



Leaving Las Vegas



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12.3 : SPRING TRIP 2023

Covers a trip in Late April through early May 2023.

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ON THE COVER



This is the iconic Welcome To Las Vegas sign found at the south end of Las Vegas Boulevard that ironically enough is not actually in the city of Las Vegas but in the city of Paradise! The sign was installed in 1959 and has remained there since. Today, it is powered by solar panels and the area around it is lit with LED lighting. There is another similar, smaller sign on Boulder Highway going towards downtown Las Vegas.

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

Happy Summer!

I finally bring to you our Spring Trip! The trip was to go to Las Vegas for Dad to attend his annual convention, something called CinemaCon, an annual convention about the creation and presentation of films that started in 2011. Dad has gone almost every year since 2011, and I went in 2012, 2016, 2017, and 2023. Mom went once in 2016.

This issue by necessity is a little longer than I wanted just to avoid making a multi part series like the May Trip was last year. (That series was 7 issues!) But even then, this issue is only about a third longer than I wanted it to be. I think you will like this better than another series that is hard to keep up with! (Yes, I ended the sentence with a preposition! So what! I'm not Franklin Roosevelt!) For that same reason, I have needed to defer other content to the next issue, making this one almost exclusively about the spring trip. There are a very few other things besides the spring trip, but the next issue will catch up with other stuff from the last few months.

In other news, we are now in summer, only a few days since the first day of summer, which was also the longest day of the year. That means that we are now in the down swing of hours of daylight that we likely won't

notice is getting shorter until maybe August. Also, up until the last two or three weeks, we had been unusually cool and rainy having good rains daily or every few days for several weeks! But summer weather has now caught up with drier and hotter temps that is more typical of this area for this time of year. I do have to say that with the cooler, rainier weather, my garden was looking lush and green and beautiful! It is still holding well enough, but drier than it looked before.

This year marks the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg of the Civil War that happened on July 1-3, 1863. Unfortunately, I don't have enough time to put together anything prior to that date, but for the next issue, I'm planning to include excerpts from a first hand account included in a little book called *The Diary of a Lady of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania From June 15 to July 15, 1863*. If you would like to get a copy for yourself, it is a short read that you can order from Amazon. It was a previously unpublished diary that is now in the care of The Cornell University Library Digital Collections. As a side note, Garfield recently turned 45 years old! The first



Garfield comic strip was on June 19, 1978. I made a special issue for his 40th birthday in 2018 you can find on the journal website.

The next issue is going to be another collection of various stuff I've had to leave out of the last couple of issues from lack of space. Also, make sure to look at the recent special issue about Doughnut Day!

Enjoy!

RG



**Happy Birthday
Garfield!
45 Years!
June 19, 2023**

WORD FOR LIFE

Revelation Topics—Are Jews Saved? Jews During The Tribulation

In the Winter 2023 issue where I kicked off this new series about topics in Revelation, I stated: “The Jews are God’s chosen people as He said ([Deuteronomy 7:6](#)), and they have their own process that God will bring them to salvation in Christ Jesus through the Tribulation ([Revelation 7:3-8](#)).” I said this to distinguish a “third group” apart from people who are saved and people who are part of the world. Now, make no mistake, there are still only TWO groups of people God sees, saved and unsaved. This “third group” are Jews who of themselves are a mix of saved and unsaved people, still two groups. Now understand that ALL people no matter the ethnicity, religion (or lack thereof), cultural upbringing, etc must have Jesus as personal Savior and Lord to spend life after earth with God! That includes the Jews. However, the Jews were a predetermined group set apart because of their rejection of Jesus when He was on the earth for God to deal with later, specifically during the Tribulation, the seven years after the rapture of the Church.

God made a very specific promise to Abram and Sarai, later renamed Abraham and Sarah, that He would make them into a great nation “*as the stars of the heaven*” and “*the sand... on the seashore*” ([Genesis 22:17](#)).

The great nation are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the 12 sons of Jacob and their descendants after that. However, throughout their history, they continually rode the roller coaster of faith swinging high in faithfulness to God and swinging low to living in paganism! Finally, God had enough and caused the kingdom of Israel to be conquered by the Assyrians and later the kingdom of Judah to be conquered by the Babylonians with many Jews killed in the process, all because of their wavering faith in Him! However, because they were still His chosen people, God would keep His covenant to Abraham and bring back the remnant of Jews: *And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord Shall be saved. [delivered] For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, [salvation] As the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls. (Joel 2:32)* The word “remnant” refers to the Jews who survived the 70 years of exile and returned to Jerusalem, in the lineage of which comes Jesus ([Isaiah 11:11](#)).

He gave them a promise of a Messiah, one who will save them! That Messiah named Jesus came about 2000 years ago, but the Jews did not recognize Him and treated Him poorly! ([Refer to Isaiah](#)

[53. John 6:41-42](#)) Most Jews rejected Him:

The Jews then complained about Him... And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

The Jews did not understand the scripture that the promised Messiah would be born of a woman.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14), meaning God with us (Matthew 1:23)

For these last 2000 years and for however many more years are left of this age—which we are very close to the end of this age, but not the end of the world—this has been the Church age, the age for the gentiles to be saved. The apostle Paul spent much of his time teaching and revealing truths to the gentiles so that they can learn about Jesus and be saved. Undoubtedly, there were some Jews saved while Jesus was on the earth and even after He ascended to Heaven. But the church age will end with the rapture and the world will immediately turn evil, but not until the Jews are prepared! God prepares His people and equips them! The disciple turned apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos later in his life, and it was during this time that God revealed the revelation of Jesus to him,

which is the book of Revelation. God preplanned to happen during the tribulation a process where the Jews will turn their hearts to Jesus. However, not all of them will accept Jesus even then and those who don’t are grouped with the unsaved people while those who do are grouped with the saved people. As I said before, God only sees two groups of people, those who are His in Christ Jesus and those who are not. God is a Holy God and cannot look upon the sins of the world. God said through Moses to the Israelites:

‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy (Leviticus 19:2).

Okay, so what does Revelation say about the Jews during the Tribulation? First, let’s explain what the Tribulation is. The Tribulation is a period of seven years comprised of 3.5 years and a second 3.5 years known as the Great Tribulation. Before the 7th trumpet sounds, two witnesses wearing sackcloth will be upon the earth who will prophesy for 42 months, that is the first 3.5 years ([Revelation 11:3](#)). Then, the seventh trumpet will sound after the two witnesses are raised from the dead and ascended to Heaven. This second 3.5 years is the Great Tribulation where most people unfoundedly get terrified by its descriptions! As for the Jews, Revelation

WORD FOR LIFE

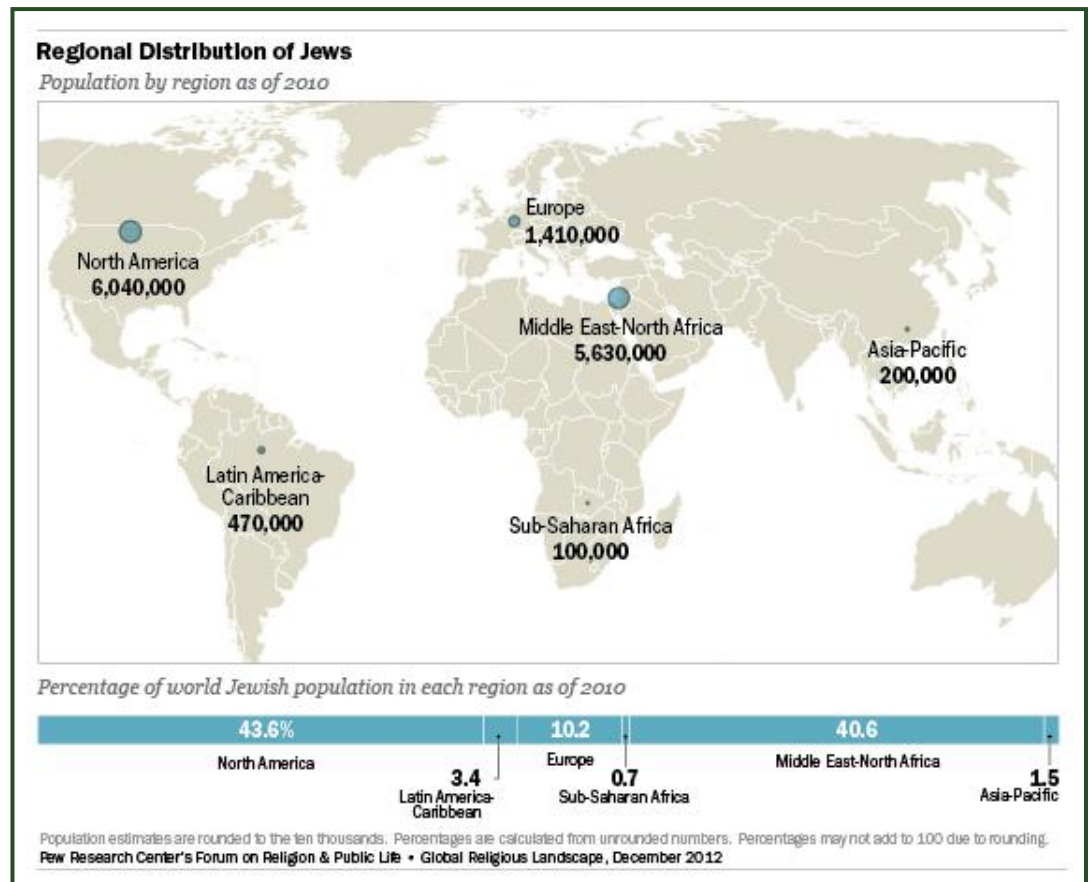
7:1-8 shows that before any destruction comes upon the earth, the Jews are sealed. Specifically, these verses show that a total of 144,000 Jews are sealed, 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes. This means that they are alive during the Tribulation, but that they will not be harmed by the things that happen during the Tribulation. *and the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it (Ezekiel 9:4) and Go... through the city and kill ... but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark (Ezekiel 9:5,6).* Now to be clear, this is NOT the "mark of the beast" that God says do not get! (Important! Read Revelation 13:16, 13:5, and 14:9-11)

So back to the original question, Are Jews saved? The answer is yes and no! First, let's look at the 144,000 Jews who were sealed. What does revelation say about them? Revelation 14: 1-5 says: *Then I [John] looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it*

were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. This makes very clear that the 144,000 Jews who were

sealed are saved. Although, aren't there more Jews than that? According to statistics from 2011 by the Pew Research Center headquartered in Washington, DC, "There are about 14 million Jews around the world, representing 0.2% of the global population."* Well then, yes, there are a whole lot more Jews than 144,000! What about the rest of them? This is where I said that the Jews are a group of saved and unsaved people. Besides the obvious 144,000 Jews that were sealed and thus saved, other Jews during the tribulation along with any other people can be saved

during the first half of the Tribulation (See Joel 2:32). The only problem with this is that if they become saved during the Tribulation, they will not have the power and the help from the Holy Spirit since He withdrew from the earth at the time of the rapture. Therefore, those getting saved during the Tribulation will most likely be martyred for their faith in Jesus, that means their heads will be chopped off! Revelation 14:12-13 states: *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from*



WORD FOR LIFE

heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'"

"Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

For Jews or gentiles during the Tribulation, those who choose faith in Jesus will be saved, even if they get killed, from persecution to worldly execution. But to be clear, NOW is the time to get saved while the world is still in relative peace! But even if during the Tribulation, better then than not at all!

