is the European projection, and it's much more reliable than the US version. We'll keep an eye on it.

9.2 Sat. Still watching the weather station. Now, just to add a little confusion both the US and European projections are united in their projected path through Florida. We have a plan B; leave Delray, FL and head North to Wildwood,FL, 250 miles North of here. We even have a plan C, if needed, which would be to go North to Georgia. All these alternate plans are good and come with a fee stays. We plan on leaving on Thursday to head North, unless Irma goes astray and does not present a danger to us.

9.3 Sun. We're still watching and getting a little nervous. Asked Dennis today when he visited us at the site, if he would want to come with us. It would have been a little challenging but doable, but he felt comfortable staying in Boca. It turns out that the caregiver on duty last with Dennis, as the storm hits, is relegated to stay with him until the hurricane subsides especially if he has to go to a shelter, which is just down the street. He was good with the situation.



9.4 Three Flags Wildwood, FL Hurricane Irma

This is it, Irma is pushing it. I couldn't sleep this morning and so, for lack of company, tossed around enough that Carla could not sleep either. Here we both are and 6:15 am; we never get up that early on our own. Thanks to the luxury of our satellite



system we're totally connected. We turn on the Weather Station. Our worst fears

materialize, now four projection bars are barrowing through Florida. We get serious. Carla has a short grocery list, including another 3 gallons of water and fruit. Once the sun comes up she calls the Wildwood campground asking if they would have room for us and if we could come in four days early, no problem; love Thousand Trails! We're off to Walmart to shop then down to the office to give notice. As we walked back to our site we must have had dialogs with at least four individuals before we arrived back to the coach; that's more talking than we've had since we got here, whatever! By 10:30 it was jacks up and away we were. We treated ourselves to a short break at a rest stop and had a quick bite to eat then a gas stop in Fort Pierce, FL followed by another short break on the Turnpike at Canoe Creek then off to finish the trek. We arrived in Wildwood around 3:30 and we're set up by 4pm. An actual Campground with grass and trees. This is not a current picture, but it is the campground, heavenly! When we got here the office had the weather channel on, now there are eight bars nailing Florida, so I'm please we decided to take off. By Thursday, according to the authorities, Irma will be in Florida; are we good or what! The bad news is that if the storm looks serious enough the campground will be closed, all must leave and go to a shelter. We'll have to wait for the next installment to see what happens next. Oh, the campground here is called "Three Flags."



9.5 Tuesday. Our new-found friend, the Weather Channel, informed us that Irma would strike the Keys late Wed. or early Thursday, with the strength of a Cat 5 storm. Wildwood has told us there are shelters but none locally that will accept shelters. Even Wildwood is anticipating winds of up to 150 MPH and very strong Cat 5. With just a little discussion we decided to take another look at plan C. This would involve a 250+ mile trip going even further North and settling finally in Unadilla, GA. The

campground here is Southern Trails. Right now, I'm being told the Cat 5 winds are at 185 MPH, probably the strongest winds ever registered. I even told my Tropic Tenants to



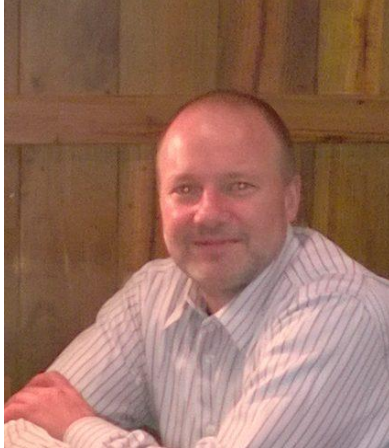
evacuate immediately if told to do so. We've stayed here before about two years ago and it hasn't changed an iota. It's basically a piece of pasture property, but it comes at ten dollars a night electric and septic, life is good.

9.6 Wed. Yes, we're still watching the weather. Awoke this morning to 78 degrees. AC didn't go on once last night; awesome!

Seems Irma, as of late, might travel the east coast of Florida, but with the same amount of velocity. We do not regret our

decisions. Unadilla, GA is way out but it's safer than being in Florida. For those RVers with great retirement and 401K plans risking their coach to possible disaster might be acceptable; after all they would just go out and buy another. Carla and I are not that well off. The S-Cruiser must be considered our last home; a very nice home if I might add.

Sept. 6th. Today is Michael's, birthday.



We don't get over to the east coast, Boston, that often. I did call and had a great talk. Only wish I could reset the clock such that we could have had conversations like the one we have now but back then.

Father son relationships are difficult with some families. Being the older of the two of us from way back, I must take responsibility for this. I'm so envious of the many fathers we've gotten to know and the close relationships they'd always had with their sons; there have been exceptions, however. I think I've changed a lot over the years, and only wish he'd had a chance to know the new me and not had to live with the older crappier version, but that's life!

Irma is not expected to have any effects on Georgia until Monday or Tuesday of next week, will let you know what happens then. Now off to amend out Travel Schedule for Sept.

9.8 Southern RV Campground, Umatilla, GA. This is our second day at Southern and what a experience. It's not that the RV Park is that exceptional, it's not, it's the fact that it's a campground, not a parking lot. The folks next to us travel in a Beaver RV. It's a 42-foot diesel which looks very much like ours except much nicer. They have a home site in West Palm Beach, FL.



Was not about to turn the rest of my life over to his buddy, not that dumb. I've had and experienced the best in the country, the heck with this buddy.

Hopefully I'll know more in the next week or so. In the mean time we've modified our plans and headed back to Wildwood. Wildwood is only seventy miles from Tampa where all the talent exists. If we should have a need to stay longer Thousand Trails has a campground in Largo, FL where we,

hopefully, can stay long term. At the time this picture was taken the park was very empty, that has changed quite a bit as those that fled Florida because of Irma are returning. The park was closed during the storm and has debris everywhere, but no serious damage and no RVs were lost to Irma.

9.28. It's been two weeks since my last blog entry. My own medical crisis seems not that critical but am still working with my Tampa Doctors for at least the next couple of weeks.

Carla will have some follow-up appointments through February so, as you can see from our proposed travel schedule, we're still hovering around Florida.

