

HOLY BIBLE
Dictionary • Study Helps

ELDER DAN LEWIS

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Life as a Widower

My Witness: God Provides

Elder Dan Lewis

Individuality is a man's privilege ...

My Senior Yearbook

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Forward

Job said so long ago after he lost all of his children and most of his goods, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Truly God had given Susan to me and me to her for the past 35 years. I have so many wonderful memories of that time. It was time to acknowledge that she was no longer mine. She is now with God where she will remain. Besides God had been so close to me during Susan's last months: He provided me with everything that I needed even before I knew what that should be. So, I was not alone.

Yet for others death is such a traumatic experience even for those who have good relationships with God. (At least they seem to have one.) So, why are their experiences so far different from mine? Yet, the answer is right here in plain sight. It is the same answer to the question as to why do some people have some much harder lives than others? The answer is found in trusting God, truly believing in Him. I knew that as I laid down to sleep about 90 minutes after Susan's heart beat for the last time, I was depending upon God to get me through what I faced in the next few days, and then in the months and years of taking care of Kevin.

What did I learn during the previous 35 years? What lessons could I use to help me during the rest of my life? Or will I be making a lot of mistakes because I will not be thinking things out before doing them? (So, I was looking forward to the life that God had yet for me.) But the answers are that I had learned some things that would be useful. Well, I would find times when I messed my life up again. Sometimes, I made judgments based upon wisdom; other times I made

them based completely upon what I wanted. This has not always been what I needed though.

One of the things that I had learned especially from the last few years of Susan's life was how to exercise patience, how to care for another person when he or she needs this from me. Yet there were many other lessons to be learned. Suddenly being alone having the entire responsibility for Kevin was one of them. Not having the companionship of a lady was a lesson that I'm not sure I have ever learned how to handle. Though I have settled on a list of desirable qualities for a potential wife, they also make it highly unlikely that I will ever find anyone who would fulfill them. (Would I be able to fulfill the list she has made?)

This part of my life contains stories of both kinds: some containing foolishness, and others containing wisdom.

Yet I find this secret when making decisions as to what I want to accomplish: dreams and dedication. Dreams need first to be made realistic and then paid attention to until accomplished. It is our dedication to our dreams that results in the latter.

Widower

2003

Life goes on

It was close to 11:30 PM Monday night before I got all of the people back out of the house. The entire night duty city policemen were the first to leave. Next the two ambulances did. (The second one had advanced life support equipment as in a defibrillator.)

The corner remained for a little while afterward waiting for the arrival of the hearse. When this happened, Susan's body was removed. As they brought her body down the hall, I noticed that her skin color had changed to that of a dead person. Then everyone else left, and I was finally alone with the exception of Kevin who was soundly sleeping in his bed.

I did make one phone call even though I hated to make it so late: I called Tom and Elaine. From my viewpoint, it was fortunate that they were still up. I did not like the idea of waking anyone up in the "middle of the night" with news of a death in the family. (Almost 50 years earlier my parents had gotten a phone call during the early morning hours with the news of Uncle Adam's death. I knew how disturbing that had been.) The rest of the calls would be made later when everyone was awake.

This is when I put my PJ's back on and laid down on my side of the bed. Surprisingly, sleep came fairly quickly... (You know **Who** helped me with this.)

The next thing I heard was the alarm clock. No one was in the bed with me, so I was alone as far as being married was concerned. But Kevin still needed my attention before the Learning Center picked him up for the day. There were many decisions to be made as well, and these were only for the things to be done this week. Surprisingly, I was able to do this although perhaps not with as clear of a head as I might have thought I had. At least Keven was dressed properly, and I was able to tell Melissa, the bus driver, that Susan had died the night before which was sad news for the entire Learning Center.

Because I knew this was going to happen, I had done some planning. During the last couple of months, I had written down the things the home health worker did at each visit which was twice a week. So I now had a list of weekly things that needed to be done. It was not hard to then list which of these things I would do each day. So, this left one large thing that I did not have to concern myself with. I still had many things to get done this week though...

Shortly after 8 AM, I called Home Health to tell them of her death. I would have liked to have called earlier because she was to get a worker at 9 AM, but I knew from experience that no one would be in the office until 8 AM.

Funeral

Funeral arrangements was the next item on my agenda which required a visit to the funeral home. I had been there almost two years earlier during the short time she was put in Hospice. That is when I made many preliminary decisions. So, I was thinking that I already had made most of the needed decisions. Boy was I wrong!

When her body was picked up the night before, I was told what garments I would need to bring if I was going to dress her in her own clothes. She looked very nice in a particular dress, so I had already knew I needed to bring this to the funeral home. But I was very surprised at all of the "unmentionables" that I was told to bring as well (a bra and nylon stockings for a corpse??).

I had taken Susan to a beauty salon in Rock Mills several times so that her hair would look nice. When asked who I wanted to do Susan's hair for the funeral, I thought of her. Very good choice! She already knew how to work with Susan's hair type. It was a beautiful job.

Arrangements

This was when making the preliminary arrangements earlier was very helpful. There were many things that still had to be decided such as the grave site, pall bearers, music at the wake (visitation), etc. What I do not remember is when I made the decision to have the funeral on the following Saturday morning, but this timing seemed to be best given who I thought would come. (I still don't remember what led me to this decision.)

One lady who had had know for quite some time asked me later why the funeral had not been held earlier in the week. She was thinking that it might had something to do with my experiences with the funerals of people I knew in the past. I really did not have a good reason for it that I could think of.

I arrived at the funeral home by 9 AM. After going through the arrangements as much as possible there, I went out to find the answers to the parts that I did not have. A visit to the cemetery was used to mark where the grave was to be dug. I also talked with the people that I wanted to be pall

bearers plus other things. By then it was time to fix myself some lunch, go out to do more things to complete the funeral arrangements, and get back home a little after 2 PM so I would be there when Kevin came home.

When Kevin came home, he did what he usually did: sit down in Susan's motorized recliner, watch TV for a short while, and then took a nap. What did I do the rest of the day? I probably watched TV with him (even after he dosed off).

There were still things that needed to be done for the funeral that day. After supper and washing the supper dishes (or did I put them into the dishwasher?), I made more phone calls. Tom and Elaine were my first call since I now knew what the arrangements were going to be. She was so helpful in getting this information out to the rest of the family. Then there were church people that I knew needed to know... Even so, there were more phone calls on Wednesday night as well. Later I would learn that I missed calling some people who would have wanted to know.

Wednesday was when I got out the suits Kevin and I would be wearing to the funeral. They were taken to the cleaners. They would be ready Friday morning. There were a couple of other things that needed doing on this day (what, I do not remember), but everything was completed by the time Kevin got back home at 2 PM on this day. With this knowledge, I began to climb down off the the "treadmill" that I felt like I had been on for the past couple of days.

Wednesday evening, I called Bro. Thomas Futral. I thought a great deal of this brother, and that is why I thought I should talk to him for a while. Was I looking for comfort? Probably, I was. But that was not what happened.

He was having some problems of his own and really needed someone to give him some comfort. Ever since, God spoke to me about six months earlier, I knew that my LORD was near. I had Him to provide me with what I needed.

So, this evening, we talked for quite some time. All along I wanted to comfort him as much as possible. In the end, I could hope that he would learn to rely upon his God as much as I have come to rely upon Him. When I hung up, I was certain that he was in much worse shape emotionally than I was. Nine months later, he died. Was it a broken heart that killed him. Yes, I think it was. Without his wife, he felt that he had nothing more to live for (early 80's).

What did I have to look forward to? I really did not have any idea. I knew that I needed to take care of Kevin for as long he lived. (This was not for as long as I thought then.) But then again, God had been with me during the past year, so there had to be somethings that I needed to be doing. Life still had a purpose.

Surprise, everything that needed done before Friday was actually completed by mid afternoon on Wednesday. So, I took Thursday off to relax some. People would be coming in on Friday with the funeral on Saturday, so I needed to get some rest just to get off the merry-go-round that I seemed to be on the past two days. At this point, I really could not comprehend how people can go from experiencing a death of a love one to the planning funeral to attending the funeral in a couple of days. I was able to unwind on Thursday which helped me during the following two days. So, in the end, the additional days were really for my benefit. Do you thing God may have impressed me with the timing?

Unexpected family

Friday morning, I heard incessant knocking at the front door around 8:30 AM: it was Webb and one of his sons. (Why didn't they use the door bell? Was it working? Did I not hear it?) Anyway, I opened it and let them in. We spent some time together including getting the dry cleaning and showing them the grave site. Then they left to go to the motel (the only one in town).

Tom and Elaine were the second ones to arrive, and they also spent some time with me which was very nice. Then around 5 PM I learned that all three of their daughters had arrived together (all from the NW Arkansas area), and this was quite a surprise to me. Marianne had also brought her two children with her.

The wake (visitation) was Friday night from 6 - 9 PM. The ladies at the Learning Center came to the wake and took care of Kevin for me during this time. They were some of my angels during this time.

There were quite a few people come to the wake including some ministers and members of several churches where I had preached. I could have asked one of these ministers to preach the funeral the next day, but I have no idea why I did not. Perhaps I was not thinking clearly or thinking that I was not worthy to have any one of the do this. (I had never had to plan for this before.)

It was nice to have Marianne's children who were rather young yet old enough to be rather rambunctious. It amazed with how she kept them under voice control. There was also the promise in these children of the continuation of life. My wife may be dead, but life does go on. There are always more things that need to be done each new day that God gives us.

The funeral home had done excellent work on Susan, especially her mouth. It had just a hint of a smile which was the way she always kept it: she looked so natural! One minister told me the same thing. His comment: "She looks like she is ready to start talking." Well words something like that.

I had fixed a stew in my crock-pot for the family after the wake, and we all ate some of it. Then I let the women chose any of Susan's clothes that they might want. Susan had a large amount of sweaters taken and a fake fur coat which I gave to Marianne.

Funeral service January 11, 2003



Kevin and I arrived about an hour before the funeral, and I took some Polaroid pictures. I also parked "Rosie" where it should be for the funeral procession. Then the rest of the family came in along with those attending the funeral. One of the people who I thought a lot of, Thomas Futral, came. Just before the funeral when the family gathered together in another room, I asked him to join us. I have always thought that much of him: he was part of our family.

Then came the funeral which I conducted myself. While I did this, the ladies from the Learning Center were there to help out again as they took care of Kevin. I talked about some of the experiences that Susan and I had shared together during our lives. I even allowed others to speak of what they remembered about her. Brother Thomas Futral took his turn. He said something about he might burst if he had not been able to say some of the things he remembered. Roanoke's mayor spoke some about Susan. In this case Susan had made the mayor one of her many friends. Cindy from the Learning Center also spoke up which was nice. (I know that what I did was somewhat of a surprise for everyone.)

One of the church members at Zion's Rest was suppose to see that enough song books were taken to the funeral service so all could sing the two songs I had planned to use: *What a friend we have in Jesus* and *Amazing Grace*. He forgot do it. But everyone knew enough of these verses to sing them from memory. So, everything went well from my vantage point.

The reason for the first song goes back to Dad's funeral ten years earlier. I had been asked to lead this song during his funeral. After I had completed this and sat down, Susan looked at Dad's casket as then turned to me to say, "What a friend indeed!" This impressed me enough that this quote is written on the family headstone.

I don't know about others as to whether speaking that day helped them or not. It was much more consoling than I can remember at any traditional funeral. I was very much at peace after having done it. (More comments about this later.)

I even remember hearing negative comments made about ministers preaching funerals for loved ones. Somehow it was suppose to be wrong. Why? I can only guess. Tradition seems

to have it that the family is suppose to have another minister comfort the family at the funeral. Me, I received a great deal of comfort to be able to speak of the things God is going to do for Susan from her death throughout eternity. It made it oh so much more real! (With Kevin's death five years later, I learned the difference. Additional comments about funerals are found there.)

There were a couple of things that I may be a little peculiar about when it comes to funerals of one's spouse. The vows I had made to Susan more than 35 years earlier was "until death do us part." So, my marriage was over. As a result, I placed my wedding ring with Susan's in the casket beside her.(I'm not really sure that I should have done this because it did not really do anything for me at all.)



This was taken shortly after Kevin's funeral. The flowers on the grave were the family wreath for him. Susan was buried to the left of him. I plan to be buried to the left of her as the foot stones indicate.

The other oddity was the burial. At every funeral and burial that I can remember attending, the casket is placed on a platform over the open grave. There it remains until after everyone leaves. Only then is the casket lowered into the

grave and covered over with dirt. Somehow, I think that I should be there when the casket is lowered in the grave and covered over with dirt. Only then have I gone as far with her as I can go. I would do the same thing with Kevin later.

After my grave side comments, some went into the church. The rest of us remained to watch the burial process in the cold weather. (Marianne gladly wore the fake fur coat.) After all of the dirt was back in place, I decided to put most of the flowers at the funeral on top of her grave. I had help from others at this time. I especially remember Tom doing this.

There it is: the words I remember Susan saying at my Dad's funeral. Jesus: What a friend indeed!



The members at Zion's Rest had gathered to have a meal at the church after the burial so the family could have something to eat before driving home. (More angels.) After I ate and said good-bye to my family, one of the ladies of the church asked me where I was going to go to church the next day. This discussion led to me agreeing to preach the next morning at Zion's Rest so that they could have a service

there again. (They had been without a minister for several months by this time.)

Hind sight is truly 20-20. Everyone who worked, did so on Thursday and left in time to arrive by Friday evening. They then spent one night in a motel and headed back home Saturday afternoon. But had the funeral been on Thursday, there would be a need to lose three days of work. So, as I see it, this resulted in fewer expenses for everyone. So, I think I was right about what day of Susan's funeral should have been. I may not have really been thinking this way on the previous Tuesday morning, but all ended well.

As everyone scattered to their homes, Kevin and I headed home for the rest of the day. He was back in the recliner with the TV going. I was probably relaxing some myself. Yet, I may have also begun thinking what I might say on Sunday morning. (I usually do things like this when I know I will be expected to preach.) In any case, I got our supper, got Kevin to bed, and then off to bed myself.

Some would not want to sleep in the same bed in which a loved one died. I did not have any problem doing this at all. I have heard of widows who had deliberately slept on their dead husband's side of the bed. Somehow they received comfort in doing this. In my case, I slept on my own side. But remember that she and I almost always slept very close to each other with the two of us ending up on the same side when we woke up. So, I guess my feelings were that I was sleeping in **our** bed.

Trying to get Zion's Rest Church active again

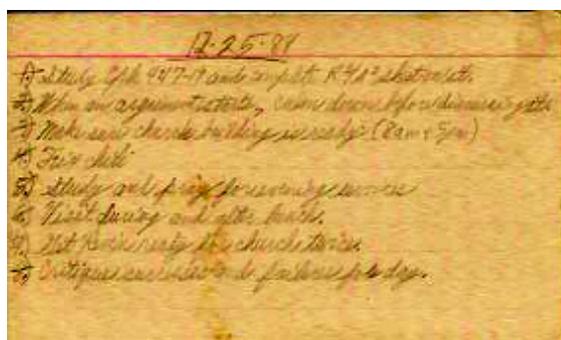
So, I got up Sunday morning and drove to church with Kevin to meet with the church there. There seems to be some discussions as to when there would be church meetings

(whether this was before the service or after, I don't remember). So at least everyone agreed upon somethings. In any case, we had a song service and I preached for them. It was a start.

Getting organized

After returning from church, on Sunday it was time to get back into a routine. Kevin was going to the Learning Center Monday through Friday. What was I going to do while he was gone? I would no longer be getting home health services, so would I be doing these things for myself or just let things go?

On December 24, 1988, I began to schedule the things that I was going to do each day on a separate 3x5 index card (The graphic is a copy of the second card I made because it is clearer). After getting a PC clone in the early 1990's, I began creating text files with these schedules. Then as I learned about OpenOffice.org, I began creating annual, quarterly, and monthly goals in text files. Next came creating simple databases with these goals in them. All of this was the result of the positive thinking books I had gotten from first Amway and then Combined Insurance Co. So, I did not have a problem in keeping myself organized when I needed this the most.



There was one thing I that I could not really explain though. For the first month or so, I made my bed after Kevin left for

the Learning Center. This was something that I did not do even before Susan became bed ridden. She had not do this, neither had I.

Memorial service in Lake, MS January 17, 2003

A week after we buried Susan, Kevin and I went to hold a memorial service for her relatives which included aunts and uncles who were in their 80's and 90's. They had meant so much to her when she was alive, so I thought this service would be a way for them to say good-bye to Susan as well. I also conducted this service similar to what I had done in Roanoke the week before. Again, there was a certain amount of comfort in bringing to remembrance some of the joys we had shared through the years.

This was a very cold weekend, and between the lose of Susan and the temperature Kevin and I seemed to be coming down with something. But I did not really pay that much attention to this at the time. I was able to shake mine within a week or two...

Financial and Scheduling things

I had been keeping a record of what I should do and using a check box to to keep track of whether it was done or not in a database form. This helped me to keep organized. As I became more acquainted with the office suite, OpenOffice.org, I used it to keep much of this information. I continued to create one file for each of these types of goals: annual (1 a year), quarterly (4 per year), and monthly (12 per year).The only problem with this is that many of the files I should have created were not. (It is much easier to say, "I will create all of them at the proper time", but it is harder to actually do it.

Keeping finances in order was not all that hard to do. That is because I had developed my system of keeping track of my sales each week verses the same week of the previous year. From the early 1990's on I had progressed from figures on paper to using a Quicken program to spreadsheets to gradually more elaborate databases.(I still have my spreadsheets from 2002 and 2003 which are some of the earliest.)

Then there was the problem of a source of income. Kevin would continue to receive SSI, but I would no longer get Susan's. I really did not think that I could find a job that would allow me to keep Kevin. Because of him not being potty trained, I had to go get him every once in a while. I never knew when this might happen. So, a job was out.

Then there was Susan's life insurance. After paying for her funeral, there was enough to last for a while. And then I would be become 62 at the end of the year. I could begin drawing Social Security then. So, this looked like the beginning of a plan. What amount should I withdraw each month? Why not the same amount as Susan's SSI had been? We had already been used to living off of these two amounts each month anyway. I would have to remember to apply for SS early enough to begin getting it as soon as I was eligible for it. I was thinking that come December, I would be getting my first check...

Sermons through the mail

Little Flock Church in northwest Arkansas records its morning sermons weekly. Cassette tapes are made from this for those who want one. So before my niece, Marianne, asked me if I would like to receive a copy of the sermons preached there. This sounded like a very good idea to me, so I said yes. My nephew, Sonny Bonner (Jennifer's husband), is the one who

made the tapes. It was the middle of February before I received a month's worth of tapes (mid Jan to mid Feb).

Between then and the end of the year, I listened to each of the tapes I received at least twice if not more. This amounted to over 100 hours of listening. I received a large amount of instructions during this time which I could access from my memory whenever I needed it.

How important was this to me? Actually the value could not be calculated. It kept me close to my God when I needed it the most. It also improved my understanding of the Scriptures as well.

Sonny continued to send me tapes for some years. Then as CD's became more common, he began to send a CD each month with that month's sermons in stead of four or five tapes. It was less expensive. The latest one came in 2008.

When I first created a religious web site in 2003, I included sermons that I had preached as well as all of ones I got from Little Flock. In the beginning, all of these were originally recorded on cassette tapes which I converted to computer audio files. At some point, I also burned them to CD's which I still have.

What about Zion's Rest Church? (What about me?)

I continued to worry about this church. Was I saying the right things? Was there some way to get the members to make some progress in how they should live as God's children? These and other things bothered me. I really did not think I could do this all by myself. So, I began looking for someone. The only thing that I could think of was finding a lady that

was well versed in what God expects. In other words, I thought I needed a wife.

But was the conclusion really based upon what the church needed? Or, was it me that had grown tired of not having a wife with which to spend my life? Anyway, I began to look around for a wife...

Donna

I drove to Smyrna church the middle of February on Saturday for church services. After we sat down in the back part of the church (Kevin would not be causing as many problems there.) As I looked around to see who was there, I saw her sitting near the front. So, being me, I started to jump to conclusions. Since there are not many Primitive Baptist single ladies in the area, was this a possibility for me? (Was she even single? I did not see any men in the area that might be hers.)

Church meetings

Many of our small churches have both Saturday and Sunday morning services as in the case of Smyrna. Such was also the case on the fourth Saturday, and we went to that service as well. Once again, I saw Donna... (We made no contact yet. I'm not sure if I even knew her name yet.)

Another thing about these services held this way is that each meeting would have several visiting ministers in the audience. As a result, usually a few of the ministers were asked to preach followed by the pastor of the church.

Then came the first weekend in March. It was Mt. Zion's turn to have services, and I made sure that Kevin and I were there for this. As usual, there were several visiting ministers

present. Then again, there was a special minister, Elder Don Ellis, that had come from Indiana a few weeks before. So, he had been asked to preach at all of the services where I had seen Donna.

This morning I was asked to preach just before Donna's father. Then after the service, all the ministers present came to the front of the church for the usual handshake in which the congregation would come forward and shake the hand of each of the ministers.

It was when she came up to do this that I had a reaction that I had never had before. As she approached me to shake my hand, everything turned white for a few seconds. I had a sense that she had blue eyes before everything turned white. (She really has brown eyes.) Then I came back to reality fairly quickly. No one seemed to have noticed any behavior on my part though.

When I later described what had happened to a nurse practitioner, she said that my brain had become overly active, and that produced the total white out that I saw. I had gotten overly excited! (Well it was pure enjoyment anyway...

Very likely I was at Bethlehem Church for their Saturday morning service (second weekend). And just as likely Donna and both her parents were there. I just don't have any remembrance of it.

The annual meeting of the Hillabee Association was held at Smyrna church Friday morning through Sunday at noon. So, I made sure we were in attendance for the whole time.

I think it was Saturday after the morning service that I actually got to talk with Donna for a while. I really enjoyed doing this! But then she and her parents had to leave after

eating lunch. (Her father had an appointment near Montgomery for Sunday.)

By this time I had really worked myself into thinking that I had to have her for my wife. So much so, that I professed my love for her to some of the people at the church services that afternoon.

I understood that she would be at the Prattville church for their regular Sunday night services. This was 100 miles a way, but I drove down there with Kevin anyway. (I had gone to this church several times in the past for some of their special meetings and sometime times just to visit.) When I arrived in town, I stopped at the pastor's home to visit before church. Since he knew Donna and her family, I began to ask him a lot of questions about her. What was she like? What type of life did she live. What were her good points? What about how she studied the Bible?

It seemed like every thing he said about her fit in with what I thought I needed as a pastor in Roanoke. She seemed perfect! (Oh, she was at church that night.)

Prattville church also has a regular Wednesday night meeting, and I thought they would still be there perhaps leaving the next day for Indiana. So, once again, I made plans to travel there for this service even though this meant getting back home around 11 PM. (Boy, did I have it bad!)

Wednesday was a rather stormy day with severe storm warnings out around the time that we left for Prattville. I was rather concerned about this, but it did not stop me from going... When I got there just before time for the service, the only person at the church was the pastor. Donna and her family had left that morning for home and arrived there before I even left home.

By the next weekend, I had worked myself into such a tizzy that I wrote her a letter telling that I loved her etc... (I had put it all on the line.)

All of this was definitely a surprise to her. She probably knew who I was, but it takes much more than this for a relationship to develop. Besides she had been married before and divorced. Because of this she was not interested in marrying anyone. So, I got a very pleasant Thanks but no thanks. She has been very nice to me the few times we have met since that time, but that is it. I had struck out.

At the time, I thought she was exactly what I wanted and needed in a wife. She was serious about her beliefs and reported to be a Bible student. I was thinking that she could help me to bring the members at Zion's Rest around to doing what God required of them. It would also be nice to have someone to discuss Bible on a serious level in my home. But again, I had not looked at what would be required to accomplish this. Financially, I was not in any shape to support a wife.

Help from the Learning Center

I'm sure that the ladies working here were concerned with how I would handle the situation of taking care of Kevin while being alone the rest of the day. The bus driver was a great help. I was able to joke around with her which kept my spirits up at times. So, I was able to see the humor in things that I did. This was important as many people are not able to do this because of a depression.

Kevin's pneumonia

They did watch out for Kevin though. By around April, I noticed that he was slimmer than he had been. So, I said something about his weight. Sure enough he had lost about 30 pounds since I had asked them to stop giving him soda for the mid morning snack. Meanwhile I had begun to fix him larger meals. Strangely enough, even though he was eating a wider variety of foods and larger amounts, he did not gain any weight. This remained true for the rest of his life. But at this point he had another problem that needed to be addressed of which I did not have a clue.

Breathing treatments

This is where I had made a mess of things. I was not paying close enough attention to his health. Then again, I think that I was not feeling all that great myself.

Someone regularly took the all of the clients' blood pressure. This time they were not able to get a reading for him. So they took him to Dr. Peterson to have it done. Anyway, he checked more than Kevin's BP and found pneumonia. Kevin's treatment was the same as Susan's: breathing treatments three times a day (before going to "school", after returning, and before going to bed at night). These treatments had medications in them, and Kevin responded fairly rapidly to this: his lungs cleared up.

This was an embarrassment to me and revealed one of the problems that Susan and I had had. She seemed to want to see the doctor more often than I thought was necessary, and I seemed to want to see the doctor less often than was necessary. So, after our disagreement flaring for a while over whether we should go to the doctor or not, we would go. But without her being there, this was one time that I waited too long.

Did I learn from this? I think so. The doctor kept me supplied with a prescription for the medications needed for these treatments and instructions on what medication to give. (I had given Kevin two medications with his breathing treatments for pneumonia, but the rest of the time he only needed one of these medicines.) During the next five years I would be giving his these treatments several times beginning on my own and then checking with the doctor shortly thereafter.

My Computer

I had more things that I did other than just the household chores and reading my Bible. I was creating a daily devotion Monday through Saturday. I was also beginning my documentation writing for a free office suite. So, I kept myself busy.

I had also experimented with the Linux operating system (OS). By the time Susan died, I was using Mandrake. I was also running my own email server and Apache web server from Mandrake. While the computer still had Windows 98SE, most of the time I was running Linux.

I also got more involved writing documentation for OpenOffice.org through the online group, ODFAuthors which I have been a member since before Susan's death.

I was still running Randolph Office Supply from my home. Every once in a while I would have a customer, but very seldom. I would get a few calls for information about computers which would take some more of my time.

At some point I sold a new computer to a lawyer to replace one. I was responsible for transferring all the files he had on

the hard drive of the old computer to the new one. This I did without any problems. But there was sensitive data on the old hard drive, and that had to be removed. I had never done this before. Fortunately, I had a CD that I had gotten with a program which would do this. It would repeatedly write over all of the data which would make the hard drive unreadable. (I had wiped the hard drive clean!)

Where did this group come from (ODFAuthors)? A lady in Australia had retired from IBM sometime before. Since then, she had written a book titled *Taming OpenOffice.org*. She had contributed much to an email list set up for OpenOffice.org users. She was very disappointed with the documentation available for OOo. Specifically, she did not like the rules and organization that produced it. With OOo being financed by a corporation, there was too many corporate rules on how things should be done. Likely, these people included the ones who were part of the creation of Star Office in Germany in the first place. She envisioned a volunteer group writing when they had the time with much looser rules. With her encouragement and invitation to those of us who cared, this is how ODFAuthors was formed.

By the time OOo version 2.0 was out, many computer software companies came together to create a document that described the format for office documents. Microsoft was invited to this gathering, but decided not to participate. The result was the Open Document Format (ODF 1.0). This was sent to a world wide computer software group requesting certification. After some study, it was certified. The volunteer group was then renamed Open Document Format Authors (ODFAuthors) I don't remember what we called ourselves before then.

Writing documentations for OpenOffice.org

During the last couple of years of Susan's life or perhaps earlier, I was watching TV on cable that discussed computer topics. On one of these episodes, a new office suite was mentioned called Star Office (version 5.0) which could be downloaded for free. Well, this was less expensive than MS Office, so I downloaded and installed it. (This office suite had been purchased by Sun Microsystems and was made available free as an alternative to MS Office to spite Microsoft.)

It took some time to figure out how to use it, but I had the daytime in which to do this. As time passed, Star Office was improved until version 6.0. (I don't remember how many of these versions I downloaded and used.) Then I learned that Sun Microsystems had made some changes. It had made two different programs from Star Office: one free (OpenOffice.org designed for the average people) and the other was still called Star Office which cost money. (This one had some proprietary software in it and was designed for businesses).

So, I downloaded OpenOffice.org 1.0 (OOo) and began using it, but I had much to learn about how it worked. Help for this program came in the form of a mailing list (users@openoffice.org). Members of it were people who used OOo. Any member who ran into a problem could write to the list, and their email would be sent to all the other users. Any one of them who knew the answer to the question would email the mailing list where all the members could see the solution.

At the beginning, I learned from other people's mistakes and the answers their emails elicited. Then as I learned more, I began to answer some emails because I knew the answer to the question posed by them.

I began working with the ODFAuthors group basically learning as I went which meant that I specialized in

reviewing what others wrote. Jean was not the only one in the group with an excellent background in computers. One person, Daniel, was working on an advanced degree in computers, and he wrote quite a bit of the original chapters. One of the early chapters I read by him was how to use styles with OOo (in the Getting Started Guide). Another was a more advanced chapter about styles (part of the Writer Guide).

Since we were suppose to use OOo Writer to write or review each chapter, those who were not as experienced needed to study everything written in the Getting Started with Writer and the Writer Guides. There was a lot to be absorbed from these chapters as well as the two chapters mentioned earlier. I needed to take my time applying what I studied to things written in them. This meant writing something, applying different styles to it to see the effects, and to then apply another style to see its effects. Gradually, I was learning how to do things properly. They even became habits...

As time progressed, I also read the other documentation and applied this information to how I used OOo. It was by reading information about Calc that I created a spreadsheet for the family expenses beginning in 2002 with one sheet for 2002 and another for 2003. Then during 2004-2008, I created improved spreadsheets, one for each year.

As a part of the group, I committed myself to downloading each new version of OOo when it was available. Quite honestly, the early versions (1.0,1.01, 1.02) were not all that good. Version 1.03 was a large improvement though. The first really big improvement was OOo 2.0 which came out in early 2006. (We began making plans for its documentation in the summer of 2005. So, I will continue this topic when I discuss the things that happened in that year.)

Shirley



By early May 2003, Cindy from the Learning Center had heard of the eHarmony.com web site. Perhaps it was from the social worker that worked with the the Center. (She was using it at the time in her own search for romance.)

Anyway, Cindy recommended it to me, so I tried it. The site has a personality survey that takes 2-3 hours to fill out completely online. It was that extensive. Then I paid whatever fee was required and waited.

I am a person who watches his pennies, so I picked the lowest cost which was also the shortest time to be listed on the site. (One thing I notice was that the longer times were not all the more than for the shortest times. So, I suppose this was to get as much money from individuals as possible.) Yet I was hoping that I would get enough "nibbles" to make my time worthwhile.

"What do I do now?" I checked the web site periodically for the list of women's names that were suppose to be compatible with me. There was also the possibility that a woman might contact me. Whether the latter happened to me or not, I don't remember now. Nor do I remember contacting any one.

So, I regularly looked at the list, but none of them seemed to really interest me. (Or was it because I was a little too shy to try to contact anyone?) Were the Women given my name shy also? Or, did they have some problems with me?

Each person on the web site had a short section about themselves that others could read. It even included a paragraph in which we could write something more about ourselves. So, I took advantage of this.

At the time, I had my own web site and was writing daily devotions. These were archived on this site with sermons by me and by others. The sermons were from 30 minutes to an hour or so. Yes, I listed the web address for the site for all to see. I also had my personal email address placed at the bottom of each devotion. So, a woman that looked at my resume had access to all of this.

According to the site, we were suppose to make all of our initial contacts through them. Revealing our personal email address was frowned upon for our own good. (This makes a lot of sense even if I didn't follow their advice.)

Time was coming up that I had to either pay some more money or give up. There did not seem to be anyone that I was interested in. No one interested in me either. So, I decided to give up even though I had not really tried very hard at all. I knew what I wanted. I was just to scared to do what I needed. So, I sent an email to the web site telling them of my decision to request removing me from their web

site around May 12th. They promised to take my information off of their web site shortly.

Emailing each other

Thursday, I was checking my email at the beginning of the morning. Because I was involved with a free office program known as OpenOffice.org, there were the usual technical emails in my Inbox. But among them was an email from an address I had never seen before. It was personal email, not a technical one ... According to the information, it had been written late the evening before from somewhere in Nebraska. What was this? Who was this Shirley? Why was she asking me about my beliefs and mentioning some of hers?

I had rather quickly forgotten what I had done just a few days before. Even though I had given the website notice that I wanted to be removed from their records, I checked out the list of potential matches anyway. I even sent a request for them to contact Shirley for me. (Does this even make sense? Well, I clearly was not thinking very clearly.) I may have sent another request for another lady to contact me, but I did not hear from her if she replied.

Shirley actually did reply through eHarmony.com, but all of this happened somewhere during my dropping from the website. As a result, I did not get an email from the website mentioning her. But as it turns out she was interested in what a Primitive Baptist believes so she visited my web site. (Curiosity kills the cat?) While there she found my personal email address at the end of one of my devotions. She still wanted more information, so she sent me her first email.

So from the very beginning, she knew that I was a Primitive Baptist minister. Obviously, one of her first questions was

about the beliefs of this group. And my first return email contained the basic articles of faith along with my comments about similarities and differences of the group. I concluded with some personal comments about some of my specific beliefs.

She was raised Baptist. She also mentioned that she was baptized as a teenager. (She and I were about the same age when we both did this.) Then she married her sweetheart who belonged to the Church of Christ (non-instrumental).

There were many questions on the personality survey about religious beliefs, but none of them were detailed enough to cover my beliefs as different from others. One of them asked for denominational affiliation for example. Well, I suppose in a general way, I would be classified as Baptist. However, there are huge differences between Primitive Baptists and the other Baptists. Yet, I don't know how they could have gotten the question to be more specific. Would it really make that much difference for most Baptists?

There is much that two people will reveal to each other over a period of time, and we were not different from others in this regard.

It turned out that I was not the only person who had become somewhat disenchanted with eHarmony.com in mid May. She had been using the website for some time and made contact with several people. None of these worked out because of where she lived. (All of the contacts lived long distances from her, and this made a relationship a non-starter for them. Then she saw the email from eHarmony.com mentioning me wanting to contact her...

I suppose there are more important things for two people to discuss than what she read or or listened to on a website that played an important part in their correspondence. I

know now that she had to read down to the bottom of at least one of the devotions I had written. (They were the only ones that had my email address in them.) But over 10 years later, I am just a little curious. (And I expect her to remember this given the passage of time?...)

There were things that I wanted to know about her as well because the profile I had read about her on the eHarmony.com did not give me a very good idea of what she was like. So in this getting acquainted period, we gradually opened up about ourselves quite a bit.

At the time, I began to appreciate the speed of email compared to the US mail. After all, when Nancy and I were corresponding in high school, once in a while I would get a letter the day after she wrote it. At other times, it would take longer, and this was at a distance of only 150 miles. Shirley and I lived over 1,000 miles apart. That would have taken 3 days to a week one way by mail. My *romance* had entered the twenty-first century.

At first, we did not write every day. But gradually our frequency increased. (She was a school teacher, so she did not have as much time to sit down and write me as I did her. However as summer approached, school let out...) With time, I could usually depend upon one email waiting for me when I got up in the morning from the night before. Then once in a while a second email would arrive later in the day.

One of her daughters lived many miles from her, and she made a trip to see her and her family early that June. (She was definitely looking forward to seeing her grandchildren once again!) Yet, she took time to make sure that I received an email or two everyday while she was there which was nice. In fact, one day she was doing some baking for her daughter, and she still found time to babysit her grandchildren and send me 4 emails! Nice, very nice!

She would later mention that her daughters took notice of her emailing this man in Alabama (I assume that she told them where I lived.) Obviously, she had begun to take a great deal of interest in me. I would love to know where they thought this relationship would go. They were going to find out.)

Phone calls

It would seem that she began to feel that more contact needed to be made between the two of us than just emails. So it was she that suggested that we talked to each other on the phone to which I agreed. This time she and another lady had gone somewhere of some distance together, and on her way home, I was to call her at a given time which would be while the two of them would make a stop. (I still don't know where that location was.)

I got really nervous as the time approached, but I managed to dial her cell phone number anyway. She answered and we began a conversation that gradually calmed me down. It also became more fluid as well. The ice was broken...

It was that weekend that she called me, and we began making calls back a forth periodically after that. We also continued to regularly email each other. Because of this we seemed to draw closer to each other... I was falling for her.

Meeting in Illinois

Then we ran into the same problem she had with men she met at eHarmony.com: she wanted to meet me. How were we going to arrange this? Distance was a problem. We discussed this some but did not come up with a solution...

During this time, I sent an email to Tom and Elaine mentioning this problems along with other things that had recently occurred. They offered their home as a place for the two of us to meet. I liked the idea: chaperons for both of us. So, I passed this information on to Shirley. With some more discussions between the two of us and consulting with Tom and Elaine, we finally decided to meet there the week of July 4th.

I know that Shirley and I talked about what we were going to do and how on the phone. Emails also contained our thoughts as well. What about Elaine and I? I'm not sure, but some of the information back and forth had to be by phone as well.

Both of us were satisfied with the arrangements as they were. She trusted me to behave myself, and I trusted her. Staying in a third party's home seemed to make our trust even deeper. We saw no problems with that...

But her daughter, Terri, had some problems with her mother traveling that far getting herself into what no one knew... So Shirley asked for some references for her which I provided. The first call she placed was to the Learning Center, and Cindy told the daughter everything she needed to know.

Shirley was very apologetic when she asked for the references saying maybe she should be giving me some references about here. Well, I may have been a little "foolish" in saying no, I did not need any, but I felt safe seeing that we were staying with my brother and sister-in-law. (I had family around me which she did not have.) At some point, I gave her Elaine's phone number in case she needed it (perhaps the daughter might?).

When Cindy spoke to the daughter (Terri), she was really looking out for my interests as she wanted this to work.

Sometimes she tends to go into great detail when talking on the phone, and I have no doubt that she did this time. She made sure that she really talked me up! She would later tell me about that phone call, and she really laid it on thick to me as well. Anyway, the daughter was satisfied with what she heard.

As the time to meet for the first time approached we discussed many things about the upcoming trip. Kevin was one of them. She taught retarded children in school, so she had some idea of how to handle this situation. However, her IQ was far lower than what she had worked with. I think it was during one of our many phone calls that we discussed this. During this time, I pointed out as many of Kevin's peculiarities as I could think of to give her an idea of what he might do at the airport the trip from there to Tom's home.

I don't remember whether Elaine and the daughter talked any, but Shirley and Elaine did a couple of days before she flew in. Of course, I wondered what these two women might have been cooking up between them. (I still do not know nor will I ever.)

I drove in on Monday, Jun 30 arriving shortly before supper. To say I was nervous is an understatement. Seems like I had Susan on the brain, mentioning things that she and I did during our marriage. (I did not know any better, nor did I have any idea what to say...) Thankfully, Elaine gently suggested that this was not a good way to act when I met Shirley. OK, I stop talking about Susan, but what should I talk about? (I did not have any problems talking to Shirley on the phone at least a couple times a week. What was my problem? Actually talking to her face to face?)

Shirley was flying into St. Louis early Tuesday afternoon. When Webb, my older brother, found out how she was coming, he told me that he would go with me to pick her up

at the airport. I did not really have a choice in this matter. He was making sure that I had someone with me whether I liked it or not!

This was nice of him because of a couple of reasons. There was road construction both near the airport and in it. He knew how to get to where we needed to be, and I did not. Besides, I needed someone who was thinking more clearly than I was that day.

We got to the airport alright, but her plane out of Chicago was late something like 45 minutes to an hour. This is where Webb was very helpful. He knew where to get the information that we needed to go to the proper gate. So, as the passengers began to disembark, we were waiting...

I had told him what she said she would be wearing, and it was a good thing I did. He spotted her right away... I was still out of it. (I don't know where my mind was.) He said, "There she is." He was right. So I approached and spoke to her. We had our first hug. At this point I think that I introduced her to Webb and Kevin to her. Her baggage was carry-on luggage on wheels which she was pulling. Soon all of us were heading to the car for the trip to Tom's.

I was doing my best to be a gentleman. When we got to the car, I insisted that I be the one to place the luggage in the trunk. And, of course I took in the house for her. I even took it upstairs and into her room. (I made sure that I went into the room first and that she was always closer to the door than I was. Since Elaine had told me earlier what part of the closet Shirley could use and where the towels were, I told Shirley.

I may have been a bit too forward in going into the bedroom she would be using, but I just wanted everything to be right (whatever that is given my state of mind). She later took a

bath upstairs, but did not use one of the towels Elaine had placed in her room. Was she out of it a little bit like I was or had my brashness led her to forget what I had said?

Sometimes I think that I almost got a little "motherly" about her. I want to make sure that she contact someone in her family so they would know she had arrived safely. Yes, I was still out of it. I so desperately want everything to go just right!

Sometime in the afternoon, Marianne and her family came in. (They would be staying in another part of the upstairs. I had the front bedroom downstairs.)

Now Marianne was going to home school her children and was looking for information on how to do this. Since I think Marianne knew that Shirley was a teacher, she asked Shirley about this. The two of them got into a discussion on the things Marianne needed to do, and this lasted longer than I wanted it to (I wanted Shirley to myself...) So, sweetly but firmly, Shirley told me to not interrupt them; they were busy discussing something. Nope, I did not like this one bit, but she was very insistent. I did manage to get over it though.

I had earlier arranged for us to go to see Elder James Harris on Wednesday. (He was the pastor of Little Flock Church when Tom was ordained as a deacon.) At that time Susan and I went to talk to him about a situation, and we did not see eye to eye about it. So, this time I wanted to apologize to him and his wife about this. So after breakfast on Wednesday, off we went to see them.

I was able to apologize to them which was accepted. There had not really been any hard feelings that first visit, so all was well anyway.

The rest of the time we all had a very good visit. Shirley mentioned that she was part of a singing group called Sweet Adeline, an all woman four part harmony barber shop structure. It turns out that Bro. James knew something about them, so I got to learn a lot more about Shirley and what she was doing in this group. It turns out that he also knew something about Nebraska.

Much of the state is fairly flat with low rolling hills. (I should mention that the wind seems to blow all of the time.) But the north central part of the state is much different. The hills are much taller and are known as the sand hills of Nebraska. They tried to tell me what it was like in this area, but I just could not grasp the idea of hills made of sand! Having worked in the west side of the state, I could understand the idea of dusty hills but not sand.

I had some problems with Kevin while we were there which I did not handle very well at all. Whether this had anything to do with it or not, by that evening she told me that she thought it would be best we just be friends... (I did not even know what this meant!)

In reality, we were both adults that had some specific ideas of what we wanted for the rest of our lives. Did our plans have enough in common to make a marriage even a possibility? Honestly? No.

Thursday I had originally wanted for Shirley, Kevin, and I to visit the Gateway Arch in St. Louis on Thursday, but this was July 3rd. Because 9-11 was less than two years before, people were still worried about another terrorist attack happening somewhere in the US. So, there would all kinds of people guarding the arch. Likely there would also be a lot of people there to see it as well. It was not a very good idea. So, we did not go. (I have yet to visit this land mark. Perhaps

if I do, I will make sure that it is a time when the crowds are not too big.)

Instead, she wanted to buy some presents for relatives and perhaps others, so she, Kevin, and I headed downtown where she did just this. This time I got to watch her as she shopped, observing her body language, learning a little more about her. Sometimes Kevin and I was in the store with her, and other times we were outside. (Did I mention that July 3rd can be very warm to hot?) Then when she finished, we ate lunch at a restaurant together. Seems that the lunch did not settle very well on her stomach that afternoon...

She was scheduled to fly out of St. Louis going home early (7 AM?) Friday morning. She had suggested that she get a motel near the airport and spend the night there. But I insisted that I would get up early Friday morning to drive her there. So, I was up at 5 AM and she was too (I think). Anyway we all got our breakfast and got her to her plane on time.

During the trip, we discussed a variety of things. Some were serious, and others were not. As we neared the terminal where she would depart from, she helped me get into the right lane and to the correct gate. Sad time for me, but the time had come to say good-bye. I hugged her again (more about this later) and then left. By the time I got back to Edwardsville with Kevin, she was probably in the air heading to Chicago. I wondered if she even looked out her window to see if she saw my cargo van down on the road...

I did not really see any reason for leaving for Alabama later, so shortly after getting back to Tom and Elaine's, Kevin and I headed south. It was a long trip (12 hours)... I was not very good company either. I did not know if I would ever see her again, and I did not want to lose her. I had no claim on her, but that was not how I felt.

Various happenings

There was one thing that really got to me quickly. She loves to sing, and a couple of times suggested the family sing hymns together. This was one of the real highlights of those days we spent together.

Another occurred Thursday evening. At her suggestion, we sat down together in the front porch swing. It was nice to have her sitting close to me... I really, really wanted to put my arm around her, but I had already agreed that we would just be friends. So, I did not. At this point, I wanted to be much more than friends: the feeling of her so close beside me was getting to me... But this seemed to be a problem for Kevin! He decided that he was going to sit between the two of us, but there was not enough room for the three of us in the swing. She moved to one of the chairs out there, and we continued to talk (my son jealous???). After a while, she went inside and suggested we all sing some hymns together again. It was a very nice ending to a very nice day.

Since that time, I have thought of another possibility. Kevin was being neglected to begin with. He, Susan, and I would sit together in church with him between us. We always made sure he had his deck of playing cards that he would go through telling us what each card was. Did he want to be with us rather than by himself? Would he have been happy sitting between us playing with the cards or doing any number of other things that he was use to doing? I now think so. (The only problem: there was not enough room for all three of us in the swing.)

One of the days, I took her and Kevin on a walk to where I grew up. Well she loves to walk! She is also very observant. The new owners of the property had not cleaned the house's gutters. This was something new to me because I had never

known my father clean any of them either. So, a discussion ensued as she talked about some of her experiences in keeping the gutters of her home free of leaves. Then as we walked back she teasingly said something about picking up the pace. Well, Kevin can only walk so fast, so she would walk off from us a little bit and wait for us to catch up. I really thought that I could have kept up with her if not out walked her, but I never have had a chance to do so. (I know so now with how I walk.) Since then I felt that I would like to challenge her to another walk just to prove it.

And lest you think that my relationship with Shirley went down hill rather quickly, nothing could farther from the truth. While we stopped calling each other, and emails no longer came as often, the change had gone to that of a brother and sister. There were many discussions some serious about a variety of topics. I got her opinions, she would ask for mine. (Yet, I still preferred her as a wife beside me to a sister 1,000 miles away. I did not know how to change the situation.)

Recently (2015) I found the emails that I sent to and received from Shirley on a DVD that cover the period from May 14, 2003 to mid July of that year. Some of what I have written came from these emails. Looking in another area, I found some from the period 2010-2011.

In between these times I took a vacation in 2005 during which I visited her in Nebraska. (Kevin obviously went along, but with his mentality he did not do that much visiting.) So, there will be more written about that time later.

My dirty gutters

When I got home, I took a look at my gutters. What a mess! Boy was I really embarrassed. This picture shows what my front gutter looked like. It also shows the date I took it: July

5. Well, it was time to do something about it. I already had a step ladder with which I could reach the gutters. (This picture was taken from the top of it.) So, it was time to see what I could do to remove the debris.



The gutter on the back of the house was as clogged like the front one. And if you look toward the other end of this gutter (the front one), you should see some green that is a plant growing in the gutter (just below the satellite dish). Its roots were four feet long! They were so entwined in the rotting leaves that when I managed to pull the plant out of the gutter, it took all of the leaves with it. I now had four feet of clean gutter from its removal!

It took several hours over a period of more than a week to clean both gutters completely. Thereafter, this became a yearly chore, and I do mean **a chore**.

And yet, this is something that my body needed at the time. I had so much adrenaline in my body from Friday (being up before 5 am, driving Shirley to the airport, then driving home) that I need some hard exercise to remove the excess. I also needed to have something to do to get my mind off of what had just happened at least part of the time. So, it all worked out in the end. Well physically, it worked out. My feelings were a different matter.

I had an 8 foot step ladder (background of the picture) with which I could reach the gutters to clean them out. When I got the ladder close to the gutter, I would reach into it and pull the leaves out with my hand. The only problem with that was the shingles that were also in the same area. I got a lot of scrapes and scratches doing this.

Sometimes, I would climb onto the roof from the ladder. Then I would work my way down to the edge of the roof and remove some leaves from there. (I'm rather frightened of heights which did not help me much while doing this!) I also tried using the hose to wash the leaves out of the gutters with limited success. (Well, I got good and wet doing it. My tennis shoes squished as I walked!)

As I pulled the leaves out of the gutters, I threw them to the ground. They were wet and yucky! As they fell to the ground, some landed on the siding instead of the ground making a black mess on it. So, after satisfying myself that the gutters were now fairly clean, I had the siding to wash.

I did the front gutter first and then the back gutter last from left to right in the photo. By the time this was taken, the gutters were clean. And according to the photo, it took me a full week to do it (July 7 though July 14).



So, now I had another chore to do. I had been told that all the vinyl siding needed was to be hosed down, however, this did not come close to doing the job. Dirt of some kind still clung to the vinyl. But I had some kind of brush that would clean perhaps a vertical foot of vinyl at a time.

After washing down the back wall, I did the front one. And that left the two ends of the building. After all, I couldn't leave the ends dirty after cleaning the front and back could I? Since the top part of the two ends was triangle shaped, I had another problem: reaching up to the top of the roof! I was able to do this with whatever I had used on the front and back. But I could not reach very far from side to side. this meant that I had to clean a small area vertically, move the ladder sideways a little bit, clean some more, move... Painstaking yes, but it finally got the job done.

Social Security

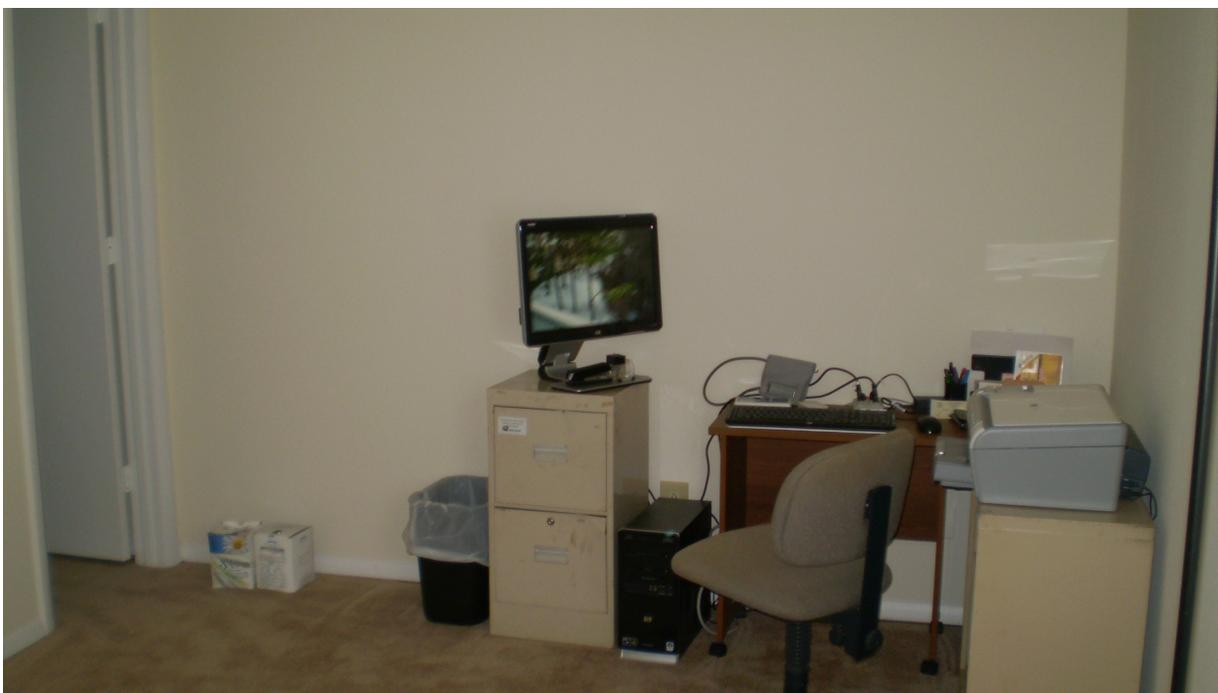
Was it during the summer or early fall when I applied for Social Security online? Anyway, I was successful in doing so. But I got a big surprise. I was not going to get my first SS payment until the middle of February! For me the first eligibility period was December 16, 2003 through January 16, 2004. (This was the first full month that I was 62.) I did not understand this at all. Oh well. Fortunately, there was still enough left from Susan's Life Insurance to pay for my share of the monthly expenses.

