

My Trip to the East Coast

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Today, I will prepare for a long trip and I will do it to see some relatives I haven't seen for decades. I will design this trip to coordinate with my brother's trip by car - we both want to see them together. My brother wanted to go all over the country to see many of his friends and to be a tourist to many states. My main intention is to just see the relatives I haven't seen for a very long time. The relatives on my father's side are in Chattanooga, Tennessee. On my mother's side, they are in Jacksonville, Florida. I want to visit them both; I live in San Jose, California. The logistics of the trip are difficult to work out. I wanted to arrive at the same time with my brother at the relatives' houses. Before I plan anything, I get my brother to name a date. He says he will be in Chattanooga on the 28th of March, a Wednesday. With that information, I can make my plan. I want to visit my relatives on both sides of the family and I want to do it in an economical manner and to be prepared for unexpected situations that may come up.

The first thing I do is get the maps that I will need for the journey. I use the internet Google Service to get them. I decide on the mode of travel to be taken. I decide to go by plane, as it is the fastest way and eliminates much lodging and terrestrial travel by car which can get to be quite expensive with gas prices over \$3.50 a gallon. A round trip by car is four thousand miles and at 32 MPG it is 125 gallons of gas at \$3.50 per gallon is 438 dollars. At four hundred miles a day of driving, it is five days just to get there and at least another five days to get back. This means I will need ten or more days of lodging. For ten nights of lodging at \$50 night that is \$500. It's \$938 dollars and is not without risk with road conditions and weather. Therefore, flying is the best option. I go online and find the best arrival and departure points and times. The best departure point is San Francisco and I try to make a decision on whether Knoxville, Tennessee; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Atlanta, Georgia; Jacksonville, Florida; or Savannah, Georgia is the best arrival point. I finally decide on Savannah as the most convenient and least expensive arrival point.

It has been very long time since I flew last. I remember the days when I was fourteen years old on that summer of 1966, just a graduate from intermediate school. I saw Gracie Lee and her then current husband Herbert and the rest of family in Jacksonville that year and a week later, I saw my grandmother Beulah and her then current husband Jack (my step-grandfather) - she divorced her original husband Jubert years ago for a gambling and drinking problem - and saw my uncle Harry and Dewy in Chattanooga. The trip was during a heat wave and it was hot and sticky with no air conditioning. Herbert could not tolerate air conditioning. I had to take showers everyday. I slept uncovered in my undergarments. I remember the trip to Ruby Falls Amusement Park in Chattanooga, it was humongous in its size and I remember going into various dark passages, seeing various rock formations. I remember the "world's largest camera" exhibition where you inside this very large camera obscura where you have a large view of the valley below. They took me to a TVA hydroelectric dam where they generate power from Tennessee's mighty rivers. I remember that when I was traveling on the I-24 freeway, "the bird" gesture was given by passersby. I was a photographic enthusiast at the time, involved largely with black-and-white photography. I would take photographs of the Gracie's farm in Jacksonville, using both still and 8 mm cinematography. In the 1960's, flying was different then it was today. It was much more formal and I was dressed very nice for the occasion. I remember this woman, a chemist by profession, which found me attractive and would try to sit next to me on the plane. This was at the height of the sexual

revolution and the women would dress nice but they also reveal things that would be confined to dressing room in earlier times. They now call them flight attendants but at the time they were stewardesses. At the airport there was no security screening at all. I would remember the big burlap suitcases we often would carry at that time. Mom had given me the boarding pass and taken me to Oakland airport for the trip to Jacksonville and there I would go.

That was the past and it has been a long time since I have flown. With all new changes, I have been reluctant to fly. But on the 26th of March, I will be flying. The only thing similar to that distant past trip is the airline which is Delta Airlines. Besides the flight reservations, I get reservations for the lodging, car rental and the shuttle service. On March 9th, I get the flight reservations directly from Delta Airlines online. The lodging reservations are from Hotels.com, which is mistake I will find out about later. I order for the 26th thru 28th for a motel in Savannah called the Days Inn at Oglethorpe Mall and I order the car rental online at Airport Rental Cars website for Enterprise car rental firm. I send letters out to the relatives to let them know that my brother and I will be coming and I contacted them by phone as well, except for Harry which I couldn't reach. The real reason for the trip is my youngest aunt on my mother's side Jean Clapp wanted to see me in person; she called me by phone and told me so. Lastly the reservations for the airport shuttle to take me to the San Francisco Airport, the Super Shuttle Service were made. I went to Concord to see my brother and to work out the loose ends and to get Harry's address and let him know we are coming; my brother was able to contact him by phone. On Friday before the trip, 22nd of March, I go to my garage and get my big Atlantic trolley suitcase that I had used for my Vegas trip. I didn't have a suitable carryon tote so I went to Sears on Thursday to get me one, American Tourister, and I picked up some road maps from AAA. I had a sweet tooth and after I visited Sears - And I had that new carryon tote with me - I bought some candies from the Sweet Factory at the Oakridge Mall. The Sweet Factory clerk was suspicious and wanted to and did inspect my tote for stolen candy.

I start the packing; I figure I might have to go to church service so I bring dress slacks and shirts and shoes with me. I find out later that I won't need them. What I should have brought is my swimming trunks and sunscreen. I pack my suitcase with toiletries and lots of underwear, jeans, and decent shirts. That weekend, I get whatever I need; I put a note on the luggage to not forget the prescription drug, glasses, and my cell phone. In my carry on tote, I put trip itinerary, the camera, my glasses, my cell phone and some towels in it but I defer and do this on Monday.

Sunday night thru Monday, I try to get as much rest as possible. Monday is the big day for me with lots of anticipation. I make sure that I rest up and eat well. I set the water heater for its lowest setting, turn off the hot water and depressurize the hot water plumbing, unplug all unnecessary electrical appliances, unplug the garage door opener and lock the garage door. Seven o'clock in the evening comes and I am ready for my long journey. I have all my effects with me and I wait in front of my garage. A neighbor doesn't know what to think of this. While she picks up mail, the shuttle arrives. The driver grabs my bags and away, the driver and I go. The van traverses the city streets and hits the highway, I-87 to I-280 and the driver gets off in Cupertino and picks up a passenger from a home near the Apple campus with his luggage. He gets in the van and is quiet with no conversation; I move over so he can get in but he decides to take the right front seat instead. It was getting dark outside and it was overcast on that day with sporadic evening showers. The Super Shuttle van takes off from the streets of Cupertino and is on the freeway again; it exits to Page Mill Road and turns left on the El Camino Real; and it stops at a Stanford University Dormitory. The dormitory has a classic Spanish look of arched porticos and ivy. A Stanford student

enters the van with his bags and is also quiet. He sits in a seat in the rear of the van, behind me. The van departs and is back on the freeway again. The four of us head to the departure terminal of the San Francisco International Airport. The van stops at the airport departure curb and the driver unloads the baggage and puts it on the sidewalk. The airport has a modernist look with glass panels and pivoted glass entry doors and is very busy even in the late evening hours. I enter the Delta foyer and gait to the self check entry. I bring my trolley suitcase and my tote bag with me. On my tote bag, in place of a notebook computer, I have all my papers neatly organized in beige manila folders. Since I have never used self check-in before, I had some initial difficulty. I brought my printed receipt that was printed previously from my inkjet printer when I was at home. It had a bar code on it and when submitted to the electronic terminal it wouldn't read it. I learn the reason for it much later on, the reason why it wouldn't read – the bar code has to be oriented vertically rather than horizontal! I use the credit card instead and the terminal used has a faulty credit card reader and wouldn't work. I go over and wait for another one to become available to me. I use it and I am successful; I get my boarding pass. Then I stroll to the baggage check in. I am asked by the clerk what flight I will be taking. I don't remember on the top of my head. I show my boarding pass and receipt for the baggage. I pay the \$25 dollar fee with the credit card for the luggage and I tell the clerk that the baggage goes to Savannah.