*The report goes on to state: "This estimate is based on the number of people who self-identify as Jewish when asked about their religion on national censuses and large-scale surveys. However, the worldwide figure could be larger if a broader definition (such as having a Jewish grandparent) or smaller if a tighter definition (such as an unbroken line of matrilineal Jewish descent) were imposed."

Scriptures Referenced

Deuteronomy 7:6, 7

For you [the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ...because the Lord loves you...

Revelation 7:5-8

5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; 6 of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; 7 of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; 8 of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.

Genesis 22:17

blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore;

Isaiah 11:11

It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea.

John 6:41-42

41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

Leviticus 19:1-2

19 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

Revelation 11:3

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

Ezekiel 9:3-4

3 Now the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; 4 and the Lord said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst

of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

5 To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; ... 6 ... but do not come near anyone on whom is the mark; ...

Revelation 13:16

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

Revelation 13:5

And he [the beast from the sea] was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

Revelation 14:9-11

"If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

SPRING TRIP 2023

Planning A Trip In The Spring

After the fall trip last year in October, I wanted to take a break from going on any trips. I did end up going to Amarillo for a few days in early November for the WRCA ranch rodeo finals and again for a few days a couple of weeks after for Thanksgiving.

However, for the about five months after that, I did no travelling. I also had no plans to go on a

trip in the spring, at least nothing more than a possible overnight regional trip. But Dad insisted on going to his annual convention in Las Vegas and because of some other details, it was necessary for me to go as the sole driver and to help Dad get around while on the trip. I planned to arrive a day or two to Dad's house before we would leave to Las Vegas. We would

take two days casually driving to Las Vegas stopping in Grand Junction and St. George. We would then spend four nights in Las Vegas for the convention. We would then drive back to Grand Junction, spending one night in Salina. We planned to spend a few days with a friend in Grand Junction before returning back to Dad's house. As for my part of the trip, I would

drive a day early and stay the night in Dumas, then to Colorado Springs the next day. After the trip, I would stay a couple of days at Dad's house before going to Leadville to spend several days there before driving home staying the night in Raton. Most of these plans were close to what we actually did until the last parts.

Lubbock To Colorado Springs

For me, the start of my trip was on Tuesday, April 18, 2023. As I did in the fall, I took two easy days to drive up to the Springs instead of driving the approximately 9 hours straight as I have done so many times before since 2007! I had thought I made the motel reservation in Dalhart as I had done before. I did not realize that the reservation was actually in Dumas until I looked over my papers the night before! Dalhart is only 30 minutes away, so it really wasn't that big of a deal. I did some errands earlier in the

day, and I left around 6:00 PM to head north on I-27 straight to Dumas, Texas. Since the drive was less than 3 hours away and with the sun staying up later, I would arrive a little after sunset. Along the way on the interstate, I stopped at the **Abernathy Rest Area in Hale County**. I have stopped at this rest stop before on the other side when on my way home, but I have never stopped at this rest area across the road going northbound. I wanted to see if it had the same or similar exhibit like on the west side. There were two main



Abernathy Rest Area in Hale County (November 2021)

buildings just like on the other side, but the one building was closed which was probably where the exhibit was. So, I did not get to see it. About halfway to Amarillo, I saw a long train on the right side of the road full of wind turbine tower sections. The train had to be half a mile long!

The drive to Amarillo was a leisurely drive. I got off on Hollywood Boulevard, which has been under construction for a new loop road around Amarillo. I drove around onto Soncy Road to see what sounded good for a light meal. But I ended up hooking back around onto Coulter Street from

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I-40 and going to the Chick-fil-A there, arriving about 8:15 PM. I had a hankering for nuggets and tea. After about 30 minutes, I got back onto Soncy and had to navigate the realignment of the road with the new loop construction until I got past the construction area further north taking the existing loop road around to I-27, which from this point north (actually, from downtown north) is US 87. I just kept going until I got to Dumas, which was dark by this

point with just faint, dark blue skies to the west. I got to the motel around 9:30 PM. I checked in, got settled, and did a few things before going to bed a little after midnight. (As a sidenote, this motel was very crummy, and I don't recommend ever staying there!)

The next day, I got going around 11:30 AM and stopped at a place called **Kountry Doughnuts** where I got some coffee and a couple of doughnuts. From there, I headed to



Before leaving Dumas, I stopped at Kountry Doughnuts for breakfast of coffee and doughnuts.

Dalhart, taking about 30 minutes. After getting gas in Dalhart, I drove nonstop for about an hour and half, accounting for the time zone change, until I got to the place in New Mexico near Capulin where there is a **windmill and barn** I have photographed since 2006 anytime I drive by the area. After a little while, I made my way to Raton but just kept going. North of Trinidad and about an hour after getting on I-25 in Raton, I made a sudden stop to photograph a geographical landmark I've seen before and had



Like every time I cut through New Mexico to get to I-25, I stop at this windmill and barn near Capulin, New Mexico.

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wanted to eventually stop to see. Actually, I made two stops. The first stop is where I thought the informational marker was by taking an exit to a rural access road where I did get some photos of the landmark from the side, while the other stop was a short distance further down where the marker actually was. I drove past it but quickly stopped short onto the

shoulder, then carefully backed myself up on the busy road to the pullout area where the marker was. I don't think I'll try that move again, but I would have had to skip stopping if I kept going especially knowing that I was not planning to come that way again on this trip. The landmark is called **Huerfano Butte**. After a few photos, I just kept driving until I got to Dad's house.



I took this quick photo at the first stop.



This original marker was installed in 1951.

This marker was probably installed within the last 15 years but has quite a bit of wear.



I took this photo at the second stop.

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Short Time In Colorado Springs

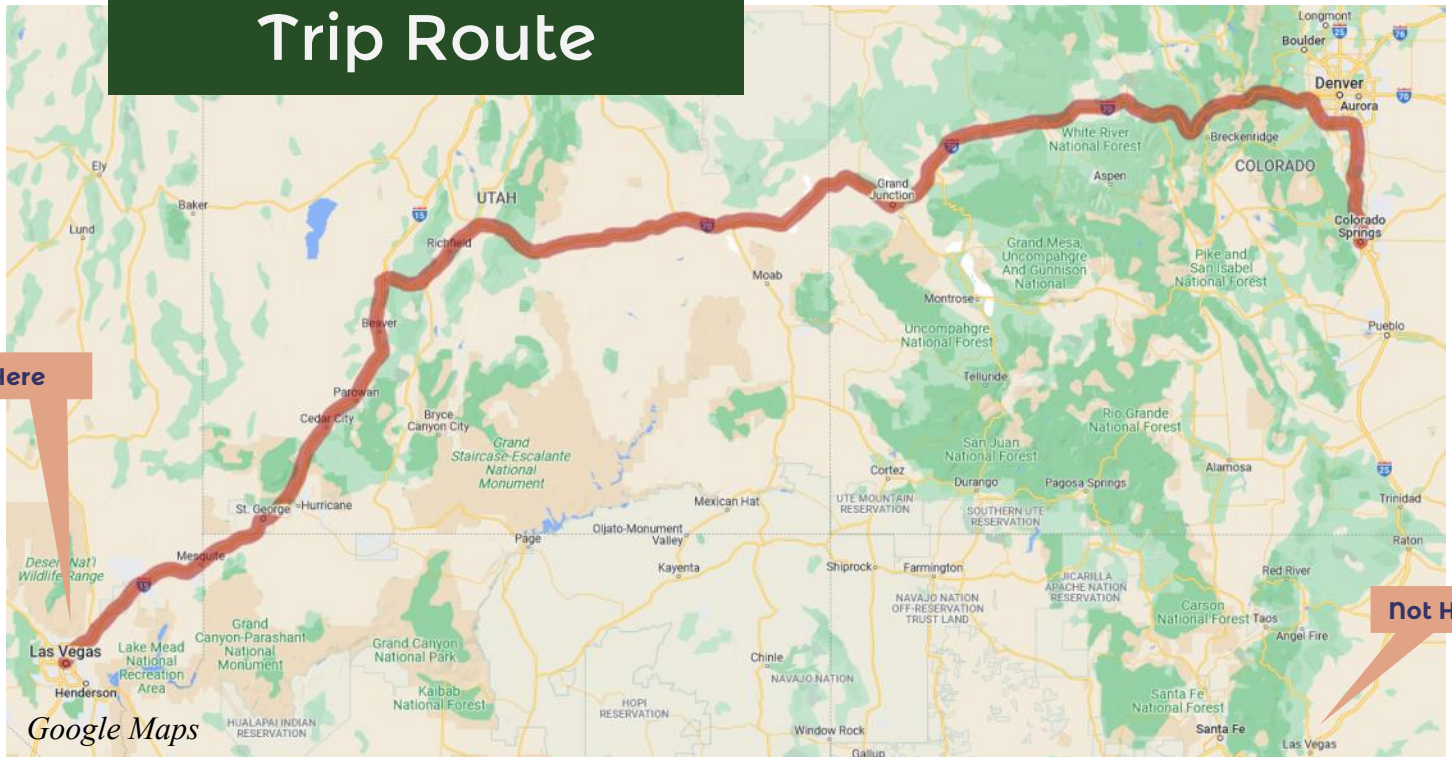
The rest of today and the next day was doing a few errands and misc things. After a little while, we went to get dinner at Culver's and a few errands before it got rather cold. Thursday was a day full of running around of errands we needed to do before leaving on the trip. We had thought that the rental car place was going to pick us up at 10:00 AM and called them by 10:30 to find out that they had 11:00 in their records. Well, okay whatever. We changed it to be 12:30 while we did one other

errand. Once at the rental car place, we had a truck rented so that we could put Dad's mobility cart in it, but I asked about another type of vehicle and when I saw a SUV type of vehicle that was available, I decided that it would be more practical, especially since Dad had trouble getting into the truck without a step stool when they picked us up at the house! It turned out that this was an excellent choice, especially since they folded down the seats making it look almost

like a cargo van. It was also low enough to easily get the cart into. I don't know if it would be called a minivan or SUV or whatever, but it had doors that slid open on both sides making it easy to roll the cart in and hold the luggage. (Don't get me wrong, I think the truck would have been much more fun to drive, but just not as practical for the needs.) Dad had a bunch of other errands he needed to do and later went to get some dinner. Once we got back to the house, I had to spend some time, probably a

good couple hours, to get the car loaded of Dad's stuff and of my own stuff. That way, it will be relatively easy when we leave tomorrow. The forecast along I-70 showed the possibility of snow, but it is hard to know until we are physically in the area. I thought about going the road through the middle of the state, along US 50, but there is still an area where there could be snow as well. So I just figured to take I-70 no matter what the weather is.

