

WESTWARD HO, THE WINSTONS GO, TEMPORARILY

I wonder if Albert Tweed had heard Horace Greeley's admonition to "Go west young man, go west" when he decided to load his wife, two daughters and son Douglas, my wife Janet's paternal grandfather, on a covered wagon and go to California in the 1870s. They got there, probably looking for gold, and when I suppose there was little to be found, they boarded a ship and sailed to Charleston, SC and made their way back up to Marshall, NC, 25 miles NE of Asheville, hard up against Tennessee. Albert may have gained his adventurous spirit and passion for travel when he joined his father Neely and his brothers in going north and fighting for the Union Army, after Neely, the Lincoln sympathizing Republican clerk of court, had shot and killed Ranson Merrill, the Democratic sheriff of Madison Co in April, 1861, as revenge for the sheriff shooting his son. Merrill, brandishing his pistol with his fellow Democratic Confederates to celebrate their slim victory over the Republicans in an election to decide, along with the 99 other counties in NC, whether to join the Confederacy, most likely drinking moonshine and shouting "bring on those Yankees", as in a similar fictional scene from *Gone With The Wind* when it was announced that the Confederacy had declared war on the United States, apparently by accident, winged Neely's youngest son, Elijah, who was milling around the crowd in front of the courthouse on the main street of Marshall, with just a flesh wound. A year or so after Albert and family returned to Marshall from California, he told his wife they were going to California again. She, obviously an intelligent woman, refused, protesting that they had almost died on their last trip, having to trade their blankets to the Indigenous Americans for food. So, she took her two daughters to Knoxville and worked in a hotel to make ends meet, but Albert and son Douglas went west again, getting as far as Kansas, where they stayed for several years before returning to Madison Co.

Douglas's son, McDonald Douglas Tweed ("Mac"), my father-in-law, made his first trip west when, as a Marine Lt, he flew his B-25 from Cherry Point, NC to Charlotte, where he put his crew up in a hotel for the night while he spent the night with his new wife Mary at her family's farm outside town, proceeding to and refueling in Atlanta and Texas before rendezvousing in California with others who had left Cherry Point. Their bombers were loaded on an aircraft carrier, just as Jimmy Doolittle's squadron of B-25s had been to conduct their raid on Tokyo in early 1942, and off loaded in Hawaii. From there, Mac flew to the South Pacific where he was bombing the Japanese stronghold on the island of Rabaul when the war ended. His 2 year younger brother Dan, a Marine sgt, travelled by train to California, arrived at Iwo Jima in time to pilot a landing craft in the assault there. When it was shot up beyond drivability, he caught a ride back out to the troop ship on another landing craft, driving another, loaded with Marines, to shore where it, too, was destroyed, and repeating the process a third time. Dan lived to be almost 90.

Mac stayed in the Marine Corp after the war. Janet, with her friend, Betty, has travelled to China, Africa, Peru and the Galapagos Islands, Spain and Portugal, and Italy and Switzerland. I guess she inherited the Tweed travel gene and it was nourished by her childhood travels as Mac was moved from post to post. She was born in Cherry Point, NC, lived in Hawaii as a small child, then back to NC. Mac had someone build him a small trailer and he and Mary piled all their belongings in it, and, with Janet and her year younger brother Doug in the backseat of their 1952 Chevy, drove to San Diego, stopping early enough at

motels with swimming pools to let the kids take a swim. Mac kept, and I guess Janet still has somewhere, the written record he made of the trip, noting every cent they spent and every place they ate and stayed.

Brother Bill was going to get drafted in 1965 so he beat Uncle Sam to the punch by joining the Army and going to Officer Candidate School and then jump school before joining the Chemical Corp (he'd majored in textile chemistry at NC State) and being assigned to its branch headquarters at Ft McClelland in Anniston, Ala., where he met the love of his life and bride to be, Sylvia Ruffin, and his close friend for life, Ken Carpenter. As a 2nd then 1st Lt, Bill served as the executive officer of a heavy equipment maintenance company in Cam Ranh Bay in South Vietnam. I don't know where Ken was stationed after McClelland (it wasn't Nam), but after both of their active (I didn't remember that Bill continued to serve in the Reserves for several years until he reminded me when we ate BBQ at Bridges in Shelby, NC on Wednesday, 3/17/21, two days before I started this story) military service to their country had ended and before they settled down to marriage, family and 8-5 jobs, they decided to take a road trip. Bill drove his new Buick Skylark to Arkansas where Ken lived and they headed west, with a tent, ponchos, sleeping bags and some cooking and eating gear. Bill filled me in on their itinerary Wednesday. They went spend a nite or two with an Army buddy near Denver, found Rocky Mtn National Park ("NP") hadn't opened yet because of the snow, skied west of Denver, on to Salt Lake City, down to Bryce, Zion and the Grand Canyons, where they hiked to the bottom with just sleeping bags, ponchos, a little grub and water; then across Hoover Dam and to Las Vegas, where they pitched their tent in an RV park right in downtown. They attended an Easter sunrise service at the entrance to Carlsbad Caverns, drove thru the Petrified Forest, saw the Alamo in San Antonio and back to Arkansas, and Bill back to Charlotte where he arrived in time to drive Mom and Dad up to Davidson to attend my graduation circa June 1, 1968. I don't remember seeing them but I'm sure Bill made beaucoup of slides of his and Ken's trip with his Canon AE-1 (is that right, Bill?-I should know because my first camera was just like it, just as my second [my first was a cheap JC Higgins] baseball glove was a Granny Hamner autographed Rawlings , just like Bill's), which probably whetted my appetite to see the Big Country.

My first trip west was the next month when I flew to Los Angeles to try out as a punter for the Dallas Cowboys at their training facility at a small Lutheran college in Thousand Oaks, just outside LA. It was short lived due to a bum knee. It was clear flying out and back and the pilot pointed out the Mississippi River and another landmark or two. I don't remember landing in LA but I do remember taking off, flying out over the Pacific before circling east. The most memorable part of the flight wasn't in the air but in Atlanta where we stopped over. There was a rather long delay for some reason, but they left us on the plane for several hours. In what turned out to be a dumb decision, to mollify the passengers after complaints about the delay, the stewardesses started passing out drinks, including mini liquor bottles. There were two young GI's sitting behind me and one got drunk and threw up on me. Needless to say, I was livid and gave the stewardesses a piece of my mind, probably a pretty large piece. I remember demanding to know where I should send the dry cleaners bill for my suit.

Brother Bill is 4 years older than I and brother, Harry, 2 younger. On Sharon Amity Rd in a suburb of Charlotte, where we moved in 1948 when I was 2 and where we lived until December, 1955, when I was almost 10 and we moved to the house Dad and Mom had built on Rama Rd, a half mile or so further out

and where we complained, “we’re moving to the sticks”, most of the boys in the neighborhood were around Bill’s age, or, like cousin, Frankie Kiser, older. They let me hang around, even letting me play baseball when I got old enough, though I was, of course, the last chosen when teams were picked and where a teammate got to take my last strike (in fact, that was a stated condition for picking me; “We’ll take Tommy, but we get his last strike”), which meant that if I got 2 strikes on me, they would take the bat out of my hands and put it in one of theirs. Harry was small when he was young and flat footed so he had to stay on the porch with Saucy, the flatulating dog, while we played ball. Mom bought a set of World Book Encyclopedias and when he got old enough, while Bill and I were out raking around (one of Mom’s terms), Harry was reading the World Book, from cover to cover, embuing him with a lifelong curiosity about a myriad of topics. Once, he delighted in showing us all a sketch of early man, such as cro-magnon and neanderthal, exclaiming, as he pointed to the sloping forehead of one, “Look, there’s Tommy”. I’ll have to admit, there was a strong resemblance. Sheesh, younger brothers!