We have been making changes however. Last Saturday Carla was inspired to rebuild our poorly installed Dish Satellite system. We decided on Winegard hardware. On the third phone call to Winegard, last Saturday morning, we got a guy who asked us in detail how our system was put together, then told us, step by step how to correct the problems.

Turns out the power unit and Wally must be within twenty-five feet of the Winegard aerial. So, we tore what we had apart and reconnected it properly, we hoped. The last step was the expensive one. The system, for a motor coach, needed an HDMI cable to go from the power unit in the front of the coach way to the back of the coach and come forward inside the rear slide and plugged into the TV. To confirm this would work and worthy of the expense we bought a 25-foot HDMI cable and strung it over cabinets, doors and windows and connected it to the TV. Within a minute the little R2D2 Winegard aerial came to life once again after being dormant for over two weeks; Awesome! Last Tuesday we took the coach to Alliance, an RV dealership we have a great amount of faith in and had them do the HDMI cable install. So now we have Morning Joe in the morning and Rachel Maddow in the evening; a little less sleep but more entertainment.



Yesterday, the 27th, after shopping and doing a wash we decided to take another look at our travel schedule. It has radically changed from a couple of months ago.

We will be jumping around a little in Florida, not because we can't sit still, but in order for us to remain in Florida without paying camping fees.

Abby just texted us, always a pleasure to hear from her. Her birthday is next week and we thought she would be celebrating her 19th, but actually it's her 20th year. She's growing in a very mature manner. Saving is part of her vocabulary, something I did not accept until my fifties. I hope she'll open an IRA, even if its only a small account, at least she'll be contributing to securing her future. Michael is still part of her life, a nice guy, very likeable. We hope we get to see both a few times during our stay in Florida, December thru Feb. It is truly hard

to believe that it has been over one year since we've travelled to a destination to do more than make repairs or improvements. In hindsight it's gone by faster than I thought it would, but I did not share the same feelings last January. Now to Dennis.

Dennis has been on his own, with the help of round the clock caregivers since July. He's been making his own decisions, buying what he wants to eat and going out whenever he wants, once again, with the help of caregivers. He's always been totally in charge of his own life, and he's done quite well; this stroke was not in the cards. He's worked hard with PT and OT and at this point it's up to him how much further progress he wants to achieve, our being around does not mean very much. We talk every day up to three times a day some days. I watch over his major expenses and checks from his insurances while he takes care of everything else.

Our day today began just after seven AM, not that we usually get up that early, but there was some excitement in the air. By 9 AM we had planned to set off on our three-day venture to West Virginia for an FMCA Rally in that state, and we had jacks-up and off at

exactly 9 AM. Our plan is to travel I-75 N to 10 E and merge into I-95 N in the end. GPS offered up a short cut going 301 E off 75. It was a slightly slower road but newly paved and much more interesting to travel than 75 for the next 50 miles. Next highway was to take the 295N and circumvent Jacksonville, well I missed it, and we went directly to I-95 N which could have been much busier. Our goal for today was Poorly, SC, but we got there just to early, so we continue to drive to Walterboro, SC, a town one-hundred further north, we've driven and stayed in- previously I think. We're overnighing at the local Cracker Barrel, enjoyed a great dinner and even purchased a Christmas gift or two. Current temp. is 72 and very little humidity; AC is off for the first time in twelve months, only using the fans...Awesome! I would have taken a picture or two but they all look the same!

9-30 It is truly hard to believe that it has been over one year since we've actually travelled to a destination to do more than make repairs or improvements. In hindsight it's gone by faster than I thought it would, but I did not share the same feelings last January. Now to Dennis.

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OCTOBER:

Oct 3rd. Our trip to West Virginia took a total of four days; the first being over 300 miles and the other three were shorter. We arrived today after traveling only 75 miles from Virginia and were all set up by noon. Today at the rally is a meet and greet day with nothing planed. Wednesday has a few more activities not to mention an ice cream social in early evening. today we enjoyed two or three walks around the fairgrounds finding several folks to talk to, even our next door neighbor.. We are experiencing cooler temperatures. Sunday morning came in at 37 degrees and yesterday and this morning around 46 degrees. Daytime temperatures have been delightful, mid seventies.

Oct 4th. Wed. Everybody slept well last night. Our traveling days have ended, at least until Sunday. Nothing on schedule for today until 3 PM, a "First-Time Attendees" meeting. This would be our first FMCA Rally. It was extremely worth while. FMCA is totally at Non-Profit. From the volunteers all the way up to the top, President, are non-paid positions...Awesome! Our Non-Profit status is also based on education all of its members, more on this tomorrow. At 6:30 this evening we will enjoy an Ice-cream social to be followed by a 20 minute video on the history of the EAMA, the Eastern Area Motorhome

Association. This is the FMCA local affiliate for this area. The movie was so educational and really sealed the deal for me to join at least one local association.

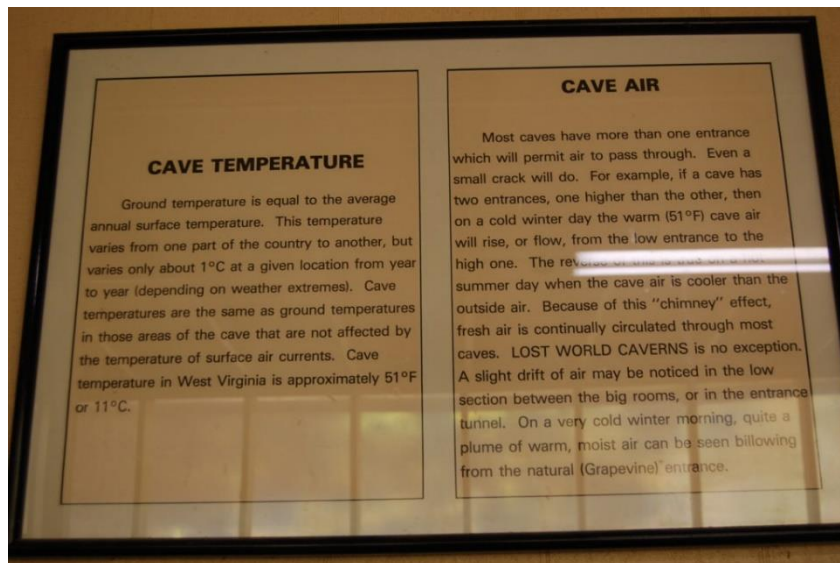


Oct. 4th. I know, the date above says one thing but this post is being written on Dec. 30th. A great deal has happen in the last three months, with both me and Carla. When your life and future is full of unknowns it's difficult to fall back into the comfort chairs of the past and write about happy days. I've now finished my first full month of chemo and begin radiation in mid January, I believe. With that information now stated let me tell you about the Lost World Caverns. The Caverns are located in Lewisburg, W. Virginia. It is here

