

1. 1st leg: Saturday, May 7: with the Bickhams'; got tour of Lon's Home under construction & photo
2. Sunday, May 8: Hotel in Budd Lake, NJ, about 12 miles east of my former home in Panther Valley; dinner downtown Hackettstown.
3. Monday, May 09: drove West on I-80 about 30 miles thru Delaware Water Gap into Eastern PA. Brought back memories of the many times I went that way when I lived in Panther Valley. The times I worked in Allentown, PA, Owings Mills, MD, Hagerstown, MD, Joliet, IL; plus the times I drove to Chicago to visit Jenn, Andy & Saula, and to Woodstock, IL when I dated Sharon. I drove up I-380 toward Scranton, then I-81 and several other roads to Cooperstown to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Wonderful museum (3 floors of tributes to the greatest players of all time). Took a bunch of photos, but would take a catalogue of 300 photos and notes to cover everything. Besides the various areas about the players, there is a movie theater (closed today), a museum gift shop, a library & a research room. After my visit, I found a pub to have lunch - Cooley's Stone House Tavern. Introduced myself to barmaid Amanda, a 5ft. 11in. shapely blond who is planning on marrying next year. We talked about her travels abroad for a college course (she went to Brussels and London, but was stalked by a man in London, so did not stay long. Then to the Best Western Hotel until Tuesday morning.
4. Tuesday, May 10: Frost on the car windshield this morning and forgot to pack a scraper – car heater did the trick; drove to Lincoln, NH to check into Days Inn hotel. Drove North toward Albany. Got an entrance ticket at 1st toll booth encountered and when I got to get off at next toll booth, about 8 miles, was told I didn't owe anything. From there a rather long slow ride East through small towns in NY on NY Rt. 7. But then I reached Rt. 9 in VT. Absolutely beautiful ride East through the Green Mountains in southern Vermont. Then Rt. 9 onto Rt. 202 to Concord, NH. Then I-93 North to Lincoln, NH & Days Inn. The drive through the White Mountains in NH was with fantastic views. After checking in and looking for a place to have lunch and a wine or beer, discovered that none of the restaurants and pubs did not open until 4pm. So, decided to drive up to the Cog Railway at Mount Washington, knowing that it only runs on weekends in May, but thinking I could pick up a souvenir. Well I chose the wrong choice of 3 ways on my GPS (The quickest). But there was a 4.5 mile road to get me to the Base Station Road & the Office & Gift Shop. Unfortunately that road was in such dis-repair with bumps and road indentions I could not travel more than 10 mph. I won't take that GPS choice again. So I get there and the office and gift shop are both closed, but I took a couple of photos of the starting point. Drove back and had early dinner at 4pm at a pub called Brittany's, Bar Man was Shane. Had a 12in. Meat Pizza (Sausage, Peperoni & Beef), glass of Cabernet & 2 beers (2nd one provided by a guy, Jack, who I shared the pizza with, along with a couple sitting next to me Pat & Jim?, who shared cross country travel experiences they have had. Then back to hotel to record my days travel notes. Oh, of interest – in VT & NH instead of signs saying Deer Crossing on the roads, they have Moose Crossing warning signs.
5. Wednesday, May 11, Double checked to see if the self-drive Road up Mt. Washington might be open today, but no luck (maybe this coming weekend weather permitting, yet the weather in NH has been sunny & in the low to mid-60's. So, I drove from Hotel in Lincoln, NH to Bar Harbor. I took the longest route, which took me practically 95% of the way on State roads from NH to ME. These roads took me through numerous small, quaint towns through both states. Charming view of long-standing American towns. Along the way, there were stretches of 5-12 miles between towns where the speed limit got as high as 55mph. But before and after as I was entering/leaving these towns the speed limit ranged anywhere from 25pmh, 35mph, to 40mph. I reached my Best Western Hotel about 5 miles from downtown Bar Harbor about 1:30pm and was lucky to check in before the 3pm time. After unloading the majority of my travel gear, I drove to downtown Bar Harbor and had lunch at the Fish House Grill. I had a cup of New England clam chowder (perhaps the best I have ever had) and ½ dozen freshly shucked oysters, plus 2 glasses of Pinot Noir. Drove around the downtown streets. Back to the hotel to work on my laptop and then back that night to the Fish House Grill. I had a dinner of baked Salmon with a glazed

sauce, ala dent cooked string beans, and brown rice, plus a small loaf of warm cornbread with butter. Two glasses of Pinot Noir and a glass of an IPA beer to wash the dinner down.

6. Thursday May 12, 2nd day in Bay Harbor ME: Bought a \$10 Senior Pass for entry into all National Parks at the Visitor Center of Arcadia National Park. Drove the Loop Road in Arcadia National Park all the way to the top of Cadillac Mountain and back around to the Visitor Center. It was a beautiful drive with lots of places to stop and take photos. Had Lunch at The Hungry Whale Pub in downtown Bar Harbor (Had my photo taken in front of the welcome sign). For lunch I had a sandwich of Gouda cheese, bacon & Tomato on a toasted bread, plus a cup of New England clam chowder (not as good as that at the Fish House Grill), plus 1 Pinot Noir and 1 bottle of Sierra Nevada Ale. Thus far the weather here in Bar Harbor has been ideal, today's high 71 degrees, and yesterday in high 60's. Went back downtown to have dinner at Gaylyns Restaurant. This was my biggest restaurant tab yet (\$25 for 2 glasses of Napa Valley Pinot Noir). My waitresses was a young black haired, attractive young woman, named Jamie. I told her that my daughter-in-law in California was also a Jami, without the "e", and talked to her about my bucket list trip.
7. Friday May 13, drove from Bar Harbor to Portland, ME. After driving around the Mansion for about 20 minutes looking for a parking spot on a street, I finally found 1 spot about 2 and ½ blocks away (there is no public parking anywhere near the mansion in this part of downtown Portland). After walking to the mansion, I went into the visitor center (long ago a carriage house), bought tickets and had a wonderful 45 minute guided tour of the Victoria Mansion museum. The Italianate architecture (Italian village style) home built as a summer residence by Ruggles Sylvester Morse (1814-1893), consists of pre-Civil War grandeur. Morse and his wife, Olive Ring Merrill Morse (1820-1903) lived in Maine, but their principal home was in New Orleans, LA where Morse was a highly successful hotelier. It was still too early to check into my hotel in South Portland, so I went and had lunch of Caesar salad with grilled chicken, plus 2 Pinot Noir wines at a Longhorn. The barmaid, Michelle and I had a nice conversation, she and her husband are originally from Morristown, NJ, and she knew about Succasunna. It is surely a small world. Then it was still not check in time, so on the way back I stopped at a Chile's and had 2 more wines. The barmaid was Alison – we had a short conversation & she wished me well on my bucket list trip. After checking in and taking a nap, I went back to Chile's for a small sirloin steak meal and 2 margaritas.
8. Saturday May 14: Drove from South Portland to Rutland, VT. Before checking into my Days Inn, I went to the Norman Rockwell Museum. He was a prolific painter, illustrator, and writer. He lived to be 84 years old and was still working up until he died. I took about 10 photos and bought some souvenirs for me and the grandchildren. After checking in to the hotel I drove a few miles to the Wilson Castle in Proctor, ME, but it is not yet open for the season. It looked like it needs a tremendous amount of restoration. I then went to an Applebee's and had 2 pinot noirs. The bartender, Ed, grew up in Ocean City, NJ. We shared our memories of NJ. He is an elementary school teacher and works a 2nd job at Applebee's. I went back to the Days Inn to download all of today's photos into my bucket list folders. Then back to Applebee's for a sirloin steak with string beans & garlic mashed potatoes, plus 2 margaritas. The steak was very tough/chewy, so Stephanie, the barmaid got the manager to only charge me half of the meal.
9. Sunday May 15: Drove 2 Hours from the Days Inn in South Portland, ME to the New York State Museum in downtown Albany, NY and spent 3+ hours viewing everything in the museum. This museum has a phenomenal collection of items to see and many items have small cards to read about them. There are too many sections to report on all, but just a few are: Early U.S Western history, the American Indians in the New York state and in the West, Harlem & the African American culture, Immigrants – particular 900 Jews, surviving the Holocaust, who were relocated after WWII into an old fort in Oswego, NY (a cause of much political discourse), the rise of wealth on 5th Avenue in NYC, the Rum business in Albany starting before the Revolution, those who worked to recover the aftereffects of the World Trade Center attack, a working carousel on the 4th floor, and so much more. After driving 20 miles from downtown Albany to Clifton Park, NY and checking into the Best Western, I went to a