2004

Painting the house (Jan-Aug)

When I was working on the gutters in July 2003, I realized that the house needed some painting done. Susan's life insurance policy was sufficient to meet expenses until mid February, 2004, when I would begin getting Social Security. So the painting was put off until 2004 at that point. Then, in mid January, I went downtown to the hardware store to get the paint to get started.

First I did the inside of the house, and as the weather became warmer in the spring, I painted all of the windows and outside doors inside and out. I also painted the fake shutters on both sides of the front windows. Most of the painting was done between January and April. I cleaned out the gutters sometime after that. And then I took my vacation which covered about half of the month of July. (Champaign, IL and Bloomington, IN)



Painting requires a lot of moving of things around, and that is something that I did a lot. This shows the bedroom Susan and I had shared for over a decade. The pink object is our drapes laying over the end of the bed, and the dark rose is the comforter. The two doors are to the closets we used.

I don't remember what color the bedrooms were, but you now see the color that I had picked for most of the house. (I think I had a different color for the kitchen and dining area.) I do remember that I like the colors I picked very much.



Then I got to the laundry room. For 12 years, I had cleaned around the washer and dryer but never under them. If I was going to paint this room, they had to be moved out of it. So, I did. What a mess!

After a thorough cleaning of the floor, I could begin painting the walls, the door, and the door jam. I think that I also painted the shelves white, but I am not sure. I don't even remember how many coats of paint I used. But, when the paint was dried, I connected the washer and dryer which was not the most fun. Connecting the dryer to the exhaust vent in the wall was rather tedious as was connecting the hot and cold water to the washing machine. Compared with these things, moving the two of these into their places after doing the connecting was a piece of cake.

One of the more tedious things was painting baseboards white. Keeping the paint off of the carpet while painting them required patience for sure. The same can be said where the walls met the door jams. The latter was painted white

and the former blue. I had to learn holding the brush on an angle just right to do this. I just could not get it right every time.

Painting inside the closets was working in small quarters. (The shelf of each one needed to be painted white as well.) I had not paid very good attention earlier, but the closet walls had not been painted. At least, I did not think so when I painted them this time.

Painting the outside trim was a challenge as well. The original paint was oil based, and I wanted to use latex paint. So, I asked what I needed to do at the hardware store. It turned out that a lot of people have that problem, so a primer was developed to solve this problem. I got a gallon and applied it to the trim. Then I applied latex over the same areas. All went well. I just had to make sure that the paint did not dry the wrong way and prevent the windows from opening and closing. I succeeded!

It took several months to complete the inside of the house. Well, it seems that I was painting something else at the same time: my clothes! It did not take much time to do this either. (Just notice the date on this picture. It was a month before I got to the laundry room!)



Shirley's trip to Washington DC

She is a member of Sweet Adeline, barber shop singing groups. Her group was chosen to appear in our capital representing Nebraska at events for the Memorial Day celebrations. While there she had enough time to visit landmarks in the city.

After she got back to her home, We talked on the phone about her experiences while there. I thoroughly enjoyed what she had to say especially because of the emotions in her voice. It seemed as if she were reliving the trip as she described what happened. I don't remember how long we talked, but it was worth many times whatever the phone bill cost.

It is times like this that makes a relationship so enjoyable: to share emotions between the two. This is true for a couple or just friends, long distance friends at that.

Trip to Campaign/Urbana for a visit

This was 39 years since I had left the area. Many things had changed in the meanwhile, and some things were the same. The quadrangle was the same as were the buildings around it. However, the basement of the Student Union building was much different. Oh, the 20 alley bowling facilities was the same, but the cafeteria was no longer there. The *Tavern* area was still there, but the only food available was from vending machines.

We went over the first weekend of July because it was also New Liberty Church's annual meeting. So, I could attend that meeting as well as visit the campus three times.

It did bring back some memories which were nice, but meeting the members did not go all that well. A few of the older ones did pay Kevin and me some attention, but such was not the case with the people my own age. Actually I feel sorry for them. There seems to be many things that they are missing out on.

The visiting minister was Elder Jack Allen who had grown up in Champaign and attended the University of Illinois there during my sophomore through junior years. (He took extra courses and probably attended summer school, so he graduated quicker than I did.) His wife, Joyce, did not come with him which was somewhat disappointing to me. He preached several very good sermons over this weekend.

The sanctuary was always dear to me as that is where the teenagers would sing after the noon meal downstairs. Well, after a noon meal this weekend, I took Kevin up to it. I wish

that I could describe the feelings I had; perhaps I was feeling the presence of God. It was a wonderful feeling.

Now 10 years later, I will never be able to be in that building again. Very cold weather had damaged the plumbing, and the cost was too much for the present congregation. So, the building and grounds were sold; they are now worshipping in a building in the city to which most of the members had moved several years before.

I left the area feeling rather empty. I wanted to make a connection again, but this was not to be. It was part of my past and would always remain that without ever having anything to look forward to there again. (This was one of those situations in which a person can never go home again.)

While there I decided to write a letter to the church apologizing to it for my behavior as a young man. I really don't know if anyone received it because no one acknowledged it afterward.

Bloomington, IN

I think that I spent one more day in Champaign on the U of I campus taking pictures. While there I talked for a short while with a lady who was completing her degree and getting ready to move to Savannah, GA. She caught my eye because she was doing some running on the campus quadrangle.

There was one thing that was different after 39 years: the trees. Sometime earlier in the century, Dutch Elm trees had been planted. By the latter part of the 1950's Dutch Elm disease had killed all of these trees. So, another type of trees were planted around the quadrangle in the place of the elm trees. These were several years old by the time I arrived

on the campus. These were now 39 years older than when I had seen them the last time.

Tuesday morning we headed for IN. I wanted to attend a church service in this state since I had attended church services in most of the states surrounding IL but not this one. Wednesday morning, I found a laundromat in Bloomington, IN and did our laundry. Then in the evening, I went to the local church's Wednesday night service. It is where Elder Don Ellis has had his membership. He had been the pastor there, but a younger man was now filling this position. The Ellis' were there that night including Donna. She treated me very nicely, but she still was not interested.

Was it worth the trip, was it just a whim of mine about the states in which I have attended services? I really do not know. I did strike up a conversation with a waitress where Kevin and I ate our meals while in Bloomington that may have been some help to her. If I was able to help her, it was worth it.

Because of something in the past, this church in Bloomington was out of order as far as the other Primitive Baptist in both Indiana and Illinois. In fact, Elder Don Ellis was not someone that any of these churches wanted to have anything to do with.

As I made my plans for this trip to Illinois and Indiana, I thought it was not prudent to mention anything about this trip nor whom I wanted to see in Indiana. I did let it be known that it involved a lady, a Donna, and some idea of which area of Indiana in which she lived (like it was somewhere in the southern half of the state). It would be some what later before I revealed her last name to anyone. Even so, I did not get the reaction that I thought I might.

Angela's wedding

Then as September was coming to a close, Kevin and I headed back to Illinois for this. From my experiences of living in that area, I knew that cooler temperatures are much more common there than in Alabama. So, I brought along some warmer clothes for both of us. This included a sweat suit for me, but I don't remember what I brought for Kevin. I made sure that we had enough blankets to stay warm at night though.

Still I was not completely mentally prepared for the difference in temperature. The air seemed to be rather chilly even when the sunshine was warm. Temperatures were in the 60's and 70's. But, I was use to upper 70's and low to mid 80's.

Housing

Gabe and Angela were running a 4-H camp near Jacksonville, and that was where the wedding would be. Kevin and I were given a cabin of our own, and Angela's family was given one (or was it two?) of the main buildings. With Kevin's incontinence, he and I needed a place for me to take care of his needs from time to time.

We also had a shower of our own which was very helpful (well sort of). It was designed to be used only during the summer so there was not any heat in the building holding the shower. Getting wet when the air temperature was in the 60's is not my idea of fun!

Meals were served in the camp's dining room. This brought back memories to both of Angela's sisters as all three had gone to camp there many times as they grew up. There were

rituals they remembered about the meals they had eaten there which they recounted during at least one meal.

So with each meal served there, we went through the same rituals that they had during their stays there.

What did we do the few days we were there for the wedding? Well, Gabe had the usual maintenance to do that the grounds required. Then there were probably some things that needed to be done for the wedding, but I am not sure now what those might be. I have a feeling that others help out by doing the things that they could. Some of Gabe's family were there during the day, and I talked with part of them.

You might say that I was slumming it until the wedding. Most of the time I was wearing a sweat suit. This almost kept me warm.

Quilt

Earlier in the year, Marianne and Jennifer decided that they would make a quilt as a wedding present and asked for quilt squares measuring one foot on a side from all of the Lewis family. With all of the material they got and what they added themselves, the project turned into much more than one quilt.

Marianne took the time to show me the entire project during one of the days before the wedding. I was truly amazed at the workmanship the two of them had done. Everything was gorgeous! I'm thinking the entire project consisted of the quilt, 2 pillow shams, and a smaller item (perhaps a lap robe).

Sunday, October 2, 2004

The wedding was in the afternoon close to the lake. Angela had changed into her wedding dress in a motor home a little farther from it. From there she walked to her soon to be husband to exchange vows. Afterward, there was a reception in the dining hall.

As Kevin and I headed home, I ran into a problem: I did not quite know where I was going. I had a map that I was able to barely follow when coming into the camp. There were several turns to make that were not always clearly marked. So, heading back out, I missed one of the turns. But I managed to get back to where I recognized on a map after not too much of a delay.

I had reservations in Paducah, KY at the Motel 6 for the night. Since this was about 200-250 miles, travel time was between 4 and 5 hours. We made it to the motel without being very late. Then we headed to Alabama on Monday which was about a 8 hour drive.

ODFAuthors and OpenOffice.org

About the same time as her wedding, OpenOffice.org (OOo) was preparing a major upgrade from version 1.1.4 to 2.0. (Version 1.1.5 came out while working on 2.0 to fix some bugs that needed it.) This meant that the documentation had to be updated for all four components: Writer (text documents), Calc (spreadsheets), Draw (graphics), and Base (databases). It would be nice if the documentation would be ready as soon after the new version was available for download which was scheduled for the spring of 2005.

Specifically, the documentation for Base had to be completely rewritten from scratch. It would be using a different database engine to run its databases (HSQLDB).

This meant that new computer code had to be written for the Base component. It took a large amount of trials and errors to do this and a large amount of time, days and days of it. But gradually it was beginning to come together. Painstakingly, the developers would write code, others would check to see if it worked, make changes, add more code, etc. When the code seemed to work to a couple of the developers, the code would be added to the complete code for OOo.

Each day, the code written for OOo that day was made available to all of the developers and those who had volunteered to test the code on their computer. (This code is known as a "daily build".) It is usually very unstable when something new is added to it. But as testing finds more of the bugs, the stability improves.

From the fall of 2004 through the spring of 2005, I would periodically download the current daily built to see how Base worked. By this time, I had learned enough about relational databases, that I could test these builds to see how close they had come to what they should be doing. There was many a build with a serious flaw (bug) in it. Some of them took several weeks before the bug was fixed. Then it was on to the next bug...

One of the volunteers in the group knew something about relational databases which is something new to Base. He even wrote some documents about how it works and was around as version 2.0 was progressing. But then he seemed to disappeared leaving someone else to continue the documentation of Base.

By this time I was paying close attention to what he had been doing. So, I began studying as much as I could about this new database concept and how it would work. From this, I wrote my first documentation for Base, a chapter called, "Getting Started with Base". It would be the only written documentation on Base for OpenOffice.org version 2.0 and higher until recently.

Late fall in December

The dentist Kevin and I used had his office in a medical plaza near the local hospital. To get there we went down a 300 foot drive lined with Japanese plum trees. In the early spring, these were filled with white blossoms which were quite beautiful. In the fall, they also had bright colors.

The dental chair I used faced a window through which I could see one of these trees. Sights like this can calm a person down even if he is in a dental office, that is for sure.

I took a picture of the drive back to the dental office, but I have lost it. Well, this photo is of two Japanese plum trees to give you an idea of what was lining the drive. It is very close to what I saw out of the dental office.



2005

Dental work needed!

Then as the decade continued, one of my fillings from 1965 was beginning to show too much wear. So, I had it drilled out and replaced. Given the age of all of them (close to 40), the rest of them needed replacing as well. A couple of them had some decay underneath the old fillings, but the drilling took care of the decay. Expenses in the financial spreadsheets show this occurred from December 2005 through 2006. So, if I live until 2045 or so, I should need to have the present fillings replaced also... (Probably, this should be done before then though.) Even so, my dentist in 2014 told me that with my teeth and health, I could live to be 106!

For some people, the idea of having any dental work is to be avoided if at all possible. Unfortunately, this means avoiding **seeing** the dentist. What I prefer to do now is to see the dentist on a regular basis (which I did not always do), get

done what needs to be done, and avoid letting problems get worse *before* seeing the dentist.

May

Around 2000, my eye tooth on the top left began to become loose. Over a period of months, it came out. Well, part of it came out: the rest of it had dissolved. It was a baby tooth! Up to that time, I had two eye teeth on the top left. The permanent eye tooth had grown down behind the baby tooth. Now at approximately 60, I had lost the last of my baby teeth.

This month, I got a partial plate. But since I was not suppose to chew with the tooth on the partial plate, I began making a habit of taking the partial out before eating. The only problem was that I then forgot to put it back in! This happened in Kansas as I was traveling from Oklahoma City to Nebraska. (There went \$432 out with the garbage!)

It was June, 2006 when I got another partial plate costing me \$578. I still took out my partial plate to eat. This time I managed to keep this partial plate for more than a year. But Kevin and I went out to eat in Roanoke at an oriental restaurant, and I forgot again. This time I left it under my napkin. I did not notice the problem until the next morning. So, to the restaurant I went during the next day. The person busing our table did not pay any attention to what was on the table.

As I mentioned earlier, my son had a partial plate and kept it in his mouth even when eating. Why did I think that I should not do the same thing? I remember hearing the dentist tell me that I should not bite down on food with this partial. I simply did not stop to think what this should mean to me. In

any case, I have gone without a partial plate because replacing one every year or two would be too expensive!

New Cell Phone (June)

It was the middle of the month that I decided that I needed to get a cell phone. By this time, I had decided to make a trip that include seeing Marianne's family and then Shirley in Nebraska. Surely, a cell phone would be helpful for doing this. So, I signed up with Unicel which was the better choice of the brands that were available in rural east central Alabama. It would also be better for most of the trip. The price seemed very reasonable also.

Summer Vacation

This was going to be a rather long trip, I needed to do some planning. Where would Kevin and I be going? How long would we be gone? What kind of expenses would we have? What did we need to take with us? What highways would we be using? What resources did I need in my planning? What would I be doing about Precious? Do I take her with us or have her kept by our vet? How much would that cost?

My original plan was to go to Springfield, AR, for a week. From there go to Valentine, NE, for the first part of the second week. Then we would go into South Dakota and east to the Corn Palace in SE SD. Next stop over the weekend would be SE Iowa. There we would be attending church with Larry and Hanna who are very good friends of Tom and Elaine. From there to Edwardsville for a day or so and then home.

At that time, State Farm had an atlas which had a map of the entire US along with individual maps of the 50 states. So, here is where I traced the route I intended to take for a little over two weeks. I may have been able to use www.mapquest.com to do this, but I do not think I did.

What to take? I had already learned from both Mom and Dad's funerals that a detailed list of things to take was absolutely necessary. So, I created a text file with this information. Every article of clothing and how many was in it. So was anything that I thought that we might need. For example, I took some sheets along for Kevin since he normally wet them at night. My laptop was also placed in this list also.

Then I turned to my computer and the internet for lodging. I knew that Motel 8 had good prices so I went to its website. Little Rock looked like a good place to spend the first night. Then after leaving Arkansas, Cozad, NE, looked like a good place to stop before going on to Shirley's. Besides, I had gone to church there the summer of 1960. So, I was thinking of being over the weekend. Then there was a Motel 8 within less than 50 miles of the Corn Palace. Then would come a stop in Iowa, Edwardsville, and then home. Well, this is how things started out...

Finally, I made arrangement with our vet for them to keep Precious. In the middle of the last week of June, I began packing in earnest. Everything except for the last minute things were packed and checked off. The afternoon before we left, Precious was taken to the vet. The next morning, the last minute things were also packed and checked off the list. It was time for us to leave, and we did so.

Arkansas

The first problem we had was in Birmingham, AL. At the western side of the city, we were suppose to take US 78 W which would take us to Memphis. Well, I got just a little confused and took US 78 E. After going around a circle little bit, I got straighten out enough to be on 78 W. By early afternoon, we were in SE Memphis with no easy access to the Interstates in and around that area. After what seemed like quite a while, we got far enough west to get on I-55. Now I knew where I was and how to get on I-40 which would take us to Little Rock.

The Motel 8 I had reservations for was in the NE part of the city. It took me a couple of extra turns before I arrive at its front door. But, when I said something about staying there, he told me quite emphatically that I should not. Instead, he recommended that I travel an additional 30 miles to Conway, AR. It was safe there, but it was not safe where I was now! OK, off we headed.

We checked into the Motel 8 at Conway and then ate supper. They were nice enough to tell us where would be a nice place to eat. Afterward, I called and talked to Marianne to tell her where we were. I may have also gotten some information about how to find their home. Then I mentioned that I had first thought of staying in Little Rock. Her comment was that they would have come and gotten us out of that place. She definitely did not want her uncle staying in such a dangerous place.

I did not think that it would take more than an hour or so to get to Springdale, but I was wrong. Even so, we were there before noon.

It was possibly Saturday afternoon or evening that Marianne mentioned an association meeting in Oklahoma City the following week. It began on Thursday morning and ran through Saturday afternoon. Elder Staten and other

ministers attend the meeting. She thought that I might want to do so also. I began thinking about it. By the middle of the week, I had decided to do it.

Sunday morning, we all went to church. It was the first time I had been in this building. Even so, yet I got a feeling that was far different than I had ever had in any church that I can remember. I had a feeling of oppression, a very strong feeling. Why was this? I really don't know, but was it a warning of some type? Other than that, I enjoyed the services and the noon meal that followed the service.

There was a gathering of people on Monday, July 3rd with everyone bringing food. (I think the menu was probably planned in advanced with each family responsible for specific item or items. I remember the Sonny and Jennifer brought a large salad among other things. Sonny remarked about it speaking of the importance to having as many different colored vegetables as possible. I have never forgot this. In fact, I try to have several different colors every day in my salad as in six different vegetables. Sometimes, I will include diced bell pepper in it. Once in a while I cut up black olives to go into it.

Elder Staten and his family were invited to this gathering. Now years later, I remember the reason for this. Actually there was two reasons: the day before was Jennifer's birthday and the day after was the fourth of July. It was an all day affair, that is for sure. Well, everyone had the day off.

The day really did not end even then. As evening turned to night, it was time for the fireworks to begin. The Lindsey's headed up the hill to the people living behind them for this. Kevin needed some rest after this long day, so I put him to bed and then hit the sack as well. I never heard any of the fireworks that night, and apparently Kevin did not. Normally,

loud noises cause him to become very nervous, but he slept through this night.

Maybe I ought to explain why. It had to do with where we were sleeping. Marianne and Paul had a bedroom on the first floor while the children slept on the second floor. Besides the house was built up against the hill. So, the first floor was at ground level on the front side, and the second floor was only a foot or so above ground level on the back side. So the ground behind the house shielded Kevin and I from the fireworks. Well, someone had a small cannon (2 or 3" diameter barrel). Even that did not phase us one bit.

It seems that we got a tour of the area with Paul showing us where he worked and other sights to see. Anything else that we saw on Tuesday? Not that I can recall.

Wednesday was another packing day. Well, it was also washing day. All of our soiled clothes were washed, dried, and repacked. By evening, once more everything but the last minute things were packed and locked in the van. Yes, they were also checked off in the computer text file.

This was a day to change our plans somewhat. We are going to Oklahoma City for Thursday through Saturday. Cozad, NE, was still my planned stop for Saturday night. With the distance between here and Oklahoma City, a full day of driving would be required. So, we would leave Oklahoma on Saturday morning. As far as lodging was concerned, I had a Motel 8 booklet listing all of their motels and locations. Something close to the airport looked like a good place to go.

Wednesday evening concluded with meeting at the church. This included a service as well as the church's monthly business meeting. The church building lived up to its

reputation: it pays for men to wear a jacket regardless of how hot it is outside.

Oklahoma City

Then Thursday, Kevin and I were up and had breakfast. Since this was a workday for Paul, we made sure that we were out of his way. After he left, I finished getting the last things into the van. This began with letting the air out of Kevin's air mattress. Having gotten all the things that I thought we had brought into the van, we headed toward Oklahoma City. This was between 7 and 8 AM, so we had some early morning traffic to say the least. But it did not take all that long to get the AR/OK border. Marianne had given me directions to the church which I was able to follow. So, I was at the building a little after 10 AM.

I'm not sure what had caused it, but Kevin had a large BM on the way there which means that I had to clean him up. It took a while, but I was able to get it done which included getting all of the smell off of him.

And then, as I like to say, came the red tape. They had a form to fill out as is the case for most association meetings. So, I did. And yet, there was enough time before the morning service began.

Morning, afternoon, and evening services were held (I think). Meals were served: lunch and supper. When I checked into the Motel 8 is a good question. I may well have left the church after the afternoon service and then returned.

Given Kevin's behavior, I was still able to have conversations with some of the people there including local ministers. I had a nice time. (I would have loved to have been asked to preach, but this was highly unlikely considering Kevin. Who

would take care of him for me? Well, God would like He had before, but I forgot about that.)

Thursday or Friday, I made a reservation for the Motel 8 in Cozad, NE at the Motel 8 where I was staying. So, things were still going as planned so to speak.

Shirley

Come Saturday morning, I packed all of the things that I had brought into the motel with us on Thursday. We headed north on I-35. By mid day, we had passed Wichita, KS coming up on Salina. So we stopped to eat there. This was when I made a very big boo-boo. I had taken my partial plate out to eat, but I had not put it back in at the end of my meal! So, I was without this until I replaced it around a year later. I hated that.

By late afternoon, I was in front of the Motel 8 in Cozad. So, I went in to get the room I had reserved. Well I thought I had a reserved room. Have you ever heard of over booking? Such was the case here.

There had been a baseball tournament in town that week, and this motel had been where all of the players and fans were staying. They were booked up! Well being a tournament meant one thing. There were losers and winners. Well, the winners were going to stay, but the losers were likely to leave. Such was the case this afternoon. Someone whose team had lost that day decided to cancel their reservation. So, I got theirs.

I drove around a little bit as well as found a place to eat supper. I also found where the church was located using a city map. And there just had to be some one way streets to complicate things, but I found it anyway.

By this time, I was running into another situation. I may have a cell phone, but Nebraska does not have many cell phone towers. Besides the various cell phone providers did not like to provide service to people using a different provider. Well, I got a signal, but no company wanted to connect me so I could call Shirley. Sad situation.

After breakfast and packing, we were on the road again. We would be heading west to North Platte and then due north to Valentine. It would be late afternoon before we arrived. Even so, there was a sight I did not think I would get to see.

I was driving north from North Platte when I happened to see a lot of sand on both sides of the road! I know I had seen sandy beaches, but was I in the middle of a desert?

This is not a surprise for those who know anything about norther central Nebraska. This area is known as the sand hills. I had heard about this region while Shirley and I were together two years earlier. Even so, this was quite different from what I would have expected.

I had a list of a couple of motels in Valentine, and I chose to stay at one of them. So, I checked in before I drove out to see her. I was acting on a feeling. It turned out to be the right thing to do. So after registering and unpacking, we headed to Shirley's home. It was not all that difficult to find it.

Because I could not call her on my cell phone she did not know when I would be arriving. She only knew it would sometime this afternoon. So she was getting somethings ready when we arrived as in a little touch up painting.

She had a two room house next to her that she was thinking that Kevin and I could stay in it. It would save \$75 plus tax to do this. However, it had corner area that was much lower

that the rest of the floor. When I saw it, I was concerned about Kevin getting into that area and possibly falling. So, I was then sure that I had made the decision to stay in Valentine instead.

But this also presents another problem from her viewpoint. How much money had she spent on the inside of this house that she did not really have to spend? How much time did she spend that she could have used doing other things? I will never know.

Sunday evening Kevin and I spent with her in a most enjoyable way. Well, he slept most of the time. Oh yes, I made sure he had a Depend on to make sure he did not have any "accidents." She fixed supper for us.

After supper we sat down to chat. One of the topics was her late husband. She even got out a picture of him. She mentioned many of the things the two of them had experienced together. It even included some of the things during the last months of his life. How was she going to make it when he died?

At some point the conversation switched to singing. We both like to sing and she knew it. Well we moved to her piano; she sat on the bench and I stood near by. For a while, she played a variety of songs as we sang them. Then she suddenly stopped playing because she wanted to sing A Capella. So, we did. I of course had to do some sight reading of the songs that I did not know. It had to be close to 10 PM before we called it a night. That is when I woke Kevin up, and the two of us headed back to our motel room.

Now this is the type of life that I would love to have: doing things together that we both enjoy doing. Each one takes consideration of the needs of the other. Each one helps the

other with whatever is needed. Each one gets to help; each one gets to receive help.

It did not take very long for me to discover that I had left something important at Marianne's home. Without it I could not keep Kevin's air mattress blown up. It was sent to me later though.

Monday morning she took us out to see one of the parks in the area. There was an entrance fee which she paid. I notice a look on her face as she came out from doing this that said something was wrong. I have guessed what that might have meant, but I don't know for sure. Anyway, we headed out for a long walk.



It was well worth the time and energy expended. I love to see waterfalls, and this was no exception. But then the time for the trek back to her car. Whether we went anywhere else

or not, I do not remember. However, it was getting to be dinner time anyway. So, we headed back to her house for dinner.

That evening while we got to meet Shirley's other daughter, Sherri and family. It was at a picnic in a park. They were as nice as Shirley. I had a nice time, and I hope they did too.

Kevin was a little agitated for some reason. Was it because he did not know them? Could have been. But there was plenty of space to walk him, and took advantage of this. It took several walks before he was tired enough to calm down.

Sherri was the daughter that had been worried about Shirley going all the way to St. Louis to meet a man she did not know and spend several days in a home whose occupants she did not know either. From that view point, being upset makes sense.

But now she got to meet me and Kevin on her territory. Things were very different. It was clear that I was not a threat to her mother. But again, she did not know that a little over two years before.

She had things to do Tuesday and I think Wednesday. So I did not see her again until Wednesday evening. But I also had things I needed to do these two days. Like, I had not washed and dried any clothes for six days. So this got done Tuesday. I may have rested up this day as well. Kevin was fine with watching TV as he always did.

Wednesday was the day that we spent some time in downtown Valentine. Population was about 2,000 (my guess), so it was not a large downtown. Anyway, I was having some sort of an electrical problem, so I bought a roll of electrical tape. Then I fixed it; whatever *it* was.

The other part of that morning involved getting a haircut. Well, I guess I could have waited until the following week... It was a strange experience. The barber went by appointments only. I did not have one. Then again, the person who did have one did not show up. Anyway, he told me to come at a specific time which I did. As near as I could tell, he had not cut anyone's hair since I had first approached him. Was I looking at this situation in the wrong way?

Shirley and we were to meet Wednesday for supper. Now, I really got this communication wrong. She intended us to meet at the restaurant next to my motel at a certain time. I interpreted it to mean that we would meet at her home at that time. Why would I think this? She was working in town that day. Anyway, I went out to her house and spend some time sitting in her swing. I really did not want to leave it. But almost 30 minutes later I headed back to the motel and the restaurant next to it. There she was, and she was almost finished with her meal. At least she waited with us as we ordered and then ate our meals.

Then it was off to her Baptist church for a Wednesday night service. She was involved that evening with the church choir. I got to watch a movie about Israel which also included showing women running businesses in that country. It was informative.

At the end of service, it was time for us to say good-by. This likely would be the last time we would every see each other again, but who knows?

One of the things when I had hugged her good-by at the St. Louis International Airport that she noticed was that my hugs were *stiff*.

Given that I had done a lot of hugging after church service in which I have had a part, this sounded strange. But then

again, hugs telling me that I had preached a good sermon is different from hugging a lady whom I care about.

So, as we said our goodbyes, I loosened up with my hug. While it was not to be, I would have loved to huggd her tight on a regular basis. Oh, well...

Tuesday and Wednesday gave me some time to think about the expenses I was racking up. I began to worry whether I would have enough money to make it back home if I continued on the route I had planned. So, I decide to head back home Thursday morning. We arrived back home on Saturday. It had cost us nearly \$1,100.

Rest of Year

This was the only big event of the year, but this does not mean I lack things to do. Instead, I had plenty to keep me busy.

I was still following the household schedule that I began right after Susan died. Since that time I had broken down the schedule into what needed to be done once a quarter and what needs to be done each month. Of course, I then made a weekly schedule so that I would know what needed to be done each day of the present week. (Obviously, I made changes in it each week.) And I had a list of tasks that needed to be done everyday. So, a large part of each day involved doing things that I had listed for that day. The same was true for each week, month, and quarter.

I knew from reading positive thinking books, that I needed to determine each day whether I did all of the things I was suppose to do. So by mid April 2005, I had created a database in which I could keep track of what I wanted to do

each day. Some of them were tasks which I needed to accomplish everyday. For them I had a label and a box to check off when done. Then for the other tasks, I had ten boxes in which to enter the tasks for the day. Each of these had their own box to check off as well. The name of the database was an obvious Schedule.odb.

For this to work all of the time, I needed to write down my annual goals for the year, my quarterly goals for the upcoming quarter, my monthly goals at the end of the previous month, and my weekly goals at the end of the previous week.

Sounds good doesn't it? Yes, it does, but that does not mean that I always did it. I actually got a beginning in 2002. It was the annual goals for that year. This was done during November and December, 2001. But this is as far as I got. There was not any documents for any quarter or month.

At the end of 2002, Susan was near death, so this might be the reason why I did not make any annual goals during the last two months of this year. Then again, by this time I had made a list of what needed to be done each day based upon what our Home Health care giver was doing. So, my schedule was strictly weekly. I just do not know how long I stayed with only deciding what I would do from one week to the next. I do know that I have no documents listing my goals for 2003 nor 2004. In fact, I have nothing for 2005 until the fourth quarter of this year. These include quarterly goals, October goals, and December goals.

Yet I had a database which had daily goals for much of 2005. But as this year ended, I began being more diligent in my planning for 2006. As a result, I had the following documents (number of them): annual (1), quarterly (4), and monthly (12). I did not do as well during the following years. Some years were better than others.

Financial statements can also be a source of what we were doing and where but not always. For example, in March 2005, I drove over 1600 miles in four or five days between a Tuesday and Saturday. Oh, it costs us \$400+. Where did we go? I have not the slightest idea even though we traveled over 1,600 miles.

But back to when we arrived home from our trip which was Friday, July 15. We had left Paducah, KY, that morning which was about 7 and a half hour trip. Kevin decided to take a nap while I was getting things organized.

Obviously, Rosie needed to be unloaded and separated. Dirty clothes went into one pile. This would be washed at a later time. Things on hangers were put back into their respective closets, and the suitcases were put into the extra bedroom because I really was not ready to put away the clothes that they contained. Then there were the containers of assorted items that were also placed in this room. (These included things like our electric toothbrush, the air mattress, hair blow drier, shoes, etc.) Things we would need placed back into the bathroom got put there before bedtime. Well, they were needed there. The other things? Well, they could wait for a while.

During the weekend, groceries were bought so the refrigerator got stocked a little bit but not a whole lot. That would not be until next Thursday (my next scheduled grocery buying day). Well, I did spend about \$30 this Saturday, but on Thursday it was more like \$98.

Anyway, on Monday, I sent Kevin back to the Learning Center. I remained home getting everything put where it belonged. This was also my wash day on my schedule, so I did. It also said that it was time to vacuum our carpets. So, I did even though the house had been closed up most of the time since I had last done the vacuuming.

Now Wednesday afternoon was when Kevin had an appointment to see his cardiologist. His pacemaker needed to be checked more thoroughly than the monthly phone calls. (It is called a pacemaker clinic.) During this visit, the machine would interact with his pacemaker to determine what its status was. Everything looked fine; it was just a little older.

By the following Monday, I was back into following my weekly cleaning schedule. This gave me a little more time to begin doing other things.

I was still getting cassette tapes sermons from Little Flock Church. So, I had to use my tape recorder I had gotten from my parents to create a computer file from them. This took a little over an hour for each tape. Then I would add these files to my web server so that others would also have access to these sermons. Of course I had to create the links that were needed. It certainly helped that I had learned the needed code to do this.

I was also reading my Bible on a regular basis and writing a devotional about a text chosen from within my assigned reading for the day.

OpenOffice.org

This is the name of the free office suite that I had been learning how to use. More specifically, this was the year that a new version was coming out: version 2.0. This was a major version, so there were so many revisions and changes.

With my math background, I decided to learn as much as possible about the database component called *Base*. Up to this point, only flat databases could be created by it. When 2.0 came out, relational databases could also be created.

Well, I had no idea what these things were. So, I began using the Internet to find out and how they differ from flat databases. Fortunately, there was plenty of information available. Studying all of this was time consuming to say the least. Even so, it was quite interesting and informative.

There were only a very few people who were developing the code needed to enable Base to accomplish what it needed to do. With any development like this, errors are going to be made in the code. So, people were needed to discover and report them. Then the code would have to be changed and tested. I became a part of this as well.

At the end of each day, all the code which had been created for the entire project was combined and made available for testers like me by the following morning. (These were called daily builds for obvious reasons.) So, periodically, I would download that day's build (a file containing all of the components of OpenOffice.org) for testing and learning more about Base. How many of these builds were made? I'm not sure, but I remember we were still having serious problems with build #74. So likely more than 100 of them were made before the developers were satisfied enough to release the final product in early 2006.

So, part of my time I was sitting in front of my computer writing the *Getting Started with Base* chapter. Another part of the time, I was creating flat and relational databases based upon my studies that I was doing on these topics.

One of first was for this chapter: Inventory.odt. This was a flat database. Another one came somewhat later: Automobile. This was a relational database which would contain all of the information needed about a vehicle's expenses. I even had a way to calculate the mileage of the vehicle. While this was designed for a single vehicle, only a

modification was needed to calculate mileage for additional ones.

OK, so I like to sit in front of my computer. You see, I was interested in the other components of OpenOffice.org. Besides, I needed to learn as much about its text editing component (Writer). After all, I was using it to do my writing, and I had to format my work as I typed. And since styles were used to define the formatting in a text document, I needed to learn how to use them. Yes, you can call this on the job training (better know as OJT in the military).

I also decided to get involved with another component: Impress. This creates and shows slide shows. So during this fall and winter, I was learning how to make slides for a slide show. And while learning, I was also writing about my experiences. And yes, the name for this chapter was *Getting Started with Impress*.

I actually got further with this chapter than the one for Base. I turned my copy in for editing on my birthday at the end of this year. The Base chapter was not that far along until around the time when version 2.0 came out several months later.

Also near the end of the year, I decided to create a local area network (LAN) with which I could connect my tower and my 1998 laptop. So, I bought a router and some R-45 twin wire to make the connection. Then I downloaded a copy of *Samba*, a program that would actually connect them electronically. Ah yes, more learning on my part. It was rather interesting to say the least. Well, it was very frustrating as well when things did not go the way I wanted them. But I got it up and running in spite of what I did.

Another thing I did at this time was to plan some things I wanted to accomplish next year. By the end of the month, I

had a list of things to be accomplished by the end of the year. Then I broke this down in to what I would do during the first quarter and then for January. (I continued to do this monthly for the rest of the year.) However, somehow I forgot to use a database to verify whether I did all of these things or not. I suppose that when I looked at the text document with what I wanted to do, I did not see any reason for making an additional entry in a database as well. Oh well!

2006

How did I begin this year? I shampooed my carpets! Well, it had to be done sometime. Besides they were 14 years old. They needed attention regularly. My annual goals called for this to be done quarterly. So, I did: during the first week of each quarter.

Daily Devotionals

In January, I decided to make audio files of the devotionals that I had made in 2002 and 2003. This way others could listen to them rather than read them. Did this really make any difference? I don't know. I could have looked at the logs created by my web site, but I did not so do. It was an idea that occurred to me, so I did it.

I had a more ambitious project for the first part of this year. In the past, I had written my devotionals each day based upon what I was scheduled to read in the Bible that day. On the 9th of January I read Ecclesiastes 8:12 through the second chapter of the Song of Solomon. I wanted to write about the latter, so I did.

(How would I know what I was suppose to be reading on January 9, 2006? Guess what? OpenOffice.org has a spreadsheet component named, *Calc*. I have a spreadsheet that lists my Bible reading schedules beginning with July 6, 2006—September 27, 2014. By 2011, I developed a database to contain written devotionals. These are organized by the daily reading assignments which total 334. Within each of these, I can write as many devotionals about that assignment as I want.)

At some point, I decided that I want to study marriage in depth. What does the Bible say about this subject? I wanted to know. Likely this was something that occurred to me on this day.

Whether I began with the first chapter of the Song of Solomon or not, I spent several days if not weeks discussing this book in detail. Then I went to other books of the Bible in which marriage was discussed. The 31st chapter of Proverbs comes to mind. 1 Peter chapter 3 as well as Ephesians chapter 5 do as well.

How long did this take? Well, my last devotional on this topic was during the last week of March that year! That was approximately 12 weeks or about 84 devotionals. It certainly was worth the time I took to do it.

My 35 years of marriage gave me insight for many of these devotionals. I saw teachings that my wife and I had followed along with the benefits that came with that. I also saw teachings that we ignored along with the bad consequences that came from these actions.

I was still corresponding with Shirley in Nebraska, so I asked her if I could send these devotionals to her. She agreed. Then I asked her opinions on what I was writing. I especially wanted this on the latter part of the Song of Solomon. This is

because the language is rather explicit when it comes to sex, and I wanted a lady to voice what she thought about the things that are taught in the Bible. She thought it was well written.

50th "birthday" (Apr)

I had learned that Elder Lonnie Mozingo, Sr., who married Susan and me, had died. His oldest son, Elder Lonnie Mozingo, Jr, was the pastor at Bethany Primitive Baptist Church in the northeast part of Atlanta, GA. This church was having a special service, and I decided to drive there from Roanoke (about 70 miles) for the Saturday morning service. (It was April 1, 2006.) I was also hoping that I might get to see Sister Shirley, his widow, while I was there.

I have been using the Internet for information about many things, and getting directions to Bethany Church was no different. Map Quest was one of the better ones known. So, before we left home that Saturday morning, I wrote down what roads and streets I would be taking and the turns I would need to make.

And because I wanted to give us a little extra time in case I needed it, we arrived at the church a little early. As usual, there were several people already there. Some were doing a variety of last minute things; some were putting the food they brought so that it would be easy to get it put out for the people to eat at lunch.

As Kevin and I were walking through the church, Elder Mozingo, Jr. saw me and we begin to talk. Then we walked together to a room, possibly his office in the church. There he and I continued to talk about many things that went back perhaps 40 years. (It was around this time that we first met.

Well I decided to play a little trick on him. So, I told him that I was 50 years old on this day. He looked like he wanted to believe me, but something seemed wrong in his thinking as well. Yes something did not add up at all. After I let him wonder for a while, I told him the truth. On the afternoon of April 1, 1956, my younger brother, Tom, and I had been baptized into Sharon Primitive Baptist Church in northwest St. Louis County. So as I faced him on this day, it was the 50th anniversary of my baptism. I suppose you could say that this was my April fool's day joke on him.

I was able to talk with Sister Shirley after the morning services and before lunch. During this time we traded some of our experiences of losing a spouse, and we agreed on several points. There is really nothing that a person can say that will really help very much when one's spouse dies. The most important thing is to know by the people's actions that they care. The unexpected appearance of my nieces at Susan's funeral is a perfect example of this. This said far more than what any words could.

I had also learned that the memories we hold of our late spouses and our attitude toward our lives can make our lives meaningful for the rest of them. This requires us to rely upon our LORD for His sustaining power, grace, and mercy.

Vacation: AR & Oklahoma City(July)

As usual, late June was the time to prepare for this trip. We were leaving on July 3, spending a couple of days at the Lindsey's home for a couple of days, and then be at the Oklahoma association Thursday through Saturday. Then

somehow we got back home. So this determined what we needed to pack.

Of course, I had kept myself busy during the first part of the year. For one thing, I had been in the dental chair three times and had two more scheduled visits before the year was out.

Was there something wrong with my teeth? Well sort of and sort of not. I needed to have the rest of my fillings replaced. Two of them had been done last year because one of them was beginning to crumble around the edges. So I had two of them re-drilled then. I really suppose that I should not complain about this. After all, they had lasted for 40 years.

That left 10 more that needed it. OK, I can have them done every two months beginning with February. So this is what I did. It sure was nice to be able to say that my original fillings lasted this long. As I write this, these refills are still doing quite well 11 years after they were put in.

Then there was more writings for Open Document Authors that I wanted to get done. In researching this, I noticed that I had written the *Getting Started with Impress* last year. Along with that, I had created a slide show that was based upon this chapter. Each slide demonstrated what was to be the outcome when the chapter was studied and applied.

By the end of the year, I was beginning to write chapters for the Impress Guide. How many did I get written? I'm not for sure since my calendar only lists one: *Master Slides*. And yes I continues this writing throughout the rest of the year as well as began a few chapters for the Base Guide as well.

Sold Rosie; Bought Black Beauty(July 24)

With only Kevin and I, Rosie seemed like more than what I needed for our transportation. So, I checked with the local Chevrolet dealership for a possible car instead. There was one problem though. There was not really a market for a van with a wheelchair lift. So, I would be losing money on any trade in. Anyway, I asked Jimmy Dunn, the dealership owner to let me know if someone needed a van like mine had.

Late in July I got a call from a local couple that was interested. The husband was in a wheelchair at the time and needed to regularly go to Anniston, AL, for doctor's appointments. So, I let him try out the lift which he did. It was exactly what he needed. So, we made an agreement of \$5,000 for it. I had had it for almost 8 years and driven it for a little over 40,000 miles. I was certain that this was a good deal for me. They were certain that it was for them also.

That is when I went back to Jimmy Dunn. After all, I needed a car to replace the van. I told him how much I could afford. Well, he came up with a deal that would involve all three of us, which the couple did not want have anything to do with it. Jimmy said that his was would eliminate the need to pay sales tax on one if not both vehicles involved. OK, that would not happen. So, I collected the \$5,000 in 50 \$100 bills. I also filled out the back of the van's title so they could get the title changed to their names. They got to pay the taxes on what they paid me. Then Jimmy and I sat down and filled out the paper work on the car, *Black Beauty*. Then I paid him for the car which was \$200+ over the \$5,000 I had gotten. The difference was the sales taxes and a fee for Jimmy filling out the paperwork.

Health issues: Welcome to Medicare(Dec)

I turned 65 this year which made me eligible for Medicare. It took a little while to understand everything. Specifically, there is the part B of medicare which required a deduction taken out of my payment each month. Then there was part D which was the drug prescription coverage. With the amount of my S S being what it was, I qualified for government assistance. I only had to apply for it which I did. It came by the first of December. I also found out that it would also pay for my doctor visits, but I would have a co-pay of \$1.00 for each visit.

This program includes a free physical to see what the person's physical condition is. My appointment was Monday, December 4, 2006. I anticipated that I was in excellent health and expected no problems. Boy, was I wrong!

I walked into the examining room, and immediately a blood pressure cuff was put on my arm. It was 184/64! I literally could not believe what I saw and said so emphatically. So, he took it again with the same result. He called it asymmetrical high blood pressure. (The systolic was high, but the diastolic was normal.) The urine sample they requested was so dark that it looked closer to coffee than urine. (It was opaque!) I was dehydrated to say the least.

Actually, he did not seem to be surprised at all. Was it because he had seen me many times over the last decade or so which I had brought Kevin in to see him? Or, was it that he had seen a lot of people my age getting this physical having readings like me? Or, could it have been a bit of both? Good questions, but I don't have an answer for any of them.

I had a lot to learn all over again. If I was as dehydrated as much as the urine sample said I was, surely drinking enough water to rehydrate myself ought to take care of the situation. Well, that is what I thought. His comment was, "You would think so." But he pointed out that this is not what happens. I still did not really believe him.

At this point, he wanted a sonogram of both carotid arteries and an echo cardiogram of my heart. Nothing was said about any treatment for the condition. I was given an appointment to have these things done.

OK, I'm going to prove Dr. Peterson wrong. When I got home that morning I began drinking lots of water. Well ever so often I drank another glass of water. In time this sent me to the bathroom. Before I came back out, I drank a full glass of water. I continued doing these two things for the rest of the day. At first this only caused the systolic pressure to increase. By the middle of the night, I could not really sleep at all. At that point, I measured my BP: 205/low 60's. But then it seemed to start to drop and I finally got some sleep.

Kevin had an appointment on Tuesday to see his cardiologist, Dr. Slavich, at the same building as Dr. Peterson. I did not mention what I had learned the previous day about myself. Kevin's was a normal check-up, and everything was fine.

Wednesday morning, I had an appointment to clean my teeth. At the time I still did not know what to do when it comes to keeping my teeth clean. For example, I would brush them morning and evening. Then I would floss them in the morning. This is not the best way to do it as I learned later. So, the hygienist had to work harder than she should have to clean them.

I got my sonogram which was an education. I knew there was something wrong in the right carotid artery because the

technician spent almost 1/3 of the time on it. The blood flow was obviously slower in the right one than the left according to the sounds being made. When I got the results back the following week, I learned that I had a 20% blockage.

I had seen echograms given to both Susan and Kevin, so I knew something about it. The latter did show a thickening of the heart muscle which would be expected with high BP.

since then, I continued to take my BP, and by Thursday morning I wanted something done. So, back to the office I went **demanding** that the doctor do something. He did: he sent me to the other side of the office to the cardiologist to see him. (I wonder if he earlier expected me to make this demand... I have not bothered to ask him since then.)

So, I was again sitting in a room waiting to see the cardiologist, Dr. Slavich, two days after being there with Kevin. So, he was surprised to see me. He actually asked where Kevin was. I replied that I was the patient rather than Kevin. So, now he had two patients from one family.

So, he began with my blood pressure. This time the systolic was 164 with a diastolic again in the low 60's. Even though this was 20 points lower than Monday's something needed to be done. So after talking with me for a while, he gave me some medication to take. It would take several months for the blood pressure to come down. But the middle of the summer of 2007, the systolic was 102 or 103 a couple of times. (Diastolic remained in the low to mid 60's.)

Once he got the information that he needed, he began to speak to me trying his best to calm me down some. One of his first comments was that I would probably live a long life. In fact, he was then taking a couple of pills for his high blood pressure. I still was not ready to believe him, but I had to after a while.

When I got the results for the echogram and carotid artery sonogram back on the Dec 15, I learned that I had a 20% blockage in the right artery just above where the first artery branched off to the left.. After I got the results directly from Dr. Peterson, I was sent to Dr. Slavich who also looked at the results. I would be seeing him once a month until Kevin and I moved to Knoxville in March, 2008.

Meanwhile, I was following the goals that I had set up for this year, quarter, and months. So, it was time to decide what I wanted to accomplish next year. By the end of the year, I had a list of things I wanted to accomplish written down.

An obvious goal was to lower my blood pressure. Specifically, I wanted to have this done by July 1. Why then? Well, Shirley in Nebraska was going to her 50th class reunion that month and there is something that she wanted to accomplish before it. So, we sort of challenged each other. With this encouragement from each other, we both were likely to reach our individual goals.

This really worked for both of us: we both did it! Sorry, I won't say what hers was. But, when I saw the doctor on July 12th, my systolic BP was 100. Diastolic was somewhere in the low 60's.

Initially, I was taking one 20 mg tablet a day. At first my BP did not respond very well to the medication, so it was increased to 40 mg. By April or May, it was going back down which pleased Dr. Slavich. It was dropping enough to return to the 20 mg tablets again. With the reading in July, it was time to think about reducing the amount once again. But he wanted to wait one more month. Sure enough, August's reading matched July's. So, he dropped the dose to 10 mg.

I wanted to continue to write about *Base* and *Impress*. I was also very active in OpenOffice.org's mailing list. People who

had a problem with either of these components of OOO would send an email to it asking questions about the things that they did not understand. I and others who were more experience would send the information back to the list. If we notice that the person had not joined the list, we would also sent an email to them (a CC). This way people belonging to the list would see both the questions and the answers. Also, the non member would get a personal email with the answers.

This was very enjoyable to me because I got to help others when they needed it. Beside, I might have to do some studying to give an intelligent answer. So, I also learn more about this office suite than I would have done without the questions being sent into the mailing list. And I should mention that I often got replies from the person with the problem that I helped solve. This way I learned that I had been able to help them.

I also continued to add to my website. There were sermons that they could stream from my sight. Some came from Little Flock Church in northwest Arkansas. Lessons could be learned by listening to them. I continued also to write devotionals with thoughts about particular text of Scriptures for the reader to study.

So, I really had two ministries that I was involved with. My writings for OOO provided for the needs of people who wanted to understand it better as did my answers for the mailing list. Obviously, the latter was a Spiritual ministry as well.

And then there was my summer vacation. I had recently attended the association in Oklahoma City the second weekend of July, and I wanted to do this again. This would give me a chance to visit with the Lindsey's while I was in the area.

But I had something else that I wanted to do. I have attended church in all of the states surrounding Kansas, so I would like to add this state to my list of states which had churches that I had attended.

Along and near the southern border of Perth, Kansas was a church that met the first Sunday of the month. One of the pastors at Oklahoma City preached there. OK, I could attend church there, come back to Arkansas to visit a few days, and return to Oklahoma City for the association.

But I ran into a problem before mid summer. The church at Perth was not going to meet in July. Well, that ended this idea. But as it turned out, another event resulted in not going to the association that year as well.

2007

For several months, I kept a very close check on my BP using a spreadsheet to enter the readings and then using statistical functions to tell me what was going on. I could do this because I had taken a statistical course while working on my master's degree in the mid 1970's. One of the things I noticed was that my BP would go up during the afternoon and into the evening hours. As a result, I began taking my medicine at noon instead of with breakfast. This did result in an overall lowering of the BP readings throughout the day. (The morning measurements were a little higher, and the evening ones were a little bit lower with the morning having the smaller change while the evening had larger changes.)

What did Dr. Slavich think when I showed him my spreadsheet on my blood pressure? He definitely did not think I had to be this exact with my readings. Maybe a reading once a day or so was enough seemed to be his

thinking. (Well, he was satisfied with getting a BP on my once a month while I was in his office!)

Well, I wanted to know what was going on. Yes, I knew that like everyone else, my blood pressure varies during the day depending upon what I was doing. I wanted to know something about when the pressure changes and what I was doing at the time. Most people could not have cared less about things like this. But I have learned some things, and this can be exciting to me.

Etta's help

Over the years she has continued to study healthy lifestyles and proper eating. Sometimes she gave great advice; sometimes... What she had told me in the middle 1970's helped me to remain free from many a cold or flu. I credit my learning how to eat healthier with not having to take any antibiotics (liquid or pill) since 1976. It is also very seldom that my temperature goes high enough to require some medication for it. This is usually less than 1 pill in 2-3 year period of time and sometimes even less often.