that we attended the FMCA Rally. We were told about the Caverns our first day here and decided to act on the information while the weather was good and I was feeling well also. The off-road that took us to the facility that housed was right out of the 1800's.

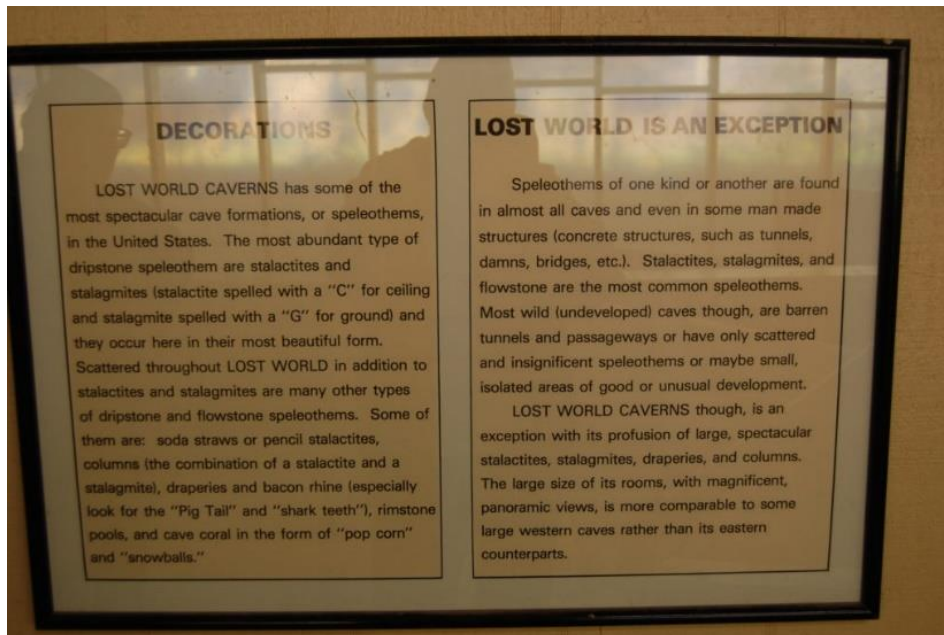


Dirt road all the way with cow pastures on either side of the road. Not to mention some of the most expensive looking mansions I'd ever seen. Each one of these expensive home, I have no doubt, were linked to the hundreds of acres of pasture lands surrounding these buildings; but let's get back to the Caverns. For the sake of readability I will be leaving information placards in bigger viewing size. I would like to paraphrase the placards and try to pass myself off as "all-knowing" but those that know me would say all-knowing is a real stretch.





Upon entering this building you'll be exposed to so much information and artifacts. Items that have been discovered in this cavern such as skeletons, remnants from earlier explorers and most of all the variety of stones and crystals from below.





We've seen many caverns and caves but this was the first one that was lighted sufficiently to take good pictures. I have no idea if this will happen again so this blog will be more of a picture-blog, and I'll provide a little text from time to time.

The way in, for just two people was very dramatic, but by the end of our experience we had a group of more than forty students and guardians of high-school age closing in the ranks behind us.

Oct. 4th. Lost World Caverns:

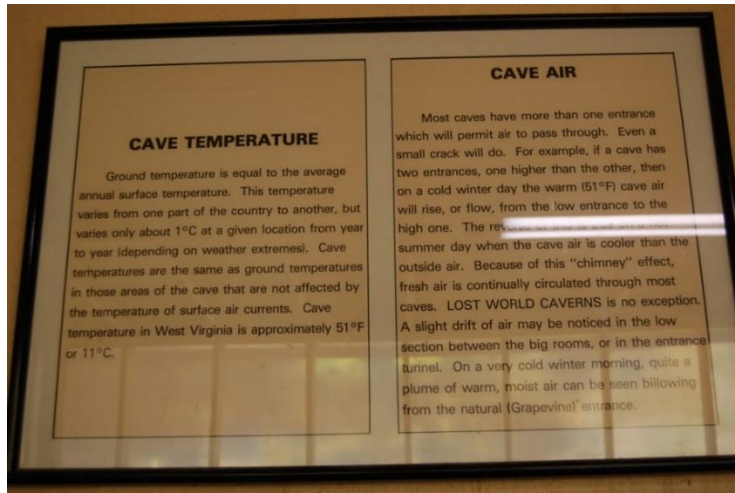
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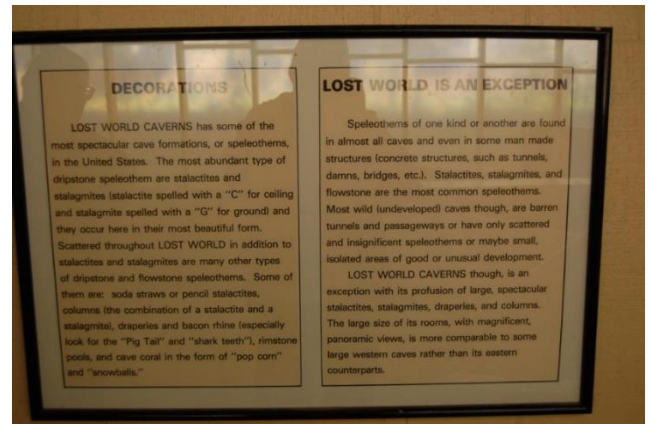




