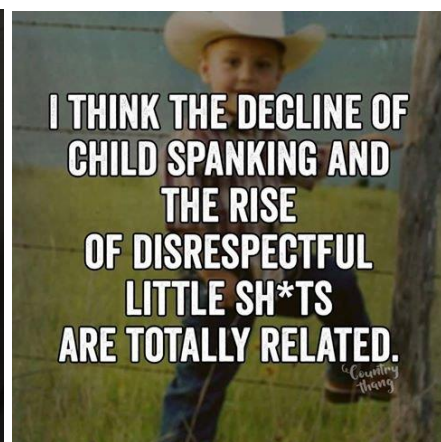
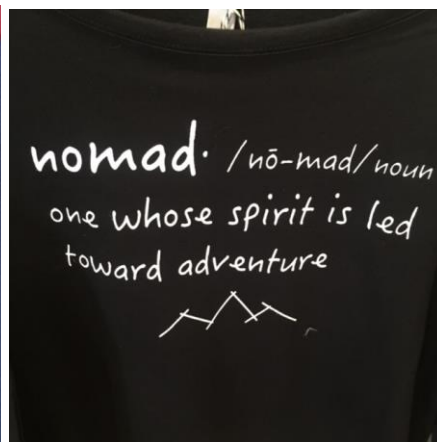




Kansas City and Columbia Trip Notes **January 27-February 2, 2018**

Headlines

- I hadn't seen daughter Alayna for a year, when I was in Kansas City for a skating event.
- I'd never seen sister Beverly's new home and she'd been in it for 3 to 4 years.
- Tom hardly knew brother-in-law Carl.
- I had an empty week. Between the upstate wedding the prior week and our French trip a week later.
- Then – T-shirts found IN Missouri. I could live there. Oh yeah, I did once!
- Then – what I think of the majority of kids traveling today.



Kansas City here I come. Here WE go. Kansas City here WE return to 50 years later. This is where it all began in August 1968 when Tom moved in almost next-door to my little junkie apartment in North Kansas City. (The military was sending him to program called bootstrap to finish his degree at the local Parkville University). Actually the apartment was in Riverside. Now it is just the back door of the newer Kansas City airport up north. He said he moved in 120 steps from my door. I think he counted those steps many times.

My life changed. But he left for Taiwan yet he returned from the Far East at least three times that year and finally agreed to "let" me move in with him to his next assignment in Las Cruces New Mexico in June 1970. In between his visits from the Far East I went to Taipei Taiwan for a month. That necessitated quitting my job.

It was in late 1968 that my month long visit to Taipei made it easier for me to agree to accompany him to the Far East when he was assigned to Vietnam in the early 70s. We moved, setting up in Taipei but with me traveling to Saigon every two weeks for a two week stay. As illegal as hell. It was after all the war zone.

That necessitated leaving my little five or six-year-old to a babysitter. Was that an investment, or not? Or was it child abuse? Wow. Nearly 50 years later I would say it was the best thing that ever happened to me. He might say the same but I'll leave that to him. And leave it to Alayna whose views have gravitated over time.

Daughter Alayna's life changed too. She attended second grade in a Chinese school run by Philippine nuns in Taipei. It was Catholic though we were not. She was the cutest little tiny thing in a blue romper. She experienced life well beyond what most American kids would ever see. She visited the house-keepers home where no one spoke English but came home with stories from the kids. She went to the beach on a motor cycle filled with husband, wife, two children and Alayna plus the picnic gear. We started our Taipei/Saigon adventure with one of the biggest typhoons of the century where our neighbors were evacuated by boat, we stayed on in much fright, and listened as the winds blew the rain so strongly that the doorbell kept ringing and the rats and snakes floated up to our living room. The bit of Tia Maria liquor and Alayna being placed on a higher level of the dining table was the savior as was the bathtub full of water for the few days without services. Windows were blown out in adjoining apartments. Many people died. Poor Tom was in Vietnam trying to see if we were OK in Taipei as many were not.

After a year and returning to the US, Alayna told stories to her Miami teacher who called me in complaining that this kid had a vivid imagination. Not so. It was child abuse that she saw a motorcycle accident with a guy run over by a bus and his eyes popped out, that there were lizards on the ceiling, and bombs dropped in Vietnam for the second Tet offensive, and knocked her out of bed in our Saigon mini-villa.

But Kansas City truly started all our adventures and now we return. I love the story because I have so little home or family connection. So little continuity. Except Tom. And Kansas City. Smile.

A big return. Though Tom has never felt all that fatherly, he voiced interest in seeing Alayna again so here we go. Some of you know that Tom adopted Alayna when she was about six years old, just after we married, and just before we went to Viet Nam.

I was in Kansas City a year ago January. I can't remember but it was a few years prior that he was there. Alayna has been invited on trips and to NJ but prefers her home and family menagerie. We coincidentally now have a semi adopted second daughter Marie who lives outside of Kansas City and is now in the University of Kansas at Lawrence. Where Tom's brother retired. Such the small world and even more so when you remember that we met Marie in Charlotte North Carolina. North Carolina where Tom grew up.

