



de Stolfe Journal



12.7 : LATE FALL 2023



CONTENTS

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Covers activities from Late October through November 2023.

(Page numbers correspond to the PDF page numbers.)

- 2** ... Contents & On The Cover
- 3** ... Comments by RG
- 4-5** ... Word for Life
- 6-7** ... Random Things
- 8-9** ... Obituaries
- 10-19** ... Post Death Travel—Part 1
- 20-25** ... Thanksgiving in De Leon, Texas
- 26-29** ... Bluecat Travepalooza
- 30** ... Final Thought—More Random Things
- 30** ... The Fine Print



This photo of Dad was taken by one of his friends several years ago. This was his favorite photo of himself.

ON THE COVER



While I was in Colorado Springs, there was a day I needed to go north a few miles for an errand to a place called Greenland that is right off of I-25. It was a beautiful landscape of very little development and rolling hills and a few other landscape features.

We live in the 21st century, not the 1920s! Wherever there is a web link like below, click it to go to the webpage it references! (Click it now!)

www.destolfe.com



COMMENTS BY RG

Catching Up...

Sigh...

After three months, I've finally caught up to include the sad but necessary trips I took to Colorado Springs after finding out Dad had died in late October. I've been months behind on telling about my various activities over the last six months and have found myself taking longer and longer to get each issue put together over the last few months. In fact, to be fair, even this topic is split into two issues by necessity for the sheer volume of things to cover between the trips to the Springs and the holiday activities. This issue covers things from Late October through November, while the next issue, the December 2023 issue, will cover activities in December through New Years.

So for this issue, the main topic was the first drive to Colorado Springs a few days after finding out that Dad had died. Obviously, the news was a shock and later evidence showed that Dad was not expecting to die when he did either. For the sake of privacy but also general respect, I will not provide much about the nature of his death in these journal issues, but rather give enough information as to explain certain details as necessary. Overall, I had many details to tend to!

I have divided the main topic differently from previous reports of trips where typically I tell what I did on a daily basis. Instead, I made the writing into mini snippets of separate topics, including a large section just of the restaurants I patroned*, bookended with the drive to the Springs and the drive home in similar format to previous trip descriptions.

**Typical of me to give extended descriptions of the places where I ate, huh?!*

Another major part of this issue of the journal covers Thanksgiving and what I did for that holiday. The extended weekend was pleasant and relaxing with a small side trip as you will read about.

I have included a major section about the travels of Bluecat, as you have seen in previous issues over the last year since the 2022 Thanksgiving. Bluecat went to a lot of very cool places over the last 13 months!

I have included a few small extra stuff where I could. But to keep this issue a reasonable number of pages, I have left out many things until I can include them in future issues. I have no shortage of various interesting and fun topics to include that don't involve any



Robert-George de Stolfe

trips I've taken. But, most of those topics have been backburnered until I can figure out the best time to include them, besides the fact that they each also require some research to cover them properly and accurately.

Overall, I have tried to keep this issue not an issue of mourning, but one still of hope and peace despite the obvious fact of the loss of a parent, and really now, the loss of both parents. These next two issues will be a mix of that and other activities I did.

Please read this issue for the intent that it is written, not of sadness, but rather of continued moving forward despite loss.

RG

WORD FOR LIFE

Revelation Topics - The Throne Room

Continuing in the series of topics from the book of Revelation, this issue covers the Throne Room as described in Revelation 4.

While exiled on the tiny island of Patmos, the Apostle John was given this Revelation of what things are soon to take place. A voice sounding like a trumpet (likely an angel) came from an open door of Heaven and called John to come up. By the spirit, John was taken up to see the Throne Room. For this writing, I am only covering the physical aspects of the Throne Room.

The first stated observation was “*a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne*” (4:2). This One is Father God, God Jehovah. The next description told of His appearance being “*like a jasper and a sardius stone*”. This is not the only place in Revelation that mentions various gemstones in the descriptions of Heaven. (See Revelation 21 for

the description of the new Jerusalem.) (Also, for another description of God’s throne as told by Ezekiel, go to Ezekiel 1:26-28.)

The other part of verse 3 showed “*and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald*”. Ezekiel 1:28 also mentions the rainbow, “*Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around [the throne]*”. Let’s take a rabbit trail here about what the rainbow means.

In the new millennium, now 24 years, the concept of the rainbow

has been corrupted by dark, evil forces to redefine it into worldly symbolism. A rainbow in physical terms is where light is refracted from a mainly white light source into its various wavelengths of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. That is why we mainly see rainbows where there are rainclouds and part sun. In Biblical terms, God set out a rainbow as a very specific promise, a covenant actually, that he would never break. That promise is shown in Genesis 9:8-17. Here is part of it.

“*11 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all*

flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

13 I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.”

Therefore, the rainbow around God’s throne is the reminder, the continual proof, of the covenant God made never to flood the earth again.

In the next issue of the journal, we will pick up this revelation to cover the lightnings, thunderings, voices and the sea of glass.



Jasper



Sardius

WORD FOR LIFE

Revelation Topics - The Throne Room

Revelation 4:2-6

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.

3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.

5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

Ezekiel 1:26-28

26 And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it.

27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around.

28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.

Genesis 9:8-17

8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying:

9 "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth.

11 Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12 And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.

14 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud;

15 and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

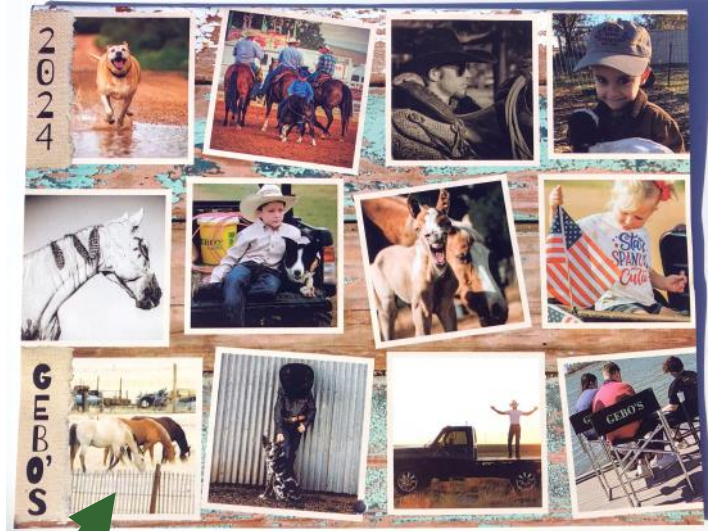
16 The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."

17 And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

RANDOM THINGS

Photo Contest

I mentioned in the last issue that I submitted a photo for a calendar contest by Gebo's. Here is the front of the calendar along with the photo they chose.



This is the photo they chose to be in the calendar. It is on the cover and on the October page.

Tree Rock

On our way back from Boise after an event, we stopped at a natural landmark near Buford, Wyoming basically called Tree Rock. A while after I got back, I looked on eBay and found an old postcard of the landmark from a hundred years ago. Here is the postcard, a RPPC, and a photo I took from a similar angle. The tree has grown a little bit!