nearby Chile's restaurant for a late lunch of spinach & artichoke dip, plus 2 pinot noirs. Back to the hotel to try and download photos from the museum from my phone. Later I went to a nearby Outback and had a cup of French onion soup, a sesame seed salad, 2 pinot noirs, and for the hell of it, a 3 layer carrot cake desert. The barmaid's name at the Outback was Sherry. She has always lived in New York State cities and is divorced.

10. Monday May 16: Drove from the Best Western in Clifton Park, NY to Downtown Scranton, PA to visit the Steamtown National Historic Site. This was a fabulous look back at how the Steam Engine was a principal contributor to the industrialization of America from 1850 up until the after WWII, after which the Diesel engine increasingly replaced Steam for powering locomotives. There were many restored Steam Locomotives and some diesel locomotives. There was a very interesting 18 minute movie in the upstairs theater than could 150 people or more. I bought the video at the gift shop. By the 1950's, the automobile and airplanes began to decrease the choice for passenger travel by railroad, and yet railroads continued to be a transport of goods up until about 1960 and later. I went back to the Steam museum and along with 5 others had a 1 hour guided tour into the shop where the reconstruction and repairs are done. After visiting the Steamtown Museum, I walked the 1000 yards to the Trolley Museum on the same National park acreage. The Trolley museum had restored trolley cars. All told I spent a little over 3 hours, but unfortunately at this time rides on steam and diesel trains are only available on weekends. After driving to my hotel, I went to Coopers Seafood Restaurant for dinner and drinks. The barmaid's name was Tanya. Then Back to the hotel, also in downtown Scranton. Oh, and this Red Carpet Inn was the worst hotel I have ever stayed in. It was old and a bit run down, despite the fact they were repainting many rooms. I had to change rooms because the 1st one did not have a refrigerator. Then there was no remote for the TV and it took two tries to get one that worked with the TV in my room. I should have known – the price was low compared to other hotels.
11. Tuesday May 17: Drove from Scranton to the Palmer Art Museum in the Penn State campus. The 2 floors tour took about 1 hour. I had to park in a parking garage and walk about 1/8th of a mile to the museum and back. Then I drove to the Quality Inn hotel about 1.3 miles from the campus. I had late lunch at a nearby TGI Fridays (Spinach & Artichoke dip with chips, and 2 glasses of pinot noir. For dinner, I went to a MacDonald's for a salad and milk shake, then back to TGI Friday's for a night cap of 2 Glenlivet's, before retiring at the hotel/
12. Wednesday May 18: Drove Quality Inn near Penn State to Best Western Hotel in Brook Park suburb of Cleveland. This hotel is undergoing renovations on the entire 1st floor, including the entrance and front desk area. After checking in went to the Solid Gold Lounge for several Miller Lights, and talked with the barmaid, Cassie, short for Casandra. Then I went to a 2nd pub, Henry's Bar & Grille, where I was the only customer – I left after 1 drink. Then after camping out in the hotel I went to MacDonald's for a dinner salad & sprite. Then back to the Solid Gold Lounge for 3 Merlots (different barmaid and a guy with too much to drink was playing very loud classic rock songs on the "jukebox").
13. Thursday May 19: Drove 15 miles to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, which is on the port of Cleveland. I parked in a parking garage of the next door Cleveland Science Center. Having my parking ticket stamped at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame reduced to parking fee by \$2 to \$9. I was at the R&R HOF for about 3 Hours viewing all of the exhibits on 3 floors and took 38 photos. I had lunch at the café on the 2nd floor and took 2 photos of the pier and harbor from the balcony of the cafe. When I first arrived I had a fellow attendee take my photo at the entrance (1 of the 38). This was a dream come true for me, as music has been such a huge influence and part of my life since I was about 6 years old, playing with my toys as Mom did laundry and had the radio tuned to The Make Believe Ballroom with DJ Martin Bloch playing the Big Band music of the 40's & 50's. When I was 12 years old still in Newark, I started listening to R&B, on Allan Freed's show from Cleveland, mostly black music. Thereafter my music tastes expanded to Rock and Roll, Jazz, and Blues. After leaving the parking garage I drove back to the Solid Gold Lounge for 1 glass of merlot and 2 Tennessee Honey Bourbons. Today's barmaid was Amy. For dinner I drove about 1.5 miles to the Rival Sports Grille and had their version of Spinach & Artichoke dip – it was

different in that it came with small triangles of baked pita bread, instead of taco chips, and it did not have the stringy cheese. I had 2 glasses of Cabernet. Then Back to the Hotel to update my trip diary.