I gait with pace to the terminal directive, terminal one, gate range 40-48, and make a right turn. I go through the foyer and I check in with the security service. They have stanchions holding thick magenta nylon rope in the form of a queue. They have a DHS officer with a thick golden badge on her chest, at a podium. I wait in line for my turn. I show my ID and my boarding pass. They permit me to go into the area where shoes and belts are taken off. They have these large gray basins, totes, where most personal effects go, shoes, belts, carry-on luggage, anything metallic goes, etc. These basins go on a conveyor belt where a scanner checks for contraband. There were three other DHS personal in the same area. I remove my shoes, belt and get two of those gray totes. I put my carry-on and shoes, belt, jacket, wallet but I forget to remove the coins from my pockets. I go into the body scanner and an alarm goes off. I get out of scanner on the order of DHS security. They tell me to go back into the scanner for a second try. The alarm goes off again. After that they take me to another area. An employee puts the nitrile gloves on. I am frisked and they discover that I have metallic coins in my pockets. He takes them to the scanner and after all this fuss, I am able to leave the security area. I put my belt on, my jacket, my watch and my shoes.

I move forward to the waiting area of terminal, seating is everywhere. Mounted high, I see the LCD displays with the flight information. I mill around to get familiar with my surroundings; the general lighting somewhat dim. I try to find gate 45 which is where Delta flight #DL1880 will load for takeoff. The gate entry is a granite escutcheon with metallic pivoted double doors in the center with raised white numbers on the top. To the right is a desk where a Delta Airline clerk sits. I go to the Hudson Newsstand which is as bright as a gleaming jewelry store; I buy some Dasani bottled water and two Snicker bars. And I go the sitting area near the gate 45 and have a seat. I notice people that have brought their electronic devices, Apple I-pads, I-phones and notebook computers. They all compete for the available electric outlets with Ethernet connection should they need them, most use Wi-Fi wireless radio frequency connections. I wait for the start of boarding. I check to be sure I have all my effects with me. I try to relax as much as possible even though there is much anticipation about this trip. It's 10:50 PM. Finally it is time to board. I quickly learn about Delta's loading protocol. I am low on the loading rank. Most of Delta's customers get to load first. I show the clerk my boarding pass and I am warmly welcomed aboard. I go through the doors into the

loading vestibule and enter the aircraft and bring my carry-on and I try to find my isle seat, trying to understand the airline's nomenclature for seating. At last I find my seat and I place my carry-on in the overhead compartment. I can describe this plane as packed; all the seats except for my row. I think I might get some space extra space, but no! At the last minute, here comes a young couple of college age. I get up and let them in. They sit by me. They are affectionate and whisper in each other's ear. Is it stressful? You bet!

The compartment doors slam and people scurry around to be seated. All must be with seats in upright position and the seatbelts fastened. We all get instruction on how to use the safety equipment and where the exits are; they show us videos on 12" CRT monitors mounted on the ceiling. With the hatch closed, the plane starts to move, first in reverse thrust to move slowly away from the loader. This is done after a brief inspection with a ground crew to check everything on a checklist and to fuel the aircraft with type A-1 jet fuel and to attach a stationary turbine blower to start the engines. The plane taxis away from the tarmac and goes through a series of taxiways. The initial runway that they planned to use, they decided not to use because the wind direction changed. So for about a half an hour or so, we taxi away visiting all the taxiways that SFO has. Finally the plane is situated with a suitable runway. The control tower gives the all clear. The wing flaps are down. The plane gets some more speed and then a sudden jolt of thrust and jet engines scream with feistiness. The plane is off! ...Going over and above the San Francisco Bay! We approach 10,000 feet and after that the seatbelts can be unfastened, but I elect to keep mine on. Brian has to go to the plane's restroom so I get up along with his girlfriend and let him out. The CRT screen now shows some entertainment and the plane is now in the Nevada airspace. It is about five hours of airtime where we all are off the ground in the heavens of the sky. I think I might get some shut eye, but no! The cabin lights are turned off except for a very dim one. Brian's girlfriend is an English teacher, and she wants to correct student's written works. So the only light in the economy coach section is on in the cabin, next to me! Isn't this luck? I have to endure this for three hours in a cramped coach seat with light in my face. For what I have to endure just to see my relatives. Me oh my!

The flight attendant brings us some drink - water that is! It is served in polypropylene cups, about six ounces. At least I can refresh a little. In about thirty minutes we are about to marry to the ground, to the solid earth. The plane is about to touch down in Atlanta. We begin to drop in altitude and my ears begin to ache from the increasing air pressure. The plane circles the airport awaiting FAA approval to land. The approval is given by the air traffic control and plane descends onto the runway. And, the Delta #DL1880 plane lands. Thrust reversers are on and it decelerates. It goes to a series of taxiways and a mechanical mule is attached to the plane and it goes to a tarmac and the plane is positioned for the passenger loader. The operator of the turret positions the loader to attach to the front hatch of the plane. And the bags are unloaded and sent to terminal where they will be sorted. We get the nod to begin leaving the plane. I wait while the traffic before me clears. It takes about eleven minutes for all passengers in front of me to get their luggage - some of it is just slightly less than maximum size allowed. At the end of the skirmish, I now get out of my seat and head toward the front hatch being sure not to leave anything behind, up the vestibule to the interior of one of the arrival terminals of the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport, 6:00 AM Eastern Time March 27, 2012.

I have a about a two hour layover. I am seated for a brief rest in concourse D and I get my cell phone out and call Harry and brother to let them know I am on my way and in Atlanta. After about 10 minutes I mill around to get my bearing and I find a display with flight information on it; I look for the departure gate for DL 1475. I don't realize how big the Hartsfield-Jackson Airport is. I note the gate number 23b and that is in the B concourse. I follow the signs and go down to a lower level which is an extremely long foyer. They have a tram which I could have used but didn't because I didn't know where it goes and I didn't want to be surprised. So, I walk over 2,500 feet to Concourse B with an aching foot and learn there is no escalator up to concourse B; I take elevator instead. I look around when I am on the floor of the concourse. I look for gate 23b and find it. I look around for a restaurant where I can sit down and have a good nutritious breakfast. I find the Café Intermezzo; it is a rare concession in this airport. I am seated by the waitress and the waitress brings the menu. I can only order only scrambled eggs – no other styles of eggs are available. I order hash browns but they are different from the usual style. These potatoes are cubed rather than the shredded patty type. I have it with bacon and the milk which comes in a container only from the dairy and only whole milk is available. A Southern gentleman that looks like a Georgian farmer sits in front of me. He orders the grits over the cube type of hash brown. I am hungry and am in no mood to be upset by the trivial. I eat and leave to the departure gate. It is 7:40 AM and it is time to get on the plane to Savannah. The plane is smaller is operated by ExpressJet Airlines. I wait for all the other passengers that have a higher priority and I go and take all my effects with me, enter the vestibule and sit at seat number 10. The plane is mostly full - there are one or two seats empty. What I like about this is the trip will be a short one. The plane loads and fuels up with A-1 jet fuel, the hatch is shut and the loader is removed and the bags go in the cargo bin. The mechanical mule pulls the plane away from the tarmac. The blower is attached to start the turbine engines. The plane taxis to the runway with flaps down and begins to accelerate and with the anger the engines put forth the thrust and the plane lifts off the runway. Up we go! Really not much to write about! The first class passengers get all the freebies and we in coach merely wait until the flight is over. And, at last we are at Savannah Hilton Head International Airport.