← “Tree-in the-Rock, the famed landmark of the Lincoln Highway, Wyo.”

RANDOM THINGS

I wanted to include this again simply because it is an unusual tree. There have only been two times I have seen this tree called Ginkgo biloba with another name of maidenhair. The first time I saw it was while at a rest stop along I-40 in Crossville, Tennessee. The second time I saw this tree was while we were in downtown Boise near the Capitol

building. The leaves are thick and have a fan shape with clear veins running from the stem to the tip. I don't know if there are different varieties of the tree, but the leaves from the two places do look a little different. The one from Idaho being a little narrower than from the one in Tennessee.



Tree and leaf found in Tennessee and photographed in May 2022.



Tree and leaf found in Idaho and photographed in September 2023.



These leaves are shaped like a fan somewhat similar to what you would see in Art Nouveau designs of the 20s.

OBITUARY

Robert Austin de Stolfe passed from this earth October 31, 2023 at the age of 80. He was born in Miami, Florida on December 23, 1942 to Austin and Janet (Smith) de Stolfe. His childhood years was spent living in various places around Florida including Miami, Marathon, and Howie-In-The-Hills along with his twin sisters Barbara and Renee. In the mid 1960s, he joined the United States Marines Corps and worked as an aircraft technician. He did two tours to Vietnam in the later 1960s. It was during this time that he also completed a GED. While stationed in Jacksonville, Florida, he met Miriam Ingram. They married on February 17, 1968 and eventually moved to South Florida where they lived in various areas until the early 1970s when they moved into an unusual dwelling in southwest Miami. An option came available to move into a two bedroom apartment on the second floor of the Tropicaire Drive-In Theatre, an old Art Déco style drive-in movie theatre built in 1948. On July 17 in 1972, the couple gave birth to a son, Robert-George de Stolfe. The living arrangement in the theatre was quite a unique place to raise a family! The family lived there through the 1970s and 1980s. Through most of the 1970s, both Robert and Miriam worked at a photography studio in Coral Gables until Robert went out on his own as a self employed photographer while Miriam stayed a few more years until pursuing other employment in the early 1980s. In the late 1970s, Robert, or Bob as he was often known, pursued photography in the film industry as a still photographer having worked on various films like Funhouse, Smoky & The Bandit 3, Porky's Revenge, Caddy Shack II, Making Mr. Right, Problem Child 2, and Cocoon: The Return, among many others. He also was the still photographer for television programs like Miami Vice, Mercy or Murder, and Poison Ivy, among others. In 1989, Miriam and Robert-George moved to Jacksonville while Robert stayed in the theatre. By the 1990s, Robert transitioned to doing theatrical projection presenting films in theaters. The Tropicaire Drive-In Theatre was razed in late 1994, and Robert moved to Miramar, Florida. He lived there until early 2007 when he moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado. He



Robert A. de Stolfe 1942 - 2023 (80)

spent his retirement years in Colorado until his death. He continued to pursue his love of photography and of his love of the theater experience: projection, light, and sound.

his father Austin, mother Janet, brother Fred and his wife Mona, and wife Miriam. He leaves behind one son Robert-George de Stolfe, sister Barbara, sister Renee, niece Noelle and several cousins and other extended family members along with various friends, neighbors, and coworkers of the industry.

OBITUARY

Miriam M. de Stolfe passed from this earth April 6, 2020 at the age of 73. She was born at Zurbrugg Memorial Hospital in Riverside, New Jersey on November 9, 1946 to George W. and Lydia M. Ingram. For nearly a decade, she lived there in Camden, New Jersey with her sister Kathryn Ingram (now Kathryn Alexander). In the mid 1950s, the family moved from New Jersey to Florida and settled in Jacksonville. After living in several places in the city, the family bought a house in late 1957, which belonged to the family well into the twenty first century. Miriam graduated from Robert E. Lee Senior High in 1965 and continued to live in Jacksonville until her marriage to Robert A. de Stolfe on February 17, 1968. From Jacksonville, the couple eventually moved to the South Florida area where they lived in various places before settling into Southwest Miami in the very early 1970s. On July 17 in 1972, the couple gave birth to a son, Robert-George de Stolfe. The living arrangement in Miami was quite unique in that the dwelling was part of the main building of a drive in theater named Tropicaire Drive-In Theatre with what was a cozy apartment style living arrangement on the second floor of the building. The family lived there through the 1970s and 1980s. Through most of the 1970s, both Robert and Miriam worked at a photography studio in Coral Gables until Robert went out on his own as a self employed photographer and Miriam left to work part time as a greeting card merchandiser, a job she did with various companies to her death. After Miriam's father George died in early 1978, that left her mother Lydia as a widow through the 1980s. However, while Robert-George was starting High School, Miriam would go to Jacksonville in the late 1980s to care for her mother Lydia after a diagnosis of dementia, which later changed into Alzheimer's Disease by the early 1990s. Miriam and Robert-George moved to Jacksonville in early 1989 (into the same house where she was raised) while Robert stayed in South Florida. Sadly, Lydia died in early 1994. By 1996, Robert-George moved for college, and Miriam lived in the family house through to her death. All through her years, Miriam had a love of the family's pets: various dogs, cats, and once a



Miriam M. de Stolfe 1946 - 2020 (73)

parakeet. She also had a love of doing surveys, refunding and couponing, watching game shows and forensics types of programs, doing mystery shopping, growing her various plants, and eating at her favorite restaurants.

She was preceded in death by her parents George and Lydia Ingram and she leaves behind her sister and husband Dave and Kathy Alexander, her husband Robert de Stolfe, her son Robert-George de Stolfe, and various cousins, nephews, and other extended family by blood and by marriage, along with close friends, neighbors, and various coworkers.

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

Normally, I report about my trips for leisure or for work. However, I took two trips, one in November and one in December, that were for a very different purpose. Sadly, Dad was found

dead in his home on Tuesday, October 31, 2023. I won't go into the details of the circumstances of his death nor of the details of those first few days, but needless to say, I

needed to go to Colorado Springs to start the process of dealing with his estate. I left on Friday, November 3. Now, unlike trips for leisure where I tell a daily

report of what I did, this writing of the two trips is structured to include notable and pleasant encounters and of the details I want to include. So, here we go.

