

## Serendipity

*By Pete Clark*

Last Thursday I drove to Lyman, Wyoming to visit my daughter Lori and granddaughter Christy. Heavy traffic and much road construction made the journey a long trip. I stopped in Laramie for fuel and intended to have lunch at a good restaurant, but the eatery had disappeared from Grand Avenue. I drove west on Interstate 80 and stopped for lunch at the old Gay Johnson location. It is now operated by a different company and leaves much to be desired. I will not pause there again.

Friday Morning Lori and I had breakfast at a café in Mountain View, before going to Kemmerer to attend the first offerings of the Oyster Ridge Music Festival. The first performers were outstanding and the next act, a singing one-man band was not as good. The man sitting next to me wore a Marine Corps baseball cap. I asked him if he had seen service in Viet Nam. He said no but he had been in Lebanon. I mentioned the Marine Barracks. He said he had been in a detail on a hilltop a ways away from the barracks, directing five-inch gunfire from the nuclear powered Guided Missile Cruiser USS Virginia. The shockwave from the explosion of the truck-bomb in the barracks compound broke one of his eardrums. As we conversed it became clear that we had a connection.

The man worked on deep rigs and mentioned the various places he had rough necked. The conversation became fascinating to me. Every place he had helped drill for oil, I had helped map the substrata's anticlines that trap natural gas and petroleum. We had shot records from southwest of Baggs, Wyoming to north of Big Piney and from Kemmerer to the Eden Valley. Those areas now have producing oil and gas fields.

Saturday morning we went to Evanston to attend the first daily showing of a movie that Christy would like. Due to her brain injury Christy is calmer earlier in the day. After the movie we went to a brew pub for lunch and then stopped at Wal-Mart on the way home. We were in a checkout line and I was grumbling about having to buy special food for a picky cat. The man behind me piped up and said he had to buy for five picky cats. He was there with a shopping cart load of cat food. His wife was in back of him, sitting on one of Wal-Mart's electric carts. He said stray cats keep showing up on his door step, looking for a home. He was wearing a Viet Nam Veteran cap. The man said he had been in the army and had spent 1965 and 1967 in country and had not enjoyed either tour of duty. I told him I had been considered for reactivation by the Air Force during the Tet Offensive in early 1968, but nothing came of it.

People have interesting stories to tell no matter where I find them.