The plane descends and drops down on the runway and the thrust reversers are used to slow the plane down until the landing gear brakes take over the job. Down to earth once again! And, out we all go from the plane to the arrival terminal. I look for the way to go to the baggage claim area from the high mounted signs. I leave with all my effects and leave the secured area and take the down escalator to a dark and peaceful baggage claim area. I sit down and wait in one of the very comfortable seats. I am exhausted but this is where the adventure really begins. I wait for my suitcase to come out of the chute and place on to the carousel conveyer system. I now have my big Atlantic trolley suitcase with me, I spotted it instantly. I check to be sure it is mine. It is now time to go to the car rental desk, it is way way back and to the left. The car rental reservation I made was for Monday and this is Tuesday, Enterprise car rental cancelled my reservation because of it. I show reservation papers and somehow it gets worked out. I sign some papers. I go outside and get some fresh air and bring my luggage with me. I have the paperwork with me and I am directed to a brand new Nissan Altima sedan which is white in color - I needn't worry for I have supplemental insurance. The attendant starts the car for me. I get in on the driver's side and get the maps out of my bag, put the suitcase in the trunk and make adjustments to the mirrors and the seats. The keys on this model are replaced with a security module, where I can lock and unlock the doors, which I call a "banana" because has a shape and thickness of a banana. There is a cavity for which it is inserted into allow operation of the car, the mating of the "banana"!

I spend my time trying to figure out the particulars of this car. I study the Savannah road map for a while. I put the car in reverse and very carefully back out of the parking space. Then I go forward to the exit sign and I get on Airways Avenue after some tributary roads and then travel toward the left or in the easterly direction. I turn right on Crossroads Parkway and I wind up at the Savannah Tech Campus, for I wanted to stay off of highway I-95. This was not consistent with my interpretation of the road map. It turned out I confused the Hunter Army Airbase for Savannah Hilton Airport. So I am all so much more far away northerly positioned than I thought. So I had to figure out a plan to get to my motel, with the reservations I have, practically across the town. I am actually in Pooler, Georgia instead of Savannah. I plan to return to Airways Avenue from Crossroads Parkway and go south on I-95 to get to Chatham County Road #204 which is also called Abercorn Street, heading east and then north. I get confused end up on Veterans Parkway and there is no easy way to turn around and go back the other way. I go up to Buckhalter Road and at last I have a chance to turn around. I go south on Veterans back to County Road #204 and go east some more and it curves to a northerly direction and it is long - I have to watch for any sign that I am getting close. And, finally I find what I am looking for but I am in the wrong lane to make the turn. So, make a u-turn where I am allowed to do so and come back. I make a left on Mall Boulevard and go into the Oglethorpe Mall Days Inn's parking lot. I am very exhausted, without a good night's sleep. I thought the Days Inn was near the airport, but it is not fact. So I have to prepare for some more humidity. I get out of my white Altima sedan and I go and enter through the pivoted doors to a nice air conditioned office. I show the clerk the papers and that my name is Robert Manning and I was flabbergasted to learn that they don't have my reservations. The major reason is that I reserved the room for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at \$39 a night and it was already paid for. Because I didn't show up on Monday from the late Delta flight, they assumed I was a no show, and further more, I feared that I would be out some money because of Hotels.com refund policy. Luckily I had my cell phone, and I was able to contact the Hotels.com hotline and it took awhile for the situation to get straightened out. I wait it out in a seat in the darkened coffee shop with the permission of the motel while Hotels.com faxes them the information; I snooze. The East Indian manager advises me not to use third parties in making hotel reservations because it can complicate things. I take heed. In about 45 minutes, I get the magnetic card for the motel room, needed to unlock the room. I enter room #107 and get my entire luggage in there. And I learn a good lesson about using third parties. Book direct! My top priority is to get some rest, think about eating later, I have a Snicker candy bar and some water. I brush my teeth and take my prescription and pull the blackout curtain, and fall asleep immediately. Oh what a relief!

I sleep for an hour and a half and I get up, while there is some daylight and I go to a nearby mall across the street, the Oglethorpe Mall. I look for a good healthy place to eat, I find the Piccadilly Cafeteria which is a like a maze to enter with a long corridor and it is much like a buffet but there are no seconds unless you pay for them. I enter on the left; I order the barbequed chicken breast, a soda and a side salad, about 2:30 in the afternoon. It has been awhile since I have eaten. I relax and enjoy my meal and they give me all the soda I want. It's time to settle down some and get in touch with my sanity and my soul. I sit there at the cafeteria table and eat away; in about half an hour I am finished. Just for the heck of it, I go stroll the mall and do some window shopping. I see some stores I never heard anything about. But by and large it is another mall with the major retailers. I head back but I find I have lost the basis of where Abercorn Street and Mall Boulevard are. I have to find my bearing so I go somewhere familiar and work back from there. I finally cross the right street, Mall Boulevard to get back to my hotel room #107. I strip down and take a much needed shower and shave. I hit the sack and rest up some more. In the early morning hours around 2 AM, I

get up once again and go over to the International House of Pancakes right next to the hotel and have a big breakfast. I have one of the big bargain breakfast plates with hotcakes, eggs and bacon. I figure I would eat now and hit the road at crack of dawn. The coffee I was served was an unusual variety that I am not used to; when cream was added, it did not taste right. I had the waitress get me a new cup. After dining, I go back to my room and rest for the night. Tomorrow, Wednesday, is for the long road trip by passenger car to Chattanooga. Tomorrow I will see Harry.

I am sound asleep and completely relaxed in that bed, but the noise outside starts to pick up and the outside starts to light up. There is pressure on my bladder; I get up and go to the bathroom. I check the clock and my watch and behold it is time for me to get up. I yawn some and stretch out to get moving again. I get the road maps out and study them. I get dressed and get all my effects together and pack the suitcase and put into the car. Since I already had breakfast, I can skip it. I check the room one more time to be sure I have all my things. I go to the manager's office to return the magnetic card. I briefly chat with the manager for a bit and then get into the car and start it up. I turned left and attempt to go to the AAA office which is also on Mall Boulevard to get a detailed map of Chattanooga but the office was closed. I go back the other way and make a right on Abercorn and head north until I reach Chatham County Road #21 which is also called Derenne Avenue and then becomes Lynes Parkway. I take this road until I reach interstate 16 and I take it heading west. There was a brief traffic jam caused by someone's vehicle catching on fire. The Georgia state troopers and firefighters were involved directing traffic and putting the flames out. I get on I-16 and cruise at 70 MPH where permitted. Once I am out of Savannah, traffic is light and it is a leisurely drive. There are groves of trees everywhere; it is so plush and green. After a while I encounter some fog and it was thick in some places. I drive for about two hours and I decide to take a break. I find a filling station in Mettler, Georgia and give the car a full tank of gas, at \$3.86 a gallon, \$19.17. I buy some consumables in the store, some candy, chips and water. I ask for a detailed map of Chattanooga and they too don't have it. I go find a table and eat and drink up. Simply relax a bit and even take a brief walk around.

I get back into the white Nissan Altima and proceed to Macon, Georgia. Along the way road crews are working and I have to slow down for them but the terrain is relatively flat, just a breeze to traverse. And, finally I am in Macon and I search for a place off the freeway to eat. It is about 11:30 AM and I find a Burger King fast food restaurant on Riverside Drive. I park the car and I get my cell phone out and text my brother to tell him that I am in Macon and am on my way. He has told me before that he does not want text messages but I do it anyway because I don't want to call him while he is driving. I go into the restaurant and have a Whopper Jr. with small fries and a soda. I try not to drink so much for a have quite a ways to drive. Also it is a convenient time to visit the restroom. I finish my meal and get in to my Nissan and find my way to the I-16 interstate freeway.

I merge from I-16 to I-75 north and the traffic starts to become busier but for a while I can go 70 MPH. When I approach Atlanta, the speed limit starts to drop down to as slow as 55 MPH. But I quickly learn that nobody is obeying it; I compromise with 61 MPH to keep from being tailgated too much. I find cars will cut in front of me just as they do in California, maybe not quite as frequent. I find the freeway signs in Atlanta confusing and I have a close call in merging but I manage to come out all right without a scratch. Once I get out of the Atlanta metropolitan area traffic gets faster with fewer cars. At some point out in the Atlanta suburbs, I get off the freeway because I think I am on the wrong freeway so I take some treacherous side roads, Delk Road and Paper Mill Road. And I find an abandoned gas station where I can safely stop to read the map. It is

also a good time to clean the windshield some. The paper towel was deposited in the nozzle bay of one of the inoperative dispensing pumps – there was no trash container anywhere. For a moment I thought I was lost. So I trace back from whence I came and it is a dangerous exercise at that. If my father was alive today, he would tell me that I am out of my mind to take this trip. He died last year. To my amazement, I was on the right freeway after all and going in the right direction north. There was no need to get off the freeway in the first place. I am back on the freeway I-75 north.