First Trip to Colorado Springs, November

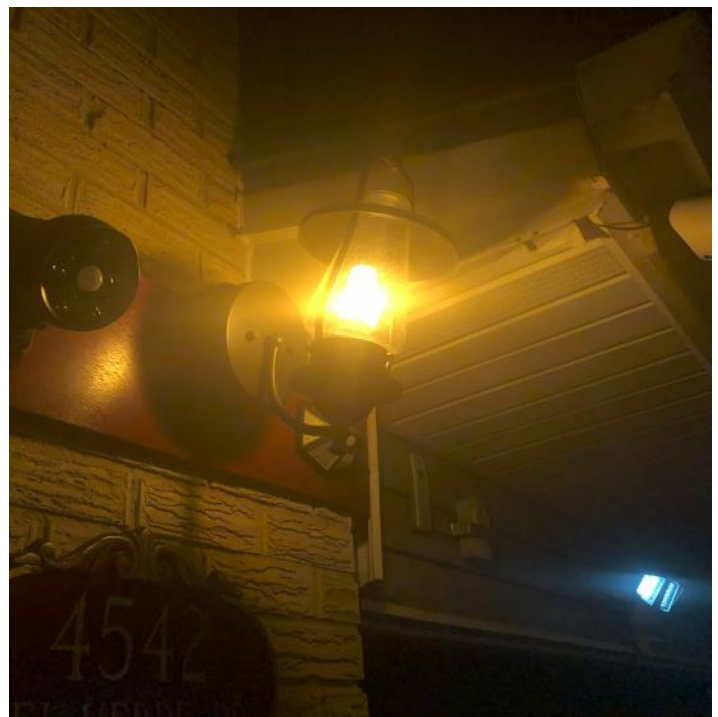
My initial trip to Colorado Springs after finding out Dad had died was from November 3 to 14, about 12 days. This number of days was not planned when I started. I thought it would only be for a few days. But it became obvious that I needed to stay longer and extended the stay a couple of times. By the nature of the death, my best option was to stay in a hotel. I chose to stay at the Comfort Inn located about four miles to the northeast of Dad's house.

I left Lubbock on Friday, November 3 in the late morning and took my usual route through Raton. My travel was mostly nonstop, but leisurely, except for a couple of short stops in Amarillo and in Dalhart, along with my usual stop at the windmill and barn in Capulin, New Mexico

for some photos. Sometime while going through Pueblo, I saw a beautiful sunset. But, by the time I got to Colorado Springs, it was mostly dark. Once I got to Dad's house, I stopped briefly to see the house and went in the garage. I did not go into the house and did not want to. Because of the nature of Dad's death, I wanted to see the inside of the house in the daytime. I left after a few minutes of looking at things. I preplanned that I would have dinner at Culver's once I got to the Springs. I went to the location over on Powers, one I've been to many times. I got my usual favorites of the potroast sandwich with fries, coleslaw, and a drink. From there, I went straight over to the hotel and checked in.



That windmill and barn in Capulin, New Mexico.



Dad bought this fixture and the fire bulb while on our trip to Tennessee in 2022. He called this the eternal light of freedom.

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

Here are a few general details of Dad's death. Dad died in the house and was found a few days later according to some evidence I determined. By necessity and by the coroner's suggestion, I had a forensic biohazard company come to the house to tend to the

remaining biohazard after removal of the body. The crew first made an assessment then had me sign papers to authorize the work. They started immediately while I drove up to the Springs, and they came back and finished on that Monday. The extent to

which they had to remove items was a whole lot more than I expected. They had to take out half of the lower kitchen cabinets, large parts of the wood floor and subfloor, half of the kitchen floor, and other items like rugs and whatever else that came in contact with the

biohazard remains. Regarding that, the house insurance fortunately was approved to cover the cost of the mitigation along with the restoration of what was removed. That process was not immediate like the mitigation was.

Topics of Twelve days in Colorado Springs in November

Since this was not a leisure trip, I'm going to highlight separately notable things that happened or that I want to include. These might or might not be in any particular date order.

That Saturday after arriving, I finally went over to the house in the afternoon to see what the inside of the house looked like. I held off for a little while, but finally went in the house to look for the first time after Dad died. Obviously, I was

surprised by what I saw but yet expected that things would be shocking. The house was obviously in a mess, both with how dad left it and with what the mitigation crew had started doing. I won't go into any more detail than that. I got the key

to the mailbox, which was loaded with mail, along with the package box having a few packages. While piddling in the garage, one of Dad's friends came by, and we talked for about an hour and made plans to get lunch on Sunday.

Dad's house the next day after I arrived.



POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

Early Sunday morning on November 5 was the daylight savings time change and the setting back of the clocks. From then on, the evenings got darker much earlier, especially being in the eastern edge of the Mountain Time Zone, and it really messed with my sense of time in thinking that it was much later than it actually was!



Mom's grave stone in Pikes Peak National Cemetery, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In the late morning Sunday, I decided that I wanted to go over to the Pikes Peak National Cemetery to visit Mom's grave. It was a beautiful day that was a little bit windy just a few wispy clouds in an otherwise clear sky and somewhat warm. Once Dad was buried, the existing tombstone will be removed and replaced with a new one that will have both names on it, Dad's info on the front, and Mom's info on the back. (That is how they do it for spouses at the national cemeteries.) I visited Mom's grave for a little while then went around to see some other areas of the cemetery. The cemetery was new in 2017 and has grown and expanded since then. They had a little visitor's center where

some offices are, and they had a computer to locate graves. I found Mom's page and printed it out for the record.

I got a call on Dad's phone with a voicemail stating that his projector was ready. I knew nothing about it and first thought it was some sort of scam. However, I knew that Dad said that

he had issues with one of his projectors and wanted to get it fixed. It turned out that Dad authorized a person to fix the projector sometime in early October, and I knew it was legitimate because Dad had a check ready to pay for it when it was fixed. Despite Dad's death, the guy did the work and rightfully

should have been paid. I paid for the work ahead of time and arranged for me to pick up the projector in a little town called Greenland that is maybe 20 miles north of Dad's house along I-25. On November 7, I drove up to Greenland and picked up the projector. That area looked really cool and had very little development.



View of Greenland, Colorado from near the interstate. (Not so green in November!)

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

While in the Springs in November, there was one day forecasted to have snow. That day was Wednesday, November 8. I needed to see a person in the Falcon area to the northeast of the Springs and this day was when I needed to go. The sky was clear and sunny in the morning until midday when it quickly clouded up and got cold, although not snowing yet. Once I finished my visit, snow flurries had already started and was getting heavier, but not so much so that it was sticking to the ground. It snowed lightly over the night but then melted by noon the next day.

My Mom's birthday was on November 9, and she would have been 77.



Wintery scene northeast of Colorado Springs.

One thing about Dad's house at the time I was there was that the weeds got crazy out of control in the front yard and in the back yard. The front yard had overgrown sunflowers that died off and the back yard had weeds that were easily three to four feet high and also dried up. Dad wanted to mow the back yard and weed whack the front yard, but never had enough energy to do it. I even suggested that he have some lawn guy come do it. I attempted to do some weed

whacking on Saturday, November 11, but the battery died in the weed whacker. So instead, I took my loppers I brought from home and slowly tackled the tall dead sunflowers, which took a while. Once done, the front yard looked much more tame! On Sunday afternoon, I started to weed whack again in the front, but the battery did not last very long, and the string ran out. So, I said heck with it and tackled the back yard instead, especially since

I charged the mower battery overnight. I had to go slow and raise up the mower to its highest setting just to get over the weeds and not choke down the mower. It took me a while to go around the yard and get the tall weeds chopped down. Afterwards, I took my loppers and trimmed a few larger weeds, some smaller weed trees, and cut off the low branches of the pine tree. After doing all of that and feeling exhausted, I sat down on the picnic table to rest and soon wept.



