



y 11, 2016

# Wisconsin, Spring, 2016

## A Chronological Summary of the Trip with Photos

Photos for this chronological approach will be minimal.

NOTE: I was hoping to complete my travelogue to Wisconsin, 2016 by now, but I am still working on the photos for posting. I kept the daily journal you see below during my trip. I am posting it to give the you the chronological story of the trip. However, my intention is to build the travelogue around certain themes: Olbrich Botanical Gardens, Bike Rides, Explorations by Auto, etc. I will use much of the text below to enhance the photographic representations of the themes. I have decided to do this for the sake of seeking a different approach to travelogue presentation than using chronology. Hope it works.

The purpose of this particular trip is to visit my hometown of Madison that I have come to appreciate greatly over the years. I have friends and family there with whom I can connect. I have been to Madison five of the last six years. This will be my first visit

in the spring. I hope to catch an emerging display of springtime beauty with my trusty cameras, but it is still early and I may be thwarted a bit. I am taking my brand new bike, designed for a person of my age. I hope to play some golf. My initial stop will be in Highland Park, IL to visit my sister, Lynn, and her husband, Paul. I will see Lynn on stage in a Community Theater production, "The Last Romance." I have not seen her on stage for many years, so this will be a treat to see my talented sister continue her craft at this point in her life.

Well, this is my first attempt at taking a trip with just my iPad Pro. I know that I can load my photos on to the iPad Pro and I have a wireless hard drive (Seagate Wireless Plus) to back them up while am gone. I will probably use Dropbox as the primary App for storage and processing photos using Pixelmator on my iPad. I have become a fan of Affinity Photo for processing my photos on my iMac, but they do not yet have an App for my iPad Pro. I am still discovering whether I can replace my use of a MacBook Air or its equivalent with just the iPad for convenience on longer trips. If this works for Wisconsin, then I will use the same process for journaling my trip to the Outer Banks in June and Ireland and the Danube Cruise in August.

Another problem that I have in using the iPad Pro is editing and adding content to my Website on iPage. I use a web builder called Weebly and for some reason, it does not currently work on my iPad using 9.3.1. I have communicated the problem to iPage and to Weebly. In the case of Weebly, they did not want to deal with it because I was not using the web builder on their Web development site. iPage did try to help, but to no avail.

So, I begin this trip with these handicaps. However, I am not discouraged and have decided to use the Journal Newsletter Template in Pages to record my trip. My hope is that with a bit of effort, I can copy and paste to my Website upon my return.

## Day 1: On the Road Again

I left the house at 4:50 AM knowing the ride ahead was long. I thought that if any bad weather was minimal and my old body could withstand 10 hours in the car with pit and walking stops every two and half hours, I could make it to South Bend, IN. I



Selfie on a bright, cool, spring morning at Vilas Park in Madison, Wisconsin





My reliable Ford Escape and my new hybrid bike. My travel companions for the trip.

thought that it would be fun to see the Notre Dame campus and have a pub dinner in a college town. I made good time. I was in western Pennsylvania about 60 miles from Ohio around 10:30 in the morning. I journeyed on through Ohio with an occasional rain shower and a few snow flakes and arrived in South Bend around 4:10 PM. I found the La Quinta Inn near the airport and settled in for the evening. I asked the hotel representative about a Pub downtown and he said yes there was one, but he also suggested eating at a friendly neighborhood restaurant called Angles that I had actually passed on my way to the hotel. So I drove over to Angles about 6 pm, sat at the bar, drank a couple of Sam's Lagers and enjoyed a pretty fair Friday fish fry of pollock, French fries, and cole slaw. The restaurant is owned by an energetic couple. The husband ran the bar that was quite full with other fish fry advocates and his wife was in charge of the restaurant on the other side of the wall. It was a joy to see them shuffle back and forth working in sync with one another. The service was slow in the Southern sense and the food was quite satisfying.

After dinner, I drove through the center of South Bend toward the campus of Notre Dame. It is unfair to judge a town with just a drive through, but I was surprised at how unlike a college town, South Bend is. Or perhaps, my judgment has been influenced by the joy I always feel in returning to the Univ. of Wisconsin campus in Madison. A portion of Madison that includes State St, University Ave, and several surrounding streets have a college flavor that provides great energy. I did not get that sense from my short visit to South Bend. I also was not impressed with the condition of the roads in the center of the city. Pot holes everywhere made driving a car somewhat tenuous. I did enjoy the limited view I got of the ND campus from a campus parking lot. The grounds looked beautiful and the architecture, famously portrayed around the country and the world did stand out. Bottom line, I do not have to visit South Bend again.

## Day 2: A Little Snow, but Onward to Highland Park

I did find the La Quinta Inn in South Bend to be comfortable and accommodating. However, the next morning, I looked out the window and snow was falling with a vengeance. I looked on the Weather App on my iPad and saw that the line of snow was a relatively thin band. I knew that if I started out, the first ten to fifteen miles on the Indiana Turnpike would be slow, but I would soon drive into clearer weather, still cold, but no precipitation. I also noticed that the snow bands to the east of me moving toward Ohio and Pennsylvania indicated that whatever weather I encountered the day before, was far less of an issue than for travelers heading East on Saturday.

And so I pulled out around 7:00 am knowing that in a short distance going west I would gain an hour. The GPS said that I should arrive at my sister's home in Highland Park, IL around 8:30 and sure enough by 8:00 am I was north of the loop about 30 minutes from my destination. So, I arrived about two hours earlier than what my sister expected, but I was welcomed warmly with a big hug and a cup of coffee.