She sent me a couple of books on diets. The main problems with them was that they were designed for people who are at least obese if not heavier. At 5 feet six inches" and 138 pounds, I was not either of these (just over weight by 1 pound or so). So, I would up using a diet that did not have the appropriate number of calories. I started to gradually lose weight which was somewhat of a problem for the cardiologist: he did not like the idea of the amount of weight I was loosing.

There were advantages to the diet as well which began to show by February, 2008 by another ultrasound of the carotid arteries. But this came later.

Wanting a wife

I still wanted to get married, but I was having no "luck". Kevin's attendance at the Learning Center required a visit by a social worker once a year to go over things that occurred in the family. When I mentioned my desire to get married, she mentioned eHarmony.com. That is where she had met her husband in the last year.

I had used this website to find Shirley four years before. So, at first I was wondering if this was even possible. Well, she was going to marry the one she had met there. So, maybe I should give it a try again. I was getting frustrated with being single and not having much contact with many people. Oh, there were church meetings, but none of them were single women that I might find interesting.

Even so, Kevin was a problem. In fact, one lady at a church meeting told me that I needed to put him in an institution and get out more. Attend things where I would find someone to share my interests. I know she meant well, but what she said was an insult to me. He was my flesh and blood. I had already had to put him in an institution before, and I was not about to do that again ever!

So, I spent several hours taking the personality test at eHarmony.com once again. I even paid for perhaps a few months.

Then came the waiting game so to speak. I had a hard time deciding which ones I wanted to contact so we could get acquainted. I guess you could say that my heart was not really into it very much. I really did not put my all into it. Most of them did not live very close to me. (Such was the case with Shirley in the past.)

Well there was one possibility, a lady that lived about 40 miles south of me. We actually emailed for a while. We may have even talked on the phone. During that call, she mentioned that she had a church activity which sort of put me off. (Her beliefs and mine were going to be a problem to say the least.)

Dee Mynatt

And then there was Dee who lived in Knoxville, TN. She seemed to be a possibility... Well, I was going to give her a chance...

Emailing each other

This time we followed the advice of the website by sending our emails through eHarmony for a while. It appeared that we had a lot in common, but that the tests we took when we enrolled on it was a good guarantee of that. But there was a flaw in the test from my perspective in the area of religion. I consider my beliefs to be very important, and there are few people that would agree with what they are.

I am willing to question beliefs whether they are mine or another's. I really want a lady who is capable of doing the same thing. Such a person is hard to find as I have found out.

Each of us has developed a set of assumptions upon which our beliefs are based. I find that mine are far different from that held by most people. This creates friction in any relationship.

So, from the beginning there were differences in beliefs. We continued to get better acquainted through emails which

became rather frequent as in many times a day. This bothered me a little because most of them were sent to her office email account. Doing this while she was suppose to be working did not seem right to me. It did not bother her; she said that she made sure she got her work done first and then spent some time emailing when she was not busy with work. Whether this was true or not, I do not know. Supposedly, this is called multitasking.

Instant messaging

I do not remember when I began instant messaging with anyone. Perhaps it was Dee that introduced me to it. It did seem to be better than emailing though because we could both see our conversations in context.

At the time she was taking a couple of college courses at night and would be up until close to midnight studying (Eastern Time). Since she was doing this using her computer, we began instant messaging during those nights. She would study some, send me a message, and read my replies all in some random order. This made it at least appear that she could multitask efficiently. The topics ranged over a very wide variety of topics. Some of them were very personal, probably too personal.

Trips to Knoxville

The first one happened during the weekend of June 15-17, 2007. I kept Kevin home from school this day and packed the car. So far, so good. Well, I thought so. So, we left for Knoxville perhaps around 8 AM. Then a couple of hours later, I realized that I had forgotten something very important: my blood pressure medicine! I had not double check my packing list to make sure I had these pills listed in the packing list file. It was not around noon and I am driving on I-59. I

needed to turn around so I could go back to get them, but the exits were not very close together. By the time I got back home, it was after noon before we got back home. Now, I had to fix us lunch before packing the pills and heading back north.

By the time I got back to Chattanooga, TN, I was in the middle of the evening traffic jam! It took me an extra hour to creep through this city. I called Dee in Chattanooga to tell her what had happened so she would not be excessively worried. When I arrived at my motel, she was there waiting for me. It had to be around 8 PM.

At this point, I was not thinking very clearly at all. I was tired and hungry. So, I just wanted to get to a place to eat. The fact that I wore the same clothes to do this that I had put on this morning did not occur to me at all. (It did to Dee.) Well, I don't remember changing Kevin any either.

We went out to eat with her giving me directions. It turned out that she was not well acquainted with the area where my Motel 6 was located in north Knoxville. So, we wound up driving around for a while before she found a Shoney's that was open. Food at last!

After supper at a Shoney's, she directed me to a pond in North Knoxville that has some resident ducks which was nice. After spending a nice time there, we returned to my motel where her car was still parked. Then we parted for the evening with a kiss, and then another.

On Saturday, Kevin and I ate at the same Shoney's as the evening before. Then we met at her apartment where I met her daughter and two grandchildren (they live with her).

Then we headed down Pigeon Forge where we boarded a trolley which goes throughout the area along the edge of the

Smoky mountains. The cost was nominal, but most of the business in that area are not. These are tourist attractions, and they make sure they get their share of the tourist dollars.

I think that I may have notice someone paying more attention to Dee than I would have wanted him. So, I let he know that she was mine. In a sense, I was telling him to have hands off of her. She later said something about be pleased by what I had said. about her.

Then we got off the trolley at Ripley's Aquarium which was nice if not expensive. (\$20 per person to view a large variety and large number of fish in several huge tanks seems to be more than necessary. A person could get annual pass for \$40 each.) Well, I can say that it was at least nice. This took most of the day.

Then we took the trolley back to were we left the car. Dee apparently wanted to go back to their apartment, but Rachel and grandchildren wanted to get back on the trolley to do some more riding and who knows what else. So, Dee, Kevin, and I headed back to her apartment.

While we had eaten lunch at Ripley's, I was hungry again. Dee was cutting up some fruit, and I really ate too much at least from her view point. I guess I was use to eating more at each meal than she would have wanted. I am not for sure, but I think we went out to eat that night as well.

Sunday morning, she went to church with her father (Father's day) who was suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Afterward we met at Shoney's on I-40 (near the Woodlands West Apartments where I lived later) for lunch. With lunch completed, we parted after many a kiss before Kevin and I headed back to Roanoke.

Somehow I convinced her to come with Kevin and I to the Association meeting at Oklahoma city a few weeks later. I'm not sure this happened because of emails or instant messaging. Perhaps it was a sense of adventure as she had not been out of the state of Tennessee before. (Well, this is what she told me at the time. It turns out that she had been married at the Mormon cathedral in Atlanta, GA.)

Considering that she has never believed in predestination, I wonder now just how comfortably she would have been listening to all the sermons scheduled for the weekend. (I would find out in July.)

Engagement

Emails and instant messaging continued with both of us becoming more serious. So, we decided to get married by the latter part of June. The wedding date would be around the 25th of December. She had bought a ring that she liked, and I paid her for it.

Looking back on this time wise, this seems like a very short time to make a decision this important. (This was the second time for me to do this. The first time actually worked out.) We really did not know each other. Then again, there are many things that have to be decided between a couple. What does each one expect from the relationship? What type of behaviors are expected? What changes have to be made in each person's expectations? (No one ever gets what he or she wants all of the time; not even most of the time.)

One of the important parts of a marriage is trust, faith in each other. Would we really trust each other? Would she say one thing and do something differently? I knew how to trust her, but would she act in a way that would make a marriage

a success? Would she listen to my advice? Would I listen to her advice? We were going to find out. (Boy, did we!)

Trip to AR

The schedule we were going to follow was that Kevin and I would drive to Knoxville on Tuesday, July 3. Then Dee, Kevin, and I would go out for an engagement supper. The next day, we would drive to Russellville to spend the night. Then Thursday, we would drive to Oklahoma City for church through Saturday afternoon. Sunday afternoon, we would drive on the Springdale, AR, to visit with the Lindsey's. (Dee had arranged to take the time off over the second weekend of July.) Well, that was the plan anyway.

So, we arrived as planned on Tue, July 3, and had an "engagement supper" after we got there. But Dee forgot to tell me that there was a problem: Rachel needed to do something without her two children. Dee and I babysat the grandchildren while we ate.

Where did we go? (to Shoney's of course) There was a problem with that as far as I was concerned: it was far too cold! I was shivering, and it was early July. Sometime while we ate, our waitress came by, and we had her use my camera to take our picture.

After supper, she had me drive through the northern part of Knoxville. Exactly why she did this, I really did not ever understand. But after a while we were heading back south. And there in front of us was a park where we would meet Rachel. (I still did not know where I was.)

Anyway we got out of my car and went to a swing which I think held Dee, Kevin, and me. There we talked for some time. The topics went from one thing to another for a while.

Then she asked a question that really created some problems: she brought up Shirley's name and whether I still had feelings for her. (If I had to make a choice between her and Shirley, which one would it be?)

While I was still corresponding with Shirley, romantic feelings between the two of us were not discussed in a positive way at all. She would only be a friend with whom I could talk with. But our feelings were that more like brother and sister. So, in our correspondence, my only choice whether I wanted to be with Dee or not.

Dee's question to me was identically to someone asking point blank out of the blue: When have you stopped thinking about polar bears? The natural reaction to this question is to begin thinking about polar bears even though the person had not done this for a very long time.

So, yes, as so as I heard Dee mention Shirley's name, memories of the things we has shared flooded my mind. This made it impossible to answer the question with either one of them. Neither was there any other woman's name that I could have used.

Well, that did not set very well with her at all! But it was all in how she phrased the question. Shirley had nothing to do with our relationship: Dee did. Besides, the answer to her question was not most important: how I treated her in many different ways had everything to do with our relationship. Anyway things did not go all that well that evening.

Anyway, the next morning (July 4), Kevin and I drove to her apartment expecting to pick her up and drive to Conway, AR. She was still in bed suffering from a migraine which she is known to have once in a while. She did not want me to see her, but I insisted. Rachel finally let me see her. (She was not really a pleasant sight.) OK, she was not able to go. So, there

was nothing to do for Kevin and I to do but to head west toward Oklahoma City.

It took most of the day to get to Conway. Once there, we checked into its Motel 6. Then it was time to eat. When we got back to our room, Dee and I made contact. (I have no idea as to who called whom. I think she did.)

She reported that she was feeling better. In fact, she had been able to get out during the afternoon and do a little shopping. She still wanted to go on the trip we had planned. One of the thoughts was that Kevin and I could drive to Oklahoma City, and she could fly there to meet us. She tried to find a flight, but cost and other things prevented that from happening.

In the end we decided that it would be better for me to drive back to Knoxville on Thursday. Then we would drive to Springdale to spend the weekend with the Lindsey's.

Trust is important in a relationship. She had told me these things, and I believed them at the time. But sometime later I had mentioned her migraine that day and how quickly she recovered. Suddenly her memory did not match what had happened. Now I wonder whether she had really had a migraine at all. Was it all a play to get out of spending a few days listening to sermons that she would not believe to be the truth? Did she really only want to visit with some of my relatives? Actually, I will never know.

So, Thursday morning, I drove back to Knoxville again taking most of a day. It took perhaps half an hour before I managed to get her luggage put into the trunk of my car. It must have been near 6 PM when we left her apartment. She insisted that I let her drive since I had already driven so much. Of course, I was happy to hand her the keys!

Traveling together

I was beginning to unwind some with her driving for me. (She was driving much better this time than she would the last time we were together years later.) Meanwhile, I did not consider what effect all of this had on Kevin. He had been sitting in the back seat all days, and now he was back there again for another six hours. How was this affecting his muscles?

For a while Dee and I talked. We may have listened to the radio some as well. (OK, I don't remember.) Anyway, about 9 PM central time, she suggested that I call Marianne to tell her about our change of plans. I suppose that I could have used my cell phone, but I wound up using Dee's.

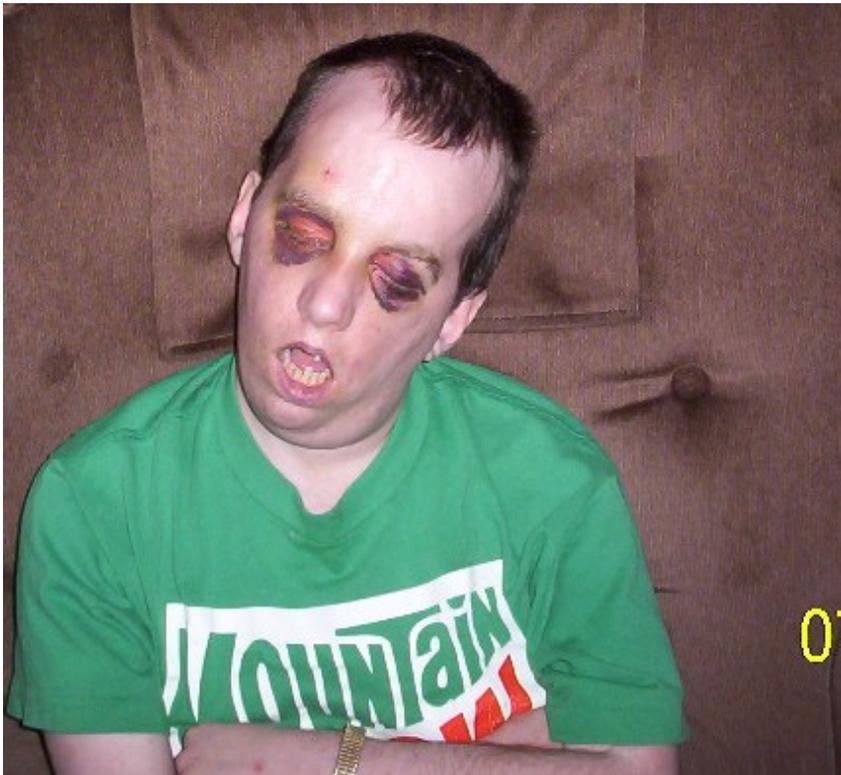
My first statement to Marianne was that we were not in Oklahoma City. This did not surprise her at all. You see, she had Caller ID. She noticed that the call came from a phone in Knoxville, TN. So, after this start, I explained what had happened and the change in plans. This was fine with her; everyone was now on the same page.

We were between Jackson and Memphis, TN around midnight. It was time to think about finding a place to spend the rest of the night. We saw a Motel 6 sign, and we decided that this would be it. It was a good thing that we did. They were about to close for the night!

Because it was this late, we had to park quite a ways from our rooms. So, while Dee took her things to hers, I took Kevin and my things to ours. Then I went back to get him.

I'm not sure just how awake he was, but he did not have very good control of his muscles at all. Well, I at least got him to the room. As I tried to get him to his bed he stumbled near the TV and hit the corner of it with his head over his

right eye. It was a struggle, but I managed to change his diaper and put him to bed...



If you look closely, you can see a small scab where the TV hit him. You can also see where blood drained through his tissue to pool in the right eye lid. Well, that night, he slept on his left side. So some of the blood that had drained into his right eye lid drained over into the other lid. He survived, but we overdid it that day! I really do not know what Dee and I were thinking. Definitely, we were not thinking of him!

The next morning, we got up and headed out once more. It was as we approached Memphis that Dee and I were discussing this new part of her life: leaving the state of Tennessee. All kinds of things were said about this; some of them were rather comical. Probably none of them were serious.

We ate lunch somewhere on the way before arriving around the middle of the afternoon. And then I got to introduce my fiancé. And Marianne got to show off her home. Being a good hostess, she made sure that Dee knew about their swimming pool. (Yes, Dee took advantage of it!) She got to meet Paul when he came home from work.

I really thing that Dee and I made fools of ourselves out on a swing that they had near their playground. We were making out for quite some time. She was in her late 40's and I was 65. We were not very good models for my niece and nephews that was for sure. OK, we actually went shopping for a while...

Saturday evening, Paul showed us a DVD movie after the children were put to bed. I think that I also got Kevin to bed and stayed with him until I was sure that he was asleep. Even so, I can not say that it was all that interesting.

Then Sunday morning, Dee decided that she needed to be getting back home. She was developing another headache. So, instead of going to church that morning, we headed south to I-40 and then east.

During this part of the trip, I was doing the driving. For whatever reason, her headache began to get better. Was it some medicine that she took or was I having this effect on her? OK, I can dream and claim responsible for it getting better, can't I? (Given some of the events for which she gave one explanation one time and another one the next time, who knows what the truth was for this time.)

We stopped in the eastern part of Memphis for the night, and we went the rest of the way on Monday.

We traveled about 300 miles that day. I would have expected for us to share the driving, but she insisted on doing all of it.

This was the problem that began to bother me some. The trip we took to Washington state in 1955 had each driver taking turns behind the wheel. But she insisted that she got sick riding but was fine while driving. I have heard of men who were showing their control over their wives by not letting them drive, so did this mean she was going to have to be in control of things?

With observations over the next few years, it seems that this was the case. So, it is no wonder that things have been rocky periodically from time to time. She is a nice woman, but her ideas of what a relationship should be does not match up with the Bible's directions. (Neither men nor women should be treated like they are always right especially when they are not.)

I had a discussion with Dee about driving my car before we made this trip. After that I was present when Dee told her daughter what I had said. She put lots and lots of emphasis on the fact that we should share the driving. She acted as if this was a big deal. (Well it was not to me.)

I would learn later that her first husband would not let her drive at all: he had to do all of it. She later divorced him for a variety of reasons. (How much of this was the truth? I do not know.)

OK, I thought that I was in love. She did things that I liked. Perhaps I even liked for someone to give me some attentions, who knows? So, I was determined to make something of this.

I knew that she had had a few other close relationships with men, and none of them had worked out. This of course makes having a good relationship with her was not very good. This is because she likely had been making the same fatal errors again and again.

OK, I get that. But I had had a 35 year marriage that I have enjoyed and still like to reminisce about from time to time. Besides I knew of things that I could have done better in my marriage. So, if both of us would make the basic changes that I had plus the ones that I had messed up the first time, we should have a good marriage. I still think that this could have worked. So, I kept at it.

Meanwhile Rachel met someone whom she thought she should marry. It was over a short period of time even as it had been for Dee and me. Besides she had her own marital baggage. The future groom may well have some problems as well.

And guess what? I was chosen to perform the ceremony! I also got to give them several hours of counseling. Well, the state of Tennessee requires a marriage license fee for those who do not get it. Just because people get counseling does not mean that they will apply it to their lives. (They did not.)

Meanwhile, the Learning Center had found a place that I could leave Kevin for a weekend. It was expensive, but I suppose it was nice to be able to be with Dee without worrying about what he might be doing. Anyway, this weekend turned out to be the day for the wedding.

I really had very little to do other than sign the marriage license and later take it to the County Clerk's office to have it registered. After all, they had written their own vows. (The only problem was that they did not understand what they had written. They were both determined to do things their own way.

How dense could I get? I marry a couple because I was doing it for free. My only real part in the marriage was to pronounce them husband and wife and end the ceremony

with prayer. I wound up paying for a motel room for their wedding night.

Well, Dee and I were suppose to spend some time in Cade's Cove in the Great Smoky Mountains Park on Saturday. Dee had spelled out the things we would be doing in beautiful terms.

She did not feel like doing any of this. So, instead there were things that needed to be done around her apartment. And yet, I found it quite enjoyable just to be doing things with her side by side. So, I really could not fault that part. The experience I had was worthwhile. Later though look back and wonder why we could not do what we had planned...

So, Monday morning, I headed back to Alabama picking Kevin on the way. I don't know how many times we made the trip to see Dee, but I remember at least one more. This time I took an older apartment sized dishwasher with me that Rachel could use in her apartment. I really don't remember how often she used it.

It was probably on this trip that Rachel mentioned that there was a Primitive Baptist Church near where she lived. So, I now I knew there was a church I could attend if I were to choose to live in Knoxville. This is nice. (I thought.)

Seems like I had problems in the Lake Charles area with thinking the same thing. It did not turn out like I thought it should...

For the most part, I had plenty to do at home for the rest of the year. For example, I was walking two miles plus everyday up and down hills. During the hotter days I was taking water with me as I walked.

Sometime after this I began to follow the dietary suggestions of the books sent to me by Etta, I noticed that I had more energy. It actually went farther than that: I felt that I *had* to walk faster; so I did. In fact I cut my time walking by 10 minutes. This was about a 20% decrease. It took me less time to mow my yard as well! The diet was definitely having a good effect on me.

Meanwhile, I had contacted an realtor to sell my home for my move to Knoxville. The only problem was that I did not get more than a few nibbles. No one swallowed the hook.

2008

First Quarter

Final doctor visits

We were signing the paperwork to sell the house the second week of March, so we both needed to have one final medical exam before moving. Kevin's would be a regular office visit, but mine would be more involved. (I needed to see both of my doctors. These would be done in February on different days. I would see my doctors back to back while Kevin was at the Learning Center. Kevin would see Dr. Slavich and go to "school" right afterward.

Carotid Artery sonogram

This would be my second one. I think I probably had a treadmill test as well (also my second).

The treadmill test was about the same as the first one as far as the results were concerned. But since I got the original

diagnosis of high blood pressure 14 months earlier, I had been walking a little over 2.25 miles a day on the hills where I lived. The last half mile involved going up and then coming back down a hill. The top was approximately 100 feet higher than the bottom. It took me about 35 minutes for the complete walk.

When I first began walking this route, it took closer to 45 minutes. But as I continued to follow the diet suggestions in the books Etta had sent me, I felt more energetic and able to walk faster. So, this dropped my walking time down 10 minutes. I also took a pint of water with me when I walked sipping it as I walked. I did this to replace the water lost in sweat as I walked.

The sonogram was an improvement even if Dr. Slavich did not want to admit it. He did this test himself. One of the things that bugged me was that he did not allow me to hear the sounds of the blood moving through these arteries as the technician for Dr. Peterson had done. But I can guess from what he said what the sounds might have been. His comment as he worked was that it did not look like a 20% blockage to him. He said that he was going to report 20% blockage anyway.

My guess is that he was right in his assessment. 13 months later my primary care physician in Knoxville had another sonogram run. This one could not find a blockage at all, only some plaque, but this was scattered in several small spots. It appears to me that perhaps as much as half of the original blockage had been removed by my activities and newer eating habits by the time that Dr. Slavich had done the sonogram.

Selling the house (2007-2008)

Selling our house and moving to Knoxville seemed to make more sense than her having to come to Roanoke and find work there. The likelihood of this was very slim. We were talking about marriage for a while even setting a possible date.

There was not really very much keeping Kevin and me in Roanoke. There had been some splits in our churches that limited where I could comfortably attend church. I was welcome in the churches on the "same side", but I did not feel really "part of the family" in any of them. Then again, I might have been better off moving down toward Prattville where there was a church at which I was well accepted. But I'm not even so certain about that either right now. It was a possibility that I had not considered at the time.

Selling the house in 2007 was not an easy thing to do. The housing bubble had just burst, and the economy was in rather bad shape. Finally, in early 2008, a woman contracted to buy the house. So, I began the process of selling the house and moving our belongs to Knoxville.

What surprises me as I look back on this is how I thought I could get all of our possessions into a U-Hall truck and then put them all in a 2 bedroom apartment! Well, I still could not get everything in the truck even after getting rid of many things.

Moving to Knoxville

I got a U-Haul truck that I thought was large enough to hold my things. I was wrong! Rachel came down with Dee to help in the move. Rachel is known for packing more things in a given space than most people. She definitely was a trooper doing this, but I still had to leave a large amount of things

behind. By the afternoon of Friday, March 7th, the truck was a full as it could be.

Some of the teachers at the Learning Center met us at the Hispanic restaurant in Roanoke for supper. Elder Kenneth and Sister Betty Perry were there as well. It was a "going away" meal. After eating and chatting for a while, we all headed north stopping along the way for the night in Gadsden.

I had already given Dee a sizable check to help me move. So when we all pulled up to the motel to spend the night, I checked in. I also expected Dee and Rachel to do likewise, but they just sat in their car. Apparently, Dee and Rachel expected me to pay for their motel room. I needed to get some rest just as Kevin did, so we went to our room and went to bed.

Likely they got miffed by my actions because they drove off heading to Knoxville without telling me what they were doing. So, when I got up in the morning, I still expected them to have spent the night in Gadsden. Kevin and I went out for breakfast and then pack the things we had used in the room the night before. I looked around for Dee but could not find her. I really needed to get to Knoxville and headed that way. (It was about a four hour drive that I faced.

I managed to contact her sometime during the day, and that is when I found out what they had done. At least I was able to learn that they were alright. That is when I began to pay closer attention to my driving.

The weather was rather cold, and there was snow in the air. Well, some of it was sticking along the side of the highway, just not on the road. As I got closer to Knoxville, I was getting a little tired and nervous.

After getting to Knoxville, Dee insisted that we have a meeting to discuss some things about moving the furniture from the truck to my apartment. Rachel's husband and Dee's son were to help in the move. Of course this included more money to be paid out. (So much for the original amount agreed upon.) Was this an extortion in that I did not have the ability to move everything into the apartment by myself? One might question her motives. Her son and Rachel's husband did work hard. Besides, it was a very cold day with intermittent snow flurries. (It was not the best day to be moving furniture!)

During this lunch/meeting, she made a comment about the fact that I was the one who had decided to move. I really did not have to do this. There were no romantic tones in her statements that day. Even so, this rather quickly left my memory. Instead, I was concentrating more on the fact that I was going to be living within walking distance of her.

Kevin's Doctor's appointment at UT

This was in the Cardiac section of the University of Tennessee Medical Center because of Kevin's pacemaker. (Dr. Slavich had recommended seeing these people because of their knowledge base on cardiac problems.) They gave him a going over to get a background of his health. This included a readout of the pacemaker's condition. I was glad to hear that they knew about his disease and the problems it can cause. I already knew that his pacemaker needed to be replaced before the end of the year.

By the time of the appointment, Kevin was already covered by Medicaid (TennCare). The only problem was that in this state two insurance companies pay out the claims. I had been given one of them that the Univ Hospital does not accept. So, I paid \$240 up front to cover the anticipated cost

of the visit. It turned out that this did not cover all of the costs. Sometime after Kevin died, I got a bill for the rest. So, I called their office wondering what had taken so long to send this bill. I also informed them that Kevin had died. They were nice enough to remove the charges.

Swapping apartments (End of Mar)

Dee did not like the type of living quarters that Rachel and family were in: they were living in very bad conditions. It was very hard to heat the apartment, and the hot water heater had to be fixed by her father rather than by the landlord.

Her solution was to move them to our apartment complex. She got a single bedroom apt which she wanted me to move into, and that left my 2 bedroom apartment for Rachel's family. To make this possible, Kevin and I needed to be gone somewhere while they first moved our things to the one bedroom apt and then moved the family things into the two bedroom apt. So Kevin and I was going to take a vacation in the last week of weeks in March.

Visit with Paul, Marianne, and family

So off we headed for Springfield, AR, March 24th. It was a nice visit. I also got a complete surprise while I was there. Paul had changed the operating system (OS) on all of their computers. The previous summer all of them were running Windows XP, but this time they were all running Ubuntu. I call this a surprise because Ubuntu was the OS I had been using for a few years myself. When I mentioned this to Marianne, she said that Paul had said that Windows XP was not secure enough. I have relayed this on to other people since then whether they paid any attention to this or not. This is because I believe that Paul knows what he is talking about given his education and work experience.

Kevin's listlessness most of the time

Kevin did not seem to be himself on this trip. He spent entirely too much time sleeping, taking naps seemingly all of the time. On the trip out, we had stopped at a cold restaurant for breakfast. There he seemed to have had a seizure which I decided was likely because of the coldness. Besides, he got much better once we got back in the car where it was warmer. Whether I was right or it was a sign of more serious things to come, I don't know. I do know that I felt helpless with the situation until I got him into the car and warmed up. Even I was having a very hard time keeping my shivering from being too hard.

He never was himself during the entire time while we were there either. Most of the time, he was sleeping in a sitting position on one of their couches. He did not have any problems eating meals though. It made me a little nervous, but I did not consider it to be serious. Marianne had made a comment about all of his sleeping, but again nothing serious seemed to be wrong. (Or so I thought...)

He had some congestion in his lungs for a while. Since I had the medication needed to correct this, I was giving him breathing treatments. After being on these, he usually got better without any problems. Other than sleeping all of the time, he seemed to be normal.

Car trouble in Memphis

After a week, we headed home on Tuesday, April 1. Time wise, Memphis is a nine hour drive from Springfield, so I decided to stop there for the night. I picked a Motel 6 on the east side of the greater metropolitan area. We arrived around 4 PM and immediately ran into a problem. The power steering seemed to have stopped working. I heard the sound

of a belt coming apart just before this happened. So, I contacted a local Chevrolet dealership about the problem. They came to get the car and promised to fix it in the morning.

I got our luggage into the motel room that Tuesday night, and Kevin laid down. He quickly fell asleep and would not wake up for supper or anything else for that matter until the next morning. I finally went out to get something to eat bringing it back to the motel. When I could not wake him up at all, I eventually ate all of the food.

I was able to wake him up in the morning after I got something to eat from Burger King. But he still would not eat. He was awake enough to eat at lunch time in Memphis though.

The engine has a tension pulley for the single serpentine belt. It had seized up causing the belt to break. It was almost 12 noon before the repairs were made and my pocket book lightened by \$366. By 1 PM we ate lunch and headed for home. It must have been 7 or 8 PM when we got home. On the way in, we stopped at a Cracker Barrel for supper. Then I went by Kroger to get the groceries we needed so we would have something to eat.

Second Quarter 2008

Kevin's last days

I gave him a breathing treatment and put him to be Wednesday evening. Then on the next day, I was giving him his three standard treatments. He was still rather listless through out the day.

That evening, Dee wanted us to go out for supper, but I declined her. Kevin was not in any condition to be out. She did not like it. Of course as I look back on the situation, she might have had her own motive for going out this evening. I will never know, and I don't want to.

I think she was saying something about me care more about Kevin than her. (Was this the case, or did she really want me to buy her a meal for her? It would certainly reduce the amount of money that she had to spend.)

That evening I gave Kevin his breathing treatment and put him to bed. I woke up about 2:30 AM or so and went to the bathroom. I thought about giving another breathing treatment but decided not to do so.

About 6:30 AM Friday morning, I woke up and did not hear anything, and I mean nothing at all! This was somewhat eerie because I immediately thought of the lack of sound the night Susan died. So, I quickly went to his bed; he was not breathing. This is when I called 911. They talked me through giving him CPR which did not help at all. An ambulance arrived and the EMT looked him over saying that nothing more could be done. Her opinion was that he had died around 3 AM based upon where the blood had settled in he legs. I could not get in touch with Dee, but Rachel's husband came up shortly after I managed to contact them. Rachel managed to tell Dee.

I was given two choices as to where his body could be taken with the University of Tennessee being one of them. I picked this one. I was not thinking very clearly, but with Kevin's medical records being there, they would know more about him than the other location. Because of this, they did not require an autopsy. So, by noon, I had notified the funeral home in Roanoke, AL, and it was notified that his body was ready to be picked up. His Insurance company was also

notified with what information I could give them. (I think they got a lot of their information from the funeral home.)

It was a little after 7 AM when Dee arrived at my apartment. Her first comment was that now she understood why I had called off the dinner together the previous evening. For the entire day, she remained by my side, not letting me be by myself at all. Clearly, she was exactly the person I needed at a time like this. She seemed to be wondering if I should spend the night alone, but I was quite comfortable doing so. I had already been through this before when Susan died.

Poor Sam though, had problems of his own because of Kevin's death. This was his 5th birthday. He did not get as much attention from everyone as he usually did for his birthday. He is a loving boy although he has many emotional problems as well. The attention that he gave me at times that day was very soothing.

We spent some time in the mall including a Disney Store. While we were there, another customer had a daughter that was five that day as well. Well this is where Sam showed out: no one could have the same birthday nor be the same age as him. But that is part of his personality.

I decided to have the funeral on Friday, April 11. Perhaps the timing for Susan's funeral had some bearing on this, I do not know. His body had to be transferred to AL and then be prepared for burial. There was the time required for the life insurance to be paid. So, in the end, this timing was as good for me as the timing for Susan's funeral.

Trip for his funeral

Dee went with me to Roanoke on Thursday, April 10. Our first stop was at the Learning Center where they provided us

with lunch along with the recipe for broccoli salad which was part of the menu. From there we went to Kevin's insurance agent, the funeral home for final arrangements, and then to the flower shop for the family wreath. While there Dee bought a couple of clear plastic crosses and probably something else.

Sister Dovie Burton, whom I had known since we first moved to Roanoke, provided Dee and me with a place to eat and sleep. We came here before supper, changed clothes, and by 6 PM headed to the funeral for the visitation.

Severe weather

There were far fewer people present than had come for Susan's. But I have no idea of how many people even knew that he had died. I did not think very much about how this notification should be handled. The ladies at the Learning Center came and then left for their homes.

Then after 8 PM, the weather got very nasty. In fact, we had to move to another part of the building because we were under a severe weather warning. It calmed down enough for us to be able to return to Dovie's house for the night. But until then, Dee and I were essentially alone for most of this hour except for the employees. And here is where my memory failed me. Marianne had driven down along with her sister, Jennifer. They were also with us.

His funeral

Elder Kenneth Milner had come to the visitation, and I asked him to preach the funeral the next morning. He agreed. As with Susan's funeral, I spoke for a while as well as gave the people at the funeral an opportunity to speak. Cindy for the Learning Center spoke from notes that she had made. Some

of the things she said were things that I had not known before. Bro. Ken concluded the service with a sermon.

Many years before when Hawaii 50 was so popular, Kevin loved to stand in front of the TV screen pointing to it and calling out objects that would shortly appear on it. Shortly after he called out, "Air! Air!" an airplane would appear. "Car! Car!" would be followed by a police car appearing with its blue lights flashing. He really got excited when he did this.

Some time before we moved, they had gotten an audio CD with the Hawaii 50 theme music. Someone played it. From then on, Kevin thought it should be played all of the time. They tried unplugging the CD player. He only found the plug and plug it back in. Then they tried hiding the CD. Some times they succeeded; sometimes they did not. As Cindy spoke of these things, I could mentally visualize Kevin having done these things.

Bro. Ken's sermon did not help me at all. I heard words, but they did not really have any meaning to me. So, as I mentioned to Sister Shirley, words do not help very much after a death of a loved one. Only actions of kindness do.

Meanwhile, I was doing something very stupid. I had not really found a way to get a primary care physician since we moved here. As a result I was running out of blood pressure medicine. Then again I was basically doing what one of the books Etta had sent me the year before. It said that blood pressure can be reduced to acceptable levels by following the diet included in the book. The only problem was this advice was for people who are obese, and many are morbidly obese. My blood pressure problem comes from a different source. So, as I gradually decreased the amount of the blood pressure medicine I was taking, the pressure went up. I was heading for trouble and did not even know it.

Bye Bye Black Beauty; Hello Windstar (April)

This idea was Dee's. With all the things that had to be packed in her SUV when her family went anywhere, she thought it would be nice if I would get a larger car so that we all could take everyone in my car some of the time. (How much is some?)

A pattern was developing here: she was expecting me to pick up some of her usual driving expenses while her part would decrease. There is also a name that goes with the way she got her viewpoint across: manipulative. Of course, I did not know this at the time, but Rachel explained the situation long after she insisted that I get a bigger car. This gets old after a while.

Around the middle of the month, she found a car that would fit the bill. It turned out that it belonged to someone she worked with. So, arrangements were made to purchase the Windstar. Meanwhile, Rachel and her new husband were having problem with transportation. He needed a way to get to work, and Rachel needed to go places on family business. So, then came the brilliant idea. If they could use Black Beauty, the problem could be solved. (Aren't I gullible???)

I think this is enough about her ways which continued off and on for the next several years. So, I will only mention a few of these times throughout the rest of this book. Our relationship was not really going anywhere regardless of what she might say to try to get her own way.

But what does this have to do with the title of this book? How did God provide for me? A better question would be: What did God provide for the situation I faced in my relationship with her?

The answer is the Book of Proverbs. There are warnings about the behavior of strange women. They are to be avoided. The entire seventh chapter teaches what I needed to know. The first fourteen verses of chapter five also contains lessons about strange women.

It even discusses people who are manipulative. These are the ones in which act in a variety of ways, so it is hard to know how they will react in a given circumstance. This also means that they may also describe a situation one way one time and another way another way. (Dee did this several times.)

And then the last verses of chapter 1 of Proverbs beginning with verse 20 points out the consequences of not listening to the wisdom and understanding that we should accumulate. It is not a pretty picture at all.

So, to put it bluntly, I did not use wisdom and understanding as I tried to develop a relationship with Dee. Having read these chapters several times. I just thought that it would not happen to me. Oh the fool I was, and I continually made the same mistakes again and again and again...

Stroke

I had eaten breakfast, and headed to the bathroom for my shower. I took my underwear with me, but my outer clothes were laid out in the bedroom. My shower was progressing fine when my hand held shower head dropped out of my left hand. So, I reached down to pick it up with my right hand. But instead of this, I found myself sitting in the bottom of the tub! (I don't remember falling.) At this point, I realized that something was seriously wrong, and I needed help. First thing, I turned off the water.

Next thing that I remember is that a plan flashed into my mind. I needed to get out of the tub, put on my underwear, unlock the front door, and call 911.

I tried to get out of the tub, but that is when I learned that I could not use my left arm nor leg to do anything. Time after time I tried to use my right arm and leg without success. Then I must have been in the right place because I was able to slither over the top of the tub and onto the bathroom floor. I was out, but I was also all wet! At least my large bath towel was within my reach.

That was when I dried off as well as I could before putting my underwear on because they do not go on very well over a wet body. Well, I could reach the front of my body with the towel, there was no way I could get my back dry from my waste to my neck. So, I had little problem putting my briefs on. However, my socks were a little bit harder, and the hardest of all was my T-shirt. (I probably should have left this off. The paramedics could surely do that for me. But I was not thinking clearly.)

OK, just how well could I crawl using only my right side? Surprisingly, I did quite well at this. It did not take very much

time to get to the front door, pull up on the door knob of the front door, and turn the lock to unlock it. (This way the door would not need to be broken open to get to me. Or, it would take more time to get a key from the office. Either way, I saved them time.)

Between the kitchen and living area there is an opening cut into the wall between the two. I used this to put a variety of things that I wanted access to from either of these two rooms. The telephone was one of them.

So from the front door, I crawled to where my phone was. This time I was able to push my body up high enough to reach the phone. So, I took it out of its stand and dialed 911.

Surprisingly, what I got was a beep, beep, beep, ... Yes, I got a busy signal! I tried again: I got the same thing. Is the third time a charm? It was this time. I got an operator. I described my symptoms to her and said that I needed medical attention. I also had to tell her where I was: name of the apartment complex and my apartment number. (This phone did not have GPS on it. It was a land line.)

She sent out an ambulance and a fire truck just like they use to do on the *Emergency* TV program years ago. And like it once in a while, they were having problem finding my apartment. She explained this to me while pointing out they were close by. Then I heard a bang on my front door and the words, "Fire Department!"

I replied as loud as I could, "The door's unlocked." So they came into where I was, and I began to relax some. (I also hung up the phone.) After all, I had already done my part. Now it was time for them to figure out what needed to be done. That was their area of expertise.

By this time I was not thinking very clearly. I answered the questions as much as possible that they asked me. Other than these things, my actions and the vitals that they had taken required that I be taken to a hospital. So, they asked me if I had any preference between the University of Tennessee Medical Center or Park West.

I really did not care, but I said nothing. By this time I was not up to making any kind of decision at all. So, they made it for me: Park West. A gurney was brought in, and I was placed on it. Then out to the ambulance I went. The hospital was less than ten miles away. During that trip I was unconscious most of the time. Even when I was awake, it was only for a few seconds.

Park West Hospital

How long did it take from the time I dropped the shower head until I arrived at Park West? As near as I can figure probably less than 30 minutes. This was a good thing. If they diagnosed my problem correctly, I should have a very good outcome.

I would think that the fire department or the ambulance people would have to notify the apartment office of what had happened. Well after 8 AM, Dee got a call from the apartment manager that I had been taken to Park West.

She got permission from her office to be with me. After all, her office manager knew that Dee and I were officially engaged. So, Dee needed to be with me. She probably would not be much help at the office anyway. Seemingly, she arrived in the Emergency Room where I was around 8:20.

I woke up in Emergency with several people around me asking all kinds of questions. I was basically no help at all to

them. I could not think, nor could I speak clear enough for them to understand me. What they wanted to know was who I was etc., all of the paperwork needed for admission.

With all of this nonsense going on, I did have one clear thought. Well, it was partially clear anyway. I needed to call Dee and tell her where I was.

I usually carried my cell phone in my left front pocket of my bluejeans. So I reached down under the covers to get the phone. OK, that much was clear. But I had not put on my bluejeans; I was not wearing them. So my phone was in my bedroom instead.

It was at this point that I happen to glance up and to my right. Perhaps I had seen some movement in that area. But there was someone standing there: it was Dee!

I also hear her tell the people working on me to give her the clipboard with the paperwork on it. She would fill this out for them. This is when I completely relaxed as another very clear thought popped into my conscious: "We will get through this together!" At this point I was sure that everything would be all right.

How long was I in the Emergency Room? It was for quite some time. They had put an IV in my arm at some point in which I was unconscious, but they had not put in a catheter. So every two hours my bladder was complaining of being full. This would wake me up.

Apparently I noticed a urine bottle, so I filled it up for them. Just as sure as one of them noticed me being awake, they would ask me for my birthday. I would say something, but I am not sure than anyone knew what I was saying. Then I would rather quickly drift off for a couple of hours only to repeat the process.

I would like to think that once I relaxed completely that my body spent the time I was unconscious to begin healing itself. Also, it was doing its part in reducing my blood pressure. How much? I don't know. But I do know that the LORD was gracious to me. With what I had done, I deserved to be a crippled person.

A CAT scan revealed bleeding occurring in the basal ganglia deep in the right side of my brain. (This was the diagnosis, but I did not know this until some years later.) I was told at some point that I had a hemorrhagic stroke.

How serious was this? It depends. As the doctors told my brothers about Mom, anything was possible. If they could not stop the bleeding, it would get into the brain stem which controls heart beats and breathing which is most often fatal. Some paralysis was possible. Or, I might come out of it with little evidence of any affects. Dee was told basically the same things. It was touch and go for a while which was very unnerving for her.

Intensive Care

At some point, they must have decided that I was stable enough to put me into ICU. Obviously, they had inserted a catheter before moving me. I no longer had the urge to fill the urine bottle; in fact, I don't remember even see one while in ICU. Nor do I remember them ever taking it out...

I have only a few memories while I was in ICU. The first one which might have been possibly Wednesday afternoon or evening. My left arm was basically useless, and my left leg was not much better if at all.

One time I saw a nurse in a cubical with a view of my room and that of another patient. Then I got the thought, "I want to do something for her with that arm." So, I used my right

hand to pull my left arm out from under the covers. The struggling to do this was rather hard, but I was able to raise it up in the air just a little bit. That is when I waved at her with my left hand. I got rewarded with the biggest, broadest smile that I thought I had ever seen! It was something. (This had to be something that she would enter into my medical records. Well, this is my opinion.)

The second time came Thursday morning when the doctor came in to see me. He told me that they had hoped to put me in a room that day (24 hours after I had my stroke), but my blood pressure was still above 150 systolic. (I would think that it had been higher than that the day before.) They were still concerned with bleeding in my brain. Friday they were going to take another CAT scan to check on this problem. If it came back showing the bleeding had stopped, I would be moved into a room.

He also mentioned something that I did not understand: something about physical therapy. ("What is he talking about?", I thought.) Apparently, it was something that was going to help me.

What was I able to do? Not much at the time. Well I could retrieve the urine bottle from the bed tray, fill it, and return it. But I could not turn over to either side that I know of.

There was something else that did not make any sense at all. He was talking about physical therapy for me indicating he expected it would occur fairly quickly. (He was not that far off.) Why physical therapy? I had never had this before.

Friday's answer

By Friday morning, I was thinking more clearly even if I was still spending much of the time sleeping. One of the times I

woke up this day, I heard this dreaded question again! (What is your birthday?)

Well, I was aware enough that I remembered what is contained on my wrist band they had put on me: my date of birth among other things. Yes, I did: I said, "This says that it is December 16, 1941." I continued by reading some other information on the band and identified what it was. After doing this a couple of times that day, people stopped asking so often.

They took me to get my CAT scan as planned in the morning, and I was awake for this trip to another floor. But as they got me into position for the scan, I conked out again: I woke up in intensive care. Then later in the morning, they informed me that the bleeding had stopped. I was to be transferred to a room that afternoon.

Own room

This was another case of hurry up and wait. Before the CAT scan, they mentioned that I should be going to my own room if the bleeding had stopped. But as usual, it seemed like a long time between the announcement that the scan had shown no bleeding and when I was actually moved (perhaps only a couple of hours , but it seemed like most of the afternoon).

Finally, I was in a room of my own even if it was late afternoon on a Friday. The nurse who got me "tucked in" was Edna. I had worked on remembering the names of the other nurses as well, but remembering someone's name that matches the name of my Mom is not very hard at all. Over the past six years now, the memories of the other names have now eluded me.

Tom and Elaine visit

Dee had contacted them letting them know what was happening. So, one day after I was put in a room, I had visitors. She was nice enough to prepared my apartment so that Tom and Elaine could sleep there. They spend some time visiting with us. (Dee and a nurse in the office where she worked were there also.) Others will have to comment about how much sense I made that day, I'm not the one to remember or make any judgments in this matter. After a while, everyone left.

Another very nice thing that Dee had done was to bring my glasses and my Bible. So, each day I spent some time reading it. I have a schedule for what verses I read each day, but it was on my computer. (She would not know how to open that file and print it out.) So much for a schedule. However, I read approximately what I thought I should to keep up with my schedule. I did not want to get too far behind before I got back home. I had a idea of how much I usually read each day, so I added a few more verses each day. When I got home and looked at the schedule, I was surprised to fine that I was only one day's reading behind schedule. It was easy to catch back up.

One of the limitations placed on me was that I could not use an electric toothbrush. This bugged me because that is all that I have used for many years, and I did not understand why they prohibited me from using it. Tom tried to explain why, but I was showing a stubborn streak that I am known to have once in a while.

Later after I was back home in my apartment, I used the electric toothbrush and learned why I should not have done so while still in the hospital. It really did vibrate quite a bit which could have caused the bleeding in my brain to begin again. I now assume that by the time I used the electric

toothbrush for the first time that my body had healed the blood vessels affected by the stroke sufficiently that the vibration did not damage them.

Went to and from bathroom using wheelchair

I do not remember when I first got a wheelchair, but I think I had it by the time Tom and Elaine arrived. By Sunday evening, I had learned how to wheel myself into the bathroom, get on the pot, and get off it, and get back into bed. This was with the nurses' permission.

When I was young, I saw a wheelchair basketball game at the high school. It seemed like a fun thing to do. Well, wheeling myself around was a lot of fun to say the least. So, for the last couple of days in Park West, I got to wheel myself around some. By this time I was not having much of a problem with using both hands to get around. I obviously was using my right arm the most, but the skill of holding onto the wheel with my left hand was coming back to me very rapidly. I don't remember my left leg giving me problems when I went to the bathroom either. (Perhaps I actually had some control over it?)

Ft. Sanders Hospital (Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center)

Monday, May 5, Dee picked me up at Park West Hospital around 6 PM and transported me to this hospital near the downtown area. After getting me checked in, she saw me to the floor for inpatient stroke victims, room 409.

Patricia Neal was a movie actress who had suffered a stroke. It was in this hospital that she had received her therapy that had helped her so much. Later in life, she was having more problems as after effects of her stroke. That is when she

came back for evaluation and treatment again. She helped make it one of the better stroke rehabilitation centers in the country. (Money can do that with the right personnel.)

Me and my wheelchair

It got me into trouble before the evening was out. When I needed to get to the bathroom, I used my wheelchair to do so without notifying anyone. These nurses did not like it at all. But I replied that I had already been doing this at the other hospital. I don't remember what they told me then, but I was again head strong and continued to do this my way anyway.

I continued to use my imagination about wheeling myself around in my wheelchair. So, I began "living" out my imaginations. I did not do anything foolish, but I was in charge of wherever I went. It was fun! Still it took some time to make sure I was going where I was suppose to go. Maybe others might not be safe when I was out wheeling along...

Occupational and Physical therapy

These two terms were confusing to me for quite some time before I finally figured it out probably with some help from others. Beginning on Tuesday, May 6, I was wheeled into my first therapy session. After lunch I would have another one. It turns out that the morning one was occupational and the afternoon was physical. I had many things to learn or relearn before I could be on my own again. Except for possibly Saturday and Sunday, I had this same schedule every day. Both sessions worked on my muscles (upper and lower body).

Probably closer to my discharge, they tested my mental abilities to make decisions. To do this they showed me

several pictures, and I was to tell them whether the picture was showing what was good and what was not.

The first picture had several electrical items plugged in. This one bothered me somewhat because some of them could draw current that might be more than the circuit could handle. So this is what I said. But later another picture had far too many electrical appliances plugged in. That when I said that this was absolutely the wrong thing to do. Then I referred back to the first picture. It was far safer than the second one. (I'm not so certain the the first picture still showed more appliances plugged in than was wise...)

At some point, they had me holding a 3 foot piece of 3/4" PCV pipe horizontally across my shoulders. I was to twist my body to the right and the to the left as far as I could twist it. As I was doing this, another patient and a therapist walked by. That is when I stopped. When asked why, I said that I had no intention of hitting someone who was walking by. His reply was an "off-handed" remark which bugged me. I almost felt like walking close enough to him to hit him as I twisted my body, but I didn't. (He didn't seem to think that there was a problem with me hitting someone.)

They finally got me out of the wheelchair and onto my feet using a walker. My therapist for this was an oriental woman. When I began walking again, I was pigeon toed (my feet were pointed inward). She constantly reminded to straighten out how I placed my feet as I walked. Then there were stairs to learn to climb (3 of them) up and down. I must admit that my progress was much faster than what I would have thought possible.

They had me working with Play Dough in occupational therapy. They put quite a few small beads in it, mixed them up in it as much as they could, and then had me use a hand to remove them. Since my left hand was weaker than my

right, I used my left hand to do this. In spite of this, I was able to get all of the beads out of the Play Dough. It sure was messy!

I'm going home in six days

I was told sometime on Thursday, May 8, that they were having a party for those who were going home soon. (Of course, this could not possibly be me...) They invited me to come too. Me being there could be encouraging to those going home. (Everyone clapped for each one who was announced.) So, I went because I did not really have anything else to do. They began recognizing various people who were going home and when. Of course, we all clapped to show our support for them. But then, I heard my own name and the date (May 14). I was absolutely shocked! I had only completed 3 days of training, and they were talking about me leaving less than a week later? (I had not begun walking yet!) They also gave me a medallion to wear around my neck.

I do not know whether this announcement was an incentive to work harder or not. If not it should have. I worked hard anyway. First because I needed to, and second because all of it was a challenge to me. I love challenges! Beside my impressions were when I first saw Dee in the emergency room that we would get through it together. So, whatever I was told to do was what I should do. This was also what I did. Of course I did some other things as well...

Speech therapy

I could not speak as clearly as I should, but I did not notice the change. But the speech therapist did. She had specific exercises for me to do using a mirror (she gave me one). By this time my cognitive functioning was good enough for me

to remember a few of the things I had done while having speech therapy the first three years of school. I had been helped then, and I believed that I could be helped now. It was a matter of doing what she told me. (To me this was more educational than play.)

Lunch area

Most of the patients on the fourth floor were able to get around on their own. So, rather than deliver the food to each room, the trays were taken to a room with lots of circular tables. (A few of the people got their meals in their rooms.) When it was time to eat, we would head to this room for our meal. I think that I used my wheelchair to get there until I was discharged. I did not get a walker of my own until the day I left as near as I can remember. But even so, while in my wheelchair heading to a meal, I was enjoying myself while possibly being a danger to anyone else in the hallway...

