

## Coping with Loss of Memory

*By CC Huffhines*

Each morning, I gaze westward through my big windows, to the stunning snow-capped Rocky Mountains. I view this from the fourth floor condo where I live, with uninterrupted space between me and the mountains (in the winter when the trees are leafless). This is the normal highlight of my day.

Other highlights in my life have slipped away. At the age of 92, my health is fine, but my memory is gone. Here's an example: At a restaurant, I comment on the attractive decor, or the quality of the food. My daughter, Lisa, responds with: "At least your opinion hasn't changed, you said the same thing last month when we were here." Last month! And I thought this was my first visit! Such experiences are typical for me.

Various challenges exist with my age. Most friends are dead. Their now adult children send cards at Christmastime and unless they mention their parents, I am often puzzled as to the identity of the sender, even as I appreciate the card.

My past life is hidden from me. Apparently I traveled quite a bit. I had a personal website program where I featured photos with comments that described the experience connected to the photo. The site was named "Tales from my Travelbag." When the site was closed, I printed copies. It's fun to read, without any memory, the stories from the website. Beyond these pages, I have specific memories of my sister, Frances, riding camels with me in the Egyptian desert and Lisa posing before the Taj Mahal.

For some reason, highlights from my early years remain the strongest. I remember the ribbon cutting at the Texas Centennial fairground in Dallas in 1936. The same year, my father took me to see President Franklin Roosevelt, who was visiting Texas. I remember hundreds of people surrounding his limousine; he never exited the vehicle, though I managed to shake his hand, a true highlight for me. Another remembered highlight was the time I marveled at Old Faithful geyser in Yellowstone Park erupting on schedule.

My adult grandchildren are highlights, when we connect. I have five adult grandkids in the Denver area, one in Texas, one in Hawaii and three in Sweden. They occasionally remind me of special times we shared together, highlights again for my failed memory. I regularly enjoy the company of my Colorado grandkids. I make efforts to be with the others, often as possible.

Even though I have lost my memory, I have enough evidence that my life has been full of joyful highlights. My immediate circumstance is pleasing. I have no desire to change anything.