I don’t know what Harry started out to major in at Carolina. He dropped out for a semester, maybe two, a year or so before he graduated and worked for the planning dept for the City of Charlotte, and also directed the choir at Matthews Baptist which Mom and Dad sang in (when we were home, all 5 of us sang in it). When he went back to Chapel Hill, he majored in urban geography or some such and stuck around and took all the courses necessary for a masters, but never wrote the thesis. I think he talked with some of his professors about his intention to get a job with the federal transportation dept and was told he’d have to have some experience first. Ignoring their advice, he drove the VW bug Dad had bought him as his first car to DC, walked in the federal highway administration and got a job that day. They sent him to Denver and Portland for 6 or 8 months each, I think to Denver first.

Harry fully embraced the Big Sky Country, tent camping all over. Carolyn Yandle, our first cousin, Dad’s sister, Mary and her husband Ray Yandle’s daughter, at least 10, probably more like 12-14 years older than Harry, and who I feel sure Harry hadn’t known very well before, was single and teaching or maybe working as a librarian in Denver. He introduced Carolyn to camping. (Harry, you need to write about how that transpired and the places y’all went and the adventures you had. I’m sure I wouldn’t have had the gumption [another of Mom’s words], temerity, patience, good-heartedness, and a lot of other qualities that don’t come to me right off, to have even thought of such a thing, much less to have pulled it off). I think Carolyn lives in San Francisco now and she and Harry have stayed in touch over the years.

Dad and Mom drove out to see Harry in Denver. If I remember correctly, a new road, maybe an Interstate, had been tunneled thru the Rockies west of Denver to get to the ski resorts, but arteriosclerotic Dad, I assume with the consent of bursitic Mom, probably thinking, 1) sort of like when he decided we’d burn some limbs and the broom straw off the garden on Rama Rd one windy March Saturday afternoon and liked to have burned down ours and Mrs. Bess Wallace’s houses, “This seems like a good idea”, or 2) “I’ve driven over mountains before” (Big Walker near Bluefield, Va/WVa when he took me on an Imperial Mfg& Sales trip calling on his customers when I was probably 9 or 10, and, of course, thru the Blue Ridge and Smokies), and 3) “besides, we’ll never have this chance again”, decided to brave it over the old mountain pass. As I recall the story, tractor trailer trucks weren’t permitted thru the tunnel and had to go over the top and Pop met one as they were both cresting the mountaintop. As I also recall, their mirrors touched as they inched along, or probably as Dad inched along; Big Boy didn’t

have anything to worry about! They came back thru the Royal Gorge in southern Colorado and drove across the suspended bridge.

Harry had hundreds of slides which he showed as he regaled us with stories when he would visit Mom and Dad at Christmas and when he would join all of us for summer beach trips (one of his attempted female attention getting ploys was to walk down the beach with his camera, aiming his lens at and pretending to use a costly Kodachrome shot on a sunbather-Harry, did that ever work?). All of my immediate family, including Janet and her immediate family had seen the West from the ground, all but Tommy, Tim and me. I don't remember when I started thinking it was time to remedy that, but remedy it, I was. Tommy turned 16 on 12/24/83. Having 3 drivers in the family didn't prompt it, but realizing that the older Tommy got, with the time demands of baseball and summer jobs, the harder it would be to block out enough time to take a long road trip. The furthest we had been as a family was to visit Harry in DC when he was single in about 1978 or 9 and to visit Mac, Mary and Doug in Nashville each year they were there, starting in 1970-71. So, we began planning a trip to leave the day after school was out in 1984.

Like Albert Tweed, we would need a covered wagon, so I started looking at conversion vans. Tommy was busy playing high school baseball all spring so Tim, 12 on March 8, became my planning partner. I don't remember how many vans we looked at but I think he was with me every time. Finally, I saw one advertised in Matthews. It was a brand new Ford 150 Econoline that a guy in the upholstery (don't remember whether car, chair or both) business had customized to sell. It was red and gray with 4 red captain's chairs and a fold out sofa seat in the back. The engine protruded into the space between the driver's and co-pilot's seats and the cowlings were upholstered in gray naugahyde, with cup holders and storage places for cd's and such. Initially, I thought it was a little too flamboyant for my tastes. I don't remember Tim's early reaction. I think we brought Janet and Tommy to see it the next day. Tommy's reaction was, "what's the problem? It's Monroe (the high school Rebels) red and gray!" That cinched the deal and we drove it home. For its maiden voyage, Tim stayed with Mom and Dad and Janet, Tommy and I, and Andy, Sue and Chris Boggs took off for Winston Salem in the spring, dropped Tommy and Chris off to stay with his brother Drew, a student at Wake Forest, and we drove up for a terrific weekend at Williamsburg.

Tripp Helms, Tommy's age and now a District Court Judge in Monroe, was in Troop 109, which Andy and I were co-scoutmasters of, gave me an Atlas one Christmas with the inscription, "Mr Caldwell, with this and a Boy Scout compass you can go anywhere". Tripp made Eagle. That Atlas is dog-eared and some pages are loose, testimony to how much use it has been and still is put to. Tim and I began planning our route. My law partner, Frank Griffin's wife, Betsy, told me we should go over and see Clegg Furr and hear about his trip. I knew who Clegg was but didn't know him well. He was in management with Kendrick Brick and Tile and lived in a large all brick house on Forest Hills Dr. How to describe Clegg; uber-enthusiastically fastidious is about as close as I can come without resort to a thesaurus. It seemed like he was lying in wait for supplicants to beg for his travel wisdom and that we were the first to bow before him. He whipped out a journal that detailed the every movement his family made on their westward pilgrimage. It noted where they spent each nite and what it cost, where they ate and what they spent for breakfast, what time they took off, the mileage to every stop, where, when and the cost of lunch and

dinner, every site they saw, and, of course, he had a story with most every entry. I don't remember but he probably showed us the photographic record of the Furr epic journey. After a couple of hours, we began planning our escape. In retrospect, we could have saved 23 days and much moola if I'd only brought Janet and Tommy over for Clegg's western travelogue. I'll bet he would have served popcorn.

We threw a cheap dome tent, sleeping bags, and a few other camping items in the back of the van, piled clothes for 23 days on top of them, and a cooler, some pogeey bait and a few nutritional items for Janet inside and lit out for Mac and Mary's in Nashville, our first stop. After a good dinner and breakfast, we pulled out of River Oaks in Brentwood, a southern Nashville suburb, with the Colonel, as he led his helicopter squadron in Vietnam, leading us in his white Mercedes out to I-40 west of town, where he waved us farewell, with a gleam and maybe a tear in his eye. I expect Janet had one in hers and I may have had one in mine. Westward, Ho!!!

Tim will have to help me remember whether we had mapped out our entire journey, with spots to visit and places to lodge, before we left. I think we had joined Triple A and gave them our tentative route and had their guidebooks.

Writer and Editor's note: This is being written entirely from the writer and editor's memory, without benefit of an Atlas or any notes, and, at least to this point, without resort to Google, and is, therefore, subject to correction, modification, revision and/or reproof by Janet, Tommy, Tim, and, with respect to our brief visit with them in Monterey, Pat and Jan Hughes, the only others with knowledge of its contents beyond this point.