Balloon volleyball

After listening to a radio program discussing the purpose of play in the lives of humans, I find that it explains my attitude while I was recovering from my stroke. Regardless of what I was asked to do, I did it as play: I made sure that I really enjoyed doing it. So it never became boring. My imagination came into my play as well just as children do.

Children learn quite a bit from their playing. Clearly, the same is true for adults as well. It likely explains why my progress was as quick as it was.

One day as I wheeled myself into one class, there was a volley ball net across the room. This only happened one time. Now, one of my PE classes at the University of Illinois was volley ball. But instead of using a volley ball here, we

used a balloon. So, I got back into the "play" mode, and this was a lot of fun! We were told not to hit the balloon very hard because the ceiling was rather rough. If the balloon hit it hard enough, it would burst. One of the instructors was known to scream when she heard loud noises... One time the balloon burst, and she screamed. Yes, I was the one who hit it "too hard". I did not do so deliberately, but it could well have been caused by a subconscious thought on my part when I hit it.

While I liked to hit the balloon back over the net when it came to me, I thought others on my side needed to get involved as well. So, I passed it over to them. I noticed that the lady on my right could not move her arms and hands very well. Perhaps this was my imagination as well, but it seemed like she was doing better as I sent the balloon her way several times. I hope it helped.

During the last few days of therapy, a couple of therapists were discussing my leaving. One of them wondered where I would be going. Would it be a rehabilitation place? The other one said I would be going home. (Well, I thought that was what they had said the previous Thursday.)

Things I did after coming home: walking with a walker

It was now two weeks since I had had my stroke. Now I had to go back to my apartment and do everything on my own. Dee was nice enough to bring me home. On the way, she stopped by Walgreen to get my prescription. I'm not sure how she was feeling, but I was a little scared to say the least. For two weeks others had been doing things for me. A few times Dee had taken my dirty clothes home and washed them. Now I would be doing all of these things for myself. Well, we had an arrangement that Rachel was doing my

laundry for the privilege of using my washer and dryer. So, this was taken care of already. But cooking, changing the bedding, etc. were things I would have to do alone.

The first time I changed my bed, I discovered that I could do so if I got down on my knees. The only times I needed to do this was to tuck the lower sheet under the mattress. So, I learned to use a combination of using my walker and kneeling to do this task.

Check mail box

This was down the hill and seemingly about a quarter mile one way. But I decided to use my walker to do this simple task. So, off I went. I got there without becoming winded, and so I went back up the hill. Apparently the physical therapy was sufficient that I had no problems doing this task.

After doing this several times, I found it a little strange that I could do this on a walker while people living near me needed to ride in a car to go down to the pool. (The mail boxes were next to the pool area.) So, this too was a challenge to me, and as I went through outpatient physical therapy I added to the challenge.

Now that I was able to take care of myself supposedly, I was not getting as much attention as I would have like to have had. The first Saturday at home was when I was sure that I needed it, but Dee and Rachel were doing something somewhere else. So, I was so alone! (I thought I was anyway.)

I had fixed a meal and I wanted to have a piece of fruit for dessert. OK, but I could not peel it, so it had to be cut...

My right hand was fine, so I had no problems holding the knife. But then I had problems holding the orange. And if I

were to hold the orange with my right hand, how was I suppose to cut it with my left hand? I could have use another hand.

This reminds me of when my father had surgery years before on the rotator cuff in right shoulder. He wanted to cut the grapefruit they had for breakfast. Well, he was not yet able to use his right hand, so he was going to use his weaker left hand. His idea: Mom was to hold the grapefruit while he cut it with his left hand. She absolutely refused to do it this way.

After all this knife was always kept so sharp that it could easily cut through an electrical cord. It had actually done this years before, when Mom had laid it down on the cord with the blade touching the cord. So, I did not blame her for refusing. She could have gotten badly hurt. In stead she held her ground until he let her cut the grapefruit by herself.

Well I did not have anyone to help me, so I tried to cut it handicapped though I was. It did not work out very well at all. OK, so there were several cuts on one of my hands, but they were all shallow ones. And there was only enough blood to smear it all over the orange peeling.

The next day, Dee took me to church (Knoxville Primitive Baptist Church). It is one that she and I had attended sometime earlier. There we met Richard Prior (Elder Orville Prior's oldest son). Anyway, while I was in the hospital, she had come to a worship service and told the people that I was in the hospital. No one thought to try to contact or visit me afterward.

The members at Oakwood Church were better. One of the deacons came by to pick me up during several of the Sunday mornings of June. This was very nice of them.

Rachel's mother-in-law visits

A few days after I arrived back home, I got a call from the Patrica Neal Center wanting to set up appointments for my outpatient therapy. They were suggesting May 22nd for the first one.

Dee had already arranged for Rachel to drive me to and from these appointments for as long as they lasted. Well, the latter's mother-in-law was going to begin visiting on this day. She would be staying for a few days, and I did not know for how long. (It would be for less than a week.)

So, I asked Patricia Neal if I could begin the following week (the 29th) having explained why. They agreed. So I began on Thursday afternoon of this day with occupational therapy. Thereafter these would be scheduled at 1 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Physical therapy would begin the day after occupational did. Thereafter these would be scheduled at 2 PM on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Rachel's mother arrived on schedule on the 22nd staying with Dee during her visit. I met her a couple of times while she was there. But they were usually going to a variety of places to show her what the Knoxville area has to offer.

East Town mall

There was some paperwork that needed to be done concerning Dee's car. Rachel drove us to the city clerk's office in East Town mall the day after the mother-in-law arrived. I was invited to go along so I could get out a little bit. So I did. But then came the big surprise for Rachel and Dee. They had expected me to be very slow and perhaps not all that well balanced. Well, that is how many people my age that had stroke would use a walker. Once I got my walker out of the mini van, I walked at a rather brisk pace. It was I who had to wait for them rather than they wait for me. But then

again, I had often walked much faster than the average person my height. (A worker at Park West Hospital later would call me a "power walker".)

Rachel driving me to sessions

Dee volunteered Rachel to drive me to these sessions. Originally, she said that this was also part of what Rachel should do since she was using my washer and dryer. (But when Fred and Carolyn Lewis came through this area, Dee told them an entirely different story. Does this sound familiar?)

Disgusted with occupational therapist

This was the first therapist that I worked with. He seemed to be as slow as molasses! He was not enthusiastic as I would have liked him to be. I was there to get better, and he did not seem to care. I tried to get him to change his attitude toward me to no avail. Neither was I satisfied with the answers from him. There were things that I wanted to know, and I got generalized answers or so it seemed to me. I wanted specifics!

"Laid down the law" to the physical therapist

So to say that I had had a bad experience the day before was putting it very mildly. I was determined that would not happen during physical therapy! I walked into this session with a **huge** chip on my shoulder! I made sure that she knew what I expected from her and in a tone that I expected to be obeyed to the letter. I doubt that she has ever had a patient to do this to her. I was there to improve as much as possible, and I expected her to make sure this happened.

She did!!!

So, she set out to find out how serious I was in what I had just said. She took me through the entire program giving me all that I could handle session after session. There were some times that my muscles would complain before she would slow down some. For this, I have always been extremely thankful.

The second Friday session, she told me that I no longer needed my walker. Now this was rather scary even if I had already been walking around my apartment without it. So, I kind of balked at this, but I put my walker away anyway.

This was one of the things that happened rather regularly during the entire time I was her patient. I have already mentioned how far she would push me in our sessions. Well, I would build upon what she did by pushing myself. As in this example above, I started walking without my walker for fairly short distances, a little longer each time. So, I really did not need the walker by the time she told me this. But, how was I suppose to walk half a mile going up and down hill with out one? (I did manage.)

One of the times I really enjoyed was when she had me working with a basketball. First she put a belt around my waist to hold so that she could control me in case I started to fall. Then I and an assistant bounced the ball back and forth. Then she began to bounce it to my right or left making me lean one direction or the other. Then we began to move sideways continue to bouncing the ball. I even surprised myself with how good my balance was while moving and bouncing the ball at the same time. (Yes, this was another play time for me. It was also a time of intense learning as well.)

On my own: Exercises

Later, she gave me a handout showing me the exercises that I needed to be doing at home. She also recommended weights while doing them. Then she had me do the exercises with the weights she provided. (Dee took me to Target to get 1.5# and 3.5# weights.) There was one additional exercise that she explained to me that I had to use stairs to do. I began doing these twice daily except for the days I saw her. Those days I only did them once.

Walked up a hill on a slant

The mail boxes, office, and swimming pool area were behind Dee's Apartment. So to get my mail I would go past Dee's apartment then around to the left in a U shape to the office. After I stopped using my walker, I decided to see if I could climb the hill behind her apartment. I did. I actually did it on a slant as I climbed up the hill and to my left at the same time. (When I told this to my physical therapist, she said that I should not be doing this. I did it anyway. I knew then that there was a certain amount of danger in going up a hill like this, and I was very careful as I did. And yes, this is another example of my pushing myself a little farther.)

Water exercises (Cold!)

As we got later into June, she suggested some exercises to do while in the pool. Good idea, but I did not take to the not so warm water. So, these were not done very many times at all. The other exercises with weights however were done faithfully.

Hot Dog award

This is what I call my revenge on my physical therapist. They have laid out an "track" that they have the patients walk on to see how far they can go in six minutes. It consists of a hall

and a "path" through the therapy room that forms an oval. So off we went with her holding a stop watch. She had to keep track of how many laps we went as well as when the 6 minutes was over.

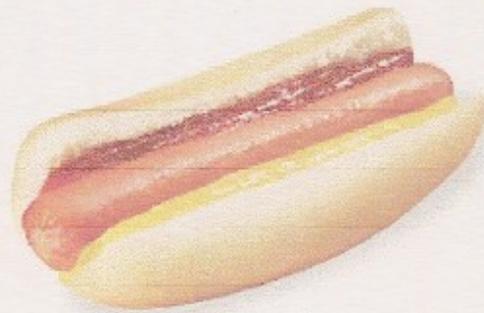
In my case, total distance was 2160 feet. Speed: 4.09 mph. Not bad for someone who had a stroke less than two months before. (It must have been June 12!) My revenge: she had been making me working hard enough to sweat, and now I was making her walk fast enough to sweat.

Fond memory: as we were walking through the therapy room for seemingly the umpteenth time, one of her fellow therapists yelled out: "Who is the therapist and who is the patient?" And her good nature replied: "I think he thinks that I am the patient and he is the therapist!"

After this walk, I was more than somewhat tired. But she did not let up. She had more things for me to do. She put me on a motorized treadmill. Then she set it on a slow speed and had me walk sideways. My muscles were complaining to me, but I said nothing. I would get my rest later. Once again she was giving as much as I could take.

The last time I saw her (June 26) she gave me this award of which I am very proud. Later I would see her again. This time I had her write how far I had walked and how fast I had done it.

the "hot dog" award



6 minutes = 2160 ft (4 mph)

**congratulations to
daniel lewis**

patricia neal "hot dog" award winner 2008

**thank you for your hard work and dedication to
being a "hot dog"**

Anissa

My new primary care physician (first and last visit)

Dr. Glass was the doctor that I had while I was in inpatient therapy at the Patricia Neal Center. She had recommended a doctor located across the street from the hospital just before I left inpatient care. So, I had called and gotten an appointment at 3:30 PM on Tues June 24. This way I could attend my last occupational therapy a 1 PM and last physical therapy at 2 PM and go to this appointment.

BP and glucose reading

However, in the late afternoon on Monday, June 23, the doctor's office called me to tell me that they did not see patients for initial visits at that time of the day. The only time available was Tues at 2 PM. The next available appoint was July 25. So, I agreed. It was too late in the day to call the outpatient clinic of the Patricia Neal Center to cancel both of my therapy appointments.

To say that I was livid is putting this very mildly. When I got up the next morning, I decided to check my blood pressure and glucose immediately. Results: 150 systolic (top number of a BP), and glucose 233. Both of these were much higher than readings I had taken on other days at this time of the day. The glucose reading is by far the highest reading I have ever had!

When Kevin was diagnosed as being diabetic and put on a pill daily for it, we were able to get his under control fairly quickly. After than I was told to take his glucose reading once a week alternating between when he first got up and 2 hours after eating his breakfast. The first one should not be over 100, and the second one was not to be over 140. (Neither ever was.)

So, after this shock with these readings, I ate my breakfast and tested my glucose 2 hours after eating. It had dropped down to 155. While this was still too high, it was a vast improvement over the fasting one. It would normally have gone up two hours after eating.

So, I had Rachel drive me to this appointment arriving before 2 PM. It took a little bit of searching to find the office, but I finally did. (I still was early for my appointment.) Then as usual, I had to wait to see her (my first female doctor). As far as I was concerned, nothing was done that could not have been done at 3:30 instead of 2:00. Then she wanted to see me again after some blood tests. So, at the end of my appointment, I went to the office to get the necessary appointment. They apparently have specific times of the day when they see specific types of patients. The earliest appointment I could get was 10 AM. So, I was suppose to fast until then, wait until the doctor was free to see me, and then eat something. All earlier appointments were set aside for another type of patients. The very idea that I was suppose to fast until very late in the morning just for their benefit was the height of ridiculousness So, for two days in a row this office had managed to really upset me by their wanting to treat patients like cattle (my opinion). I made the appointment anyway, but I would not keep it.

My final meeting with Dr. Glass

I had one more appointment with her around the first week of July. This is when I vented a little bit of my anger over the way I had been treated by my new primary care physician's office. She agreed with me and suggested another doctor in another part of Knoxville. So, that afternoon I made two phone calls: one to cancel the appointment I had made with the above named doctor's office, and one to my new primary

care physician's office. (In 2018, I am still happily using Dr. Louis Smith.)

Told I could drive again.

As she was finishing what she had to say to me, I asked her about my driving again. I knew that there was a driving course for people who had a stroke, and I thought I would have to take it. But she really surprised me, telling me that I could start driving again. I quickly told her that I wanted this in writing. So, she did. To say that I was a happy camper when I left her office is putting it very mildly. I was absolutely ecstatic!

Rachel was waiting for me, and she was the first person that I showed what Dr. Glass had written. I would have loved to driven home, but it was not convenient for her to get out and me get into the driver's seat. So, my first time to drive would have to wait until the next day.

Rachel's bad marriage

In the next day or so, Rachel called me. She wanted to know what I knew about her husband. She was going to do some shopping or possibly pay some bills that day, but going on line she noticed that bank account no longer had any money in it. Also during the day her husband called her to say that he would be coming by that evening to get his things. He had completely blind sided all of us.

When he came, he brought a policeman with him. Dee and I paid very close attention to what was happening as he got his things. This upset the policeman because he did not know what we might do. So we got a warning to back off which set Dee off. But he managed to get his things before she and I did something stupid.

One thing that I wonder is whether the mother-in-law had anything to do with this since this happened about a month after the end of her visit. But we will never really know.

Swapping apartments

Given that that the rent was due, something needed to be done fairly rapidly. Dee's solution was to move necessary things into her 2 bedroom apartment where Rachel and children could stay. I would move from my 1 bedroom apartment to Rachel's 2 bedroom one. I would use one of the bedrooms, and Rachel could store her things in the second one. I was suppose to receive payment for providing storage. (Never happened) The apartment office gave an OK to the moves.

So this is where I did my first driving once I got the packing done. I would load the mini van with things and drive between the apartments. I even backed into the parking places so that the back of the van was next to the sidewalk. Then for the next few days it was driving back and forth over and over again. It was good practice in making sure that I could put it wherever I needed. So when I finally got out on a street, I was use to the basics of driving.

Dee and Rachel moved the things she needed to Dee's apartment while I was moving my things from the one bedroom apartment. My front apartment filled up rather quickly with Rachel's things.

Medical Associates

This was in west Knoxville about a mile from Park West Hospital where I was taken when I had my stroke. I used my GPS unit to find it, at least I thought I could find it this way. Turns out that the GPS had the office on the wrong side of

the street. But I found it anyway with some patience. (This was July 15.)

The doctor was white haired and overweight. He was very nice and has remained so ever since. I have since learned that he is a few years younger than I am. (But with my age, that is to be expected.) The office personnel were much more friendly than the previous doctor. The lab was near to where the patients check in for their appointments. The nice part about this is that I can schedule an appointment for lab work throughout the day. I call this consideration for the patients.

One of the questions he asked got him an answer that he did not expect. He asked, "What are you allergic to? My answer was that I did not know. Probably he might be wondering why I answered it this way. When he asked further, my answer became that I have not taken any antibiotics since 1976. (I thought his question referred to them. Otherwise, I am not allergic to anything that I know of.) Years later, I asked him about this question and my answer. Given what he knows now about my health, how would he have answered it? It was similar to what I had said. "It is yet to be determined." OK, there are some differences...

As with the first doctor, he wanted some lab work done which I did just before going out the door. My potassium and sodium levels and glucose reading seemed to bother him some, so he asked that I repeat these two tests in one week. He was better satisfied with these later results.

Dr. Jan Henley, DDS

I saw her the first time the fourth of August. She wanted a full set of x-rays and a "surround" x-ray. (The latter is somewhat like a CAT scan in that the x-ray machine takes a

continuous picture from one side of my face to the other side.) This was done in the morning, and the dental cleaning was done in the afternoon. Since I lived only a mile from her office, there was no problem making the two trips.

The cleaning did not go very well. In fact there was more cleaning that needed to be done than could be done at one time: deep scaling was needed. I had been told before I left Roanoke that I might even need periodontal work done. But she told me that they could do the necessary work in her office. So, every other month, I was having one fourth of my teeth deep scaled. One time they had to shoot an antibiotic between two teeth to reduce the swelling and the hole created by it. I was also given a prescription for a periodontal rinse to use and the instructions as to how.

The strange thing occurred on my third appointment. I was expecting for her to take an hour to clean my third quarter of my teeth. Well, she got all of that done in about 30 minutes. So, she began on the final quarter of my teeth finishing cleaning them as well. What had happened? During my first cleaning on Aug 4, she likely partially cleaned these two quarters of my teeth. The first two deep scaling appointments were used to clean the teeth that needed the most attention. Since she had already partially cleaned the remaining teeth, there was not as much that had to be done to them.

It seems possible that the rinse I had been given may have had something to do with this. Some time during these visits flossing had been mentioned. Well, I had been flossing regularly in the morning. Anyway, I asked where would be the best time to floss: morning or evening. Dental hygienist told me, "It should always be done at night." My impression was that twice a day flossing was OK, but doing it at night was a definite must. So, I began doing this and continued to

do so. The results have been remarkable. Dental cleaning now just removes some plaque here and there. It is so much nicer to have these type of cleanings!

Over the four months between my initial visit and six months later when I came for my deep scaling, I was taking better care of my teeth. As a result, there was less accumulation on the remaining teeth. This saved me the time and money of a \$90 dental visit. It was worth it!

Northshore Greenway

Around Aug 9, I was at this place to walk at the invitation of Dee and family. It is 2.1 miles around going up and down hills as well as across some fairly flat areas. Sam, Dee's grandson, was being his usual self running around and occasionally off. He had to be called back when the latter happened.

I was feeling very good as well. So, in a dare to myself, I decided to run after him the next time he ran off. Surprisingly enough, I was able to catch up with him. Well, he must have heard my footsteps because he turned his head to see who it was. The look on his face was something else again. The last thing he had expected to see was me running as fast as he was! So, he slowed down. I was really enjoying this! For the rest of the walk, we horsed around a little bit which was also nice.

Sometime the later part of the summer, I decided to time myself. Well, truly, I wanted to make one full trip around the greenway in 30 minutes. So, I began my walk when the second hand reached the 12. As I got nearer to where I began, I realized that I would have to run at least part of the way that was still left. Of course, I chose the part where it was fairly steep downhill. (OK, I was sort of cheating here a

little bit. Anyway, I did make it back to my starting point in just under 30 minutes. Clearly, I was physical in good shape after my stroke. All of my exercises had paid off quite well.

Elder Harris' funeral (Aug)

His death had happened rather suddenly. I suppose it could have been anticipated given his health over the years. He had suffered from deep vein thrombosis meaning that blood clots would form in his legs. Obviously, he was on a blood thinner to try to keep this under control.

He had been out walking that morning as usual. Then one of his neighbors saw him just fall over. There was nothing that anyone could. It must have been an instantaneous death. (It was the way he would have preferred.)

We first got to know him well in the mid 1950's when my family began to again go to church regularly. By this time he had a small family: a wife and two sons. There were times when they would visit Sharon Church (where I attended) and preach for us.

Likely these visits were because he had been invited. I say this because he was the pastor of about three churches north of us. (All of them were about 20-30 miles apart.) So he was rather busy the entire month.

Then he ran into a financial problem. He had been working five days a week in Alton, IL, for several years making a good living. But the company decided that everyone was going to have to work shift work which included Sundays. It is rather difficult to pastor three churches while not having his Sunday's free from work. In the end, he quit his job and worked at a variety of things to pay the bills. One of them was working for the village in the water department. (This meant that he had to learn to do a wide variety of tasks to

keep the water running for everyone.) Another job was as a volunteer fireman. Perhaps there were some other things that he did. (Small churches like his do not provide much help; there are not enough of them.) Well, they survived and thrived thanks to the grace and mercy of God. Yes, I can safely say that his witness would be as mine: God provides!

While we attended at least two of these churches for services once in a while, Palmyra Church was the one we attended the most. This was not often. Since Sharon Church met only on the first and third weekend, we were "free" to attend church elsewhere on the Second, fourth, and fifth weekends. Often we did not attend on these weekends. But we would go to Palmyra a couple of times a year. Sometimes there would be a visiting minister, and sometimes Elder Harris would preach.

From the time I first heard him, he impressed me as a special minister. Among other things, he was easy to understand even though he had a lisp. He had obviously worked on this. His sermons were well thought out.

It was how he interacted with his wife and children while he was preaching. The two young boys were known to act up once in a while. He thought nothing of calling them down if he thought they were getting a little too active. In fact he did it in a way that it did not distract from his preaching. We would all hear his say, "Paul, behave yourself." And then he would continue preaching. Many a time it would almost seem like what he said to one of his children was part of the sermon! (Paul was the older brother, so I remember hearing his name called out.)

One special time I remember was at the wedding of Jack Allen and Joyce Prior in west central Illinois. Bro. James was performing the beginning of the ceremony until her father (Elder Orville Prior) escorted Joyce up the aisle. Then he

stepped aside as Elder Prior took over for the rest of it. Well, it was almost the rest of it. There was only one thing missing: "Your may now kiss the bride."

After the ceremony those of us who wanted to take some pictures went to the back of the church for this. Just as we were ready to begin, Bro. James said the missing words! Jack and Joyce obliged us with a well meant kiss. So we all got a picture of their very first kiss as a married couple.

His wife, Hilda Mae had died some years before him, and I had attended her funeral as well. So, when Elaine got word of his death, she notified me. She was wondering if I was going to attend his funeral. I said yes.

This was three months after I got out of the hospital because of my stroke. How was I going to do this? Was I well enough to drive that far? Obviously, I had some questions on my mind, but I wanted to be there to say good-bye. I guess that I would find out. So, I got out my packing list file before packing. Some adjustments had to be made given the circumstances. Even so, I still forgot my camera.

I got things packed into the car and headed out shortly before 7 AM (6 AM CDT) on August 15. This put me in Nashville around 9 AM. So far so good. I tried to stop about every couple of hours for rest stops as well as some exercising of my legs. All seemed to go well for the rest of the day. My watch sounded every hour on the hour. Well, I was driving down the street where Tom and Elaine live when it went off at 3 PM. It had taken me 9 hours to make the trip. My legs were a little tired, and my seat was definitely somewhat sore. But other than that, things were fine.

After I got there, I learned that Webb had requested that we all get together for a meal. So, we all ate out that evening. Since I had been rather careful about what I ate, I ordered

mostly side orders that seemed to fit my diet. The others ordered regular meals.

Then the next evening, we were invited to Webb's home for a visit. Why? He wanted to check me out. How was I doing physically and mentally? He really wanted to know. A lot of people are not doing all that well this quick. Some never get to where they can do things well.

Well, he found out. I was doing quite well. Of course, I would have appreciated it if he had not done so much smoking while we were there. I just made sure that I was not very close at all. (I don't like cigarette smoke!)

I should mention that in the last 24 hours, I had bought a disposable camera. Why? Because I took some pictures that evening. I also politely listened to the conversation and answered any questions about my experiences with my stroke and some of the things I did to get over it. (I had already send emails with some of this information in them.)

The funeral was on Sunday morning and attended by so very many people. As I passed by his casket, I quietly said good-bye to Bro. James as I patted his hand. I later engaged in conversations with some of the people that I met before the service. After it and his burial, there was a meal for anyone wishing to eat. I got a chance to talk to more people I had not seen before the funeral. And then it was time to go.

Then come Monday morning, I finished packing the car before heading back to Knoxville. The trip back was as uneventful as the trip to Illinois.

December

Bridge

In late 2008, I decided that I needed to get out some. I had two items on my agenda: visiting the senior center to see what was available, and begin going to the stroke support group which is held in Ft. Sanders which houses the Patricia Neal Stroke Center.

So on Monday, December 29, 2008 I drove to the Strang Center. One of the things going that day was bridge. Now I had not played this game since 1964, so I was very much rusty to say the least. People were nice, but I don't think they appreciated my "wild bidding." Bridge was played at this center on Mondays, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. So, I came back on Wednesday.

This was New Year's Eve. I played as well as I could, but I was not in the same league with these people. Besides, one's memories can be just a little bit fuzzy after more than 40 years... But the point was that I was out doing things. I was not sitting in my apartment all day playing with my computer. OK, I was continuing to walk everyday as well as doing my physical and occupational therapy exercises a couple of times a day.

2009

Come Friday, Jan 2, I was playing bridge again. At the same time, I noticed the computer room at the center, and I asked about it. I thought that with the amount of time I had spent at my keyboard, I should know somethings that I could teach others. It did not occur to me that others would not be as interested in knowing how to use the Linux operating system as I am. All they know is windows, and that is all they want to know.

I continued to play bridge 2-3 times each week through January. Some days it was cold outside. Due to the heating system in the building, it was rather cold inside. Even so, there were times when I and others played from near 9 AM to 4 PM when it was time to close the building.

Jan 9 was one of those wintry days: we had snow showers that day. It remained for a while, but within a few days it was gone again. (Then again our average snow is at most 1-2 inches. Usually, it melts before the sun goes down.) This is a picture outside on my balcony (on the third floor).



The following Thursday began with a 8:30 AM appointment with my doctor. Everything looked alright, but the potassium level was a little high. So, he wanted to have that test run again at the end of the month. (It dropped from 4.8 to 4.7 which is not much. At least it was not going up which could get dangerous.)

Then there was another test that he had been wanting to run ever since I first saw him in the previous July: the carotid artery scan. Well, Medicare will only pay to have this run once a year, so it could not be done until after Dr. Slavich had run it the previous year. So, it was scheduled for the 20th. Every time, I had seen Dr. Smith, he had listened to my carotid arteries. So, he likely already knew what the results would be. Even so, he wanted to make sure.

So on this afternoon, I got this done. So far, I had had this done twice, once by a technician and once by a doctor. Both had their own way of doing it. So what can I expect this time? How would this technician do it?

The part that I was most interested in was the sound made by the blood coursing through these arteries. Dr Slavich had not let me listen when he did it. The technician here was happy to let me listen to the sounds. What a difference 27 months makes! Both arteries sounded just as my left one had in the beginning (it had not had any blockage). The report came back as I had hoped after hearing these sounds: no blockage. What I hoped before the test was that the blockage had been reduced. So this was good news.

When I saw the report, my mind went back to what Dr. Slavich had said a little over a year before. (The blockage did not look like a 20% one, but he was going to enter that number in my medical records anyway.) I concluded that it had shrunk between my first and second carotid artery scan. How much? I was thinking to about 10% given that it had been done about halfway between my first and third scans. But I will never know.

Then came Monday, January 26. I was there as usual. Now this day we had a new player. She had a handicap which did not permit her to hold her cards in her hand. So, she had a device to hold them for her. OK, maybe I was more than curious, but I did keep my eye on her during the morning.

The following day, a new bridge class began, and I was able to join it. Bill Dietzler was the instructor, and he charged \$5 per session. At the time, I thought there would be four of them, but he decided to add a fifth one sometime during the course. (There were 8 new students which began this day.)

Finally, with this class, I was gaining enough knowledge to be able to play better (Actually, the people I played with did not have to suffer through my very poor play!). His handout was very helpful, and I had a bridge program for one of my computers that ran windows.

This handout became my bridge "bible" so to speak over a period of perhaps years. When I was not completely sure of myself, I would read the appropriate part of the handout to see what I should do. Even after I had bought a computer tablet in July 2014, I put files on it that included this information in them. (I was getting sophisticated!)

My computer tower ran Windows VISA. Among the games contained on it was a bridge game. So, I got to do some practice using it. Nice! (Unfortunately, I could no find a computer program that ran on Linux, so I could not use my laptop in this area at all.)

Among the practices was one that had me try to obtain a specific score using one hand of the four generated by the computer. Sometimes this was hard or I messed up somewhere. Sometimes it was not. One time I was suppose to take 11 of the 13 possible tricks. Well, after playing it a couple of times, I managed to take all 13 tricks! Yes, I definitely patted myself on my back! Why wouldn't I?

This Tuesday (the 27th) was the beginning of two things. There was a bridge lesson in the morning, and a stroke support group meeting in the evenings. Regular meetings were held the fourth Tuesday of the month at Ft. Sanders Regional Medical Center. One or both of the co-hosts worked there in the Patricia Neal Center. (I thought I recognized one of them when I first walk in the door.)

As usual, I am more than a little picky about what I eat. Since part my inpatient care at the Patricia Neal Center

involved proper diets, I was *somewhat disappointed* with what food had been made available to us during the meeting. It was soft drinks and several large pizzas. Actually, both of these were no-no's.

It was a rather informal meeting with the greatest amount of time devoted to letting each person introduce themselves and then tell something about their experiences they had because of their strokes. So, with this I got to learn her name, Sherri Russell. Her stroke had occurred a couple of months after mine.

It was around this same time that I thought I needed to change cell phones. I think I had learned that Verizon was in the process of buying out Unice. So I went to the Verizon store in Westtown Mall to find out the situation. At some point I would be switched over to Verizon, but I did not know when.

What I learned was that I could switch from Unice to Verizon that day without the usual extra expenses. Well, it did cost \$88.11, but this included about \$40 for the first month's usage. (Any usage above allowable amount would be billed a month later.) So, I walked out of the store with a brand new phone and phone number. Not bad all all!

Feb through April

By the end of January, I had talked to a computer instructor at the Strang Center about my teaching Linux there. (No go: the people who maintained these computers did not want any operating system on them except Windows.) But I was able to get some help from Phyllis, the receptionist at the center. She put me in contact with the person who ran the senior center at Halls. So, I got an appointment later that

day to talk with him. I would begin morning classes four days a week on Groundhog's Day. (I had to have Tuesday morning free for my bridge class at Strang didn't I?) My class ran two weeks.

Starting over with Bridge

Then on Feb 3, I was back to the Strang Center taking lessons, there were two tables in the back of the room with people playing bridge. An earlier class of Bill's, which had also met on Tuesdays, wanted to continue playing on Tuesday mornings. Along with many of this earlier class, there were a few more who already knew how to play, and play well. So, while we were learning, they were playing very quietly, not disturbing us at all.

Anyway at the end of our lessons, several of us asked if we could continue to come on Tuesday mornings and play bridge with them. They agreed. Since that time, our group has gradually expanded in number to the low 30's. So, unless several people are doing other things, we have seven tables of four players on Tuesday mornings. On a rare morning, we will only have 18 people.

Sometime before the middle of February, I mentioned to Sherri about the Tuesday morning bridge. I thought she might want to attend given how much she loved to play bridge. Well, she took me up on it. Come Feb 17, she was there with her daughter again bringing her. Since I knew both of them, I went over to them which is when I suggested that I drive her back home after it was over. After all there was no need for her daughter to wait around for her or come back to get her. Her home was on the way to my apartment. I could just drop her off there when we finished. She took me up on my offer.

Then there was the second stroke support meeting the last Tuesday of February. Sure enough Sherri Russell was there again with her daughter bringing her. We chatted a little during or after the meeting.

As the meeting progressed, I began to become a little bored with what they were doing. I basically heard the same things that I had the previous meeting, and there was very little that I could learn that I did not already know. I was beginning to wonder just what kind of support I was suppose to be getting.

(Besides, I was strictly doing my therapy exercises once or twice a day, and I was eating the nutritious foods recommended while I was an inpatient at Patrica Neal. OK, but I will hold out for a little bit longer...)

With some of Susan's emotional problems, she was encouraged to attend a support group about it while we were living in Roanoke, AL. After only two meetings, she gave up on it. Her complaint? Some of the people were complaining about the same problems, but they were not developing an means to solve their problems. (What good does it do to constantly complain?)

Problems brewing!

Ever since I began playing bridge at the end of last year, Dee had been trying to convince me that I needed to move. I suppose that she no longer had much of an interest in me, and I still wanted it to work out. Yes, I was being stubborn.

Honestly, between her use of my money and the expense of the apartment was a drain on my net worth. I should have began looking for a cheaper place, but I did not know quite how to do this. Because I did not really want to do this, I did not try very hard either.

Dee had borrowed some money from me and promised to pay it back. Then she had told me that she did not have the money to do this. Basically she said that this was not going to happen. She had used some of this money to buy some things. I did not like this.

So, I told her to give me the items she had bought with my money. If I was going to pay for something, then I expected to have possession of it. Needless to say, this did not go down very well at all. But after a week, she actually had her daughter return the items to me. They were slightly damaged, I could handle that. Even so, this did not take care of the money she still owed me.

It is often said that it does not pay to mix a relationship with financial loans. I had probably seen that to be true on some of the TV small claims court programs. But I thought our situation was different... Boy was I wrong. Well, it was my own fault.

Then about mid to late February, 2009, I sent her an email stating that I expected her to come to my apartment to discuss the money problem on Feb 20. Either she came or there would be consequences. I was on the verge of suing her. (I had not told her that this was the consequences she would face. Maybe I should have done this.)

So, she printed off the email and took it to the office claiming I had threatened her. (The apartment manager said that Dee feared for her life. But Dee has later stated that she never said that.) In either case, I was informed that I had 3 days to vacate my apartment. (I had until midnight Saturday February 28.) I would be charged with trespassing if I was ever found on the premises after that. I tried to explain the situation, but the manager would not listen to anything I had said.

There was a business in the Rocky Hill area (perhaps a mile away or so) that had rental storage units. So, I drove there and rented one. Then on Friday, I rented a U-Hall and began moving my things that I would take with me. There were also somethings that I did not think were worth taking. In the end, there were things that I did not have room for: the unit filled up much more than I would have thought possible.

For one thing, during the fall of 2003 Susan became incontinent and also had a couple of weeks of diarrhea that latter part of September. So the mattress and box springs probably needed to be thrown out. That meant the bed frame should go as well. (Well this was the one I bought late fall in 1967, and it had not been made of sturdy wood either.) Dishes, glasses, flatware were reduced in number before packed. Such was the case with several things.

When Rachel's husband left her, she left the couch and a china cabinet in the apartment when I moved back into it. Since I did not have any room for either of them, they were left. The maintenance people got the privilege of removing anything that I could not find a place for.

Actually, I was wondering is I should have told the office that Dee and Rachel should be allowed to get anything out of my apartment that I left. I really thought about it quite a bit, but I was rather hot under the collar at the time. I had never had anything happen to me like this, so I was extremely embarrassed as rather angry. I did not say anything.

Then I ran into a problem with the washer and dryer. I did not think that I would be able to physically get them down to the truck. Well, one of the maintenance men volunteered to help me get them down three frights of stairs. He and his son did this for \$10. I was happy to pay this!

One of the maintenance people had told me about Super 8 Motel renting rooms by the week claiming that this was as cheap as renting an apartment. It was not completely true, but it was a place to stay for a while. So, I rented a room, paid two week's rent, and paid a deposit of \$50. So, now I had somewhere to put the clothes that I would need to wear as well as other items I would need in the motel room.

The room had a small microwave and a small refrigerator, so I began to use them to fix my meals. (I was not going to eat TV dinners!) Well, there was no table in the room, so I bought a collapsible TV tray to eat off of. There was a laundry room on premises, so this was not a problem. Room and laundry ran about \$193 a week.

How did I manage to get everything in this small refrigerator? Well, everyday I taught computers in Halls, I had to come back by a Kroger's store. So I could buy groceries a couple of times a week if need be. It would not change how far I had to travel at all.

I was rather busy until the evening of February 28. I thought I had gone through the entire apartment making sure that I had gotten as much as possible out that I could. (Well, I did not.) Being angry and scared, I developed tunnel vision. I did not. But it was too late then.

Over that weekend I had eaten most of my meals At Shoney's, so there was an extra expense in this. Well, I did not really feel like cooking anything. I did not even want to think about what I might cook either.

On Monday, I again went to the Halls Senior Center to teach computers. On the way back I stopped at the Post Office on Weisgarber to rent a post office box for six months. Now everyone needed to have my new mailing address...

Then that afternoon, I went to the office at Northshore Apartments to turn in my key and post office box. A policeman was outside at the time and would not let me go inside. Dee was inside talking with the manager. OK, I get that, but it still bothered me. I may get angry, but I am not violent at least not as violent as the policeman thought I might get. (Should I blame him? Well, Tennessee is one of the top states in the number of women killed by a man with which she had a relationship. So, no I should not blame him. He had good reason to want to protect Dee.) In the end, he took the key inside and brought an envelope out to me with a check in it. (It just was not as much as what she actually owed me.)

The next day I went to the Strang Center to play bridge. This time, I was no longer taking bridge lessons. I made sure that I had the instruction sheets that Bill I given me thought! I won't say that I used them every time I bid, but it was almost that often. It was nice to feel more comfortable while playing though.

Then afterward, I went by Books A Million to get the Windows XP Dummy's book. Certainly this would help me teach others what to do. Well, I thought it would anyway: it had me when I was using DOS 6.2 and Windows 3.11 back in the mid 1990's.

Now I wonder how I managed meals in that motel room. Why? Well, it was Monday, March 9 before I went to Walmart to look for a TV tray after I got home from being at Hall's Senior Center. What I found was a solid wooden one. I quickly bought it and then began using it. It sure was nice. It still is more than 9 years later.

The next morning I was back at the Strang Center for another morning of bridge. From there I went to Kroger to buy some groceries.

The stroke support group decided to have an eat out event this Tuesday evening at Olive Garden. By this time Sherri had decided that this group was not going to help her much, so she did not attend.

A new beginning

By late March, Sherri wanted to be able to be on her own if at all possible, and Stephanie (her daughter) wanted this also. So they were going apartment hunting. Stephanie wanted it close enough so that she could get to her mother if needed, so these were the apartments they were concerned with.

But before they did this, they invited me to join them. This way I could possibly find a place for my own as well. So, off we went to apartment complex after complex... It certainly was boring and tiring as well! Nothing seemed to be desirable at all, and we were getting down to the last couple of complexes...

That was when she pulled into Woodlands West and went inside to the office. It was not what she wanted, but she thought I should consider this one very seriously. They were seriously needing tenants!

Normally, I would have to pay the first month's rent, last month's (security deposit), and a security check. This would be over \$600. Did I say they were serious? All I had to pay for the first month was \$1 with the rest of the fees waved!

So, I filled out the paperwork including the security papers. I also mentioned why I had move out of Northshore Woods. (They had not reported the incident, so no one had a record of it.) Then they wanted their \$1. I gave them a five and they had to scrounge around to get my change. (Obviously, not very many people had taken them up on this offer!)

Not long before we got to Woodland West, we passed a 13 floor building whose rent was based upon income (section 8). Perhaps I should have investigated this as well, but I did not. But when the rent at Woodland West became more than my income could handle, I not only checked out, but I also moved into it.

This was the first of April, and I was to move in the next day at Woodlands West or so. Well, they had almost everything done by then.



This was the middle entrance to my apartment building where my apartment was located. There were three of them each leading to the inside stairs to three floors. I was on the bottom floor to the left of the door. The laundry room for us was on the second floor directly above the entry door.



So, I informed the people at Super 8 Motel that I was staying for that weekend (well Friday and Saturday nights). I paid for the two days as requested. I planed to spend my first night in my new apartment on Sunday night.

But Saturday morning while I was in the office, I was informed that things were not all done yet. They needed part of another day to finish. That is when I asked if it would be alright for me to spend the night Sunday night. They said yes as long as my things were not in their way when they came in on Monday. I agreed with that.

Until that time, I had other things to do to get ready to move. Rather than fix any meals in the motel room, I ate several meals at Shoney's through the weekend and Monday evening. Saturday I spent some time in Big Lots looking for the things that I might need but had thrown out. I did not find many things that fit this description. After all, I spent a whole \$8.47! Later I found what was suppose to be a convection oven. (It was the size of a toaster oven, and it was basically exactly that only more expensive.) Anyway, I paid about \$35 for it. It worked for a while, but it did not really last more than several months.

Some time later I would also buy a oven roaster and rack. I would use this later to bake a turkey. This way the juices and oils would remain in the pan while the turkey sat on the rack above it.

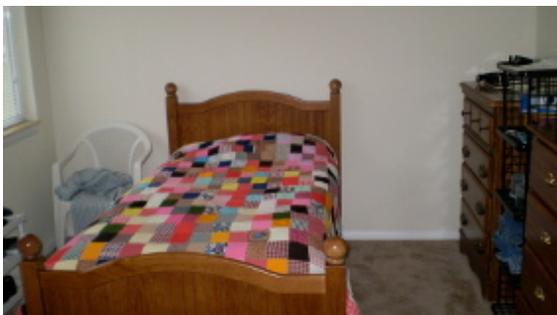
What were the normal apartment rates? They were the same as what I would be paying every month, \$420. Security deposit would have been \$200; the security report would have been \$50. But I only had to pay the rent from this point on.

Now, I needed some furniture. Many of these were put into storage, but I did not have a bed frame nor mattress. So, after I got back home from Hall's Senior Center, I began moving everything from the motel to the apartment. Once I did this and checked out of the motel, I began moving what I could from the storage unit as well. So, I was too tired to fix supper that evening: I went to Shoney's.

Sleeping on an air mattress was not something that I wanted to do all of the time. What should I do? Stephanie had an excellent suggestion: go to Big Lots. Buy a single mattress/box springs set there. So, I did. They also happened to have a single bed frame which she gave me the next day. This was really nice of her!

So, at first, I put the mattress on top of the box springs and slept on top of this. There was only one problem with this. It was still early April and the floor was still rather cold. So was I more than a little bit cold (!!!) even though I had several layers of covers. After getting the frame, I put all of this together. This seemed to help some. I came up with a different idea of how to solve the cold issue during the winter. It was something that my Dad had done when my bedroom was on the second floor as a child.

I also finished getting everything out of storage except for the washer and dryer. These got put into their places, and things looked even better. So, I am going to take you on a picture tour of my new apartment beginning with my bedroom which is the front of my apartment.



This room was as wide as my apartment and perhaps 10 foot deep. So I sort of divided it in to two areas. The sleeping area had the things that I needed: a plastic chair in which to place my clothes when I went to bed. On the other side of the window is the shoe rack, and that is what I used it for. To the right of the bed is where I kept all of my clothes that I did

not hang up in the closet. One of the chest of drawers had my undergarments, socks, pajamas, and some miscellaneous items. Then other contained my BJ shorts, tan shorts, sweaters, and other miscellaneous items. The black thing between the two had my clean bluejeans folded and placed on the first shelf. More miscellaneous items were placed on the other three shelves. That little black object on top of it? This was the most important item if I wanted to get up on time: my traveling alarm clock!



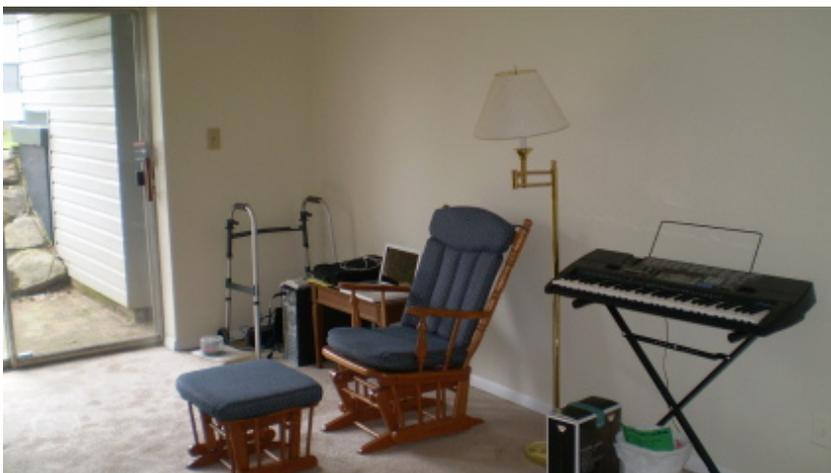
This was my "working" area at the other end of the bedroom. Beginning with the door on the left: this is the entrance to a six foot (or more) closet. On the other side of this was the bathroom. There is the printer on top of a metal bookcase with two shelves. In the corner is my portable typing table. Its contents included my computer mouse & keyboard, my 6-plug extension cord which supplied the power to all of the computer complex. Moving to the left, there is the computer tower, the 2-drawer file cabinet with the monitor on top, and

the wastebasket. (I needed somewhere to throw any trash when in the bedroom didn't I?)

There is one more set of objects in the bedroom that I have not mentioned. It was the rest of my outdoor plastic chairs. They were in two stacks on the front wall.



Next comes the living room. I guess I will work my way around the room here. This is the entrance door to my apartment. Most of the room is carpeted in a light beige, but there is a three by three area at the door that is tile. I suppose I was missing something there: I should have gotten a "welcome" mat to place in this area for when my shoes were wet when I came in. (Oh, well!)



Next was the keyboard that I had bought sometime after I had got out of the hospital with my stroke. I liked the idea of playing music on it, and I also thought that it would be helpful to keep my fingers nimble. (Unfortunately, I have not done this as much as I should have...) Underneath it of course is another wastebasket. (This was just a convenient place to put it.)

What was that black box next to the keyboard? It seems that I wanted to keep warm while I was sleeping. So I had bought an electric blanket. It certainly works better than the two heating pads that I also have!

Sometime while at Northshore Woods Drive, I had bought a floor lamp at Target. Why would I do this? I like to read, and most living rooms do not have any overhead lights. So, it was logical for me to place it next to my glider rocker and footstool. Then comes the coffee table with my MacBook that I had bought from Dee more than a year before. Also on it was my black laptop that I had bought back in 1998. Yes, I owned a second computer tower.

The computer monitor, tower, keyboard, and mouse in the bedroom was the one I had bought the previous fall that Dee promised to pay me for and did not. It had 640 GB hard drive, so this is the one I decided to use most of the time. The tower in the living room had a hard drive with only 30 GB.

Was that an other monitor in the corner under my walker? It might have been. At some point later I got rid of a couple of pieces of electronic gear including the laptop I had bought in 1998. It got to the place where the black plastic was breaking into pieces, so it had to go. What else went? Probably whatever is in that corner went as well. And the other obvious item on the floor was a container of burned CD's. Likely, this contains many of the CD's containing

sermons from Little Flock Church plus some CD's that come with some of the software I used on my computers and laptops.



Next comes the sliding glass door. (You can see it clearly in the previous photo.) Clearly, my apartment is not on ground level on the back side. Well is it on the front side though. I suppose this was somewhat of a help in the cooler to colder parts of the year. The ground was almost up to the level of the window in the dining room. Well, there was some seeping of coldness through the concrete blocks of that wall. But that was about 50 degrees. The outside temperature could be below 20. There is definitely a difference!

This door faced south which meant that the sun would shine through the sliding glass door. This of course could make the living area warmer, but the overhead from the back patio of the second floor apartment helped to alleviate this some. There was also a vertical blind that I could close and adjust to keep more of the heat out.



This leaves the wall between the living room and kitchen. The TV is sitting on top of something that I had bought to place my microwave oven on. Well, the latter fit quite well on the cabinet top above the automatic dishwasher. With its height, a TV worked quite well on it. And the space left along this wall was just right for my other bookcase.



This has to be the most sparse room in the apartment! Count them. One, the gray filing cabinet on wheels; two, the white plastic chair; three, the TV tray that I used as a table; and four, the kitchen wastebasket. And now you know basically what I had in the way of furniture as I began my life again. Living in a motel room for a while is not the most fun in the world, that is for sure. But now I was starting over.



On the right side is the cabinet where I kept any canned or packaged goods. (Tomato sauce or paste were the most common canned goods. I just do not like anything that contains elevated salt or sugar.) To the side of the cabinet was the stove and then came the kitchen cabinet along the back wall. There were also cabinets along the top of the walls on three sides. And a cabinet fit next to the refrigerator as well. It was on this one that I had put the convection oven that I had gotten from Big Lots.

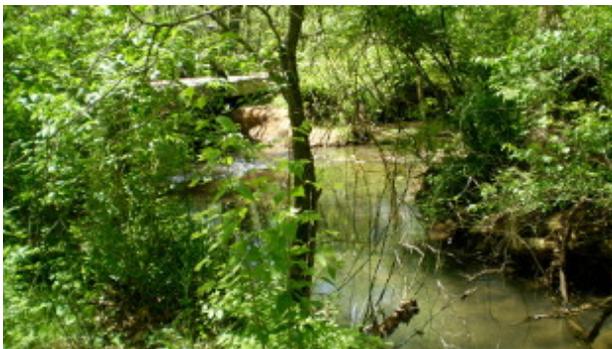
10 Mile Creak Greenway



There is the 10 Mile Creak Greenway with an entrance at the back of this complex. After a while, I found it. It is a walk/bicycle path covering a couple of miles. Part of this is along this creek. I have walked these paths many a time. I

also walked around the circumference of the apartment complex itself at times.

This gate leads to a valley through which the 10 Mile Creek flows. Well, it usually stays with its banks. But once in a while, we get several inches of rain. That is when it gets out of them. Obviously, that is a good time to walk around the apartment complex! When we had the snow shown below, it was safer to walk elsewhere as well. Well, I did not have a pair of boots to keep the snow out of my shoes!



This is a picture of the bridge that crosses the creek from upstream from it. The one below is taken from the bridge looking upstream. Notice the rock formation over which the water is flowing. It was really nice to hear the water flowing over them. It certainly was peaceful, that is for sure!

One day, I was walking near this area when I saw a man fishing in the creek. Now the creek is usually very clear, and the largest fish that I had seen in the creek was a minnow. So, I wondered why he would be fishing.



Well, he had done this before, and he had a picture of what he had caught on his cell phone. It was about 6" long! I know seeing is believing, but I still found it hard to believe what I saw.

From the bridge the path splits and goes in two directions. One ends at the corner of Bridgewater and Cross Park Dr. After crossing Bridgewater, the walkway/bike path continues west and south for some distance. The other path ends in the Walker Springs Park which is a recreational area including bathrooms (contained in this photo).





There are a variety of things that go on in this park. During the summer, a group of women bring their children out to play together. Once I came upon a wedding party fixing things up for the wedding.



The Greenway is a wooded area through which these paths wind. Nothing is done with the trees except when their limbs fall onto the one of the paths. (They are removed.) So I got to see nature as it is with little interference from man. There is a pair of large hawks (perhaps 18" tall and 4 foot plus wing spans) living in the northern part of the trees. I would have taken a picture of one of them, but I was talking on my cell phone then. I have also seen a few rabbits running around at times.



It can a beautiful sight in the winter as well when snow covers the area also. This was perhaps the heaviest snow

that I have seen for a while at seemingly 4" or more. It lasted Jan 10-15.

By this time, I had everything out of storage except for my washer and dryer, and I did not have a place for them. So, I decided that I would have to sell them. The only suggestion I got in doing this was to list them on Craig's List on the internet. I did, but I really wanted more for them than what anyone was willing to pay for them. But if I did not sell them, I would have to continue paying about \$90 a month for storage. So, I agreed to sell them for \$400 for both of them. This was a little less than 50% of what I had paid for them. At least I could stop paying storage!

When I had moved out of Northshore Woods Apartments and into the motel room, I got a post office box so that I could get mail (quarterly). After I moved into Woodlands West, I closed it near the end of that quarter since I had a mailing address again.