14. Friday May 20: Up through today, with the exception of rain during 2 nights and 1 day of chilly wind, the weather has been fabulous; sunny and mid-70's in Bar Harbor, sunny and upper 60's just about every day; 67 degrees with clear sunny skies in Cleveland yesterday and today. But rain is forecast tomorrow and next 2 weeks as I continue my journey west. Today I 1st went to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and spent an hour touring and taking about 25 photos. The pay for parking lot was full due to school excursions, so I had to park on the street and pump quarters into the meter. I then left there and drove about 1/8th of a mile to the Crawford Auto & Aeronautics Museum. They had a pay for parking lot was had a number of open slots. I spent about 1.45 hours there – there was just so much to see. I took over 40 photos of cars (from 1908 up to 1969), several planes, and an assortment of other items. Oh, and upon getting my entry ticket, they pass out coins for rides on a working carousel. I had 2, but only used one for my ride. I gave the other to one of the school children going through a guided tour. For lunch I went to Rivals Sports Grille and had a large cup of chicken soup & ½ BLT sandwich combo for \$6.95, plus 3 glasses of cabernet sauvignon. Later for dinner I went MacDonald's and then to Henry's Bar and Grille for a few J&B scotches, then back to The Best Western in Brook Park, about 10 miles South of downtown Cleveland on I-71.
15. Saturday May 21: Drove From the hotel in Brook Park to New Hudson, MI, the home of Chuck and Elaine Lada, old friends from Redeemer Lutheran Church in Succasunna, NJ. They moved back to MI in 2008, before I moved to Charleston, SC in January 2009. They have a beautiful ranch home in an attractive development, with a number of new homes under development. We had lunch at their house (Hot dogs, Potato Salad, and fresh cut fruit melody). After a tour of their home and all the projects they are working on, Elaine and I went for a long walk around the neighborhood (about ½ mile). Then the 3 of us went for an extensive ride around the countryside, until it was time for an early dinner. It was my treat for their hospitality. Back to their home after dinner, Elaine served desert of ice cream and blueberries with chocolate syrup. Then Chuck showed me a large number of his artwork, including ones that won awards. Then Elaine and I went for another walk around the neighborhood (shorter than the earlier one). As we returned from the walk Elaine showed me all of the gardening she has completed. After that we retired to watch some TV shows, after which we all went to sleep. The weather turned sunny and warm in New Hudson, About 73 degrees, after having driven through rain on I-80 west of Cleveland until the Toledo area, then it cleared up as I drove North on I-75 and the I-275 to New Hudson.
16. Sunday May 22: I left the Ladas' at 6:55am and drove to my daughter Jensea's and ex-wife Patricia's house in Chicago. I arrived little after 11am (Central Time), sunny with a temperature in the low 1970's. Jen was at church up in Waukegan and had afternoon meetings. She left me a key in a safe place so I could bring my belongings upstairs. Since Jen didn't expect to be home until about 5pm, I decided to take a ride down to Joliet and have lunch there at a TGI Friday's. I wanted to see the office of the Illinois State Police, Bureau of Information, where I worked as a Project Manager consultant for 18 months from October 2006 to April 2008. So much has changed in 8 years I had difficulty getting my bearings after lunch, but eventually I found the office on Chicago Street in downtown Joliet and took a couple of photos of the building. Then I drove back to Jen's and Patricia's house, awaiting Jen's arrival. When Jen got home we went out for dinner at Connie's Italian Restaurant, Jen drove. I paid for the dinner and we returned home, where Saula had to do her Geometry homework.
17. Monday May 23: Emailed Jen several reservations that had yet to be printed, so she could print them at her work office at the Merchandise Mart in downtown Chicago. Did my laundry in the basement of the house – had to ask Pat for some help when I couldn't get the dryer to start up. After folding my laundry upstairs and putting it into my 2 clothing duffel bags, I went for a ride. I started to drive up the Woodstock, IL northwest of Chicago, but the traffic through the Loop and downtown on I-90 was horrendously slow, so I exited and turned back and took I-55 south. Traffic on this route was also bumper to pumper until I got past the exit for I-295, then it picked

up. I got off at the exit for Bolingbrook to look for a place to have lunch, but nothing appealed to me. So back on I-55 North to the Romeoville exit and the best I could find was a McDonalds. After a lunch of cheeseburger & small vanilla shake, I drove back to Jen's & Pat's house. Jen texted me the address of the library for me to pick up Saula after school (she does her homework there). She has an after school care-giver named Umar, who escorts her and 3 other children from the school to the library. Traffic on I-90 again was bumper to bumper until I got several miles north up to the exit that took me to the library where I met Umar and then walked Saula to my car. I ignored my GPS and took N. Ashland south until I got the GPS to lead me to the house. Jen had 2 meetings after work, so Saula and I had macaroni & cheese dinner made in the microwave.

18. Tuesday May 24: After Jen & Saula went off to work and school, I spent time working on my laptop until it came time for me leave before the housekeeper arrived. So I drove off and eventually drove up the Lake Shore Drive, up past where Jen originally had her apartment. Then I turned off and took the slow road back to Café Bianco on State Street in downtown Chicago, where I met Lenore & her Co-worker Leah. Several minutes later Jen arrived via Taxi from her place of business at the Chicago Merchandise Center. We had a great lunch and conversation. Lenore picked up the tab. We said our good bys and they went back to their hotel, awaiting a last minute announced all day Thursday meeting with the new corporate big wigs, when they were originally supposed to fly home on Wednesday, May 25. I drove Jen back to her office at the Chicago Merchandise Mart, she gave me a list of items needed for tonight's barbecue with friends she invited over, and then I drove to a local Best Foods to pick up a list of what Jen's list asked me to buy. I picked up the items on the list, but mistakenly bought cream cheese instead of sour cream. When Jen told me, I walked to a local store and got the sour cream. When the guests, Bill & Rebecca & their 3 young children arrived, (One of the children, Ella, is a classmate of Saula's). Bill cooked the salmon burgers, beef burgers, hotdogs and everything else.
19. Wednesday May 25: Drove 8 hours to my Best Western hotel in Omaha Nebraska. After checking in, I walked over to a local pub, Cunningham Pub & Grill and I had 2 Pinot Noirs to check out their menu. Then I walked around the corner to The Lounge. They lost their chef 2 months ago and no longer serve food (I was looking for something better than what the fare was at the Cunningham Pub & Grill. I met the barmaid, Katy, and learned, upon talking with her, that we both were Lutheran. She told me about her volunteer church work as a Lutheran. She told me about her moving to Washington State to live with her Dad, a divorced ex-Airforce Vet, with 4 children and 2 former wives (the children from the 2nd long term wife). I had 2 glasses of cabernet sauvignon while conversing with Katy. Then I walked back to the hotel until dinner time, when I walked back to the Cunningham pub for dinner and had a cup of shrimp chowder soup and a house salad, and 2 glasses of Glen Livet scotch on the rocks with a splash of water.
20. Thursday May 26: After the desk guy helped me print 3 future reservations, I packed the car and drove 26 Miles to The Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum in Ashland, NE. After spending nearly 2 hours visiting 2 floors of all the planes and exhibits (taking loads of photos), plus watching 2 movies, I bought a couple souvenirs in the gift shop (a dvd & a cap). Then just as I left several school buses arrived with students, so I kidded 2 of the teachers that I was leaving just in time, as I waited for the groups to walk up the walkway, so I could walk down. I then drove 164 Miles in 2Hrs & 45 Minutes to The National Music Museum in Vermillion, SD. It is on the campus of the South Dakota University. I was able to park free on the street by the museum. There I took another load of photos in about 12 sections on 2 floors. By this time it was about 20 minutes after my hotel check in time of 3pm, so I drove the 1.1 miles to the hotel, check in to a room on 1st floor, and used a baggage cart to make 1 trip to unload by belongings in the room. By now it was nearly 4pm and I had skipped lunch, so I drove about 1 mile to downtown Vermillion to The Main Street Pub. I had a large club wrap sandwich with a side of potato salad and 2 Bud Lights. By now it was going on 5pm, and I went back to the hotel to try and email to me all of today's photos so I could download them to my laptop. I didn't manage to get them all emailed & downloaded, so I worked on today's Tour Notes.