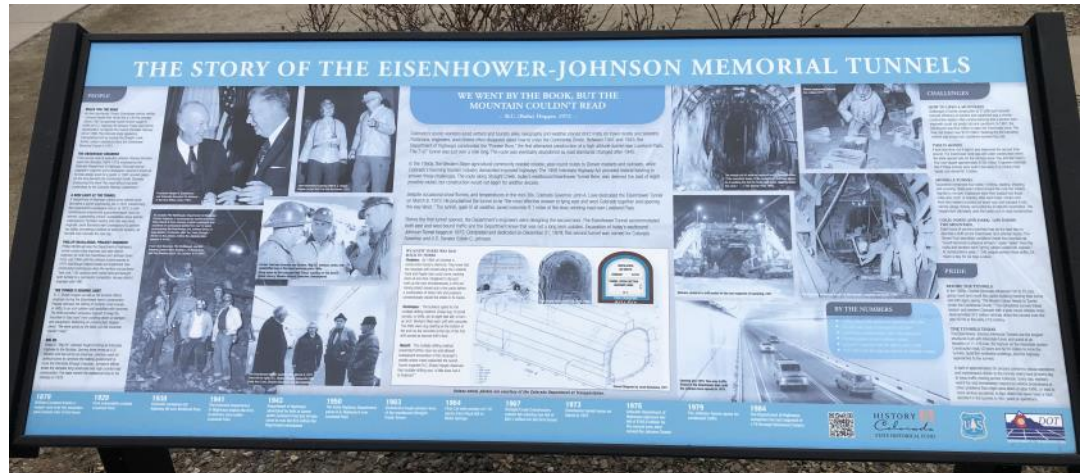
Trip Route



SPRING TRIP 2023

Colorado Springs to Grand Junction

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are the days we travelled from the Springs to Las Vegas. We left the house around 11:00 AM and stopped briefly to get our usual travel breakfasts of doughnuts and orange juice for Dad and doughnuts and bottled coffee for me. We drove I-25 up to the road 470 that loops around Denver to get to I-70. From there for most of the way across the state, we travelled through mountain passes. A little before 1:30 PM, we made a stop in Georgetown. I have wanted to stop at the visitor center there after hearing about it over the last decade. I didn't stay very long, but I took a bathroom break and visited the gift shop where I bought



Informational panel about the construction of the Eisenhower and Johnson tunnels.

a couple of wood postcards. Georgetown is a small Colorado town established in 1859 at an elevation of 8500' with a current population of 1100.

As we were leaving, it was quite obvious that we were heading into a cold, snowy wave. I knew ahead of time that there probably would be

snow, but I had no clue how much nor how cold it would be! After about 15 minutes, we came to the longest tunnel along I-70, the Eisenhower Tunnel, that punches right through a mountain under an extensive ski resort, the Loveland Ski Area. The tunnel also crosses the Continental Divide. Just to the note, the Eisenhower Tunnel, named for President Dwight D. Eisenhower, is on the north side and opened on March 8, 1973 while the Johnson Tunnel, named for Colorado Governor and US Senator Edwin C. Johnson, is on the south side and finished on December 21, 1979. As we continued past the tunnel, I noticed that besides the occasionally

heavy snow, the outside temp was 23°! I had to be very careful driving as there was a lot of traffic and a lot of snow coming down, but the road generally stayed clear and was not slick. However, it was hard to see out of the windshield from the road grime and the snow hitting the windshield. I was concerned about trying to use the wipers and having the windshield turn into a solid layer of ice! This was a rental after all, and I did not know what type of windshield fluid was in the car. Less than 30 minutes later when I made a brief stop near Copper Mountain, the temp had dropped to 19°! I checked the wipers at a little rest stop there, and it turned



These are the two wood postcards I got from the visitor center in Georgetown, Colorado.

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out that the fluid was fine, and the window did not freeze making it a lot easier to see out of! I did not want to guess that while driving on the crowded interstate! I did turn on the defrost, but it didn't help much because the windshield wasn't really wet, it was just dirty. As we got further away, the snow stopped, and the temps went way back to something more moderate.

Over an hour later, we stopped briefly at the Grizzly Creek Rest Area, but the bathrooms were too far for dad to walk to, and so I walked down to the Colorado River there and got a few photos before continuing on to another rest area just a little further down called No Name Rest Area (also called CDOT Rest Area), apparently named for the nearby No Name Canyon. Dad could get to those bathrooms much easier. Within several miles, there were three rest areas along this canyon pass! There were several markers at the No Name Rest Area explaining just how much of an engineering feat it was just to be

able to have an interstate go through such a steep, narrow canyon! After resting for about another 20 minutes, we continued on to Glenwood Springs

only a few miles away. We came to an area of road work that only slowed us down for about five minutes across about one mile. After about another 45

minutes, we got to Grand Junction, but it took a little while before we got to our friend's house where we would stay the night and ate dinner and visited.



Informational panel about engineering an interstate through Glenwood Canyon.



View of the Colorado River from river level in Glenwood Canyon at the Grizzly Creek Rest Area.

SPRING TRIP 2023

Grand Junction to St. George

Today was Earth Day and we saw plenty of earth as we went through Utah! We took a late start leaving our friend's house in Grand Junction knowing that we would be spending the night in St. George, which was only a drive of about six hours. We left about noon and went over to a City Market for our usual travel breakfasts and some gas, including washing off the windows! Once we got on I-70, the Utah border was less than 30 miles away. After we got into Utah, we had to make a couple of short stops to take care of a technical issue, but then kept going. Utah has a speed

limit of 80! Around 2:30 PM, we came to an area where we made several scenic stops and got to see some really beautiful landscapes and rock formations and mountains of different types and colors and shapes that were really cool. We got to Salina a little before 4:30 PM and stopped at a Love's truck stop for the bathrooms and ate some lunch at the Arby's there. By 5:30, we were off again headed to I-15, which was about 45 minutes away. After about another 30 minutes, we made another stop at a rest area. From here, I guessed that we were maybe another hour and

a half away from Saint George and would probably arrive somewhere around dark. Here is where things got a little weird. California and Arizona were the same time, Pacific time, while we were in Utah which was still Mountain time. But as we passed Cedar City, the clock in the car automatically switched to the Pacific time zone even though we were still in the Mountain time zone. So, I wasn't exactly sure what time it was. But after dark, we stopped at a Culver's in a town called Washington which is nearby St. George. We got some custard and had a break for almost

an hour. Now after I left, I was a few miles down the road before I realized that I was going in the wrong direction and heading back north! But wouldn't you know it that there were no exits for miles down the road before I could turn around. It took another 20 minutes before I got back to an area near where we were when I left! But from there, we were only about 15 minutes until we got to the road in St. George where our motel was. We stopped for gas before getting to the motel and checking in for the night.



Spotted Wolf Canyon View Area near Green River, Utah.

SPRING TRIP 2023



Eagle Canyon Rest Area almost halfway between Green River and Salina on I-70.

Arriving to Las Vegas and Getting Settled

We stayed the night in St. George knowing that the drive the next day would be easy, around two hours. We left a little after 12:30 PM and got on I-15. A short distance later, we came to the Arizona border and to the next time zone, the Pacific time zone. We only had to go a little further before coming to some very curvy roads through a beautiful canyon that follows along the Virgin River called the Virgin



Here is the rental car stopped at a wide area near the Virgin River Gorge on I-15.

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River Gorge. We made a stop at a wide area for about ten minutes to get some photos. Once we got to the other side of the canyon, the landscape suddenly became flat with desert vegetation as we came to Nevada. Once we passed Mesquite and a little further down, we came to an area dense with Joshua trees (not quite as packed or as tall as those in Joshua Tree National Park in California, but quite a few of them). The rest of the landscape was low scrub, cacti, and grasses. Then, a little further down, they were gone, and it was mostly sandy desert. We arrived in Las Vegas a little after 1:30 PM and headed first to Caesar's Palace so dad could pick up a parking pass and so that we could get our exhibitor passes as well as to get a lay of the land, especially since dad would be riding a mobility cart to get around. Once we left, we went right to our hotel to check in. We stayed in Circus Circus. I was able to get a good rate through my hotel membership program, but even with the casino tax that literally doubled the price, it was still a good price compared to

the other hotels, less than \$100 per night!

So a little more about this convention. It is called CinemaCon and meets every year sometime in April. "CinemaCon has... become the largest and most important gathering for the worldwide motion picture theater industry... truly a global event attracting attendees from more than 80 countries." Like with any convention, there is the main convention with sessions and special events and activities, and there are trade shows. In this case, there are two main trade shows, one that focuses on the infrastructure and presentation of films while the other focuses on concessions. For us, we only had the passes for the trade shows as an exhibitor, not for the main convention, which costs over \$1000 for the regular attendee! The company that sponsored us is called Magna Tech Electronic Company based in Miami, Florida and in Atlanta, Georgia. Dad used to work for them when he still lived in Miami before moving to Colorado Springs. Dad has been going to



Interesting wildflowers and grasses near Virgin River.



These are Joshua trees that grew in a small but dense area southwest of Mesquite, Nevada.

the convention nearly every year since it started in 2011. I have gone in 2012, 2016, 2017, and now 2023. Mom went in 2016 when all three of us were there. (You can read all about that trip in my April/May 2016 issue, go to www.destolfe.com.) When dad goes to this convention, he usually

likes to arrive on the Sunday before it starts to help set up the booth. The trade shows set up on Sunday and Monday, then open at noon on Tuesday. In this case, the booth this year was much smaller than in past years and there was not much needed to set up and was already done before we got there.