Before



After

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

Over the last few years, Dad had let some weeds turn into large weed trees that were ugly and out of control! Dad liked them and would not cut them down even though they were growing in bad places. I bought some of that bright plastic marking tape from Lowe's and went around the house marking what trees I wanted to remove. After talking with a neighbor, I wanted a quote from

an arborist she recommended. The arborist called and would come around 2:30 PM on Saturday, November 11, and once he arrived, we talked for a little bit, and I explained what I wanted. He looked around for a little while and took some notes. Once we agreed on the work to do and the price, he said that he would be back on Monday, November 13

to do the work. Once I got to the house later in the day, for I had not been to the house until then, the arborist took care of the weed trees and was on the last tree. I went ahead and paid him, and I was happy with the work he did. The yards looked much better!

On Sunday, November 12 in the evening, I decided to go over to Trader Joe's to get some

things I wanted and to look around at what they have. I took Bluecat with me into the store so that Bluecat could go shopping and look around in Trader Joe's. Take a look elsewhere in this journal to see what we saw! I did go back to Trader Joe's the next day to pick up a few more items I decided I wanted.



Before



After

Restaurant Rounds

The Saturday after I got to the Springs, I decided I wanted something good to eat, so I thought I'd go over to Texas Roadhouse. Well, that proved to be useless since it was a late Saturday afternoon! The restaurant was very crowded and had at least an hour wait! Since that

was a no go option, I thought it over, I went to a place called Bird Dog BBQ that was really close to the hotel. I could see the restaurant from my hotel room. I went there one or two times before about ten years ago when I lived with Dad in the house. They are

an Oklahoma style of BBQ that is really similar to Texas style



BBQ. I thought I would try them again since I recalled that they were pretty good. They were good with good portions, but they were also very expensive for what I got. But that is just another example of the recent inflation that has affected everything.

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

On Sunday afternoon, Dad's friend came by the house as we planned to get some lunch/dinner. We went to a place that he and Dad went to a few times, a place where Dad and I also had gone to a couple of times, an oriental restaurant called King Buffet. What's interesting is that Dad never like Chinese food but did like the American food they had on the buffet. That and because Dad liked buffets generally. This restaurant had many buffet stations. Besides the usual standards of Chinese food I like, I also got some food from the Mongolian grill station. I made a big pile of vegetables, chicken, beef, and some sauce and ate it with some lo mein noodles and fried rice with spring rolls and egg rolls. I did not want much for dessert

and only had a little chocolate pudding. We ate a leisurely meal.

On Monday, November 6, I went over to Rudy's for lunch since I had some errands to do in the general area. Colorado Springs has one Rudy's BBQ that opened sometime within the last 10 years. I had been to that location many times. Dad ate there anytime he was near the area. Just like with the Rudy's at home, I got a nice big turkey sandwich, potato salad, some creamed corn, and a drink refill. For this particular visit, I decided to skip dessert since I got a second side.

For lunch on November 7, I went to the In-N-Out Burger north of the Springs located on Interquest Parkway. There are a lot of



Rudy's BBQ in Colorado Springs.



Bluecat likes Rudy's BBQ!



King Buffet: Mongolian grill with lo mein and rice.



In-N-Out Burger on Interquest Parkway.

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I



I got the Double Double, fries, and a drink.



John 3:16, Nahum 1:7, Proverbs 24:16.

restaurants on this road. I went to this restaurant once within the last two years after it opened.

The place was busy as I would have expected around noon on a weekday. I got the double double with grilled onions, french fries, and a drink.

Because they were busy, it took them a little longer to get the food to me. Of course, I took some straws and sugar packets with their logo on it.

One evening, I wanted to get some pizza, but I only wanted a couple of slices. Most pizza places don't sell slices but just whole pizzas. Not too far from the hotel was a pizza place I never heard of called MOD Pizza that makes small personal pizzas very similar to a place at

home called Pie Five. So, I thought I might give them a try. They had an 11 inch pizza with however many toppings you want for a single price. (Pie Five has the same thing.) I got the toppings I wanted and a drink. They also had these things they called a No Name Cake that seemed like some sort snack cake similar to a Little Debbie cake. They had chocolate and a seasonal flavor of pumpkin pie spice. I got the pumpkin one since it was November. The pizza was good, but I only went to this restaurant once.

Several times while in the Springs, I went to Chick-Fil-A for either a meal or for an evening snack, especially for their soup. I rather made



I went to this Chick-fil-A several times. The day before I left to go home, they switched from fall decorations to Christmas!

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

a habit of that as a good meal option especially with it being colder. Their soups are really good!

On Thursday, November 9, I thought I would try a Hawai'ian restaurant that was not too far from the hotel. I have never had Hawai'ian food before though I have heard descriptions of it. The place was called L & L Hawaiian Barbecue. I had a coupon that came in the mail, but I ended up getting something else than what the coupon was for. I got what was called Chicken Katsu which was a flattened and breaded chicken breast deep fried and cut into strips served with two scoops of white rice and Hawai'ian macaroni salad. I knew about the macaroni salad because I have made it myself at home in recent years. The meal with a drink ended up costing around \$18 which I did not expect since prices were not on their website. The food was good, but the chicken was a little over fried. I did like the rice and the macaroni salad!



One evening, I went over to the newish Whataburger in Colorado Springs to try them and see how it compared to the ones in Texas, but also because I had a coupon I needed to use that expired soon. The food tasted exactly the same, no different at all! Now, one thing I had noticed that I thought was funny was that there was a Whataburger, In-N-Out Burger, and Culver's all in short distance of each other!

Several times while in town, I went to Culver's for food including the day I arrived. My favorites include the deluxe butter burger, fries, coleslaw, the potroast sandwich, and even got once the grilled chicken sandwich, along with tea and claimed my free scoops of frozen custard! Every time I am in the Springs, I make a point to go to Culver's at least once.



Pretty much looks the same as in Texas!



Whataburger and In-N-Out are right across the street!



And near the In-N-Out is Culver's!

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

On Monday, November 13, I went downtown to do some errands and had lunch at Borriello Brothers Pizza. I got a large slice of New York pepperoni pizza with a salad and some delicious garlic knots and a drink. Of course, I also had to get a black and white cookie that they get from Harvest Bakery in New York. After I was done, I wanted another slice of pizza and ordered a slice of plain cheese in memorial of the plain slices of pizza Dad would get there.

