

11th Storyworth: What is one of your favorite trips, and why?

While putting copies of these Storyworth articles on my website at <http://www.holzerent.com/pdfpages.htm> I was testing the download features because a friend needed a service manual. As you've noted before, I read service manuals like others read Harlequin novels, and most I now have are PDFs because they take up very little space, and I have a bunch of duplicative 2TB servers on my LAN which I transport between Dawn's and my CNY home and our Florida place. But I also use my website when the size of a file exceeds what can be attached as an email, to enable simplest sharing of information as needed.

Anyway, I was reminded of a trip which occurred late March in 1973, my Senior year at Clarkson just before actual interviews for professional jobs. For those of you who don't follow hockey, Clarkson has been a perennial powerhouse in the ECACs, but had experienced a poor year prior, so had been unexpected to get anywhere near the finals. But they somehow managed to get to the final four, so I and a bunch of my friends decided spur of the moment to go to Boston, as the finals would be at Boston Garden over the weekend.

If you look back at some of my writing, you will see that I owned my '63 Chevy Bel Air wagon during my last two years at Clarkson, so seven of us piled into it and headed across the Adirondacks, very much spur of the moment, packing little more than ourselves and the food on our backs, plus snacks. You should note here that we expected to meet some snow and slush along the way, and thankfully the car's heater was up to the task. The audio system consisted of the in-dash AM-FM radio, which a EE friend had spliced a 3.5mm jack into its pre-amp so I could use a portable cassette player headphone port, and I'd used some wire to form a basket to hold it under the dash. Not the first, nor last time I'll form a useful something with such wire, which I ALWAYS keep on hand, like I did for my GPS use of MS Streets and Trips on a tablet PC, etc ;-)

Anyway, there we were tooling along with the turquoise turtle until we reached the Northway, then continued across Vermont and New Hampshire to get down to the Mass Pike. There we were heading East, planning to stay at the home of one of the guys while in Boston, when a Porsche 911 Targa, the car I LOVE, passed us. So we all started rocking the Chevy hoping to get it to catch up, which made the Porsche owner laugh. Just as an aside; this was a bunch of Engineering geeks who fully understood that our rocking to help was not even a possibility. It's called entropy, and there is simply no way to ADD inertia when you base it in the same seats you hope to rock faster ;-). So much for science. I think we were all just as wishful thinkers then ;-)

At this point I should note that Lynne and I were already engaged, which occurred the prior April 1, because my roommate, Dave Phillips, had helped rescue her from an accident she had while trying to visit me. Her '69 Toyota Corolla had been poorly winterized before she knew me, so had a damaged engine from freezing, which misfired, but decided to add more than 33% power just as Lynne reached some black ice on I-81 coming from Alfred U where she was attending. Anyway, after her accident, we were in my dorm room where I proposed to her. She accepted and it was approaching midnight, when I said "April Fools". She didn't see the humor, so I repeated the request about an hour later, when she verified I had no overhanging disclaimers ;-)

So Friday night we were driving very late on our way to Boston, arriving WAY after midnight, when we all simply crashed. We awoke late morning on Saturday, and headed for Boston Garden for the afternoon semi-final, which Clarkson won. So we were going to the Final the next day, which Clarkson eventually also won. But THAT is not why this trip was memorable ;-). After the semi, we went to visit the girlfriend of one of the guys who attended a private school for girls. I am sorry but I do not recall the name, because it COULD have been Wellesley, where my daughter eventually attended, but it made no impression on me at the time, sadly.

What WAS memorable was the young woman who was the “gatekeeper” who had to call up for whichever girl(s) was to join us. She was, and still is, the most stunningly beautiful woman I ever met, and WAY out of MY league, I can promise you. You must imagine six guys who’d been crammed into the car, plus me, dressed in typical game garb (read SLOB ;-)) and descending on this virtuous place. If you recall the Billy Joel line “I told her dirty jokes until she smiled” you’ll have the picture – I was in rare form; rude, crude and loud. You know; typical ;-)) And completely unaware of what was going on until one of the guys mentioned Lynne, to which the girl responded “You’re engaged?!” not in disbelief, but in genuine disappointment. You could have heard a pin drop. Nowhere in MY sphere of recognition had ANY idea of MY desirability by the fairer sex been even contemplated. So I was startled, if not flabbergasted. Who knew, right? ;-))

Not only was I incognito, I imagined pretty much everything I had just done was expected to have precisely the opposite effect BECAUSE I already had a secure relationship with a woman. Another of Mom Nature’s nasty tricks; the more desperately you want someone the less desirable you somehow become. But the converse is seemingly ALSO true. Look up the word “irony” and you’ll see the definition MUST include MY picture ;-)) And her response could not have been more genuine, because she tried all the time we were there to influence me, as if she somehow hoped I’d break it off with Lynne. That was the day I started to learn something about “the other woman”. I still cannot comprehend WHY they put up with such second-hand status, but I sure as hell see that it DOES happen, and I feel immensely sorry for ANYONE, male or female, with the experience.

Anyway, we had a fun afternoon, and I learned that whatever IMAGE was projected by such a setting, it is no more to be believed than ANY of Grimm’s Fairy Tales. I don’t think ANY scientist will EVER find the real source of the emotion of LOVE, but I know very few who would deny its existence when presented with such facts. And I also know that I need to be patient with Dawn when she expresses anxiety over meeting any prior romantic interest of mine. Relationships are fragile and require real commitment to preserve any longevity. And that will be on TOP of anything else nature wants to throw at us.

The remainder of the trip was pretty uneventful, except we were all tired by the time we returned to Clarkson. Most of the others slept at least part of the way back, while I drove the entire way, pretty much as is my practice usually. I am fortunate that I like to drive as an end unto itself, so Dawn is a perfect match in that she HATES to drive, and prefers to ONLY do so when she has no other choice. And the one truth about my life so far with Dawn which is shared with the trip I described above is that neither could possibly have been planned to be what they eventually became; an absolute disavowal of my adage about being a “Project Manager”, which implies I think about every possibility and plan a contingency for it. I could not have possibly planned for the afternoon we had at that girl’s school, any more than I could have planned to meet and fall in love with Dawn. But the spontaneous times are the ones we will remember most fondly throughout our lives. ;-))

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