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Four Days In Las Vegas

For this section, rather than give a day by day account of what we did, I'm going to highlight specific things we did during our four days in Las Vegas.

Food

Las Vegas Buffet

On Sunday after we checked in to Circus Circus and rested for a little while, we were hungry. Dad wanted to go back to a new buffet he found last year. I was driving, and apparently, the buffet was at a casino waaaaaay down at the south end of Las Vegas Boulevard that took something like 15 or 20 minutes to get to! We went to this one because the other buffets that dad liked had closed over the last few years. The buffet was called Garden Buffet at the South Point Hotel Casino & Spa. (I would find out

later that this hotel has a large arena and equestrian center for events.) Once we finally got there and eventually got seated, we were able to help ourselves with the buffet. There were several stations specialized with a certain type of food, and it was good overall. I started out with some salads then went to a main course of turkey, pot roast, and rice with gravy. I sampled several of the desserts. I was certainly happily full, but without feeling like a wallowing pig! Before we left, dad wanted to get some photos of the moon, which was a crescent or a banana moon as I call it.



South Point Hotel Casino & Spa



*Garden Buffet at South Point Casino.
The buffet cost \$28.95 per person!*

Something About Cinnamon Buns at Circle K

In the late morning on Monday, the first thing we did was to go over to a specific Circle K on Las Vegas Boulevard near the Stratosphere

where dad likes to get some cinnamon buns, or perhaps also called honey buns. We have gone there in past years when we were in town. I also went over to Dutch Brothers on Sahara Avenue not far away.

California Burgers

On Monday for lunch, we went to In-N-Out Burger, the same one we've been to before. This specific one has the fancy lit sign like I've shown before in past issues! I got the #2

single combo, and dad got a variation of the same but with a shake. When I was done, I walked over to the gift shop and bought one of the apron pins like what their workers wear.

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Not as impressive during the day, but at night, this sign glitters!



Saw this flowering ocotillo on the side of the restaurant.



The packaging for In-N-Out includes scriptures. John 3:16, Revelation 3:20, Proverbs 24:18

Trade Show Catering

Sometime around noon on Tuesday, there was lunch served in the wide hallways outside of the trade shows. They usually do this free on the Tuesday of the show and again for pay on the Wednesday of the show. The food was good with salads, various sandwiches, desserts, and drinks. It was quite filling. We sat at a table with a whole family group based out of Colorado who had a booth in the trade show and who were an equestrian family. On Wednesday, we decided that we would go to Denny's for breakfast specifically because dad wanted pancakes. So we went over to the Denny's on Sahara

Avenue and had a pretty big breakfast. Dad had a couple pancakes while I had a Grand Slam with some coffee. We did this with the assumption that the catered food at the trade show would be for pay as it had been in past years. A little while after we got to the trade show, they set out the food like before, but it was not for pay but free like yesterday. If we had known that, we could have just gone straight there and gotten another full meal of sandwiches, salads, and desserts. Well, we did in fact partake a little of the food. Dad ate a little more, but I only focused on the desserts and some iced tea.

Circus Circus Food and Attractions

When we got back to the hotel on Tuesday, I eventually went on a search for some pizza. I ended up wandering around the place and on multiple floors for a while before finding the place where the pizza was! We then ate the small pizza back in the room. On Wednesday after dark, I went downstairs to checkout the midway and get a snack. I settled on the Popeyes getting a chicken sandwich, coleslaw, and tea. By the time I got upstairs to the midway, they had closed at 9:00 PM! There was another small area with

various toy machines and a few box games, etc. There was intense game of air hockey between a couple of guys. Not far away, I found a machine that dispensed a custom mix of various candies, and particularly M&M's, that was similar to one I saw at the trade show for skittles. It ended up being too expensive, and so I walked away.

Custom Candy Dispenser



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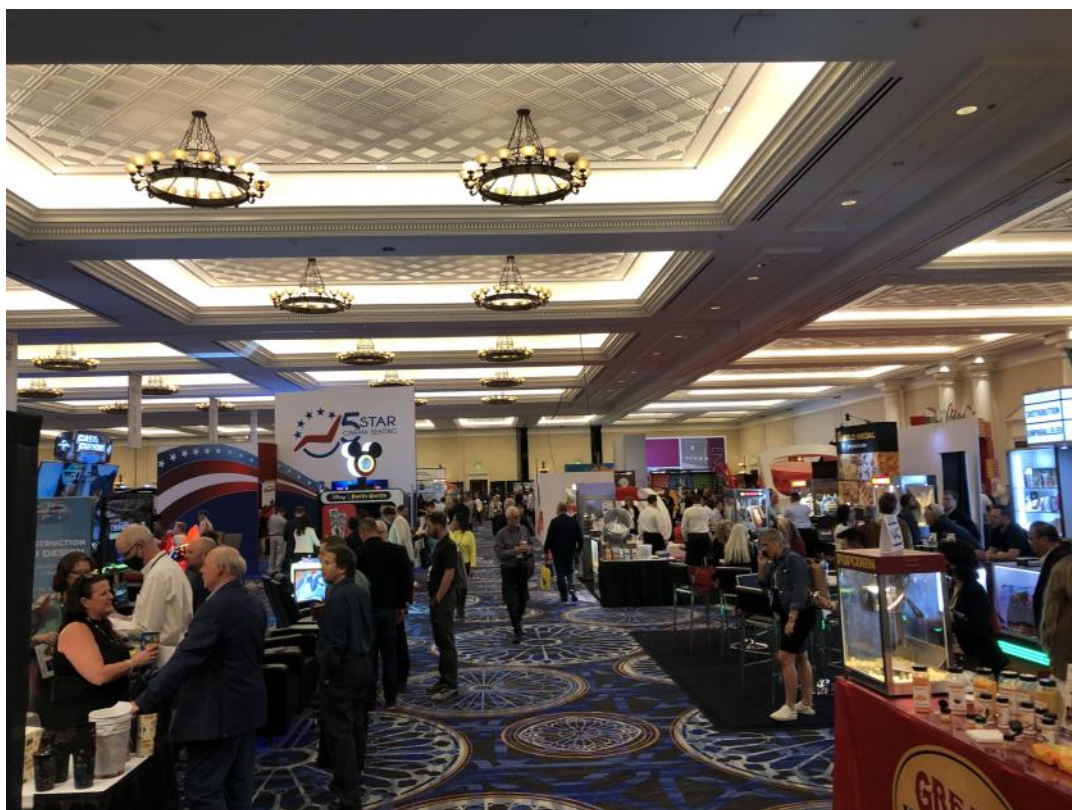
Convention

Trade Show Wanderings

The trade shows opened about noon on Tuesday. We went to meet everyone at our sponsor's booth and thank them for letting us come. Then we wandered around for a while getting bags to fill with goodies and sampling various concession treats. Since I had been several times before, I was choosy with what things I wanted to take so that I would not end up with bags of junk I didn't need. We wandered around mainly in the afternoons on Tuesday and Wednesday. We did notice that many of the booths were not giving out as much as in past years, I guess because of the effects of the "pandemic", but also that there were not quite as many booths as in past years. In the middle of the afternoon on Wednesday, I had seen pretty much everything, and I ended up sitting in a chair in a quiet part a hallway and did nothing but rest, almost falling asleep. Also, the owner of the business was busy tending to his business, and we ended up not seeing much of him as we had in past years.



Here is what one of the trade show rooms looked like. There were two other main rooms with booths. This one was the most active and had the most booths.



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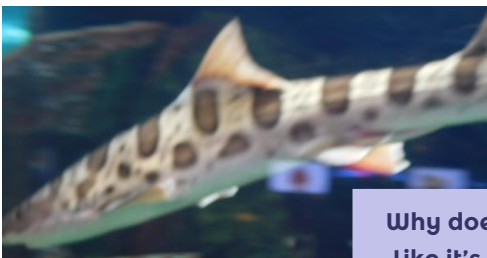
Fish of Atlantis

Tuesday afternoon, I needed some self time while at the trade show and so being at Caesars Palace, I took a walk over to the Forum Shops, which is basically a fancy mall. I went over to where the big fish tank was. It was a lot of walking, but I finally got over to it. The animatronic show that is usually there was down for repairs, but I was there to see the many fishies. While

there, I got a bunch of photos and especially videos of the fish swimming around. Some of them might very well be the same ones I saw in 2016 when I last saw the aquarium with mom. As a side note, if you have not seen my two Fish of Atlantis videos on YouTube, you need to go check them out! There might just be a third video coming out in the next few months!



This stingray kept doing this as it floated up the glass to the top of the tank.



Leopard Shark

Why does this fish look like it's zapped out on drugs and caffeine?



Dead Cart

On Tuesday once the trade show closed, we started out on the trek back through the hotel to the parking lot where the car was. We were over halfway to the parking lot when dad's cart ran out of power and just stopped. There was a security guard nearby who we then told what had happened, and so he called for another guard to bring a wheelchair but that it

would be a few minutes. Well, that "few minutes" was probably more like 20 or 30 minutes as apparently trying to find a wheelchair was difficult! Eventually, another security guy came with the wheelchair and we got dad, the cart, and us over to the car. I plugged in the cart to the car while we drove back to the hotel. That was apparently long enough for it to



This fish is called a Lookdown.

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Around Las Vegas

Welcome to Las Vegas Sign

On the way back from the buffet on Monday, we stopped at the Welcome to Las Vegas sign located near the airport. You saw the sign on the cover. The sign was installed in 1959, but ironically, the sign is not actually in the city of Las Vegas but in the city of Paradise! Today, it is powered by solar panels and the area around it is lit with LED lighting.



Iconic Welcome To Fabulous Las Vegas sign on Las Vegas Boulevard.



Plaque added out front explaining solar powering of sign.

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Slow Drive Back to the Hotel!

After we left the buffet and the Las Vegas sign, I mistakenly thought driving down Las Vegas Boulevard to get back to the hotel would be quick and easy! Boy, was I wrong! To go 4.5 miles, it took us about an hour with the traffic, stop lights, road construction, and the overall craziness of evening on the Strip! The drive also revealed just how crazy and selfish and dangerous people are when driving! But, even as slow as the driving was, we were entertained by the various activities and sounds of the people walking around and by the many, many lights of the casinos, including the fountain in front of the Bellagio.



ARIA Resort & Casino on left, Miracle Mile Shops & Planet Hollywood on right.



Miracle Mile Shops and Paris Las Vegas.



Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino.

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Driving Around Las Vegas

The Las Vegas metroplex is a large, sprawling area. To go from one place to another can take 30 minutes even by expressway! And the opportunity to make wrong turns is plentiful! Monday afternoon, I wanted to go over to see Lake Mead, but with several stops dad wanted to make and missing some turns, I never got there! After the high traffic drive on

the strip on Sunday, I was NOT going to go back to the hotel that way! Fortunately, there was another road from where we were that was much better! It was the Boulder Highway. It is the same road that comes from Arizona over the Hoover Dam and through the town of Boulder. It took us right to Sahara Avenue and close to the hotel. I'll have to take that road again if I get to go to the lake from Las Vegas again.

Impromptu Desert Landscaping Stop

While on a wrong turn in the middle of the Las Vegas metro area, I came across a business park to turn around. I turned around and left, but before the red light changed, I u turned back into the business park and went to the parking lot. In this area, the business park was beautifully landscaped with various flowering cacti. I wanted to get

some photos of the magenta prickly pear flowers.



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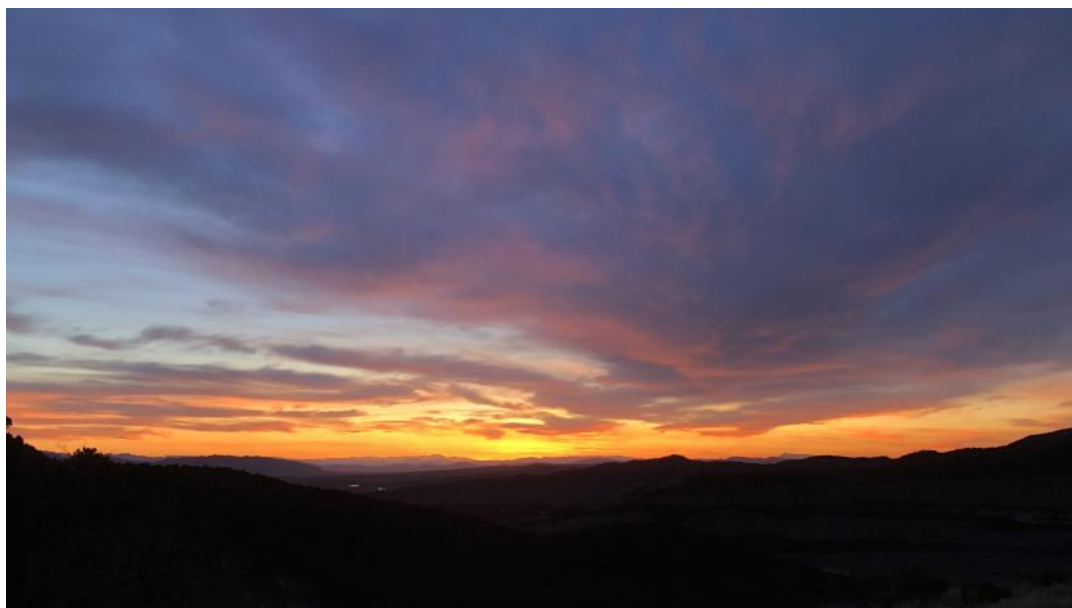
Leaving Las Vegas

After we left the hotel, we spent about four hours doing some errands, making various wrong turns or missed exits and making some impromptu stops as we decided to do. We stopped at Jersey Mike's for some sandwiches on the north side of town, then we finally left around 3:00 PM heading north on I-15. Except for a quick stop to get some photos of the Joshua trees, we kept going until we got to Arizona and went back through the beautiful Virgin River Gorge. After getting to Utah and a time change, we stopped around 6:00

PM in St. George for some custard from Culver's and some fries. From there, we just kept going until we got to I-70, and as we were getting to a mountain

pass near Bear Canyon, we made a stop on the side of the road at about 8:30 PM and saw a beautiful sunset. A little further down, we stopped in Richland at a

McDonald's for some burgers as a snack. From there, Salina was only about 20 miles away to the motel where we stayed the night.



Unplanned Cancellation

Without going into much detail, we ended up leaving the motel and Salina unexpectedly early Friday morning around 4:30 AM while it was still pitch dark

outside, and we headed straight to Grand Junction, about a drive of three hours, making a couple of stops on the way. The sun was coming up as we were

going. We stopped to see our friend in Grand Junction for a little over 30 minutes. We were going to stay the night and for a few days, but we decided that for

some particular circumstances it was better for us to head back to Colorado Springs.



Looking north on I-70 near the exit for Yellowcat, Utah.

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By 9:30 AM, we were on our way back taking I-70 in the reverse direction of how we left a week earlier. Once we passed Glenwood Springs, we stopped at the No Name Rest Stop we stopped at before and rested, more like slept, in the car for about 45 minutes since we had left so early and I was having trouble staying awake. We continued on and made another stop in Wolcott for a few minutes. Once

we got to Silverthorne around 2:00 PM, we stopped at the Panera Bread for some lunch, leaving around 3:15 PM. The rest of the drive was simply continuing on I-70 to the 470 loop road around Denver and to I-25 south back to Colorado Springs to Dad's house. Once back, I completely unloaded the car, got a shower, and went to bed.



Exit for Yellowcat, Utah.

Major Change of Plans

On Saturday, we did some things at the house, then left for some various errands including getting some lunch. After we got back to the house, I did a few things then soon left by myself in the rental car to do some of my own errands. I got back to the house well after dark. By this point, I had decided that it would be best for me to leave Colorado Springs on Sunday, the next day. This was several days earlier than planned even though I had already planned to go to Leadville later in the week. However, this was necessary for

reasons I will not explain. I made the necessary arrangements for the change in going to Leadville. Once back at the house, I packed up things in my own car that I didn't need for the night to make it easier in the morning.

On Sunday, I got cleaned up after doing a few things then loaded the rest of my stuff in my car. The first thing I had to do was return the rental car since dad would not be driving it after I left. This specific rental place was open on Sunday which is why I decided to leave Sunday instead of Monday. So, I

then headed over there, which was about five miles away. This rental car place has a policy of picking up or dropping off their customers who have rentals. However, what I didn't know was that on weekends, they don't do that!

Apparently because of something about having limited staff on weekends. Well, that left me stranded! I did not have any other choice, I just started walking back to Dad's house! After about an hour of walking and not even being close to halfway back to Dad's house, I stopped for a few minutes in a shady

spot to rest and ended up calling one of dad's neighbors we knew to see if she could pick me up. After about ten minutes, she came and we got back to the house in just a few minutes. I was tired, sunburned, hungry, and exhausted. Plus, I still had a several hour drive ahead of me to Leadville. Once back to Dad's house, I briefly told him what happened. I finally left Dad's house around 3:30 PM.

I first did a quick errand then headed over to Rudy's, which is right by the exit that goes through the mountain

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pass westward. Much like when I'm at home, I got a nice big turkey sandwich, some potato salad, tea, and some chocolate pudding. I casually ate and rested for a while. To note, the bathrooms were in repair and closed. By a little after 5:00 PM, I was on US 24 going through the pass, known as Ute Pass. Less than 30 minutes later, I got to Woodland Park. There were some public bathrooms near the road next to an old depot. While there, I took care of business and took a few photos with Bluecat. When I left, I noticed a construction sign about some sort of detour west of Hartzel. I wasn't exactly sure what that was all about, but I would find out later. The drive was much like it usually was

when I've driven that road. I got to Hartzel a little before 6:45 PM. Being the last day of April, the sun was still up, especially after the time change. The detour sign referred to the stretch of road that went from just west of Hartzel to where it dead ended into US 285 called Antero Junction because of road construction. I continued on the detour which went on CO 9, which itself also goes to US 285 further north near Fairplay. The drive was flat and beautiful going through the northern part of South Park following along the South Platte River.

Once I got to US 285 just south of Fairplay, I had two options. I could go south to get back to Antero Junction and

continue on with the usual route I take, or I could go north on CO 9 to I-70, which goes to the exit that goes down to Leadville. This northern route from where the detour ends was actually a little shorter despite the mountain passes, and I had never gone that way before. So, that decided it. While US 285 continued east from Fairplay, I stayed on CO 9 from Fairplay to continue west, or more like north, to the interstate. Leaving Fairplay, the elevation immediately climbed, and the valley got narrower as I went. Eventually, the roads got steep and curvy while climbing. I got to a high point called Hoosier Pass, which was also the continental divide, at an elevation

of 11,539 feet. About 15 minutes later as I was driving along, I saw a moose just casually munching on grass in the ditch by the road. I went through the town of Blue River, then through Breckenridge, then through Frisco before getting on I-70. I wanted to stop in these places (this is called foreshadowing!), but it was sunset and would be getting dark soon and probably dark by the time I got to Leadville. Less than ten minutes later, I turned off to the Copper Mountain exit on to CO 91 that goes down to Leadville, a route I've taken many times. I got to Leadville about 8:20 PM and got to the motel a little while after making a stop to Safeway.

A Week in Leadville

Despite making arrangements for arriving earlier than expected, some details were unavoidable having a minor impact on other people's plans who were expecting me to arrive on Thursday. But it was all good, and we just made it with

our plans not worrying about it. It really did not have much effect in the end. While I planned to arrive to Leadville on Thursday, May 4 and leave on Sunday, May 7, the changes made it to where I arrived late Sunday, April 30 and stayed until Saturday,

May 6. After getting cleaned up, I checked out of the motel (I only planned to stay the one night) and headed over to City On A Hill for coffee and a lovely bacon cheddar biscuit, my usual breakfast when I'm in town. Then, I went over to the

museum to wait for the director to arrive. Once he came, we sorted out the work I would do for the week and did some initial setup. Afterwards, we went to his house, where I stayed the rest of the week, and brought in my stuff.

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Foreshadowing Revealed

Because the weather today was rather nice and tomorrow would be rainy and possibly a rain/snow mix, I decided to take the rest of today as a mini vacation by taking a leisure trip! I decided to go the route I took yesterday, but in reverse, to visit the places I could not stop at! The day was partly cloudy and rather warm and made for a good day to visit the town of Fairplay and to see the places in between. Leaving about 1:40 PM, I took the road from Leadville back up to I-70. I made one brief stop to see the area that once was called Kokomo, a town that formed in 1878 north of Leadville but is today under water as part of the mining operations of the area. The town itself was dismantled long ago. The area was piled up with snow cleared from the roads but was slowly melting. From I-70, I jumped over to Frisco, which is at 9097 feet, to take CO 9 south. After about 15 minutes, I arrived back in Breckenridge but kept going. After about another 20 minutes, I came to Hoosier Pass. I

stopped for a few minutes to get photos of the markers that were there. Continuing on the steep curvy roads—and glad that it was not raining!—I arrived in FairPlay after another 15 minutes stopping first at some signs at the edge of the town.