OK, my address had been changed, so I needed to update that information on my driver's license. They insisted that I get one with a new photo, so there went \$12. The same thing was true when I moved from my one bedroom apartment into Rachel's two bedroom apartment. So this was the third driver's license I had gotten in about 15 months. (The state of Tennessee loves to get my money for this.)

Summer time

During early summer, Stephanie's family would visit her husband's family in Germany. Actually, this year they left in the latter part of May. (Well, this is almost summer.) While they were away, I provided transportation for Sherri. (She

was about 2 miles from me, so that was not much of a problem.

I wanted to make sure that she had a way to church, so May 24th, I drove her to the Methodist Church in the downtown area. My impression was that what I saw was a play. I did not really get much out of it at all. But that was me. It was not what I had been used to hearing nor seeing.

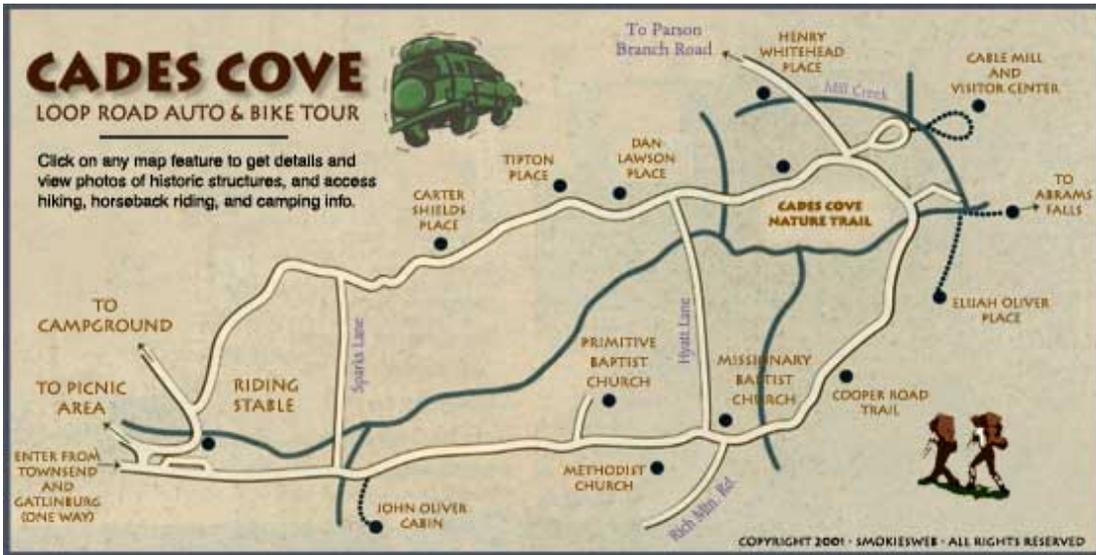
The next day was rather nice even if it was rather cloudy on the trip down to Cade's Cove. (This is located in the western part of the Smoky Mountain National Park.) It cleared up later only to rain after that.



Cade's Cove is actually a valley within the Smokies. Within it is a paved road that skirts around the edges of the valley. Within all of this are various buildings that have been there seemingly from the very beginning. Some were houses, barns, churches and three information centers.

This national park is the most visited one in the nation. People come from the time that the weather first permits it to open until after October. Even so, on the warmer days, there are many things to see during the winter. On cooler days, it pays to pay close attention to the weather forecasts and snow can close some of the roads fairly quickly.

Entrance to the park is free, and many of the people volunteer to staff many of the personnel positions. To pay for some of the services these volunteers sell pamphlets with information about various parts of the park.



The white lines are the paved roads, and I think the blue lines are nature trails. And there are also horseback riding available as well. (FYI: The flow of traffic is counter clockwise beginning and ending at the bottom left).

We stopped at the entrance to the cove and listened to what the volunteers had to say about the cove. From here I looked to the opposite side of the cove, and this is what I saw. It was definitely breath taking with the mountains rising so tall in the background.



Out in the middle of this field was a flock of wild turkeys, but they were too far away to be able to get a good picture of it. After I took a series of pictures as a panorama of the southern edge of the cove. I also got somewhat of a panorama of the northern edge behind us while I was at it.

I wrote what day we did this, but I forgot to write the name of that day: Memorial Day, a federal holiday. Well, we were not the only ones who decided this was a good day to make this trip. Grid lock all around the circle! No one was really in a hurry at all, so we crepted all of the way.

The only building on the north side was a cabin some distance off the road. To visit it, we would have had to walk through tall grass. With Sherri's disability, we decided to skip that.



The next building was the Primitive Baptist Church on the left. Of course, this is what I wanted to see, so I drove to it. Given the bibles, hymnals, and other books on the benches, it looked like it had been used recently. I also understand that they had an annual meeting once a year, but I do not know when that might be.

This building reminded me of several of our churches that I have visited over the years. The building reminds me of the size of many of them as well. But I did notice that special

feelings that I had while I was inside the building which was very comforting.



One of the recent residents mentioned that she had attended a wedding in this church which surprised me. Why here? Not far from here is the Methodist church that also used to serve the people in this area. Why not there? Maybe there is truly something special about this building and where it is located...

After going through the cemetery, I drove us on. But I had not gotten quite to the main road around the cove, when Sherri demanded my attention. She was pointing out the window toward the woods to our right. No wonder she was excited: that was not exactly a small deer. It looks like this one had antlers, but I would think that late May would be a little early to be growing them.



I took more pictures, but there was not much in the way of things of interest the rest of the tour. Then we headed out of the cove and then out of the park. Then I tried to find a restaurant where I had eaten before, but nothing looked quite right. OK, so I blew it and wound up at a different one. And to make matters worse, it began to rain as we approached it. Anyway, we got inside without getting *too* wet. After eating, we headed back to Knoxville. So much for this outing. Well, at least we got to see a live deer!

During the next couple of weeks, I checked in with Sherri if there was something that she needed: getting groceries, doctor's appointments, blood tests, x-rays, etc. If she needed to go anywhere, I was the one who took her.

One afternoon after one of Sherrie's medical appointments, she decided that she was going to fix supper for me at her daughter's home. Well, we had to get her home first. The appointment was mid afternoon, and it was cloudy outside. Then the clouds got darker and darker... By the time we left the doctor's office, it was definitely threatening a storm. We were almost to her house when the bottom dropped out. So, we were both rather wet before we got inside.

Then came the lightning and of course the thunder accompanied it. Then the lights went out: no electricity! OK, this happens in the summer all of the time. So, we waited, and waited... Still no lights. Well, how can you cook a meal on an electric stove? Right!

When it did not come back on for a while, I decided to call my apartment complex office to see if I had power. I did. So, we packed up the food and headed to my apartment. There we fixed spaghetti her way. With her disability, she told me what to do, and I did almost all of it. It was my apartment and cookware after all. (It was the first time someone had been in my apartment for any length of time. Marianne's family was only the second.)

In late May, Stephanie had learned about Tai Chi and its importance to elderly people. So she took Sherri for the first meeting. It helps with maintaining balance. The hope was that such would be the case with Sherri. But, it was too much for she because she had very poor balance in the first place. The muscles on her right side had been badly affected from two strokes. As a results she could not have enough balance to do anything enough to even begin doing any of the movements without losing her balance. This was even true when she was using a chair to help her. So, she stopped attending.

Anyway, after Sherri's first Tai Chi class, she recommended that I consider joining the Tai Chi class. After my having a stroke, she thought that it might be a help to me. So, I used the GPS that I had in the Windstar and went.

I knew I already had good balance, but I did not really realize just how much. Actually, it seemed that my balance was best when I was in motion. What about when I am standing in one position? More importantly, what about me being in one

position while balanced on one foot, especially my left leg? Now, that is the question!

It was something I would find out fairly quickly. Two of the early moves required me to balance my body over a single leg and foot. The first one put me over my right foot, and the second one put me over my left foot. Somehow I managed to remain upright. Well, the entire movement placed different body parts in such a way that my center of gravity was at first my right hip and then my left hip. Then it was a matter of keeping it there.

After doing this over and over again, I became more comfortable in each of these two positions. Me being curious, I tried something different during a break. I would assume the position for the first move. I would slowly put my body in the position required. With this, I was leaning forward with my arms held out in front of me. My left leg was held above the floor and extended straight behind me. I could hold this position for several second. OK, I can do this without any problem. Then I wondered what would happen if I moved my left leg from side to side. Would this cause me to lose my balance. (I need to mention that I did this very slowly and moved it perhaps a couple of inches.) I could do it without falling! I kept my balance.

So, I continued to attend the sessions until the the classes ended. By this time I supposedly had learned 108 moves. (I had worked on the moves taught each week, but my memory of what had been done the previous weeks was not that good.

After a week or two later Tai Chi part 2 began. Much of this time was on Tai Chi exercises which involve similar movements as the 108 moves of Tai Chi. Since there are only 6 of them, I have remembered most if not all of them and

performed them from time to time. (I continued with part 2 until the middle of December, 2009.)

Rest of the year

By the end of the summer, an apartment was found for Sherrie, and she moved into it. She was about seven miles from me and 9-10 miles from her daughter's. Since Stephen is a math professor at the University of Tennessee, he sometimes comes by to do some things. Otherwise Stephanie drives over.

Since I am the closest person who plays bridge, I volunteered to take her to bridge each week. I get mileage for doing so, but I do not make it very much for her. Besides I deduct the distance I would drive to and from my apartment from the total distance. I also charge for taking her to doctor appointments (the full distance).

My cousin, Fred Lewis, was helping various Lutheran Churches with their building projects. He had a Winnebago that he and his wife, Carolyn, used as their home on wheels as he traveled over some parts of the country.

Their next project was in the Washington, DC, area although not actual in the city at all. Their last one was somewhere in the western part of the US. So, on their way, they decided to go by my two brother's city for a visit. From there, he would come by mine before heading northeast to their project.

(While they were there during the winter of 2009-2010, they had a big snow storm go through the area as in over a foot of snow. It must have been quite an experience.)

When they arrived, I was teaching computers to seniors at the Halls Senior Center. So, I took a cold lunch and ate it

after class. Then using my GPS once again, I located the trailer park where they would stay the night. I almost got lost, but a circle around that park one more time did the trick.

Then I went inside for a visit. It certainly had been a long time. How long? It was probably April, 1956, our grandparent's 50th wedding anniversary. That is certainly a long time to catch up on!

Well, they are use to having a snack during the afternoon, and they did this day as well. Now, I watch my diet rather carefully, so I refused politely. But this did me no good. As soon as I mentioned a possible problem with carbs, I only gave him a opening in a way that I did not expect!

It turns out that both of them were diabetic. So, they have to be careful with their diet as well. Then he gave me some good advice: "never eat carbs naked. Yes, I was wondering what being diabetic had to do with not wearing any clothes when eating. It sure was confusing!

Then he explained himself. He was talking about the carbs being naked, not me. When eating carbs as a snack, a person should also eat something containing both some protein and fats. These two cause the body to take longer to digest the carbs. Of course it goes without saying that the carbs should have a minimum of sugars and a maximum of starches. This increases the digesting time even further.

After several hours of talking, we decided to go to Shoney's for supper and talk some more. (Since Dee and I were on good terms again, I wanted her to meet my relatives that were in town. So, by phone I invited her to join us.

She was working a longer shift which ended about the same time we were scheduled to arrive at the restaurant. So, she

was a little late. Besides the evening commute in Knoxville can be quite busy! Then introductions and conversations began again. She really impressed them.

Among the various topics of conversation, my recent stroke and recovery was discussed for a while. It was then that something Dee had said disturbed me. What she said about my outpatient therapy and how I was able to get to the hospital and back did not match what she had said at the time. So, which story was the correct one? Did she really know? Had she just said what sounded good? (It certainly sounded plausible to me.)

Database for Tuesday Bridge Info

Someone had made a email address list for the people who play bridge on Tuesday. There were some new people that had come in but were not on the list. Besides very few had this list. So, I volunteered to create a database for this list. With time I was able to get everyone's address along with phone numbers for those who wanted others to have theirs. Then I sent everyone a copy of the list in table format. Since that time, I have been asked to send out an email to everyone about something which I was able to do easily.

Then as time went on, I kept updating the list when someone new began to come regularly. Then I heard an offhand remark that set me to thinking. He wondered if it would be possible to include the person's picture with their personal information. Well, this was definitely a challenge that I just could not resist accepting. With some work, I got it done. First, I needed to take pictures of the people. Then I was able to put it all together. When I emailed this out, it surprised quite a few people.

Tai Chi was also being taught at the Strang Center on Tuesday mornings. As a result, I would meet the first instructor I had for this every once in a while. While he had said that the particular style that he taught did not produce any DVD's, I still wanted to get one from someone. I did get one from someone teaching a different style. There are some difference between the styles, so I bought a DVD the middle of November. For what ever reason, I have not really used it as much as I should have.

Budget

Even with rent being at \$420 a month, I had to control my expenses very carefully since rent was more than 50% of my income. Food stamps helped some, but not very much. With my learning more about Base, I was able to use my financial database better. I even found a way to have an accurate running totals of each of my financial accounts (bank accounts, cash, etc.) at any given day. By learning to enter anticipated expenses in the database, I also gained a good idea of how much money I would have left over at the end of the month. This told me whether I could afford a given item or not before buying it. This can backfire as I learned about five years later...

TN Aquarium (July)

This was the second time that all of us had been in Chattanooga to see this (TN Aquarium). The previous time was last August.



It is rather difficult to see any butterflies in this photo, but there were thousands of them in that room. To keep them there, the entrance and exit was designed specially. As we walked through the entrance way, air was blowing in to send any near butterflies back into the room. On the way out, air was blowing into our faces for the same reason.



These two pictures are a sting rays in a pool that we came to as we left the butterfly room. They are fairly tame, and we could reach into the water and pet them gently. This is what Sam was doing the next picture.



This was on the third floor with a ramp that wrapped around the inside of the building down to the first floor. There were many exhibits in that rather long ramp. At the bottom was a gigantic sized pool with a large variety of fish including rather large sharks. It was really something! (I did not take a picture of it though. My bad.)

While waiting for the building to open, we (Dee, Rachel, Gwen, Sam, and I spent some time in a playground area a block or so away. This was for climbing, and all of us took our turns doing this. The two children did it much more than we adults.



Then they decided to "go over the top." With some good humoring, all three adults did as well. (I have but won't show that happening!)



It was the day before when I had seen Dr. Louis Smith my personal care physician. So, this meant there was blood to be drawn and tested. As a result, my cell phone rang. It was his nurse, April, calling me with the results; they were all good. So I shared this with everyone.

My Apartment

April was rather cool, and my first electrical bill was more than I had expected. After all, I had used a little over 408 KWH in a little over two weeks. This did not really set with me very well. How am I going to get that lower especially with summer right around the corner?

Well, I got my answer one day as I was walking to where I got my mail. Another tenant volunteered how without me asking. Possibly she told this to any new tenants that she saw. Anyway, she said that she flipped the circuit breakers

off to the hot water heater except when hot water was needed. It was a trick she had learned while living in Japan with her husband. (He was in service then.) So I began doing this. I guessing that I saved about \$10 a month doing this.

During the summer, I tried another trick. I was on the ground floor which meant that the floor was always cooler than the air. This also meant that I could use the ceiling fan to move the cool air near the floor through the living area. This was sufficient to keep the temperature below 80 degrees. I can handle that, so I seldom ran the AC during the summer. Well, when the temperatures were in the upper 90's or so, I would run the AC very sparingly with little discomfort. Catching! Nice!

But come the beginning of October, the air temperatures were dropping. More heat was needed. Then there was the sliding glass door. A lot of cold air can migrate through it. Then there was the kitchen and bedroom windows. They did not close all that tightly either. What do I do now? I do what Dad use to do.

Every fall, he would put the storm windows over the windows. I know he did this on the first floor. What about the second floor? Somehow I don't remember about them being there. But I do remember one thing. One winter I was in a room on that floor and looked into what had been my bedroom. There was plastic taped over the window with a little hole in it somewhere. And through that hole, I saw a little bit of fine snow blowing into the room.

So there was my answer. I get enough plastic to cover the windows and sliding glass door. This should help with the heat, or so I thought. So, on Susan's birthday (10/19/2009) I went to Lowe's to get what they had. It took a few days for it to get cool enough that I decided it needed to be done right away.

It took a while to get everything like I wanted it, but there were no drafts around any of the plastic. My cocoon was intact. It did mean that I could only go in and out of my front door. But in the case of an emergency, I could tear the plastic off of the sliding glass door and escape that way.

As the weather began to warm somewhat during the next spring, some of the tape used to fasten the plastic over the windows would begin to come loose. No big problem: I just used some masking tape to tape it back on. Then before May came, I took all of the plastic off.

I did this every fall and spring until 2014 when I finally moved out. How much of a difference did this make in electrical costs? Well, between the things I mentioned I did during this time, my one bedroom apartment cost me an average of about \$45 a month for electricity. I think I managed to save quite a lot thank you.

My vehicle

The check engine light began to light up each time I started the car but would never go off. So finally, I decided to do something about it. I went to a auto supply store and had them read what the problem was from a computer output. It was two oxygen sensors attached to the motor. (There may be other ones; I don't know.)

So, I first bought two of them. After crawling under the car a few times I finally was able to replace one of them by myself. But I could not get enough leverage to loosen the second one. It looks like I did not get the second one changed until March 2012. I certainly waited a long time to do this!

Meanwhile, in December 2009, I went to a local Ford Dealership across the Interstate from where I lived. (I had gotten a recall notice in the mail.) Of course the person who

I spoke to wanted to know why I was not getting all of my maintenance done there. I really did not have a reason, but his actions during another recall for my Windstar clearly pointed out to me why I should not every use that dealership.

My Writings

What else was I doing? Well, I had written *Getting Started with Base* and updated it perhaps once already by the latter part of 2009. I had also completed chapter one of the Base Guide. So, I began writing chapter two.

The first two chapters included a large number of illustrations. These were screen shots of an actual database and instructions on how to use them. Such was not the case with the latest chapter. Its title should say why: *Planning/Designing your Database*.

To create a database, a person must first know what he wants, the goals he wants to accomplish when using it. A database stores data, so what data will this database store? What are the characteristics of each thing in the data? What type of information is wanted from these things? How can this information be gotten from the data? Many times the answers to the last question require several steps.

The design section depends upon the plan section. In fact, the design is a statement of what is done in Base to accomplish what the plan calls for. For example, the plan calls for the data to be divided into specific tables. The design states how to do this using a particular part of Base. So, yes, there is a large amount of writing needed. (It also took me quite some time to write down how to both plan and design a database. I spend long hours in front of a computer keyboard.)

2010

It was time for the census to be taken one again. So I decided to get involve once again as I had twenty years before. When the call went out for people to apply to become census takers, I went to one of the meetings in April. There I filled out the necessary paperwork and produced two forms of identification. A background investigation was run, and I was selected. That was when I received a phone call confirming this.

Then I received another call which I was not expecting. Given my background and education, someone thought that I would make a good manager. I would be assigned a preset number of census takers which I would teach and supervise. Of course, this sounded like a good idea considering the difference in pay. Well, \$12+ per hour is nice, but \$14+ an hour was even more.

Then came the schooling: there is always schooling with government work like this... My supervisor had recently gotten his schooling, and then it was his time to give his managers their training. As required, he spent almost all of his time reading the information out of pamphlets, *just as he had been instructed to do*. This included the part that we managers were to read the instructions for our census takers from the pamphlets provided. (He did make some off the cuff statements though.)

Then it became my turn. Well, I had been a teacher, so I thought I knew a little bit about teaching. (I had not really been very good doing this.) So I read some and explained some. As a result, it took me much too long to get through the material. This was not a very good start... But, I managed to get the training done (over budget and time).

Then we began working out in the field on OJT (on the job training). I broke the census workers into groups. Then I worked with one group at a time. The rest of them started working individually of their assigned areas. As soon as I was sure a group could work on their own, I began checking on another group. And so, I got everyone up to speed (so far, so good).

Each morning, I held a meeting with everyone to go over any problems they had and to tell them anything that I had gotten from my supervisor for them. That is when I collected what they had accomplished the previous day and their time sheets which also included their mileage. Then they went to work, and I had to go over everything they had done to make sure they had done it correctly. When satisfied with this, I drove to my supervisor's home and left all of this information with him.

It was not all that long before there was more things to do than the hours to do them in. Despondency set in, and it got worse as time went on. So, I finally quit. Total time working for the U. S. Census Bureau: about one month. (Would I do it again in 2020? Only if I happen to forget what I went through the last time!)

When I had signed the lease in April 2009, it ended May 31 of 2010. So, come May, it was time to renew the lease. Housing prices were not very good so, the rent remained the same. But there was also a bonus I would get depending upon how long of a lease I chose. (The length ranged from six to thirteen months with the bonus increasing as the length did.) So of course, I chose 13 months. I would do this for the next couple of years.

However, each year after that, it began going up. As the economy improved the rate of increase increased. By the summer of 2013 the rent had increased to \$490 a month,

and in April, 2014, they wanted \$515. By this time, it was getting more than I could afford. I had to do something.

But lets center our attention to August, 2010. Sherri had been an English teacher, and she had directed some plays for her high school. So, this was an area of interest to say the least.

Since her son-in-law was a professor at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, she knew about the plays put on at the university each year. She mentioned the plays that would be presented for the following school year. She really wanted to attend all of them this time; it would be nice if I could provide the transportation to where they were presented. Well, it sounded like a good idea, and both of us bought a season ticket.

The first play was *Amadeus* which is the first name of the famous music composer who lived during the same time as Beethoven. He was definitely a child protege who produced a huge amount of music beginning quite early in life. In fact, he preformed his musical abilities in the front of many of the nobility throughout Europe as a child.

At the age of 16 his father took him to a musical event at the Vatican in Rome. After he got home, he wrote the entire musical score for it from memory! He insisted that he attend another session of it to make sure his had not made a mistake. He had not. His was the only score of it outside of the Vatican at the time.

A day or so before the play began, Sherri had me drive her to the theatre so she could fulfill her curiosity. (At least I got to find out how to get there beforehand. Considering where we had to park, she would be in a wheelchair. So, I wheeled her this time to where we would be sitting when we saw the play.

While there, one of the people putting on the play was in the playhouse. Sherri use to be an English teacher and had produced plays every school year. So, she had several questions that she asked this gentleman. Being satisfied, I got her back to her apartment.

The only plays I had ever seen were a few during high school. Well, I had been a part of a couple plays myself during that period of time as well. But none of these compared with this play! (I probably could have seen a few while I was in college in Illinois. While money would have been a problem for me then, I don't remember ever seeing when or where any plays were produced while I was there.)

What made this play different. To begin with the characters were more professional, more mature. The university choir had several singing parts as was the case for the orchestra. Together, they were fantastic.

Yet, thanks to Sherri, I found out that it was not perfect in spite of what I just wrote. Mozart was playing a piano for someone in his home reading the sheet music as he went. The goof was when he turned a page of that music a little too quickly. It fell down, and it did this more than once as he tried to set the sheet up. She confirmed that this was likely not according to the script in the play for this. OK, but it was still much more than I had expected.

There were a few scenes which I would rate as **R**. As people would say to day, what I saw was TMI (too much information.) According to Sherri, Mozart had been a womanizer which explains the background for these scenes. Even so, what I saw was not necessary to point this out. Another scene involved his wife and a nobleman. Let me say that she did not act like a lady in it.

There were four more plays during that school year with *The Music Man* being the last one. In this one, the female school librarian falls in love with a traveling salesman who is selling musical instruments without providing any musical instructions. I have never seen someone in a play act the part as well as she did. Her face was radiant, her speech dropped with the feelings of love.

Then came the first of December. This evening Sherri and I were going to attend the play, *A Christmas Carol*. It was rather cold that night: I was wearing gloves and ear muffs! Everything was going well until I started back home...

I was driving back to Sherri's when I heard a short sound of a siren. Oh yes, blue lights suddenly appeared. I thought that I was in the way of the police, so I turned onto a side street to get out of his way. Well, he followed me. Hum, I think he wants me to stop.

For some reason, I had forgot to get a new tag for my car the previous spring. He asked me for my registration. I had one for earlier years but not for 2010. Then he asked me for my insurance card. At least I had this, and it was up to date. At least he was nice because he suggested that I get a new tag fairly soon. I promised to do so the following day. (I did.) Embarrassed? I definitely was, and this feeling continued until the next morning when I bought the new car tag. (I have not made that mistake again since then!)



This was not exactly a warm evening when this was taken either. (March 3, 2011) But at least I was dressed up. Women definitely had an influence in what I wore this time. Dee and her daughter picked out this suit back in April, 2008. I took Sherri shopping one day, and I saw this hat. I then asked if she liked it. (She did.) This was taken in the Clarence Brown Theatre where we watched all of these plays.

2011

January was cold and snowy. Well the 5th was cold with only a little bit of snow. This was taken after I went to the Ten Creek Greenway with my camera. (Someone had asked me to take some pictures of the snow, so I did.) When I was almost back to my apartment, I saw and asked my next door neighbor to take a picture of me.

Why would I do this? Someone had given this to me back in December, perhaps close to my birthday. (I'm not sure exactly when.) Besides the temperature at the time was very

close to 20°F if not below that. So, it felt nice and warm despite the temperature.



Within a few days, this snow had melted as the temperature had risen somewhat. But another snow came five days after this one. It was much deeper, and it remained on the ground for several days. The banister looks like it has about 3 inches of the white stuff.



Well, you know the saying about the postman. Well, this is a good example of this. The picture was taken about 11 AM on Jan 10. The picture above it was taken about 3 hours earlier. Obviously, several people living in the apartment complex decided that they could drive on this stuff. But I have an idea that where there are tire tracks there was ice that someone could slide around on as well.

Five months later, at the end of June we had a storm that did some damage in our complex. Several of the trees lost limbs. Some of the trees were actually pulled up by the roots! Now that I think about it, it probably was a micro burst that did all of this damage.



The post office boxes where we got our mail was one of the things that was damaged. (I think this picture describes the damage the best. For whatever reason, the debris was removed, but I don't remember another structure was built to replace the damaged roof during the following three years.



Two of the fallen trees were near to were my apartment was. My next door neighbor's apartment is the the bottom apartment in this picture. His glass was not broken when the tree fell against the building. Such was not the case on the second floor. The right half of the window was shattered upon impact. There was considerable damage where you see the tree limbs leaning up against the building. Below it is a picture of the rest of the tree. All of this happened early June 22. (This was enough excitement in and of itself, that is for sure.)



Finally, a picture of the other fallen tree on my block.



During the late spring, Sherri was having problems with high Calcium in her blood. Cause: a couple of parathyroid glands needed to be removed. Problem: she takes a blood thinner because of an irregular heart beat. With the earlier method of surgically removing them, this could have been a problem. But with a fairly recent improvement in the technique for this, blood loss is limited to extremely small amounts. But the very idea of any bleeding can be very traumatic for such people, especially Sherri.

Well, one of the men playing bridge regularly is a retired orthopedic surgeon. He gave her some advice about the situation: even with her taking a blood thinner, problems during this surgery are very, very rare. So, you might say that she got a second opinion for free.

It did take some consultation between her personal care physician and the surgeon, she was given instructions as to when she would be reducing the amount of blood thinner and how much. Surgery was scheduled for the first of June.

When this came, I went to the hospital for the surgery and to give some moral support for her daughter. It was the usual wait around for longer than it seemed it should have taken. But that is how we seem to think about things like this.

Everything went well, and her Calcium level dropped back to normal within 30 minutes after the removal of these glands. Within a hour of this, she was back in her room, awake, and talking. Her pastor also stopped by for a short visit.

It was during his visit, that Sherri confided how frighten she had been. Her comment to him was, "I thought I was going to die!" Obviously, she did not.

Association at Oklahoma City, OK

It was time for me to return to this church meeting. Of course, while in that area I was going to spend some time with Paul, Marianne, and family during the first several days in July. So, I did my usual planning making a list of the things I needed to take. I also got a haircut so that I would look good.

I had other preparations to do as well. I filled the Windstar up with fuel on Tuesday and washed it in a car wash. I also bought a box of table salt. Why did I get this? I wanted to make sure that the things I kept in the ice chest would remain cold. There was one small problem with this though: every time I got something out of it, my hand ached from the cold! And yes there was still a large amount of ice still left floating on the very cold water.

This was a lesson I learned in Chemistry class in high school. When a fairly large amount of salt is added to ice, relative

low temperature can be reached. How low? Well, it is possible to obtain temperatures as low as 4°F! I would say that the salt/ice mixture I used had a temperature less than 20°F. As a result, the ice only partially melted over a two day period.

Come Wednesday (June 29), I washed my clothes. Well, things needed to be ironed as well. Then I began packing all of the clean clothes. Then believe it or not, there was some cooking to be done. I already knew what I wanted to have for breakfast and lunch. So, I spend some time fixing these things putting them into the refrigerator.

And then there was a financial item to take care of. Rent was due. But my Social Security would not hit the bank until July 1st. However, the office would not hold the check until then. So, I wrote the check and mailed it the next day out of town. Another problem solved.

On Thursday, I got up at 5 AM. I ate the breakfast that I had fixed. Then I put what I had prepared for lunch into the ice chest and topped it with the ice/salt mixture. Then came the final packing and then leaving.

I spent the night in Conway, AR, as I had before. On Friday, I headed west and north to Springdale. Along the way, I got a cell phone call from Marianne. Caleb had a medical problem, and she was at the hospital with him. She had another lady watching the rest of her children. She remained until I got there, and then she left. Here I was all alone with children I had not been with for at least a couple of years. It turned out that it was not as bad as they had thought it could be. So, all was well by that evening.

Then Saturday, we had a get together with Sonny and Jennifer. Well, Tom and Elaine were also there and would remain until the following Thursday. What was the occasion?

Jennifer had a birthday on this day (July 2), and Sonny had officially retired as a A/C maintenance man from a local school. (This was the first day of the fiscal year.) Besides, Elaine would also have a birthday in 12 days. I know that Elder Carl Staten was there as well, but I do not remember who else was there.

You know, sometimes memories pop up at unexpected times. In this case it concerns the salad that Sonny brought for this event. He was talking to someone about it when I heard him say, "The more colors in a salad, the better it is for you." He had a wide variety of colors in his that is for sure. It is something that I started putting into practice ever since then. (Mine have a minimum of six different vegetables, all of a different color.)

Then on Sunday, I went to church with the Lindsey's. After lunch at church, I returned to their home to rest up from the activities. After that, I don't remember how much time I spent visiting with my brother and wife and the Lindsey's. But I do remember washing my clothes on Wednesday morning. The rest of that day, I began packing for the trip to Oklahoma City.

Meanwhile back in my apartment, things were not going very well at all. Perhaps shortly after I left, my refrigerator died. Besides I had turned off the A/C. (The floor was cool enough even during the summer that the temperature in the apartment seldom exceeded 80°F except for very hot weather.) And then there is the freezer content: among other things there was a chicken and fish fillets.

As the days passed, the contents first thawed and then began to rot. The smell got worse and worse. It did not take very long after that for my neighbors to complain about the smell. Since the office did not take this serious for a couple

of days, the smell only got worse. Finally they sent a maintenance man to investigate it.

He told me later that given the stench that he had expected my dead body to be the cause of it. I suppose he might have been a little relieved to discover it was only rotten chicken and fish.

Needless to say, the refrigerator was removed as soon as possible. The windows were opened in the bedroom and dining area. Likely the sliding glass door was also for as long as he had to be in the apartment. The fan for the A/C heating unit was turned on as well. It was still running when I got back home the following Monday afternoon.

I was at the church when my cell phone rang. The office informed me that there had been a problem in my apartment and they had had to enter it. Then she mentioned the problem with the refrigerator. I appreciated that something had been done. (I would also learn from some of my neighbors some of their experiences until the problem was solved.)

Dee and I

It was during this time that Dee and I seemed to be getting along again. Well, she and her family was going to Dollywood and invited me to come. (I did have an annual pass.) Perhaps somewhat insisted on it as well. This was the last day of September.

So off we went in the morning spending part of the day there. Then it was back to the Apple Barn for lunch. Now this has always been a very good place to eat. Besides there were a large number of shops there as well. All of them were selling apple products. I really do not go in for these things,

but the walk around all of the shops and the aroma of the apple products was wonderful.

It was late in the afternoon by the time we got back into town, but we did not go home just yet. Instead we spent some time in downtown Knoxville for a while. Then there was a movie that Dee wanted her family to see, and me also, *Courage*.

It had a religious message in it that I really liked. It had people having the courage to do what is right. (These were the good guys.) And it had one person choosing not to do it (the bad guy). It does make sense to do what should be done whether anyone is looking or not.

Meanwhile, the temperatures were beginning to cool down a little bit. So ten days later, I was again buying plastic sheets to put over the two windows and sliding glass door. (Time to live in a cocoon again. I'm a butterfly??? Oh well, I will emerge sometime in April.) I certainly did not complain about my power bill as much as others who do not do this.

Workout Anytime (Dec)

Stephanie wanted her mother, Sherri, to continue to exercise as this was important since she had a stroke three years before. There were times when she took her to *Workout Anytime* where they had all kinds of exercise equipment.

Well if she need the exercise, then I did too. (This seems to be her thinking at the time. It had been when learning how to do Tai Chi earlier as well.)

So, she talked me into becoming a member. This way she would have a ride there a couple of times a week. The cost of membership was placed on my debit card, and she repaid me soon afterward. For a while, we would go right after

Bridge on Tuesday and then again on Friday. The latter would require a trip that involved only this. (I got paid mileage for this, so it was no big deal.)

I did this for several months before I stopped for some reason. I have to admit that I did build up some upper body strength for a while. And yes, I have to admit that it was good for me. I was still walking twice daily anyway.

2012

I started this year off with a bang! On the third, I picked up Sherri for bridge as usual and returned her home again after we did our exercising. Then I went shopping for groceries. After that I needed to go to the Radio Shack (in the same shopping center). It was when I came back out that I had a problem. I was walking rather fast if not trotting back to my car when I did not pick up my foot enough to get over the curb. That is when I started to fall forward, and I could not get my balance. Fortunately, I landed on a grassy area, so there was not really no damage to me. Problem: I had placed my cell phone in my jacket (the blue one in the snow pictures last fall). Well, the cell phone fell out, and I did not notice it.

I sort of dusted myself off and drove home. There I put the groceries away. It was only after that when I noticed it was missing. I drove around some trying to find it without any luck. What do I do?

Meanwhile, Dee had gotten a couple of calls from someone she did not know. It came from my phone, but it was not me that called. So, she began to worry about me. Was I alright? At least he told her that he had found my phone. But still, how was she going to get a hold of me?

Fortunately, perhaps an hour later I called her from a land line (non cell phone). This relieved her, and she told me that someone had found my phone. Good, I thought. At this point, I called my cell phone and talked with the gentleman who had found the phone. He told me how he had found it. Now how am I going to get my phone back? He was doing carpenter work in the southwest part of greater Knoxville, and he gave me the address where he worked.

So I got in my car, turned on my GPS system, and headed his way. Well, as usual, its directions could have been a little bit better. So it took a little longer than it should have. As a thank you gift, I bought him a pack of cigarettes. It seemed worth it. After I got home, I checked my mileage for this day: about 65 miles. This was definitely enough excitement for me for a while!

Gayle, a lady who has played bridge for sometime, lost her husband the last of February. He had been diagnosed with cancer the previous summer. At that time, he was stage 3 or 4? I'm not sure. But for a while, it was brought under control. It did come back though.

As a result, she had not been able to play bridge for the most part over the fall and winter. We all missed her, and we talked about it from time to time. Then I decided to do something for her: I sent her an email letting her know that I was thinking of her.

At the funeral, I got a surprise. She thanked me profusely for sending it to me. What really impressed me was the emotions I heard in her voice. In the mists of her grief, she was upbeat about how the email had affected her at the time. I knew then that she was going to get through this loss. (Actually, I was a little embarrassed. I had taken Sherri to the funeral with me.)

This brings us into March in which my car decided to act up on me which included some very expensive repair work...

It began about mid month when I took June to her daughter's home. The transmission was acting up. But I did not really pay that much attention to it. It began to get a little worse. Then in the latter part of the month, I got a recall notice for the car. So, I took it to the Ford dealership which was right across I-40. I barely managed to get it over there, and I walked back to the apartment. I also asked them to check out the motor mounts at the same time. I even had pictures of the damage under the hood. The service representative was very surprised and said so.

It was Thursday before the recall was completed, and so I went over the check on the thing I had asked about earlier. Well, there was a rather big problem. Because of the motor mount problem, the right trans axle (front wheel drive) had pulled out of the transmission. In addition, there was no way to fix the motor mount.

So, come Friday morning, I walked back to the dealership and told a salesman that I needed him: I needed a car and I knew just how much I could afford. I know I should not have told him this because he just happened to have a car that fit that description. It was not in much better shape than my present car.

Of course, the maintenance department wanted money for discovering the problem. It was far more than what it should cost for taking the right tire off the car while it was on the lift. Anyway, I drove off in a 1998 Pontiac Bonneville. What I did was nearly max out my VISA card. I still managed to pay all of this off in a couple of years.

Actually, I got another VISA credit card from ORNL Federal Credit Union where I had a savings account. Then when the

first card's balance got down to the level of my second card's credit limit, I transferred the balance and closed the first credit card.

Now I had already charged items using the Wells Fargo VISA card and paid them off fairly rapidly. (At first, I had a \$2,500 credit limit.) So, in the bad days of the great recession, Wells Fargo had raised that limit to \$4,000. It was this that enabled me to get the Bonneville. (Now, I would not recommend doing this at all! The amount of interest I paid was more than it should have been for a car loan.)

Somehow I thought that I could possibly work some. (It would be nice to have more money coming in.) So, among other places, I applied at Walmart. They did a background check and a drug screen. I passed these. Then I was to appear for orientation which I also did. The only problem was that I did not like the attitude of one of the supervisors. They wanted someone who could work outside in the hot summer sun while on a 40 hour week. There is no way that I could do that. So much for thinking that I could earn some extra money...

Easter was early in April, and Stephanie invited me to an Easter dinner. (There were other guests as well.) I thought this was very sweet, and I thoroughly enjoyed my time there that day. Stephanie and her family have been very nice to me from time to time.

2013

Building up my knowledge of Base

During this year, I wrote or rewrote several chapters for the Base Guide. Some of these were not completed because of

my attitude. I would write a chapter and then submit for review, but no one volunteered to review my work to see how accurate it was. So, I gradually lost interest in the project. Oh, I did begin the fourth chapter, but that was as far as I got.

There had been some discussion about the Base Outline. This document as it states contained the outline for the Base Guide. Was this the right approach? How could it be improved. In fact some suggestions were made along this line. So, I decided to look into this. By November, I had submitted a new outline. This was approved, and I began reworking the first several chapters. There was many a day when I spent several hours sitting in front of my computer thinking very hard about this topic. This was because I was dividing the outline into more chapters. Some of the topics in later chapters of the old Base Guide were being put into an earlier chapter. Then there were new topics to be added. Which chapter should contain them? Where should they be put in it? There were all kinds of questions to be answered.

I was working with the group of people producing the guides in English. Well there were several groups working in other languages. This included a group for the German guides. Specifically, there were some people who were working on the German Base Guide. Its name is Base Handbook. It was from them that I got many of my ideas for my Base Outline.

What they had done was to begin with my *Getting Started with Base* chapter and written a German version of it. This contained the general outline of what can be done with Base. Then they took this general outline and expanded it with detailed things that Base can accomplish. And even I was surprised to learn just how detailed this could be!

I don't remember how long this group had been working together, but they were getting much more work done than I

was. As a result, the Base Handbook was completed and published. Well, we really needed to have a Base Guide, and the Germans already had one. So the thinking was that we should translate it into English.

Some of our authors are fluent in both English and German, so the handbook was translated into English. Then people needed to double check the translation for possible errors.

This is where I came in. Others worked on the early chapters. Some translated the German chapters. Others would follow up by verifying that what had been written would work in an actual database. This worked fine for the first four chapters.

But chapter 5 *Queries* was a problem. It required someone with a good math background. Well, it required Algebra and Topology. The latter studies things called *Sets* and what can be done with them. (If you do not know what Sets are, then you also understand why not everyone could have verified the things in this chapter.) Even so, it took me some time to figure out what was going on in some of the algebraic expressions used in the queries mentioned in this chapter.

So I started wadding through rather long algebraic expressions. At times it did not seem that what I was reading was making any sense. At other times, I thought the instructions needed to be modified some. As a result, I periodically communicated with the head of the German Base group. He was able to explain to me where I needed help. Also, when I thought changes needed to be made, I said so and why. This led to him making some changes in the German version as well. With this, I was able to complete my review by March 2013.

The LibreOffice Guides were published in four formats. Two of them could be read using LibreOffice: the ODT and OM versions. The former is in the standard text version used by

LibreOffice; the latter is a master document. The third version is PDF which is a standard version. Finally, there is the seemingly new text format: ePUB. With the popularity of tablets, several formats have been created for the tablets to use when reading documents such as books. Many of them are proprietary; ePUB is open source. All of the tablet documents readers are called e-readers or electronic books. (Yes, these formats are available for phones, tablets, and computers.)

Some discussion was made about using ePUB format as another format available of our documents. So, I decided to investigate this. A program that would convert our ODT files into ePUB files is calibre. (The author who created this program insisted that it should be all lower case.) It also is capable of doing much more with electronic books.

But calibre could not clean up the code in the ePUB files. Well, when in doubt, always read the manual. (Most people don't, and I can be that way as well.) And the answer was right there in it. Another program was recommended for doing this: Sigil.

I know that this will not make much sense for anyone who is not acquainted with these codes. So I will give an example of it. This is a picture of a paragraph with some formatting. The entire paragraph has the same formatting (font size, spacing, etc.). The words in Bold type have an additional formatting added to them.

The snapshots used in this chapter were made using LibreOffice 4.0.2 downloaded from the LibreOffice website. In LibreOffice, I use the Galaxy icon set, size small, available with this version of LibreOffice. (**Tools > Options > View**) For the icons on my desktop, I use the Oxygen icon set. If you are using a different icon set in LibreOffice, the icons you see will be different from my snapshots. If you are using a different desktop icon set, you will also see differences.

When I converted the document containing this paragraph to ePUB format, this is the code that was produced in the conversion. This is far more code than required by the paragraph. So how do I remove the excess code? This was indeed a challenge, and I like challenges! So, I began studying the process and trying to apply the processes I learned.

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<p class="p-ooortabletext"><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">The snapshots used in this chapter were made using LibreOffice 4.0.2 downloaded from the LibreOffice website. </span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">In LibreOffice, </span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">I use the </span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">Galaxy icon set, size small, available with this version of LibreOffice. (</span></span><span class="s-oomenupath"><span class="s-t6">Tools &gt; Options &gt; View</span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">) </span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">For the icons on my desktop, I use the Oxygen icon set. I</span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">f you are using a different icon set </span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">in LibreOffice</span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">, the icons you see will be different from my snapshots. </span></span><span class="s-ooodefault"><span class="s-t6">If you are using a different desktop icon set, you will also see differences.</span></span></p></td>
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In the end, I wound up with the following code. Note that this only has two formats: for the paragraph (<p class="p-

ootabletext">), and for the words in bold type ().

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<p class="p-ootabletext">The snapshots used in this chapter were made using LibreOffice 4.0.2 downloaded from the LibreOffice website. In LibreOffice, I use the Galaxy icon set, size small, available with this version of LibreOffice. (<span class="s-oomenupath">Tools &gt; Options &gt; View</span>) For the icons on my desktop, I use the Oxygen icon set. If you are using a different icon set in LibreOffice, the icons you see will be different from my snapshots. If you are using a different desktop icon set, you will also see differences. </p>
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How did I do this? In general, I used find and replace. This led to a few problems and was tedious as well. But after a while, I learned how to do this using regular expressions. (It was a more complex way of find and replace, but it was much faster.) But I liked the results, so this was nice!

Once I learn how, I also converted the chapters I had written for Base into this new format. I love doing things that are new.

I also learned how to use calibre for other purposes as well. It has the ability to search the Internet for websites which make ePUB documents available for downloading. Some of them have extensive libraries. Among the many topics, there are classics such as Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography (a classic).

This book was one of the books I had to read for my American Literature class as a college graduate. So, I decided to look for some other ones. One of them was The Pioneers which was a part of the Leatherstocking Tales series. I discovered that the entire series is available in this format. So over a period of time, I downloaded one book at a time and read it. Well, I also downloaded Moby Dick, but I discovered that I did not like it at all. So, I never finished it.

Oh my teeth!

As summer came so did some construction work. As a result, they had to dig across one of the streets. So, we had go the long way around to get where we were going for a while. It would seem that I really should have done the same thing when I was walking around the apartment complex. I did not. So on Tuesday, June 11, I fell face down. I don't remember doing this, but I do remember catching myself just as the top of my mouth hit the concrete. This hurt to say the least; I also had a bloody mouth.

For some reason, I did not got to the dentist to see what could be done about the situation. Well, I did not think that I could afford to have the dental work. So, I showered and went to play bridge that morning. I wonder what everyone else thought about my appearance?

That evening I walk as I did on Wednesday morning and evenings as well. Thursday, I decided to begin my walk with some running. Big mistake! I quickly developed a nasty headache. This bothered me enough to go to the doctor. I did not know whether I had caused any bleeding in the area where I had my stroke or not. The doctor ordered a C-scan. It was negative. This was a relief.

Possibly later on Tuesday or the following Monday, I got an appointment to have something done about my teeth (Wednesday, 19). My dentist saw me perhaps the Tuesday after the accident. At this point, her schedule was very slow, so she planned to use much of the morning to work on my mouth.

Actually, it took most of the morning. Of course, she still had to perform examinations on other patients, but she spent a lot of time with me as well. But every time she had to leave to do this, she would apologize when she got back. She may

have been worried, but I was not. By her coming and going, I got a chance to relax a little bit: it broke up the time into manageable periods. With her using the drill to smooth off the ends of the damaged four teeth, I needed some down time!

She did not know exactly how much damage I had done to these teeth, so she could not be certain that I would not have any problems later. It was possible that the damage was enough to require a root canal in the future. When? Possibly in 20 years (possibly sooner).

I sort of got a chuckle out of this. If this did happen, I might be able to announce at bridge that I was getting this procedure done. After all, I would be in my early 90's. How many others my age would even have their own teeth then?

When I arrived that Wednesday morning, I still did not know how I was going to afford this. But she said I could pay it off in installments which I did. Four months later, I walked into her office and made the final payment. (Total: \$660.00)

My Autobiography

It was early to mid December when I got a call from my niece, Marianne. Her family would be driving to N C on the 24th. Since I lived close to I-40, I was on their way through Knoxville. So, they wanted to stop and visit a while if that was possible. Of course it was! They would be arriving around noon, so we planned to eat at Shoney's as well. I could hardly wait.

We met there and then came to my apartment. While they drove there, I had walked since it was a little over a half mile. I also walked back with two of her children coming with me. (Good exercise for them, for sure after riding as long as

they had.) After we met them at my apartment, we did managed to visit about various things for a while, but then they had some surprises for me.

When Kevin died, I had given Marianne many of his Bike/Hike t-shirts. (This is used by the Learning Center he attended in Roanoke, AL, to obtained funds to run the school.) She had promised to make a quilt out of them. But it seems that there were many other things that had interfered it being completed. But today she had this with her.



Then she had a project she wanted me to begin. From what she said, it was obvious that she thought I may need some persuasion to both begin and then finish. (I suppose she as probably right.)

She began by giving me a background about Paul's grandmother. She was getting older and more frail, and she wanted to do something for her grandchildren before she died. That is when these relatives got together to decide what would be a good thing. In the end, they decided to ask her to write about her life because they wanted to know more about it. Then she agreed and got the help with this project producing typed pages single spaced.

Then she looked straight at me when she said that she would like for me to do the same. There were things about my life that she would like to know more about as well. And she also emphasized that it did not have to be long.

I have to admit that this seemed rather intriguing to me, a challenge even. So, I agreed. And then we visited some more until it was time for them to leave. As they did, I could not really wait until I could get started. As a result, all kinds of ideas were swirling around in my head as to how I would do this.

One comment about this though: I am a minister. Am I suppose to be brief about anything? Besides, one of my characteristics that she might not have been aware of was that I tend to be verbose! Besides, over more than 5 years I had been writing chapters for the LibreOffice suite. Most if not all of them had been at least 30 pages (50 pages was not unknown). My first draft of my autobiography became approximately 135,000 words. This had to be far more than she had expected!)

All of this writing also taught me to have an outline. Of course, in high school Composition and my freshman English class, outlines were necessary. But actually making or following an outline had become a habit.

It seemed obvious that the outline needed to follow a time line. Then I had to break that into smaller segments. Well, there was growing up including the summer of 1960, my college years, my service years including early marriage, the rest of my married years, life as a widow. (I have since then changed these period of time to four which are the four volumes of my autobiography.)

These obviously needed to be furthered divide into smaller units of time. So, that is what I did. There was elementary school, junior high, high school, and my summer on the farm (1960). And I did this for the other major time periods as well.

Then you might say that I became a little antsy: I wanted to get started writing! So, I did beginning around the time of my birth. Of course, I was doing this all from memory. Well, the fact that I was writing about this time in my life, I began to stir up more memories. Many of them were about events that occurred around the same period time. Some were about events that occurred in a different time period. And both required adding to the outline where they needed to be included. So, the outline began to increase in size.

2014

My lease would be up the end of March, so I began filling out the paperwork (if any) for the new lease in December. Then I got the bombshell: They were going up by more than 10%! Obviously the was more than I could afford. It scarred me!

When Stephanie had taken me to this apartment five years earlier, she had mentioned a tall building behind Westview Mall that I might want to consider. I remember something about rents being base upon something, but I was not quite sure what.

Finding a place I can afford

So, in January, 2014 I went to Westview tower. I met with a lady named Barbara who explained the things I needed to know. It sounded fine to me at this point. Paying approximately 30% of my income was far better than the 50%+ I was paying then.

What I was most concerned was how soon could I move. After all, I had less than 90 days before my lease would be up. I wanted to make sure I could get into Westview Tower by then. She explained why she thought that there would be no problem with this. My age would put me higher on the waiting list. OK, this looks like a good deal. I need an application.

I got an application and filled it out. It took several trips to the tower before I got everything just right including the paperwork they needed. So, I was finally on the waiting list; I was #3. Then the top person on the list moved in. I was getting closer...

I was approved and move up the waiting list fairly rapidly because of my age. Somewhere near the middle of February, I was at the tower to see Barbara about something. I had finally reached the #1 spot. There was a lady, Shirley, who had just moved out. But she had been in this apartment for 17 years, and she had not taken very good care of it at all. So, a couple of weeks would be required to get it into renting condition. This was according to the head maintenance man,

Richard. This fit into my time **and** financial situation. In the end, I signed the lease on March 3rd and moved in two days later.

Now I had to get everything packed to make this move. I had quite a few things, so it was going to take many boxes. Fortunately, one of my neighbors worked for the school system in an office. Well they used large quantities of copy paper, so she was able to bring the boxes that contained them on a regular basis. It certainly helped very much. While I was at it, I informed the office in writing that I would be vacating my apartment the last of March.

For some reason, I was concerned about the appearance of my apartment. So I asked a maintenance man if he would take a little time to look at my apartment to see if there was anything that needed special attention. His comments were, "Why? Your apartment stays in better condition than most apartments do when people move out." I thanked him for the complement.

On March 3, I drove to Westview Tower to "sign my life away" so to speak. Well, there were a lot of places to sign or initial and just about everything required a date as well. And then there was the checks... One was for the rent, and the other was for the security deposit (\$265 each). I had earlier been afraid that I might have to use my VISA card to pay for some of my expenses, but I just had enough money in my checking and savings accounts.

As I headed back to my old apartment, I almost had a problem. It was around freezing outside, and it was raining. As a result, the driver's side door was halfway frozen shut. With some tugging, I managed to get the door open though. The rest of the day, I began moving boxes between apartments. My moving had begun.

