

### 33rd Storyworth: How Do You Prefer To Travel?

Given how the question is posed, I'll presume a variety of things. But I should point out that I have been intrigued by some advertisements as we have been dealing with Covid and its risks, and some options I had never even been aware of, let alone considered as possibilities. Dawn, for example, has been on cruises, while I have never even contemplated them. But the limited number of Senior Trips we have participated with has suggested some merits for somebody else to "take the reins" sometimes as well.

Because I LIKE to drive, even as I have no patience whatsoever for most of the morons I am forced to share the road with, I have simply assumed that however I got to my basic location, I would then want personal transportation to explore the area itself. I don't know enough about cruises yet to definitively determine how I would feel about them, but long shipboard trips have not really interested me, albeit without my having much experience with what they might entail at all. So I probably need to open my mind a bit there.

One possibility for those I had not even been aware of before Covid was River Cruises, which by the physics of a river mean smaller boats. But the Viking ads on PBS have opened my eyes to some real possibilities, especially if I include them as part of some greater travel plans, such as revisiting Europe, where I would HAVE to include renting a car to drive the Autobahn while the ability to do so still exists. I am well aware that driving 240 kmh (that's 150 mph, which I have actually done there, with perfect legality ;-)) both consumes more fuel and contributes to global warming vs driving a more normal 120 kmh, but being an accomplished artiste behind the wheel makes it just as essential to my existence to do it well as performing with my 12 string guitar. If I would sound terrible, what would be the point? But that might explain my reaction to incompetent drivers when I have to share the road with them; how long would YOU want to listen to a bad musician?

I have NEVER wanted to take an ocean liner "across the pond" so to speak. So Bahamas cruises have held no real excitement for me either. I generally prefer to get out into the other cultures and partake of some of their fare, rather than riding some sanitized super city of familiarity around. But I am also impatient. I HATE the process of even GETTING to an airliner, between security and the inevitable likelihood that no matter where I am going, it will seem like I had to WALK half way there through some airport terminal with expensive and lousy food you cannot even bring yourself because of TSA. But that is the only reasonably time-efficient means of getting between countries, with the exception of Canada, to which I prefer to drive because of its proximity, although I am not exactly certain that would be the best option were I to consider, for example, taking the CN Rail excursion across the country, something I have actually contemplated, based on Lightfoot's "Canadian Railroad Trilogy". In fact, it might be fun to go to the left coast via one country rail system and return via the other's just to see the contrasting approaches to the concept. I think Dawn might enjoy it, too ;-)

Clearly, she and I are of one mind when it comes to winter weather, which is one of the things about her which first appealed to me. I am tired of CNY winters, and very much enjoy the five month stints we spend now in Florida since we bought our home there. As an aside, a good friend from there just told us of the passing of a number of our park residents, which surprised us, so we are unsure what might be the upshot by the time we return this November. But her sister, Diane, with whom Dawn was staying when we first met, and has a place eight miles north of ours there, just replaced her Toyota minivan with a car much like Dawn's recently acquired new Subaru Forester, and I like to think in some small way was influenced by my opinion in the matter, so she can continue to reliably make the trip as we have; by car spanning three to five days depending on stops enroute. That process allows us to have our travel vehicle available for daily driving at the destination, too ;-)

I HAD hoped to get my RV operational again so we could use it to travel as well. I always enjoyed the freedom that entailed while I was working. But my own physicality is no longer up to the task, I don't think, to say nothing of the financial impact on my savings. So I am still not decided what the next steps with that look like. But the ability to stop pretty much anywhere along your route for a snack or meal, and decide spur of the moment to revise travel plans, is one of the great freedoms I had as a "full-timer" while working my career. In doing so, I would bring my daily driver towed behind the RV, which enabled me to keep total fuel costs down even while having all my familiar comforts with me, and not constantly having to repack my bags in transit. And by staying at parks whenever possible, I kept my other direct costs to a minimum as well, which is one reason I bought my Lifetime Membership in the Good Sam Club and my Senior Pass for all the Federal Parks. Unfortunately, JUST before Covid hit, so I have yet to actually USE that. Soon, I hope ;-)

Travel by air, as noted above, is something of a hate, hate not so much, relationship. I suspect that might be the most honest assessment by the almost three billion air travelers each year, which can only be expected to increase. And unfortunately, no technology for significantly reducing the global warming footprint of that is likely to be developed anytime soon. And with the global impact from Covid, it will be some time before things are back to "normal" as far as public transit is concerned, as very few of the world's population have had the benefits of the vaccines, as we in North America have been fortunate to receive. Until that all clears, there will be disruptions in most travel plans for EVERYBODY, unfortunately.

Of course, as can be gleaned from above, driving is a form of entertainment itself for me. So my favorite mode of transport will likely remain my personal automobile for some (hopefully LONG ;-)) time to come yet. But WHERE I would like to travel is pretty much anywhere that I will not be stuck in hot traffic. One reason I have always liked being in CNY when it is NOT winter has been the ability to drive in pretty much any direction for under a half hour and be where I will never see a radar trap setup trying to play "gotcha" with me, to say little of the other attractions of the area. I am not a fan of museums and the like, although I do love places which have interactive exhibits where I can learn, especially if they can entertain both adults and children. With my Granddaughter Ainsley just turning four, I hope she will soon be both interested in and able to travel with us. That could prove to be a great way to visit with her, and to give her parents a break as well.

No matter how I travel, who I travel with matters more. Sharing experiences is what life has always been about. And I know Dawn shares my interests in such activities, which is part of why I share her interests in so many things like her church, senior groups, Bingo, Bunko, etc. So, while I don't yet know where, how, nor even when we can be allowed to do so, it is rapidly becoming time to start planning trips again... ;-)

Joe Holzer 8/9/2021