We crossed the Mississippi and Arkansas and into Oklahoma, noting that the US was green until Oklahoma City, where we spent the nite (for quite a while, Tim and I, not sure about Tommy and Janet, could name every motel we stayed in and every meal we ate, but alas, those critical details are not documented a la Clegg Furr and will soon be remembered no more) and brown west of there. We turned south thru the top hat of Texas, buying some fixings in Amarillo for a picnic down the road, stopping at a little park dominated by two things of memory; big, green flies and a strong, steady wind. We sat a full liter bottle of Coke on the table and it blew over. It was a short picnic and we headed across tumbleweed and grasshopper (I think that's what they called the ubiquitous, perpetually pumping oil rigs) dominated landscape, headed toward New Mexico. I think it was along then that I discovered that Tommy had forgotten to bring his driver's license, and, not unusual for me in those days, and still, occasionally, but thank goodness (another of Mom's terms), not as often, I got a little hot under the collar because I was thinking we would use a 3 driver rotation. As it turned out, as it usually did and does, my aggravation was senseless because I enjoyed and therefore did 90% of the driving. A day or so later, Janet was driving on the Interstate and a prairie dog ran out in front of us. All three of us yelled instructions on how she could avoid hitting him. She swerved left, back right, then left again and squashed him. Thank goodness (thanks again, Mom) there weren't any cars around or the prairie dog might not have been the only one to meet his reward on that stretch of Interstate. It took a while for Killer Janet to live that down.

The theme song for our great adventure was Neil Diamond's Coming to America: "On the boats and on the planes, they're coming to America, TODAY! Our country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, TODAY", which was on a cassette tape of his greatest hits; Sweet Caroline, I Am, I Said, something Rosie ("you store bought woman"), and many others that we learned the words to as we sang along. Tommy had made a (what's it called, a remix?) tape of some of his tunes: a disco song by (Janet remembered as I was reading this to her as I typed it) Donna Summers (who, Janet said in the same breathe, is now dead), something about a girl dancing and getting into her groove, accentuated by a whip cracking (I loved that one-if that song had been around when I was 16, maybe I'd have learned how to dance, which I'm sure would have made me cool and a heartthrob, which in turn would have probably led to root beer, then the real thing, thing to Fast Times at East Meck with me getting stoned like Spicoli, then to, to, to what... to Parris Island, Vietnam, agent orange, the VFW, Central Piedmont or George Shinn's King's College on the GI bill, a shoe or life insurance sales career, marriage to Ruby, and plea for her not to take her love to town, or to Lucille who would leave me with 4 hungry mouths to feed and crops in the field, the life of many who learned to jitterbug, twist and to mash potatoes. Tommy's tape also introduced me to the great songs of Chicago. What would have been on the soundtrack if Dad and Mom had embarked on such a trip as ours when Bill, you were 16, I was 12 and Harry, you were 10: "Hey bird dog, get offa my tail, hey bird dog, you're on the wrong trail" or "Wake up, Little Suzy, wake up" or "Dreeeam, dream, dream, dream, when I want you, all I have to dooo is dreeeammm", or the updated old standby, Blue Moon, or the newer version of moonstruck amour, ending, "there's a moon out tonite, moon out tonite, moon out tonite, there's a moon out, tooouuo, niii—iite! What's a trip without some tunes?

Capulin Mountain, a volcano rising right up out of the relatively flat plateau of the NE corner of New Mexico, with a little snow still clinging to its rim, was our first glimpse of what we anticipated of the west. I did google it to correct my initial misspelling of its name and found it's a National Monument. There was a half mile, maybe longer trail around its base which we hiked. I was so carried away, I think I shot a whole roll of Kodachrome. After that, I began pacing myself. Oh, if we'd only had cell phones or even digital cameras in those days. Then, on to Pueblo, CO, where we began to catch glimpses of the snow covered Rockies on our approach. First, Bill, then Harry, and then Dad and Mom had seen and extolled the grandeur of the Royal Gorge, carved by the Arkansas River across southern Colorado, so we headed there after Pueblo. And it was all they had cracked it up to be. We drove across the suspension bridge, walked across the swinging bridge, and took the inclined tram down to the river. From there, we continued west, next seeing the equally magnificent Black Canyon of the Gunnison, before spending the nite in Grand Junction. Then south to Bryce National Park, a surreal landscape of, I guess, sandstone formations, which prompted some settler to remark, "Hell of a place to lose a cow". Continuing south to Zion NP, we entered it thru a long narrow tunnel which had windows hollowed out every so often, giving a glimpse of the canyon floor you were headed toward. We spent the nite at a motel in the canyon, though I don't think in the higher priced Lodge. We took a hike back into one of the narrow side canyons before departing for the south rim of the Grand Canyon, picnicking on the shore of Lake Powell.

We camped, with the boys and me in the tent and Janet on the folded out back seat of the van, for the first time at the big gully carved by the Colorado River. We saw the historic lodge and walked out to some of the viewing spots to see the spectacular views to the bottom and the trail where hikers and

donkeys were going down and coming up. You could tell by their pace and the look on their faces, i.e., whether a smile or a grimace, which were going and which were coming. We headed southwest and passed thru a city with a billboard that advertised itself as the home of Jingles P. Jones, whose real name I can't recall, sidekick to one of the TV cowboys, maybe Hopalong Cassidy. Then, across the spectacular Hoover Dam, where we took a tour into its belly. Oops, back to the Grand Canyon for a minute. In Tim's anecdotes about me which he sent, along with those which he had asked others to send for my 75th birthday a few weeks ago, he mentioned an episode which I had forgotten. I almost backed our van into a vehicle occupied by some Asians in the parking lot at the Canyon. Though it was me who was careless, the driver got out and humbly and profusely apologized as though he was the one at fault, a reminder of how apparently some Americans think Asians should act toward them, as evidenced by the shameful language of a Congressman from Texas a few days ago blaming Covid on China, the day before the madman murdered 8 Asian women in Georgia. I think it may also have been at the GC where we saw a VW van which had maps painted on each side of the routes in the countries it had travelled, including, in addition to the US, Europe, parts of Asia, and Australia, noting the thousands of miles it had rolled.

Back to the Dam. We saw folks spitting water over the dam and watched the wind coming up its face blow it back at them. Maybe the boys tried it, so, of course, I had to get into the act. I got a mouthful of water at the handy fountain and spewed it out, only to have it blow back into the face of a park ranger who happened by. I don't remember his understandably sarcastic comment, something like "Nice going, buddy" or "You wanna try that again, fellow". I was as apologetic as the Asian. Tim remembered that in his birthday anecdotes as well. More of his remembrances later. Ken Helms and family have crossed the new bridge below the dam built after 9/11 to keep traffic off the dam. I'd love to, too!

I wonder how much of the power generated at the Hoover it takes to light up Las Vegas, our next stop. Someone had told us we should visit Circus-Circus as it was kid friendly. We ate dinner there but Janet got claustrophobic since, as I'm told as in all casinos, there were no windows. We spent the nite at a motel some distance from the strip and couldn't wait to get the heck out of there the next morning. We ate breakfast at a Denny's. The only \$ I lost in Vegas to gambling was a nickel I put in the slot machine beside the cash register when I paid the check. We were glad to see Sin City in the rearview mirror.

Our next destination was Yosemite Park and the closest route was thru Death Valley. Exiting the Valley, the lowest point in the US, to the west, you immediately look up and see Mt Whitney in the Sierra Nevadas, the highest point in the lower 48. Amazing! We turned north and entered Yosemite NP at Tioga Pass, recently opened after the winter's snow. We drove past Tuolumne Meadows and into Yosemite Valley, where the road followed the shimmering Merced River. I can only imagine what John Muir must have felt when he first entered this majestic valley. If I remember correctly, Teddy Roosevelt visited Yosemite and, leaving his aides behind, camped out a night or two with John. I think Teddy designated Yosemite as the first National Park. If there could only be one, for me, it would have to be Yosemite, or, as Trump mispronounced it, Yo see mite.