I stayed in Fairplay for about 30 minutes only really wanting to visit the old courthouse and the square after seeing it yesterday. I parked over by the South Park City Museum, which looks like an outdoor structures museum, but they were closed for the off season until the start of the summer season, which was still about a month away. I'll have to make a point to visit again when they are open! I walked across the street to the courthouse and walked along the main road getting various photos of the old red sandstone courthouse that is still the original building from 1874! When the county offices moved into a new building a block away in 2006, the building became the library until it moved to another building in 2013. From what I can



Area near where the old town of Kokomo was.



Marker at Hoosier Pass.



The sign outside the town of Fairplay.

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The old Park County Courthouse, built 1874.



Accompanying jail near the courthouse.

tell, the building is now the headquarters for the South Park National Heritage Area while the upper floor is being restored to the 1880s courtroom appearance. The building looks to be two floors with a basement, more in height than in area of land. Off to the side was another building described as the jail built with the same red sandstone but much simpler. There were a few other things I saw and got a few more photos.

I left a little before 4:00 PM and headed back north like I did yesterday. On the way through the pass again, I made a few quick stops to get photos of the crazy road signs that

show just how curvy the road was! Once I got to Blue River, I stopped at the city marker for a photo because Bluecat wanted to see the Blue River! Established in 1964, it is named for the literal body of water called Blue River that runs through the area but is really just an extension of Breckenridge. I also got a photo of the ski lift that goes over the road. Arriving in Frisco, I stopped for gas at the same station that dad and I stopped at back in October. From there, I just simply went to I-70 and took the route back to Leadville, basically driving straight until I got back to the museum.



You could wave to those in the ski lift as you drive!



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Spending the Week In Leadville

I'm not going to go in gory detail of a day by day account of what I did, what I ate, and what things I saw. I'll just provide a summary. I stayed at the director's house, and I was basically free to plan out my week of what I wanted to do however. But for the most part each day, I would stop at the coffee shop in the morning for a light breakfast and head over to the museum to work for five or six hours not really doing much else and not really having much of a break within those times. After the museum closed, some days I would go do or



see something before going for dinner. When I was by myself, I decided what to have for dinner, but when the director was back in town, we decided on where to go. The rest of the evenings were back at the house resting and chilling. I ate at just about every restaurant this time including City on a Hill, High



Town of Blue River founded in 1964, named for river.



The various signs I saw while driving on CO 9 from Fairplay to Breckenridge.

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Mountain Pies, Casa Blanca, Treeline, Tennessee Pass Café, and Quincy's Steakhouse as well as Safeway for some misc food. On this trip, the elevation did not seem to bother me as it apparently did when I was in town last October.

As for what I did for the museum, I have worked there in some capacity since 2014. You can sift through the backlog of my journals to read about the three summers I spent in Leadville (2014, 2015, 2017) and the annual visits (2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022) for a few

days (except for 2020). With the annual visits, my main goal is to process new artifacts. Throughout the year, the director obtains new artifacts that I then process in person when I am there. This process involves getting purchase/donation data, provenance data, determining object numbers, getting physical data, photo documenting, and determining storage locations. On occasion, I'll do something extra like this year where I redid a display case by adding a couple of new items and rearranging it all into a nice arrangement.

A few items of note.

On **Tuesday**, I stopped by the new Big R in Leadville that was in the building that was the Alco in 2014 and the Shopko in 2015. After Shopko went bankrupt in 2019, the building sat empty for several years. The store was packed with ag stuff, and I bought a few things.

Late Tuesday night into Wednesday, it was thundering and lightning most of the night with rain from a front going through the area. I woke up to find light snow on everything but that melted off quickly by midday, but there was some solid snow on the mountains to the west.

On **Wednesday**, I made a stop at my favorite antique store called Western Hardware. Today, it is a booth style antique store, but originally, it was a hardware store, and the inside still mostly looks like it did in the 1800s. I stop here mostly to buy old photos and sometimes stereographs and other misc items.

Wednesday evening, we watched a couple of old movies on the Turner Classic Network, of course being black-and-white films. The first one was from 1932 called One Way Passage starring William Powell and Kay Francis. Supporting roles included Ailene McMahon, Frank McHugh, and Warren Hymer. It was a fun film of only a little over an hour considered a romantic comedy. The second film was from 1934 called Evelyn Prentice and also featured William Powell and included Myrna Loy with supporting roles of Una Merkel, Rosalind Russell, and Isabel Jewel. Being about 80 minutes long, it was much different from the other one and much more serious, basically a lawyer drama. They had another silent film from 1922 I wanted to watch, but it was getting late and we were tired, so we went to bed and rather than watch it.

Critter in the crack of the sidewalk.



Bunny near the museum.

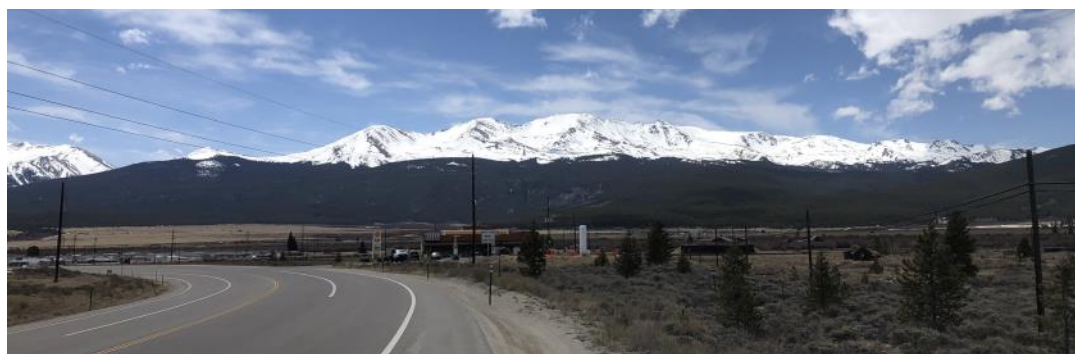
TCM
TURNER CLASSIC MOVIES

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Alternate Routes Back Home

By this point, I'm was nearing the end of the first week in May, and it was time to go home, having been away for nearly three weeks. My plan was to go home directly from Leadville rather than go back to Colorado Springs, which frankly was just out of the way. In the fall, I did the same thing going by to Santa Fé for the night then on to Lubbock from there. This time, I thought I'd go to Raton and stay the night there and take my usual route cutting through northeast New Mexico, as I have done so many times before.

I determined beforehand what route to take since I would need to go to Raton rather than Santa Fé. While part of the route was the same, the route was different past Poncha Springs (Salida) by going east. I was in no particular rush to Leave Leadville since Leadville to Raton was only about four hours and the sun was staying up longer. I stopped at a few places and had lunch before I left around 2:00 PM. The route was straight forward. I took US 24 out of Leadville going



The view along Malta Curve several miles west of Leadville, Colorado.

south to Buena Vista. I made a couple of quick stops on the way at Malta Curve and in Granite for some quick photos. In Buena Vista, I stopped at the City Market to get a few items I wanted along with breakfast for the morning. On the route to Poncha Springs, I stopped several times at historical markers I had not stopped at before along the scenic highway. This kind of pattern would repeat itself throughout the afternoon! Then I went



This is the town of Granite in Chaffee County, Colorado.

east on US 50 in the direction of Cañon City, but I would be turning long before I would get there. Most of this road follows along the Arkansas River, quite



Part of the view on US 50 along the Arkansas River.

literally next to it through narrow passes and twisty, curvy roads, but the road itself stays relatively flat. It's a very beautiful drive, and I stopped several times in several spots to get some photos of the river and whatever other things I wanted. A little after 4:30 PM, I stopped at a little rest stop called Rincon Recreation Site which was an entrance to Colorado public lands for hiking, fishing, and camping. In the small parking area, there were some dry bathrooms,

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you know, nothing but a toilet over a hole in the ground! They were like modern day outhouses but of cinderblocks and concrete and plastic toilets. (If you have to do number one, it's fine. But if you have to do number two, it's a little creepy! But I've seen much worse!) After I continued on, I saw and went past a neat little bridge, but I decided to double back to get some photos of it. It is a neat metal truss railroad bridge. (See a photo on the last page.) Further down the road, I saw something else interesting that I drove past then double backed to get some photos, a cow skull on a building.

As I was nearing where I needed to turn to take a road to Walsenburg, I intentionally drove past the exit for maybe a mile. Why? When I turned around, I saw the sign I was looking for that I didn't see in the other direction! The area was called Texas Creek, another public parks area for fishing, water sports, ATVing and horseback riding. (Sounds pretty Texan to me!) From there, I turned onto Colorado 69, a very narrow two lane road that at first



Quick stop to get this photo of a cow skull on structure.



Texas Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas River.

looked like it was climbing up the mountain, but it was a short pass that opened back up quite a bit. The road was curvy and was quite beautiful actually going up and down along the curves. (I know the road is 69, but no jokes here, please!) After maybe 30 minutes, I reached the town of Westcliffe. This area of Colorado is wide and flat in between the mountains with quite a

bit of farming. It was a very scenic area that mostly had livestock, but it also had an obvious Amish settlement noted specifically for the wide shoulders and an occasion sign showing a horse drawn buggy like I've seen before. Once I was on the very outskirts of town, I saw this long line of mailboxes right on the side of the road. There had to be at least three

dozen mailboxes each on their own posts! (Makes it easy for the mailman!)

After about 20 minutes, I came to the tiny town of Gardner where the road went right through the middle of the old town and where the road did a jog. And as a standard feature of small town, a cop in a car was right there waiting for people who speed through the jog! It was along this stretch of road almost to I-25 where there were some fancy ranch entrances suggesting that people with money live in this part of Colorado. I did not stop to get any photos, but I will plan to come back this way in



Amish buggy caution sign in Westcliffe, Colorado.

SPRING TRIP 2023



Long row of mailboxes in the far outskirts of Westcliffe, Colorado.

the future to see these areas again. After about 10 minutes, I came to an area where I saw an old, abandoned building that looked like it was once a church, particularly for its pointed arch windows. I drove past it but soon turned back (again) to get some photos of it. What was interesting about this building is that it look like it was made from Adobe, and there were some other buildings across the street that looked like the same Adobe. There was a broken off fireplace on one end, and the roof was made of wood shingles. This area is called Farisita, and apparently, part of the area is on the National Register of Historic Places, but quick research does not mention this church building across the

street. This might just need to be a separate article in a future issue of the journal!

