

A Memorable Christmas Eve

By Pete Clark

This year I spent Christmas Eve driving halfway to New Mexico for a doctor's appointment. I followed the directions provided, turned left on South Potomac and right at the first intersection. I went past the carwash and turned into the parking lot of a large building with no name on it. I went inside and found myself at the registration counter of a hotel. I told one of the people standing around in there that I was looking for a doctor's office and was told to go to the next building over.

After arriving at the correct building, I checked the lobby directory for my doctor's suite number and took the elevator to the third floor. There was a woman in the waiting area when I walked in. She was the only other patient I saw during the hour and fifteen minutes I was there. Two women were working in the reception area. One of them gave me a tablet similar to an Etch-A-Sketch for entering my registration information.

I did not wait long before a CMA came to lead me to an exam room. I figured I would have to wait a while in the room as that is generally the case. But I was wrong. A Nurse Practitioner arrived almost immediately to begin her inquisition and examination. She asked if I have heartburn. I said no, but many years ago when I did have heartburn I did not know what the pain was called or where it came from. She asked if I get full quickly when eating and I answered yes. Then she asked if I get hungry a relatively short time after eating. Once again, my answer was yes. The Nurse Practitioner told me she thinks she knows the reason for my continuing weight loss.

Ten years ago, I weighed two hundred sixty-five pounds. My fear of Diabetes and its accompanying needles inspired me to get my weight down to one hundred seventy-five pounds without the aid of some fad diet. A year or so ago, my weight began dropping on its own. The Nurse Practitioner said she believes there is a problem that prevents much food from getting into the small intestine in a state that allows the absorption of its nutrients.

After finishing with the Nurse Practitioner, I was turned over to the Scheduler. It took her less than five minutes to set up my Upper GI. Then, we had a bull session. Parts of it were about our individual health, but the talk was mostly chitchat. We finished up with her taking me across the hall and through the open door of the Doctor's office. He was not in, but there was something in there she wanted me to see. There is a Navajo saddle blanket, colored with subdued shades of gray, hanging on one wall. Bronco paraphernalia and other items hang from other walls. She giggled and pointed to the window. A vertical sign hangs there. On a red field with black letters, it says, MAN CAVE.