Meanwhile, I had arranged for a truck from U-haul for the move on Wednesday morning (March 4). But I probably would need some help. This is when another neighbor promised to help me moved. So, Wednesday morning, I got the truck, and we began moving the things from my old apartment to the truck.

Then we moved the things to my new apartment. Then we did this again. But during this time we ran into a slight problem. The bed frame was screwed together which required more time than I originally thought would take. We finally got it apart and off to Westview tower with the last load.

By this time, it was at least 11 AM. Since I am on the tenth floor, an elevator has to be used. Since there are only two of them for 240 apartments, anyone moving makes everyone use the remaining one. This can create some headaches for those who want to use an elevator. (It certainly makes the wait for an elevator much longer than normal.) Besides, that afternoon was when Second Harvest provides vegetables, fruits, bread, and sweets (pies, cakes, doughnuts, etc.). The elevators are used a great deal this afternoon. We needed to be finished before this occurred. (We finished by 12:30.)

For the rest of the month, I spent some time at the old apartments several days making sure I had everything the way I wanted it. Then about the third week, I removed the plastic off of the windows and sliding glass door. Everything was ready for me to go. So, the last day of March, I turned in my keys and left for the last time.

Westview Tower Apartments

The building has thirteen floors. The first floor contains the offices, a beauty salon, a community room, and a game room. Floors two through thirteen contained 20 apartments each. Two elevators served to get us from floor to floor as did the stairs (our fire escapes) at both ends of the buildings. Laundry rooms are on the fifth, eighth, and eleventh floors.

The apartment types are efficiency, handicapped, and one bedrooms, but there are four floor plans. Most of the efficiency apartments are located along the sides of the building. These are also some of the smaller ones. I happen to have a corner efficiency one which is perhaps 20 square feet larger. (I have not really looked into from where this extra space comes from.)

Back to the ground floor and going in the front double doors. These are part of a glass wall that is perhaps 10 feet tall. Inside is a vestibule perhaps five feet deep before a second glass wall containing two double doors. Both doors on the right are part of the handicapped system opening with the push of a button. This brings us into the lobby (perhaps 20 by 25) with the office to the right and behind it a hall also to the right. Then in front of us are the two elevators. And to the left is a hallway (?).

Going down the hall to the right we see the post office boxes first and then the beauty salon. Across from this is what I would call the computer room although there is more to it than that. There are also several book cases filled with books of various kinds. Anyone wanting to read them only has to come get and later return them. And in the very back is an office for Susan. (She is the service coordinator for the building, the resource person.) This has since changed: In November 2016, The computers, books, and Susan's office were moved to the other end of the building.

Now going left from the lobby, we enter a very large room (25 wide by 60 deep) called the community room. It has a large TV for viewing. The number of people doing this at a time depends on what is playing. On football Saturdays, there can be quite a few. Then again at other times it might be one or two.

This room is used for larger gatherings and events. For example, Second Harvest brings food on a weekly basis that grocery stores have donated. Sometimes they had meat. They almost always had fresh vegetables often a large variety and in large quantities. There were also canned goods as well. And of course there was large quantities of bread of a wide variety. Last but not least something for everyone's sweet tooth (pies, cakes, donuts, etc.).

Another use for this room was the monthly flea market (first Friday and Saturday). Tables were put up, and residents would bring down things to sell that they had made or that they no longer needed. One person made jewelry for this purpose.

Every Thursday evening, a religious service is held here. Ruth has been appointed to schedule the ministers who will be conducting this service. And because of the size of the room and number of people hard of hearing, there is a portable speaker system that is used. Some times the crowds can be small; other times they can be larger than normal. I should also mention that one group comes each month on the first weekend.

Opening into this room is the game room. In it was the billiard table which was very, very seldom used. It also had a TV. Its purpose was for smaller gatherings. For example, There is a Bible study every Monday afternoon. For this tables and chairs were set up. And since Second Harvest needed more room than is available in the community room,



Activities available

In the beginning, there would be a sock hop on a Saturday evening (**Never** on a football Saturday). One person had music from the 50's and 60's that he played for the people. Then another Dan took over for a while. But interest began to dwindle over the years...

I attended the Bible study for a while, but there were too many times when I did **not** agree with what the teacher was saying. Yet, while I was attending, I also got a chance to point out things that she had not thought of. She told me that she appreciated what I had to say.

Saturday afternoons people play canasta in the game room on the first floor. I have done this at times, but it has become more of a waste of time: there are other things that I could be doing of more importance.

View from the 10th floor

Location wise, I am near the southwestern corner of a large shopping mall. The block we are on measures approximately one half of a mile on a side (area: 0.25 square miles or 160

acres). This gives me a very large area for my walk/run twice a day. With the large parking lot, I can also see much of the sky above me. So, getting out at sun rise gives me a beautiful view of the changing of the colors in the sky! There are also plenty of song birds to keep me company. Besides, being near the western edge of the Eastern Time Zone, I do not have to get up as early to be out at sun rise.

My windows both face to the east, and this gives me an unobstructed view to the horizon from the northwest to the southeast. On a clear day, I can see a panorama of mountain peaks in this entire view. Being about a mile south of Internet 40/75, I can see its traffic for a couple of miles as it rises up over a hill heading to the northeast.

The Smokey Mountains are known for their cloud cover much of the time which gives them their "smoky" appearance. (Fog is probably a much better description of it.) So, southeast of me in the mornings is usually a bank of clouds along the east to southeastern horizon, and the sun rises over it. (Off to the northwest are the Cumberland Mountains which meet the Smokey's in the northeast corner of Tennessee.) There is usually less fog on the mountain tops to the northwest though.



Sunrise can be quite beautiful and varied depending upon where the clouds are in the sky, and there are usually some clouds. First there are the reds in the east over the top of cloud bank. Then comes the oranges, yellows, and the light blues. The parts of the clouds that do not have direct sunlight remain dark gray to black. But as the sun rises, even these parts of the clouds turn to these colors and finally to white.

As the sun peaks over the horizon, the weaker sun rays appear on my walls. Then as time passes, the sunlight is much brighter. This

The above photo was taken from the "balcony" on the 11th floor the latter was taken from the parking lot of the West Town Mall.



Sometimes the clouds are like cotton balls scattered across the sky. Other times they are more organized in long lines from southeast to northwest.

But with complete cloud cover, it might not be much to look at.

The fireworks (July)

Knoxville is a large enough city to have fireworks for certain holidays. (Labor day is called "boomer" day.) And I can see them from my windows. (Well not when it is a rainy evening...) I had been told that we had a wonderful view of them.

July 4th was my first chance to watch them. But what no one told me was how many fireworks there were. It turns out that Knoxville is not the only city that has fireworks. There were many fireworks on the eastern horizon that evening. I could see them from the right edge of my window all the way to the left side. So, I was constantly shifting my attention from

one side to the other. This went on for a period of about an hour. It was quite a view.

Both of my windows are covered with screens, and that means I could not take pictures through them with a digital camera. I think Labor Day is the next fireworks program. Perhaps I can get some pictures or even movie clips from the 11th floor balcony then.

There are balconies on the south side of the building on the 2, 5, 8, and 11th floors. So, I can also view the area from these as well. My windows can be opened, so they also have screens. Any pictures I took through them would have the screen in the background which takes away from the picture. So, at least some of pictures I take will probably be from one of these balconies.



This is an example: a rainbow I saw from the 11th floor balcony after an evening rain storm in May, 2014.

Dental cleaning May

This would not have been special except for my having broken the ends off of my four top front teeth. During August 2008, I had began using Dr. Henley as my dentist. One of the things she insisted on was a full spectrum of my teeth. Now

about five and a half years later, she wanted another one. This would serve two purposes. It would update what she had found with the first one. Secondly, I had damaged my mouth, and she wanted to know how much if any that was. It turned out that I was very fortunate. The damage had been limited to the ends of these four teeth. So she was relieved, and I suppose I was too. So, after everything was done, I said, "See you in six months."

Fire alarms

There are 240 apartments in the building. Most of us get a rental assistance because of a financial need and some have other special needs as well. The emphasis is upon new renters being at least 62 years of age. (We get special consideration.) So a certain amount of forgetfulness is to be expected. Things can be left cooking on the stove too long producing a lot of smoke. This will set off the fire alarm. Then we get the "privilege" of walking down the steps to the outside of the building.

We had two such incidents the month I moved into the building. Another occurred within the next two months. All of these were minor requiring only some smoke removal. Then again, this is the usual when the fire alarm goes off. But it sure does get monotonous! Besides walking down ten flights of stairs (168 steps) is not all the much fun.

But July 5, 2014 was an exception. A lady was frying something and laid down. (She lives on the top floor.) This did much more than make a lot of smoke: a fire actually broke out. (This was around 7 PM.) I had already eaten, but it was a little early for me to take my evening walk because of the hot temperature outside. So, I was not doing anything when the fire alarm sounded thinking this was another case of smoke coming from a pan that had boiled dry.

I immediately headed down the steps arriving before the fire trucks arrived. I mingled among the residents who also came down. (People with physical handicaps have to depend upon the fire department to get them out.) Then I got somewhat bored and decided that I would take my evening walk earlier than I had planned. Of course, I told a couple of people where I was going in case someone needed to know where I was and headed out.

When I got back, I saw an ambulance in front of the building. The lady had apparently fallen asleep. Not very long after my return, another ambulance arrived as well. She was taken to the hospital but released sometime that same evening. I'm not sure why the second one was called unless someone thought another might be needed for someone.

The building is equipped with sprinklers. This is good because it makes it highly unlikely a fire will spread from one apartment to another this way. This is bad in that the water has to go somewhere. The ones around the affected apartment got lots of water in theirs as well. Furthermore, the water somehow went down through the floors all the way down to the ground floor.

The first water damage I noticed was on my floor. (This was on the west end.) The carpet was very wet as far as I could see. But the worst damage visible to everyone was in the Community room. It has large cellotex tiles for its ceiling. Well cellotex does not retain its shape for very long. So as the water began dripping down from above, these tiles literally fell apart because of the weight of the water and the softening of the cellotex. Then there was the drip, drip of water onto the tile floor. A garbage can was used to catch the water until the dripping stopped.

One thing that I had not thought about (but should have known) was that this amount of water could get into

the electrical system and perhaps cause some additional fires. It didn't, but it was a definite possibility as the water made its way down through the building.

A company that specializes in cleaning up after water damage was called. They began working Saturday evening and finished up the following Wednesday for the most part. They brought in dehumidifiers and heavy duty fans to get rid of the water. They probably also used something to vacuum as much water as possible first.



One resident told me that she still had one of their fans going in her apartment Wednesday evening (four days later), but she lives near the top of the building. There has also been some reports of the dry wall bubbling which the person thinks will require a replacement.

Some people got quite upset with the water damage. One man is threatening to move out because of it. This remains to be seen whether he can find an apartment that he can afford. Others think that the water damaged some of their valuable furniture. We shall see how the people cope with this.

Meanwhile, a State Farm Insurance agent will be here Friday morning to explain their rental policy for fire insurance. I plan to attend to find out what it covers and how. This is for my personal information only since I already have this policy with them. (It was required at the last apartment complex where I lived.) The information she gave us was informative as I learned some things that I had not paid that much attention to before.

Gardening

When I first moved into my apartment, I had learned something about a garden behind the building. But I am not too sure just how I had learned. I do remember someone saying something about it being too late to get a garden plot. The meeting for that had been the last of February. OK, maybe next year...

But this did not stop me from going out there when someone was there working. After all, I was lonesome at times. This gave me an opportunity to talk to other residents. It certainly helped. Well, I paid close attention to what they were doing: it was also a learning experience. I even asked questions if I did not understand what I saw. I really did not make a nuisance of myself though, or did I(?).

Kay and June

At this point I need to go back to February of this year. Kay (I played bridge with her) had been having some medical problems and was due to enter the hospital to correct one of them with surgery. But when the time came, another problem was discovered, so her surgery had to be postponed. We were all concerned about her health, but one thing or another seemed to crop up; she did not return to playing bridge again.

Then a couple of months later, June had an x-ray done for some reason. But the results were not good: she had spots on her lung. It was cancer in an advanced stage. So now we had two members of our bridge group out. We were still not sure whether Kay would ever return to play bridge, but it seemed likely that June would not.

Other members were very nice to June during the months that she had left. They would show up in her room with a deck of playing cards. She may not be able to play it with us, but these people made sure that they would play with her. It had to be uplifting to her soul for this to happen as often as it did.

Senior Citizen walking contest

The last Tuesday of July, Sherrie noticed a flier about a walking contest sponsored by Walgreen. She told me that this is something that I ought to check out since she knew that I walk quite a bit. So after taking her home, I stopped by the Walgreen close to my apartment. The manager took my name and email address but not the senior center that I attended (if any). I was suppose to get an email with a PDF statement that explained the contest. One month later, this has not yet arrived. What I have learned is that the senior center reporting the largest number of steps taken will get \$1,000. The contest goes from Friday, August 1 to Tuesday September 30.

Even so, I did not wait until I got this email. One week after Sherri mentioned it, I asked the Phyllis at the center about it. She told me what I needed to do, and gave me a pedometer to measure the number of steps I take each day, and email the number to her. I can do this each day, or I can also do it once a week listing the amounts for the seven days.

Since then I have been more conscious of how much walking I am doing. It also gives me an idea of how many steps I have been taking. My usual walk is a little over 2800 steps. The weekend is my time to take it easy which means little walking other than my two walks. So, I seldom reach less than 6,000 steps the week days. During the weekdays I range from a little over 6,000 to a little over 6,200.

Sherri and I

She was having more problems keeping her balance which creates some possible serious problems when guiding her down the 18 steps at her apartment. In mid August, she asked me to take her to have an x-ray taken of her arm which she had broken earlier. As we neared the bottom step, she nearly fell. I was barely able to help her sit down on it because of her weight, and this scared me. It occurred that she needed someone who could help her getting up and down the stairs, and I was not the person to do this.

I had already agreed to take her dog, Cotton, to be groomed the following day. So, after bridge, I drove to her apartment after bridge, picked up Cotton, and took him to the groomer. Sherri's son-in-law picked him up later in the day after work.

Since that time I have only seen her one time at Kroger near her daughter's. She looked better; in fact she looked like she had lost some weight! When I asked about this, she admitted that she had. She even said that she was doing this on purpose.

Flu shot field trial (Aug)

My primary care doctor is a part of the Summit Medical who are gradually becoming more computer and Internet friendly. They have been sending out newsletters since 2006, maybe

before. Then they had created a portal where we could communicate with our doctor through an internal email system. I used this from the very beginning having my doctor send me the blood test results each quarter. I found that I could access this information usually by the afternoon after the blood was drawn. This was obviously much quicker than the snail mail report that they were sending out.

Recently they have change the portal again in a way that is a definite improvement. With this I can access all of my past test results and a lot more information. With my permission, I can grant access to this information to whomever I wish.

Back to the newsletter: In the July issue (bi-monthly), they mentioned a field trial for flu shots. Presently, the flu shots contains three stains of dead flu viruses. This company is developing a flu shot with four strains of dead viruses. The field trial will compare the people getting the 4 strain shot against those given one of two different 3 strain shots. So, there are three groups: one contains 50% of the volunteers (these receive the 4 strain shot), one contains 25% of the volunteers (these receive the 3 strain shot already produced by this company), and the last one contains 25% of the volunteers (these receive a flu shot manufactured by a competitor).

During the first week, I had nothing much to report. I took my temperature every evening (as close to the same time as possible as in 9 PM) and filled out reports about my observations about my health.

On Aug 18, they took my temperature just before I got my flu shot on Monday as my base line. It "spiked" Tuesday evening four tenths of a degree higher. This makes this part of the report sort of ho-hum. I barely had any redness around the shot area, on the next evening only the evidence: a scab was forming, and on the next evening I had to look

very closely to even see where the shot had been given. I have a much easier time finding a freckle on that part of my arm!

Three weeks later, I returned to have blood drawn to determine the immunity level the shot had produced in my body. (This was the anniversary of my wedding day.) It was also my quarterly medical appointment with my doctor which meant blood being drawn there first. I'm not sure this was the best idea in the world though, but I had them draw the second blood from the same spot as the first. But, all this did was to increase the amount of time before this double puncture healed sufficiently to remove the bandage.

The next six weeks continued to be ho-hum with no sickness at all. At this point, I had my phone contact with the research people reporting that nothing had happened. Well, ... a week later my nose started running seemingly constantly. A few days of taking a mild anti-histamine dried my nose out, and that was the end of that. (No fever, just a constantly running nose.) Such was the case medically. And this continued until the last phone call the following February.

June's funeral

During this same month, I received notice while playing bridge that June had died. There would be a celebration of her life on Sat, Aug 23rd. So I went. When I got the address for the church where it would be held, I thought I knew where it was. Sure enough it was where I had learned Tai Chi a year earlier. (It was also where Dave and Carol Coklin's church membership was.)

Several of us at bridge decided to eat at a restaurant together before going to the funeral, so I did also. Then we

all sat in the same area of the church. I think it was a nice gesture.

I cannot leave this without mentioning a few things about the June I knew, the times we played as partners. I have been told that I am a very good player, but that does not mean that I always played my cards as others would expect; I did not. Once in a while June would remind me of this. She would say that playing with me was *very interesting*. And she would say this phrase with a variety of tones as she said it. (She really strongly emphasized these words. She still was a dear that is for sure. I should end this with this: unlike me, she very seldom made a mistake when she was playing!

Tennessee Valley Fair (Sept)

I ask the activity director at Westview Towers about this fair and was told that it was worth seeing. So, I decided to do exactly that. Besides, she had arranged for two buses to pick us up and return us to our apartment building. We were also suppose to get some tickets for free rides while there. This was also Senior Day at the fair as well.

The only problem was that Almost no one was there. Rides did not really begin to open until we left in the middle of the afternoon. There were a few buildings opened, but that was it. So, I learned my lesson: it is not worth my time to go again.

It was not a total loss; just almost. One younger lady living here does excellent drawings with pencil. The details she puts into them are enormous. And as I walked though one of the buildings, I saw some similar art work. One had earned a blue ribbon. Her drawings were as good as this one! Since I like to encourage her whenever I can, I mentioned what I had seen. I also let her see a picture I had made of it.

Meeting Dee (Donna Mynatt) again (Oct)

By mid October, I had completed my project, or so I thought. I had even converted it from the format used by LibreOffice (.odt) to ePUB. I was ready to send the .odt format to Marianne.

But then came the fourth Thursday of October and a email in my inbox. It was from Dee or so I thought. (I did not notice until later that the name at the end was Donna.) But I read it anyway. Well she sort of caught my attention by what she wrote.

The trees in the Knoxville were nearing their glorious full color, and she wrote about this being the case in Nashville as well. And then she added information about herself to bring me up to date on what was happening in her life. And then came the real reason for the email: she was going to be in Knoxville the following day. She want to meet and talk with me while in town.

Her two grandchildren had dental checkups scheduled for the day. Sometime earlier, she had decided when the entire family moved to Nashville that she did not want to change the children's dentist. They had liked the one they had had here, and such might not be the case for a new dentist.

Why not meet with her? I really did not know what she wanted, but it would not hurt to find out. After all, she lives about 180 miles away. So, I replied that I would meet her in West Town Mall on Friday afternoon.

They were waiting for me in Belk's. Well all of the females were in the restroom; only Sam was waiting near the designation meeting point. It was nice to get a hug and enthusiastic greeting, that is for sure.

After everyone got together, we headed into the mall itself. This is when Dee and I had a serious discussion. She was apologizing for the way she had treated me in the past. Was there anyway that we could become closer? This was her concern.

This was when I mentioned that I had written a book about my life experiences including the way I viewed our relationship in general and her actions toward me specifically. (The name of it was obviously, My Life.) There were a lot of hard feelings mentioned about her on my part. (Yes, this was definitely a "tell all book", at least in this draft of it.)

And yet with all of her remorse, I offered to send her a copy of the part of my book that involved her. I also gave her the opportunity to make suggestions as to how that part should be written. This would give me a chance to get her perspective on it. She said that she would, and she did.

So, we began emailing again sending information back and forth. During this time, I learned some things about her that I did not know. When we made our first trip together to visit Marianne's family, she had said that she had never been out of the state before. Now she is saying that her first marriage was in the cathedral in Atlanta, GA. (Later her step son died; he lived in GA as well.)

In our discussions, she mentioned somethings about publishing the book. Later somethings were said about dividing the book into parts. What would be the best places to split it logically. Obviously, they would have to be major events in my life. Finally, the decision was made to use two of these: my wedding, and the death of my wife. As a result, My Life: Part I, My Life: Part II, and My Life: Part III were born.

One more thing came out of our meeting in October. Dee was not the only one that I had written harsh statements about. It was during our deep discussions then, I suddenly realized that I would have to go through the whole document rewriting everything that was harsh. It was not ready to be sent to Marianne just yet.

Why did this happen "out of the blue"? Is there a reason for this meeting? I have become convinced that there is. God used Dee to show me that I was doing the wrong thing in writing this book the way I had. She and I have never hit it off the way we should have done, but that does not matter. God had His way in the end.

Beginning rewrite of My Life: Part 1 (Nov)

So, by this month, I had decided to go with a three book series, and the text of the original book had been split into three parts. I began working on the first one. I rewrote the forward, and then I came to the actual text. I got all the way to the second paragraph before I had to begin making changes. Well, this was where my first harsh statement was located.

When I was helping to write documentation for first OpenOffice.org and later LibreOffice, we would have to rewrite it anytime when a major revision of the program came out. Well, rewrite always really meant revise and write new topics. Such was what I discovered I was doing as I began this rewrite.

Why? The more I thought about the things that happened back then, the more I got flashbacks of other things that also happened. Sometimes I would realize that what I had thought was true was not. I would remember something that

contradicted what I had written. It continues to be a learning experience, very interesting.

I wanted to finish Part I by Marianne's birthday if at all possible. Then I was thinking that the end of July would be a good deadline for Part II since that is when I gave Susan her diamond. Since she died in early January, the end of December would be a good deadline for Part III.

Well, I reached the end of Part I on December 8th. OK, I was rather close to being on time. So, I waited a few days before emailing it to Marianne. (I also emailed a copy to Tom and Elaine as they had requested a copy of it.)

It was either the 23rd or 30th that I was playing bridge. Sometime during that morning, I heard Phyllis say something about needing someone to help her get a brochure finished. She was talking to someone at the time, and I overheard her. So, I let her know that I should be able to help her. After all, I had just finished my first book. I had also had several years of experience working with ODFAuthors on OpenOffice.org and later LibreOffice. I should have no problems helping her.

I meet Carolyn

It was around the 20th of December, 2014 when I had gone downstairs to the community room. In the game room next to it were a few people who were trying to work on a skit for Christmas. The only problem was that the flu was working through the building. There were not enough well people to be able to put on the skit.

Why had I done this? Let's face it: I was bored and lonely at the same time. I wanted to be around people, and that is for sure. But I was not prepared with what happened...

Noticing them in the room just talking, I decided to find out what they were doing. Carolyn, who was in charge of the group, explained and then asked me to join the group and help out. They were trying to put on a Christmas play, but there were not enough people who were well given the number of people with the flu. So, she asked me to become one of the actors in it.

Well, I declined because I do not celebrate Christmas for religious reasons. That might have been all to that except she decided she wanted to dance ...with me. (A radio was playing softly in the background.)

But I get squeamish when I am holding a lady close to me. Besides, I don't really know how to dance either. And I did not really know how to explain why I did not want to dance. Somehow I managed to get out of this predicament. She says that I rather quickly pulled away from her. She also describes me as being shy.

2015

By this time problems were brewing between Donna and I as it always seemed to be after awhile. This relationship was not going anywhere, but I still could not get her out of my mind just yet.

Helping Phyllis write her book

It was almost the middle of January before she was ready for us to begin work on her project. (I write book now because it turned out to be 100 pages long. At that time she was still thinking of a booklet which is only a few pages.) So, I drove to her house on a Monday using my GPS to guide me. Well, she also gave me some verbal directions as well, and I sort of followed both. I arrived about the time I had said that I would.

In the beginning she described what she wanted in more detail than she had previously. She had much of the work already done right, but what she had problems with was the layout of her project, the format. She wanted the paragraphs to have the same font and font size. The headings need the same things, and this was true for each kind of heading. (She had main headings, subheadings, etc.) Pictures had to be anchored to specific parts of the page, and there were also spacing requirements as well.

Now this was right up my alley so to speak. LibreOffice uses styles to accomplish these things. Each heading level had its own style as did the paragraphs and pictures. So, with them I could place any of them right where I wanted them to be. If for some reason she did not like the results of a particular style, she told me what she wanted differently. All

I had to do was to change that setting to what looked right. When I did that, it changed everything with that style. For example, she wanted the top heading to be a little larger, so I changed the settings in its style. Instantly, all of the top headings had the new changes.

Sure enough, it was what she wanted, but she was concerned with the other top headings. So, I scrolled through the document showing that the others were indeed the exactly the same as the one she had said she wanted changed. She was very satisfied!

Perhaps I need to put in some background for this project. Phyllis has a master's degree in English. So she knows quite a bit about how something should be written. She also had someone she knew how to edit the document well. So, the document was ready for formatting. So, I was the missing key to complete the project.

Kay's Funeral

Kay's condition had continued to deteriorate because of her attitude. She spent her time in either a hospital room or nursing home. Joe was either going to or did make some modifications to their home, but she never would actually spend any time there. So, she had plenty of time on her hands, and she made good use of it. She researched the various medical problems that she had to see what was possible. In the end, she decided she had had enough: life was no longer worth living. So, she allowed her condition to worsen until death took her. She was buried on February 28th

I knew that Joe had had problems when people he knew died. In fact, Kay had warned me to be careful of what I was saying one day when we were playing bridge. I think it was

the time that Jan had died, and I was saying something about it to one of the other bridge players. She did not want him to get upset, so she told me in a nice, but firm way that I should not say anything like this where Joe could hear it. I appreciated her concern and stopped talking about it.

As soon as I learned that Kay had died, I sat down and wrote a poem about her that I would then email to Joe. It encouraged him to call to remembrance of the wonderful times they had shared as a married couple. (Well, now that I think about it, remembering the time they dated would be nice also.) Here it is:

Thoughts about Kay Hansen

A wonderful lady has left us.
We will miss her for our lifetimes.
Yet our memories of her last
Through the years as long as we last.

Her sense of humor may be dry.
To talk with her was a great joy.
She had a way to say her thoughts.
Agree with her, seemed so simple.

She and Joe made a nice couple.
What marriage should be we see.
They cared for each other so well.
I have seen: Each is such a dear!

I saw her protective of Joe.
No harm did she want to be his.
Quietly, she has made it plain
Why something should be changed for him.

Their love was only a short time.
But, oh the memories, Joe has.
To think of the wonders they had
These can continue forever more.

It worked! In fact, Joe later told me that this poem meant the world to him. One of her sons also mentioned how much this meant to him as well. At the funeral he spoke of the things he remembered about her and what she had meant to him through the years.

It is hard to think about Kay without thinking about the relationship that they two of them were able to establish over a relative short period of time. They remind me of the couple that had caught my attention at Thanksgiving time back in 1966.

Each couple had formed their own personal world from which they reached out to the people with whom they came into contact. The lesson I have taken from this is that it does not matter whether a couple is young or old, this is not only a possibility but a reality for those who choose to do the things it requires of them.

Speaking of this, I'm reminded of what happen one day when Kay, Gayle were sitting at the same bridge table.

Gayle asked a question. "Given the number of habits we have that would need to be changed for a marriage, would it be worthwhile doing this at our age?" (She is a month younger than I.)

I immediately replied, "Yes." That is because I knew Ned and Dovie Burton who were in their late 70's when they married. (She was a widow of several years, and I think he was a widower.) They acted more like teenagers in love around each other. It was a joy to see how they lived together!

Another lady, Kay who has only been married for a few years gave a more practical answer. She basically said that it depends. And I have come to agree with her. After all, to have the joy that I had seen requires both people to willingly, lovingly make the changes that results in this joy.

Then I look at her marriage. She and her husband made these changes, and this marriage is also truly a joy to see. Her description of her husband at the end of this discussion? "He is such a dear." I can still hear the love in her voice as she said it.

My Garden plot

When I had moved into the building the previous March, there was already a meeting for people in the building who wanted to garden. There is an area behind the building with 10 plots, each 10x20. So I was a little bit late to do this that year.

But come late February, I signed up for a plot. There were others also including Carolyn, Karen, Sandy, and Wayne. (Adam is in charge of this program doing it for our garden plot and others in other parts of the city.)

It has been two weeks since I signed up for a garden plot, and I decided that I needed to do something to get some equipment for the garden. I bought spade, hoe, garden rake, fencing, fence poles, and work gloves. The only problem was that I had bought plastic fencing. It seems that rabbits are quite capable of eating right through the plastic which is what I found out a little later.

Anyway, after coming back home, I came out with at some of these things going to my garden. Karen was also out there since she had a spot a couple of plots from mine.

She had had my plot the previous year and had planted some winter crops including carrots the previous fall. So, now she wanted to harvest them; after all they belonged to her. So, I helped her some. To begin with, she was pulling some of the ones around the edges up one at a time. I was surprised at the size of them! They were at least 5" long and perhaps 1.5" in diameter at the top. Well, since I had my spade with me, I suggested that using it to dig up the carrots would be faster. I also had a plastic grocery sack with me. What she would up with was truly amazing. The carrots were growing in a one foot square area. Yet, the carrots that came out of the ground there nearly filled the grocery sack!

Early planting

The end of this week is when I started the garden. First of all, I used the spade to break up the ground at the back of the garden. This was not easy work since the ground was mostly clay. Well, the small roots from the trees in the area did not make it any easier either. They were rather close to the surface of the ground. But I persevered. Then I planted carrots, beets, and mixed greens. Then I was looking forward to some garden produce by mid May. (This did not really happen though.)

But if I am to have a garden, I probably ought to put a fence up. I got this done a couple of days after digging up all of those carrots. Having heard about rabbits being know to dig under a fence, I buried the plastic fencing about half of a foot. Of course, I had to dig a trench along the edge of the plot to do this.

By this time, I had decided that the entire plot was more than I might need, so I offered to let Ruby have the front

half; I would keep the back part. I did this because she had mentioned something about wanting to have a garden.

Another weekend passed, and I am back in the garden. This time I broke up three areas of the garden, each one being four square feet. Then using the rake and hoe I planted radishes in one, peas in another, and green beans in the third on the following day.

Carotid Artery Scan

This was not an April Fool's joke at all. I was in my doctor's office for my quarterly appointment. Everything seemed to be going quite well until he was listening to my carotid arteries with a stethoscope. While he did not show any particular emotion, he was hearing something that he did not like. So, he told me that he wanted to have this scan run because of what he had heard. (Something did not sound right.) Actually, I now think that he knew exactly what was wrong. He just did not know how extensive this problem was yet. So, an appointment was made for the following Monday.

I have always liked to talk with the technician when they do this, and this day was not any different. For some reason, I wanted to know a little more about plaque. What did it look like on the screen? I was told that it would be white. Well, before all I had seen was my large arteries of the scan, and there was no white showing up that I had seen. This afternoon, I was shown a plaque area. It was definitely white. With that I was satisfied.

But likely, that was more than just any plaque. I think it was big enough that it had interfered with blood flow in a small artery. The report that came back in a day or so indicated that it was partially blocking it (less than 50%). It also

increased the speed of what blood got by this plaque as in by nearly 50%. I could definitely hear the difference of the blood flowing through this artery verses the other arteries. Conclusion: the scan needed to be repeated in a year. If things did not improve, intervention would likely be necessary. (This is my opinion, not anything the doctor had told me.)

This did not really concern me all that much. Why? Because I had been able to remove a large blockage of plaque in my right carotid artery over a period of two years, so this could be done again. Paying closer attention to my diet should do it, or so I thought. Not only did I think about, I began to decrease what I ate somewhat.

Bridge group deaths (April)

In the past couple of years, we had three members of our group to die (Jan, June, and Kay). Some of the people wanted to have some sort of a memorial for them, a plaque for example. This was OK'd by the senior center, and we each donated our fair share of the cost. On the plaque were their names with room for several more to be added later.

Then on the 21st, we were presented with it during Bridge. Members of the three families were asked to be present for this ceremony. Each of them were asked to say something. It was touching.

Gayle had come for the presentation, but then she left. But there was something wrong. She was not acting the way she had in the past. I decided to pay attention to her actions for a while. Sure enough, on later Tuesday mornings, it became more apparent to me that I had been right in my diagnosis. I was even concerned that I asked the retired orthopedic surgeon about it. I really did not get any clear

answer. First of all, if she had said something to him or he to her, he could not discuss what had been said without her permission. That is how it should be.

State Farm program (April)

Actually, it may have been in late March that I had learned about a new program that my insurance company is developing for auto insurance. If it can decrease my premium, I am quite ready to sign up! Well, I did.

They sent me a module to plug into my computer jack under the dashboard. (This jack is what a mechanic would plug into to get the readings needed to service the car.) So, I did. I could hardly wait until I got my first report from this project.

But it was not as good as I had hoped. It contains comments about my driving habits. It turns out that I do not indicate which way I am turning soon enough. This earned me a C in that area. On speed, it was A⁻. Anyway, my insurance premium went down \$6 a month in June. Well, that is \$72 a year; I will certainly will take that!

But back to the garden: By early May, I could see small plants of each thing that I had planted. Unfortunately, the carrots, peas, and radishes were not and did not do very well at all. Remember that what I had for soil was basically clay.

At some point I began saving all of my fruit skins and vegetable peelings I got when making my salads. Then as these accumulated, I buried them in my garden. This became my fertilizer. They would gradually decay releasing nutrients into the soil which is a natural process. This also depended upon earthworms to further breakdown my

garbage. Even so, I wonder how easy of a time they had getting to it. After all, clay is not very easy to dig through on their way to this "food." Fertilizing things this way takes a lot of time before any benefits would be obvious. Would you believe the month of July?

Everything had been going well with my plastic fence, so I was happy. Well I was until I came down one day and saw two big holes in it. One was on one side of the plot, and the other was on the opposite side. Did the rabbit make one hole, go across the garden and make the second hole to get out? It certainly looked like it. (There was no evidence that any of my plants had been harmed by the rabbit while it was in my plot that day.)

So, it was time to get a two foot wide metal fencing to put around my plot. So, I did and put it up. Unfortunately, the metal rods that I had used to hold the fencing up broke rather easily. So, I had to get several wooden stakes to hold up the areas where the metal ones had broken. That seemed to take care of that.

Soon after this, Adam brought out some plants which we were to transplant into our gardens (8 beef steak tomatoes and 7 bell peppers). So, I had to decide where I wanted them to be placed.

But going back a little time, I was doing some organic fertilizing of my own. First of all, I was periodically getting used coffee grounds from the Starbucks located inside Kroger where I shop. Then because my previous experience with organic gardening, I began saving up the things that I cut off while making my salads. Banana and orange peels were added to this as well. When there was enough to do so, I buried this in the garden in the areas where I would be planting new crops.

So when the tomato and bell pepper plants arrived, that is what I did. Underneath where I would plant the tomatoes, I dug down at least 4", probably deeper before putting the garbage at the bottom. I covered this up breaking up the soil some as I did so. Then I put the plants into the soil in an area about 2'X3'. The pepper plants went into another area that was closer to 4'X2'. It contained two rows.

Little Flock's Annual Meeting (June)

This was held over the first weekend, and I had gotten an email from Elaine explaining what they expected in the way of ministers. Since the main minister, Elder Jerald Williams, was someone I had known from early in my service years, I had a desire to hear and be with him for one more time. So, I leaned quite heavily on attending it. So I emailed her back that I would be coming.

But then I had a conflict. I also wanted to make a visit to see his mother in Natchez, MS. There were some things that I would like to tell her. With finances being what they were, I could not do both. With her age, I really should not wait until the next year to see her. So, I had to send another email to Elaine that I would not be coming after all.

Then I decided that I needed to contact Brother Jerry (Elder Williams) about making a trip to Natchez to see her. It took an Internet search to do this, but I did so. He told me some things that were not completely consistent, but that was alright. In the end, it came out that she was having some severe medical problems that made such a visit as not going to be profitable. Her memory was not working very well, so she would not remember any of the memories we had shared over the years: I had waited too long. That ended the idea of seeing her. (I think she died before the year was out.) So, a third email was sent to Elaine stating

that I was coming to the meeting after all. I did make one request through: I did not want my oldest brother to know that I would be in town.

And so I left on June 3rd heading north. The previous time I had been in Illinois was at Elder Harris' funeral seven years earlier. It had taken me exactly 9 hours to get there. (OK, it took a *few* minutes longer than that.) This time I thought I would make a stop at the southeastern part of Illinois for the night and travel the approximate 150 miles on Thursday. I should then arrive at Tom and Elaine's by lunch time the next day. (I was.)

As I usually do, I filled up with gas right before I left. Since I had been averaging a little over 20 MPG driving around town, I expected to have to fill up before getting there. But that is not quite what was happening. The needle in the fuel gauge was moving oh so slowly and I drove on and on... When I got to the motel in Metropolis, IL, I had close to a quarter tank! What is going on here? How was this possible? I am driving a Pontiac Bonneville after all. It is not know to get good mileage, not at all. And yet I had traveled about 350 miles with more than a quarter tank of gas remaining.

At this point I should mention that this town (Metropolis) where I stopped was named after the city in which Clark Kent (alias superman) worked and lived. There is even a monument to superman in the city, probably the logo on the suit he wore. As usual when in a new place, my GPS system did not accurate locate where the motel was. At least it got me within sight of it. Well, a little driving around got me to where I saw it. So, I checked in in the middle of the afternoon at this point.

I took a little while to get settled in. This included getting out my MacBook and getting online. Then it was getting

close to supper time, so I got verbal directions to where I could eat. It was some distance off, but it was worth it (Chinese).

Since I eat specific things for breakfast that others probably do not, I brought all the things with me: oatmeal, oat bran, wheat germ, seed mixture (ground myself), yogurt, blueberries, whole wheat bread, and peanut butter. So, I fixed and ate my breakfast in my room. Afterward, I took a walk around the motel lot to get my physical exercise. Then I took my time packing the car before heading out.

After driving for about 120 miles, I thought the gas gauge was low enough that I should start looking for a place to fill the tank up. There was also another reason for this stop. I was near the beginning of many miles of road work on the Interstate. I was not sure how easy it would be later on to be able to get to and from the highway. So, I pulled off the first exit I came to (actual mileage driven since leaving Knoxville: 457.5). Then came the real surprise. The pump clicked off, the window showed 13.318 gallons. That meant I had averaged 34.35 MPG! I could not believe it, but I had to.

At that rate, I could have driven all the way without filling up until I got there. Well, that would have been true until I got lost in my home town... It took some time and extra driving around to find Tom and Elaine's home.

In the past I had been coming into Edwardsville from the east. So, I naturally did it this time. As I got closer, I notice all of the landmarks that I had seen before.

But I was forgetting some very important information. In the past several years, there had been some road construction in the area. The university on the southwester part of the city had increased traffic to it from the east, so the road I

took was changed to take traffic from the east to the university.

So when I came to a sign that said something about a road to the right, I thought I knew where it went. The only problem was that I was wrong. It was the road I should have turned onto. It would have taken me into town the way I had gone before.

Well, I knew I was getting lost, but I did not know how to do anything about it. After all, my GPS map did not show these new changes. So, it could not direct me to Tom's home. After some time of going around seemingly in circles, I recognized a landmark. From here, I finally managed arrive. As a result I was a little late for lunch.

The next morning, I was out early for my daily walk. (Elaine had told me about the walkways in that area, and I took advantages of them each morning. Then I would come in and fix my breakfast so that I would not be in people's way. Well, I could then get cleaned up for church while they were eating. And the shower and bathrooms would be available for them when they needed them.

Friday and Saturdays were reunions for me. Many of the people who I had had know when I was young had also attended this meeting. Brother Jerry and I had a good visit as well. I had a wonderful time.

I had decided to head back home on Monday morning making a stop somewhere around Nashville. I probably should have remained one more day; I really should have! The entire area from Edwardsville to Knoxville was covered with severe thunderstorm watches and warnings throughout the day. Before I left that morning, I was looking at the radar

out of St. Louis. There were very large patches of very heavy rain through which I would be driving.

I got in the car anyway and headed out. For whatever reason, I had not really paid any attention as to the gear that I was using. (It was 3rd. I really did not notice this until I had already driven over 100 miles. As so as I saw this, I moved it up to drive and continued to slosh through the large rain puddles in the road. (Windshield wipers were on high.)

Donna and family were going to Knoxville that afternoon, so I had agreed to come by her home in Nashville. Then the two families would be forming a two vehicle caravan on to Knoxville. I arrived at her home about 2 PM on Monday.

Things started basically OK, but from then it all went down hill... As a result, I finally came to my senses and decided our relationship (whatever it amounted to be) was not worth the time, money, nor effort to continue. So that ended that. (The next morning being Tuesday, I went to play bridge...) Two days later I saw an email from her confirming that she agreed with my assessment.

Summer work

It was during this summer that I got to know Carolyn and Sandy better. Because the summers are known to have dry spells, they were watering their plants quite a bit in the evenings. To do this, a very long hose had to be dragged from the faucet on the building to the garden area and back.

So, I helped do this. But I was really doing more than this. I chatted with the ladies for several reasons. I liked the

companionship, besides this was one way to learn things about gardening that I did not know. I did a lot of the latter.

There were times in the summer when I got to the garden and did some work for a while in the heat. Then when the temperature seemed to be lower, I would excuse myself as I went on my evening walk. So, this became a ritual of sorts.

Carolyn brought down Kendall (her rat terrier) when working in the garden. So there were times when I was asked to watch her when Carolyn needed some help with her. As a result, she became use to me. There were times when Carolyn would be helping with putting the hose where it belong when we finished in the gardens. Kendall would be tied to Carolyn's walker. Rather than having Carolyn walk back to the garden to get her walker and dog, I brought them up to where she was.

There were other times when I would come out to walk, but go to the garden to chat and observe what I could. (Let others work in the heat.) Then as it became just a little bit cooler, I would excuse myself to walk. On some occasions Carolyn would ask me to take Kendall along. Then off I would go with her on her leash. When we returned, there would be more chatting, and then I would help move the hose back to where it belong. Then those left would go inside together.

Harvesting

I had been picking some greens, but this was about all. The peas, carrots, radishes did not produce anything at all which seemed rather strange to me. My tomatoes were growing and even putting on some fruit in June, but that was about all. Week after week there did not seem to be any increase

in the size of any of it. But I was not yet watering my garden as the ladies had been.

Some of these things got pulled up. Then I used my spade to dig that part of the garden up. While doing so, I would bring the garbage I had accumulated from vegetable peels etc while fixing my salads or fruit. These got buried in the dug soil. I had done a lot of this where I then planted the beef steak tomato plants a few months before.

The biggest problem was that I was not watering my garden as the ladies had been. Why? I suppose I expected the rain we got to be sufficient. After all, it always was during my summers at home 50 years earlier. Well, June was a very dry month.

To close out June, I spent the morning playing bridge as usual. Up to this point, I had had some really good hands over the previous six years. Many times I had taken all but one or two tricks in a hand (11 or 12 out of 13 tricks) when I made the bid. When my partner and I did not get the bid, quite a few times occurred that we prevented our opponents from making their bid. But this morning, I had got what could be considered a great hand, and my partner did also in my weakest suite. So, in the bidding process I discovered that we had all of the aces, three kings, and possibly four queens. In other words, we had the cards that each other needed. I had one last bid to make, and I was in a quandary. Do I bid to take 12 tricks or go for broke bidding 13 tricks? After some agony, I thought why not? Hands like ours do not come along very often at all. So, I bid 7 spades (I said that we would take all 13 tricks). Well that was my partner's suite, not mine. So, he had to play this hand.

The opponents began by the one to my right making the first lead. Then I laid down my hand for all to see. When it

was time for me to play a card, my partner would select and play it. When he saw what I had, he also saw how he would play the hand. It worked! we took all of the tricks. More emphasis as to how rare this is: it is called a grand slam.

About the same time, our drought began to end. In fact, July turned out to be rather wet. Of all of my garden crops, my tomato plants benefited this the most. They grew up to six feet or so. Of course, the amount of garbage that I had buried under them did not hurt any either! With this you would have thought that I would have had lots and lots of tomatoes from the six plants I had translated. Sadly, that would be wrong. only three tomatoes grew on these vines. This is the picture of the largest one (It only weighed 12 ounces!) The other two weighed in at half that amount. OK, so I only got one an a half pounds of tomatoes, but I could still brag about the big one.



These plants were on the west side of my plot. On the east side is where I had several grape tomato plants. Now these were more productive as I was picking some every week or so for a couple of months. It was not a whole lot, but it did

cut down a little bit on how many grape tomatoes I bought at Kroger for my salads.

Change BP medicine(July)

I saw my doctor for my quarterly visit the first part of the month. Almost everything was good with the exception of my potassium level: too high. The Benazipril (an ACE inhibitor) was causing it. So, I was instructed to reduce the amount I was taken. He wanted another blood test around July 20. So, I did.

This did not improve the situation, so he changed meds and wrote a prescription for Valsartan which inhibits the body's ability to retain sodium. I got the prescription filled and begin taking it. While doing so, I also kept rather close check on my blood pressure.

Now when I do things like this, I do it about every two hours during my waking hours. (OK, but I want to know what is going on with my body. Just taking my BP one a day does not tell the whole story.)

What happened a week after I began the new med shows why this was important. My blood pressure is normally higher during the evening hours, and the present was no exception. But, for the couple of days was that it was getting to be higher than I would have liked.

For some time I have had little red spots in my skin. As near as I can tell, they are caused by very small veins that looked like they were curled up. Well this evening, one of the veins broke open and began to bleed slowly onto my skin. Besides I was not feeling very well either. I decide to take my BP to see if that had anything to do with this. My blood pressure cuff is set to cut off at 160, and then it would

gradually decrease in pressure until it measured both systolic and diastolic. Only thing was that that was not high enough. It pumped all the way to 200. It started measuring my heart rate at over 170. I did not like this at all!

So, I drove myself to the emergency room at Park West Hospital (where I had been taken when I had me stoke). Unfortunately, this one one of the busier nights, and I was not initially checked out for over an hour (10:20). When he took my BP, it was 200/80. Now this really bothered me. Even so, it was after midnight before they took me back for treatment. The first thing they ran was a basic metabolism panel (blood tests). Of course this took time as well. So by 3 or 4 in the morning, he finally gave me a pill (beta blocker) to bring my BP back down. This took more than an hour. And finally as dawn arrived I was allowed to go back home. He made another change in my meds. I was originally taking one 160 mg Valsartan pill each day. He told me to increase this two two pills a day. (Since then I have taken one when I get up and the other with my evening meal.)

Smoke Free by Nov 1st

Up to this point, we had a smoking area in the west breeze way of the building. But at the end of July, Megan held a meeting in the Community Room for all of the residents. That is when she broke this news to us. No longer would smoking be permitted anywhere on the premises for new tenants. The rest of us had 90 days to stop smoking on the property. There is a parking west of the building that belongs to either Sears Auto or West Town Mall. Obviously, no one could stop anyone from smoking there.

There are the health risks that smokers cause for others. There are also final considerations. People were smoking in their apartments. This stained the paint on the wall and

requires some extra coats of paint to cover this up. The smoke gets into the carpets that remains there for long periods of time. The management probably would have to replace the carpets when a smoker moved out. (Regardless of the problems caused by smokers, they raised a ruckus about this. Some of them three years later are still smoking in their rooms.)

RSV/Flu field trial (Oct)

I liked being part of the flu trial the previous year, and I also thought about volunteering for other studies if possible. Well, it seems that I was getting my wish. This was a combination study (my way of describing it). The volunteers would be divided into two groups: those getting a flu shot (4 strain) and the proposed RSV vaccine, and those only getting the flu shot along with a shot of saline solution instead of the vaccine. Of course I volunteered for it. (After all, I was getting a free flu vaccine and it was four strains besides. Normal flu shots have just three strains.)

By late September, I was contacted telling me where and when I should be to begin my part of the study. So, I went and filled out all of the required paperwork. Then I got a shot in both arms. That evening I began my recording of my medical condition as it applied to the flu. This involved taking my temperature daily at the same time (I always did it as close to 9 PM as possible. I did this because this is when I knew my body temperature would be its highest.)

Everything was normal the first evening including my temp. The second evening, I had a slight temperature elevation (0.6) which is what I had the previous year in the flu trial. So, I put this down to being caused by the flu vaccine. The third evening, it was back down to normal. Then the fourth

evening, it went back up as it had two days before. The next evening my temperature returned back to normal again.

So was this because of the RSV? Well, this was a double blind study so no one that I could talk to would know. (They were not suppose to know.) Then there was a narrow red streak running from one of the injection sites... It was more than half a centimeter in length. I quickly concluded that I had been given RSV in one of my two shots.

Fall planting

About the same time I began the flu/RSV study, others in the garden were planting fall gardens. So, I decide to do likewise. Why not? After all, Karen had planted carrots this time of the year and wound up with several pounds of them in the spring. (What I did not know at the time was the amount of fertilizer she had used then. I did not use any.) So, I prepared the area where I would plant them. These had to be things that did not require rather warm to hot temperatures to grow. For me these were peas, carrots, and mixed greens. And then in the back of the garden I planted two or three rows of barley. By the time I got this done, theirs were already peeking up out of the ground.

Why did I plant the last one? Well, one part of my daily lunch meals was some kind of whole grain; this included barley that I had gotten from a health food store near where I played bridge. Now from my reading from my Bible, I knew that barley and wheat were two plants that were planted in the fall in the land of Canaan. So, why can't I? It was an experiment as I wondered what I would have in the spring when it was time to harvest it. guess I would have to wait to find out.

Was I really sick?

It was the later part of October when I began feeling bad with a very sore throat. Now this was 3 AM when I woke up with this condition. So, I got up and took my temperature: 98.6. (Normal for me according to the thermometer I was given for the study was 97.2.) So, I definitely had an infection of some kind.

I went back to bed, but I got very little sleep as I tossed and turned for the next three hours. Meanwhile for the rest of the day my BP ranged from normal to elevated throughout the day. I again took my temp at 5 PM (98.3) which was slightly elevated. I did it again a 9 PM (99.1). The next day my temperature was gradually going back down although not exactly normal. The day following, everything was basically back to normal.

Meanwhile, on the second day of elevated temperatures, I had a decision to make. We were each given a booklet to fill out if we got sick anytime during the study. The requirement for opening it was that it be respiratory in nature. Well, my nose was giving me fits during this time as well. So, I decided that this qualified and began filling out the booklet from the first day that my temperature was elevated. (I had made a record of the things needed by the booklet for each day just in case.) So, I was stuck with daily filling out this for 30 days. I also had to make a couple of swabs of my nasal passages to take to the where the study was being run. And yes, this required my seeing a staff doctor for an examination.

The doctor took a couple of looks into my nasal passages and said, "Chronic sinusitis." He did not see any signs of infection though. So, he suggested taking a mild anti-histamine which I did. But since I had begun filling out the booklet, I had to complete the 30 days with it. Well, I did have an elevated temperature. Was it really a fever? Given

that the thermometer I used was a cheap one, it may or may not have been high enough to be considered a fever.

I would have three more appointments after this. One was for some paperwork that I was filling out each evening from the beginning. The next one was for a blood test to determine the immunity I had gotten from the flu shot as well as that which came from the RSV shot if I had really gotten it rather than saline water. The third was finishing up with the 30 day booklet I had to fill out. From this point on, I would get a monthly call to determine how I was doing health wise.

From the beginning I knew that this was potentially a two year study. Half of the volunteers would not get RSV. They would be in the study for only the first year. The other half would be asked to continue for one more year which also include more shots in the fall. They would then be followed for another year.

As a result of this all in the study were getting monthly phone calls until it was revealed who got the RSV shot and who did not. The latter would then be dismissed. So, as the months continued to pass, I became a little agitated not knowing for sure whether I would be included or not. It may have been sometime during the summer when I got the final call. The initial study did not produce the results they were hoping for: too little immunization produce by the RSV was not sufficient to make the second part of the study worthwhile. It was being shut down. That was the bad news. The good news was that I had gotten the RSV shot. I was right about the symptoms I had seen. (Yes!)