If I remember correctly, you drive past El Capitan and Yosemite Falls on your left before you reach something (again, I'm not googling) Village, where there were a large number of big tents over wooden platforms with four cots inside, our luxurious accommodations for two nights. We must have gotten

reservations ahead, though without cell phones, email and internet, that would have been easier said than done, either that, or we were very lucky. We couldn't afford the beautiful Ahwahnee Inn.

It was like we were in a fib, with hearts racing, trying to decide what to see and do first. We walked to the base of Yosemite Falls, with the thunderous roar and spray increasing with every step. We sat in the meadow below El Capitan with our necks craned to watch the miniature figures edging up the monolith, golden in the sun. We walked to as close as we could get to the bases of some of the other spectacular falls, like Nevada, Vernal and Bridal Veil. I don't remember whether we could see Half Dome from the Village or whether we walked or drove down to it, or how far into the Valley the road extended. The Valley wasn't terribly crowded with cars or people.

****Technical stuff:** months ago I had a problem with the laptop I'm typing this on in that the arrow operated by the touch pad which moves the cursor around was stuck in the very upper left corner of the screen and wouldn't budge. So, the Geek Squad at Best Buy tells me the touch pad is kapoot and I'll have to buy a separate mouse and a little doodad to stick in a porthole on the right side hereof so the mouse can talk to the 'puter, both of which I acquired from BB for about \$25. Not long after, the touch pad started working again and has worked fine until a little while ago when the arrow got stuck again in the same place. I turned this contraption off and back on and, voila, the touchpad is working again. I guess turning a 'puter off and on is akin to how we used to stop the screen from flickering on old TV's; a good slap up side it. But, unless my eyes are deceiving me, the type and line spacing, starting with the immediately preceding paragraph, appear different, and in addition, whereas before, the Enter button caused a two line skip, which I like as a new paragraph indicator, now it only moves the type down to the next line, thereby necessitating two strikes to the Enter button for a new paragraph. All of this to explain the difference in appearance hereof from the above paragraph on, unless and until another cyber demon strikes yet another blow to this Luddite's technological indulgence. ******

Another Writer and Editor's (FYI, they're one and the same, me) note:** I spent a good bit of time yesterday editing what appears above because my main critic and main squeeze (FYI, who, for clarification, is also one and the same; Adorable Janet, as she labeled herself in my phone contacts so that her name appears, if not first, certainly near thereto, and which distinguishes her on caller ID from other Janet acquaintances, of which I can't think of any right off), thinks my style of writing is hard to follow, largely, if not entirely, but with which I often take issue, because of my long, run on sentences, in hiking jargon, "switch backs", in food or kindling preparation jargon, "chopped up" or nautically, "choppy", as in waters, broken up only by many ,,, 's, and () () 's, and ;;;'s and [] [] 's, my stream of conscious, i.e., rabbit chasing thinking, and my sheer resistance to orthodox syntax and such, BUT, from here on, I am returning to my, though, possibly, or more likely, probably hard to decipher and/or digest for anyone who might end up wasting their perfectly good but limited time here on earth, reading, or attempting to read this rambling wreck (with apologies to Ga Techians), state of hypermnesia (I did google that one and found it as a close synonym for "thinking", as a means to further endear, or to at least further ensnare those unfortunate souls who have read thus far) and methods of writing, because 1) it comports with how I think and, more importantly, to me, at least, 2) it's easier, but most importantly, again, to me, 3) it's a hecka of lot more fun. Sorry, readers. **

Someone told us about a spectacular but little used trail near the park's entrance on its west side, that is, for visitors travelling east, as opposed to where we had entered at Tioga Pass, which is on the park's east side, and entered by passengers travelling west. Now, since hopefully you and, more importantly since I'm driving, I, am appropriately oriented geographically, the view from said entrance is panoramically spectacular. There's an overlook that it seems essential to me that all visitors should take

advantage of, giving a vista of the entire valley. It's breath taking! We drove up there and I think the not well marked trailhead emanated from its parking lot, and off we went, having the, what started out as a fairly well worn, trail to ourselves. I should have realized why, when the trail got narrower and narrower, with less and less signs of recent use, as it wound further and further uphill, narrowing more and more as the rock wall it was clinging to became sheerer and sheerer, until it suddenly hit me that I had led my only progeny, who thought, or maybe theretofore had thought, that their old man had some sense, into a highly precarious and dangerous situation. We had proceeded on the trail until it had gotten so narrow and slippery from the crumbly rocks underfoot that it was hard, and potentially dangerous to even turn around, but we had no choice, unless I wanted to chance the extinguishment of my branch of the Caldwells. And our scary predicament was made even more ominous by the sound track that accompanied this high stakes, and elevation, drama; the sound of rocks breaking off the canyon walls and falling hundreds, maybe thousands, of feet before striking granite below, like loud rifle shots, reverberating and echoing off the highly acoustical rock walls. I don't remember much conversation, but I probably tried to downplay our situation, though I was plenty concerned about our safety. Sons, were y'all as scared as I was? I don't recall for sure whether Janet had stayed in the Village or was waiting in the van, but I think the latter, and I don't remember who said what about our misadventure, but Mama, rightly, majorly chastised me!

But did I learn? We drove up to Inspiration Point on the rim of the valley, aptly named, for the view into the valley and beyond was truly inspirational. The tradition, of park rangers nightly lighting a large fireball of dead branches and pushing them over the rim at Inspiration Point to be witnessed as it cascaded down the granite canyon wall by amazed spectators in the valley below, had been halted a few years before, but we saw photos of the spectacular display. The overlook had a fence to keep gawkers like us from getting too close to the edge and a sign stating its purpose. Did that stop me? Given my past faux pas, or more like ignorant and/or intentional misbehaviors, take a guess! A real photographer, like me, intent on getting a prize winning photo, is not bound by the strictures on plebian snapshooters; he must be able to disregard the rules designed to protect mere mortals, because danger is no obstacle standing between a REAL capturer of magic and the magic he must capture. So, over the fence I go, only to be collared by a lady park ranger. How embarrassing, to me, that is. I don't remember, but Janet and the boys probably acted like they didn't know me. Tim, as recalled in his anecdotes for my 75th, still remembers it, as I'm sure he, Tommy and Janet remember our walking and driving through the giant sequoias in the nearby Mariposa Grove.

My next and last visit to Yosemite was in the summer of, I think, 1991. Tommy had finished Carolina and Tim a post high school graduate year playing basketball, and a little studying and marching, at Fork Union Military Academy, before heading off to Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville and college at Davidson, respectively, and they decided to do a reprise of our '84 trip, though with a somewhat different route and with a frat bro of Tommy's from Carolina instead of their fun stifling parents, but using the van, which I we still had. They spent the night in the bottom of the Grand Canyon, having only Bear Claws for sustenance (Tommy was in charge of groceries), saw the Dodgers play and flexed at Muscle Beach in LA and picked me up outside the Stanford football stadium in Palo Alto where I had arrived after flying into San Fran at couple days earlier and seeing some sights in a rental car. We drove to Yosemite and backpacked a couple of nites out of Tuolumne Meadows, swimming buck naked in a cold lake and seeing the beautiful back country, before Tommy and his buddy hiked to Hetch-Hetchy (if you're not familiar with this other Yosemite valley which was dammed and flooded in the 1920s for a water reservoir for San Fran, you should google and read about this shameful episode in our rapacious history) while Tim and I hiked out and I thumbed back to get the van. I drank the coldest and best beer I've ever had tasted (I think I let Tommy and his of drinking age buddy share it with me) from a frosty

pitcher and we ate some delicious steaks at the Mountain Room (I had to google it) located near Yosemite Falls, with beautiful huge Yosemite photos on the walls. We camped and watched the fireworks over Lake Tahoe on the 4th of July, got the van's oil changed at the Ford place in Sacramento where it was 100 degrees around noon, and watched the Giants play in Candlestick Park that nite, where we wore all the clothes we had and drank hot coffee and cocoa to keep from freezing, before I flew home the next day to resume earning a living while the vagabonds resumed their travels, not returning home for another 3 or 4 weeks. A great diversion for me from work and the boys from their studies, and a pleasant diversion from Westward Ho, to which I now return.

