

Manna from Heaven

By Pete Clark

I have experienced a myriad of serendipitous happenings during my life, such as the time I moved to Kansas City, Missouri to accept a position that looked very good. The reality on the ground in Kansas City was much different than the distant view. The job did not work out and after a few months, we were on our way back to Denver and our finances were depleted. I had a few traveler's checks left in the book I had bought for the move east. When the last of those checks was gone, I knew I could be walking through hot coals if I was not extremely careful.

I soon found employment at a fairly decent salary that did not allow for emergencies. I generally keep a little bit of cash stashed somewhere, even when times are tough. Some sort of crisis rose up and I needed money. I dug into my hiding place and located no cash, but found that for some reason, I had not disposed of the empty traveler's check book. Without thought I picked up the little folder and opened its cover, exposing a twenty-dollar traveler's check that should not have been there. It was a life saver that kept us afloat.

One pay period in 2002 I had worked many hours of overtime and after taxes I had cleared a very good amount. I went by the bank on the way home that Friday and deposited my paycheck. When I deposit a check, I always ask for the balance. When the teller gave me my receipt with the balance on the back, I almost had the big one. The account balance was a little over \$500.00. I asked her where the money had gone. She told me the account was in overdraft. Something clicked in my brain and I realized something I should have known: Norma had a gambling problem. I left the bank for the supermarket where we traded. At the time of my arrival, Norma was there, exiting her car to go in and buy scratch tickets. I asked her not to write a check for a lottery purchase. She did not put up an argument and got back into her car to drive home.

With the checking account drained I didn't have the money to pay the monthly bills and wondered what I was going to do. If push came to shove, I could take money out of my 401K, but that was the last thing I wanted to do. I called work to see if there was any overtime available the next day. I was told I could go in and work eight hours, so I did. After work that day I went through the mail and found an envelope from my employer. It contained a check for more than \$2200.00. The following Monday I asked the personnel supervisor why I had received the check. She said she did not know why the check was issued and told me not to say anything because not everyone received payment by mail.