21. Friday May 27: Drove a little over 8.5 hours, 488 miles, but crossed over to Mountain Time (my GPS Navigator recognized and asked if I want to update the time on my SUV's clock– it did that too, when I crossed into Central Time from Eastern Time. On the way from Vermillion, SD, on I-90 West, I ran into steady rain for the 1st 150 miles, then it started coming down so hard, I had to slow down from the 80 mph speed zone to 50 mph, and turn on my emergency blinking lights. The rain came down so hard I could not see more than 100 feet in front of me and that required me to seat forward and grip the steering wheel tightly. Then I remembered a tip I got from an Illinois State Trooper, when I consulted for ISP for 18 months that it helps a lot when trucks and cars are throwing back huge white clouds of rain, to put on your sun glasses. This sounds like the opposite of what to do, but it truly helps to reduce the view on the white clouds of rain that the tires of trucks and cars in front of you throw back at you behind them. You actually can see a good bit better, and it helps to maintain the lane you are currently in. This lasted for at least 50 miles, until the rain let up. After about 230 miles, the rain subsided and about 300 miles it pretty much stopped, so that I could see the most amazing display of rain holding clouds I have ever witnessed. Finally I arrive at my hotel, checked in, unloaded my car of things, and drove up the road to find a Pub. I stopped at the Dakota Cowboy Café. I had a combined lunch/dinner of breaded shrimp, potato tots, with a small dip of tomato sauce and potato salad, plus 3 glasses of pinot wine as I conversed with the bar maid. Her name is Georje, (originally her parents wanted another son, but added the "J" to her name). Her mother was a Dakota American Indian and her father was a blond haired German, hence she inherited some of her father's light skin and complexion, Georje is the youngest of 15 children, mostly brothers and a few sisters, her mom brought into the world. We had a long conversation as she attended the few others in the pub. She has a master's degree in Psychology, an undergraduate degree in Business Admin, and a degree in Culinary Arts. Later I walked down the driveway to the Captain's Table restaurant and had 3 Glen Livet scotches on the rocks, then went back and sacked out early – I was so tired from the long, tense ride through the storms.
22. Saturday May 28: After the rain during the night, the sun was out in the morning – temp at 48 degrees at 7:30am. Left the Best Western Hotel in Custer, SD and drove to the Mount Rushmore National Memorial; got there a few minutes before 8am, paid the entrance fee and got a receipt that allows free admission for 1 year. Hardly anyone was there that time of the morning, but when I left at 10am, the crowds flowing in were humongous. There must have been about 100 RVs and the parking garages and outside parking was loaded. As I left I decided to go to the Crazy Horse Mountain Memorial, only about 18 miles from the Mount Rushmore Memorial. On the way, the sun was replaced with the start of a new rainfall, but I went anyway, as did many others. Because of the weather they stopped running the vans up to the mountain face of the Crazy Horse carving. So I spent almost 2 hours going through the museum and I attended a movie about the sculptor and his family of 5 sons & 5 daughters, who along with his wife are carrying on the dream to complete a carving of Crazy Horse on his horse. After that, it was Noon and too early to check into the next Best Western in Hill City. So I drove into downtown Hill City and had lunch at the Mangy Moose Saloon. I had chicken quesadillas, 1 glass of pinot noir, followed by 2 bud light drafts. The bartender was named Kevin; he was originally from Pennsylvania and used to go on vacations to Myrtle Beach, SC with family, until he moved to SD. I then went and checked into the Best Western in Hill City and unpacked the car. Later I went out to fill up the gas tank and stopped for a nightcap at the Bumpin Buffalo Pub in downtown, across the street from the Mangy Moose. I had a cup of creamy chicken rice soup and 2 pinot noirs. Then back to the hotel for the evening.
23. Sunday May 29: Drove 7.5 miles from Hill City, SD to Hardin, MT and checked into the Rodeway Inn. On the drive here, I initially went about 20 miles north, a small part of that was a town that had about 1 mile of its downtown street torn up and not only bumpy (15-20mph is all you could go), but muddy and dusty from earlier rains. Once I got up to I-90 West I cleared the rain and all through about 200 miles in Wyoming the sun was out all the way into Montana. About 95 miles from Hardin I stopped to get gas, just to be on the safe side. When I got out of the car to pump gas, I saw that my car is in dire need of a car wash, due to that bumpy ride through that small SD

Town. When I got to Hardin, there was no car wash places in the small town of Hardin. After unloading at the hotel, I looked for a pub and grill (hardly any here on a Sunday), I found Ace's Pub & Grill about 1 mile away. I had a hamburger & tater tots, with 2 bottles of Miller Light. Then back to the hotel to finish emailing and downloading yesterday's Rushmore photos to my Laptop (the internet at the last hotel was tied up with the large number of guests). I chose the hotel in Hardin for its short 16 mile distance to The Custer Battlefield Museum, which opens tomorrow on Memorial Day. I will go there tomorrow morning before I head to my next hotel near Yellowstone.

24. Monday May 30: After driving 16 miles to the Custer Battlefield Museum, I went in and was instructed that no photos were allowed, so me and another old gentleman watched a movie about Custer, Sitting Bull & Crazy Horse and Custer's Last Stand at the Battle of The Big Horn. Then I looked over all of the artifacts in this small museum, and then I bought the book & DVD of the movie we watched. Unfortunately I forgot to take a pic of the entrance to the museum, as I was in a hurry to set my GPS for my 7.5 to 8Hr drive to my hotel in Jackson, WY, within a few miles of the Welcome Center for Mount Rushmore. I would not advise anyone to reserve a room at the Hotel 6 there. First, it is the only hotel I have ever known that charges extra for Wi-Fi Internet access. And after I paid for the 1st 24 Hrs access, I still could not get into the internet (it kept asking me for my credit card number). With over 55 years IT experience I have never seen such crappy software interface – I went to the desk and bitched and went back to my room and still could not get past the request for my credit card number, that I had paid for, even after entering it several times. This plus the fact that the room is tiny, there is no refrigerator, no tissues, and a shower that is so tiny I would not attempt it. Oh, and no free breakfast!!! Therefore instead of staying here 2 days, I looked for another hotel in the Jackson area, but either there was no vacancy or the room charges were in the \$250 range. So I will check out tomorrow and see as much as I can of Yellowstone, before driving to my Best Western reservation in Salt Lake City (I called and they confirmed I can check in a day earlier). I had reserved this hotel via Travelocity – I will give even a worse review than the one where I recommended the hotel needed to be torn down and rebuilt.
25. Tuesday May 31: Drove north 1.25 hours (57 Miles) from Jackson to the Southern Entrance of Yellowstone National Park. When I got to the toll booth, I showed my senior annual pass for all national parks in the U.S. that I bought at Acadia National Park in Maine. The pass got me in free. I then drove another hour through winding roads to Old Faithful, where I parked and took several photos. On the drive up I saw so many beautiful sites of mountain lakes, rivers and of course the mountain peaks of the northern Rockies. I initially intended to spend about 4-5 hours in Yellowstone, but not finding another hotel in the area, I decided to see as much of Yellowstone as I could from 9:30 am to Noon. When I left Old Faithful I had set my GPS for the Best Western in North Salt Lake City. The fastest route was still 7.5 hours and took me out of the Western Entrance. On the way to that entrance there was two different herds of Buffalo spaced about ½ mile apart slowly walking up the mountain road. Fortunately there were only several vehicles like mine heading down the hills opposite of the buffalos' direction. However, the line of vehicles driving up the hills were practically stopped for about 10-12 miles, waiting to get past the two herds. When I came upon the first herd, there was a park ranger in a van telling those of us heading opposite of the herds to gradually find a way past the herd. It was not easy as the buffalo came at us not only on the road, but also on the narrow right side dirt shoulder. Once I got past both herds, I made my way out the Western entrance, where I parked and took photos of the entrance and exit signs. That exit led me into Eastern Idaho and down to the Salt Lake City area of Eastern Utah. After checking into the Best Western around 4:15pm and unloading the car up to my 2nd floor room, since I had skipped lunch, except for a couple energy bars, I drove another 2 miles to an Applebee's. I had a dinner of cut sirloin over spinach, walnuts, Portobello mushrooms, and wild rice. With 3 glasses of pinot noir, I was ready for an early bedtime.
26. Wednesday June 1: After breakfast, I worked on downloading my photos from Yellowstone, updating my trip spreadsheet with next stops, and printing updated spreadsheet and hotel reservations at the downstairs public