Before going on, I need to mention a couple of immunizations that I needed for my own body. One of them was the shingle shot. I remember my Mother being very

adamant about me having cow pox when I was a child. Did this have anything to do with why I had never had chicken pox? Might it also explain why the TB vaccination I had my sophomore year in college did not take? After all, the Air Force gave me their version of this vaccine, and it definitely took, boy did it!

So was it possible that I would not need the shingle shot? I thought so. But I had several close relatives who had not enjoyed having the shingles over several decades. So, maybe I did need it. But I was not permitted to have any vaccinations while I was part of a medical study. So, I had to wait until the first half of this study was ended if I got one.

Still not all that sure one way or the other, I asked my doctor. I also asked the retired doctor who played bridge. Both gave me the same answer. I might not need this shot given the circumstances, but if it was their choice, they would get it. So, I did. By this time it was August 10th. (There is more to this, but it will have to wait until I get to the other things happening around the first half of August.)

Back in the mid 1990's, pneumonia shots first became available. Because of their myotonic dystrophy, both Susan and Kevin needed them. With my age, so did I. But since that time other strains of this disease were prevalent. I really needed to get mine. So, in January, I did. Boy was that a trip! It has been quite some time since I felt that bad. Well, since I had a thermometer, I decided to again take my temperature around 9 PM since this would likely be the highest it would go while I was awake. My temperature was again elevated for a few days (or was it several?). But it never got over 100. Obviously, I survived.

Pillows for sale

When this happened exactly, I do not know. What I do know was that I was in Kroger where they have many more things other than groceries and related items. This includes a pharmacy, clothing, kitchen items, etc. Well, this involves pillows of all things!

I am use to getting junk mail trying to sell me things. I even have watched a little of TV programs selling things. There is always something that someone is trying to sell, but they don't look like they are really worth it. This is despite them harping on how much that item would cost people if they did not get it from this seller.

Well I was surprised when I was approached by a lady working in Kroger wanting to sell me some pillows. She was saying how these were sold in some places for \$100. But on this day, I could get two of them for \$60. Yes, I knew that the pillow I use could be somewhere near 20 years old. But something did not sound right. So, I refused her offer. OH well!

December 25th

As fall and then winter came, I had gotten in a habit of watching the Hallmark Channel on TV in the Game Room. So, on the 25th, I went down to do this.

Carolyn was in the Community Room at the time trying to get someone to go out to eat with her.(She did not want to eat this meal alone.) I listened as she asked a couple of gentlemen. Seemingly I wanted her to ask me. (I did not want to be alone either.) Surprisingly, she spied me and asked. (How could I refuse?)

So, off we went in her car. The only problem was that we had left too late. By the time we arrived where she wanted

to eat, it was closed. This happened more than once before she finally found a open restaurant that she knew.

Then We had to wait for quite a while as there were many others who also wanted to eat out this evening. (It was after 8 PM or possibly 9 before we were seated at a table.)

From the beginning she made it clear that there would be separate bills, and I agreed. Then while we ate, she told me plainly that this was not a date. She was a married woman. OK, I had no problem with that. I really had no special interest in her other than what knowledge she had of gardening. After all, her garden plot produced much more than mine had. We just chatted as friends do.

Given what I had already written about her, just what kind of impression did this evening have on me? It was nice to go out, and it was nice to have someone to be near while chatting. But other than that, not all that impressive. In fact, it did not even get mentioned in my daily journal! Well, the time she wanted to dance with me did.

2016

My Car

I had been getting reports on it from State Farm, and the maintenance report part was not good at all. Let me see what the report said... The engine was in bad shape, needed work on it. The transmission and drive train also needed repair. The heater was not working at all, and it was impossible to replace the part that needed it. Yes, I think I need to think about getting a newer car. So, I mentioned this to the lady that usually handles all of my insurance

needs. She suggested Carmax as she knew someone who worked for them. OK, I think I will.

Actually, the reason why I even was in the office was that I had already decided to borrow against my life insurance to get the money I needed to buy the car. I really doubted that ORNL Federal Credit Union would loan me enough money to buy a car new enough to be worth while. So, I was first asking what was the cash value of the policy. I was planning to pay it back as soon as possible. While the interest charge was not as little as the credit union, I could get a much newer car this way. I had access to twice what ORNL would lend me. More money; newer car. Also, I remembered the problems with my Bonneville from the very beginning because of its age.

When she gave me this information, I headed to Carmax to see what they had available the later part of December. The only one that was in my price range looked promising. So, I talked about buying it. Since it was located in the Chicago area, they required that I pay \$199 for transporting it to Knoxville. It would be putting it close to all I had to buy a car. So, I gave them a check, and it was to be delivered in three days or so.

But before the day was out, I decided to check the Kelly Blue Book. They listed that model being worth less than the asking price. Besides it had 125,000 miles on it. That was 30,000 miles more than what the Blue Book listed for what this car should have for its suggested price.

Basically it looked like they would be getting \$1,000 more out of me than the book said I probably should pay. So, that ended this deal. Within a week, the money for the car's transportation was replaced in my checking account. Good!

On January 4th, I remembered a car dealership right next to a ORNL branch. I also remember seeing some cars listed for under what I knew that I could afford. So, I dropped by to see what they had. Well, they had a Pontiac G6 which looked like it fit the bill, it was a 2008 model. Gee, I may be able to get a car that is ten years younger than what I had!

Anyway, as we talked, I was impressed with how the salesman handled himself. Carmax had offered me \$500 for my Bonneville. They only offered me \$200. I knew that my car was not really worth very much, so this was fine with me. So, he took me out in it on a test drive. This was not a mile or so, I drove it under several different conditions over a 18 mile course. It was nice!

So, it was time to fill out all of the paperwork. Every item on the form was clear and precise. I understood each part. The final number? \$7,200. That was a couple hundred more than I really wanted to pay. So I asked if it could be rounded down to an even \$7,000. He quickly did that.

The car was a one owner with 90,000 miles on it. That was less than 12,000 miles a year. This is good. And I should probably also state that I checked the Blue Book again. The suggestive mileage was very close to reality, and so was the final price. I am fairly sure that I got a real good deal. This had to be the exact opposite to the deal I had messed up on when I got the Bonneville about three years earlier. Besides, interest on a policy loan (6% per annum is much cheaper than on a credit card. (I forgot about a policy loan back then. Live and let live, I guess...)) I was toying with some other ideas as well to help me lower what this car would cost me, but they would have to wait.

The first part of the year was rather quiet considering the things that occurred during the rest of it. Oh, I again signed

up for my garden plot. Once in a while I would go out and gather some greens that would last me for a few days. I also watched my barley plants, but I never did discover when would be the proper time to harvest them. The heads were full and green for a while before turning a light brown. At this point the seeds would slip out of the heads, and I got nothing.

But I did have a problem with my computer tower. I wanted to make some changes in the hard drive, so I use a program that I was well acquainted with to do this. Even so, I messed up. So, I wound up making more changes than I had really wanted to do.

This could have been a disaster if I only had one partition on the drive. But I did. I used one partition (called Storage) to hold all of the documents that I use, so I did not lose any of them. They were located in my Document folder. It was also subdivided into subfolders according to subject matter. Of course music and picture folders also existed.

Finally there is the Download folder. This contains all of the latest programs that I use. So, when I got around to create and format the partition for my operating system, I could install these programs.

But I had a large amount of data in my databases. All of this was still on the partition which I had messed up. Many of them used MySQL to run. That could have been a problem, but it was not.

Early in the month, I had exported all the data from MySQL and transferred this file to my laptop where I imported into my MySQL program there. So while I was straightening out the mess I had made, I enter financial date using the laptop. Then after getting the tower working again, I exported the

all the data from the laptop and then imported it back to the tower. Piece of cake! Even so, it took two nights to do it.

I did look a bit weird downstairs though for those two nights. I took my computer (tower, keyboard, monitor, and mouse down there with me. Why? I had Internet access there which I did not have in my room. While there I was reinstalling MySQL which can only be done from a Internet download. I also downloaded and installed a few other programs that also required this process.

Final Bike/Hike

For some time, I had been thinking about being at the Bike/Hike in Roanoke, AL one more time. There seemed to be enough money to do so, I headed south on the Friday before the third weekend of May. I knew that the motel in Roanoke would be \$75 per night plus taxes and fees, so I was looking for something less expensive. The closest one to there was at Oxford, AL (40 miles north of it). Well, about \$50 is much cheaper than \$75 plus! I had my breakfast things with me, so I did not have to spend any money for breakfast. (Even the motel just outside of Prattville was at least \$10 cheaper, and it was near a major Alabama city.)

Things had definitely changed in eight years! Anne was on oxygen full time, and Cindy had cancer. The rest just a little older and not really worse for wear. But after standing around and talking with staff members, I decided to hike the course they had set out. Like I do here in Knoxville on my "walks", I ran the first and last parts of it. Then I headed to Prattville for church on Sunday morning.

I had hoped to visit with Elder Jerry Abernathy, but his father-in-law was very week. Pam is his only child, so both

of them were spending time with her father as much as possible. He did not get into Prattville until late in the evening.

We did get a chance to visit Sunday morning at a fast food restaurant for about an hour before going to the church building. As has been his custom, he asked me to preach this morning which i did. (I already knew this was possible so I had done some studying here before I left.) A couple of young brethren got up first and each spoke for a while. Yes, what they said directly led into what I had on my mind. God does arrange for this to happen, you know. It was a very enjoyable service. I also enjoyed the fellowship during the noon hour. But then I had to leave so I could get back home.

What really surprised me was my MPG calculations. To start with, I averaged slightly less than 40 MPG going from here to Chattanooga. In fact, I drove the first 450 miles using only 10.245 gallons! (Knoxville to Prattville and back to Birmingham). The rest of the trip back was seemingly all uphill so I only averaged 36 MPG. (Isn't that a shame!)

With June coming so also came a new relationship with a lady resident. This continued on and off again until December 2019 when she bought a home and moved there from the apartment building. By personal agreement, what I write is limited because they would require approval by both of us.

June-December

June

Gardening

I had obtained a garden plot the last of February on the north side of the apartment building property along with several others. (It was the same plot that I had the previous year.)

Two ladies with plots were Carolyn and Doris. Both were very serious about their gardening as I had gradually learned last year when I was hanging around the area observing what people were doing in their gardens. (It's better than sitting upstairs or watching TV alone.)

So, it was no surprise that they knew about lectures being given by master gardeners several times during the summer. The first one was during the third week of the month. I got invited by them to go with them to the first lecture. Actually, in the end, I drove them to it. And yes there were things to learn which they taught that day.

The person in charge of our gardens (it was a government program for seniors I think) was also there, and he wanted us to take fertilizer (I think) back to our gardens. It was also for those with garden plots which were not in attendance. So we did.

Carolyn uses a lot of fertilizer on hers. So the plants were producing much. The yellow crookneck and zucchini were also getting closer to producing. In the midst of this, Carolyn is scheduled to go on a cruise the following week for a week

or was it 10 days? Anyway, that times was quickly drawing closer. So she began to make arrangements with people for some or some ones to keep the produced picked while she is away. A couple agreed, but they did not follow through for very long. So, for most of her absence, it was Doris and myself. While I was not having much luck with my garden, Doris' garden was also producing quite a bit.

all of this was hard work both because of the amount of watering was required as well as the amount of produce needing to be picked each day. One of them included 20 pounds of squash. At one point, one yellow crookneck squash was over 15" long and weight over 2 pounds. (Some people said that the inside would be too hard, but this is not the case. In fact, it was quite good.) In any case, we survived until her return. By this time I was eating squash once a day, had some squash in my refrigerator freezer, and basically a bottom drawer full in the refrigerator which I gave to her. (I need to mention that Doris also shared some of her produce as well. (I certainly did not have as much groceries to buy during this time!))

One of the challenges we faced was the large squash plants. The leaves were very scratchy! I wore long pants, but Doris continued to wear shorts. This caused abrasions to form everywhere her skin came into contact with these leaves. It was not anything that we really noticed at the time, but there were serious consequences from this. During the next month or two, she was regularly seeing a doctor about skin problems. By the fall, this resulted in her hospitalization. after weeks in the hospital, she was diagnosed with a serious, contagious skin disease. a flood of antibiotics, this problem was solved. Even so, she was in no shape to be released from the hospital. After being there for some time, she was move to where one of her daughters

lived. Then later she came back to recovery place in south Knoxville. She never did return to Westview Tower.

A few days after her return, she left for Jackson, TN to visit with her oldest daughter (the younger one had gone on the boat with her.) While there, she took sick and did not return for some time. So, Doris and I were back to tending her garden for her again.

Walking & Square Dancing

By the end of July, she knowing that surgery was coming up in late October, decided she needed more exercise. She also has seen me out walking morning and evening ever since she first saw me hanging around the garden area watching people work. She had even let me take her dog with me on an evening walk. So, she asked if she could join me some morning. Having told her when I go out in the morning, we arranged to meet at 7:30 am the next day. From then until her surgery, we were walking most mornings, so she got quite a bit of exercise.

Within a couple of weeks, I got a surprise. She had taken her dog out one night. While outside she spotted something in a trap she had set some time before. (We had trouble with rabbits raiding our garden plots.) So the next morning, she insisted we go out the east door of our building instead of the west one as we usually do. This will take us by our gardens and the trap. At this point she mentioned that she had seen something in the trap, but she could not make out what it was. Now she wants me to find out so we will both know. So now I'm approaching the trap and really do not see anything special... After all, it is only a small ball of black fur. (Do you think that this would have told me what was in the trap? It did not.) As I got closer, I saw that this was not completely black: it had a white stripe! Now I know

what it is, I am slowly, quietly backing back with her laughing at me.

It took a few calls to animal control for Knox County to get someone to come out to dispose of the skunk. Even so, it was 4 pm before he arrived. This baby skunk had been in the trap since the middle of the night which is not exactly a short time. Problems because of this were only going to get worse as time passes. But in the end, a solution was found to open the door to the trap. Then it took some time before the skunk realized it was open. Then out it rushed, stopping only to get a quick drink of water from a bowl and then disappear into the underbrush.

During one of our morning walks, I mentioned the first time we had met in December 2014. I also explained why I had refused to dance with her when she asked me.

Sorry, I will give no hints as to what that was except this. Square dancing seemed to be a solution as far as dancing together. So, I went to the web to look for people who are still doing this. Within a week, I located a group in downtown Knoxville. Making contact with the head of the local group, I informed her of what I had learned. On the third Monday in August, I drove us to their location. I got a little lost even with some directions from her, so we were late. Walking in, we watched the people square dance. After a while, they stopped. That is when they got us on the floor with them in our first lesson. Before we left, we were given a set of directions on how to get home. That we managed to get home without any problem.

The next Monday we got there a little ahead of time. So, we were on the floor all of the night. Like the previous week, we were each given an experienced dancer. Things were beginning to make sense!

Usually we were talking going to and coming from the square dancing. We usually did this for a little while after we reached the parking lot for our apartments. Like our morning walks the topics could range from run of the mill to serious. In any case, during these times, I felt quite comfortable sitting in my only talking; she felt the same way. If anything, we each experience the presence of angels protecting us from each other and ourselves as far as temptations are concerned. One of those evenings occurred while Doris was laid up in her room with her leg problem. We talked about the situation for a while before we decided to visit her before each going to our individual apartments.

Often when we got back, we would take her dog out to do her business. Then we would walk to her apartment. After she put her dog inside, we would talk some more. Then I would say something to make her smile before going upstairs to my apartment.

Surgery

As October began, this had been scheduled for the latter week of this month. While I really did not have anything to do to winterize my garden, she had a rather long list of things she wanted done before the surgery. So, she was spending a very large amount of time in it. When I could, I would join here. This got more things done than she could have done by herself. During all of this work together, I learned a very important lesson about my parents when they were working together in their garden. There was a bond that formed between them.

Because of all of the work done, the month seemed to pass quickly. Then came the day she went to the hospital. I made sure that I found out when she was going to leave Westview Tower for there. That morning, I was downstairs escorting

her to her SUV and watched her drive out of the parking area.

The surgery took longer than anticipated as well as her recovery. She has breathing problems which requires she wears a CPAP to help her, and her dog, Kendall, had been trained to wake her up if she stopped breathing. So the latter was to be expected. Even so, her younger daughter (she lives in a northern suburbs of Knoxville) called me to let me know she was back in her room. When they finally let her out of the hospital 3 days later, she went to her local daughter for rehabilitation.

During this same time, one of our maintenance men was in the hospital with what proved to be a fatal kidney disease. Even spending time in Vanderbilt Hospital for while could not change the end result. (This hospital is known for the latest cures in many areas of medicine.)

I thought a lot of him, so I was determined to go to view his body. At this point I also called Carolyn with the news asking if she wanted to go with me. She agreed, and I picked her up at the scheduled time. What surprised me was that she was using a cane or was that two? Anyway, she made her way to my car and then into the funeral home. Stairs were a problem for her, even a few of them. We spent some time visiting with relatives before I returned her to her daughter's home.

December 25th dinner

Then came a blunder of major proportions on my part. But first the background. Christmas was on Sunday. After she returned to her apartment, she started making plans to feed several people who were going to be in their apartments that evening. Others were invited to fix something for the

occasion. My dish was a cranberry relish. (It contained cranberries, apple, some kind of nuts along with nutmeg. All of this was chopped in my blender.) Sandy brought something as did Carolyn's daughter.

Since this was being held on the elevator lobby of the 8th floor, tables and chairs had to be brought up. This was what I did with help from others. So, everything came together, and we sat down to eat. Afterwards, I had something that I wanted to know that I did not think Carolyn would tell me. So I asked her daughter. The only problem was that I spoke loud enough that it could be heard for three or four floors! She went ballistic! It would be March of 2018 before bad feelings were soothed. It was all my fault, and I quickly admitted this to anyone who knew of our relationship.

2017

While there were many things that I did during this year, my not being able to even talk with her this year makes me want to leave this year a blank. Again, 2018 was a different story as will soon be obvious.

2018

February-June

I have been paying my car loan (\$212+ per month). I looked at my financed and decided that I could pay \$250 a month. Most if not all of the payments were at least this month. By the beginning of January, the amount still due was not far from three month payments of \$250. I divided the difference by three, and added that part to the January and

February payments. So the beginning of March was when I made the final payment which was payment in full. I had gotten a 26 month car loan, and it only took me 22 months to pay for it! Was I happy? You know I was! Yet now I have a financial problem. I will have \$250 a month extra to spend. What do I do with all of this money??? You see I really do not need much other than the necessities. I don't want a lot of things that are useful. Besides I am basically fine with what I have. Well, there is one thing that I would like to have, and a mere \$250 will not help that one. I want a wife of my own...

Carolyn and I had a garden plot that we worked. The latter part of February was when we were assigned our plots which were the same ones we had in the past. The last day of March, I walked to the garden area when I saw her working in hers. I, who was full of himself about all of this money, walked up to starting a conversation. I could not help myself: I had to brag about this new found fortune! I even asked her, "What am I going to do with so much money?" She did not hesitate as she said, "You can take me out to eat." This sounded great, so I quickly agreed for the next Wednesday at 7:30 pm.

Well, there was a change in plans. On Tuesday, she texted me asking to change the time to 6:30 pm. OK. So we met at the now appointed time and then going to Pelancho's (a Mexican Restaurant). This is when the conversation began and did not end for the most part. When we finished, I paid for the food and tip. Then we headed toward the door. So far, I was enjoying her company, but it was still quite lite outside. What was I going to do with myself until bed time. That seemed so very far away... A little later she made a suggestion: why don't we go to a movie? And she added what I really wanted to hear: "My treat." So off we went to what is known as the cheap seats. This movie theatre gets

their movies from a later release which cost less than the initial release. Years earlier I had paid a little over \$1 to watch a movie here. Now with inflation, it had gone all the way up to \$2.49! We took a little time to browse the movie posters to determine what we wanted to see and discuss it. Then we went in to watch the movie. She then paid the enormous amount of \$4.98! (In case someone does not notice, I am being completely fallacious.) On the way home, we continued to talk about this evening. We both agreed that this was a nice outing. Then over a period of time (well maybe not that much time), we decided do this again next week.

In fact, we continued to do this until the later part of June. Over a period of time, going out on Wednesday was a problem. So the day was changed to Tuesday. Another item also needs our attention: the garden. It needed tending every day. As the growing season progressed, this became more obvious. Also, Carolyn agreed to house sit her daughter's home while her daughter went on vacation. (I don't remember whether their two daughters went with them or not. But this ended seeing eating out and seeing a movie weekly.

There were consequences for going out once a week. Up to this point I have been walking twice a day. Now I was missing doing this for one evening each week. I saw my doctor in July which also included blood tests. They were up. In fact, my HbA1c was 6.1 which was the highest level I have ever had. It took half a year to bring back down to the normal level.

Later in the year

Carolyn got a phone call that she did not want nor expect. Her father had died! Her younger daughter helped her to get to Texas for the funeral before returning. This really bothered me as well, especially under questionable circumstances.

July-August

Search for Elder James Allen Rushing

This gentleman and his wife played a very important part in my life since we first met in Memphis in November, 1966. Several times I had tried to find his on the Internet without any success. So, I tried again. Somehow, this brought up the suggestion of Grace Chapel Primitive Baptist Church. So I went to its website. (This church was a very important part of my memories as it was the first time I was asked to share the stand with a minister that Sunday evening. I had only been asked to take part in services twice before this.)

As I browsed through the website, I saw a familiar name, Elder Zach Guess. I stayed in his home that weekend in November, 1966! I was due to fly out of Memphis for Biloxi, Mississippi at 10 pm. He was going to get me to airport. But before that happened, he and his two sisters were going to go to Grace Chapel for services. I was invited to go along, and I accepted. In addition to this, he had been good friends with Elder Rushing. So, it would seem that he would be able to answer my questions.

So, I decided to go to Memphis for church there. I made reservation at Motel 6 just outside the beltway on the northeast. This was for the weekend just before Labor day. Come that Saturday morning, I left to go there. Arriving in the early afternoon, I checked in. After eating supper, I head

to find the church. I got a little lost before locating it. Pulling into the parking area, I got out of my car to check things out. The doors were locked; well the front ones were. There was a sidewalk from the parking area to the back of the building which led to a door. Walking up to it, I half expected for it to be locked also. It wasn't. So, I opened it and went inside. Wondering through in the dark, I managed to see a light in front of me. Going toward it, I noticed it was in a room, probably an office. So, I walked through its doorway. There sat Bro. Guess! I introduced myself to him, reminding him of how long it had been since the last time we had seen each other. I even took out a my school picture from my junior year. Then the conversation began in earnest. After a while, I headed back to my Motel to sleep.

It took a little less time Sunday morning to find this church than last evening. As the congregation came in, I got at chance to talk with them. Some of them had been there the last time I had. Others also attended the meeting at Whitehaven PBC in November, 1966. So, it was definitely a reunion. After services, I was invited to go home with Bro. Zach for lunch. He and his wife have had perhaps a dozen children who have children of their own. The whole clan ate lunch together that day! While there, I was given a contact in Oak Ridge who is the pastor of a church there of our faith. I was also given his phone number. In fact, he called Bro. Zach sometime later. That is when I got to talk with him for the first time.

Monday morning I left for home arriving around noon. Then since I have developed the policy to find out how to get to new places by driving to it ahead of time, I drove to the church in Oak Ridge. It took a while before I found it even while using a GPS unit. And it became gradually easier the following Sundays and the Sundays after that.

The schedule for Sundays was a morning service followed by lunch with conversations and then afternoon services. I found the individual services somewhat different any I had attended in my life. After the song service, a chapter from the Old Testament was read. The preaching followed that.

I was interested in joining this church, but the pastor had many questions about my beliefs. (They held closely to the London Confession of Faith of 1688 and the Fulton Confession of Faith. Both were written with very long run on sentences. (This makes understanding them more difficult.) But, I was very adamant about the sovereignty of God. To me, the Bible clearly states that God has declared will happen and no man or thing can stop it at the time He appoints and the manner He selects. Later he asked me to preach during some afternoon services. And still later, he left me to take his place when he was away.

The congregation when I began attending their services consisted of two elderly ladies (in their late 80's), a young man, and the pastor. The young man in time stopped coming because there were not any young ladies attending. He obviously wanted to get married and did not see how he was going to meet someone coming to church here.

During the time I attended this church, more than two years, we had visitors on a few occasions. One time they included the widow of a minister with whom I shared the time at Grace Chapel in November 1966.

Carolyn and I had a deep friendship. There were times throughout the time we interacted with each other when one or the other would attempt to make it more than this. But the other was able to prevent this from happening. Just being deep friends was hard to maintain.

As Thanksgiving approached this year, this problem reared its head once again. I was the cause. Hannah's high school graduation would be the Saturday after Thanksgiving. I wanted to attend and bring her with me. At first she said no; later she said she would. When the time to leave, she refused to go.

Nov

I had known for sometime this fall that Hannah was completing her high school classes. There were specific assignments that were yet to be completed. Finally, the word came that she had completed all of the requirements for graduation! The date for this was set.

So, I left Knoxville, TN, on Thursday morning spending the night in Motel 6 in northwest Memphis. Friday, I made the rest of the trip. Roger had already arrived.

He and Hannah were spending a lot of time together, and they obviously had a very close relationship. Well, they told everyone that they were only friends. It certainly looked to me as if they were much more than this, much more.

By the time I arrived, things were beginning to become more hectic. Hannah, Marianne, Sarah, and probably more had things that needed to be done at the last moment, so they left. Then the men that were present decided to go out together. I was asked to go along, but I refused. Shooting guns at targets did not interest me at all. The last time I fired a gun was in the summer of 1969. Seeing how well I can shoot did not mean anything. So, I was all alone. (At least I did get some additional rest after driving for several hours.)

Come Saturday morning, we headed for Little Flock Church in Little Flock to complete the finishing touches. Then came the graduation ceremony. Paul was the spokesman, and then Elder Carl Staten delivered to Hannah a charge. It was different by far from my graduation ceremonies, but I liked it. With it ending, we all retired to the dining area for refreshments.

Just how close was Roger and Hannah? Well, since most of the conversations this weekend were about things that others could take part in, but I did not see how I could. So, I just listened. This is when I heard mentions of marriage. So, this is where the two were going. They expected Roger to give Hannah an engagement ring. At some point, he approached her with something in his hand. It seems that she thought it was this ring. She took it with enthusiasm, but it was not. Her facial features changed rapidly!

I was suppose to have my eyes examined by the beginning of October, and this was late November. Earlier, I had talked to Carolyn about glasses. (During our relationship, we took time to discuss many topics that interested us.) She mentioned that she got lenses that were progressive any time she could afford to do so. I obviously became curious about this. So, I decided to ask Paul about progressive lenses. It turns out that is what he has. Having an engineering background, he filled me in on many points concerning these lenses which were mostly positive. The negative point was that some people could not adjust to them. Something about the time of day when this type of lens were first worn.

Several years before, a lady using these lenses described them as mostly being out of focus; only a little bit was in focus. This might have resulted in her putting up with them rather than enjoying them. Anyway, Paul's explanation

intrigued me. Well, I am always looking for something new to experience...

Come Monday, I was heading back home. It was either that day or the next that I heard that he had finally given her the ring.

December

The next time I saw Carolyn our relationship had cooled a lot because of my trying get to go to Hannah's graduation. From there, things went down hill again. With everything that was going to happen between then and the 25th of this month, she did not have any spare time to be with me.

OK, it time for me to get my annual eye exam. I did that morning, and I had enough of a change to get new lenses. So, I ordered new ones. Since they keep a large stock of lenses, they had the progressive ones that I needed. It only took a few hours to make the adjustment for my astigmatism, so they were ready by or before 2 pm. I was shocked when I put them on! Instead of almost everything being out of focus, literally everything was in focus, and at the very same time. Words fail to state what I was experiencing at this point in time! I ma ecstatic to say the least.

What else is left for the year? Well, it was time to study my finances for 2018 to determine what my anticipated expenses will be for 2019. Boring, huh? Yes, but very necessary.

2019

Judith

Rather than spending all of my time in the evenings now that Carolyn and I were not seeing each other, I went to a TV room off of the Community Room to watch TV. Specifically, I was watching the Hallmark Channel. Several times during this month, a lady would come downstairs. She would spend some time talking with people in the Community Room. Some time she would also come into the room where I was. I noticed that she was nervous, over what I had no idea. She would spend some time chatting while standing and yet was fidgety. In time she would come a little closer than before. She even got to the place that she would sit down for a while. This continued on at least until the summer...

During this entire time I tried to be as nonthreatening as I could. With time I learned that her name was Judith. One thing for sure: I was enjoying her companionship when she did.

She had a dry sense of humor. She also reminded me of Susan: she also had a quick wit. (What's not to like?) Which reminds me on of evening outside near the east breezeway. I was listening to several ladies talk. The conversations got around to what is wrong with men. (I was definitely not saying anything here!) Anyway, at some point Judith added her comment with something about her not married to her so I would not know what she was complaining about. Then came my turn with this comment: she never had given me a chance to say no, as in refusing to marry her. With there

was a lot of laughter; even Judith joined in. She knew I had got her so to speak.

March

Carolyn and I may have made contact some this year, but that memory is not clear enough to write it down. Anyway, come the last of the month, she called to ask a favor. Her father's estate needed to be settled. Since, this is already about a year since that happened, the time was now. I am not sure how this was settled, but the rest of the family did not want to do it. So, she needed to go to Texas to get this done. Driving that far was out of the question. So, she wanted me to drive her to the local bus station so she could take the bus. I did so, and remained until her bus left. Yes, I was sad at seeing her go. It would be the end of August before she returned, but I did not know that yet. Neither did I know that there would be very little communication between us for the entire time she was gone.

August

Tom & Elaine's 50th wedding anniversary (August 30)

Earlier in the summer, I noticed that the sole one of my pairs of dress shoes was loose. Since I knew that I would need to wear them, something had to be done. So I did a Web search for a shoe repair shop. Then it was off to get the shoe repaired. the lady that waited on me, noticed there was a larger problem. When she pulled on the sole, both sole and heel came off! (Well, I had bought them back in the mid 1990's...) The other shoe of that pair was not really

better off either. So between then and this anniversary, I bought a couple of new dress shoes.

As August continued toward the end of it, I first began planning on this trip. This is where my computer came in very handy: it contained a file with a proposed list of the items I should take with me. It is a file that dates back to my Mom's death in 1998. I had updated this through the years. This time I updated it even more. Once I was satisfied with the items to take and how many of each, I began packing. As I did this I would check off each item packed. So by Thursday morning, Aug 29, all the items were checked off. I also began packing the car with the things ready for this. Only a few items (hygiene) were packed and taken to the car on this date.

It was a little before 7 am DST when I headed out of the driveway. As the miles rolled on, it seemed that I was getting closer to Tom & Elaine's home that what I thought possible. In fact, I ate lunch at a Welcome Center as I entered Illinois. This was between 12 and 1 pm DST (11 and 12 CDT). It did not seem very long before I was signing into my motel room (Motel 8). Upon arrival, I called Elaine on their cell phone. The only problem was they do not use their cell phone unless they are on a trip! So, the voice mail was not received. Then I unpacked my car.

Next, I headed to Cherry Street where they live. I had been using a GPS unit that was fairly accurate... In any case, I was not sure where I was as I drove into Edwardsville. Then I saw a street sign that seemed to be familiar. Upon this, I slowed down a little bit looking intently for the next one. This time I saw it soon enough to turn right (as I should). Cherry Street came quicker than I had expected, but I turned in time. As I approached their home, I was looking

for a parking place for my car. Not seeing one, I parked a out 50 before their home.

For some reason, I did not bother to look behind me before getting out of my car. Well, it has been my experience that the traffic has usually been almost non existent at this time in the afternoon. So, I got out and started walking toward the front of my car. That is when I head a car motor behind me. So, I quickly walked to where I could slip in between vehicles and waved the car on. As it passed, I notice the car license as being from Iowa. Rachel Hanna, a very, very close friend of Tom & Elaine had just arrived. So I walked along the street side of the parked vehicles to her car. By this time, Elaine had already rushed out of the house and across the street, Marianne not all that far back.

After some chatting back and forth, she started to get some things out of her car. That is when I asked if I could help. Naturally, the answer was no. After all, she was use to doing everything on her own. (I only asked because I saw she had three things to be taken inside which was one more than she had hands... Goof ole Marianne. She told Rachel to let me have something since I was a Southern gentleman... So, she did. And in time we all headed inside.

I did not interact that much with anyone for a while. In time supper was ready and most of the people part of or related to them were there. During the supper, Elaine told me about the group going to eat out the next evening at a Chinese Restaurant. So I asked about the serving size at it knowing the usual was enough for two easily. That was confirmed, so I then asked if any one would like to share a plate with me. Rachel volunteered.

After supper, most of the people gathered in the living room with others scattered throughout the first floor. Some

anniversary presents were opened. (I had not brought any because I had no idea as to what would be appreciated. Neither did I realize that I was suppose to do so. In the end, I sent them a 1000 piece puzzle to add to their already large library of them.) Then in a period of some quiet, Paul looked at me, and said, " you must be the oldest one here."

This is when I looked around at all of the people. Well I knew that I was older of everyone but Rachel. Her body language and looks told me that she could not be as old as me. So, I said, "Yes, I am." It was a little later that she sat down on the couch next to me and said quietly, "I may be older." This became a challenge to me, so this led to a weird conversation between the two of us that involved the bombing of Pearl Harbor. What came out of this was that I was born 9 days after it and she was born one year and one day after it. So, every year we are the same age for eight days. The rest of the year, I am older. But did it really make any difference? But what was really important is how she approached me. She was so sweet and kind.

After some more time past, some of Tom & Elaine's children spoke up insisting we play Michigan, a board game. I actually joined in in playing and was glad I had done so. I felt that I belong rather than being an outsider. I thoroughly enjoyed this time until I had to leave to get some sleep in my motel room. But it was then that I began to realize that I wanted to become part of this family in some way, being involved in some of their joint activities.

Finally, I had to say my good-byes. After I arrived at my motel, my thoughts turned to Rachel. After all, she was my age and a widow like me. It seemed to me that we might make a good couple. Then I thought about the incident at her car. I was asking myself what would I have done if I had been the one getting things out of my car? I really did not

like the answer I got: yes, I would have said, "I don't need any help. In fact, that is exactly what I had said to Tom some time in the past. Is this what I should have done in that case? The answer came back as "NO". Why? This is when I realized that Matthew applied. If I wanted others to accept my offer to help, I need to be willing to accept the offer of help from others.

The next afternoon was when preparations were made for the celebration to be held on the day after this. So, I had some time to myself during this morning. Among other things I made sure I got my walking in. To do so, I walked around and around the motel and the Restaurant next to it (well in the joining parking lot). I was not sure just how far I walked, but I did time myself to match how long of a time that I usually walked. After lunch at the restaurant, I headed to the Church of Christ where the celebration is to be. I don't remember how helpful I was though...

Then came the evening along with a problem. Rachel and I were going to share a plate. The only problem with this was how were we going to share the cost + tip? I had not really approached her about this, and this bothered me. Then it seemed a long time between when I arrived with Jennifer and Sonny and when she arrived. In the end, we sat next to each other. Our decision was that I would charge the meal to my debit card and she would give me half of what I spent. The only problem was that she paid for the time as well as half the cost of the meal. (I wanted to pay half of the as well.) But I let this drop until the next day. What I did was enjoy a wonderful evening in conversation with a lovely lady...

Saturday arrived, and I had another morning to myself followed by lunch alone. Afterwards, I put on my suit and headed to the celebration at the approximated time given

to me. One of the things that I did was to straighten out the financial situation with Rachel. In the end, I insisted she take back some of the money she had given me. After a little bit, I got my way, but I did not like the interchange at all! (I am talking about how bad I was feeling about how I had done this. I did not like myself at all!) Anyway I began feeling more like a wall flower, while I noticed that Rachel was having no problems talking with others. (I would have loved for us to do this together. After all, everyone else of the Tom & and Elaine clan were couples: we weren't.)

I did move around watching the slide presentation on the screen. This gave me a different perspective of the relationship shared by Tom and Elaine. Later I would notice Webb, Margret, and their family came in, sitting at a table. I did not go to greet them, not did they make any move to greet me. As some more time lapsed, I actually went up to some tables introducing myself to them. One of the was the Clapp family from Little Flock Church there. I also learned about Nancy and how she was doing. Later, I found Jeff (Webb's son and family). We had a rather long conversation extended throughout the evening meal. I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent with them.

On Sunday, I went to Little Flock for church. I saw Rachel there as well. I had this great desire to sit near her during the service but did not act upon this at all. After lunch, I went outside looking for her car hoping that she had not left for home already. I could not find a car with an Iowa license, so I walked around the church grounds. As I came around to the front of the church building, the front door opened. There she was! We walked to each other, and the conversation began. I rather quickly suggested that we walk to her car rather than just stand there. Well, she would be closer to her car when the conversation ended. So, we did. As we reached her car, she got in. At this point, I thought

she would start her car and drive off, but she did not. Instead she rolled down her window and the conversation continue for a little while... Only then did she drive off.

I went back into the church. Others were going to a Nursing Home to sing for the residents. My throat was not going to stand the strain, so I headed to my motel room as others headed out. Later in the afternoon, Marianne called to tell me when supper was going to be held on Cherry Street. (The clan was getting together one more time before dispersing.)

(I don't remember exactly when this happened this weekend, but I am including this here.) Around the first of July, Tom and Elaine had taken a bus tour/cruise to the north eastern part of the US. During the cruise part, they had had taken many pictures of the both of them. In them was revealed a different part of their relationship that none of the rest of us were expecting! Even so, I remember a glimpse of what these photos revealed sometime int the past, but that was all. As far as the other thing occurring that evening, I only remember that I thoroughly enjoyed myself. But it was getting late, and I had a long drive ahead of me. So, I said my good-byes to everyone. To Elaine, I made a comment about Rachel. She immediately said that Rachel had said, "I don't need any man." (Elaine certainly read my inner thoughts like a book!) Then off to try to get some sleep.

i headed home using GPS, but I was wondering about its directions. It had what I thought was south west when I wanted to head south east. For the first hour or more I was driving through fairly dense fog. I was not a safe driver during this morning! Once again, the trip seemed quicker that past trips, but I don't know why. I do know that I stopped for lunch at Cracker Barrel about 12:30 CDT. At this

point I was little over an hour from home. Being the lunch hour, I had to wait for a while to get a table.

Within a couple of days, I was heading outside from my apartment building. As I approached the front door, a couple opened the door for me. Remembering the conclusion I had come to just that past weekend, I thanked them with feeling. Their words and body language told me they were well pleased. I felt very good myself. Conclusion: I was right about this!

Carolyn arrives back from Texas!

When I got back home, I learned that she had arrived the same day as I went to Illinois for the 50th Wedding Cerebration. After I returned, she was in the community room talking with people. I sat near by as she talked for slightly more than an hour. Then she invited me to go out to eat with her. This is when she had still more things to tell me. For the past six months, she had been settling the estate of her father who had died a month ago. Then in early August, There was a man's death near to her that occurred. The others being close to the one who died wanted her to settle that man's estate as well. Between the two estates, she had received quite an inheritance. So, by the end of the year, she had bought a house near her local daughter. She left the apartment with the last load of her things on December 31, 2019. (We have had little communication since then.

During the time I knew her, I was keeping a journal of some of the events that occurred. Some of these entries contain things that are about the two of us that I choose not to include in this series. They will only be available to anyone besides myself for as long as I live.-

Text message

On the last day of the year, the day Carolyn left, Marianne texted me stating that her family were going to pray out the year. So, she wanted to know what things I might wanted to be included in in their prayer list. I sent a short list off the top of my head, but it definitely was not something that I took seriously.

2020

January

Phone call

The next morning (Wednesday), she called me: we spent most of the morning talking about a variety of topics. At one point she was talking about Bo. Carl's sermon. Since this interested me, I asked where I could find this sermon on the Web. She told me, and I said that I wanted to hear what he had had to say. Then the subject turned to another topic. And so most of the morning went this way.

My Spiritual education expanded exponentially

One of these topics was *Prayer Request Journal*. It was something that she kept, and I wanted to know more about it. I have kept a journal off and on since then. So, I used the same program to create a prayer journal of my own. Unfortunately, writing in it has become similar to my journal: sporadic at best.

Well the next afternoon I decided it was time to listen to this sermon she had raved about... The Scriptural reference was Ephesians 1:11. So far, so good. Then he began reading. It was about an inheritance the the Ephesian brethren had obtained. At this point, I stopped listening because I just knew that his sermon was about Heaven and immortal glory. I have heard enough of those sermons. At this point, I literally stopped listening, not hearing another word even though the sermon was still being streamed to my computer. When it ended, I closed the browser. What had I heard in the beginning? First, his title for the sermon: *Heaven's Saving Account*. Then these words: In whom we have obtained and inheritance...

(Here is some background about me and Bro. Carl's sermons. I had sermons he had preached between January 2003 and November 2008 with an exception of six months of missing sermon computer files. During that time, I had gained an idea of his preaching style during that time as I had played all of the many times in the past. So now I am having an internal fight on my hands. Had I really missed some very important information in not listening, or had he in fact preached a traditional sermon that Sunday? I had to find out. This means I had to play it again. This time I would be listening very intently for sure!)

About noon on Friday, I opened my computer browser going to the Little Flock website again. This time I was determined to find out what I had missed the first time. The results were rather embarrassing to me. It was a far from a traditional sermon on inheritance as one could get. It was not about the afterlife, but our lives in the kingdom of God while we live now. It was this sermon that I understood based upon my life experiences! This certainly changed my life, and this was only the beginning.

The Book of Ephesians

The following Sunday, I attended church In Oak Ridge as usual. Later in the day, I went back to the Little Flock Church website. Bro. Carl's sermon was from Eph 1:7, his topic, Forgiveness. It was amazing the things that I learned that day. Among them was the applications of this sermon to my autobiography. Along with this came some thoughts about what it meant from his preaching from the book of Ephesians for a second Sunday in a row. Is this part of a series of sermons on Ephesians. (I had known him to do this several time in the past.

The following Sunday, his sermon continued in Ephesians, so after listening to it, I took a closer look at the list of previous sermons. This gave me my answer: yes, this was such a series. Also within the next couple of sermons, he mentioned something about earlier sermons in this series. So, I started searching for the first sermon of it. It was not what I would have supposed: that sermon revealed the background for this chapter of the Bible. The second sermon discussed Paul as A Ready Writer. It took some time, but I finally found all of them. For the next few weeks, I would listen to the sermon preached that week and an earlier one as well.

I was in Oak Ridge for church on the third week end of January when I had an unusual experience. I had the feeling that Rachel Hannah was standing beside me as we were singing the last song before the preaching. I literally choked up where I could not sing at all! Well, it was a wonderful feeling!

Meanwhile the news was covering the problem that China was having with what appeared as an epidemic named Covid. Actually, the first mention of this was back in 2019. It

was obvious that whatever they were doing was not working. At some point, they basically quarantined an entire large city! Then there were reports of this disease in other countries.

Birth of Malachi

While the Covid-19 continued to spread throughout the world, Hannah due date drew constantly nearer. At this same time, false information was being spread faster. The minister at Oak Ridge was sure that there really was not anything to worry about. All the bad news was not the truth. People were being paid to certify deaths as from this virus even if that was not the case. The people who were relatives to those who died knew from what their relatives died. But who was listening?

On February 15, 2020, Hannah went into labor. By evening, Marianne was in a car heading to South Carolina many hours away. Malachi William Whitney was born early the following day. Anxious grandmother arrived shortly thereafter. At some point that week, I decided to visit my new great-great-nephew.

I was discouraged from coming too soon after his birth, so I depended upon Marianne to tell me when. It turned out that was Saturday, the 22nd. I had a GPS unit, so I programmed it with their address. Come Saturday morning I headed out expecting a two and a half hour drive or so. Unfortunately, it did not have good directions placing me in another part of time. I think it was more than 3 hours because of that.

Ever since the first of the year, I have been listening to Bro. Carl's sermons every Sunday. (At some point, I was recording his sermons and then listening to them. Often I listened to the more than once.) Over a period of seven

weeks, I realized that he had been describing the Spiritual reasons for the events of my life! Actually I was getting exciting about this. During this day, I mentioned this to Marianne along with (I think) some example in my life. Boy, was I excited when I did this!! As a results, I was learning many things about my life that I have not realized before. How was this possible? Since the summer of 1982, I had been reading my Bible cover to cover less than one year and doing this every year. So, Not only had this affected my actions but also how I wrote.

Later in the day, Marianne "sweet talked" me into holding Malachi for a little while. While it had been decades since I had held my own son when he was this age, I still remembered how to hold a very young baby. Was I nervous? Of course I was, but I soon got over it.

All good things had to come to an end, I had to leave for home. I was given something to eat along the way. So off I went somewhat wondering if my GPS unit will get me back... I certainly got on the way, but this unit was not the biggest worry. The highway I was taking went through the mountains. There were two construction areas that backed up the traffic going my way literally for miles for each one. I think I could have walked faster than what I drove! This an exaggeration, but not by very much. Travel time back to Knoxville was about 5 hours.

More and more restrictions

I remember listening to a sermon from Little Flock Church in northwest Arkansas one Sunday. Usually they had a handshake to end their services, but not this time. It would be suspended for the duration. Then came another sermon later in which there was not going to be any lunch at church anymore. Then there were going to be any services

anymore (Mar 22). (This was getting serious!) Then came the first attempts at Bro. Carl preaching on Facebook without a congregation. Later he also shared sermons on Facebook by other of our ministers. So, in time I could view several sermons each week which was a great help to me. It was definitely educational!

It has been a year since my cataract surgery, I had had a resent visit to my ophthalmologist. My eyes are obviously still changing even after a year, so I was given a new prescription. I immediately took it to Vision Works around noon. With their large inventory of lenses, they had one in stock. It was later in the afternoon when I got my new glasses. This was March ¹². (In only a few weeks, this store along the rest of the mall store would close their doors not knowing when or if they would every reopen, (Why repeat myself with this? Well, this was the feeling in the back of everyone's minds at the time.)

What was I doing all of this time? I definitely did not have very much contact with anyone except when going out to buy groceries and other needs a couple to few times a week. I was still going outside (with my mask on) to walk everyday. Very seldom did I get close enough to even speak to anyone. I did spend some time on Facebook though sort of keeping acquainted with family members and friends.

Economic shutdown

On Fri, March 20, all of the mall stores were closed but one. It would close the following Monday. From then on, I saw even fewer people than before. Then come Wednesday evening, I listened to Bro. Carl's sermon from the previous week This is when I noticed that this sermon had been lived streamed on Sunday. But beginning on Mar 29th, I watch their live stream every Sunday. At this same time, I had

started recording the daily statistics on Covid-19. It would not all that long before I stopped attending church in Oak Ridge. I was concerned that if I got it unknowingly, I might give it to the two elderly sisters that attended regularly. (They did not think this was necessary.) It would be months before I returned.

It may sound like there was nothing to do other than two daily walks, login to Facebook, read my Bible every day, get groceries, etc. Such is not the case. Some time in the past I had rejoined the documentation group for LibreOffice. First there was the preparation for the 6.4 edition coming up soon. This means that I needed to update the Getting Started with Base chapter as well as help with the entire Base Guide. Only when that was completed, could I then turn my attention to the 7.0 version. (LibreOffice 7.0 was due to be release in about 9 months.) So I had a lot of computer work to complete even before I logged into Facebook.

On Mar 31, everyone in the building got a sheet informing what was about to happen and what was expected from us. Then the next day, all the doors were lock permanently for what was thought to be the duration. The office hired two security guards which it placed behind tables in the lobby of the building. If you were not a resident, you had to prove that you had a right to enter the building. This was definitely not an April 1st joke! But it was April 1st.

I even took the time to think about others in this pandemic: it is my younger brother: he works in a grocery store. We may have problems with shortages, but he had to deal with the people who caused them! He had to deal with people who were govern by fear of what might be coming. How are they going to get through this? This was just one of the questions that were going through their minds. Then my

mind wonders... the very people who were deemed as essential workers were the same ones whom they usually paid very little attention nor money. Makes me wonder.

Yes, I even had time to do some cooking... Sometime in the past, I had attended a lecture in the Community Room that included making various types of stock. What caught my attention in this was the use of vegetable and fruit peelings. (I had years earlier made beef or chicken stock using the bones I had leftover from my meals. This included adding part of a cup of vinegar to the water, add the bones, and simmer. With this lecture, I learned that I can use my banana, orange, and onion peelings: simmer them in water for about 8 hours. A crock pot is excellent for doing this: put everything in the pot, and water, and cook. Gee! onion peels sure make a wonderful room freshener!

I even got a chance to help someone else. I learned that Audrey had a school project that her grandmother Elaine helped her with. I'm fairly certain this was information about cassette recorders. Since my first computer used one as its storage device, I did some research. Then through her mother, I sent a link to a website about its use. I also included information concerning how I had used it. This gave me a nice feeling!

Just how serious is this going to be? Someone who studies things like this decided discover the answer. Using the data that he had available, he predicted 800,000 to 1.6 million. This prediction was made around April 24. Those who read this knows that this was in that range. (This is for the period of time of the Covid-19 pandemic. This counting ended with the declared end of the pandemic.)

Since last fall, I have been Facebook friends with one of the officers of my graduation class as well as at least another

student. So, as things got worse, I sent her a note on Facebook asking about the effects of Covid on our 60th class reunion anniversary. After some consulting with the other officers, it would be postponed until next year. By the time that we were to originally meet, this decision was proved to be the wise one!

This is April 30th. It is twelve years since I had my stroke. It is also the 53st birthday for Donna. This brought back memories of that time. We had been walking a couple of miles a few times recently. As her birthday approached, she grew more and more worried. Her sister had died at a young age, and she feared she would also, as in less than a week. But she had woken up that morning and got off to work on time. Then the unthinkable: a phone call from our manager: I was in the hospital! At some point that morning, she heard the words that she really did not want to hear from the doctor: *if they could not get the blood from bleeding into the brain, I would die.* Well, obviously they did. But even then, the next question was what would be the prognosis? At this point I could not use my right arm and leg. Would I be crippled? Would I have to spend the rest of my life bedridden? Clearly, no one knew until after I began physical therapy. But twelve years later, we all know. I still have weakness in the left side. But otherwise, I can do quite well thank you for my age. For the next day or so after this, my attention went back to other events that two weeks in the hospital.

Here is a thought for today: *Give thy mind a break from its habitual judging. Thou formest judgments about this or that situation, persons, etc. -- as if judging were their main function in life. But We created thee first and foremost to know Us and to live in rich communion (abide) with Us. When thou becomest preoccupied with passing judgment, thou usurpeth My role.*

From the spring of 2003, Shirley Schumann and I corresponded by email for more than a decade (I think) for the most part. This quote came from her. She realized that sometimes she had been too judgmental and uses this to remind her it is time to stop once in a while. With the lesson God taught me about this subject the fourth week of October, 2014, I realized the importance of this saying. I now have it as part of my background. The other is a poem.

As Covid-19 took its toll, more churches were beginning to go to the internet to continue having services. It was Bro. Carl that shared the Facebook page used by these churches. I think it was Point Remove that he first shared. Then he shared one that was broadcast from Union church in north Georgia. (He had transmitted it to this church as one of the sermons for their association meeting.) Then he shared one from Salem which is northwest of Little Rock. I was able to find a few more as well. I certainly enjoyed all the Spiritual lessons I have gotten from all of these brethren! It made what could have been a bad situation from a mental point of view. Instead, I had learned so much about my Lord, so much more than I ever had before.

During this same time, I was thinking about my books that I had written. I had three books purchased. I even had one lady who had bought one to tell me how much she enjoyed her book. But three books in two years certainly was discouraging to me. So, I pulled my books from the website.

Oh my shoulder!

During the summer, I started to take my water bottle with me on my walks. Then I noticed that I had a feeling in my right arm and shoulder when I carried it on this side. It gradually became pain. This increased in intensity until I was forced to seek medical advice.