Lynn, Paul, and I talked for awhile and then headed out to a local breakfast and lunch favorite for some brunch. We talked some more and then headed back Lynn and Paul's home for an afternoon of rest and getting ready for the little pre-play gathering for about nine of us, beginning around 4:30. Paul had to go to work, so he missed the good conversation we had while sipping a bit of wine and enjoying some finger food prior to leaving for the play in Glen Ellen. Zita is the next door neighbor who is approaching 90, but has the energy and wit of a person much younger. She can be laugh out loud funny with her stories accumulated over her many years. Our cousin, Ann, and her husband, "Sodie," Soderstrum were also there. Ann is just a class act who is articulate about life and family. Sodie, however, has a very wry sense of humor, and although I rarely see him, I truly enjoy exchanging gentle barbs with him

when we are together. At 6:30 we left for the hour long drive to the quaint little theater where my sister, Lynn, was about to act in the last performance of The Village Theatre Guild's "The Last Romance."

The play written by Joe DiPietro is a story of two people beyond 70 who meet in a dog park and begin to develop a relationship based on the omission of some important aspects of their lives and how those misunderstandings or "lies" turn into a simple story of developing love into something a bit more complicated. It is an engaging story that kept me involved for the entire play, partly because my sister was one of the three main characters on stage and secondly because the dialogue spoke quite clearly to me, an aging soul on the other side of 70. It spoke of being alone and being lonely. It confronted issues of family and family obligations. It confronted the idea of romance later in life. I really enjoyed the play presented in a very intimate, tiny theater in Glen Ellen, IL. It was good to watch with friends of my sister and members of our family. It was fun to attend the after party in the basement of the small theater that was once, I suspect, a one room elementary school long ago. It was just a memorable evening that marked the early stages of my latest trip to the Midwest.

We arrived at home not too long after midnight and I plopped into my guest bed shortly after in search of a much needed night's sleep.

## Day 3: Sunday, Day of Rest and a Birthday Celebration

I awoke around 6 am and continued making entries into this journal. We all agreed that this Sunday would be truly a day of rest. I went to Church at 8. The Immaculate Conception parish has a very talented cantor with a clear and pleasing voice. Her talents and those of the piano and organ accompanist complemented the Mass beautifully. The deacon, who I suspect was shortly going to be ordained as a priest gave the homily. With all of the reading in theology I have done recently around the ideas of Teilhard de Chardin, it gives me a context for how to interpret



even the most traditional of sermons. The deacon is a very good public speaker, but the content of his homily stuck very closely to the scripture readings for the day. However, certain phrases centering on finding Jesus in ourselves resonated with some of the most recent readings I have been doing. It was a pleasant service that was a nice beginning to a restful day.

I met Lynn for coffee at the local Starbucks and we talked about the meaning of the "The Last Romance" and the high quality performance she gave. The theater has been important to Lynn all of her life. In many respects her passionate love of all things theater has been her greatest gift to others. Outside of being a wife and mother, her life's purpose is born out every time she directs, plays a role on stage, or writes a creative piece for children's theater. Lynn had to go and strike the set at the Village Theatre Guild's post play ritual of tearing down and preparing for the next show.

I wandered back to Lynn's home and did a little more writing in this journal. Paul and I had a nice conversation about what is important at this point in life re volunteer service. When you are younger, you are willing to put up with more conflict in service oriented volunteerism, but at my age I am wondering whether it is really worth it if the conflict is getting in the way of the primary reasons volunteered. At any rate we had a good conversation.

In the afternoon, I sat part of the time with Lynn watching this year's Masters' Golf Tournament. I was disappointed to see Jordan Spieth lose his substantial lead on the back nine of Augusta National, but he was not hitting the ball that well the whole tournament. His ability to overcome adversity left him on the final nine holes and he lost to Peter Willett who was hitting and putting the ball magnificently. This disappointed golf enthusiast and supporter of Spieth has gotten use to accepting the twist and turns of the complexities of golf. Spieth is 22 years old, a brilliant golfer with a bright future ahead. Yesterday was a painful learning experience for a young athlete who quite possibly learned a great lesson about how easy it is for exhilaration to turn to despair and loss.

We went to Lynn's favorite local restaurant, Bella Via, and celebrated her 69th Birthday (actually, April 13) with great wine,

delicious food, and more family conversation with humorous memories of the past.

I now find myself banging away at my iPad the morning after as I get ready to move on to Madison. I hope to see Sally and Ann this evening for dinner.

## Day 4: Another Look at Madison

The drive from Highland Park to Madison went very smoothly. I ran into very little traffic on this sunny traveling day. From Highland Park, I traveled north on I-94 toward Milwaukee, taking the by pass (I-894), which cuts off the downtown area. Getting back on I-94, I just aimed the car west and about an hour later I was driving up to the Countryside Apartments situated on the South Beltline, just minutes from everything Madison. I was a bit early for checking in, so I drove to the nearby University of Wisconsin Arboretum documented in earlier travels to Madison. I went into the Visitors Center and browsed the Bookstore, finding an interesting looking book on the Bark River that runs into Lake Koshkonong, a man made lake on the Rock River south of Madison. The Rock flows through Janesville Wisconsin and then south into Illinois and eventually emptying into the Mississippi River. I am hoping to take a little day trip to the Bark. Perhaps there are some bike trails there to enhance my visit. The book invites one to canoe, but I doubt I will do that.

I checked into my second floor apartment a little after noon, enjoyed a turkey wrap sandwich at the Badger Tavern (formally Tony Frank's) and then did some grocery shopping to put a few things in the refrigerator. During past trips, I have purchased way too much in these shopping adventures. This time, I tried to be more limited in what I thought I would need. *Aside: at the conclusion of the trip, I still gave some food away, took some with me, and tossed the res. Will I ever learn?*

I brought my Apple TV with me, so I watched that for a little while and then joined my friends Ann, her husband, Brad, and Sally at a new restaurant called the Hollander. It is a rustic, pub like atmosphere with a great bar, good food, and a list of specialty beers that never ends. I had a couple of Palm Ambers on draught, but finished with a bottled red Belgian Amber brewed in Cooperstown,

New York. On the label was the phrase "Rare Vos" (amber ale), which I have on a beer bottle at home, but brewed in a totally different place. Needless to say, I took the empty bottle with me. We had a great conversation at dinner. It took no time to pick up with my friends where we left off last summer. I felt like the first day in Madison was a great success. I fell into bed around 10 PM and rested reasonably well for the adventures coming up on Tuesday.