computer & printer. I then drove 14 miles to the University of Utah, on a high hill overlooking downtown Salt Lake City, to the Natural History Museum of Utah. It is a wonderful, modern 3 floor building with fascinating displays of reconstructed dinosaur body structures (some very large). From the outside patio there are great views of snow-capped mountains, and a view down the valley to downtown Salt Lake City. Then I went for Lunch (Spinach & apricot dip plus 2 margaritas) at Applebee's. I later saw a Chile's but on the opposite side of the busy multiple lane road. Back to the hotel to catch up writing comments in my Trip Diary. I took a nap for about 1 hour. Later I went back to Applebee's for a dinner of Grilled Chicken Caesar salad plus 3 glasses of pinot noir. Then back to the hotel for a shower and further input in my Trip Diary before retiring for sleep. I have to add my observations about my drives through South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and thus far Utah. The views of the majestic, monumental mountains, especially those still snow-capped, is so awe inspiring and overwhelmingly beautiful that at times I had to reach for a tissue to dab my eyes. It is a sight beyond words – to witness for my first time the majesty and greatness that God has blessed America. There were the Black Hills in SD, and branches of the Rockies through Montana, Wyoming, Idaho & Utah. A new thing for me is seeing the warning signs posted on the state and local roads, and occasionally on I-90, I-80 & other Interstates. For example: "Next 3 miles Large Horned Sheep Crossing"; "Next 5 Miles Watch For Buffalo Crossing"; "Next 3 Miles Watch For Bears Crossing"; there were also warnings about wolves, and in a couple of cases just livestock. Of course there were just signs with deer embossed on them, but that is not new for an Easterner like me.

27. Thursday June 2: Drove 4.5 hours from Salt Lake City to Battle Mountain, NV, crossing into Pacific Time, to visit the Battle Mountain Cookhouse Museum. The name is deceptive. The building used to be a cook house next on the 25 Ranch, but was moved here and converted to an antiques museum. I spent about 35 minutes on the 2 floors taking photos. I met the woman and her daughter & their dog who were hosting the place for the owner. I then drove another 54 miles west to the Best Western in Winnemucca, NV and after lunch at a next door larger hotel with a restaurant and a good sized casino, I was able to check in. For lunch I had two glasses of cabernet and a shrimp cocktail. Later after a short nap and entries into this journal, I went out for dinner and found via google the Toasted Tavern Restaurant & Bar. I had a 14 oz. sirloin steak with grilled asparagus and sweet potato fries. It was almost more than I could eat. Along with the food I had 2 glasses of merlot and 1 Glen Livet on the rocks. The place is owned by Spanish people, who are very hospitable. At the bar with me were a couple (Sharon & forgot his name), who were celebrating his 32 birthday. He was a CA Giants baseball fan (hat on his head). We had an enjoyable conversation. They are both originally from CA.
28. Friday June 3: Drove 3hrs from Winnemucca, NV to Reno, NV and visited the Reno Historical Society museum on the campus of the University of Reno. I took lots of photos and talked with the two women who were volunteers collecting entry fees and served at the gift shop. Both were from California (Sacramento & San Jose) and when I told them I was heading to Danville to visit family they both knew of the town. One of the ladies was practicing for giving the guided tour tomorrow – she stopped her verbalization and gave me an intro tour. I paid the entrance fee and later a few small gifts. Then I drove to the Best Western hotel near the airport, checked in and unloaded my car. I had lunch at the restaurant inside the hotel. I had a salad and two glasses of pinot noir. Then after emailing the photos from the Historical Society museum, I took a brief nap. Later I drove about 4 miles to the Flowing Tide Pub III, where I had a Shrimp Acapulco dinner over linguini with 2 slices of toasted garlic bread. I had 1 glass of merlot, then 2 drafts of Newcastle ale. I struck up a conversation with an older fellow, Don, sitting next to me at the bar. He was gambling on one of the many small machines set around the bar (I sat at a seat that was in between 2 gambling machines. I asked Don about how to access the small gambling machine, what types of games can be played, etc. He graciously explained the various options a player can choose based upon the odds and the amount of winnings possible based on the odds. I asked about the minimum amount of money it required to play. I saw him getting change of \$100 bills and inserting at least a \$5 bill each time he played. I didn't want to interfere with his playing but we got into a mutual conversation about each of our work

experience. Don is a retired Teamster in his mid-sixties and has not yet signed up for social security. He grew up in Sacramento, CA, and moved to Reno after high school. I mentioned that when I worked for Prudential I was in charge of the software for their retirement plan. We shared some personal info about our family (he more than me) and then after I paid my bill, we shook hands and wished each other happiness.