After Atlanta, I know I am getting close to Chattanooga, Tennessee. I keep right on driving at a steady pace. The thing I learn is I-75 is popular with truckers and the behavior of many of the truckers is that they like to tailgate regardless of the speed one is going. I try to get out of their way when I can, but it is not always possible. I pray that no one will cut in front of me while I am being tailgated by a truck. I am glad I chose a midsized sedan instead of subcompact economy car, in which has more strength and the power to get out of difficult situations.

Wednesday afternoon there is drizzle on the freeway. After a while, I stop at a rest stop – Adairsville, Georgia. There I park the car and relax a bit and get out and walk around. I also empty my bladder there too. I clean the windshield as good as I can. I recline a bit in the car and relief some of the stress. I also call Harry telling him that I will be in Chattanooga in about an hour. For a minute, I thought that I may be stranded at the rest stop. The Altima wouldn't start. I mated the "banana" and pushed the start button on the dash board. The car wouldn't go. I played with the transmission lever and checked the parking brake and I put some pressure on the brake. This satisfied the car's on-board computer and I pushed the start button and the car started automatically.

Then I am back on the road again. I get alternate rain and sunshine, and the trucks are still a pest. Soon I am in Tennessee and I take I-24 west toward the Moccasin Bend. I miss the exit for Long Street where I am supposed exit. I take the Moccasin Bend portion of I-24 and exit on Browns Ferry Road which to my delight will take me to the Cummings Highway. I make a left turn and I made a right on the old Wauhatchie Pike Road which is also Hamilton County Road #318. It is uphill and I am able to find Scenic drive but instead of going up more by making a slight right which is the correct path to take, I choose make a left on Scenic drive and it takes me to the Cummings Highway with a very dangerous intersection where cars on Cummings go very fast and you can't see the cars very well at all coming from the right. Had I known how dangerous this could be, I would never have come to Lookout Mountain, Tennessee to visit Harry and his wife Helen. I wait patiently for the traffic to clear and then proceed with haste. I am lucky that Tennessee drivers are good. I am able to get onto Cummings without a scratch and without the screech of burning rubber from oncoming cars. I go down hill to Broad Street and pull into a strip mall parking lot and I get my cell phone out and call Harry, for I am in no mood to fool around with roads as dangerous as these that are here. I am on the property of a dry cleaning establishment. I try to park the car in a conspicuous place where I can be seen. I give Harry the best description possible. In a short time, he is there with his red Cadillac Escalade SUV. We shake hands and I tell him I am glad to see him. From there I follow his SUV and I am amazed how close I came to finding his place. He takes me to 100 Scenic Highway and I drive past a gated entrance and there is a private paved road that slopes downhill and at a point it transitions to gravel. It is a very remote but a very exclusive private property. And I park my Nissan Altima on a gravel terrace next to his garage and dwelling. I see my brother's 1999 beat-up Honda Civic there too.

Harry invites me in and introduces me his wife Helen and I shake her hand. I am seated in the kitchen's family loft. I sit on one of the comfortable chairs. The conversation begins and I amaze myself on being very good with the conversation. If my father were live, he would tell me not to visit Harry. But it has been years and years since I have seen them, it might will be worth the trouble after all. Helen is very easy to talk to. Harry has aged quite a bit but in very good health and is able to get around. He is three years younger than my father. Helen is his second wife. He married Helen in 2002. She worked for the American Red Cross until 2007 when she retired from the stress of silly bureaucratic regulations that forced her to lie to people. The dwelling place was a condominium with about 6,000 square feet. It was big enough to get lost in. It is attractive enough to be featured in Homes and Gardens magazine. It has no mortgage and is paid up in full. In California it would be worth millions. My brother arrived an hour or so before me and it is nice to be off the road.

Harry and I have some conversation and with his wife too. He tells me about my brother and how dirty and disheveled he was when he arrived. I am embarrassed by what Harry said and I am put on the spot and I really don't want to impugn my brother. I could only say that Ed was on the road a lot and he might not have an opportunity to bathe and clean up as he should. I said that he should be more presentable once he cleans up. I am much cleaner but I had the opportunity to get a shower when I was in Savannah. I sit down and have a snack that they have on the coffee table, an assortment of salted nuts. My brother enters the room and I can easily see what Harry was taking about. I haven't seen my brother for a number of days and he is dirty. And too, he is in a bad mood with an attitude. I try not to get him upset or make his experience less comfortable. He is in poor health and on about 18 different prescription medications. One of first remarks Ed makes is to criticize me for taking snacks on the coffee table, sighting poor etiquette. And what is worse he criticized me over my haircut that got from the barber before I made the trip. He said it made me look like a fag. Regardless of what he says, I look good and clean and perfectly masculine. I don't say anything about it, for I know my brother embarrasses himself in front of Harry and Helen. He is also hypocritical about etiquette when he uses the laundry without asking Harry or Helen. Not only is my bother in poor health, he is obese. And he is acting like a jerk today.

We all chat together in the loft off the kitchen. We talk about the family, sports and some politics. It is one enjoyable chats I have had in long time. Helen is avid book reader or book worm. She has hobbies in the domestic arts and gardening. Harry likes car races and bungee jumping. After a while, out of the gracious generosity of our host, they want to take us out to eat. They suggest something such as the Country Place Restaurant and I make an alternative suggestion from out of the conversation about eateries. I tell them that I really like Italian food. I suggest the Macaroni Grill, for in which the past that I found that their cuisine and service is nothing short of superlative. But to be fair with my bother I gave him the right to decline and wouldn't do it, even though I knew that Italian food doesn't work well with his stomach; I find myself stuck in this trap. So we go there and the restaurant is crowded and the service suffers. Harry, Helen and I understood this and we didn't make a fuss over it. But my bother, Oh my brother! He has to act up and embarrass us all and embarrass the manager of the establishment and get a waiter in trouble, because the table service and food was not to his liking. He refused to allow a gratuity to be paid for labor performed on our behalf. He spoiled this rare opportunity to have a good time among the relatives. I wanted the family to come together with no exclusions and have a merry time but the merry part in it is fleeting. If he wanted a different restaurant he should spoken up sooner. But no! He has to embarrass everyone!

We go back to Harry's lavish condo and I try not to say anything about it. I go to the trunk of my car and bring that big trolley suitcase inside and I put in the informal dining room, close to a wall in a corner and along with my carryon tote. I open it up and plug my cordless shaver into the power outlet; in the dining room that is next to a dedicated home office. The bedroom I will be staying in is upstairs; it has two twin beds and is a dormer bedroom with a dedicated full bathroom. I bring just the bare essentials with me like my street cloths, wallet, money, watch and set of fresh underwear. I go back downstairs and continue to talk with the host. I answer their questions about picking Savannah, Georgia as the air travel destination. I tell them that it was the most economical way to get to the South and visit relatives on both sides of the family. I say that I not only want to see the Manning's but the Yarbrough's, the Godbold's, the Clapp's and the Howard's which are in Jacksonville, Florida and its vicinity and Savannah is closer to Jacksonville.