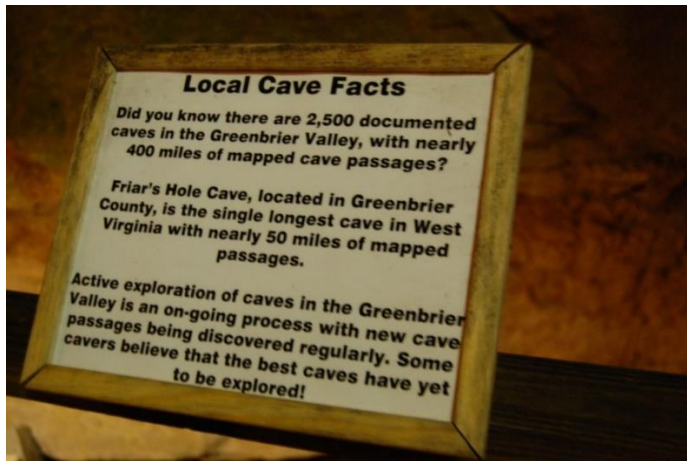
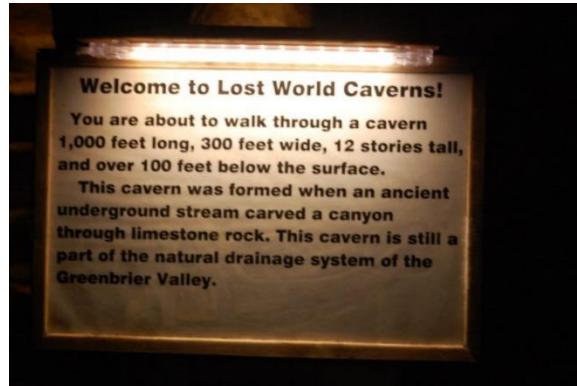
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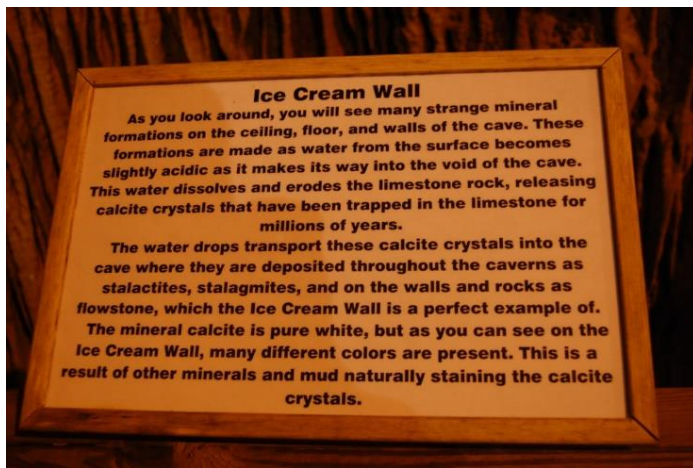
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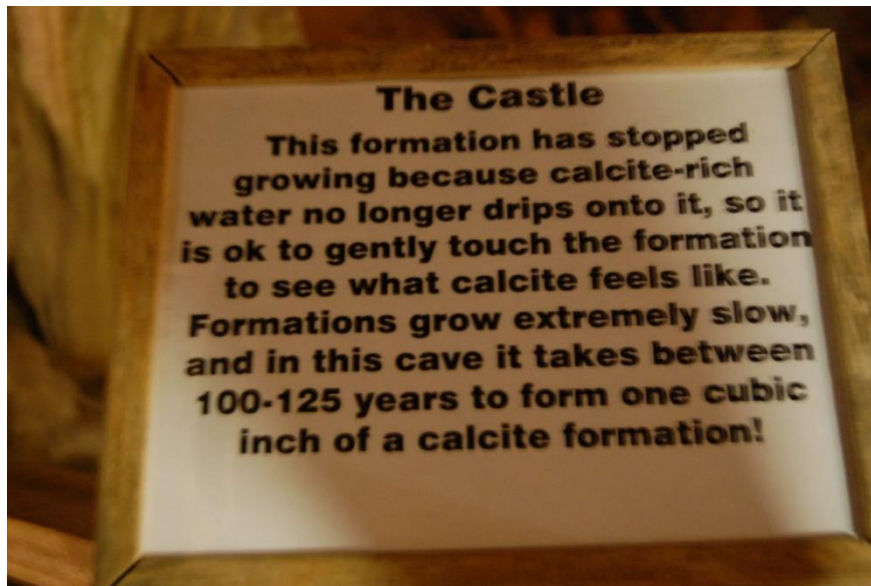


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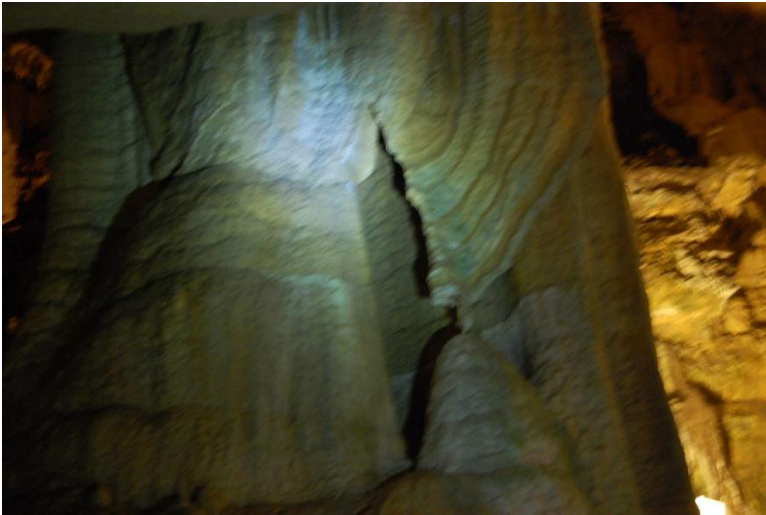
It may seem strange that Carla, most times, is in the lead. It's just the way it is, I follow her in Walmart as well.