To get to Kansas City this time was not without a little drama and in fact, our flight attendant was very amusing. For the second time United gave us food but failed to provide eating utensils. The very sweet older attendant named Brigitte had great humor and pulled out of her own pocketbook three plastic forks that she offered. We shared one of them. She told of being an older attendant and that this was a second career. I spoke of having started a career with TWA as an attendant out of the old downtown Kansas City airport but quickly being fired. It was the hot pants era and the Braniff Fly Me era. I couldn't have been so lucky as to be fired as I had no business with a child even thinking of being a flight attendant, or even a ground hostess - which one becomes in those days when they get air sick. Damn. That sure was a cute little hot pants red dress that got turned back in rather quickly. Turned back and into a real career when Tom finished his.

I wonder. Is it only as we get older that we start reminiscing? Or is it that youth does not have as much to reminisce about?

And what do you do when you land in Kansas City? You get torn between barbecue or tacos. I just ordered my first fish tacos of the trip. We were in in the hotel until near 10 PM.

Remember I told you that nice Paris studio apartment in December was about the size of our upcoming Palais Royale bathroom. Well I think this residence inn probably cost about the same as that upcoming Palais Royale bathroom. Such the bargain. I'm telling you this so you know that we can be adaptable to many ways of living. Smile.

Kansas City can be very foreign. Such as:

- There are big wide open spaces.
- It is very dark on the roads.
- It is quite flat with just a few tiny mounds.
- The big trucks are huge. And long. And fast. (I drove).
- The cars can be very old. I guess they don't have to pass inspection like in NJ.
- Gas is dirt cheap, but so was NJ until they added 24 cents per gallon taxes a few months ago.
- They have billboards. And sometimes that is the only light.
- The speed limit is 70 mph which means plenty of people go 80.
- It's a long distance from one city to another.

But they sure have good tacos and I'm looking forward to barbecue and here's a couple pictures of our first tastes.

We are first at my sisters town of Columbia Missouri for three nights and then to Kansas City for three nights. More coming.



Some of you will remember my fish taco eating extravaganza or a.k.a. Fish taco marathon, in Colorado Springs I will try to beat that record here. Eat. Then we drove onto Columbia.

Columbia MO is not only home to Mizzou but has been home to my sister Beverly since she went to university. We went here first in part because Beverly would be home before going to her weekly grand-baby-sitting duties in St. Louis but also for logistical purposes so we would be near to the Kansas City airport the night before our flight home.

We would have a delightful time visiting Beverly and Carl and we were almost surprised to figure out that Tom and brother-in-law Carl had only met once before. A pity and yet it's never too late because they both seem to enjoy each other. Equally they have a lot in common. There's another weird commonality: Beverly and I both had first husbands that didn't last very long. Both first husbands were good looking big talkers not worth keeping. Both second husbands are wonderful type Bs, smart, easy going, happy and handsome guys. Both second husbands are just the type you want your daughter to marry.

We wined and dined with Beverly and Carl at restaurants, bars, and in their home. We enjoyed museums, downtown historical areas, and art galleries. They gave us a tour of the historical and lovely university which both of them know well. We shopped. We ate. I got up to five fish tacos but that surely is not my record by far, but what more could you ask for.



Beetle Bailey cartoonist Mort Walker was from Columbia and just died the day before. His bronze cartoon lives on.



Home to the very first journalistic school in the world. That's what the plaque said but I wondered when they called it "in the world".

Columbia has many converted factories and big open spaces for artists. This one featured as series of doors.



We visited at museum that was having a special Exhibition by the painter Paul Jackson. Beverly had gifted us with a lithograph by her friend Paul that featured Koi magically appearing out of the paint tube. We always called our pond the Living Jewels.



Downtown has a large sculpture called the key to the city.

Also downtown was tile work that reminded us of Gaudi from Barcelona.

Inside the old historical Downtown Tiger Hotel were a series of Salvador Dali's artwork. Carl had once worked for the Hotel's financier.

We ended our stay high up in the tower of a Hilton hotel with a view of the city plus a view of the church across the street whose roof topper was known as the Donald Duck church. And more food. Next we would drive to Kansas City.

Kansas City. Where it all began nearly 50 years ago.

Nearby in a little town about 45 minutes away is Plattsburg where daughter Alayna has lived for many years. First she lived in a big 6 1/2 acre huge home that my mother called a farm; Alayna gave up the farm when she was 40 years, going through a divorce, and she chose one of their smaller rental houses. She will be 54 this year.

Alayna drove into Kansas City to spend our first evening with us and then drove back again the next morning to spend the day with us at the Nelson-Atkins art museum. At the art museum I think that Tom's and Alayna's priority was the lovely cafe whereas mine was the art. We ended the day with Tom's choice of barbecue. I certainly took part in the eating and they got some artwork in too.