## Day 5: A Hike in the Arboretum, etc.



So, yesterday was a "Jay" doing his thing kind of day. It began with a 3 mile hike in the Arboretum where I wandered off the beaten path for awhile, finding some early spring scenes where new vegetation is underway. I had never walked these paths before on earlier visits, probably because they were surrounded by bushes and plants in full bloom and did not catch my eye. After the jaunt in the Arboretum and a shower, I traveled the wonderful street called Monroe and landed at Victor Allen's to renew my connection with this "other coffee house (Colectivo's)" on the street. *I bowed to the pressure of Colectivo's, and went there for coffee today.* After a brief sit on a bench at Wingra Park, I took my traveling car to the Car Wash, followed with hitting a medium basket of balls at Vitense's. My back was bothering me a bit. Hope it holds out for a couple of rounds. Getting old sucks--the favorite cliché of we older folk.

I checked in with my BOE chairman and discussed a few gory details with him about the meeting coming up when I return. "Ah, will he ever return? His fate is still unknown." Then, I took my nostalgic trip down to State Street for a Brat and a beer, followed by a trip to the "cozy" part of the Union that is still open on the Theater side of the structure. I bought an ice cream waffle cone and settled in the for a short visit in a section of the "Rat" that is still open. I then wandered down the hallway to the back patio behind the theater. I shot several photos of the patio under reconstruction. While there, I met Gaither, a young woman who grew up in Stoughton, spent sometime in Nashville, and now lives in Steamboat Springs Colorado. She, like me, is back for a visit.







This guy was trying very hard to make this jump work.

We talked for about 15 minutes. We conversed with one another after she smiled at me following my taking of the photos. I still seem to have the spirit of serendipity that motivates these little conversational events. Unfortunately, I did not shoot a photo of the lovely Gaither.

After a trip halfway up Bascom Hill and the addition of shots of the Lincoln Statue to my repertoire, I wandered back down lower State Street where I captured this guy on his skate board. After wandering through the UW Bookstore where I saw more Badger Red than I could take, I returned to my car at the Lake Street ramp. I drove down University Avenue and then up the hill to Resurrection Cemetery for a short visit with my parents. Then, back to Countryside to enjoy a brief nap, followed with giving my new bike a short test run along the residential neighborhoods of Grandview Blvd. I watched a movie on Netflix, discovered a place called Picasso's where I went for a pizza, and that is where I met Chad the owner. We exchanged stories about Madison and found that we shared some memories and people in common. For example, I mentioned how I went to Lombardino's after dances at Edgewood High School, and he told me that members of the Lombardino family often come to Picasso's for pizza. Chad's wife earned her doctorate in a bio medicine at Wisconsin. They met at the Univ. of Michigan in Ann Arbor, but have been in Madison for at least sixteen years. After about a twenty minute conversation, Chad and I parted. I had a few more minutes of discussion with Corrine, my waitress. Bottom line, Picasso's provided me with not only good pizza, a couple of glasses of red, but also some very pleasant conversation. Serendipity and discovery are alive and well on this trip. I settled in for the evening around 8, went to bed at 10.

## Day 6: Cloudy, but Getting Warmer

Began my day with coffee and a blueberry muffin at Colectivo's on Monroe Street. I will return to my favorite Victor Allen's tomorrow, because although Colectivo's is the "in" coffee shop for Madison, it does not resonate with me. Sometimes an old habit is better than a new adventure.

### *A Visit*

Hometown welcomes me.  
Memories flood, Madison shines  
Friends, photos, and walks.

I opened Trader Joe's at 8 AM, purchasing some cheese and the crackers that I like. It is neat to go to a Trader Joe's and find the same products that I regularly purchase in Danbury. For example, I have taken to consuming about an ounce of dark chocolate a day for its antioxidant qualities. The same chocolate bars with 72% cocoa are nestled into the TJ shelves as at home. I also bought a pound of grass fed hamburger to make a hamburger when I am on my own for an evening meal. Yesterday morning was a shopping time for me. I went to Walgreen's in Fitchburg and then to Hilldale to Morgan Shoes where I found very expensive shoes called Mephistos that are way beyond my budget. While in Hilldale, I stopped into Metcalf's, an upscale grocery store where I bought some Wisconsin cheddar from Monroe and four chicken wings to consume for lunch. *I went to two upscale grocery stores in Madison, Hy Vee and Metcalf's. The place here at home that comes the closest to these two Madison stores is Stew Leonard's, although the Internet puts Whole Foods in that category too.*

After enjoying the wings, I watched a very depressing movie about the homeless in New York City about a couple that found each other on the streets, fell in love, watched over each other, lost each other in the end, with one member of the couple returning home at the end, perhaps finding answers to her questions in the homelessness of her four years on the streets of New York. It is a rough and griddy movie that often made me wonder why I kept watching, but I did.



After the movie, it was time for a bike ride, the first real one since I arrived in Madison. I hitched my bike to the car and drove a few miles to the bike station on Seminole Hwy. I was not sure of my destination starting out, but I chose to cycle along the "Military Ridge Trail" to Verona about four miles west of Madison. Here are a couple of photos from that trip. The best composed selfie of me is a bit on the blurry side, but you get the idea. Early spring in Madison looks more like winter than spring, but there are hopeful

signs of new life, just like on my walk the day before. It finally reached 50 degrees yesterday, but the overcast day and a noticeable breeze made the ride less enjoyable. However, I did almost 9 miles of steady riding and accumulated another notch on my exercise belt.