It was Saturday, November 11, I was certainly hungry after working in the yard all afternoon. I really wanted to get a steak with potatoes and stuff like from Texas Roadhouse. But knowing that it was Saturday night and Veterans Day, I assumed that they would probably be crowded. I even called them to find out that it was well over an hour waiting time! Ditching that option, I decided on going to Cracker Barrel. To try something

different there, I got the hamburger steak, which is basically just a hamburger without the bun served with gravy, and I got loaded mashed potatoes and carrots, and of course, the biscuits and tea. It was really good actually! Now, when I was about to check out, my server came and totally surprised me to say that my meal was paid for and that I did not owe anything! I don't know who or why someone bought my meal. I know it was Veteran's Day, but I looked nothing like a veteran, but I did eat alone. I was pleasantly surprised and thanked him and left. I have very

rarely had someone anonymously buy my food. I went back to the car and sat there for a while thinking about it. But I also could not help but feel a little sad even guilty for why someone thought they needed to buy my food, especially anonymously. I wept while sitting there. Once I felt better enough to drive, I left and decided I wanted to get some dessert but didn't know what or where. I decided on getting some ice cream from Cold Stone and went to the location just a little ways from the Cracker Barrel. I got the Like It size of the Founder's Favorite.



I always make sure to get a black and white cookie when I go to Borriello Brothers NY Pizza!



While not related to any restaurants, I was at Lowe's to pick up a few items, and I parked near one of those remote police towers. It had this flashing blue light that made my white car look bright blue!

POST DEATH TRAVEL – PART I

Travelling Back To Lubbock

It was Tuesday, November 14 and the previous evening, I went through the house to gather a few miscellaneous things that I wanted to take home from this first trip to Colorado Springs. I knew that this first trip was not going to be about packing or even about sorting through anything in the house. (We did the same thing with Mom's house after she died where we only did a few things but mostly left everything alone until the trip back.) I got the car loaded up with the few boxes and some other miscellaneous things so that I would not have to do it in the morning. After checking out of

the hotel, I went back to the house to get some daytime photos of the front and back yards after things were cleaned up and the trees cut away. After about 30-40 minutes, I finally got on my way and was on I-25 a little after 11:30 AM.

There's nothing of particular interest driving from the Springs to Raton. Once in Raton, I stopped to get gas and had lunch at the Arby's there. Then, I got on US 87 going east a little before 3:00 PM. I had thought about stopping at the windmill and barn I usually stop at, but since I had already stopped there on the way up, I decided

just to skip it. But I did stop at the little Capulin Country Store near there to look around. I stopped there in the past and bought some things. I bought some Christmas tree ornaments and a few other things and went on my way. From there, I just kept driving to Clayton, and to Dalhart, and went south on US 385. I did make a very brief stop just after crossing into Texas to get a quick photo of the sunset. As I was driving, I decided that I did not want to take the Tascosa Highway route at night because of the heavy construction on that road. So instead, I stayed on US 385 and took the route to

Littlefield home. I did stop at the Pilot in Vega for a short break. I got close to home around 10:00 PM, and I predecided that I would stop at the Chick-Fil-A near the house for some soup that I would take back to the house because only the drive through was open. Once home, I was glad to be home and ate the soup then spent the better part of an hour fully unloading the car. I needed to get back home because I had plans for Thanksgiving and because I needed to get back for work. The next trip back to the Springs came three weeks later in early December.



The Capulin Country Store is a little convenience store and gift shop on US 87 in Capulin, New Mexico.

Trip Summary

Days Away: 12

Miles Travelled
(Round Trip):

1338

THANKSGIVING IN DE LEON

As I have for several years now (except in 2020), I have spent Thanksgiving with friends who live in De Leon, Texas. Located pretty much in the

northern middle of the state, it takes about 3.5 hours to drive there from Lubbock. But this year, I decided to try a different route along the second half of the trip. I

had first found out about this route when we went on a work trip to Houston back in very early September. So, I thought I would go a similar route. I left on

Wednesday, November 22 and would return back to Lubbock by the same route on Sunday, November 26, 2023.

Wednesday, November 23, 2023

After getting cleaned up and a quick errand, I left Lubbock a little after noon taking Loop 289 northeast over to Slaton Highway to cut out traffic and a few extra turns. From here, the travel was pretty straight forward. I just took Slaton Highway, or US 84, southeast until I got to I-20 by the town of Roscoe. I did not have much of a breakfast and planned to stop in Abilene for lunch so that I would not be famished by the time I got to my friend's house! As I have done several times in the past, I stopped at the Chick-fil-A in Abilene along Ambler Avenue, an area of many restaurants and other stores that is close Abilene Christian University. I went somewhat healthy getting a wrap, fries, and tea. Once I left, I only had about a mile or two to go on I-20 before turning onto a different road that started the

different route I would take to De Leon. There was a short jog in that I got off on Highway 322 and shortly took a left onto Highway 36. However, this route was so heavily used that I ended up waiting through several lights before actually getting to turn. From here it was only a little over an hour to get to their house. The only thing was that I planned to go visit another friend who was going to be in Stephenville and about the only time we would both be available was Wednesday afternoon. After passing through Rising Star, I got on FM 587 that would take me right to downtown De Leon. I was also warned about active deer activity in that area where they would be around near sunset and early evening. It was nearing 5:00 PM and the sun was closing in on the horizon. I got through downtown and



got on Highway 6 towards Stephenville, getting on US 377 near Dublin. I got to Stephenville before dark and had a short visit with my friend and his family before leaving again heading back to De Leon and the place of my friends where I would be spending Thanksgiving. One advantage this year was that I got to stay at their AirBnB and avoided having to deal with my hotel and the travelling back and forth that went with that since there was not one in De Leon. (Last year, I stayed at a hotel in Eastland, and the year before that, I stayed at a hotel in Stephenville.) It was completely dark by the

time I got to their house, and I did not see a single deer anywhere the whole day! I did stop briefly at the Aldi in Stephenville and stopped at a grocery called Shoppin Basket in De Leon to pick up last minute food items. Part of Highway 6 was still torn up, but was in the finishing stretches of construction unlike last year where it was really torn up! Once there, I got settled and we had dinner of tacos and played some games. I was tired by 10:30 PM and rested in my unit, but I ended up falling asleep on the couch waking up around 4:00 AM before actually going to bed for a few hours!

THANKSGIVING IN DE LEON

Thursday, November 23, 2023 - Thanksgiving Day

Despite having slept on the couch for half of the night, I eventually woke up and got cleaned up in the late morning. In past years and similarly this year, our group has the meal in the later afternoon while the rest of the extended family has a separate meal at a family member's house and they have their meal mid day. In that way, everyone can sort of get two Thanksgiving dinners! Anyway, I did sort of get up with the rooster crows outside and with my host checking on me to let me know what's up. They went ahead over to the extended family's house and I eventually caught up with them. I did have a small breakfast that they left me and I got some photos from around the farm including the chickens. On the way and before going to the other family's house, I did stop at our host's house to drop off some food items for our dinner later. This is the house of the other parents who have their own AirBnB. Last year, the building was still under construction. Once I got over to the

other family's house, they were pretty much done, but I stayed for a short while and did get a big scoop of their famous banana pudding before I left! We then headed back to the other AirBnB house where we would have our Thanksgiving dinner. We were there for a while snacking and waiting for all of the food to be ready, including the rolls I brought. We did get a group photo outside during the nice sunset before going back inside and feasting! We had a nice meal of turkey, ham, stuffing, mashed potatoes, green bean almondine, cranberry sauce, gravy, and my rolls with butter. There were a few other things that I did not eat, but it was quite a filling meal! I ended up having two full plates! Later in the evening, we had desserts of various pies and other desserts, including sopapilla cheesecake, pumpkin pie, and the Key lime pie that I brought. After all that, we kind of just ended up like beached whales watching the football game for the rest of the evening. We

did rewind back to the halftime show to watch Dolly perform. By mid evening, we went back to my host's house on the other end of the property, and we watched A Garfield Thanksgiving, our little tradition ever since I first brought the DVD

years ago. A couple of us did some other things for a while in the shop before we were all in bed and sound asleep. Thanksgiving was a nice day with a nice evening and a great meal. It was good to see everyone.



