

Vacation

9-10-2012 by Harry Zirkelbach

There is a modern distinction in the definition of vacation. Today it is assumed travel is required for vacation to be correctly understood.

That was not always a consideration.

When employment was essential for survival, that tedium merited an annual break from punching the time clock. This was two consecutive weeks of freedom from employment, with pay. A time to be spent any way chosen.

My parents were not the exception when they enjoyed Dad's vacation days, by doing nothing, at home. Their first vacation involving travel, was in the summer of 1955, when I bought a new car at the Plymouth factory in Detroit, motored to Erie Pa, then drove them 1000 miles further from home than they had ever been, here to Denver. We continued driving to Colorado tourist sites,. Then finally to Union Station for that delightful return home via a choo-choo, which deposited them a few blocks from their home.

Those whose initial roots rest in other states, often have the logical choice in a vacation destination, miles away with friends and relatives. Usually inexpensive lodging there, with faces and places, sharing of memories and current events before return to the rut of going to work.

These work days, without contact with the family, work, a daily vacation of sorts. Within work as defined here, many pleasing mini-vacations.

Ugly vacation? To find one join me here at Windsor Gardens. Building 60's elevator was reconditioned four years ago. Barbara and I live on the 3rd floor. We chose to stay at a daughter's house those weeks. In one instance we joined friends from our old Congress Park neighborhood for an evening of bridge.

Pleasantly uneventful. It had been snowing all day, and that continued as we drove home about midnight.

The weather kept sane Denverites home. The few driving followed the ruts of their predecessor on the unplowed streets.

In the 3400 block So Monaco, our car struck a large pothole. The right front tire was deflated. The only lighted area was the King Sooper parking lot at Hampden and Monaco, where I exited the wobbly car. We called AAA. When they answered much later, no promises, busy elsewhere.

While waiting I remove the spare from the trunk, where it was buried under precious debris. More calls for help. Sometimes an answer, with vague promises. Unhappy at this lot, cold and getting wet from the heavy snow, I try to loosen the lug nuts, and with a surprising fury, manage to do just that. Then jack up the Oldsmobile, replace the flat. Beginning to regain sanity, I drive into what seemed the medium of the unseen solid white Hampden roadway, begin to turn west in the heavy snow, when another traveller headed east whacked the rear bumper without stopping.

So as any reasonable person might do, I became angry a second time that early morning, and recall the events clearly and unhappily even today.

Not mentioned earlier, this was my 85th birthday.
We drove to our temporary home, almost empty streets,
in a snow storm of increasing beauty
as calm, warmth, returned to the celebrants.