Harry has a place in Orlando Beach, Florida which he had from the time when he once was a widower or divorcée. And the residence at Lookout Mountain comes from Helen, Harry's wife. When asked about Ed and his car trip, well, I say it is awfully hard on him. He says he wanted to visit some friends in Texas and Arizona and in general wanted to visit many tourist attractions. He mentioned going to a bridge tournament where he could make some real money. He also said the weather would be cooler at this time in spring. I say Ed has to spend much time driving and then lodging. You know he sweats a lot and can have strong body order. I talk to Helen about Harry's bungee jumping and racing cars and his financial support of Nascar. I mention the very nice condo she has and its furnishings and the wonderful lifestyle in general. We go into the family history from the days before the Civil war. We talk about Harry's mother and Father, Beulah and Jubert. Sometime in the 1930's Beulah divorced Jubert, because Jubert had an obsession with gambling and drinking and was alcoholic. I learned Beulah lived near the Tennessee River at the Moccasin Bend in a shack. This was all very interesting for me to know. We move on and start talk about the water resources that Tennessee has and conversation gets political. She expresses her concern about Atlanta, Georgia and the growth of that metropolitan area. She mentioned that it was built without consideration for its future water supply and she said she feared that it would someday take Tennessee's precious coveted water resources, which Tennessee uses for making power and for agriculture and industry. And in the future, that she might someday be forced to endure severe water restrictions on her and on her way of life. Later on, I researched this and I didn't think she should worry at all. Atlanta has a good water supply system; it only needs to conserve wisely to stretch the resource out to the maximum and reuse when possible.

It is now time for bed and I go upstairs to the generous dormer bedroom. I ask my brother if he wants to take a shower first. He says he wants to wait until the morning. So I strip down and take the shower. But my brother wants to go pee. I let him do it. I then get with my shower and clean everything up when I am done. He goes into the bathroom and talks to himself and he accidentally cuts himself with his razor. He does his best to keep the blood contained in the bathroom. He takes the prescription blood thinner – Coumadin. When he leaves the bathroom, a drip of blood gets on the bedroom carpet. I try to blot it up but I give up for the fear that I might make things worse; the blotting was ineffective and I only diffused it more. Harry and Helen have no first aid supplies. I have some bandages in my carry-on and I give one to my brother, my dear older sibling, and it was able to stop the bleeding. Then I hit the sack and try to get some shut eye. But the central air conditioning is on all night and it is blowing cold air on me. I go to the register and partially shut it, but my brother finds that it makes too much noise. I go over and open it up fully and I tell my brother I will endure it for the night. I am really bending over to be nice to my brother so we can

have a good memorable time at Harry's. And he makes one of his rare diplomatic solutions – he suggests that I get some cloth and stuff it in the grates. It turns out to be a good solution. It saves the night until he starts to snore loudly. I try to endure and make the best of it and try to stay disciplined when I get up in the morning all tired out and do it without embarrassing our host.

I get up early before everyone. I go for a short walk and enjoy the wonderful scenery. In about an hour or so the rest of the household is up. And we have just a short morning snack. I learn Harry likes to put peanut butter on a banana.

In the afternoon we plan to see Dewey and the rest of his clan. But Ed wants to take the car to Honda Dealer in Chattanooga; he is afraid a bearing might be failing because he hears an unusual noise, which turns out to be only a tire whine. Harry is to follow him and pick him up so he leave the car at the dealership and go see Dewey. I will accompany Harry, giving him instructions on how to get to the Honda dealership. After a bit of calling, Ed gets into his Honda, Harry and I get into the Cadillac Escalade and Ed leaves first. Helen stays behind - and thank goodness she does so! My one big mistake is I didn't bring my cell phone with me and neither did Harry. We go up the upgrade and make a right on the Scenic Highway and travel on it for many minutes and we find ourselves at the stop sign at the very dangerous merge onto the Cummings Highway. As the Cadillac transcends down the winding slope the engine conks out, luckily for us there is a turn out and we park the Cadillac a few inches away from the pavement of the road there and thank goodness the SUV is the color red and where it can be easily seen, a very dangerous situation. Apparently Harry forgot to fill the tank of his Cadillac Escalade. So Harry goes and finds that rare payphone and calls Helen and Helen calls my brother.

Is this stressful for me? You bet! And with a bad night's sleep too!

I wait near the Cadillac but far enough so I can escape injury should a car collide with it. A Tennessee state trooper comes by and stops. I explain the situation to him and say help is coming and the SUV is out of gas and it won't start. I tell him, my uncle is getting a gas container full of gas. The trooper leaves after getting on his radio. Later on a Good Samaritan comes and expresses concern and I tell him the same, he mentions that he works in chemical factory that makes consumer products and that I am located near his factory. I promise him that I will leave when I am able to do so and I tell him that I don't own the Cadillac, that it belongs to my Uncle Harry Manning. Soon Harry shows up with a plastic gas can with a funnel and it is very awkward to use. Harry can't get gas in the car. I come up with a clever way to do it but I get some gas on me. Even when we put a gallon in, it is not enough to get the Cadillac to go. My brother finally shows up. My brother and Harry go back and get a second gallon. And once again it is not enough to get the car to go. We abandon the gassing and summon the road service, Harry was an insurance salesman when he was working and he had an Allstate road service club card. Ed used his cell phone to call; he gave the phone to Harry but the club was not responsive enough, we were told we would have to wait an hour or more for road service in a dangerous location. Ed got on the phone and he angrily rebuked the service company. We decided to use the AAA road service instead. Ed had an AAA card and so did I. Since I rarely ever use my card, I was the one selected to give the road service. I called AAA and explained the situation and the service showed up in 12 minutes or less and the tow brought two gallons of gas. The tow mechanic had a way with the Cadillac and got the engine to kick over and go. I felt a sense of short term relief. And, we took that big baby and gave that

baby Cadillac the gas fill of its life. We put twenty or more gallons in at about \$90 dollars. From there we got on the interstate I-24, with my brother following.

Harry didn't follow my instructions and messed everything up. We got off on Swallowford Road all right, but we could decide which direction to go. Harry would ask around but couldn't get a good definitive answer from someone knowledgeable. I suggest we try trail and error. Ed has found us and we try to decide on something. Was this stressful for me? No kidding! We are to find Chapman Road off Swallowford Road where the Honda Dealer is. Harry almost gets clipped in his Escalade by a school bus. Thank goodness Tennessee drivers are good and quality tires hold up! Ed wants to find a Wal-Mart to buy a TrakFone card to buy minutes for his cell phone. I suggest he go to Best-Buy across the street to buy them. Lucky for us and him, he gets the minutes he needs. We go the only plausible direction possible which we all can go and I keep an eye out for Chapman. It is an obscure sign and difficult to spot. I spot it, but for some reason, Ed can't see it. I have Harry turn right and go all the way down and we finally find the Honda dealership. The Cadillac is parked at the Honda dealership. But Harry and I could not understand why Ed didn't show. So it gets even more stressful, if it could get any more stressful. I have no idea where my brother is. He must have gotten lost again. Harry and I decide to stay put and I try to reach him on his cell phone, but he doesn't answer. The Chattanooga Honda dealership was unbelievably kind to us for letting us use their phone system even if it means toll charges for them and assisting us in helping find Ed. After about 45 minutes and torn nerves, he shows up and he gets the car into service. From there, Harry takes us all to Dewey's residence on Phelps Street.

Harry, Ed and I get into the Escalade and Harry knows where Phelps Street is and needs no direction from us. Ed calls Dewey and Richard to inform that we are coming to visit so they aren't so surprised. The Cadillac goes to Dewey's house which is much more modest and is much like a lot of suburban track houses. We get out of Cadillac and go onto concrete pathway to the front door and knock. Richard answers the door and he invites us all in. The interior is busy but decent. We all greet each other and I am introduced to Sheri who is Dewey's wife. She is host and she brings me some wine. So we sit down and talk a bit about lots of things, including disputes about neighbors that have too many loud dogs and a city bureaucracy that won't do anything about it. I learn about my father's early days when was in Chattanooga and before he went into the Navy, and something about his enlistment as a non-commissioned officer. He was in gunnery and he was involved in the Battle of Midway in June of 1942. They mentioned his involvement; he was an Aviation Machinist Mate Third Class. He warned of the attack of the Zeros (Jap Attack Planes) to his Ensign Officer. My father would never talk about it as if it were a secret. The battle was a success and did irreparable damage to the Japanese Imperial Fleet. In learning that, I think the trip was worthwhile. We stay for while and I don't say too much, only that I have retired and the last time I visited was in 1966 as a teenager and 1955 has a little 3 year old boy. I never talk about Moscow and mention learning Russian.