When I arrived at my doctor's office on Friday, I had to be wearing a mask and then have my temperature taken. Only then was I allowed inside the building. Oh yes, they had several questions for me about specific things I might have done. One of them was this, had I been in a gathering of more than 10 people. Had I had a fever?

Since this was not within the expertise of my regular doctor, I saw the nurse practitioner who was supervisor of him. This was definitely an extremely painful experience. You see, she had to poke around my shoulder and upper arm to see from where the pain was coming. The sharpest pain occurred when she touched the top of my shoulder about half way from my head. My entire right arm went completely limp! I came close to screaming. Yes, I definitely had a problem with tendons being inflamed. So, I was given some prescriptions that included a salve and pain killers. Then I was referred to a physical therapy facility.

I thought I had read the directions for each of my prescriptions well. Yet, it took three days to realize that I was using about half of the salve on my shoulder. I wonder if that had anything to do with the pain not subsiding as much as I would like?... Actually, it had everything to do with the amount of pain. From here on, it was a lot less.

In the mist of this, my observations of the number of new Covid cases each week was becoming worrisome. The number of cases were rapidly increasing. Other areas have much larger number than we have. Will we have this? Actually, it was looking like the question was not if but when.

By the first Saturday, the pain had lessened enough that I no longer needed to use the salve. (Finally!) The next day I decided the pain was low enough I might be able to do

without the pill as well. It was, but it had increased enough for me to use the salve one more time at bedtime. Monday was similar: no pill and the salve only applied at bedtime. Beginning with Tuesday, I stopped using both: no pill, no salve. What other results was I having? I actually vacuumed the rug without any real difficulty.

But then I thought I had another problem appearing: black spots in my stool. Having reported this to the nurse practitioner, I received a kit to collect stool samples. (Oh joy! **AND** I hope no one faults me for not describing how I collected these samples...) The results were all negative. Possible cause of the spots? I eat a large amount of kale. Well chewed up just might be what I had seen...

One thing that is missing in my journal is my physical therapy. It started the middle of July and ended August 25th. The female, Alisha, I had for physical therapy after my stroke had been very nice even though she was constantly pushing to my limits. The male I had for upper torso therapy was the opposite! This time, I got one that not only did she push me as did Alisha. She even has a very similar name that also begins with an A. It took about an hour to do all of the exercises she ran me through. Then I think she first used heat to relax my right shoulder. Later she would use ice. My mind is rather fuzzy as to how much of each or when. All I knew was that my shoulder felt better by the time the session was over. Somewhere during the time I saw her, my muscles learned how to relax. I would be going through strenuous exercises and pain was getting worse. But, as soon as I stopped, the pain immediately and completely vanish! As the end of August approached, I still had one week of physical therapy that I could have. Instead, I decided to quit one week early. This way, if I needed a week's sessions later in the year, I could get them. (I did not need them in the end.

When I left the final session, I went in a different direction and got lost. Then not really watching what I was doing, I hit a pothole with my right tire. That bent it causing an air leak. I managed to limp to GMC Rice where I have my car's work done. A new wheel was ordered and later put on.

Donna is back, at least for this time. She contacted me wanting to meet with me. Apparently she still has feeling about being with me. So, we met to eat one more time (or will it be the last?). The only way we could be as close as she would like is for the meeting of our minds. We have different ideas about things that neither are willing to change. So, they would, and we will never be as close as we could have been.

October

It was perhaps mid September that I had decided to find some way to get a fob to open my car doors. I have a fob to open the door to my apartment, so why can't I have a fob for the car doors too? So, I drove to Rice GMC to ask one of their service representatives. She recommended going to American Radio for this. So, I did. That is when I learned that their first opening for service was in two weeks. I took it! When I got it the first week of this month, I could open the two front doors, which were the ones that I used all of the time. I did not realize this much later. When I did, I had them fixed. There were some problems with the locks.

And then it was near the end of October that I ran into a problem with my glasses: the right leg fell off! This bugged me to say the least. (Fortunately for me, the mall had reopened. Unfortunately, I failed to write down when.) My past frames had lasted for years. It appears that this one lasted less than 18 months! (The new lenses that I had gotten back in February were put in the frame of the old

glasses. I had gotten this frame in May 2019.) Personally, I thought they should have replaced the frame for free. They didn't. After giving me a discount, I got a new frame with the lenses placed in it. Then I got an explanation as to what had happen. Each leg of the frame had a spring that allows the legs to expand out when putting the on or off. However, when doing this repeatedly, these springs have a tendency to break which is what happened to mine. Then they gave me some advice: hold the legs securely when putting the glasses on or off. Every since then, I have done this. (Three years later, I was still wearing the same frame, only the lenses have been changed.)

November

Since I had already talked with PMG about a Covid-19 medical trial, I knew it would not be a lot of time be this began. Also, I had an appointment to see my doctor for my quarterly contact. I also was wondering about a specific test that I wanted to be run: inflammation test. It had been low in 2008 and 2009. But what was it now. I am going into this medical trial, so I would like to know what was was now. The doctor agreed. It turned out to be quite low. The range for this is 0.3 to 3.0. Readings of 1 or less is considered to be normal. Mine was 0.5! So I was certain that I was very healthy going into this study.

Temperatures are continue to drop as winter approaches. Thanksgiving is coming soon also. With this back drop, I went to an early appointment with my ophthalmologist. My eyes are continue to change after my cataract removals 18 months ago. So, it is time to get new lenses again: twice in six months! But there is one thing that is nice. At the end of the eye exam to determine my prescription, they always ask me to read the bottom line. Well there are rows of letters that I saw in all but one line: the bottom line. It

contained numbers with a slash: 20/20. I like that! Oh, there could have been a downside to the exam. The doctor found evidence of diabetic retinopathy. To see it, he had to magnify a small part of the retina a great deal to see that very tiny amount of blood near a blood vessel. He was not concerned as he sees this many times. In most cases, the eye will repair itself and the blood will be reabsorbed into the blood system. It just need to be checked for once in a while.

Humana Medicare policy

I suppose watching TV sometimes can have its benefits. Watching these programs from off the air means that many of the channels available to me are independent ones, and their advertisement revenue comes from smaller sources. So, adds are now more off the wall so to speak. As a result, I was seeing a lot of commercials about the open enrollment period for Medicare. I decided to check them out by calling one of the phone numbers listed. I liked what I had heard. With my given medical and financial conditions, Humana and United Healthcare were the top choices. At this point, I then called Humana directly to apply for the program.

After that I got a phone call from PMG which was later changed to Accellacare. They were shortly going to get the Covid-19 vaccine by Novavax probably by the end of the month. Was I still interested in being a part of this medical trial. Yes, I am very interested! At the same time I was also on a list for a medical trial concerning afibrillation. But, the latter trial refused medicare recipients which had a Medicare Advantage Policy. Since I had just obtained that from Humana for 2021, I was dropped from that list. After that call, there were delays of one sort or another. For me, it started on January 5, 2021. So much for shortly. (Novavax is

new to commercial production of this type of vaccines, so these things should have been expected. There were additional delays over the next few years.)

Oakwood PBC

Up to this point, I had been attending Covenant PBC every Sunday. Recently, Bro. Barber had began a series on the book of Revelation. This create a problem for me. He is a confessed pre-millennialist. I am not. His introductory sermons to this subject were sheer lectures which did not improve my knowledge one bit. So, at the end of the afternoon service on the fourth Sunday, I told him that I would not be coming back again. We actually ended on a civil basis.

So, on the fifth Sunday, I headed out to Oakwood PBC for church for the first time in more than ten years. When I arrived, I was expecting to see Elder Ellis, but he had not appeared yet. As I waited, I talked with the deacon that had already arrived. Right at 10:30, a few more people arrived including the assistant pastor.

There was one big problem: none of them could lead singing. They all knew that I had some knowledge of music from the last time I attended here. The pastor did not show up, and he was the only song leader. So, I was asked to do so which I happily did. As I did, I felt Jesus blessing me in to this. I felt at home.

The following Sunday, I learned what had happened. The pastor had recently accidentally thrown away his updated debit card which had been sent to him. (The envelope for these is nondescript for a reason. They are less likely to be stolen.) So, when he tried to buy gas that Sunday morning, his old card was rejected.

Over the next few weeks, he informed me of my situation as far as he was concerned. One charge that I had leveled against me seemed very strange. I did not understand where it came from. (I have figured it since then. Since I did not believe a certain passage of Scripture the same way others did, I got a label that was misleading to me to say the least. I continued to attend that church for more than a year.)

December

I finally got a call from PMG the last week of the month. They set up my initial appointment for January 5, 2021. Finally, they are getting this off the ground.

From at least the middle of this year, my entries into my journal have been data about Covid as gathered from the Knox County Health Department. I suppose you might say I had become fixated with them. Then then again, there was a certain amount of certainty in them. It was not what might happen: it was this is happening now.

The end of the year, the government sent out stimulus packages to many people. It was a rush job, so mistakes were likely. But the most important part was that the economy needed the extra spending, and it was not a huge amount per person to start with. I did not spend it at first, but I bought a nice suit with the money later.

2021

January

Novavax Vaccine Study

The study was divided into two groups, one twice the size of the other. The larger one got the vaccine while the smaller group got a normal saline solution. This is to run for two years with the final office visit scheduled the first part of January, 2023. Several office visits were required as they were taking blood samples each time. Of course, pay was \$150 for each office visit... In earlier studies we had been given booklets to fill out with daily temperatures plus answers to other questions. This time all of this was done with a cell phone.

My first visit was on January 5th. This began with a temperature check and a Covid test. Somewhere deep in my nose, displeasure with this procedure made itself known to me rather quickly. Then came a blood sample to establish a base line for the other blood tests. I was also given some time (perhaps an hour?) to read through many pages of information about the various parts of the study. Then finally, I got the vaccine shot along with a debit card to which the payments were to be made. Its expiration date was 2023. I had to wait 30 minutes before they could let me go. This was a precaution in case I had a reaction to the shot. (I did not.)

February

My printer is getting out of date, and I have this extra money because I do not have very many places to spend the money I get from Social Security. So, I decided to get a new one. While I was at it, my computer could use enough RAM to bring the motherboard to its maximum in this. I also wanted to get rid of various old electronics at the same time. Well, If I bring them into Office Depot, it will recycle them for a fee. They also have a printer I like. Unfortunately, I can not get the RAM from them; this had to

be done through another local store. This definitely put a dent into my financial budget, but it's not a problem.

March

I am learning to use my Humana policy. It has reward system for people with healthy habits, and it is also used as an incentive to develop them. By seeing a doctor for certain test, exercising regularly, I will be given prepaid debit cards to the stores of my choice. This is nice as I can use the cards to pay for items that I would need buy anyway: it saves money. It also adds up over the year.

I must be in a buying mood this month. Kroger's has various cookware they place around the store in strategic places where people can pick them up on a whim. (They also have a kitchen area in the store will all manner of cookware there as well.) Some years ago, I saw a small slow cooker that may hold up to one quart of liquid which has no controls. Plug it in, and it cooks on the low setting. Unplug it, and it stops heating the contents. Periodically, I have used this for cooking dried beans. I would heat the beans and water to the boiling point before pouring them into the slow cooker. 3 or 4 hours later, the beans are ready to eat.

Then why did I decide to try using an Instant Pot? I'm not sure. Was it a whim? Perhaps. The literature were filled with all kind of things it could be used for. In the end, it has been my go to device for making yogurt. It took several times to get things working right. There are a few dishes

that I have made using it, but this was only years after I bought it.

I noticed that I was having problems with my back doors. So, back to American Radio to find out what the problem was. It seems that the actuators for both doors were not working. Really they really had never worked properly. So, I had them replace these parts which they did. Now I can unlock all of the car doors at one time. Yeah! It would take some time before I noticed a problem with the right front door. It locked and unlocked perfectly. But, Button that is suppose to be up when unlocked remains down. In fact, it is always down. Does not matter! I'm happy.

Webb's death

This even really caught me off guard. It occurred a week or more after his 81st birthday. This was despite what I had seen one year ago. His family held a birthday party for him then at 80. Pictures a possibly some videos were taken at it. It was the look in his eyes in the photos. What I saw was a lack of recognition in them. It was the same look that my wife had at our 35th wedding anniversary years earlier. Neither seemed to be very active. So, this is something that bugged me: I knew something was wrong, but I did not know what. Well, nothing seemed to happen until this did.

Early that morning, Margaret knew that something was wrong, so she called 911. Most likely the paramedics knew something was seriously wrong. He was taken to St. Louis University Hospital, a huge Catholic hospital. Upon arrival, he was put onto a ventilator as they made their evaluation of his health condition. Like his mother before him, it was a hemorrhagic. Her seemed to be localized. His was not: the bleeding was occurring from every part of the brain. So, two hours after his arrival, he was taken off the ventilator. The situation had gone from critical to terminal. The blood in his brain was destroy it. Elaine called me about noon with this

information. 24 hours later, she called with the news that he had died that morning.

I wanted to do something to help but what? It would be some time before arrangements would be made. His body was cremated. Perhaps the family could all get together in the summer. Everything remained vague.

April

Silver Sneakers

Exercise plays a very important part in my remaining healthy. Humana pushes healthy activities. (They tend to see the doctor less often than those that are not physically active.) So, it was perhaps late March that I learned about this organization and their relationship with Humana: it is all about exercise. How did I do that? I got a call from Humana who wanted me to get involved with this. So, I promised to look into it.

I found the app for in Play Store (Android) on my phone, downloaded it, and became a member. After exploring what this app had to offer, I used it to locate places in Knoxville that offered these activities. A couple of local gyms (Gold Gym) also had a swimming pool. I drove to one of them, filled out the paperwork, and began going to it for the water exercises. That is when I started to have problems: the water was too cool for me even if it was in the mid 80's. So after about 6 weeks or so, I stopped going. However, I was keeping track on how much walking I was doing already.

Another feature in this app was that it uploaded the activities in which I participated. This then got reported to Humana who would pay me for doing this. (Payment was

made in the form of debit cards. I had a wide variety of cards that I could select with which I would receive payment.) This was part of a bigger program called Go 365 which paid for various activities. See a doctor on a regular basis is important, but payment was only made for see the doctor for certain. For example: wellness test, HbA1c test, flu shot, bone density test, etc.

Broken tooth April 8

Several years earlier, I had fallen while walking which resulted in breaking off three teeth near the tip of them My dentist used bonding to restore what had been broken. I never understood why I had fallen not even having a sensation of that fall. Then this April, I had a similar fall. This time it broke of one of the earlier broken ones much closed to the gum line. I knew this was going to be much costlier that before. Let me see: my dentist is not part of the Humana network. But my Medicare Advantage plan will pay for this accident. So I went looking for a dentist that was in network. I found one that twas close to me and had him fix it. With this, I decided to use him for my dental needs. This tooth needed to be removed surgically because its root was twisted endangering the next tooth if pulled. When my mouth was healed sufficiently, he took impressions so that I would have a partial plate. Total cost to me was approximately \$200. For the two years that I had him as my dentist, My total cost was less than \$150. Before, I was paying all of my dental bills out of my own pocket. Enough said about what I think of this program. If I had not gotten the Medicare Advantage policy, it would likely have cost me as much as \$1,000.

Stimulus package

By March, Congress was working on another stimulus package. These were sent out fairly quickly. Mine came in this month. It was a nice amount for me: \$1200. Like the first package, I kept it in my bank for a while before spending it. Last month while getting my back door locks fixed, I became interested in one display. It was a radio that can give me directions using GPS as well as other things. It will answer my cell phone so this was had free besides play CD's Hmm...

By the first of this month, I got a call about the vaccine study of which I am a part. Because of the seriousness of the pandemic, everyone in the study needed to have the vaccine, not just two-thirds of the participants. So the later part of this month, I needed to get another two shots just as I had back in January. The ones who had gotten the vaccine the first time got two shots of sterile saline solution this spring. Those who got the sterile saline solution got the vaccine. Officially, this prevented anyone from knowing which shot they got. Given the side effects of the vaccine, I have no doubt that just about everyone knew. At least I did. I suppose some people did not experience any side effects. If so, they would never know.

May

Annual Meeting at Little Flock (AR)

A couple of months, I was on Facebook following Little Flock PBC in NW Arkansas. That is when I saw the notice for this meeting. For some reason, I wanted to attend it. They had not had one the previous year because of the pandemic. So, I arranged to go staying at my niece's home. I also arranged to arrive a week early.

Someone had given them a shed which was put in the backyard. Paul did not like the direction the door was facing, so he decided to rotate it. As in other projects, he carefully designed the way to do this based upon physics and geometric principles. Among other things, this would require a jack on wheels. Then the family pitched in to begin the rotation of it. All went well for a while. I may have helped some, but mostly I was a bystander.

At some point, I was holding a cell phone taking a video clip. While I was doing this, Paul was working with the jack. Suddenly the jack handle bounced back hitting just below one of his eyes. I was probably closer to him than I should have been, but even so, I caught this accident on video. In the end, the building was rotated, and Marianne was tending to his wound. Fortunately, it resulted in a black eye for several days. He certainly had a shiner!

Then came the Wednesday night Bible Study. This day, Marianne made it plain to me that she would like for me to move to Arkansas. This made sense given that I am getting older. Besides I am at more than 450 miles from anyone if something were to happen to me. Beside, I am wanting to get to a place where I can feel at home and accepted as a member.

She even mentioned that there were some potential candidates for a wife for me since I have repeatedly said that I want to remarry even when I know that does not seem to be possible. So, this became something to consider seriously. My problem as I saw it was that she refused to endorse one or more of them. To her, this was as far as God wanted her to go. OK, she did tell me where the church directories were kept. (The front pages contains the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the members (and some others)).

The meeting did not start until Friday night the first weekend of this month with two sermons. These were recorded and loaded up to the church website. Saturday morning also had two sermons. Yet, the thoughts Marianne had placed in my mind, were still very much in my consciousness! And more were to come very soon!

A little while after the morning service, Bro. Carl did something that shocked me. He announced that they wanted all of the ministers to come to the front of the church so their picture could be taken. Then looking directly at me, he motioned me to join them! Now, was he really jestering to someone behind me, or was it me? In any case, I did. At the same time, I was now thinking that this was God's way to tell me that i should move.

Then lunch was ready: time to get in line to get our noon meal. I hung back and wound up talking some with Donna. As the line thinned out, I said something about eating. In any case, I followed her to where the food had been put out on the long counter. There was a table next to the other end of this counter. I sat down there. In the end, that table had several older sisters (some widows) besides myself. We all had a very enjoyable conversation for some time.

After lunch came another service with two sermons. Afterward, most went in all directions. I don't remember what I did until everyone returned for their cookout. (Did I stay, or did I go somewhere?) But when the food was ready, Donna and probably others were at the table in the northwest corner of the dining room. I was there. This is when we talked for quite some time. (Was this the one?)

Sunday morning, I waited for her to arrive at church escorting her into it. I let her pick where she wanted to sit. Then during the song service, we shared holding the

hymnal. We did the same thing with a Bible during the preaching. I really felt good!

(I rode with the Paul Lindsey family as I have often done during this entire meeting. So, when Marianne said that there was a church member in southwest Missouri that they needed to see, I knew I would be going along. Betty Williams was in a wheelchair, and apparently Marianne had the feeling that she was not doing very well at all. (Her health deteriorated greatly after that, so she was not far from right.) After arrival, the men gathered together with her husband, Dale, while the women gathered together in a bed room. Marianne, as is her custom, became busy straightening up the room where the women were. Things got folder and put away among other things. Also, Betty had some problems with a Velcro fastener. Since Marianne knew exactly what to do, she quickly fixed it.

After a few hours, we left, mission accomplished. When we got back into the vicinity, the topic of supper came up: we were going to eat out. Some calls were made, and several brethren and sisters gathered together for one last time, so to speak. (Donna was not one of them. Sad situation as I was getting to like her.)

Even so, by Saturday noon when the pictures were taken of the ministers present, I was certain that I was suppose to move to this area. Marianne was going to get her desire!

Monday morning, I headed home early probably spending the night in Memphis. Then on Tuesday, I drove home. I had a lot to think about after this meeting. Should I move? It certainly looks like I should. But there was not much else to think about of any importance or so it seemed at the time.

Well, there was one thing this week... The dentist had taken an impression of my mouth a few weeks ago. So, this week I picked up my partial plate from him. It seems to fit quite nicely. There is only one problem: I had insisted that it needed to have two teeth on it. One was for the baby eye tooth that I had lost about 20 years before. The other was for the tooth that had to be removed. It had the one front tooth but not the tooth for the eye tooth I lost around 2000. Instead of telling them to redo the partial, I took this one.

Humana want me to get more involve with exercises: they told this to me in a phone conversation. Of course, they have no idea of how much exercising I get each day seven days a week. They were about to find out.

First they sent me a device to measure the number of steps I was taking. When it arrived, I put it to use, but only when I was out on my twice daily walks. These got duly entered in the Silver Sneaker's app on my cell phone. I also check out a couple of gyms that was listed on this app. Both had exercise equipment and pool. I may have used the latter but not very often. I discovered there were some exercise classes in the pools. On certain days, they were in one pool and other days in the other. I became part of these classes before I began to run into problems: even though the water had been warmed, it was still too cool for me. It became harder and harder to get into the water, so I quit. Only two or three weeks had pasted in this month of May...

June

I guess I was getting tired ironing my slacks, so I did something about it. I remember what we did when I was growing up. There were expandable metal devices we put down into the jean legs when we hung them on the line.

Expanding them put creases in the jean legs. When they were dry, we would collapse them.

So, I looked for these pants stretcher on the web. What! They still produce them? Yes they do, so I bought two pairs for about \$36. These arrived in a few weeks. From this point on, my slacks had them inserted into their legs...

July

I got a strange notice from my credit union about my checking account. In rapid succession, two charges for \$0.01 appeared on my checking account. Then there was a third charge of a little over \$100. The credit union was wondering if they were mine. I think I got both texts and emails from them. I replied that they certainly were not! This required the freezing of my debit card, and soon followed was a notice to out that these charges were not being honored. Meanwhile, from the information that I had been given, I contact the business who had sold the \$100+ item. It was an auto parts place. I mentioned what the problem was to them so they would not be surprised when their debit was rejected. I was curious as to where this charge was made, but I did not have to know exactly from where. So, I asked if the auto part had been shipped to Tennessee. The reply was that it wasn't. (This is after I told here that I live in this state.

So, the next day or so, I went to the credit union to get a new debit card. And now came the fun! I had to call all of the companies that keep a record of my debit card number such as for paying my insurance each month, or the local public radio station to which I monthly donate money. (I am a member of it.) I did not manage to get into contact with everyone!

August

On the 12th, I headed to Springdale to check on housing possibilities. I had learned that rental apartments was hard to find. Rather than to call their offices only to hear that their waiting list was approximately 18 months long, I decided to meet the office staffs face to face getting whatever paperwork that would need to be filled out.

Finding them even with my phone's GPS system was actually impossible in the case of one apartment complex in Fayetteville. (There was road construction in the area, and the GPS map was not up to date.) At another place, there was no one in the office for more than an hour. Finally, I got a surprise: this particular apartment complex was going to have a vacancy at the end of September. Also, they did not keep a waiting list. This certainly seemed too good to be true. So, I gave them information that they required, and left. Thinking that everything was settled, I left for Knoxville on the 17th.

This shows just how a great desire for something clouds one's thinking. When I first arrived, no one was in the office, so I decided to look around. It was a group of two story buildings with stairs. I also notice that the hallways to the first floor apartment were rather dim. This should have resulted in a warning bell. The fact that all the other managers with whom I talked had waiting lists should have been another. But neither one of them even bothered me...

Leading up to the first of the month, I had seen a add-on sound system that included GPS. It also had a radio, answered a cell phone, played CD's, etc. I just had to have it! (Yes, in my language: this was neat!) Covid was still

around and the supply chain problem was in full string. The earliest it could be installed was on the 8th.

So the day after I returned from Springdale, I took it in to have this installed. So, for the next few weeks, I used the GPS to guide me to wherever I wanted to go. Mostly this was to Kroger. As I was gradually getting use to the system, I also had some problem understanding how to use it. So, there many trips to that store to get the answers.

For the navigation to work properly, a cell phone had to be connected to it through a USB wire connection. The cell phone provided GPS with the latest maps from Google. As long as Google Maps was kept up to date on the cell phone, the system would be up to date as well. All of this was going on all the way into September.

September

I was not hearing from the apartment complex that had verbally promised me an apartment at the end of this month by the 10th. So, on the 12th, I headed back to Springdale to see what the problem was. You see, that deal I thought I had was in fact too good! First of all, I had not been informed that the apartment being vacated was for handicap people. I finally woke up. This was not for me! I did not want to move there!

So, now was the time to look for some other places. With the this new GPS system, there were easier to find. I visited several places getting literature at each place. The last stop was at Spring Meadows where I talked to Stephanie, the manager. She told me what I would need. (I thought I understood what paperwork was required.) She told me that I could mail it to her, or I think fax it(?).

For more than a year I have been thinking about my 60th class reunion. Originally, it was suppose to be in October 2020, but Covid stopped that. Then the class officers decide to combine it with the 61st reunion this year. So, I knew that I would be in Illinois the very first part of October. So, a detour from this through Springdale made sense even if it was only a couple of weeks since I was last there. So, I made an appoint for early October to return the paperwork directly to Spring Meadows.

So, after a short visit I was on my way to Knoxville. As I left the home of my niece that morning, she made some remark about my brakes and insisted that Paul take the car to check this out. After a while he returned, and I made sure that I had everything in the car. (I usually wind up leaving an item...) As I got on the Interstate heading south to I-40, I was wondering exactly where I was going to stop for gas since the last time I had driven it in Springdale the gas gauge was rather low. Out of habit at this point, I looked at the gauge: it was full! Was there really a brake problem? (He had said that there was not.) Or, was this a way to provide me with an extra tank of gas?

On the way home, I learned just how wonderful this GPS could be. I was driving between Little Rock and Memphis. I saw a warning on the system about a traffic ahead, but I did not think that much about it. Then it insisted that I make a right turn at the next exit which I did. Fairly shortly, it told me to make a left turn. I did not realize why for a while as I was traveling on a state highway. Then I happened to look to my left. The road was running parallel to I-40! What I saw next was surprising to me: I could see the I-40 clearly. What I saw was south bound traffic stalled. I could have been in it if I had not followed the directions of the GPS! I was so thankful to have it now. After I cleared the stalled traffic on

the Interstate, I was directed back to it. I think the rest of the trip was uneventful arriving on the 18th.

During the 11 days I had between trips, I manage to unpack, wash my dirty clothes, and repack. During that time I also found time to fill out all of the forms that I thought were going to be needed. Before leaving for Illinois I had this paperwork fax to Spring Meadows. I also created a completed colored copy of every form just in case. This included all of the financial statements that went along with the forms.

And on the 29th, I headed toward Illinois for my class reunion. This certainly took much less time that I remembered from the previous trip. I thought I would be eating the lunch I had packed at a Welcome Rest Stop on the edge of Kentucky. In reality, it was at one of these places, only it was just into Illinois. And I made good time the rest of the way.

October

I spent some time with Tom & Elaine through Saturday afternoon. Then it was time to get ready for the class reunion. Besides all of this, I still had a lot of thoughts running through my head. Who would I remember? Would Terry be there? (She is the one that I walked to school for several years before high school.) How am I going to mingle enough to get an opportunity to get reacquainted?

(I had already used GPS to identify the location for this event. Then I drove to it.) Time was growing shorter as I headed out for this evening. I checked in, got my identification badge and reunion booklet containing the

personal information of my classmates. Within a few minutes, I had my picture taken.

The highlight of the evening came several minutes later as Terry entered the room. It was not long before she was standing in front of me. She wondered if I was really me. She had attended many of the class reunions in the past, seemingly always wondering what had possibly happened to me. Well, now she knows; I am quite a live. For the rest of the evening she spent talking to me as well as the others at our table.

It was unlikely that I would have known here. Some days before coming from Washington state for this reunion, she had fallen and put an extensive bad bruise on her right cheek. (I ought to mention at this point that she is happily married.) So, this night was an answer to the prayers for both of us.

Among other things, I mentioned I had written an autobiography that included some things about her and me. (Sorry, but I just can not help myself!) Later I sent a copy of what I had written to her in an email. The last entry was something that I wrote that I was not sure it had happened. Our freshman year in high school, I had asked her for a date that involved square dancing. My only problem, I did not remember actually going on that date; I just thought I had. Her return comment hinted that this date did not happen. OH, well!

Sunday morning, Tom, Elaine, and I went to Little Flock for church. I was enjoying the singing when I was interrupted. Elder Robert Adam asked me to introduce services which I gladly did. I surprised later when a few people told me how much they appreciated what I had heard. (This had only

been possible because of the grace of God that He bestowed upon me.)

The afternoon was spent quietly. Then it was time to head beyond Litchfield for a restaurant where we ate with Angela's family. We had our own little reunion! I was very impressed with the maturity with which she discussed things that evening!

Come Monday morning, I took some time on my morning walk as I had ever since Thursday morning. During those walks, I saw several deer, one was a doe and fawn together. This always made it a nice experience. Then I ate breakfast, finished packing, taking everything to the car by which time it was 8 or 9 am. Then I left for Springdale. On the way, I had a nice chat with Elaine.

My GPS has a mind of its own. I was planning to stay on the interstate basically all the way. Apparently, there was a "through the country route that was shorter than going through the large cities in southwest Missouri". Anyway, when it told me to get off the interstate, I did. After a while going through several small towns making several turns in each one, I was wondering what was going on! Then the needle in the gas gauge began to get much lower. I did not see any stations where I could get fuel. Finally I did. It was at this point that I called Marianne to tell her what had happened. Since I was sharing my location with her on Google Maps, she saw where I was. Her comment was that I was being led in by the back way. (Elaine had mentioned earlier that this is the way they come to Springdale.) So, I felt better. With some starts and stops, I was able to get to the place where I knew where I was at. The rest was a piece of cake.

About 8:30 on Tuesday morning, I headed to Spring Meadows arriving there half an hour later. I went in holding all the paperwork in my hands. Pat was suppose to go over these things with me, but she got lost rather quickly. (the manager Stephanie had two other people coming in shortly for the same thing.

When Stephanie noticed there was a problem, she came to Pat's office a took over the interview. After a short while, a serious problem had arose: the faxed papers were not readable at all. But when I presented the original print copies of all of the documents, everything went speedily. She simply went through them one at a time. If it was needed, it was put in one pile. If not, it went to another pile. As this continued, I obviously was missing one document. She had one that twas blank. It only required my signature on both sides. That being quickly done, she completed her task. I was only missing one thing: my Social Security Award letter. Everything else was completed. As soon as I could get to a place where I could email this to the office, I would be placed on their waiting list. My next stop was the Springdale Senior Center. Once I got there, I quickly sent this email. By 12:30 pm or so I received an email confirming my position on this list. It was date stamped with the hour, minute, and second that it occurred. I was one happy camper.

I had one more thing that I felt I needed to do before leaving for home. I gave Paul a check for the church. Then Wednesday morning early, I left. (When I arrived home, I set up monthly payment to Little Flock in AR that continued until the month after my move to Springdale.)

I had one more thing to add to my relative new sound system: a back up camera. The cost was about \$200 which was not all that much. Again, I just had to have it! With me

not wanting just anything that I might see, there was more than enough money for this. As with the other parts of this system, it took some time to adjust to it. Even then, several months later I was still not using as I should in certain cases: it was a matter of using the camera view along with the outside rear view mirrors.

November

Pressure was being put on people in various working places to get the Covid vaccine. Joan who works at Westview Tower was one of them. It was something that she refused to do. In fact, she decided to retire instead. But at the party the building had for her, her body language and how she spoke tells me that she was very happy and looking forward to retirement. Was Covid just the excuse for her retirement? I think so.

December

Thanksgiving is gone, and a week later I was heading once again for AR. I left Friday, Dec 3 driving straight through. That evening, the young people of the church were gathered together to make Christmas Cookie boxes to give out to the people attending services Sunday morning. I drove to the church.

While there, Tom and Elaine were down for an early Christmas. They insisting on getting me something even though they knew that this is not something that I celebrate. They were nice.

Then came the second Sunday. At church we learned that a tornado had touched down in Dawson Springs, taking the roof off. Internal damage had occurred as well. At the end of

the services and the request of the pastor, the church voted to send a specific sizable amount to help them. Then came the passing out of the cookies.

Then something strange happened. My Fitbit device indicated that I was asleep from the end of the service for more than an hour. At one point I noticed that my heart rate had dipped to 40!

So, I apparently was sleep walking while going through the line putting food on my plate. I sat down and began eating. For some reason, I did not chew something very well before swallowing. It got stuck, and I began to choke. The usual maneuver did not dislodge it, so I got my back pounded a few times which worked. Yet, I was still asleep! Strange indeed!

I was told the first of October that I need to regularly contact Spring Meadows so that they would know that I still wanted an apartment. I had done so in November with an email. This month, I dropped by to personally tell them this.

But back to the tornado. I was already sending a monthly donation for the church because I felt that this was my duty (even if I was not a member). I felt that I also had a duty for this as well. So I told Bro. David, the church treasurer, that an extra check would be sent to him for this purpose.

Speaking of finances. I had also determined that I would be making several trips in 2022 to AR, so I need to seriously consider my budget for next year. And I did exactly that. This included the money needed to move from Knoxville to Springdale. It took a while, but it certainly looks feasible.

It was broken down into large categories and into smaller and then into even smaller ones. For example, gas for

traveling (this was a large amount) as well as gas for local driving (a small amount), etc.

2022

January

The Covid virus has changed so much that a booster with some modifications was needed. Novavax has produced one which I took on January 5th. As I had been required to take my temperature daily, I notice that on this day, it was the same as previous days. However, such was not the case the following day. It was 99.8°! That is almost high enough to classify it a fever. It dropped gradually back to the 97's in the next two days. OK, it too elevator repairs. Well, I was a little listless for a couple of days or so also.

This month I decided to open a new website. Things did not work as well as I had home. For first thing, I thought I was getting the domain: elderdanlewis.org. But since I was not paying close enough attention, it was actually: elderdan.org.

March

Not much is going on so far this year, but this is my first scheduled visit to Springdale, AR during the middle of the month. While there, I decided that I needed to know what changes in my Medicare policy with Humana were going to be. So, I found the address and phone number of their local office in NW AR. Making an appointment near 8 am I think. So, I headed there arriving in the rain. Well, it took a little while before I found it driving around, in its parking lot until I did. The lady I was suppose to meet was running late, so I

had some time to kill until she got there. She was very informative which was nice. At least now I had a better idea of what to expect.

Other than this, I visited the Springdale Senior Center a couple of times. Actually I made use of their facilities. Cindy is a physical therapist who has exercises four times a week for Silver Sneakers. So, I joined that class these two days with Silver Sneakers paying for the classes. Then it was time to head back to Tennessee.

But not quite. Ever since the tornado had damaged the Dawson Springs Church, I had wanted to go to see for myself promising people at Little Flock Church this trip that I was going and would return around the Annual meeting with pictures of it. (How I was going to do this was not not exactly clear at the time.)

April

I don't remember just when there was talking about renovations to Westview Tower, probably the first of the year. But they kept putting off telling us what it was going to look like after the completion of it.

During the couple of weeks of this month, renovations had begun on empty apartments. This meant that our use of the freight elevators was going to be limited. As a result, the smaller elevator was usually crowded going up or down. If some special was going on on the first floor, getting up stairs proved problematic for a long time.

The freight elevator had been acting up as was quite old. It needed a lot of work. Since the build was going to be renovated some time in the near future, the decision was made to include the elevator in the renovations. After

warning us for some days, the closed this elevator for anyone's use until work on it was completed.

Dawson Springs PBC

I contacted the pastor of this church telling me that I would be in the area the third weekend. This is when he informed me that the congregation had decided to meet in the church's sanctuary for the first time since the tornado hit. This suited me quite well.

Now, the Friday before this weekend was the day for the Jewish Passover. This meant that a week after the third Sunday would be the feast of first fruits, the anniversary of Jesus' resurrection. They were not aware of this seeing they had been taught that Easter is that anniversary for His resurrection. So to them they were returning to meet in their church on the resurrection anniversary. (Disagree with me if you must.)

I arrived early enough to do some visiting first with the pastor and then with various members of the congregation. Also before the service started, a local TV station had sent someone to tape the service and then to interview some people who attended the service.

After services, I was invited to eat with the pastor (Elder Jeff Winfrey) and his wife. It was also a reunion of their family members. The one thing I loved about this is that I was able to have a Biblical discussion with him. His question concerned something that bothered him: how could Jesus die since He is eternal. I gave him some ideas I have on the subject. Hebrews states that He was "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death." (Yet, it was not Jesus' Spirit which is verily eternal; it is His body that died. This body had been made natural, mortal, and corruptible.

In His resurrection, His body became Spiritual, immortal, and incorruptible respectively.)

After my return, Something horrible happened. The freight elevator was on the 11th floor when it suddenly fell all the way to the basement! Fortunately no one was on it at the time nor was anyone in the basement under it. Between the weight of the elevator and the distance traveled, there was a tremendous amount of energy generated. Obviously, the elevator was a complete wreck. So much for trying to repair it. A new elevator had to be ordered and then built.

When it happened, I was on one end of the tenth floor. I thought that someone may have dropped a large cabinet that was being installed in one of the apartments upstairs. The sound was much louder the closer a resident was to the elevator shafts. On the first floor, it was more like a small earth quake with a huge amount of noise! Well, this was not the worst of it. There were people on the small elevator coming down to the first floor when the other fell. It really scared them. One of them realized what had happened from the sounds they were hearing as it fell. This was when their fear was made quite huge: they thought their elevator was going to fall as well! Anyway, as a result, there were many months in which the small elevator was all that we had. Thoughts about this one falling later because of all the use it was not getting. The fact that the first thing done when the freight elevator fell was to establish without a doubt that the small elevator was safe did not help our feelings.-

May

Earlier in the year, the decision was made to hold their annual meeting this month. So, this is my second planned trip this year. So, I packed everything I needed, or so I

thought a week ahead of the meeting. Then I left on Friday driving all day to get there. (I wanted to be there so I could help with the thorough church cleaning. It was a lot of hard work, but this was also enjoyable.

When I arrived, I realized that I had not brought my Instant Pot. Marianne had said that the breakfast she was going to serve during the meeting included yogurt. (I was planning on using the missing Instant Pot to make this.) Sometime during the week possibly while I was at the Senior Center for Silver Sneakers and lunch, I bought a one which was larger than the one I had. I placed it in on the kitchen counter with it still in its box. When she asked about it, knowing that I had already mentioned I did not bring mine, my reply was that it was a wedding anniversary gift for this year's and all the others before it. She put it to use both for making yogurt (I think) and for making other things.

By Wednesday, the sleeping arrangements had to be changed. A large family was coming in on Thursday which was going to take all of the beds in the house. (Sarah and Jonathan were going to sleep above the garage, and Marianne and Paul were going to use the trailer in the back yard. Me? I was sent to Paul's parents for Thursday through Saturday.

I remained at Marianne's until they arrived. I got a little visiting in and supper before I left. There I met a minister who was also staying with Leona and David. He was from western Alabama which perked up my ears. There had arisen a question about the ministers who ordained me as a minister. Were they sound doctrinally? I hoped that he would be able to answer this question since he knew some things about east Alabama where I had lived for almost 20 years. He did not provide anything conclusively. There was

another minister which was scheduled to come who would know more.

Saturday morning I had an opportunity to talk to him. Unfortunately for me, he provided me with the information that I did not want to hear: they are not considered to be sound ministers in the interpretation of certain Scriptures. So, now it is obvious that when I move my membership to NW AR, I will not be able to bring my ordination with me. What does this mean for my future? I don't know, but I will have to wait on the LORD to see how He guides me through this. (I disappeared when it came time to take the pictures of the ministers present.)

June

Then come the first of June, I headed to Edwardsville for Little Flock's Annual Meeting. The invited ministers were Elders Jerry Williams and David Burris. When I was around them, Bro. Jerry was at Natchez, MS, and Bro David was at Baton Rouge, LA. The latter had been ordained as an Elder before I left Louisiana, and the former was ordained after that .

It was nice that I was able to visit with each one of them some after three decades. It was speaking with Jerry that meant the most for me. I confided with him about my condition and my intention to join Little Flock in AR after I move there. At this point this is less than a year away. It turned out that he knows both of us well, and his conclusion was that we would work well together. This was definitely encouraging.

And then there were some young people who seemed well versed in the Scriptures. These conversations were very

interesting to me!

One thing that truly surprising: there were people from southwest Louisiana that knew the pastor in Orange, TX while I lived in that area. He is still alive which was a surprise to me.

The trip was well worth while considering the situation. I went home well satisfied.

The restoration was continuing throughout the building. While there may have been work on individual rooms, this part concerned the fire alarm system as well as the emergency cords. All of these had to be replaced as well including in the office and the fire control center located at the bottom of the east stairway.

There were flyers put out all over the building. This was nice, but they listed the wrong day of the week and the right day of the month for the beginning of the project. Actually, some of the work was done on Wednesday and the rest on Thursday and Friday. Because the major work took longer than usual, Friday was a very long day. I think they started around 8 am and it was after 10 pm before things were finished.

Then came the trouble finding and fixing all the little problems that occur normally in the beginning of using any new system. Obviously, we survived that whether we wanted to do so or not.

This month I also turned my attention to my website. I added a new domain: bro-dan-lewis.org. I also moved my original website to this domain. Then I began to give this one some structure. I also moved some financing for the site around as well. Now comes the big part: begin to

upload more articles. I have been a little lax at this though: it is slow going.

July

Then came some more information about the renovations of the apartments. It still was not as detailed as I or others would have liked, but we just had to live with that. For that matter the new elevator seemed still off in the future some where...

August

It was the first of the month once again, and I as I had been doing, sent an email to Spring Meadows that I was still interested in one of their apartments. The time was not down to 8 months according to what they had said 11 months ago.

With the time getting closer, I need to consider when I was going to return to Dawson Springs for a second visit. This will let me see what progress they had made since April.

The Sanctuary is very nice with all of the doors now on their hinges. There were some nice pews. However, the basement where the pastor's office and dining room were had been damage since my visit. There had been some standing water from something. I was told, but surprisingly I have forgotten what. But it was a nice visit.

September

Yes, there are only 7 more months to wait. By this time, I'm thinking that the new elevator has been installed, working,

and the small elevator is being restored which is taking about three weeks to complete. I definitely do not like the interior of either one: is is a dark grey! Yuck!

October

Now that it is the first of the month, there are only 6 months to wait. The time to begin the renovation of the is much closer. In fact, we got a very big surprise: They were really going to tell us what the complete renovation project is all about. Then the middle of the month, The office scheduled meetings for the residents. These were scheduled over a period of two and a half days. Rather to bring people down by specific floors, the went by the last two digits of their apartment number. The last group consisted of the room numbers ending in 18, 19, and 20. (They chose three apartments from each floor meaning there were 36 apartment in this group.) We were the last to hear because we were the first ones to move.

During this meeting we got to see the entire layout including what was going to be done on the first floor. It was awesome. There were almost enough empty apartments for all of us to move into when the time came. There would be a few with whom living arrangements were made until our new apartments would be ready for us which would begin in November. (I was moved the first of December.)

In front of us were also the moving boxes we will need to pack everything. However, I notice that one thing was missing: boxes for hanging clothes. (This we had to furnish ourselves.) So, I found a source for this item and bought what I was fairly certain enough for my clothes. Then I purchased them. So began the packing process in earnest.

During all of this going on, I had one more dental cleaning appointment, and it was this month. So, after the cleaning, the dentist examined my teeth for the last time. At this time, I said my good-byes to every one who had been so nice for the past year or so.

November

Now the wait time is down 5 months. The number of people in front of me on the waiting list has gradually dwindled downward also. The time is getting nearer! I can feel it. (The monthly email had gone out to Spring Meadows.)

This was another one of my "lasts time" something. This is my annual eye exam. Once again, he said that it was not necessary for me to get new glasses just yet. I once again said my good-byes.

Message from Spring Meadows Apartments

This came as a complete surprise! I think it was an email or it was a text on my phone. It simply said that I was to call the office as soon as possible. So, I did. A handicap apartment had come open recently. One of the residents needed but did not have one. So, she was given the open one, and I would get hers as soon as they got it ready which should be the first couple of weeks in January. Now before I could decide when, I needed to know Marianne's plans for the month of December. The middle of the month was good for her. So, I called Stephanie back which is when I made an appointment for Dec 16.

December

Westview Tower Renovations

Residents were being moved starting in late November. We were not the last ones to be moved nor were we the first. Last days of November were the days for apartment numbers ending in 20. I was given a key to the vacant apartment a day earlier. I both visited it and swept the floor which was quite dirty. I was going to bring the things in my refrigerator to the one in this room, but it did not work. Then there was a matter of the heating/AC unit: it did not have one! So instead, I moved some other things. I reported these two problems and was told that maintenance already knew about it.

On moving day I moved more things that were on wheels leaving the boxed items along with the bed for the movers. (The frame was taken apart and the box springs and mattress were stacked against a wall. It was after 10:30 am before someone arrived to move things. By about noon, everything was moved except for a few small things that I would move soon after. My refrigerator was still sitting there full of food.

As time pasted into mid afternoon, maintenance moved the bad refrigerator from my temp apartment. Then he moved my full refrigerator in to replace it. My AC/heating unit was moved as well. So, I had a running fridge and heating unit! During this commotion, I put my bed frame back together and put the box springs and mattress on top. So it was time to make it. Among other things, I settled down to my first meal in my temp apartment.

Along with all of this, I had learned that Florence, Elaine's sister, had died. Since this is somewhere around 200 miles from Knoxville, I decided to go to it. So, I had reserved a motel room kn the area.

I left on Fri., Dec 2 arriving in the afternoon. GPS was a big help for the most part, but sometimes I must not have followed its directions as closely as possible... After checking in, I headed for the funeral home. There were family members there at the time.

Back in 1969, Tom and Elaine were married in Ohio. Susan drove up there with our four month son. Florence was also there, and she got acquainted with Susan. At the time, she was expecting, asking questions about names. It turns out that she like our son's name, and when her son was born, she named him the same thing, both first and middle names!

In fact this son was at the funeral home when I arrived. This gave us a good reason to talk for a while.

I also talked with Edward, the widower now. This included some wisdom that I had gain after loosing my own wife. I did the same thing with the siblings at the cemetery.

I got home Monday afternoon. Now with my move coming ever so much closer, I needed someone to move me. I had gone to Angie's list for this back in 2019 when I thought I would be moving then. But that name had been changed to angi.com. I thought this would be a good place to start. There really was not much there. I finally settled on one that look promising.

Having talked with the representative I agreed to have them move me. This required a upfront payment of half (about \$1780) the anticipated bill (\$3550+). So, I gave him my credit card number for that on Tuesday. Two days later, I opened my credit card account, and there was the charge. I had to look at this a couple of times before I realized that the name of the moving company he had used was not the

one that had charged this amount. This was a definite red flag! My reasoning was that if anything went wrong with the move, the company that was suppose to move me could easily say that they had not receive the money: they then would not be responsible for the problem. That belonged to the company whose name was on the charge slip. Of course, when I call the representative back, he has an explanation for that. So, Friday morning, I called the credit card company complaining about the situation, namely that the company who received the money was not the one I had agreed to pay. The card representative stated that I needed to cancel my credit card which I had her do. Then she also issued me a new one.

As courtesy, I called the moving company again to informed them of what I had done this morning. This did not go down very well to say the least. For some time he exerted high pressure salesmanship on me. This was getting very irritating, so I finally hung up since he did not want to listen to me at all.

With a few days I had arranged for someone else to move me. The price was about \$2800, and there was no deposit needed. Half of the cost was due on pickup, and the rest when delivered. My previous experience had not been wasted at all. You see, one of the reasons of such a difference between prices was the cheaper one did not include a fuel fee for moving over 500 miles. (Fuel was somewhat expensive at the time.) So far, so good.

I have had my car for at most seven years at this point. The tires were new when I bought it. Not only that be I am anticipating more snowy weather in AR. So I asked the service representative where I had my car worked on. She pointed out where dry rot was very evident: time to get new

ones! So, this is one more then that is done before my move.

quick trip to Springdale

I only had a few days after obtaining a mover to pack and head to Springdale for my meeting at Spring Meadows. Perhaps some checking account statements were needed; perhaps not. But the amount I was getting from Social Security had changed. So, I had to take the latest one. Since these become available on the last day of November, I was able to download the 2023 Award Letter and print it for the office. By 9 am on Friday, Dec 16, I sat down with Stephanie at which she went down the things that had to be completed. I was given my new apartment number (51) at this time and a copy of the paperwork we filled out. At this point, tentative moving date being in the second week of January.

I spent the weekend at Marianne's including Church on Sunday. Then come Mon, Dec 19, I was on my home again arriving in the evening. I tried to make sure that I took everything that I had brought. But does it really make any difference? I'm going to be back in less than a month to permanently. I could get it them...

There were two items that I needed to take care of: phone and internet service. When I check with my cell phone provider, I was told that I could keep my phone with not changes required. AT&T did all of the paperwork for me including arranging for service by the time I arrived.

Then it was a matter waiting for the time to move to occur. Later in the month, the moving date had been moved up to the first week of January. I now had an appointment at the office at 9 am on January 6. So, I contacted AT&T and the

movers of this. Internet service would be available during the daytime on that date. The movers were to come on Jan 2.

Ah, all the little odds and ends! When I learned of the apartment becoming available in January, I informed the office, in writing, that I intended to move by mid January. With this latest information, I informed the office I was leaving the morning of Jan 3. And then there was the Covid study. I had my last office appointment on Jan 3 at 9 am. So obviously, I would go, sign any paperwork, have blood drawn, head to Westview Tower, and then leave.

So for the rest of December and the first couple of days of January, I made sure that the boxes were all taped up and ready to go. I also decided to take enough items that I can use until my furniture arrives. Also, the things I am taking from the freezer compartment and fridge in a cooler. Computer equipment was included. In other words, I had a car packed full. And yes, the car's tank was full!

My relationship with her off and on though it be was an experience of our creating our own little world. Given the circumstances of her leaving her husband fearing for her life but never divorcing him, some would question the godliness of my actions. And yet it was kept within the bounds of only a friendship. This does not mean that one or the other desire it to be different: it means that desire was never allowed to change the relationship.

We had many events that could have easily made a mockery of it being just a friendship. Others were certain that that it was not in these circumstances. What they did not understand was the true depth of our friendship. Nor did they know of the things God was doing in the background. Our self control was not always the only control placed upon us.

The first time we began spending time together was June. It ended due my very big mouth on December 25. We had very little to do with each other until the end of March 2018. The second time began then ending in November 2018 again due to my big mouth. (I really wanted more from our relationship than I had any right.) Yet, when she had surgery on her parathyroids later, I was the one she wanted to be with her.

In 2019, she was out of state on family business for several months. During this time, her husband died which changed her life in ways she would not have imagined. By the end of the year, she moved out of her apartment. We have not had meaningful relationship since then.

Meanwhile, it was not until the summer of 2018 that I completed the fourth and final draft of my four book series.

Following this, I began attending church again. This became somewhat of a problem when Covid 19 became a serious threat to health and even life itself. Even so, the sermons seemed to become very dry while lacking in nourishment. So by November 2020, I left that church to attend the one I had attended when I first came to Knoxville.

Going back to the beginning of 2020, I was led to begin listening to audio sermons from Little Flock PBC (AR). This became a massive Spiritual awakening. Just as Covid 19 was beginning to cause so many problems for so many people and our churches in particular. more of them began streaming their sermons.

Mate

Wife and husband's desirable characteristics

Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold.

1. **Way side:** personal habits that interfere with the relationship (see #4 & 5). They must be replaced with habits which improve it.
2. **Stoney ground:** lack of trust or faith in the other person. Removing either of these requires time and actions that leads to more trust.
3. **Thorns:** Influences of others that try to destroy the relationship as described #4 & 5. These have to be eliminated if at all possible.
4. **Good ground:** She is as patient with him while he strives to meet her needs as he is with her while she strives to meet his needs.
5. **Absolute must:** They gradually learn how to work as a team to do what is the best for both of them.