We left Yosemite headed for Monterey, where my first cousin, Pat Hughes, the younger son of my mother's youngest sister, Jeanette, lived with his wife Jan and their 3 children, Chrissie, an adorable adopted Asian (Korean[?]; Pat and Jan, you'll have to help me out with her name and country of origin) little girl, and son Michael. Pat and Jan now live on Whidbey Island, WA, where I visited them 5-6 years ago, enroute to join friend since the 4th grade, Bill Carr, and some of his buddies from the Atlanta area at the Seattle airport, before flying on for a salmon fishing trip in Alaska. Mike, Pat's older brother, lives in Michigan, near Mackinac, where I hope to visit him after we settle in Louisville. In '84, Pat was a Navy officer and was attending the Navy postgraduate school located in the beautiful old Monterey Presidio. Tough assignment, Cuz! If I recall, the middle child, whose name I can't recall, was infatuated with Tim, who had the same effect on Susan Demart, who, 6 or 7, with her parents Herb and Cam and sister Darcy, members of 1st Baptist Monroe, as we were, was glued to 14 or 15 yr old Tim on a church camping and rafting the Nantahala River trip I organized. Pat took us on the grand tour of the Monterey Peninsula, even to Pebble Beach golf course, where we walked out to the 18th green and watched the Pacific crash against the beautiful coastline.

The next morning, we headed up the coast, arriving in San Francisco in late afternoon, not stopping in the city but getting a good tour as we circled it when I missed the exit for the Golden Gate, crossing the iconic bridge after the 30-45 minute circumnavigation of the city, taking, unlike Tony Bennett, our hearts and appetites with us. I think we briefly visited Golden Gate NRA, (National Recreation Area) in the hills high above the northern end of the bridge, before having dinner in a beautiful restaurant in Sausalito on the shore of San Fran Bay, with a terrific view of the City on the Hill and Alcatraz Island. It was a very high end restaurant and the delicious meal was a tad expensive. I left a tip in cash, commensurate with the tab, for the elegantly dressed, maybe tuxedoed, waiter, and Tommy gasped and made a comment about the size of the tip, unaware that our gentlemanly server had walked up, and smiled as Tommy sank down in his chair. I was just at this point in the story about 10:00 yesterday, Saturday, 3/27, morning, when Tim called. I read him what I'd just typed and he immediately said "Spinnakers", the name of the restaurant.

With our bellies full, we drove a little further north and spent the night in a small town I don't remember the name of. We headed on up the California coast, stopping to see the redwoods in the John Muir Woods and/or Redwoods NP, making it to Coos Bay, OR, a beautiful town on the Pacific, with the waves crashing on the rocks, for the night. The Matriarch, having suppered on meat at Spinnakers, was rather insistent that we cleanse at an all veggie place. The food was terrible, even, I think to Janet, though she was reluctant to admit it.

We drove all the next day, hearing on the radio as we entered, as darkness approached, Seattle, that the Mariners were playing at home, when, like magic, I saw the exit for the ballpark and, without discussion, turned off, much to the delight of the boys and without objection from the Missus. We were in our seats, which I think were in the right field bleachers, for the first pitch to the Mariner's opponents, who I

don't remember. Tommy and Tim were big Atlanta Braves fans. This was the second major league game we'd seen, the first being the Braves against Pittsburgh in Atlanta, where we stayed in an apartment which Dickerson had rented for Andy Boggs to stay while he was working there on a long term project and which he let us use for the weekend while he returned to home in Monroe. The Braves were leading in the 9th and had brought Bedrock, the flame throwing Steve Bedrosian in, in relief of knuckler Phil Neikro, to stop the Pirates rally, which had loaded the bases. The Pirates brought up a pinch hitter, and Tim, who knew him and his home run record, warned of disaster, and sure enough, he hit it out of the park, a grand slam, and the Braves lost. * I said that was our first big league game, but it seems like we'd visited Bill Carr before and saw a game with him and his sons. In any event, the Mariners' game, though not like seeing the Braves, who, I think, were in the pennant race, provided a fun night. The next morning we went up in the Space Needle, which gave us fantastic views of Mt Rainer and other snow covered peaks, including Mt Baker in the North Cascades, which we then headed north to see up close.

Tim called again Sunday (3/28) morning on his way to Palm Sunday services (he usually calls when he's driving, alone, which is a good idea as it doesn't interfere with family time, though probably not encouraged by highway safety experts, though [again], is talking on the phone while driving, aside from the dialing or receiving aspects, much different than talking with passengers or listening to something you're intent on hearing on the radio or on a cd?) to see if Janet had arrived safely from Louisville back to our cabin near Bakersville, NC, where I'm, presently, comfortably ensconced. I read him the above paragraph, and he promptly recalled the Pirate pinch hitter, Omar Marino, and that he was batting .300. We Caldwell's remember the important stuff!

The North Cascades had only recently become a national park when we drove through in late afternoon on a two lane, maybe gravel in places, road under darkening skies, with high mountains on both sides, with no restrooms or other accommodations, and very little traffic. We came up on a small car pulled over with a flat tire, and stopped and walked over as an elderly man got out, and with a bit of panic in his voice, explained that he and his wife were driving their rental car and he couldn't find the spare. We found it, one of those small, get you to the service station types, under the hood, and put it on for him. He was extremely appreciative and offered to pay us, but I told him we were Boy Scouts and this was our good turn for the day. (Andy had worked in a service station in high school and had the great idea of talking Neal Hinson, manager of the Goodyear store on Skyway in Monroe, into letting us use the store's garage bays a couple of nights to teach Troop 109ers some basic car maintenance, such as checking and changing the oil and changing flat tires.) The gentleman was so frantic that he'd probably have given us every dollar in his wallet if we'd have taken it.