I got to Walsenberg a little after 7:00 PM and got on I-25 going south. I made no more stops and just drove straight down through Trinidad and Raton Pass to the

outskirts of Raton where I've been many times before, getting there a little before 8:00 PM. What would have normally take about four hours took six hours with all my little nitpicky stops! I got to the hotel, a Quality Inn, a few minutes later. This was a newer hotel,

or a remodeled hotel, which is why I chose it over Santa Fé. After checking in, the next order of business was to get gas and to find somewhere to eat. Just for fun, and by this point, it was already dark, I drove all the way to the south end of town where it meets the interstate. I don't think I've ever done that before. Of the several food options, I ended up going to Arby's to make it easy. I just piddled and did misc things for the rest of the night in the very comfortable room. All that was left of the trip was to get home from Raton, about a drive of five hours with a time zone change.



While used for storage now, this obviously was made as a church. (Farisita, CO)

SPRING TRIP 2023

Smooth Trip Home With A Twist

This was the last day of the trip with the last leg of driving before I got home. The day was Sunday, May 7, 2023. I casually got up, got ready, and left the hotel a little before 11:00. I went east on US 87, which incidentally is the same road that goes right to Lubbock, but with various twists and turns. While I could have made some stops at my usual places and at some little towns to find some abandoned buildings (and there are plenty), I ultimately did not stop anywhere, not even at the windmill and barn I always stop at. After being gone for nearly three weeks, I was just beelining it home for the most part. Even once I got back into Texas and past Dalhart, I just kept going. But, I made an impromptu choice as I was driving down US 385. Usually, I would go to the Old Tascosa Highway that goes right to Amarillo where I would take I-27 home, but instead, I just kept driving south passing that exit. I did originally want to go to Canyon to stop at a store, but since it was Sunday and already in the middle of

the afternoon, the store would be closed by the time I got there. Therefore, I had no real reason to go to Amarillo. I have taken US 385 before, in May last year in fact among many other times, so I was plenty familiar with it, and the route was shorter to my house.

All along the road from Raton and down US 385, I made notes of the different ranch entrances and their brands that someday I would go back and get photos of the entrances. I did that same thing last May along the same road. By the time I got to Vega at a little before 3:00 PM, it was time for a break. I stopped at the Pilot Travel Center (truck stop). I had been here before and it was a clean, newer plaza. After the break, I thought I'd get a snack. They had a Cinnabon station with cinnamon rolls and cinnadoughnut holes. I got the holes which were expensive but really tasty. I did not stop again until I got home. From Vega, I went straight south until I got to Littlefield and got on US 84 until I got to the exit that is about

2.5 miles from my house, only a drive of about 30 minutes.

Once home, my first order of business was to get everything out of the car into the house, except for what things I usually keep in the car. I then rested for a little bit, then left to do some errands and get some dinner. After all, I had not eaten much the entire day. I had a banana and coffee I bought in Buena Vista that I ate at the hotel in Raton, and I did not eat all of the doughnut holes (I put most of them in the freezer). I went to get the car washed and went over to Cracker Barrel for a

big dinner that was really good. Along with some other stops, I needed to get gas. I usually go to Costco, but they were already closed since it was Sunday. I eventually settled on the 7-11 that was about a mile from my house. Just for fun, I entered my phone number, and it turned out that I must have had some credit built up somehow for the price went from \$2.89 to \$2.39, an amazing drop of 50¢! I was more than happy to get that savings spending less than \$30 to fill up! I went home and chilled. This concludes the 2023 spring trip.

Spring Trip Stats

States Travelled Through

7 states: Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada.

Total Miles Travelled

Rental car: 1864 miles
+ my car: 1396 miles
= 3260 miles total

Stops For Gas: 11

Total Gas Bought: ≈ 135 gallons

Total Spent For Gas: ≈ \$457

TRAVELS WITH BLUECAT



Bluecat is ready to travel!



Over near Huerfano Butte in Colorado.



Doughnuts are good start to the day! (Dumas, Texas)



The visitor center in Georgetown, Colorado.



That windmill and barn near Capulin, New Mexico.



Spotted Wolf Canyon View Area. Green River, Utah.

TRAVELS WITH BLUECAT



Virgin River Gorge near Littlefield, Arizona.



Stage sculpture in Woodland Park, Colorado.



Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada!



Manitou and Pike's Peak Railway, cog car



Bluecat want to stop by Yellowcat! (A lake in Utah.)



Nice shady spruce tree.

TRAVELS WITH BLUECAT



Hoosier Pass at 11,539 feet!



Bluecat likes Blue River!



County courthouse in Fairplay.



Rocky mountains near Nathrop, Colorado.



The old jail in Fairplay.



Needed to turn at Texas Creek to head home.

TRAVELS WITH BLUECAT



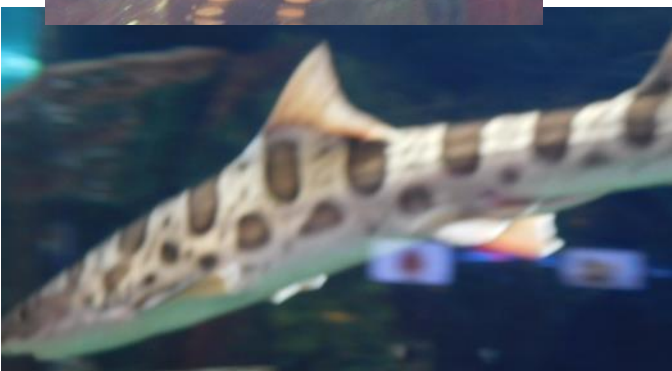
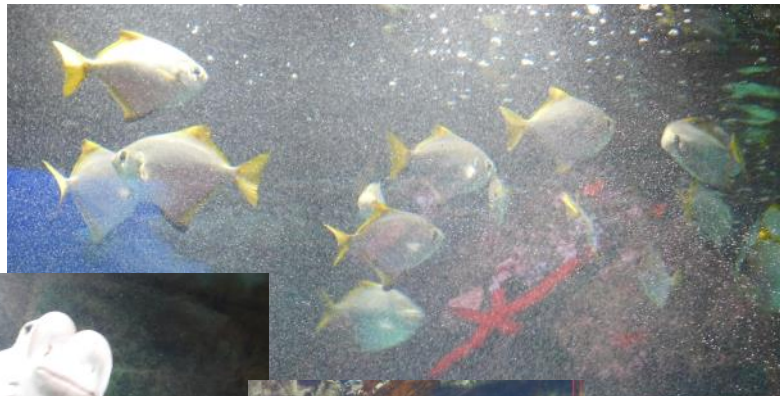
The Arkansas River along US 50.



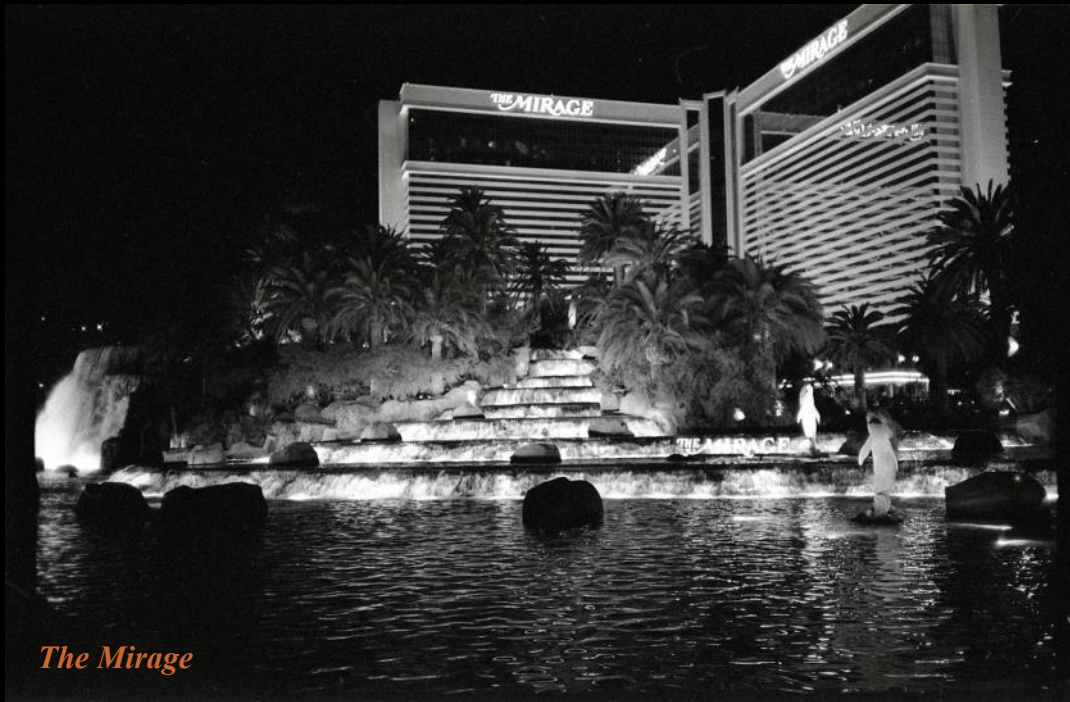
The Arkansas River along US 50.

