

Summer Vacation 2007

By Katy Cox

Have you ever gone on vacation where most of your plans went awry? It started when we decided to use the free night hotel room from the casino in Wheeling, W. Va. The clerk said they were sold out for that Sunday night. So we went to the Mountaineer instead. This wasn't so bad because my husband Glenn won enough money to pay for the room. About 6 p.m. I said, "Let's go to Weirton and have dinner." Off we went to find no place to eat and drove 40 miles to go back to the casino for dinner.

We got up the next morning to find that Chester was three miles from the casino and had places to eat. We drove to Chalk Hill and got lost trying to find Kentucky Knob. We had just decided we missed it, when we saw the sign and the closed gate. Reading the fine print in the travel guide, I discovered the house was closed on Monday. As was Fallingwater. So we went back into town to have lunch. We found a diner which had a lot of cars so we stopped. I said the food must be good since so many people were there. I ordered spaghetti and meat balls which was the worst food I have ever tasted.

We drove on to Gettysburg. I told Glenn not to hurry because the Visitor's Guide was open until 8 p.m. during the summer. We arrived at the center at 5:15 p.m. to find summer hours didn't start until the following week. We drove through town and decided to stay for the night. I said the motel room would be expensive as it was next to the National Cemetery. It turned out to be the least expensive place we stayed that week. We went into the square and had dinner at the Pub which turned out to be good and we felt better. We met a man who has family near our home. The next morning we went to the Visitor's Center and saw their famous Electric Light Show.

We drove on Historic Route 40 toward Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square. We arrived about 2 p.m. It was hot, the sun was a ball of fire, and the sky was as blue as blue as could be. We decided to leave the sun roof open a bit and the windows down some. Off we went to find a full days worth of activities, ending with an evening concert and a water fountain light show at dusk. We were walking through the beautiful gardens about 4 p.m. and watching the dark clouds begin to roll in. Then it began to thunder and the lightning flashed. We hightailed it to the greenhouses. It was too far and too late to close

the car. We spent the next hour walking through the glass gardens and watching the storm. As the rain subsided, we went to the cafeteria to find dinner. We ordered ham thinking that no one can ruin ham. It was as tough as shoe leather, the rice was cold and the green beans weren't cooked. I had a dish of ice cream. The Heinikens beer was good and cold. The concert was very enjoyable. They had moved the group into the pavilion which was good because it rained again. As the light show started we found seats. As we sat down, we found out why they were empty - they were wet. Halfway through the program, there was a loud pop and the announcer said there was an electrical problem so the show was canceled.

Now it's 10 o'clock at night and we have no place to stay. We drove to the next town and a Holiday Inn Express. No room, but she knew of a Day's Inn a couple of miles away and we found shelter for the night.

The next morning, while checking the tourist info at the Inn, I found that Winterthur was six miles away, so off we went to see how the rich and famous lived. As we rode through the gardens, the guide told us about the beautiful spring blooms. He said the hills started with daffodils, then all the other spring flowers. He said there was a large area of azaleas of many colors. He said people come from all over the country to see this riot of color. Of course it was the middle of June and summertime so there was nothing but green for us to see. The house and the collections of the duPoint's was interesting.

To avoid traveling on the Pennsylvania turnpike, I had chosen to travel across the old National Road or Route 40. This turned out to be a good thing because as we drove along, signs for places to stop and visit made our trip worthwhile. We stopped at Fort Necessity and caught the docent as he began his explanation of the importance of this site. He was dressed in period costume and had an aide to help him explain about the fort. He fired his musket for us so we could understand about warfare during the French and Indian War. We stopped at Washington's Tavern and Braddock's Grave, which the docent had spoken about, thus making it an interesting conversation between Glenn and me, as we had forgotten this piece of history.

One morning I found a brochure for the Morris Arboretum on the University of Pennsylvania in Chestnut Hill. We went and had a wonderful time watching the

miniature trains go through the garden and past the miniature replicas of famous buildings. One night we went to the race track casino and lost some money. My relatives were worried as these places are not in the best neighborhoods. Friday night my relatives joined us to celebrate Glenn's birthday. We went back to my sister-in-law's apartment for cake and a pleasant evening.

We now come to the purpose of the trip. We were visiting relatives who live in Fairless Hills, which is just north of Philadelphia. We stayed at the Holiday Inn Express near there. They have a wonderful breakfast bar. One morning we went out to the parking lot where two people were standing and talking on their cell phones. The man next to us said "You may want to park in the front of the motel tonight as vandals have stolen my tires." Looking at the other person, she was also calling for help as her car had one tire missing and another one broken off but still there. We found that another car had been stolen. So much for safe neighborhoods.

Coming home I planned to drive through the Pocono Mountains on Route 6, but Glenn said he had enough driving so we took Route 80. It was a straight drive with no interesting places to stop. We arrived in Meadville about 6 p.m. We went downtown to look for a restaurant for dinner. We found a place in the old market which is a craft and arts shop, that part was closed. We decided to try it. I had prime rib and a baked potato. Thank goodness for the potato as the prime rib was tasteless. As we drove out of town on Route 6, we found the strip of restaurants and gas stations. We were so disgusted, we came home to our own bed and thus ended our summer vacation.

Crooks Target Elderly more than Younger Persons

Senior citizens are often the targets of fraud and financial crimes, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC).

Among the reasons for targeting Seniors is they may own their own home, they are easy to find at home and they can be swayed by fears of losing their financial independence, says the FDIC.

One of the most common cons designed to trick consumers - especially the elderly - into giving up money, property or valuable personal information are prize and sweepstakes frauds.

It may involve a congratulatory phone call or letter informing the senior that he or she has won a prize or a large sum of money in a lottery or sweepstakes.

However, they are told, before the "winnings" can be delivered they must provide personal information and/or pay for fees, taxes, shipping and handling or other charges. Once they pay, the prize never comes or if some item is delivered it is essentially worthless.

Another crime involves phony checks.

Checks are sent to unsuspecting seniors who are asked to deposit them in their bank account, keep part of the money for their trouble and send a check for the rest to the letter writer.

The seniors who do that are later told by their bank that the check was no good. They are stuck for the money they sent to the letter writer.

The lesson is: If it is too good to be true, it is NOT true.

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