Falls in Verona at the far end of



Dinner with my friends at Captain Bill's.

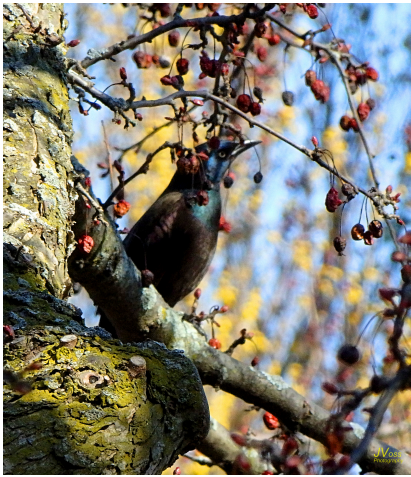
Returning from the bike ride around four, I rested a bit, and then got ready for dinner at Captain Bill's with Ann, Sally, Sally's friend, Doug, and Jerry and Marsha Rather. It was pleasant time with lots of sharing about the Rather's trip to the Master's Golf Tournament last weekend, stories of Ann and Brad's adventure with the construction of their new condo, Sally's issues at work, and a just a bit about the storied life of Doug. He has lived in New Jersey, California, but inherited a farm near Oregon, WI, and now has embarked on a life in Wisconsin and a new friendship with Sally. I took a photo to show the happy group prior to ordering our various sea and lake food dishes. I had delicious clam chowder and Walleye, a wonderful cod like white fish that is hard to find in CT.

It was another early night. Climbed into bed around 9:30. The bad news is that I am writing this at 4:30 in the morning because I have accomplished my nightly goal of five hours of sleep.

## Day 7: Just Another Day in Madison on my Own

Today was beautiful day and to my detriment, I did not ride my bike. I just did not feel like it. However, I did take some photos. It began with a pre-coffee trip to Vilas Park where I tried to capture a few landscapes in the early spring mode that I may use to compare with similar shots at other times of the year. I returned to my usual coffee haunt of Victor Allen's and read the NY times and looked at a few other tidbits. I wandered home, picked up my regular Olympus Camera and headed to the Olbrich Botanical Gardens for a spring shoot. Needless to say, there were few blooms poking out of early spring buds, but I captured some purple, violet, and yellow colors along with some additional bird in the tree shots and some landscapes with water, land, and man-made structures integrated into some attractive formats. Before





At Olbrich Park, spring was still hiding, but birds in the trees sang of hope.

entering the Conservatory to look at the tropical plants, I had a nice chat with the two volunteer ladies manning the desk. Neither were Madison natives. One came from northwestern Iowa, the other from Ohio. In any event we talked about the cold spring of recent weeks and that the weather now on the horizon may bring the hoped for renewal of spring colors at the gardens.

I was still wrestling with the idea of riding my bike, but returned home for a little lunch and sitting in the sun on the deck that adorns my living room in the apartment. Putting the bike idea aside at least one more time, I drove out McKee Road in Fitchburg to take a look at the HyVee Grocery Store and their dessert menu in anticipation of Saturday night at the Rathens'. It is a fascinating restaurant with many prepared foods and a very nice market restaurant open all day. I tried a little Gelato and enjoyed the ambiance of the store.

It was about 3 PM when I returned to my abode and parked myself again on the sun drenched deck and read about the Bark River and Chief Black Hawk, followed by a listen of the MacCast on my iPhone and Beats Headphones. I also tried to work on some of the family photos I took snapshots of in Highland Park.

Something has gone wrong with my Dropbox files and I have decided to just wait to work on my family project until I get home. I seem to have most of my photos on my Seagate Wireless external drive and I know I backed up stuff before I left on this trip. I should be OK, but I did make an error that apparently lost me files on Dropbox. It is a continuing struggle with technology to understand what work flows are solid and which ones are tenuous. Thank the stars for a backup strategy. *Interestingly enough, I found the files a couple of days later on Dropbox. Not sure what I did, but no matter, I found the photos when all was said and done.*

My goal was to make it to 5:30 when I planned to go to Lilliana's just a bit up the road to listen to music, have a drink, and some appetizers (my solution for last night's dinner). I emailed Sally and invited her to join me, which she did. We spent the next couple of hours sipping wine, munching away on tomato topped bruschetta, and consuming tasty chicken wings. In addition, we had one of those deep talks about life as a widowed person and the discoveries we make about ourselves and others. There was no plan here, just a last minute whim to invite Sally to join me. It was another one of

those serendipitous occasions, but this time with a very good friend talking about what is current in our lives. I was home a little after 8:30. I watched another depressing TV series on Netflix and packed it in at 10. I am still waking up after five hours of slumber, but I was able to catch some additional sleep before getting up, facing this new day, and writing this much too mundane story of my life in Wisconsin in early spring, 2016.

## Day 8: The First "Warm" Spring Day with Sunshine

It was clear when I arose on Friday morning that the temperature was already moving towards 50 and that this would be a good day for an early morning bike ride. I donned my biking shorts, a black turtle neck, and my L.L.Bean spring jacket and headed for downtown Madison along the Lake Monona Shore. I did a healthy 8 mile ride along the lake shore with occasional hellos to other bikers and joggers. I rode past the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Monona Terrace Civic Center, then on to Williamson Street where I turned around. On the return trip, I took a little detour across the John Nolan bridge to the park on the southwestern side of the lake. There I repeated the "selfie" act of other years with the bike and me set against the back drop of the lake and the Civic Center. It was a good ride and a good start to my Friday. I stopped at Victor Allen's on the way back to the apartment for a coffee and scone.