Our last full day had us driving to Plattsburg to see the renovations on Alayna's house and to meet her four puppies. Well, doggies, as the youngest is three. I was especially taken with one of them and I didn't mind going home covered in black and white dog hair.

We would join her adopted work family who run a restaurant and had not only an enjoyable but a unique meal. That's a story.

This cute little local restaurant was once a drugstore and still has the memorabilia. Two sisters run it and the brother is the chef and he cooks from scratch. I doubted that happened any more. Alayna has worked with them since her weight reducing business closed down and she doesn't seem to want to change as she enjoys the family and the people and that the restaurant is only two blocks away from her home.

The owners had shopped especially for us: fish, strip steak, and my choice of wine. Just as the food was served all electricity in the entire town went out. Candles and flashlights and good wishes also came out and we finished our meal like in luxury camping. A fun way to end a six-day total visit.



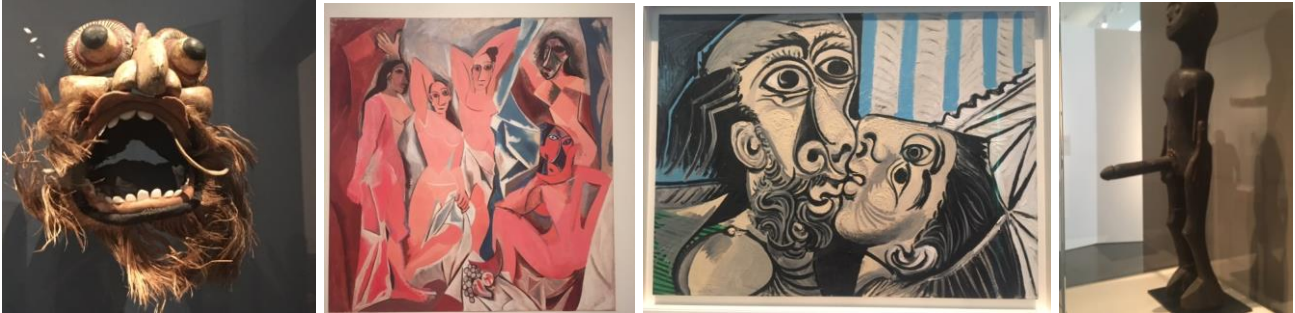
A little town called Blackwater on the way from Columbia to Kansas City. I think the windmill, train station and Dalmatian-styled fire hydrant was the most they had to offer.

Into the Nelson-Atkins art museum downtown Kansas City.



Tom and Alayna made a beeline to the central café with Tom immediately ordering the chicken salad he remembered. He said it was good but he admitted you can never go home again. One of the special exhibits was a recently found tomb where in death royalty were covered in pieces of jade held together with gold thread.

The funeral items for quite a world apart if not extreme from the other special about Picasso. It was called "Through the Eyes of Picasso" and held many of his world travels collection. The purpose seem to be how he change from one style of art to another when he visited different part of the world.



Some of the art had been borrowed from museums where we previously saw the art. Much of it takes imagination or explanation, though the erotic room did not. Picasso must have had a lot of erotic collections as he had a lot of women in his life.



They claim to have one of the only copies of the gates of paradise. I questioned and researched this because last month in Florence we saw the original in the newly renovated museum, and one of only two copies on the baptistery door. The other copy we saw in San Francisco at the Grace Cathedral and it was said that those molds had been broken. Apparently those “only two copies” were from the second world war whereas this copy was made more recently.

We ended the day at a barbecue smokehouse near to where Tom and I would shop the next day.



Our last day would be spent being lazy, having a huge breakfast, shopping at Zona Rosa, then to Alayna’s house to meet puppies. There are no pictures of the restaurant or dinner because, as told, the lights went off. Lovely candlelight meal!

The End.

Itinerary

Sat Jan 27

2:00pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#3586
4:22pm Arrive Kansas City MCI

Rental Car Thrifty Conf#722837669

Drive to Columbia – aprox 2 ½ to 3 hours

Hotel Residence Inn Columbia – 3 nights – form in file
1100 Woodland Springs Court, Columbia, MO 65202 Tele: 573 442 5601

Sun and Mon Jan 28 and 28

Open to see Beverly and family

Tue Jan 30

Am Drive to Kansas City

Hotel Kansas City Airport Marriott – 3 nights – form in file
775 Brasilia Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64153 Tele 816 464 2200

Wed Jan 31

Nelson-Atkins Art Gallery
BBQ meal
Dillards?

Thu Feb 1

eve Dinner in Plattsburg

Fri Feb 2

9:30am Turn in rental car

11:50am Depart Kansas City MCI via UA#3489
3:43pm Arrive Newark EWR

Note: Kestler's to the east are gone same days.
If snow shoveling needed, Matt will arrange and bill us.