29. Saturday June 4: Drove 3.5 hours from Reno to Danville, CA to the home of Brett, Jami, Cade, and Gavin & Kelsey. The descent on I-80 down from the higher elevation as I drove toward Reno from Winnemucca, NV to Reno was about 18 miles of steep, winding road through the Rockies. But that was nothing compared to the drive west from Reno. There was a 48 mile descent of steeper, winding curves, through the mountains, first to the left then to the right and on and on as I and other cars, RV's, and tractor trailer trucks negotiated the descent and the back and forth curves. Along that 48 mile stretch we crossed from Nevada to California, as we headed toward Sacramento, the capitol of California. After arriving around 10:30am, in the afternoon, we went to a Panera Bread for lunch – Jami's treat. At night we went to a Fuddrucker's for dinner – my treat.
30. Sunday June 5: We all attended their LDS church (I had been there before). Then Gavin's baseball team had a pool party picnic at a local HOA pool. Brett, Gavin, Kelsey & I went, while Jami & Cade stayed back at the house. During the pool party & picnic (several types of pizza, fresh grapes, soda & water), trophies were handed out to each boy on the team by the 3 coaches. Gavin and a teammate were also honored as co-MVP with a gift certificate to the local Dick's Sporting Goods store. Brett, Kelsey, Gavin & his teammates spent several hours in and out of the swimming pool (I never packed a pair of swim trunks, not expecting to go swimming on my trip). I spent a lot of time talking with the grandfather of one of the boys, and a short time with the grandmother and another father. About 30 minutes after the trophies were handed out a large cake was unveiled for the boys, the parents and guests. After the pool party picnic, we went to the BevMo liquor store where I used the gift card Brett gave me for my Birthday to buy a six pack of Coors Light (all for me, as Brett & Jami have taken the LDS pledge to not imbibe in alcohol). Then back to the house where the swimmers changed out of the wet swimsuits, and then all 6 of us went to play tennis before dark. I hadn't played since 1978, when Patricia and I took lessons. After tennis, we all went to an In-and-Out hamburger drive through for dinner, on Brett, and then back to the house. I had 3 beers.
31. Monday June 6: I drove Cade to school. Brett drove Gavin & Kelsey (different school) on his way to work. Then I did my laundry and went downtown for gas and a car wash. I drove to the downtown area of Danville to see if anything had changed. Later I followed Jami, who was taking Gavin to the doctor after school, and I drove Cade & Kelsey back home. After Brett came home from work (Jami had a work from home day), we all went out for a Chinese dinner, on me. We had several take home boxes, as the servings were huge. At home I finished the last 3 beers. Later I retired to bed (Cade allowed me to sleep on his bed), after saying goodbye to all, as I was going to leave early on Tuesday before everyone awoke.
32. Tuesday June 7: I left a few minutes before 7am to drive to San Luis Obispo on the California coast. What should have taken 3.5Hrs to drive 224 miles, took me about 6 hrs. I had selected the quickest route on the GPS, I-680 South to Route 101 South direct to San Luis Obispo. But when I was about 130 miles from my destination (a Best Western hotel), I saw an exit east to Monterey Peninsula and thought it would be a nicer ride to pick up route 1 along the coast and take that south to my destination, so I turned off the GPS destination, thinking I could reinitiate it after I got onto route 1. Unfortunately my idea about taking route 1 turned out to be a big mistake. At first when I got onto route 1 it seemed fine, but after 4 miles I hit stopped traffic on the 2 lanes heading south. The traffic literally crawled for about 5 miles before a sign was posted indication an accident ahead. After about 3/4 hours, I decided to exit and see if I could find a way closer to the coast through a town that would get me back on route 1 past the accident area. That was also a mistake, because so many others thought the same and exited. There were so many red lights that the same thing happened – a painfully slow crawl occurred for about 3 miles, which took another 1/2 hours. Finally I opened the GPS to my previous setting and it took me back

north on route 1. As I got on Route 1 north, I could see that the traffic heading south at that point was stilled nearly stopped. The GPS headed me north for several miles to an exit on route 68 East and after about 20 miles I got back to route 101 south, now about 120 miles to my destination. Along that 120 miles stretch I had to stop twice as I felt over tired – once at a MacDonald’s for a hamburger and a hot tea, and next at a rest stop. So finally I got to my hotel after 6 hrs. After unpacking, I took a nap for an hour, consequently there was no time to see any of the popular sites in the area. Around 5pm I drove 1.6 miles to an Olive Garden restaurant for a dinner of steamed shrimp over angel hair pasta with a white wine garlic & tomato sauce, along with 1 glass of cabernet wine and salad & breadsticks. Then back to the hotel for 2 complimentary cabernet wines. Then I retired for an early evening.

33. Wednesday June 9: Drove from San Luis Obispo to the home of Karen & Rick Neal in Anaheim, CA. If not for the typical stop and go traffic in the LA area, I would have gotten there almost an hour sooner. As it was I got there right at 11am, as I had told Karen (a former girlfriend) that would be my arrival time. As I arrived there was a squirrel stuck to some glue on top of a fence that Rick had put to try and keep the squirrel from jumping from there to the bird feeder. The lawn maintenance guys were able to get the squirrel down and freed its feet of the glue, and it ran off, hopefully never to return. I got a tour of the house and all of Karen’s paintings (she is an excellent artist). Then the Rick drove us to a restaurant for lunch, my treat. Then back to the house and we all sat out under a large umbrella at the rear of the beautiful pool behind the house. We drank a lot of Manage-a-troi cabernet wine. Karen made dinner of small steamed clams over pasta. We had more wine. We watched a video of Karen a number of years ago when she was on the Gong Show. I asked for the DVD so I could copy it to my laptop. I did not remember going to bed, but Karen said I had laid down on the sofa bed on top of all the coverings without a pillow. Then apparently she made me get up so she could ready the bed. I don’t even remember putting on my PJs, so shit faced was I.
34. Thursday June 9: In the morning I copied the DVD and packed my bag, then went downstairs and Karen made me a cup of tea. I skipped breakfast, as I knew I had a 7.5 hour drive to the hotel at the Grand Canyon and wanted to get on the road. We all said goodbye and I told them how much I enjoyed visiting with them. Then I struggled driving the 7.5 hours and forced myself to stop 3 times to get gas, and clear my head somewhat. After reaching the hotel, I unpacked and took an hour nap. Then went to the restaurant in the hotel for a salad and a draft of Bud Light. It was an early night for me.
35. Friday June 10: Got up at 5:30am, packed the car by 6:15am & checked out of the hotel, filled up the gas tank and had a quick small breakfast at MacDonald’s. Then I drove the 3 miles to the southern gate entrance of the Grand Canyon. I got through the gate with my Senior National Parks Pass (no charge) around 6:55am. Then I drove 6 miles up to the Southern Rim Desert road. I stopped at a number of outlook areas along a 20 miles stretch and took over 20 photos. Then I turned back and went to the visitor’s center, where I parked along with the huge crowds that had later arrived and initially stopped at the visitor’s center. I bought a couple souvenirs, and watched a movie about the history of the Grand Canyon & the Colorado River. I left after at least 3.5Hrs and drove back to the Best Western, where I had checked out earlier and went to the restaurant there and had eggs, bacon, hash browns & wheat toast. Then I put my next destination in my GPS and drove on I-40 to Winslow Arizona (exit onto Route 66), where I stopped at the Standing On The Corner Park and had my photo taken alongside the statue of Glenn Frey, where Winslow set up a commemoration to the Eagles song, “Take It Easy” (“Standing on the corner of Winslow Arizona watching all the girls go by....”). Then I drove I-40 32 miles to the Best Western in Holbrook, AZ. I had lunch at MacDonald’s and then checked into the hotel. Later I went out to a small local restaurant and had salmon, rice pilaf, & corn, with 2 glasses of cabernet. Then back to the hotel to email and download all of today’s photos, make another reservation for two days hence, update my journal and get a good night’s sleep.