I spent the rest of the morning reading about the Bark River, sitting on the deck in the shade, but where the warmth of the sun was evident. The last chapter in the book is where the Bark hits the Rock River in Ft. Atkinson and then moves on the Lake Koshkonong. Many years ago, when I lived in Janesville, my first wife worked for a guy who tried to get a camp ground going on the Lake. Reading about its history and its relation to Native American tribes in the area was quite interesting. The author spent a considerable amount of time telling the story of carp in the lake, which also brought back memories of the many who fished the lake for carp back in the early 70s. I do hope to travel to Ft. Atkinson this week to take a few photos of this intriguing river in southeast Wisconsin.



Ann and Ren: Partners in a video production enterprise.

I picked up Ann for our lunch date about 11:30 and she took me on a tour of the new Condo that she and her husband Brad are building on the outskirts of Madison. It is a duplex, with a great layout and plenty of room. She is looking forward to living in a home with more room than she and Brad have currently in their small, but quaint ranch just southwest of the Beltline. We met her partner, Ren, at O'Grady's Pub on Mineral Pt. Road and shared stories about Manhattan where Wren lived for many years, his five years in County Mayo, Ireland, and his 12 years in Madison, a town he thoroughly enjoys. Ren is a creative soul with video production, painting, and writing as his outlets. He and Ann are going to Puerto Rico next week for a shoot of interviews with employees of a company that has hired their production firm. Ren looks impressive with his well kept beard and the black cowboy hat that are part of his persona.

After lunch, I wandered home where I watched some Netflix, read some more about the Bark River, and waited for the arrival of my sister, Lynn, for the weekend. She rolled in about 6:30 and we went to the Laurel Tavern on Monroe Street for some food and beverage. We have come to like the Laurel Tavern as a pleasant neighborhood bar with a bit of class. Around 8 we wandered into Delaney's Steak house on Madison's westside for a nightcap and to listen to some pleasant jazz. Lynn and I enjoy our visits and we talked about things of importance to us and had a very pleasant evening.

We called it an evening about 10 and I did get a pretty good night's sleep.

## Day 9: A Sunny Saturday in Madison

This morning, I took my bike back to the Bike Station on the Seminole Hwy. and finally bought a season trail pass. I cycled down to Camp Randall, about 4.7 miles from the place of origin. Another 4.7 miles back and I felt good about my morning workout. Lynn and I went to Victor Allen's for coffee and then I remained there while she walked down Monroe street to the boutique and gift shops at the lower end. I joined her at Katy's, her favorite specialty shop in Madison. We then traveled to the Monona



Terrace Civic Center, parked the car and spent a few minutes on the Square at the Farmers' Market. Then, a short jaunt down to Paisan's where we enjoyed drinks and an appetizer looking south across Lake Monona. Getting home about 2:30, I went out to HyVee's to purchase dessert and wine for tonight's festivities at the Rathens. This was followed by a short nap.

Lynn and I joined the Nelsons, Sally, and Doug, at the Rathen's home for a very tasty chicken and pasta dish with good wine, salad, desserts and lots of conversation about travel, work, and even a little politics. It was a very pleasant evening. We were home by 10. Today, Lynn heads back to Chicago, but we will go together to Lake Geneva for a short visit with our cousins Jim and perhaps his brother Bob.

## Day 10: Lake Geneva



Lynn, Jim, and Jay at Popeyes.

Following my usual ritual of attending Mass on Sunday, my sister and I went to Victor Allen's for a second ritual at what has become our favorite coffee hangout. We then drove two cars to Lake Geneva, had a couple of drinks at Pier 290 in Williams Bay sitting in a very warm sun, good for Lynn, not for me. The purpose of our visit was to meet with our cousins Jim and Bob McCullough, brothers of Ann who joined us for Lynn's play the previous Saturday. We saw Bob just for a few minutes at a family gathering celebrating his father-in-law's 92nd Birthday. Then we met up with Jim at Popeye's, a favorite hangout of Lynn's on the shores of Lake Geneva. Lake Geneva, a thriving resort town and vacation domicile for wealthy Chicagoans came alive on this first warm, sunny day of spring. We enjoyed a nice lunch and family conversation. Lynn headed back to Chicago, I to Madison. I did my usual drive through Janesville, by the house where I lived from 1970-75. The yard looked very green and I wondered if they had actually put in a new lawn. The rest of the house looked the same as my other drive-bys in recent years. I also decided to stop at the campground on Lake Koshkonong where my first wife had worked for a time back in the early 70s. It never caught on back then. She made very little money working for a blind owner who depended on her as his eyes. Today, it has a different name and is a thriving campground with both stationery and transient campers filling the spaces. Not sure, if they ripped down the old pavilion, but they

did expand the bar and the store. The parking lot was paved and the shoreline looked clean and inviting. Lakeview Campgrounds, formally known as Bayview, is what owner Sam envisioned all of those years ago.

Arriving back in Madison, I decided to run the dishwasher, and do my laundry. I was tempted to go out again, but the domestic chores convinced me to do otherwise. I watched a British movie about girl meets boy mistakenly on an online date and they somewhat enjoyably find their way to love.

My lower back was bothering me last night and I hope it is a temporary condition. I need to do my bike riding excursions this week and play at least one round of golf. Rain is predicted for Tuesday through Thursday, so who knows what I will do. Eat less I hope. Less exercise does not help my "weight management." I could go back to my traditional walking in the Mall.