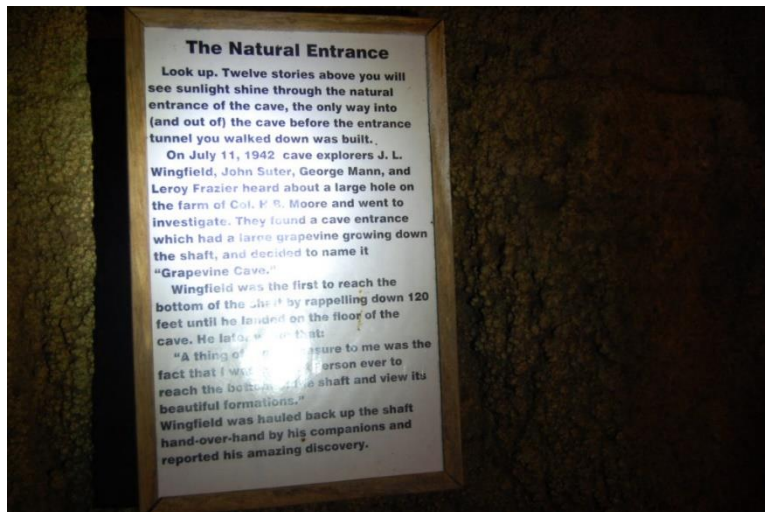






I'm giving up. I'll try to come back in a few days and add a bit more text to the photos, but heck, it's a cavern, and doesn't a picture tell a thousand words. Enjoy the photos that follow and remember there were about one-hundred pics that did not make the cut.







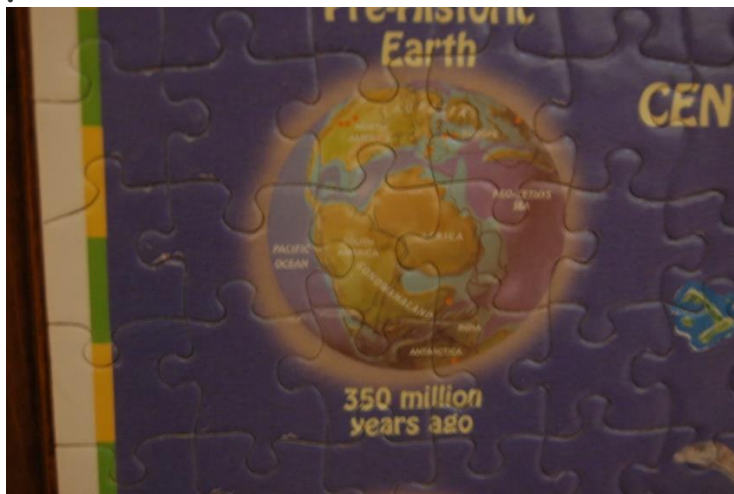
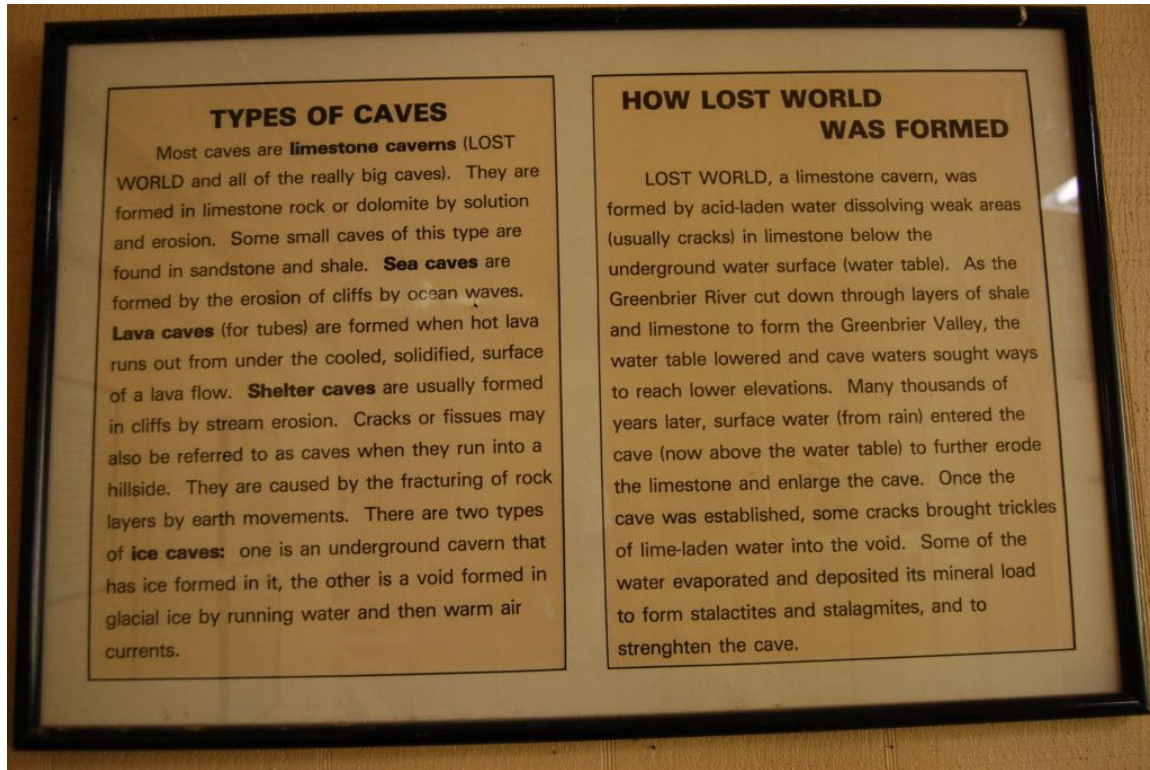