We leave and give hugs and go to the Country Place Restaurant on Shallowford Road. My brother and I have Alaskan Pollock. I forget what Harry had. But it is like a country store with amazing and rare merchandise, some of which I have never seen in years. I don't buy anything though. My brother is behaving better and seems to like his food. I let my brother do the conversing for the most part. I just shut up for the most part, relax and eat the fine country food. Then it's time to go back to the house adjunct to the Scenic Highway. We are back at Harry's and oh, oh, oh, what a day it was! What a Thursday!

It was Thursday evening, I am at Harry's and I decide to go for a long walk and Harry agrees to accompany me. We walk a long walk up East Brow Road and look at all the elegant and very exclusive mansions and real estate. This was fun enough. But to top it off, I get to look at Chattanooga's jewel attractions. The Incline Railway which is an amusement, but not open at the time. It would have been a thrill to take and I thought I might do on Friday but I never did. Railway descends to St. Elmo, an old town with tourist attractions. We travel further to Point Park where you have the Battle of Chattanooga Museum. Harry and I enter the park and look at the Civil War Monuments. The Civil War started because of a separatist movement in the South. It was caused essentially by a class struggle. The South required cheap labor to toil the plantations to have a good economy, meaning the use of slavery. The slaves were imported from the Gold Coast of Africa, they were Negroes. The North was much more industrialized and didn't require the cheap labor to have a good economy. The difference between them caused a conflict of interest. But Washington would hear none of it and it forced the South to stay in the Union. The South fought for the separation. This is one of the first signs of Imperialist power by Washington. The South was defeated and stayed in the Union. Harry and I decided to go back to the condominium. Harry was winded and I was not. But Harry was in good enough health to do this even though Helen said that Harry was very tired. I hope I didn't hurt Harry's relationship with his wife. If my father were alive today he would squawk about it.

I get a tour of his three-level house. On the first level, it has a three car garage, the previously mentioned Cadillac Escalade and a Mercedes-Benz S-class Sedan and still with much more room. There is an entrance into a social reception area for parties with its own kitchen and bathroom. There is a workshop room for building things and technical troubleshooting. On second level, we go upstairs and we have a kitchen with a counter island with plumbing for entertaining with an informal living room loft for casual everyday use. It has an informal dining room, a laundry center, a home office with computer, a guest bedroom with its own bathroom, a long formal dining room with fire place, formal huge living room, home library with a lavish display of books and big fireplace, a small half bathroom, a large foyer with huge decorate front doors, a bigger bathroom with many toilets and bidets and wash sinks. There may be other features I didn't see. A place like this is worth millions. On the third level, there is a huge master bedroom with a sauna bath and with several walk-in closets, several lofts with fireplaces, a major master bathroom with golden and marbled fixtures, a sewing room with an adjunct room, a previously mentioned dormer bedroom with its dedicated full bathroom with a line of louver closets. One of the lofts has a balcony and has its own outdoor barbeque. There are other things about the place I haven't mentioned. It is the closest thing in the likeness of heaven that I have ever seen on earth. I heard the story that Harry and his wife got out on the balcony and locked themselves out; they had no cell phone. They were trapped. Harry had to climb down a tree to find another key. Places like this have their pitfalls! Maybe not heaven after all!

This Thursday evening is getting dark and it is time to get some shut-eye. My brother while a being a pest actually made the trip more stressful but also more interesting. I love my brother. And tonight if my brother snores too much; I will get a blanket and sleep on one of the long sofas in the library. I try the dormer bedroom once again and he starts snoring very loudly and I take my shoes off and quietly sneak out of bedroom quiet as a mouse while brother sleeps. This time he can't say my snoring kept him awake...It was his own doing! I go to the most wonderful private library and use it for what it is not intended for, a place to sleep. It has large picture windows and a very picturesque view below; this is the charm of Lookout Mountain. At night you see all the lights below. I have an idea of diming the ambient lights low but not totally dark. It was just the prescription for me to sleep. I slept as soundly as a dog. It was a very good experience. About an hour before dawn, I sneak back into the dormer bedroom and get into the twin bed. Brother arises, I, expecting him to complain about snoring, he does not. I learn that in the middle of the night he got up to discover that I wasn't there. So naturally he doesn't complain about snoring!

Friday morning and after breakfast, Ed, Harry and I go back to the dealership to pick up the Honda. The technician makes the check engine light extinguish, and checks all the bearings and everything on the whole car and it receives a clean bill of health. We wait for the technician to get the car for us. Harry and I go to the waiting room and we both have refreshments in the interim. And Ed gets into the Honda and I and Harry get into the Escalade and then we are back at Harry's. My brother and I assist Helen with her Apple I-pad and try to resolve her technical issues with software updates. In the afternoon, we have plans to go to the Chef Lin Asian Buffet in a strip mall on South Terrace Road. Dewey, Richard, I (as Robert), Ed, Harry, Faye, Sheri and Helen will attend this buffet with an exclusive private table just for us. The afternoon comes and we go there, these wonderful people do this on account of my brother Ed and I for paying them a visit. We all have a chance to have a tremendous variety of delicious food. We chat quite a bit, I am a little quiet. I greet and say something to everybody there. I think of my attendance as obligatory - I had initial plans to hit the road at daybreak so I could go to church with Gracie Le on Sunday. But I will delay because I want a chance to meet everybody in the family that is able to come. We stay there for hours and after all of this we go back to the condo. I decide Friday is not a good day to travel because of the weather Chattanooga is having, like the thunderstorms and showers, but I make a decision to leave anyway after the banquet. I hesitate and ponder this decision for a while. I decide not to go to the Cowpens National Park in South Carolina with my brother like I planned. I decide to go directly to Jacksonville, technically St. Augustine, Florida. I inform Harry that I am leaving and shake hands with Harry and Helen. Ed is now in bed early to get some rest for his long tomorrow. I tell Harry to please inform Ed that I am going to Jacksonville, when he gets up. I don't think he remembered!

I go and get all my effects together and put them into the Nissan. I get in and I put the "banana" in its place and push the car's dashboard button. The car automatically starts itself. I put the transmission lever in reverse, release the brake. And, I begin my long journey across the state of Georgia to St. Augustine. I back out of the level terrace and put it in drive and leave the very exclusive condos to the Scenic Highway, making a right turn. I take the Scenic to the Hamilton County #318 and turn left on the Cummings Highway and I take it all the way to I-24, stopping only for gas at a place called Kangaroo Express. I buy a soda drink and some food and get on the Interstate 24. For a while I have a lot of slow traffic and we go at a crawl and I see the view of Chef Lin's Buffet Restaurant that's on the right side, the very restaurant that I was just at. I patiently navigate and soon I am in Georgia on the I-75 going south with gradual increasing speed. I stop at