## Day 11: Monday in Madison

So, I woke up this morning with no plan in mind, but my luncheon date with Tiffany, Gina's friend. We have made it a tradition to meet for lunch during the times I have visited Madison. The plan was to meet at Manna's Cafe and Bakery on Sherman Ave. about 11:30. We ate there two years ago and it was a very pleasant place for good food and conversation. I decided not to ride the bike early yesterday, because my back was still bothering me a bit from Sunday. I went to Victor Allen's for my morning ritual of coffee and some pastry of questionable healthy value. I spent a couple of hours there reading the news and working on my iPad. A group of women were sitting at a table to the right of me knitting away and conversing about daily issues that were outside my scope of hearing. At any rate, about an hour into their conversation I went over to them and asked permission to take their photo. We exchanged information for a few minutes and then I captured them on my trusty iPhone camera. I thanked them and returned to my seat. In a little while, they broke up, but one woman, Liz came over to me to engage me in a conversation. She asked if I was divorced or a widower and I told her the latter. I told her my wife had passed away five years ago and that I enjoyed coming to Madison for annual visits. She shared with me that her husband was going through a serious bout of illness with brain cancer. We



The Victor Allen Coffee House  
Knitting Group

shared notes about care giving and the fact that our daughters were both married a bit prematurely because of parent illness. She and her husband walk regularly and she is also an avid bike rider. It was a very pleasant way to start my unplanned day. I had given each of the sewing women my Website card, so I sort of hope Liz will email me at some future time. She did tell me about her friend, Michele, who is single and that she might give her my email. Well, it is quite unlikely I will hear from Michele. If I had not gone over to the sewing "jennies", I would not have encountered four retired teachers willing to have their photo taken and one of their number who continued the engagement for an additional 20 minutes.

What fun, and what joy come from these serendipitous encounters. As difficult as it is for me to engage strangers, I need to force the issue, because the results on recent trips have been most enlightening and satisfying. It is always interesting to find the common ground in meeting with strangers.



We convinced a volunteer photographer to take this photo.

With warmer weather (80 the past two days), I wandered over to Kohl's to pick up a couple of pairs and shorts and two polo shirts. For some crazy reason, I did not pack shorts and I can always use more golf shirts. The morning was going quickly, so it was time to meet Tiffany at Manna's. She had an hour break for lunch and we had a thoroughly enjoyable time bringing each other up to date since we met last July. I showed her photos of Jacob and Stella. She showed me photos of her niece receiving her First Communion. Tiffany is an excellent photographer and the black and white photo of her niece receiving communion was exceptional. She talked about her job and the potential opportunities for teaching part time at the UW in the fall. I encouraged her to do that and even think about the doctorate down the road if she finds the teaching rewarding. Well the hour flew by and as we were leaving, we cajoled a willing woman to take our annual photo. It was a delightful time and I hope we can continue the tradition on future visits.

I decided to drive home the other way around Lake Mendota. I believe the circumference of the lake is about 26 miles, so I had well over 13 miles going in this direction. It has yet to turn green with vegetation in rural Madison, so there was not much photo interest. I did decide to stop at two places. The first was a county park with name of Mendota. I took a few photos there, but then noticed a young couple to the left of me enjoying this warm, spring



Just one more serendipitous interaction. This time with Kaylee and Mannie.

afternoon. He (Mannie) was taking photos of his girl friend (Kaylee) on the fallen trunk of a tree jutting out beyond the bank of the lake. I wandered over and asked if they wanted me to take a photo of them together. They said yes. After taking a couple of shots with their phone, I asked for permission to take their photo with my camera. I told them, that I might put the photo on my Website and they were OK with that. In fact, Kaylee said that she loved being on the Internet. I gave them my card. I looked at the photo last night and I will have to do some processing. Not much planning went into my photo shoot and I found the brightness of the lake and sky in the background underexposed their faces. I should be able to get a decent photo. I tell this as one more example of a chance encounter. These brief moments with strangers are just plain fun and sometimes poignant. So I stopped at the UW Bookstore in Hilldale and bought a couple of stuffed Bucky Badgers for Jacob and Stella. I went back to Countryside, relaxed for a bit and then decided to do a bike ride. The back was feeling better and I needed a ride. I took the Capital City Trail east for about 5.5 miles and then came back. Parts of the trail are hilly and I have a tough time biking up long hills, but I only had to dismount once on a rather long incline on my ride back. I was glad for the late afternoon exercise. I showered and then decided to go and sit at the bar at the Hollander. After a couple of Palms and a tasty version of meat loaf, I came home, watched some Netflix and retired after a very eventful, unplanned day. In many respects, this highly unscheduled day was a one that will linger in my memory from this current visit to Madison.

## Day 12: And the Rains Came

From the beginning of the day, it was cloudy and threatening to rain. As luck would have it, I had the morning to play outside without the fear of getting wet. I started with a nostalgic nine hole round of golf at Glenway, where I first learned to swing a club under my parents guidance when I was 8 years old. Today, the course is greener, the greens much faster and truer, and the layout trimmed of some trees from years gone by. Due to my twitching back, I took a cart and completed my round on the deserted course in an hour and five minutes. It was fun and although I cheated somewhat liberally in the name of the twitching back, first time out, and lack of familiarization with the 21st Century version



of this course, I hit some good shots, some bad ones, but I was glad I did it. Next, I headed to the famous Hubbard's Kitchen And Bakery in Middleton for a couple of blueberry pancakes that were OK. It was good to visit the famous diner, but perhaps it is like all diners that serve relatively good food in a clean setting. The architecture of the building is Art Deco, not unlike the original version of the Edgewater Hotel down on Langdon Street. While enjoying my breakfast, I decided to head out Hwy. 14 toward Spring Green in hopes of adding to my collection of photos of the Wisconsin River. I have several from the southwest portion and further north toward Wisconsin Dells, but none in between. The photos displayed here were taken near Spring Green on Hwy. 26. I then traveled Hwy. 60 toward Sauk City. I wandered off on some County Roads (Mostly C and B), stopping for shots of the beautiful rolling farm country, winding rivers, and chirping geese. I even found a historically acclaimed single room school house, no longer in operation, but quite well preserved and on the National Register. Arriving in the famous little River town of Sauk, I decided to make a return visit to the Wollersheim Winery and Distillery. I had gone there with Ann two years ago. It is a much more bustling place in the summer time, but I did taste a few wines and left with bottles of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and du Sac made with local grapes taken from the vines displayed in the photos. I shot photos on a sunnier day two years ago in the fall, but hopefully these new ones complement the earlier ones. I was home by a little after noon, just as the rain was beginning. It would continue for the rest of the day. I joined Sally and Doug at Picasso's for a delightful dinner with our owner-host Chad in attendance. He made a special pasta dish for Sally and the lasagne was quite good. If I lived in Madison, I would frequent this restaurant often for good food and for friendly chats with the owner.