36. Saturday June 11: Drove I-40 3.25Hrs to Albuquerque, New Mexico to my hotel. After checking in and unloading, I had my 10k miles oil changed at a local Jiffy Lube (I could not get an appointment at the 2 Toyota dealers, despite calling at 7am when I left Holbrook, AZ). After that I had lunch at a nearby Chile's (1/2 California turkey sandwich and 1 miller light. After that I went to visit the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History. It was very interesting about the history of atomic & nuclear energy and its use in both war and for modern forms of energy. When I 1st arrived there was a 50 minute movie about to start about the Manhattan Project, which was the U.S. Government project to develop atomic energy in a race against Nazi Germany during WWII. After watching the movie, I toured the 20 plus sections about the initial scientific attempts to develop atomic & nuclear energy (including the development of the bombs to help bring the end of WWII against Japan). The sections progressed in a circular manner through time up until the recent current time where the nuclear energy is being used for peaceful energy use. After returning to the hotel for a quick rest, I went out to have dinner, again at that Chile's. I had a 6oz. sirloin with mashed potatoes & broccoli, plus 2 glasses of Cabernet, then back to the hotel.
37. Sunday June 12: Drove I-40 4+ hours to Amarillo, TX, plus Time zone change making it "5+ Hrs.), despite that when I arrived at the hotel it was a bit too early to check in, but that had not been an issue on any hotels up to now. So I went to a nearby MacDonald's for a quick lunch and took a ride around the area. When I got back to the hotel, there was a large group waiting for rooms to be cleaned and ready for check in. I took a short ride and when I got back, after several others got rooms I got one (my 1st time up on a 3rd floor). Since none of the attractions I was interested in were open on a Sunday, after unloading, I took a ride to one of Amarillo's oldest Pubs, Austin's Pub, for a late lunchtime drink to offset the 90 plus degrees heat and had 2 bud light drafts. Then it was later enough for an early dinner, so I drove to the Verona Italian Bistro, where I had a cup of homemade minestrone soup and homemade meat lasagna (both among the best I have had), with a couple pieces of thick bread and butter. To wash it down I had 2 glasses of cabernet and 2 glasses of water. Finally back to the hotel to update my journal and finish downloading photos. Ready for an early night and an early morning for my next stop.
38. Monday June 13: Drove I-40 270 miles, 4hrs, to Oklahoma City. At least the last 200 miles was through a heavy rain storm with tractor trailers, RVs & auto kicking up large whiteout clouds of rain from the sheet of rain on I-40. Using the tip I got from an IL State Trooper, I used my sunglasses to diminish somewhat the whiteout effect, enabling me to pass the tractor trailers along the way and get into occasional open roads where I could see much better. I arrived in Oklahoma City well before check in time, so I stopped for an early lunch at a nearby MacDonald's. After lunch I went to the Best Western to see if I could check in early (it was Noon). The woman at the front desk called housekeeping to see if the room she would assign to me was ready. The Housekeeper told her it she was starting on it. So the desk clerk signed me in, and told me to come back in 35-40 minutes. So I just walked around the breakfast & dining rooms and sat on a couch in the lobby until my room was ready. After unloading my car, I drove about 10 miles to the National Softball Hall of Fame Museum and toured the 2 floors checking out the displays and taking photos. There was no entry fee and I was the only visitor there. Then when I walked outside I saw that the Oklahoma Firefighters Museum for Active & Deceased Firefighters was on the other side of the road from where I was. So I drove over, paid a \$5 fee, toured the old time fire trucks & equipment, taking numerous photos. This museum was only 1 floor with multiple large areas that housed all the various fire engines. Then back to the hotel to update this journal & download the load of photos taken. The hotel has a dining room with a bar. I ate dinner around 5:30pm – 8 ounce ribeye steak with mashed potatoes & Green beans, along with 3 glasses of pinot noir followed by 2 Glen Livet's. The barmaid was Melissa (very friendly and good at her job). We talked about traveling – she and her family will be driving to Fremont, CA in September to visit relatives. Other customers came into have dinner and sat at the bar. One older couple had packed up their home in Georgia, had their belongings shipped ahead, and were driving to California to fly to

Hawaii, where they already have a home, and were moving there permanently. He mentioned that he had been married 3 times and had children who did not have much thought about taking care of things, so he has not left them anything. His 3rd wife looked rather bored as he talked. The old gent mentioned he had initially retired as a security agent in Los Angeles and had just retired a 2nd and last time. They drank vodka & various flavored mixers. Another fellow came in and had a martini. We also had a conversation. Then I paid my bill and retired to my room.

39. Tuesday June 14: Drove 3 hours from Oklahoma City to Fort Smith AR. Before checking in I drove 10 miles to visit the Fort Smith Museum of History and a short walk from there to the Fort Smith National Historic Site (part of the National Park System). The fee for the museum was \$7, but with my National Park pass the fee at the national site was free. After taking numerous photos at both places I drove back and checked into the hotel. After unpacking I went to have a late lunch at a restaurant & pub (a salad plus 2 bud light drafts). Then I stopped at a gas station to fill the tank. After emailing and downloading all the photos from my tablet, I rested a bit, then went back to the same restaurant & pub for a dinner of linguini Alfredo with shrimp, plus 3 glasses of pinot noir. Then I retired for the night.
40. Wednesday June 15: Drove 2Hrs to Little Rock, AR. Got there well before hotel check in time, so I drove 7 miles downtown to visit the Historic Arkansas Museum. Spent about an hour touring 2 floors and taking 16 photos (some of the displays are similar to earlier museums in Oklahoma, Texas & Fort Smith). Next I drove 18 miles up a mountain to the Pinnacle Mountain State Park and toured the Visitors Center, taking about 15 photos. Then I drove back to the hotel and checked in. After unloading, I drove 1.5 miles to Gregeen's Irish Pub for lunch. After lunch I returned to the hotel for a nap. Later in the evening I went back to Gregeen's for dinner - Shepherd's Pie, 2 drafts of Bud Light & 1 nightcap of Abalour single malt scotch (12 year old) on the rocks. Then back to hotel to update my trip journal and post on Facebook.
41. Thursday June 16. Drove to Memphis, TN and visited Graceland. The temperature was 95 degrees. Spent nearly 3 hours. 1st the huge parking lot is across the street (\$10 fee) on Elvis Presley Boulevard (the boulevard is 9 miles long, much of it in poor sections). Then you have to walk from where you parked your car to the ticket office building which is on the same side of the street. If you park way in the back it is a long walk. I found a spot not far from the walkway to the ticket office building, just as another car backed out to leave. I got there around 11am and there were very large crowds, some on tour busses. After waiting in line inside the ticket building, I bought my VIP Pass (\$40). Then you have to wait until your Tour number is called (mine was 11 O'clock, Tour #8). When your Tour number is called you go outside and stand in line (mine was very long) until the shuttle busses arrive (they constantly go back and forth bringing visitors to & from the Graceland home across the boulevard). The line weaves around under a flat roofed overhead canopy. A you get to the last turn (there are still about 60 people ahead waiting to board 1 of several shuttles), there are photographers to take your photo in front of a Graceland mural. If you opt to have your photo taken you get a receipt ticket that you can turn in when you return on a shuttle. They charge \$45. Now as the row for the shuttle moves forward, you are handed an Apple IPAD with attachable audio head gear. The IPADs have a strap that you hang over your head and neck. This allows you to have an audio and 360 degree picture tour as you go through the home, exterior buildings, the grounds, swimming pool area, and the meditation garden, which is the last of the VIP tour, unless you pay a little more to tour the 2 airplanes over by the parking lot. Then you wait for the shuttle busses to empty new arrivals and move down to load you and take you back across the boulevard to where you can pay for your photos, have lunch at a small restaurant, visit gift shops, etc. After all that you walk back to where your car is parked and leave. After that I went to check into my hotel about 2.5 miles away, but my room was not yet ready. The desk clerk gave me a 10% discount for lunch at Marlowe's restaurant, which is back down to Elvis Presley Blvd, about a mile past Graceland. I had a huge Elvis Burger and 2 bottles of Bud Light. Then back to the hotel for a short nap and email & download the over 60 pictures I took with my tablet (I carried it along with the IPAD

hung from my neck). That night I went back to Marlowe's for dinner. It is one of only a few restaurants other than fast food places. I had a small salad and 2 more Bud Lights. Then back to the hotel to Post on FB and go to sleep.