My host family has free range chickens during the day, coop at night. This hen seemed to like this spot near their door! And laid multiple eggs!



This chicken thought I was going to feed it!

THANKSGIVING IN DE LEON

Friday, November 24, 2023 - Black Friday

I decided for today, Black Friday, that I would do something similar to what I did last year on this day. I went to Breckenridge. I went by myself for everyone else had various other plans, so I figured that I would catch back up with everyone in the later afternoon. I slept in and eventually got going in the early afternoon. I took Highway 6 up to Eastland and got gas at the Brookshire's there before taking Highway 112 up and over to Highway 183. From there it was about 20 minutes to get to downtown Breckenridge. Now, this Breckenridge looks quite a bit different from the Breckenridge in Colorado! No comparison! But, it does have its own rural Texas charm as do most of the small towns of this region of Texas! I first drove over to the Gebo's there. I went there last year for the Black Friday specials, but I went there this year to use my \$25 gift card I won from the calendar entry as well as to check on Black Friday specials! I also

got some more copies of the calendar. It turned out that many of the special items I wanted they were out of, so I looked around and found a few things I liked. From there, I went over to the Mexican restaurant I ate at last year called Familia's Restaurant & Grill. I remember them being really good last year and wanted to go back the next time I was in the area. I got the deluxe Mexican plate that had a little of everything. It was actually more food than I really wanted, especially after all of the chips and salsa! I was stuffed! From there, I went over CVS to use my monthly Care Pass to get a few things I needed, but also to get some cat food for my host's barn cats. By this point, it was not quite dark, but getting close to sunset. So, I wanted to get back to De Leon. However, I could not leave before visiting the courthouse square. There were a bunch of historical markers, and I looked around at them. There was this one marker with a stone arch or doorway that seemed

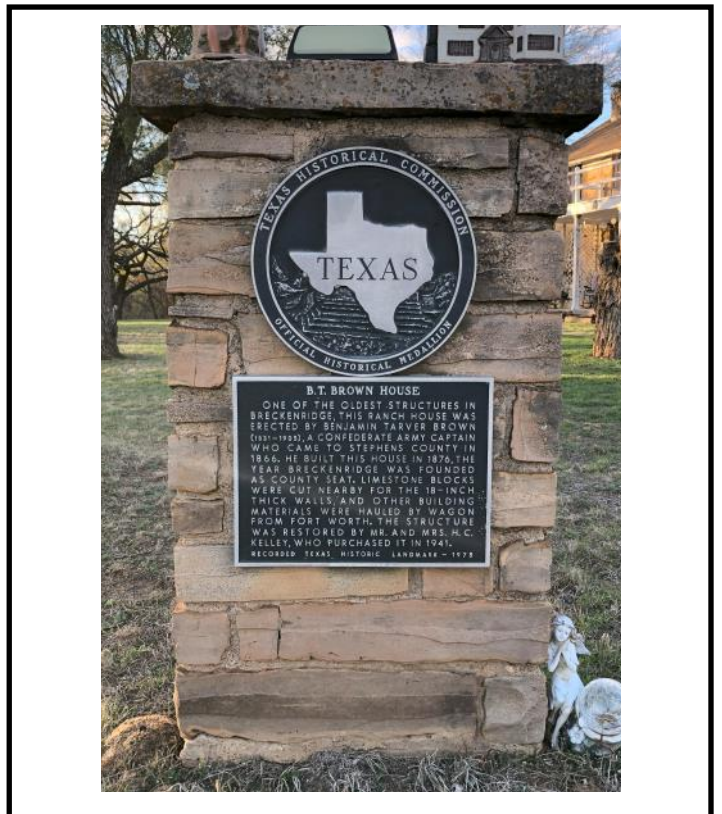
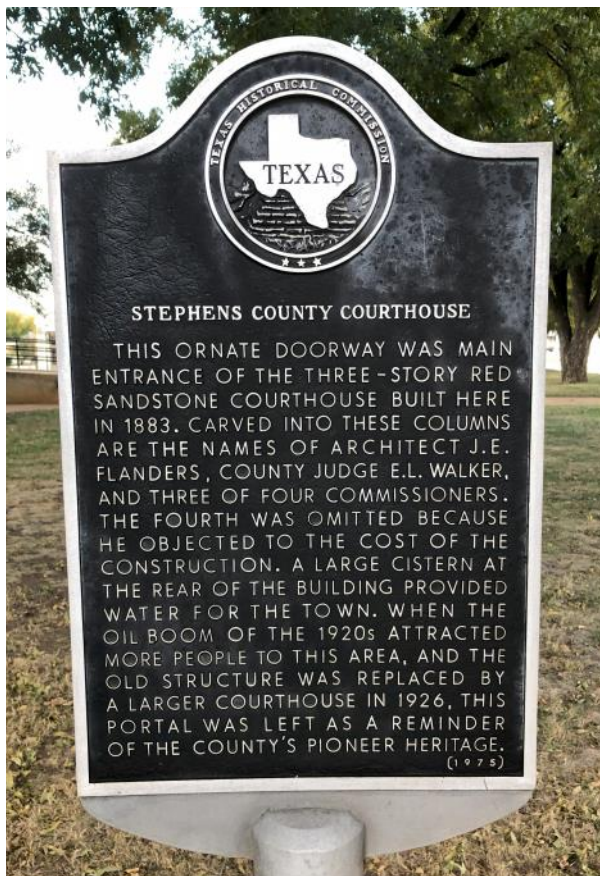
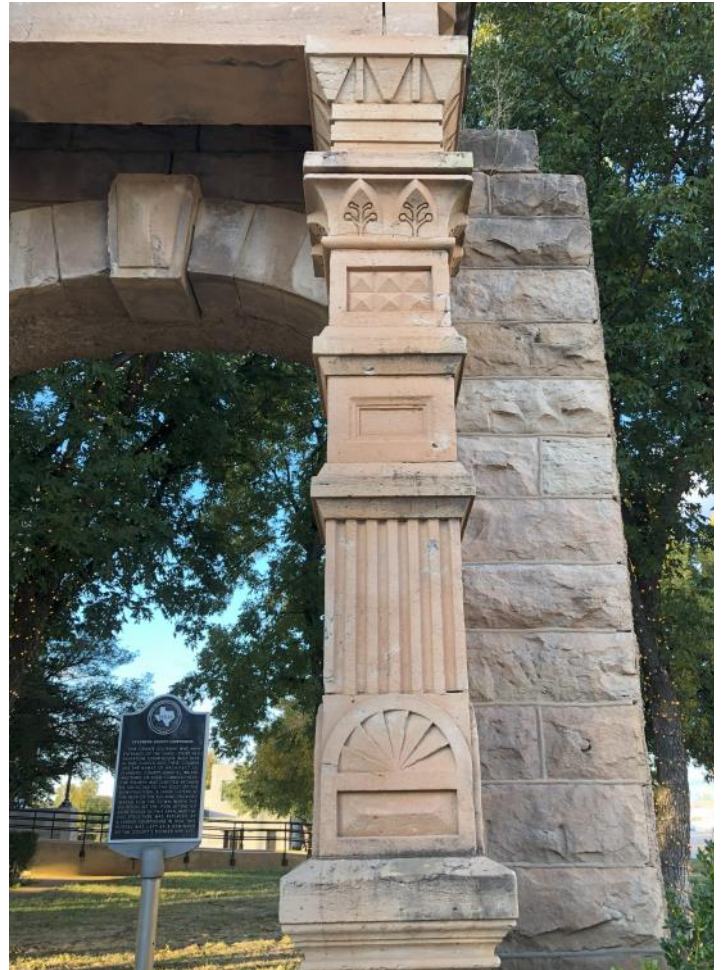
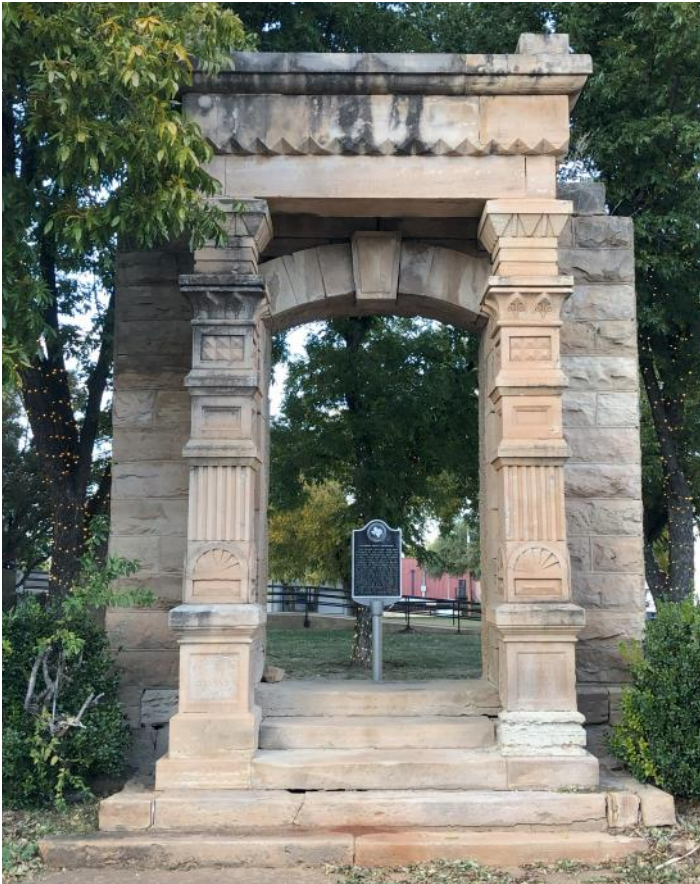
unusual. It turned out that this is what was left of the original courthouse building, having torn down the rest of it, but leaving this elaborate original entrance. The stone carving was spectacular and was a unique feature of the previous building. I got back on Highway 183 going south and made one other quick stop for another historical marker south of that town. Just off the road was a caliche road that led to a privately owned house with a small historical marker at the edge of the property. It was the BT Brown House, a ranch house that Benjamin Tarver Brown built in 1876.