We spent the nite in the small cowboy western looking, whether for tourist reasons or simply because they liked the look, town of Winthrop, which I wouldn't have remembered the name of except for the fact that about a month ago, I reconnected, on FB, with my young old friend, Rip Parks, who as a young 20s Troop 109 Eagle Scout alum, joined Andy and me as an assistant Scoutmaster, leading the Troop on some pretty great outdoor adventures (rock climbing and rappelling in Crowder's Mtn, NC St Pk, canoeing the New River, also an NC St Pk, cross country skiing at Moses Cone Pk, part of the Blue Ridge Parkway, backpacking in Linville Gorge, a National Wilderness Area, just off the BRPWay, tubing the Green River), as well as plenty of local camping trips, and who remembered and asked me on FB Messenger about the trip I'm now writing about, and to whom I gave our route, remembering every place we spent the night, except Winthrop, which I had to google; hence this exception to and explanation of my previously mentioned google-free policy. The next day we drove across the Grand Coulee Dam (I wonder if it's now closed to traffic post 9/11), into Idaho, getting the oil changed and van washed in Coeur d'Alene (had to google its spelling), Idaho and on into Montana, stopping for dinner in

either Libby or Kalispell (whichever is westernmost). Having a little daylight left, and asking a local the distance to and lodgings in the easternmost of said towns, we decide to plug on to the next town, after being warned by the local to watch out for wildlife, which we hadn't theretofore seen a lot of, crossing the road. If I recall correctly, we counted 30-some 4 legged Montanans, mostly deer, and maybe a moose and/or elk or three. Unlike 3 weeks ago, when I'm proceeding early one morning down NC 226 from our cabin near the Ledger community to Spruce Pine to hook my little camper to my 2004 Tundra pickup for a few days at Cheraw, SC St Pk, a teenage deer sprang from the woods and destroyed the glass on my passenger side mirror, necessitating my pulling the 24' camper down the mountain to Marion, around it on its 4 lane bypass to I-40, west to I-77 in Statesville, south to I-485, around to the new US 74 toll bypass in Matthews, to regular US 74 in Marshville, east to Wadesboro, departing the 4 lane on NC 52 to Cheraw, and south on NC-SC 52/US 1 to the Park, all in the outside lane, further necessitating a drive to Scott Clark Toyota in Matthews the next day to be told the mirror wasn't in stock, back to Cheraw for 9 holes of golf, and a drive back to Matthews the next day for installation. But, thankfully, the mirror was repairable with just the replacement of the glass. Though I didn't stop to check, I expect Bambi was beyond repair.

The next day we drove into Glacier, NP, stopping briefly to take in the gorgeous view across a glacial lake, maybe St Mary's, to the snow covered peaks beyond, arriving at the pass that is the beginning of what has to be one of the most spectacular drives, not just in the US, but surely around the world, the Going to the Sun Highway, the day after it was opened from the winter's snow, gawking at the snow piled around the parking lot 8-10' high in our shorts and T-shirts, in early June. My co-pilot admonished me frequently to keep my eyes on the road as we crept along the narrow, curvy two lane highway carved into the rock cliffs, with low, if any, guard rails on the opposite side. We crossed into the Canadian side of the park, where it's called the Waterton (named for the beautiful Lake Waterton) International Peace Park and into the town of Waterton where deer had the run of the town. They were in the streets and nibbling grass and bushes in the yards. The boys rolled down the window and fed them the only thing we had to eat, lemon drops. We had made a reservation for the night at the Prince of Wales Hotel, which I knew about only from its picture in a full page color ad, probably for some hi \$ scotch, on the back cover of a magazine, and, unlike often when reality pales in comparison to the photographic image, as though the image had been enhanced and surely was, at least to the extent it was made in ideal lighting, seasonal, and weather conditions, as we drove around the edge of Lake Waterton and our view of the Prince, an elegant, 1920s, European chalet like edifice perched on a plateau above the end of the Lake, which extended for miles, framed by mountains on both sides, the magazine image began to pale in comparison to the real thing; a story book structure in a majestic setting. Seasoned travelers as we were becoming, accustomed to the luxuries of Motel 6s, the plumbing and other accessories were a bit antiquated and the food in the restaurant was something less than anticipated, though the gastronomical disappointment was lessened by the visual experience of looking out on the panoramic view of Lake Waterton. If there's one place I would like to stay in again, of all the places we stayed on this trip, it would probably be the venerable Prince of Wales, though I wouldn't object if they changed its name to the Sir Winston, in the opinion of this very common commoner, a much worthier Brit.

Heading back into the states, I think we had lunch in East Glacier but I don't remember how far we got that day. We visited a western museum which had a large collection of Remington paintings somewhere in Big Sky Country, maybe Helena, and spent that or the next night in, I think, Livingston, in southern Montana or northern Wyoming, the gateway for our entry the next morning to Yellowstone NP from the north. I can't remember what we saw and did in order in Yellowstone. We stopped with other cars to see bison, or buffalo (is there a difference?) roaming free and watching with astoundment as adults

urged kids to walk closer to the behemoths for a photo op, despite signs warning of the danger of approaching them and other wildlife. This is one time I followed the rules. On down the road, neck cranners were out of their cars with cameras and binoculars, watching what they exclaimed was a grizzly in the distance. He/she could have been Mildred for all I could tell. Tim started to cry and we had no idea why, but on inquiry, he sobbed, "all we do is ride. I'm tired of riding. I want to do something." "What do want to do?" "I want to go fishing!" Well, that would have taken some doing as we didn't have fishing gear, licenses, or local knowledge. As a respite from riding in the van, we rode horses on a group trail ride, the old sway back, nose to rear of its predecessor type nags that slowly clopped along while the guide regaled us with his Yellowstone wisdom, all almost as much fun as riding in the van listening to Donna Summers crack her whip, but at least it stopped Tim's tears. We camped near some hot sulfur springs, were awed by the Yellowstone Lodge, which is near Old Faithful, where we had timed our visit to coincide with its announced anticipated burp, and belch it did, right on time, as faithful as advertised. And, of course, I exposed quite a number of Kodachrome shots at the yellow Yellowstone Falls and yellow gorge walls, before heading south toward where I had been excitedly anticipating the whole trip, the Grand Tetons.

I've been a drug addict for over 50 years, in recovery for over 20. My first exposure to tobacco was at Aunt Verla Kiser's on Windemere. Gene and Mickey smoked; I don't remember about Sid; Frankie did when he became a teenager; even Aunt Verla smoked. I don't know if I actually remember this, if it was remembered by witnesses and promulgated, or if it's apocryphal, but supposedly I picked up a lighted cigarette from an ashtray at the Kisers' and put it in my mouth in imitation of my aunt, cousins and dad, who smoked Kools for a period, only I put the lighted end to my lips, a trauma that unfortunately didn't turn me forever against the evil weed. Dad also smoked Sir Walter Raleigh in a pipe. I loved its smell in the big can it came in. Paul Dover lived on the corner of a short dead end street and Monroe Rd, the first street from Rama toward Charlotte and in the 6th and/or 7th grade, Paul would pilfer a Winston or two from his dad and we'd puff them down in the woods. I'm sure, as Bill Clinton, we didn't inhale or we'd have thrown up, which I did when I tried a chaw of Grandpa Beaty's plug of Brown Mule and swallowed the juice. In high school, I would smoke an occasional cigar, sometimes, as I've written about in my story "Hook It, Kiker", with the tacit approval of basketball coach Baker Hood, may he RIP. I didn't inhale cigar smoke. I don't remember ever smoking a cigarette in high school, nor did a drop of alcohol pass my lips, except for one sip of champagne at a prom after party my senior year. Fortunately, I never got addicted to alcohol, unlike, unfortunately, I did to nicotine.