the Calhoun rest stop and get out and stretch out and a walk some and visit the restroom to do my business. I get back on the road again and travel south past Atlanta and I go until I get to Stockbridge, Georgia and about 7:30 PM. I go and get situated at the Stockbridge Inn, room #102. I remember that I was so tired. Accommodations were satisfactory, but not really all that clean. I was beginning to run out of white athletic socks. So I washed a couple of pairs in the sink. I wrung them of the water. I used a hair dryer to help dry them. Then I hang them on a coat hanger for air drying. I am hungry and I go to the Golden Corral to eat. It is a buffet where you can have all you want. I have a choice of a wide variety of foods. The restaurant is very crowded and is the most popular. The waitress finds me a table. The table I get is below where the roof leaks; it is raining outside. Don't I have all the luck! I avert getting soaked and keep the rain water off my food. I have green salads, veggies and potatoes and meat and diet soda to drink. I turn in and get some rest for the next long day of travel. I wake and get things together into the car. The socks don't completely dry. I go to the Waffle House to have bacon and eggs with hash browns and milk to drink. I turn in the magnetic card to the manager and then go. Back on I-75 south! The traffic is not a problem. I just keep cruising at 70 MPH until I reach Ashburn, Georgia and I stop and fill the tank with pricier gas than usual. I get a sweet tooth and have an ice cream cone at the Dairy Queen. I take my cell phone out and text my Aunt Jean that I am in Ashburn, Georgia and I am on my way to St. Augustine. I rest a bit and get back on the freeway. I go south for an hour more and stop at Tifton, Georgia and I find this shopping center with a gas station. I take the opportunity to clean the windshield of all the bird droppings and smashed insects. And for moment or two I rest in the car. I see a Sav-A-Lot store; I go in and see if I can buy a cushion to ease some of the strain on my neck but to no avail, they do not have it. I start the car and get back on I-75 and continue my trip to Florida. I go past Valdosta and Florida welcomes me and I see and pass by the Suwannee River on my way to I-10 going east. I stopped at Winfield and bought some window cleaner and paper towels and called Jean let her know that I am in Florida and that I will be over in 90 to 120 minutes. I arrived at Jacksonville and crossed the St. Johns River to merge into I-95 south intending to take exit #305 but I miss it and go and use exit #298 and take US #1 north to St. Johns County Road #206 making a right and heading towards Crescent Beach. I go over the draw bridge and smell the fresh breezes of the sea and I am at the intersection of Coastal Road A1A and I make a left and go north for a about four miles, keeping a watch for Ocean Gallery on the right hand side.

I find the Ocean Gallery condominium residential park and I enter at the guard gate. The guard greets me and I go through. I go in and make a left on Clubhouse Way. I park there and I call with my cell phone to Aunt Jean and tell her I am at Ocean Gallery at the Club House parking lot. I describe the Nissan Altima car and what I am wearing. It about a minute or two here comes Jean with Gracie Le. I get hugged and I am so glad to see them both and they too are glad to see me! I follow their car and lead me to Del Prado Sub-Complex Ten. I park in Space #104 and go in to their modest leased condo which has been rented out for the occasion. They immediately fix me with some refreshments seat me in the living room and we start taking a bit. We go out for lunch at a seafood place in St. Augustine and I had some soda and Crab Louie salad and a lemon desert. We talked some more but I was not such a good conversationalist. I thanked them for the wonderful meal and we went for some more attractions in St. Augustine. I visited the St. Augustine Lighthouse Museum; I didn't bring my camera and was not prepared for this. I decided not to go for a tour at that time. I bought some photo post cards as souvenirs. We left and went over the Bridge of Lions drawbridge to the downtown of St. Augustine. I wanted to see one the museums but it was just too crowded to find a decent parking space. To use a parking garage it was expensive at about \$12 which in my opinion is a rip-off; and, the girls agreed with me. We found a

compromise around the old town near St. Georges Street. We parked there for \$5 dollars, but it took some patience to find that place. Gracie Le said that the parking used to be free. We got out of Aunt Jean's old beat up Toyota Corolla and Jean got the ticket and we strolled to the oldest section of America's oldest city before the Pilgrims discovered Plymouth Rock in 1620 - St Augustine was established in 1565. We traversed the streets some of which were made of stones and there were hitching posts for the horses of that day, before we had automobiles. And, Gracie Le told me they have special archaic names called bollards and quay posts. I took no photos at the time, for I didn't have a camera with me. But it was quite a sight to see with rare merchandise like glass, pottery, porcelain, paintings and sculpture. If you wanted to, you could take a buggy ride. What were notable were the St. Photios Greek Orthodox Shrine and the Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse in the nation at 41 St. Georges, on St. Augustine's St. Georges Street. We stopped by the food shops and had some ice cream and bought some bottled water to keep us refreshed.

After a day like this we returned and I was able to get my breath and relax and get the bags out of the car. The girls were nice enough to go make an errand and buy some essentials for the kitchen. I appreciated that. They gave me the choice of bedrooms, the small bedroom or the master bedroom. I picked the master bedroom with its dedicated three-quarter bathroom with shower instead of a tub. It is spacious with king size bed with a headboard with fancy bed dressing, shammed pillows, comforters and bed skirts, a wicker hamper at the foot of the bed. This bedroom had sliding glass doors that lead to the balcony that is screened to keep the insects out. The bedroom has a walk-in closet that is opposite the wash basin in the bathroom. The closet has mirrored louvered doors that are much too close to the bathroom light and vent switches; some damage was done to the switches' faceplate. I learn the light over the toilet and shower is burnt out. In the closet, there is a stepping stool and I use it to get access and open the fixture and remove the burnt out light bulb. I go down to soffit closet downstairs and get another bulb after searching for awhile. I replace the bulb and secure the fixture and test it. It is working and I now have a lighted bathroom using my technician skills. I have radio and television service in this bedroom. I get one of the foldable luggage racks in the closet and I put my Atlantic trolley suitcase on it and open it. I leave it there and in that way, I don't place anything in the dresser. I do take the suitcase's plastic containment for toiletries; it has a hook on it to hang up. I hang this in the closet along with my US Polo Association windbreaker. I am all set. I have some sanity for this Saturday! I go downstairs and I have a short snack of a dinner which is a ham sandwich that Gracie Le made for me. We three have some conversation about the years in the past when Gracie, Lula and Lucy (My mother) were growing up and the mischief they would all get into. They were kids and one time too! Mollie (their mother) would punish them when they got caught. Often they would get away with it and have a good laugh. I get ready for bed. I take a military shower (water conserving shower) and put on some fresh underwear. I hit the sack and get some good rest on a very comfortable bed. I don't open the patio doors though, the noise made by the amphibians and insects make sleep impossible. I sleep until Sunday morning comes.

Aunt Gracie Le and Aunt Jean sleep in the other bedroom. I just happen to go there for a moment; I didn't realize that they were in there. I promptly apologize (sorry!) and leave at once. I get up early and go for an early walk being sure to have a key with me. It is very nice outside and I stroll around and get used to my surroundings and learn where every thing is. I greet all passersby, so friendly! I go back to condo #104 at Del Prado Sub-Complex Ten. Gracie and Jean are up and they serve me breakfast and coffee. Gracie Le is not used to whole bean coffee. I tell her it has to be ground and you use a food processor for that. After that she prepares the coffee, in an automatic drip

coffeemaker. I had two eggs and sausage. They really fix me up. If my brother was there he would scold me about my etiquette for letting the women serve me. But I think the women like to do it and it makes them feel wanted and needed. It is just good psychology. I am glad he is in South Carolina at this time. I spend a lot of my time getting comfortable and watching TV and drinking soft drinks. The girls go out for a bit and I do some reading and play the piano, America the Beautiful and Danny Boy. I am a real amateur! They come back and they tell me about a plan to meet all the relatives that are available to come. Uncle Billy and Brenda Howard and daughter of Jean, Rhonda, are coming. The other daughter of Jean, Angie could not attend because of job obligations as a 911 dispatcher. I was able to talk briefly with her on the cell phone. He went to a common place where Billy could locate us and got into Billy's car with Gracie, Jean, Brenda and Rhonda too. We went to an Outback Steak House and had a nice dinner; I had steak and potatoes and tossed green salad and diet soda. I forgot what the others had that day. I remember that the credit card processing center was down due to a bug in the software. The waitress feared that they would have to manually process the transaction with the risk associated with it. But Billy paid for the dinner in cash and was even able to offer a gratuity, Sunday, April 1, 2012. I didn't really say too much; but after the dinner, I shook the hands of the Man and I was hugged by all the women. I went back to Ocean Gallery #104. I went to the beach on my own; I saw the Atlantic Ocean. I didn't really get on the beach but I saw cars parked there. It was open to the public. I heard about proposals to close this beach. It was a really fascinating time to be here. Before I get sunburn, I head back to the #104.