From there, I headed straight back to Eastland then back to the house in De Leon. For the rest of the night, we did several things. We eventually went over to the other house for dinner of pizza and some hanging out. By mid evening, my host and I went over to their AirBnB unit where I am staying and we talked for a while and watched a movie. We watched Rango, which was just what I needed to watch considering my mood at the time. Dad and I had watched Rango some years ago including all of the extras that were on the Bluray. I stayed up for just a little bit and went to bed.



Familia's Mexican Restaurant & Grill in Breckenridge

THANKSGIVING IN DE LEON



THANKSGIVING IN DE LEON

Saturday, November 25, 2023

Being a sort of vacation day for me, I was in no rush to get up. The forecast showed that it was supposed to be very rainy all day, but it did not end up being rainy, just overcast. There was a lot of turkey left, and my host wanted me to turn it into a type of turkey salad similar to how I make chicken salad. I first had some tacos and tamales for lunch then went over to the Shoppin' Basket to get a few ingredients I needed for the salad along with a few things for myself. Then back at the house, I spent a good hour getting all of the vegetables prepped and the turkey cut up. I only used the white meat, which left still half a bowl of the dark meat. But once it was all done and seasoned up, I

made the dressing and mixed it all together. It turned out really good and the kids were already snacking on it! At this point, it was somewhere between 3:30 and 4:00 PM, and the family needed to get cleaned up for a small family event that evening. I did not intrude by trying to crash it. So, I figured out what things I wanted to do for the evening. I went back to my room for a little while, then left to go to Stephenville. I went over to Staples for a few items, then made my way to a BBQ place I've wanted to try before but was closed in the past when I was in town. The place was called R&R Bar-B-Que, and I wanted to try them instead of going back to



I ate at the R&R Bar-B-Que in Stephenville.

the Hard 8 BBQ place. By the time I got there, it was already dark, and there was some slight drizzle. They were really good. I got a brisket sandwich with coleslaw, potato salad, tea, and banana pudding. It was good and a little different. The coleslaw was a kind of peppery vinegar slaw that almost was like a chow chow, and the potato salad had a fine

texture that was good. From there, I did a little running around trying to find a particular item I wanted for some craft projects but without success. I was pretty much done by around 8:30 PM and a lot of places were already closed, so I just headed back to the house. After a little while, my host came to the unit, and we just talked for most of the rest the evening.

Sunday, November 26, 2023

Today is the day that I would head back home. I got up a little earlier and got cleaned up and got my stuff loaded up in the car. I did have a phone call that lasted for about 40 minutes before I left. I said my goodbyes and was off

around 12:30 PM. I basically took the same route back home as I came. After I got through downtown De Leon, I got on FM 587 after I missed it and double backed to the turnoff. Somewhere about halfway on this

route before getting to US 36, I stopped at this place where one side of the street had a windmill and some big tanks, while on the other side of the road were some penned black cattle. Once on US 36, I headed to Abilene,

which took about an hour and half. I got back to the Ambler Road where I stopped on the way out and got gas at the Allsup's and tried to figure out where to get some lunch. Being Sunday, Chick-fil-a was closed, so I settled on

THANKSGIVING IN DE LEON

the Panda Express next to the gas station. I got a bowl with half fried rice and half lo mein and sweet fire chicken.