Wollersheim Vineyards near  
Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin

I do love the fact that Trevor Noah and Stephen Colbert are on an hour earlier in the Midwest. I have the satisfaction of watching without the fear of sleep deprivation.

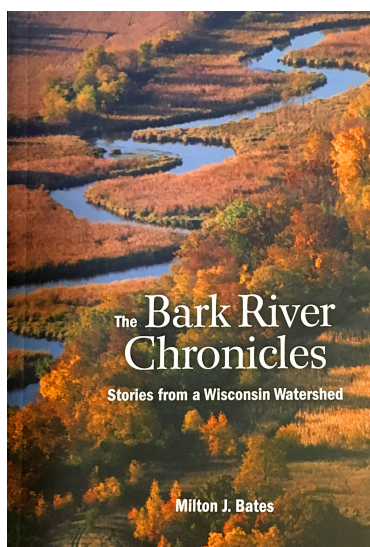
Today is supposed to be quite rainy. I am on my own. Perhaps another visit to the Botanical Gardens between rain drops to see if buds have blossomed and a stroll in downtown Madison. It is another day of random choices, a process I do enjoy. As per ritual, I started the day with coffee at Victor Allen's.



## Day 13: And Another Rainy Day in Madison



But most of it was not rainy. What a surprise to see the sun shining brightly on Wednesday morning with temperatures in the 40s and rising. This turned out to be another day of unplanned happenings that created in me a feeling of joy for having the chance to travel like this. The day began with an eight mile ride along the shores of Lake Monona, past the Monona Terrace Civic Center and then on street trails along the "Lake Loop, which was mildly hilly in places, but a flat ride for the most part. I was on the bike for about an hour with some short stops at lakeside for a few photos. I also repeated photos of Monona Terrace that I took a couple of years ago. I was able to get a few shots of bikers on their way to work using one of the popular modes of transportation in Madison. Due to the sunshine, I decided to make a second visit to Olbrich Botanical Gardens to see if the warm weather and the good rain of the day before had made a difference in the blossoming of spring flowers. I was not disappointed as I hope the photos below communicate. One of the reasons for coming to Madison at this time of year was to witness this birthing process.



Early in my stay, I bought a book about the Bark River, a winding narrow River that begins over near Waukesha county and empties into the Rock River at the Ft. Atkinson town line. The sunny day provided me with the incentive to travel south on Rt. 12 and 18 to find spots along the river where I could take a few photos. I let my gut and the car search out points along the river with the trusty aide of my iPhone navigation app. The photos below display three points of interest. The first is along Rt. 106 heading from Jefferson to Ft. Atkinson. Thanks to my iPhone map, I stopped at a bridge where I knew it was the Bark River, but it was not marked as such. Driving up the road about a mile, I found a turn off for the village of Hebron. I knew from reading the book, that this is where kayakers and canoe enthusiasts put their boats in the Bark River. In the center of the village, I found the river flowing over some rocks creating a mini waterfall. It was still winding quite liberally. Finding a straight stretch in the river was not easy. I took an overexposed selfie (probably not worth processing) there to record



The Bark River in Hebron,  
Wisconsin

my discovery of the Bark. I got back on Rt. 106 heading toward Ft. Atkinson and soon found a turnoff that would lead me to where the Bark River joins the Rock River just east of Ft. Atkinson. I traveled down the designated "Rustic Rd" that from the looks of the flooded plain on either side of the road was recently underwater and impassable. I stopped and took a couple of photos the Bark flowing through the flood plain and then a few more at the bridge where the Bark joins the Rock on its way to the Mississippi and eventually to the Gulf of Mexico. I did not talk with any strangers along the way, but having read the chapters in the book about this section of the river gave me great satisfaction about this latest adventure of discovery.

I stopped for lunch at Culver's, a famous Wisconsin fast food place where they pride themselves on using farm raised products and where they promote farmers from all over the Midwest and America. It took me another 40 minutes to arrive back at Countryside where I napped a bit. I saw that there was music (guitar and bass) at Lilliana's. I decided on another trip there for wine and appetizers as my dinner choice for the evening. I emailed Sally, and told her of my plans. She said she would join me for about an hour before going to choir practice at the Lutheran Church nearby where she attends Sunday services. We continued our "deep" conversations about singing in choirs, retirement options, etc. When she left around 7 pm, I made a comment to the older couple next to me, which began another one of my wonderful serendipitous exchanges with people I meet along the way. Bob is 93 and was in the Army and the Marines in World War II. He was proudly wearing his Veterans hat as she sat with his lovely bride, Shirley at his side. They were enjoying some red wine with a wonderful looking cheese plate. They were a couple, both widowed and products of long marriages, who discovered each other online and decided to tie the knot three years ago. Bob and I chatted about some interesting Madison personalities from the distant past and he had some great stories to tell. Shirley was no foreigner to the use of the iPhone as she referred me to several photos of their recent 6000 mile journey by car to Arizona and Mexico where Shirley had some major dental work done for a fourth of the cost for similar work in Madison, (Shirley showed me a photo of her dentist and Bob could not say enough about the professionalism and good work done by these dental specialists in



Mexico, just across the border from Yuma, AZ), California and Denver to visit family. While married, they have maintained separate condos and found a way, later in life, to live alone, together. What a cool story and what an inspiration to meet two love birds traveling the country at their very "young" ages. I have come to love these brief encounters beyond what I could ever imagine. I started to consciously engage strangers on my last trip to Madison in 2015. The process has continued here and as added great richness to my time in Madison and traveling the surrounding countryside. Friends and strangers make for good company on these little adventures of mine.