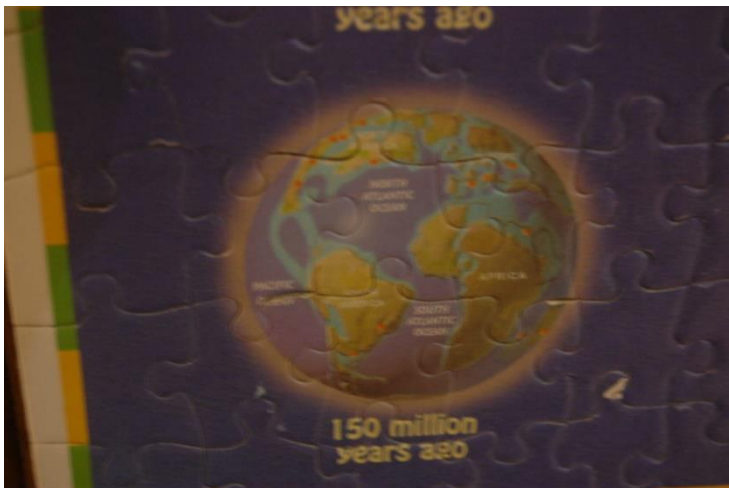
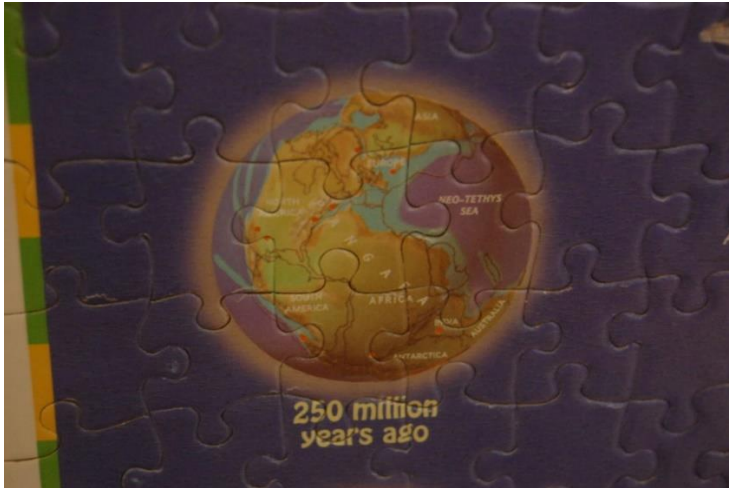


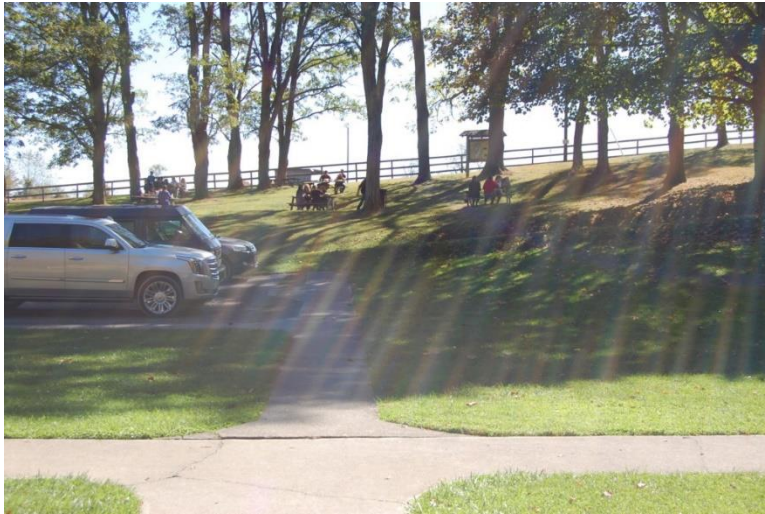
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Oct 5th Thursday. Today is a little more involved. At 11 AM we were going to attend FMCA University. This will be available to all members by Perry, GA Rally. It will fulfill the non-profit mandate of educational options. FMCA will be taking all of its publications and will make articles in the magazines and group them into six or more categories. More categories were recommended in the question and answer session after the presentation. I am looking forward to this program. After this we enjoyed a hotdog/

hamburger lunch. We both needed haircuts and the HHR needed a bath as well; we both feel better after the cuts. at 7:30 this evening we get to enjoy a John Denver tribute. Oct 6th. Friday: Happy Birthday Abby; TWENTY years old today.

Dec 13th. The Christmas Letter I'll catch most on all hat's happen the last couple of months. We're still residing at Wildwood, FL at Three-Flags RV Campground. Now for the letter.

Christmas 2017

As in every Christmas Letter Carla and I hope this will find you and your family in good health and spirit. 2017 has been our most difficult year. Dennis, as you might remember, had a stroke in September of '16. Carla and I did all we could to help bring Dennis back as much as possible. By July of '17 we realized that Dennis needed his independence as well. We moved back into the coach and relocated just ten miles from him in Delray Beach, FL. We were close enough but not in his way. What we did not expect was to have Carla diagnosed with breast cancer. Her salvation from this new challenge was that we were just minutes from one of Florida's best Cancer Treatment Centers, the Boca Raton Regional Hospital. The staff at the hospital almost immediately took her in as a patient, proposed a treatment plan and began treating her within days. The plan included a right breast mastectomy followed by six weeks of radiation therapy. She bit the bullet and followed through on the plan proposed and presently her doctors are happy to report that, for now, she is a cancer survivor.

By now it's September and yes we are excited. Dennis is doing quite well and Carla is back on her feet again with most of her doctor appointments behind her, and then comes Irma. Still over a week away from us her path continues to come much too close to us for comfort. To be safe we opt to pick up and go north to Three-Flags Thousand Trails RV Park in FL. We were there just one day and the storm trackers had her coming right at us, so we move again, going even further north to Unadilla, GA, and there we stayed. We did get pushed around but we came through it unscathed. However! As we travelled up to Unadilla we got a phone call from my endoscopy doctor; in short he said the results from the test indicate I had cancer! Not what I wanted to hear. Our plans for the beginning of October were to attend a rally in W. VA. The rally was relaxing and very interesting, but my mind was far from the rally. From W. VA we travelled south back to Wildwood, FL at the Three-Flags, once again. It's a very comfortable campground and only a seventy-five minute ride to my doctors in Tampa. After an exhaustive litany of pre-op tests I checked into Florida

Hospital on October 31st for a full Whipple operation. After the nine-hour operation I was awoken and told the team felt good about the procedure. Later that week Carla brought me back home. Tomorrow, December 5th I begin six-months of chemo and radiation. All we can do now is hope and pray for the future. It was not an easy year, but as we look back in retrospect, we're both thankful to Him for our outcomes. For almost thirty years we've lived a very happy – healthy life; Awesome!

