

JOURNALING OUR DRIVING VACATION 1/12/03

On our first driving vacation together Linda would finish each day by reading to me her highlights of the days trip. She would use her writing skills to make the days adventures come to life for me again that evening. Linda was able to provide interest by using her insight plus writing background to document her observations as if she were still standing there. Habitually, she would also document some of the nuts & bolts of the trip such as, expenses, miles driven/day and major stopover highlights, plus if the food were interesting, some mention of the days dining. I decided eventually to make an attempt at reciprocating her journaling effort.

Creating interesting journaling is made easier if you do interesting things. Linda did a marvelous job of our trip planning. We initially agreed upon rough distances, budget and major destinations for the trip, from there she took over. By using the Internet, she would research the towns, parks, scenic highlights, and gardens along the way looking for destinations compatible with our interests. AAA trip guides plus word of mouth from vacationing friends also entered into the planning. Ultimately she would have us drive hard the first day or two until we got to areas new to us. Once there, we seldom put on over 200 miles a day while we observed and simply played tourist. Quite a contrast from my previous approach of picking a destination then driving madly to get there, missing all but the most obvious mountain ranges and major landscapes in the process.

Linda tended to write her journal as we drove. Since I did most of the driving, this left early evening as my time to write. It helped me by having someone set a good writing standard, although pride kept me from copying her writing style. I would carefully complete my daily highlights before hearing hers. I would also recall my observations not just by recounting what I had seen but how it affected me and how it compared to some of the other wonders I have seen before. I was also careful to include any jokes or amusing happenings we had shared in our daily banter to keep my writing from becoming too dry. This contrasting style proved to be interesting. We soon noticed from our writing that it appeared we had taken separate trips. Linda took notice of flowers, plants, interesting people and receipts. My focus was on wildlife, geology, natural scenery, plus real estate comparisons as well as recalling our impromptu humor. There was also a subtle competition in our writing. This helped us to improve. Knowing we were going to write about what we saw also made us more observant.

After journaling two consecutive trips, we decided to convert our longhand journaling to typewritten computer copy. This further refined our story plus it enabled Linda to use our now more presentable stories (I have terrible handwriting) in a trip scrapbook format. To our writing she added selected photographs and clip art from some of the souvenir brochures of places we had visited. Assembly in this fashion will allow for accurate, detailed, retellings over the years, now visually enhanced by our photographs. At times our writing seemed a bit like work. Once we finally sat back to enjoy it however, we easily determine the results justify the effort. Each passing year tip the scales further. Preserving our trip adds purpose, preserving it well, adds fulfillment.