I roomed with my friend and football teammate since the 8th grade, Martin Brackett, my first year in college and he started smoking Salems, and I started bumming them and also started inhaling. A number of guys on the hall and frat bros smoked and gradually I picked up the habit, and began to buy an occasional pack of Winstons. When Homer Smith was hired as football coach before Christmas of '64, my freshman year, he instituted a no "dissipating", his word, rule; translated, no smoking or drinking anytime, in season or out or over the summer, or anyplace, in your room, on campus, at parties, or in Mongolia, the penalty for which was being awakened before sunrise by Coach Dave Fagg, football and wrestling captains and MVPs his senior year and Tommy Peters Award (given to the senior who best combined athletics, scholarship, leadership and integrity) recipient before his 1958 graduation, and a Navy OCS grad and veteran, captain of the Dawn Patrol, who would escort you to the football stadium to run its steps and perform such other feats as he deemed appropriate to assure him that your dissipation days were over. Pack Hindsley, frat bro two years my senior, team co-captain his senior, my sophomore year, pre-med, was the first victim, having been seen taking a smoke break outside the chemistry building during labs, and next morning, was awakened by Fagg for the Dawn Patrol. A year or so ago, Coach Fagg, now 85 and living in Davidson, remembered it in a laughter and reminiscent laden phone

conversation we enjoyed, not our first and hopefully not our last. Coach said he ran Hindsley on the stadium steps till the '57 team captain was afraid the '65 co-captain was going to collapse, then took him down to the end zone to do up-downs till he threw up, then made him roll till he stopped moving. He told Pack to get up but got no response. Fagg said he thought, "OMG, is he dead? 'Get up Hindsley! Don't die on me!' My coaching career is over! I may end up in jail." Pure Dave Fagg. I asked if he remembered the time, late one Friday or Saturday night I was walking, or semi-staggering down Concord Ave toward campus from a married frat bro's house where several of had gathered, feeling little pain (the sip of champagne I mentioned earlier was the only devil's brew that made it down my gullet until the spring of my sophomore year when some frat bros got me drunk on Wild Turkey when I lost a bet to my close friend, frat bro and wide receiver, the Rockingham Rocket, Kim Johnson, who dropped out of school at the end of the semester, joined the Marines and died years ago as a hermit living in a shack on a deserted part of the beach near Southport, that he would attend every class for a week, which after he told me he had at lunch on Friday, I went and asked and all of his professors verified that he had) and he pulled up beside me and rolled down his window and said "Tommy, is that you?" and I said something like "who is that?", and he told me to get in and dropped me off at Duke dorm. I'm still waiting for Coach to roust me out of the sack for a session with the Dawn Patrol. At a gathering some years ago to honor Dave and his wife Barbara with a \$1M, raised mainly from his former players, endowed scholarship in his/their honor, at which guests were invited to tell a Coach story, with Homer and his wife in attendance, before, obviously, he died a few years later with leukemia, I, prefacing my remarks by stating my assumption that the statute of limitations on dissipation had run, told that story.

Davidson was a pretty conservative place. I'm sure there were some marijuana smokers and some use of harder stuff. The only illegal drugs I knew anything about, though I never used them, I guess they were amphetamines, that guys used to stay up late studying. At least I never took any intentionally. We played the Blue Hose of Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC my junior year. I'd been having a problem with painful shin splints and asked trainer Tom Couch, affectionately known as Dr Crotch, if he had anything I could take for it and he gave me a pill. We went out and did calisthenics and pregame stuff and came back in the locker room for Homer's pep talk. When we took the field and the team headed for the bench, I asked Coach Fagg when we were going to do pregame warm ups, and he looked at me incredulously and asked what I was talking about. I didn't remember that we had done them just minutes before, and I don't remember anything about the game except that we won and that I rode home with Mom and Dad, who had driven down for the game, and that we stopped by Chester to see Mom's twin, Uncle Leighton and Aunt Eva Dell. I went to bed at the normal time and stared at the ceiling till about 4 in the morning when I finally got up and got in Dad's car and drove around till light. I'd never had and have never since had such an experience, and I never took another of Dr Crotch's pills.

My dissipation preceded Homer's, Fagg's, Dick Tomey's (later head coach at U's of Hawaii and Arizona), and Ken Blair's (an All American offensive lineman at Colorado) arrival at Davidson, determined to turn us footballers, who had become Wildkittens, back into Wildcats. In addition to bumming Brackett's Salems my freshman year, I'd started chewing a little shredded Beechnut, or maybe it was Redman. One afternoon a couple of us were sitting in the bleachers watching a wrestling match in Johnston Gym and I had a chaw in and was holding a paper Coke cup I was spitting in. Dickey Dickens came in and jerked the cup out of my hand and before, though I may not have been too quick to say anything, maybe thinking he'd be getting what he deserved, I could protest, he took a big swig. He didn't make it to the grass, puking all down the front steps of the gym. Later, after I'd begun imbibing a bit, I found myself sitting with some guys at the bar at Hattie's, or, as students called a trip to the beer joint just outside the town

limits of Davidson, going “up the road”, with a Blue Ribbon in my hand, a chaw pushed to the side in my mouth, and a Winston between my lips, the Dissipation Hat Trick.

By the end of September my senior year, after my football career had ended by tearing the cartilage in my left knee, twisting it while making a tackle just before halftime in the 3rd game of the season against East Carolina, the first and only game Mac, my new father-in-law, ever saw me play, a pack of Winstons was usually in my shirt pocket. I drove over to watch practice on crutches, smoking a cigarette alongside the chain smoking Dr Crotch. Homer came over, saw the cigarette and asked me to leave. Janet and I were living in a little house up past Hattie’s my senior year and she was after me to stop. I’d quit smoking in the house after Tommy was born, and Janet wondered why the decrease in my protests against taking the garbage out, even in cold weather, to put in a 55 gallon barrel in the backyard, until she noticed smoke rising, even when the barrel wasn’t full enough to burn. I don’t think smoking was allowed on planes in ’68 when I flew from Charlotte, thru Atlanta where a stud boarded and to LA, where, when we deplaned, the stud, DD Lewis, an All-American linebacker from Ole Miss or Mississippi State and a Dallas Cowboys’ draft pick, bummed a Winston off me when he saw me light up before we joined the other Cowboy rookies in the terminal for busing to training camp, where we all hoped to get the permanent Cowboy brand, my flight back from which I’ve mentioned earlier.

By the time I finished law school I was smoking two packs of Winstons/day. I smoked everywhere. I lit one up first thing in the morning. I smoked in the house, in the car, in the office, walking to the courthouse, in the Register of Deeds and in the hallway during breaks in the courtroom, on the church steps between Sunday School and robing up for choir, on Scout camping trips and in the van driving to them and to summer camp. Everywhere except in front of Dad and Mom. When Harry and Kate’s first, Alexandra, was born, we still had the van and Janet, Tim, who was around 14 because Tommy wasn’t along so must have been at Chapel Hill, Dad and Mom and I drove to Baltimore to see her. To keep from going nuts and killing us all by crossing the median and hitting a tractor trailer head on in a withdrawal panic attack, I smoked a pipe on the way up and back, inhaling, of course, somehow thinking that wouldn’t have been as offensive to my no longer smoking Dad and (probably never had a drag in her life but who could smell it from 100 paces) Mom, and apparently it wasn’t. Neither ever said a word to me about smoking, but when I’d light up in the bathroom when I was occasionally at home, blowing the smoke out the window as if it would escape Mom’s sniffer, outside the locked door she’d say, “what brand are you smoking, Tom”, to which there was no good reply.