Carla, I and Scoots wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas & Safe, Heathy and Happy New Year. www.paulandcarlatakethefifth.com

Carla: 407-461-3957 carlagrenier@aol.com

Paul: 407-461-3700 pjgrenier44@gmail.com

12.26th. Today is actually the 26th, but I would like to record the events of the 25th for my own purpose, should my mental faculties begin to fray even more than they have already.

I will begin by listing my only disappointment for the day. It has been some time since Dennis and I have visited. With the Doctors Okay for a visit on the 24th I was very anxious. Dennis chose not to permit the visit, but he told me today that, nonetheless, he had a great Christmas. I don't know where to go from here, possibly nowhere!

We broke the rule last night and attended the 6pm Christmas vigil mass. We found a totally unique location in the church several feet away from the attending crowd; the church was filled to capacity, Fr. John was on schedule for the 8pm mass but showed up at our mass time instead.

He's been a great consolation to me from the beginning of the cancer ordeal. With so many activities I had taken for granted and now I'm told to avoid groups of any size and exert yourself minimally. What's left is quiet contemplation, and for a person like me it's like purgatory.

No matter what we topped the day of with presents, a steak dinner to die for, a bag of jumbo shrimp and did not go to bed before we viewed Polar Express once again. Last night was It's a Wonderful Life.

On the other hand Carla and I also had a great Christmas.

Today is actually the January 11th, but I would like to record the events of the 25th for my own purpose. Since this is also a personal blog, I take liberty in sharing our Christmas morning with all who are interested,



We awoke Christmas morning to see a couple of cranes wandering in the vicinity of the coach. Getting mail to us in a timely manner is a challenge, but many made it happen, thank you...



Scoots enjoyed having Muff and Scruff around the last three weeks to play with and occasionally knocking them to the floor.

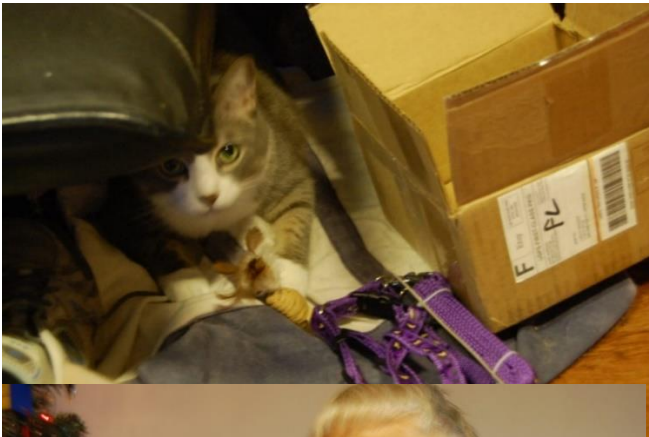


Not quite the Christmas of the past, since we have all the "Stuff" we really need. But it doesn't mean we can't try to sneak in an item or two, on Christmas.



Top: This year we did two or three "as seen on TV items" this and the one below are the items. Above is a baking tin that will be placed in a crock pot and this will act as an oven, and it worked well. Within a day Carla was baking bread and it came out tasting really

good. Below is the "Red Copper" cooker. We've used this at least three times and all came out excellently. A steak, chicken and hash browns. Well worth the \$29.99 we paid for it. It cleans up well and easily for the dish-washer, yours truly.



Scoots receive quite a few gifts including this walking harness. She'll, most likely rarely use it. She is definitely not a country cat. Residing on her lazy-boy by the fireplace is as close to country as she likes. Below is a gift Carla had previously, but it had an accident. Not a travel accident, it was dropped in the sink. Thankfully I was able to replace it.



Clothes we don't always need but you can't wear the same thing all the time. A gift her niece, Amy, gave Carla. Actually we both loved the tin so much it could have been delivered empty, but a gift card was also inside.





Scoots still looking to be the center of attention. No matter how many times I tell her not to play with plastic, she never listens. Like we really needed this, a knife sharpener. Carla was nice enough to look really pleased and surprised. In other words it was a desperation gift, but our knives were never that sharp.



Even I got my fair share of gifts. A bunch of t-shirts, the good ones, to hopefully replace the ones I'm wearing out. Once a t-shirt starts to fray a bit, it just feels so comfy.



When we took Scoots home from the SPCA the staff gave her a "Mousy". Every night she would spend about fifteen minutes talking and playing with her Mousy. Sometime in the last year or so Mousy ran away from home. We've look high and low trying to find her hiding place, if that were the case to no avail. So for quite a while Scoots, whether she said so or not, has longed for a replacement member of her family. Santa was good to her and gave her exactly what she needed. She has adopted little Grey Mousy with open paws. She

has resumed her talking in the evening and chasing her up and down the coach till eleven until both are so hungry they feel they have to come get me out of bed for their treats or they just go to sleep.



Our big gifts. I received a Ryobi 1600 pressure cleaner. I witnessed a cleaning crew using this in the past and was impressed on how good a job it did. At 1600 psi, at least it won't rip the paint of the sides of the coach as well. Isn't she a sweetheart. You would think I'd bought her a new Lexus to see the expression on her face, it was only a DVD; Lady Hawk. Most guys would have spent a heck of a lot more money for the same reaction, not bad for \$19.99.



Bought Carla a pool stick awhile ago and have been hoping for one ever since, until today; finally! Not as big a mess as when we lived in a stick and mortar home, but none the less, it's a mess.



Scouts is always the first to offer to help!

AFTERWORD

First, I would first like to thank you, for purchasing this, my first publication, and secondly for sticking it out to the final pages of this transcript.