From there, I got on I-20 and headed straight back to Lubbock. The traffic on I-20 was busy and heavy all the way to the west side of Sweetwater. But in that area, the construction slowed the traffic nearly to a halt for about 20 minutes until I got over on to US 84. From there, I was able to get moving again, but the traffic back to Lubbock was much heavier than I remember it being in the past! There were times when there were very few cars on the road, but this day stayed heavy all the way home. All along I-20 and US 84, the traffic was such that people were trying to go as fast as possible and weaving in and out of the lanes to get ahead of other cars. Once I got to

Post, the traffic was at a complete stop on the bridge leading into town, so I took the exit and went to the main road another way as a few other people were also doing. Once on the main road again, the traffic was stopped because of some accident a few blocks further. So, I stopped at a gas station for a break and to get a drink. That was enough time for the accident to get cleared out and I continued on my way. I took the loop around back to the house. It was after sunset by this point and mostly dark. I unloaded the car and left again to do some errands. I also stopped at the Whataburger to get some food to eat at the house. This thanksgiving weekend lasted about five days and was a good, relaxing weekend.



Some cattle I found in a pen along FM 587.

BLUECAT TRAVELPALOOZA



Bluecat is ready to go on a trip!



In-N-Out in Colorado Springs.



Road construction on Tascosa Highway.



Whataburger in Colorado Springs.



Windmill and barn near Capulin, New Mexico.



Culvers in Colorado Springs.

BLUECAT TRAVELPALOOZA



Hens taking a sand bath.



Waiting for da birds!



Hello to fellow kitty.



Gebo's in Breckenridge, Texas.



Comfy place in this steel flower.



They look hungry!

BLUECAT TRAVELPALOOZA



Bluecat explores Trader Joe's!



World of spices.



French apple tart.



Can we say green bean casserole!



Panettone, Italian Christmas treat.



Various rices and grains.

BLUECAT TRAVELPALOOZA



Bluecat likes various canned fish!



Cinnamon coffee cake.



Cat advent calendars! Great idea!



Chocolate Brooklyn babka.



All sorts of dips and sauces.

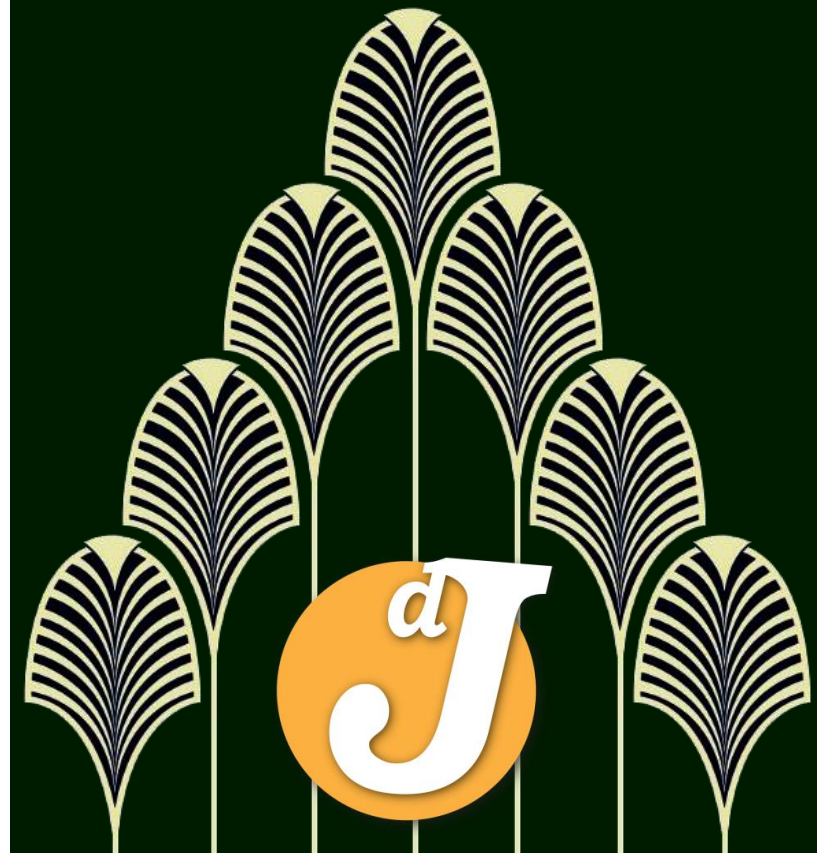
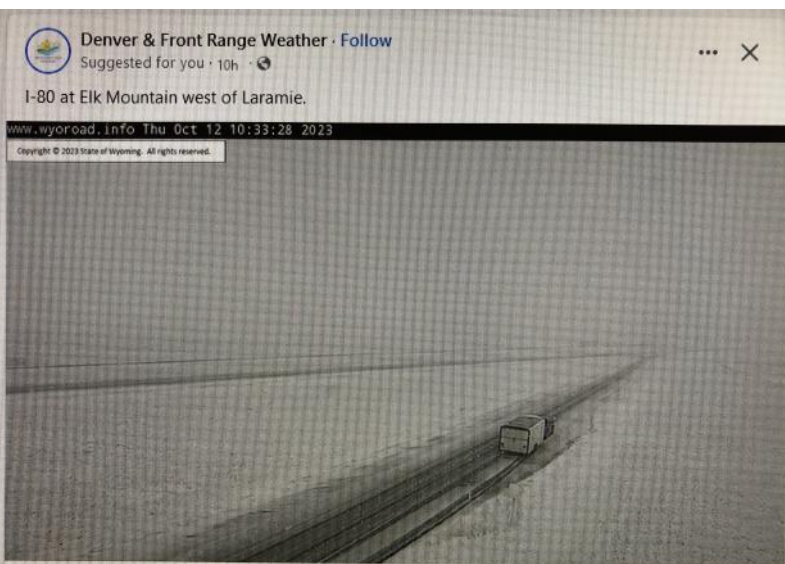


Joe at Joe's.

FINAL THOUGHT

A Few More Random Things

In late September, we travelled round trip along I-80 through southern Wyoming for an event in Boise, Idaho. Here is what that same interstate looked like about three weeks later on October 12, 2023! Total blizzardy conditions! No thank you!



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What is a contronym?

Single words that have two contradictory meanings (they are their own opposites) are known as contronyms, and they are quite rare. Here are ten of them:

1. **apology:** a statement of contrition for an action, or a defence of one
2. **bolt:** to secure, or to flee
3. **bound:** heading to a destination, or restrained from movement
4. **cleave:** to adhere, or to separate
5. **dust:** to add fine particles, or to remove them
6. **fast:** quick, or stuck or made stable
7. **left:** remained, or departed
8. **peer:** a person of the nobility, or an equal
9. **sanction:** to approve, or to boycott
10. **weather:** to withstand, or to wear away