By the time I get back we have weather alert for thunderstorms, and I hear the clasp of thunder and lightning. But it passes and gets calm again. I have some ham sandwiches and snacks. I watch TV and I retire for the night. I pay Jean, for the use of the condo, with five crisp \$100 dollar bills with Ben Franklin on them; what we call Bennies, five hundred dollars. I retire for the evening and go back to master bedroom. And Jean and Gracie leave. Tomorrow Jean has to go to the doctor and Gracie is not to be left alone. I have the place to mostly to myself tomorrow; I will have to find my own entertainment. I get my cell phone charged and my camera ready. But Monday I go and window shop at the St. Augustine Premium Outlets out of curiosity. I have a little lunch there, a slice of pizza and coke at Sbarro's, and I look around and see the merchandise. I buy some candy at the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory and that's about it. It is very quiet with not much business going on there. After that, I go down south on A1A to the lighthouse and this time I buy a pass and do some photography in the electronic digital medium and no silver halide is involved. I spend some time there and take the steep stairs and have a really good time enjoying the day. In a couple of hours, I go back into the old town of St. Augustine. And, I do pay the full price of parking even though I think it is a rip-off. I try to find parking for a museum but am not successful, the parking lot is crammed. I park in a multi-level garage where the car can stay cool near Castillo Drive and San Marco Avenue. I walk on foot for the rest of the day. I have my visor cap on. I buy some bottled water to keep me refreshed. I go to the old ancient streets of St. Augustine. I do much photography: Flagler College, Lighner Museum and St. Georges Street and adjuncts. For a while, I actually get lost, but I mill around and find something familiar and I get my bearing and find my way back to the parking garage. I get out of the garage and pay the toll and take a left on Castillo Drive. I take the Dixie Highway south. I make a left on King Street and find my way back to the Bridge of Lions and cross Matanzas Bay to Florida highway A1A. I go back to Ocean Gallery #104 and Jean and Gracie call me to see how I am doing and tell them about my adventure. I prepare my own supper. I have broccoli and a hamburger. They drop by briefly, Monday, April 2, 2012. We go to the beach and I show them the way I go. And, pick up some shells for souvenirs. I note that in

their condo, there is a whole jar full of shells next to the television. When back in the house, I give them a DVD with family pictures on it.

Tuesday was the extra day. I wake up and go walking out on the grounds for exercise and I go to the club house gym which also has a pool. I get on the treadmill to burn off some calories. I go to the store to get some groceries and laundry detergent and to stock the refrigerator and get snacks for Ed. I stay close to give Ed instructions on getting here. I leave the cell phone on, so he can call in. I hang around, read a bit, watch TV and do preliminary packing for tomorrow. I learn that Ed didn't bring his instructions.

I can rest up some; I was able to do what I wanted and then some more. Tomorrow I drive to Savannah. Ed gets lost and I don't have a detailed enough map of the Florida Coast to help him. I refer to Jean to fix this; she knows this area better than I. It is relief for me. I won't have to go searching for him. Ed is tired and impatient. Jean finds him and she guides him to the condo. I open the front door and here comes brother. I officially welcome him to St. Augustine. I let him in and he doesn't know what to think of my kindness. He thinks there is some ulterior motive. He gives me a Bennie, a one hundred dollar bill. And I was just being facetious! Jean shows him to the small bedroom. And, he sleeps there. Ed has dinner with me and he orders take out with his cell phone and Jean and Gracie join us. I was to offer a hamburger to Ed, but he orders out anyway.

Wednesday morning comes and I get all my stuff together and put it in the Altima for the last time. I decide on only a brief snack, a good shave and good cleaning of the windshield. And, I am off and away to Savannah. I have a good full tank of gas; I have picked my favorite radio station. I make a left on A1A and go to county #206 and I go on to I-95 north straight to Savannah. Ed discovers he has master bedroom for himself. He will stay for about a day or so and will take off. He will see an old military buddy at Pensacola, Florida. I learn Ed was not impressed with Cowpens Battlefield or Charleston, South Carolina. But it was a good diversion that I enjoyed. He will face some difficult weather prospects coming back; he will face the chance to get into a very nasty seasonal storm.

I continue my leisurely drive up the coast. I stop at a rest stop for a minute and get back on the road again and remain driving until the afternoon comes. I am now at Savannah, early afternoon; I will scout the streets of the old town and photograph the interesting views with the camera and have some lunch in a Cajon restaurant.

I take I-95 to east I-16 to Bay Street in the downtown historic district and find a garage called the Whitaker Garage. I go down several levels and find an underground parking space. I take the elevator to street level. I go onto the street of Bryan and find my way to Ellis Square and photograph the jets of water from the fountains and other attractive features, like the old brick buildings on Bernard and St. Julian. There they have a visitor center that is made of glass paneling. The atmosphere is very festive and I go to one of the restaurants of the City Market that serve Cajon Creole cuisine. I don't remember what I had that day, it was blackened and of the sea. I remember I would be in a spot in this restaurant where people would bump into me all the time. I photograph the parks and fixtures, Johnson Square and Reynolds Square; photograph the city hall near Bay and Bull Streets; photograph the spire of a church, the Independent Presbyterian Church. They have buggy ride tours but I didn't have time for it and it was about time for me to leave the historic district and get to the Savannah Hilton Head International Airport.

The city of Savannah was established in 1733 before the Revolution. The friendly Yamacraw Indian tribe welcomed the settlers under the leader, Tomochichi. General James Oglethorpe made it a British colony. It was spared damage in the time of the Revolutionary War with strong defense by the Colonist. American revolutionaries were not successful in capturing it. In the Civil War General William Sherman decided to spare it from damage as a “Christmas present for Abraham Lincoln”. This Union burned down most cities in Georgia. This is why Savannah is such a gem, if you want to see the oldest historic places in Georgia.

I enjoyed the brief stay but I have to get back to San Jose. I get the car out of the garage and head to the airport. I turn the rental car in and as you know there is still some clerical confusion with Enterprise Car Rental Company. They had a problem identifying the car that they loaned me. I had to show the papers to straighten things out. I brought all my effects with me; I discarded the window cleaner and left the paper towels in the car. I check in and my trolley suitcase is sent to the baggage counter. And like the Brahms Symphony No. 3, I move to the security entrance and take my shoes and all metal things off my body and show ID and pack in gray totes my effects, but a coin is lodged in my pocket and I fail the security test. I get frisked again. But this is the last time. I go into departure terminal and find the gate that will take me to Atlanta. I am low on the priority list and wait for others to board. I get on find my seat and in time I am in Atlanta. In Atlanta, I have a snack from a vendor to keep my stomach satisfied, called Simply Fabulous. I get water, potato chips and veggie snack wrap. The operator wants to close up and offers to sell all her food. I chuckle but I don't show it. I say it would cost several thousand dollars if I did. Sorry babe! I don't have the money! I transfer to the departure concourse and I take the tram this time and it saves me time and trouble. I sit and wait for boarding to begin and I go on when it is my turn to enter the vestibule to the plane. I find my assigned seat. And the plane taxis and lifts off and is way into the air and I am on my way to San Francisco and the four hours are slow. I see an interactive map and know the position and altitude at all times. The plane has been refurbished with newer technology. The plane reaches San Francisco and circles the airport and lands when given the FAA clear. I am almost home and need only to call East Bay Connections to let them know I have arrived. When my turn comes, I leave the plane and enter the arrival terminal and go to baggage claim and get my suitcase and leave to the outside curb where a driver in a Lincoln Continental picks me up and takes me to San Jose to my home. My brother did me the favor of arranging and paying for this. So all I had to do is get out of the car and bring the bags and effects to my residence. I put the bags temporarily in the living room and restored the hot water system and electrical and I hit the sack and fell asleep. It was past midnight and early morning Friday April 5. I was all so tired! I made it home! What an adventure! What a story!

The End