It was never my intention, at any time in my life, to ever attempt to write anything of this magnitude. As I have mentioned in the very beginning, our decision to embark on this awesome and ever satisfying lifestyle had nothing to do with writing a book. Our initial reason was to finally experience all we could in the years we have left. So many little stories had occurred in the last eighteen months but they've slipped from memory, unfortunately. Without a doubt many of them would have added a little more levity to this text if I could only remember a few of them. In anticipation of an RV-n-AMERICA 2015 I have been much more diligent in recording many more of the details of our travels. So many little mishaps that all RVers come face to face with on a daily basis and resolve them all eventually, will now have a home in print next year. Looking back on many of them, not all though, I realize that it was just Him reminding me that this carefree lifestyle is not meant to be a free ride.

Carla and I, like many of you, had finally reached a stage in our lives where we felt we might be able to entertain retirement. This could have happened a few years earlier if it hadn't been for the Great Recession. There is just so much to see in this great country, both big and small, yet we have seen so little of it. Even my brother Dennis is in the process of dissolving his rental properties and start thinking of spending on himself what he's worked so hard saving up for all his life. I'm not certain if he'll take the route were traveling, but it's gratifying to see him thinking about what he should do with the rest of his life.

A great deal of my free time, that's the only kind of time I have, the last four months, has been devoted to this manuscript and being more diligent in documenting are current travels, and how have we travelled this year. We hit the road this year in April after diligently waiting for tornados and severe weather in the mid-west to subside. Our patience paid off in spades. Our travels as of this writing, will exceed five-thousand miles this year as we began our trek in Florida and travelled NW as far as the Wisconsin Dells and then back home again. We, once again climbed to new heights and at times found ourselves more than three-hundred feet underground, exploring caves and caverns for a change. In many of these underground worlds we walked for miles, sometimes in spaces as big as a basketball court but, other times however, the spaces were so limited that even walking upright was difficult with very few inches to navigate the narrows of these worlds. We, however, did not spend all our time underground. This year we also visited Graceland, had a chance to meet an extremely famous entertainer in Branson, MO. In our travels we discovered so many magnificent churches and cathedrals, not to mention a little time spent at an MX racing track. Our timing, this year, was excellent for the annual foliage season on the Blue Ridge Parkway and we even found a little time to relaxed at America's biggest home. In short we've had a year even greater than 2014. As of now we're even planning a seven-week excursion with twenty-four other RVers to Alaska in July of 2016. At present we're camped at Three Flags Resort in Wildwood, FL, just two days until Thanksgiving. The odometer can rest now until we begin anew in May of 2016.

On July 3rd of this year our family had to face the loss of our mother, Yvonne Grenier Price. There is never a day I fail to think of all that she'd done for me and my brothers, asking very little if anything in return except Love . We began this lifestyle reluctantly, since it would take us away from Florida and her in Boca. As we experienced so many new attractions, cities and awesome campers, both part-timers and full-timers, mom would be the one I called each night in hopes she might be able to share in our new joys and experiences.

Almost as tragic as a family loss is the loss of a good friend. That would be Harry Tolles. We only had the privilege of knowing him a few years, however, he had a way of making you feel like a life-long-friend, he

is missed. Listening to him and his family relate their RV experiences as they traveled America, especially the upper peninsula of Michigan, in their Holiday Rambler Motorhome, truly increase our interests in RVing. He was an awesome individual and a one-of-a-kind father and husband.

Our travel experiences are even richer now knowing my parents, Carla's folks and Harry are looking on from that ultimate Campground Above.

I mentioned way back in those early pages of this book, that the fifth and me did not always see eye to eye. Preparing to relocate was fine, a little work but nonetheless doable. Traveling was not a problem either. My problem was always when we reached our new site. I never totally acquired the ability and skills needed to maneuver the fifth properly, as it pertained to backing into a new site. As a result we reluctantly traded in the Open Range Fifth and Dodge Ram for a Class-A Motorhome.



A Chevy HHR will now be our personal vehicle from now on; miss you Dodge Ram!. This big change in our lives has permitted us to more fully enjoy our travels this year. It takes only minutes to prepare to leave a site and even less time to settle in once we arrive at the new site. In the RV-n-AMERICA-2015 book we'll have pictures and a bit more information on our new home.

For now it's time for me to close by thanking you again for allowing me to share with you so many of our experiences in 2014, some of the venues coming up in 2015, but not all, as well as the acquisition of our new "home."

God Bless and have safe travels every day.

P. J.

THE AUTHOR



Off I went in 1962 entering the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and soon thereafter, in '67, became a Registered Pharmacist. I trudged along in this profession and, in the eighties, even had my own pharmacy. My soul however, way down deep, had a yearning to spend less time indoors and more time outdoors. By the time I turned fifty I knew a change was needed, especially after enduring one of Connecticut's worst winters on record.

So off we went again in search of a warmer climate and hoping to find a business opportunity before we ran out of money and starved to death. So I once again prayed to Him desperately for that opportunity to present itself and, as fate would have it, it did, and we would find ourselves in the Child Care Industry. Our center in Greenacres, Florida would have made us millionaires if we'd hung in there a few more years, but another opportunity presented itself in Orlando, FL, and once again we moved.

So off we went again north to Orlando. We eventually purchased another child care center and I began a second career as a Commercial Realtor, brokering what else but child care centers, of course. We did okay, but as my Broker would attest to, I did not set the world on fire, but with excellent commissions we kept our heads above water. Within a few years the novelty of getting up early, wiping noses and lacing up shoes was wearing thin and Carla opted for retirement. I and Real Estate were getting along well until 2008, you remember - the Great Recession. We were heavily invested in, what would you think, rental properties of course, as well as a very expensive log cabin in Maggie Valley, North Carolina. Well many more prayers to Him got me through that decently. But even I, who could not fathom the possibility of retirement, was getting a little jealous of all the free time Carla was enjoying. So once again we made another change in our lives.

So off we went again this time deciding to free ourselves of the shackles of home ownership and job responsibilities, so I find myself, these days, feverishly typing assuming that James Patterson probably started this way as well, many years ago.

Moral here is that HE hears all our prayers.

Thank you,

P. J.

269 pgs / 31451 wrds