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Fish in the Roman Forum Aquarium

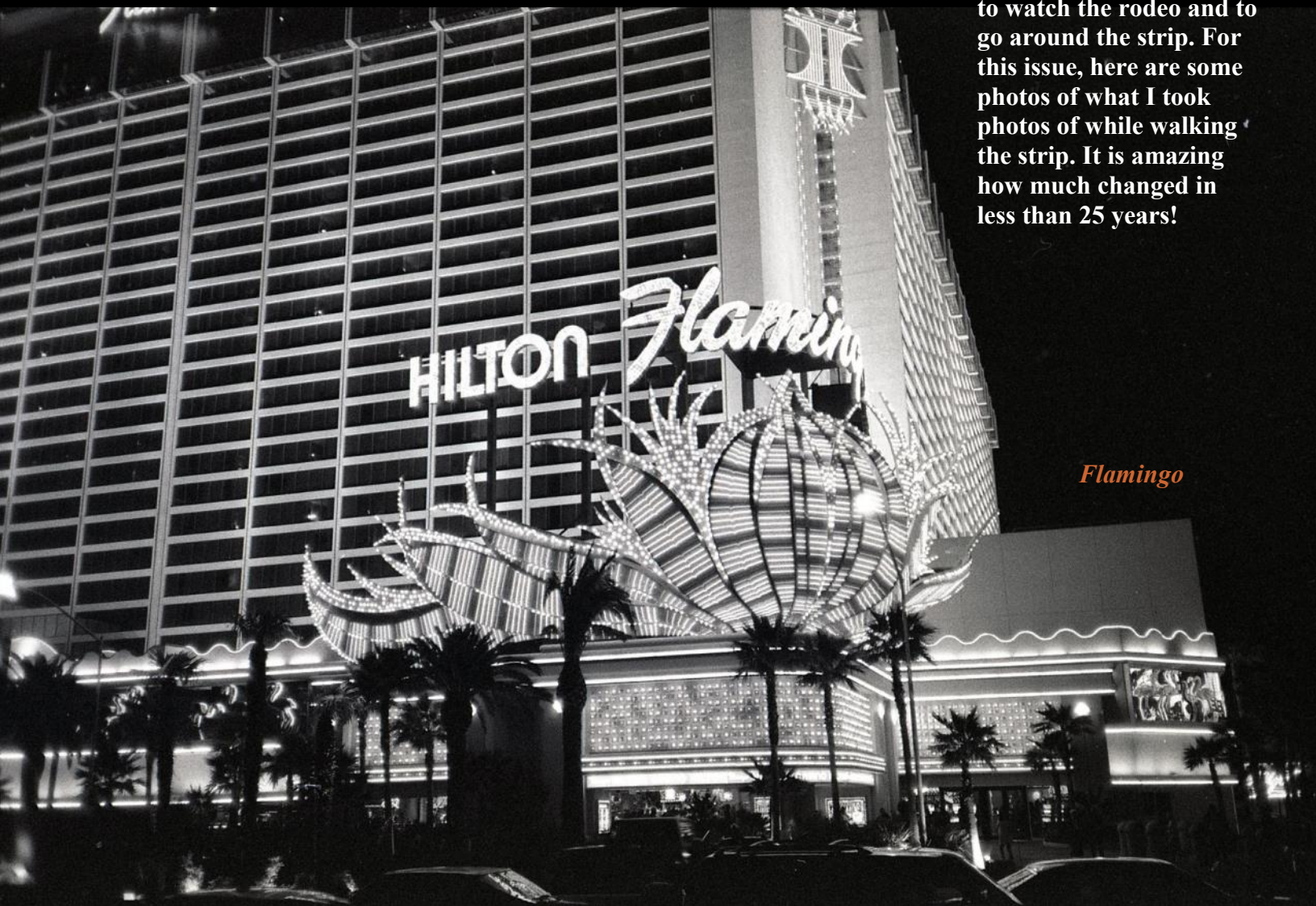


VINTAGE VEGAS



The Mirage

I came across some black and white negatives of some photos I took sometime in the late 1990s. I was living in Flagstaff, Arizona at the time, and I went to Las Vegas with a small group from the NAU Rodeo Club, that is Northern Arizona University, because there was a college rodeo in Las Vegas as part of the Grand Canyon Region of the NIRA, that is the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. Most of us were not contestants but just went to watch the rodeo and to go around the strip. For this issue, here are some photos of what I took while walking the strip. It is amazing how much changed in less than 25 years!



Flamingo

VINTAGE VEGAS



Stardust

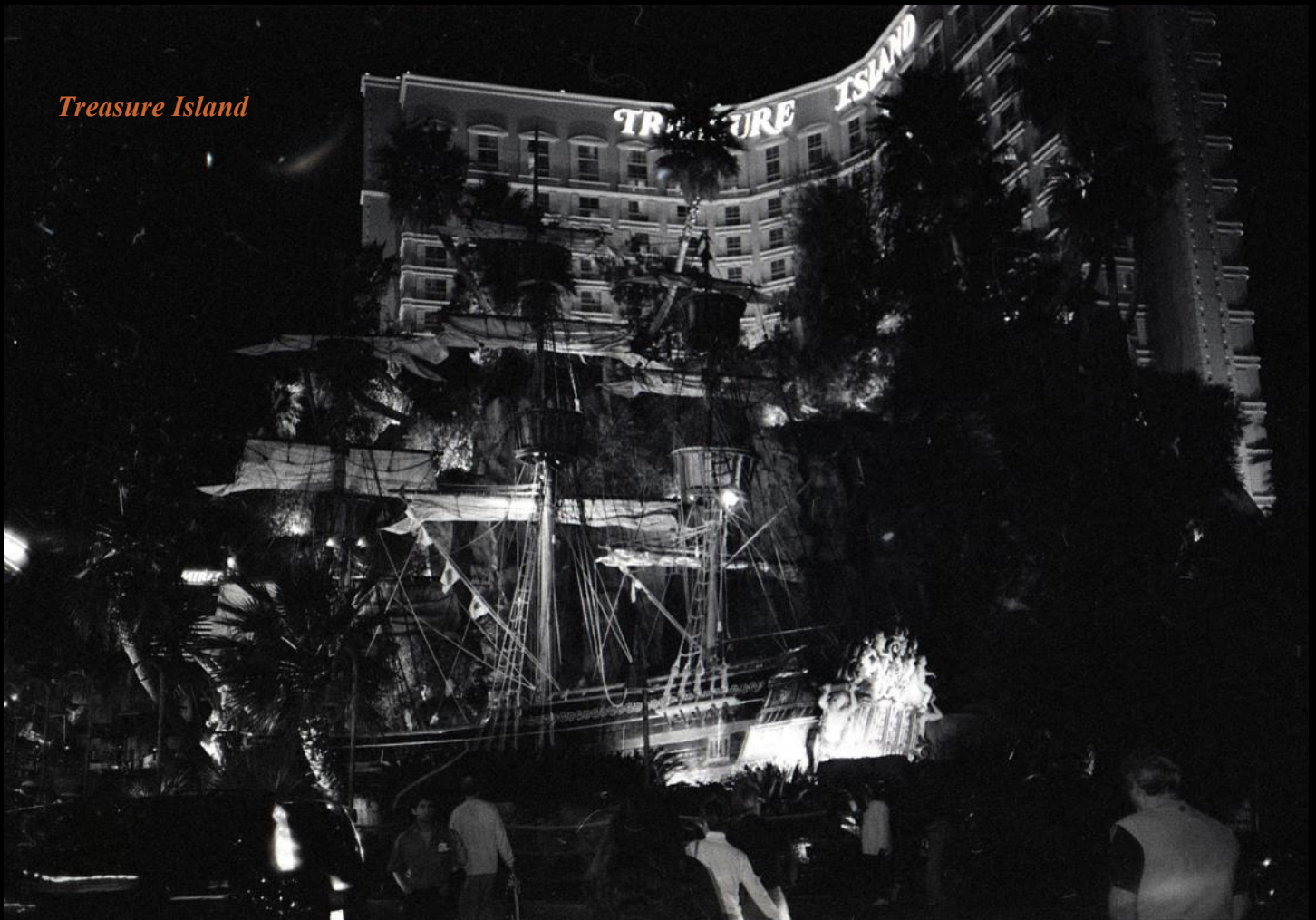
This page shows a bunch of long gone hotels. The Stardust was imploded in spectacular fashion “at 2:34 AM on March 13, 2007 after a four minute fireworks show”. The Frontier, shown in the back of these photos, “closed on July 16, 2007 at 12:01 AM”. The Riviera was demolished between mid June and mid August 2016 taking down each tower separately.



VINTAGE VEGAS



Apparently, this giant lion figure at the corner of the MGM Grand was removed sometime in 1998. Today, this corner is a little smaller as the intersection expanded and crosswalks keep the pedestrians separate from the traffic unlike what you see here.



VINTAGE VEGAS



Riviera Hotel



McDonald's



Luxor

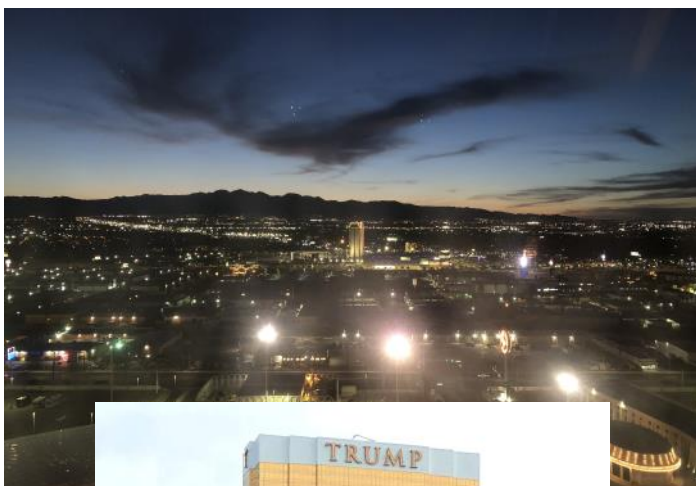
FINAL THOUGHT

Spring Trip Miscellany



*Amazing gelato at Circus Circus!
(But more expensive than I wanted to spend!)*

Sunset from Circus Circus hotel room.



Trump International Hotel Las Vegas



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Robert-George de Stolfe

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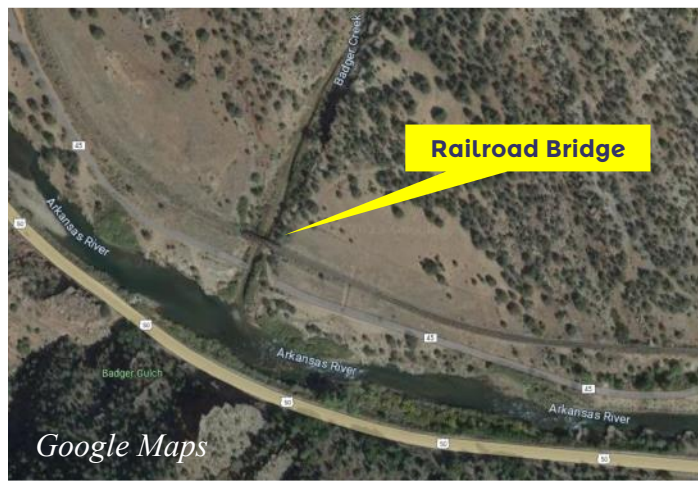
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Robert-George de Stolfe
PO Box 16156
Lubbock, Texas 79490
806.470.5867
rgdestolfe@yahoo.com



Old metal truss bridge of the Rio Grande Railway spanning over Badger Creek tributary and running parallel to the Arkansas River and US 50 just southeast of Swissvale, Colorado.