42. Friday June 17: Drove Southeast 243 miles from Memphis to Birmingham Alabama. On the way (about 102 miles) I stopped in Tupelo, Mississippi, to visit the Birthplace of Elvis. Very interesting. I got to visit the house he was born in, the garden area, and a small museum (no photos allowed). Also there was the church he and his parents attended when he was a young boy. The church was moved back from across the street where it had been previously moved and made a residence. When it was moved back it was restored to its original structure. Visitors can go in the church and watch a 15minute movie that reenacts a church service in the 1940's with actors playing the preacher, choir, attendees, Elvis & his parents. The young boy playing Elvis sings a gospel song. The movie not only shows the front of the church (Preacher et al), on a large drop down screen the width of the church, but on each side a drop screen shows side views of the attendees as if you are looking at them from the left and right. I tried to buy a DVD of the movie, but it is not for sale. I had my picture taken with a statue of 13 year old Elvis, and a picture in front of the outhouse. After leaving Tupelo, I drove on to Birmingham and got to my hotel to check in about 2:45pm, just as a windy storm hit the area. I unpacked and stayed in my room watching the TV for when the storm warnings would end. About 5pm, not having stopped for lunch, I walked across the dual roadway to Landry's restaurant, carrying my umbrella just in case (the wind & rain had subsided). I had a cup of gumbo (good, but not as good as Bick's), followed by a large dish of Linguini Alfredo with shrimp. I had 4 glasses of pinot noir to top off the meal. Then I walked across the street and dropped into bed early. Given the weather I did not venture out to visit any of the places of interest. Maybe some other time – lots of history there.
43. Saturday June 18: After checking out I needed gas, so I stopped about a mile from the hotel to fill up. I decided I needed to pee, so I went into the men's room. It was the 1st time in years that there was a condom machine in the rest room. Then I drove Northeast 148 miles up through Mississippi, Northwest Georgia and back into Tennessee to my hotel in Chattanooga. Had lunch at a Wendy's next door. Drove up Lookout Mountain to Ruby Falls (a waterfall in a mountain cavern) around 2:30Pm, but the crowd waiting to buy tickets was exceedingly long and the main parking lot was full. I found a spot in a subsidiary lot and attempted to get in line, but there had to be at least 400 people in line. That would mean standing in a slow moving line for 1.5 hours to get a ticket and another 1.5 hours for the tour, so I decided to leave and come back around 6pm thinking the crowd would diminish for dinner time. Drove back at 6pm, but the crowds had not diminished, so I drove another 6 miles up the winding mountain road to Rock City. I bought a ticket and started on the long trail through rocky caverns, rocky overlooks and short stops with gift stores. It got to be close to 7pm (would have taken another 1.5hrs to take the full trail loop), so I decided to turn back on the separate return to the exit, to head back down the mountain and go to Logan's, a large restaurant, next to my hotel. For dinner I had meatloaf with mashed potatoes, gravy & a side of cinnamon apples. I had 2 bottles of bud light & 2 night caps of Tennessee Honey on the rocks with a splash of water. The young woman barmaid & I flirted a tiny bit & I got a hug when I left. Oh, and there was a tub of unshelled peanuts on the bar that I had my fill of waiting for the meal.
44. Sunday June 19: Father's Day. I thought I'd try one more time to see Ruby Falls. After a free breakfast of scrambled eggs & sausage & OJ, I packed the car, checked out and drove up to Ruby Falls, it opens at 8am on Sundays, and when I got there at 8:15am, there was no line and only 1 tour in progress. I was 1st in line for the 8:30 tour. The elevator down into the cavern only holds about 13 people & children. At least 2 elevator loads form a tour. The descent in the elevator is 26 floors or about 260 feet. Along the cavern passage there are places you can take photos (often quite dark, despite some artificial lighting). By the time you walk through the narrow downward cavern path and reach the underground falls, at least 45 minutes with stops on the way for the guide to discuss the rock formations (many with signs), you are now 1120 feet under Lookout Mountain. One of the 1st

stops is where you can have your photo taken and given a ticket with which you can purchase your photos at the gift shop at the end of the tour. The falls are absolutely beautiful in the eerie lights that change color every minute or so. The falls cascade down out of a rocky roof about 145 feet above and fill up a round pond that you can see and that flows under your feet on the rock bridge with a railing so you can take pictures. As we made our way back at least 2 other tours were in progress. Our guide would hold up the incoming group, so we “survivors”, as he called those exiting, could squeeze through the narrow cavern passages on our way back to the elevator. Now the elevator takes you not just to the floor you started but goes further up to a restaurant, gift shop, rest rooms & a tower from which you can see a panoramic view of all of Chattanooga and take more photos. After leaving Ruby Falls, I drove 162 miles, 2.25 hours, Up I 75 through Knoxville, past Sevierville & Pigeon Forge to my hotel in Newport, TN, off I 40. After checking into my hotel, I walked over to a Ruby Tuesday’s for lunch. Later that evening I went to Michael’s Pub connected to the hotel for dinner and several glasses of Merlot.

45. Monday June 20: All day yesterday I wrestled with a decision about continuing my journey for another 10 days. When I left on the bucket list I had originally thought I would go until about June 30, however when I got to Newport TN, I felt a bit exhausted and had charged over \$5,500 on my credit cards and had driven a bit over 11,000 miles on the trip. By today I had journeyed for 43 days and out of that only 5 of my stays (for 13 days) were for more than 1 day. Of those 13 days, 2 were in Bar Harbor, Maine, 3 in Cleveland, Ohio, 3 with my Daughter & Granddaughter in Chicago, 2 in Salt Lake City, Utah, and 3 with my Son, his Wife & 3 Grandchildren in Danville, California. Thus for 30 days I had stayed 1 day in a hotel and visited the places I was interested in, and then driving on to the next stop, as journaled above. Despite all that, I had only one other trip I was trying to decide on taking – that was heading back Northwest to Springfield, Illinois to try and visit with the wonderful people I worked with on my last 2 consulting contracts. Also, while I worked there I had developed an attraction to Springfield. In the end, when I woke up, I decided that it was time for me to go home. Thus, I drove the 329 miles in a little over 5 hours to my home in the Charleston area of South Carolina. After unpacking and relaxing, I retired early and slept 12 hours (on my journey, I typically only slept 7 hours or so).