It must have been after Johnson, et als, had introduced me to alcohol but before school ended my sophomore year, because I wasn’t driving (Dad bought me my first car, a ’65 Volvo that looked like a ’48 Ford in the rear, which Janet nicknamed Farfel, the summer before my junior year), some frat bros dropped me off late one Saturday nite at 2318 Rama Rd after a frat party in Charlotte, to which my only escort was a pack of Winstons and a few shots from somebody’s bottle of bourbon. I found the key where it always hung in its hiding place in the garage and tiptoed down the hall, closed the door to mine and Bill’s (we slept together from the time I got out of the crib through young adulthood when we were both home on visits, up until I was married) bedroom door, and got in bed. Directly (one of Dad’s terms), I heard the door creak open and, through squinting eyes, could make out Sheriff Louise easing over and bending down over my face, as I feigned sleep, trying to exhale only thru my nose. She left my door open and I could hear her say to Dad, who she may have awakened just for the occasion, as he was usually in bed by 10, even on Saturday nites so he could be to church early, manning his station as Sunday School superintendent at Matthews Baptist the next morning, “he’s sure got the habit-he smells like a smokestack”...again, thank goodness and thank Mom the she didn’t smell a distillery, only a smokestack, the one time the smell of cigarette smoke did me a favor. I don’t know which is the more

potent smell, smoke or liquor. Mom knew the smell of bourbon since she used it in her fruitcakes, but maybe she didn't recognize the fumes after it had been mixed with Coke and consumed. But for whatever reason, I dodged a bullet. To Southern Baptist Mom, smoking was one thing, even deacons smoked (Preacher Carr taped a sign above the urinal in the restroom of the newly built education building where Sunday Schoolers took a smoke before going into the sanctuary for preaching, reading: "Please do not throw cigarette stubbs in the urinal." Some wag marked thru "stubbs" and inserted "butts" and, being a good punctuationist, turned the period at the end into a comma, and added, "it makes them soggy and hard to smoke." It got a giggle out of me and the current Preacher Carr, WB Jr), but drinking, no way, Jose. If she'd smelled that bourbon, I might have been punting for Bob Jones U that fall.

I tried to kick the habit a thousand times in a dozen ways; gum, filters, even hypnosis, all to no avail, even fooling myself into spending probably twice as much buying them by the pack, on the fairly reasonable theory that having a carton handy would increase my consumption, and on the absolutely unreasonable, nay, the absolutely stupid theory that I might quit before I'd smoked the whole carton, thereby pouring more money down the rat hole, which, of course, had grown, over my pack at a time buying years from a hole into a bottomless pit. In the 30 years I was a full time smoker, I'll bet I didn't buy over 10 cartons. I placed much of the blame for my inability to stop on the anxiety of my job, so rationalized that being out of the office for an extended period would be my path to quitting. Five days away from work, whether on vacation, chaperoning church youth on mission trips or going to Scout camp (Martha Parris told me that before going to camp one summer, her son, Dan said "I sure hope Mr Caldwell doesn't try to quit smoking again at camp", an obvious reference to how pleasant my trying to quit made me! So, apparently freeing myself from my addiction would take more than five days out of the office. I promised the fam that I'd quit on the trip. I'd bought the lemon drops we fed the deer in Waterton to ease the pain, and had started slowing down a little. At Yellowstone I was reminded that I only had a week to go, and as we left there, I announced that the pack in my pocket was my last. I vividly remember, it was late afternoon and we were nearing where we were going to spend the night just north of the Tetons, reaching into the pack and discovering the last cigarette, and probably broke into a cold sweat. I made it to bed that nite, wondering if I could make it thru the next day. I got up before the others, got dressed and walked over to the restaurant and sat down with a cup of coffee, which, for the past 15+ years, had always been accompanied by a Winston. Man, did I ever want one, and came close to buying a pack, or at least bumming one from a stranger, but I didn't.

Few sights compare to that of the Grand Tetons rising abruptly and majestically up out of the plains, shrouded in the early morning by mist rising from the Snake River and Lakes Jenny and Moran. The John D Rockefeller Hiway runs along the range, given that name I suppose because he bought and donated much of the land that makes up the Grand Tetons NP, probably, as with most of his philanthropic gifts of land to the public, which includes the Linville Falls area here in NC, to assuage his guilt for his part in the massacre of striking coal miners in Colorado and other misdeeds usually committed by robber barons. We visited the chapel where the window behind the pulpit provides a stunning view of the Tets and spent the night in Jackson Hole, strolling around the rustic town and the park which is entered thru an arch of elk antlers.

The next morning we headed south and, I think, spent the night near the Wyoming/Colorado border before driving thru Steamboat Springs, Rocky Mtn NP on Trail Ridge Rd, feeding the marmots peanuts or popcorn (I don't know why Janet thought marmots were cute but hates squirrels, maybe because marmots haven't made nests in a hole in the logs of our Penland cabin or dug up the pansies she planted in containers at the house we bought in October in the Highlands in Louisville), on thru Estes Park and

Boulder, spending the nite on the outskirts of Denver. I was bringing in our stuff and the boys, anxious to see how the Braves were doing, turned on the TV. When I came in with an arm full, there on the screen was a fully, or at least partially, nude member of the opposite sex, prancing around and catching my innocent, at least one, sons' complete attention. They'd found the Playboy channel. I don't remember if Janet saw it or not but the channel was quickly changed. No, I didn't turn it on after they'd all gone to sleep or before they awoke the next morning; what kind of man do you think I am? Don't answer that, I will: I'm an old man!

The next morning, we headed east on I-70, through eastern Colorado and across Kansas, considering but rejecting a short side trip to Ike's birthplace in Abilene, my mouth watering for a Kansas City steak. We arrived in the early evening, got a motel room and some steakhouse suggestions, settling on the Apple something restaurant. We weren't disappointed. The steak was delicious, the bread was hot, fried apple fritters, making it one of my all-time favorite dining experiences. I'd never and haven't since mixed steak and apples. YUM! I can almost taste it now! I need to see how far KC is from Louisville. "Going to Kansas City, Kansas City here I come, they got those scrumptious steak and fritters, and I'm gonna get me one", of each!

After KC, we were on our home stretch. We rode up the claustrophobic Arch in St Louis, across the southern tip of Illinois, my, so far, only venture into the Land of Lincoln, thru the Land Between the Lakes in western Kentucky, headed for Nashville, where Mac had another of his juicy rib eyes ready for us and Mary, all the fixin's, with free lodging included in the price. The next day, I think Saturday, as I wanted a day to decompress before reentry into the workaday world, we hopped back on I-40, to I-77 in Statesville, I-77 to the Brookshire Expressway (I-485, if it had been built as it should have been if Charlotteans could have agreed on its location, their indecision causing the funds that had been allocated for it to be shifted to build Raleigh's outer loop [when will politicians, and the citizens who elect them, learn that problems are solved by cooperating rather than by bickering and grandstanding] would have saved a half hour or longer), to US 74 to Monroe (the 74 toll by-pass, opened two years ago, after being discussed and argued over for 20+ years, would have saved at least ¾ of an hour), arriving back at 1105 Martha Dr, exhausted but exhilarated after our 9,000 mile, 23 day, the last 5 or 6 smokeless, odyssey, our discovery of America, land of the mostly free and home of the sometimes brave (my favorite patriotic song is "America" sung by Ray Charles-sorry, Neil).

Written, amateurishly, and edited, inadequately, by your driver and travel guide,
Tom Caldwell,
April 2, 2021

EPILOGUE: The acid test was when I got back in the office on Monday. I was nervous, but I made it through the day without a smoke. Tuesday, the same, and Wednesday. WOW! Was it getting easier? I don't remember. Thursday, a smokeless day. I was on the church softball team and we had a game that nite. I got there after the game had started and we were in the field. There was a pack of Marlboros and a lighter on the bench. I don't know what I was thinking, maybe testing to see if I was really cured. Like an idiot, I lit one up. I bought a pack of Winstons on the way home, hooked as bad as ever for at least another 10 years. My Doc, John Hartness, two years my senior in college, had been after me to quit and gave me a box of nicotine patches which he'd been given as samples. The box sat on my bureau for over a year, collecting dust. It warned that if you smoked after sticking one on that you could overdose on nicotine. I'm not sure it said what the consequences of an overdose might be. One Sunday morning, I

don't remember whether I had a pack in the house or had run out, without thinking about it the night, day, week, or month before, I said to myself, "today's the day" and I put a patch on. I haven't smoked since. I do hope to go west again, hopefully with our grandchildren, and I also hope they never light up.