Bob and Shirley the happy couple.

Arriving back at the apartment around 8, I watched some Twitter technology shows on my Apple TV and wandered into bed about 9:30. We did get some rain after 6 pm, but for the most part this day was no "wash out," but very much a "sun in" kind of day.

## Day 14: Nothing Planned Again and Dinner at Sally's

It turned out to be another beautiful, non rainy day. I decided after my early morning coffee at Victor Allen's and some work on processing the older album photos I copied from my sister, Lynn, during my stop in Highland Park, that I would venture south of Madison to New Glarus, for a bike ride and a visit to the New Glarus Brewing Company that makes my favorite Wisconsin beer, "Spotted Cow." I arrived at the beginning of the Sugar River Bike Trail a little after 9 am. The trail runs for twenty miles to Brodhead, WI, but I did the first 7 miles of it too Monticello, a very small farm community located in the center of the cheese making industry in Wisconsin. The trail was packed stone composite with grass growing through from time to time, but it was dry and firm so my trusty new bike had no trouble navigating the very straight and sometimes monotonous trail. I did pass by the Edelweiss Golf Course and some very calming farm scenery with horses and cows (yes spotted ones) grazing behind the fenced in countryside. I decided, that I would look for photo opportunities on the way to Monticello, but to concentrate on the exercise portion of this bike ride and not stop. I navigated the 7 miles in around fifty minutes, leaving the trail to ride the mile or so





Looking west from Monticello's  
Main St.



Looking northeast from the New  
Glarus Brewing Company Patio,  
home of "Spotted Cow," my  
beer of choice in Wisconsin.

into Monticello located on the banks of the Little Sugar River. The Sugar River is farther down the path past Monticello just north of Albany. I wasn't sure what I would find there, but after peddling down Main St., I found a small breakfast place where I could get a cup of coffee and an English Muffin. The locals were sitting at the counter and paid little attention to me. The couple behind the bar, a man and a woman--not sure if they were married owners or owner and employee--waited on me in a slow and deliberate fashion, which after I took a couple of deep breaths turned out to be to my advantage to slow down and be patient. The man behind the counter, the woman called him Jim, was the primary cook and the woman was the waitress and spent a lot of time at the sink in the back room cleaning dishes and utensils. Jim started preparing chopped tomatoes and peppers for the lunch crowd and we had a brief conversation about the bike trail and the exercise quality of the seven mile ride to New Glarus. I left there around 10:30 and started the ride back. I took a shot of the M&M Cafe, famous for its homemade pies, and the Little Sugar River meandering its way through a beautiful little park setting just across the street from the cafe. Most of the shots below, I stopped and took on ride back to New Glarus. It took me a little longer, but I was still able to get my heart rate up on the ride back. I took a little walk around downtown New Glarus, the little Switzerland of Wisconsin. I bought some New Glarus cheese and then traveled a mile down the road to the beautiful hilltop grounds of the New Glarus Brewing Company, one of best craft beer breweries you can find in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, they do not market their well brewed beers beyond the borders of Wisconsin. I put \$9.50 on the counter for a tasting of three beers with the small tasting glass thrown in. I liked Moon Man (a lager) and Dancing Man (a tasty wheat beer). I tried Belgium Red thinking it was an amber beer, but soon found it was cherry based and very sweet. I did not like the last beer, but it was my fault for not asking before tasting. While tasting the beers, I wandered the expansive patio and photographed the agricultural countryside and the architecture of the brewery with an old world flavor. I bought some glasses for Gina, Joe, and me, followed by a visit to the Beer Depot where I bought a twelve pack of four different beers, including the two I liked at the tasting, Spotted Cow, and Go Naked. Somewhere around 1 pm, I started the drive back to

Madison, stopping at the HyVee to buy a chocolate tort cake for Sally's dinner gathering in the evening.

I sat on my deck enjoying a glass of white wine from the bottle left by my sister the previous weekend, some Wisconsin cheese, and crackers from Trader Joe's. I was feeling quite lucky that the forecast for three days of rain beginning on Tuesday was wrong, and that I had had a chance to play golf, ride my bike all three days, and continue the photography shoot that has driven the bulk of this trip back to Madison. After a little afternoon nap, I went to Sally's for dinner with Jerry, Marsha, and Sally's friend Doug. The food was great, the companionship special, the conversation wide ranging, and a perfect finale dinner for my visit. I still had one more day before I scheduled departure early Saturday morning.

## Day 15: Final Day in Madison



This was a normal final day for me. I feel anxious to get going, but must delay a little longer. There are always more people to see, but I have seen who I can and it is time to go home. I started off the day with my last coffee at Victor Allen's. I did run into Liz and her friend Michele, but as I said time marches on and I must be on my way. I traveled down to the Monona Terrace Community and Civic Center. one more time and took a look inside. Then I walked up to the Capitol Building, where I took a few shots. I came back to Countryside concocted a little hamburger appetizer for lunch and then went to see Tom Hanks in his latest movie, "The Hologram and the King." It was OK, but I have seen better Tom Hanks movies. However, he always plays likable characters and you end up rooting for him and the girl. In this case there was a girl, a Saudi Doctor who plays an interesting part in the story. I went back for a final meal at Picasso's and enjoyed the the Friday night walleye. Said goodbye to Chad, came home and packed what I could in the car. I am going to bed soon so I can leave at 4 or 5 am tomorrow. My goal is to make to Penn State Univ. tomorrow night. I have a hotel reservation. It is time to go. Had nice notes from both Sally and Ann. Another chapter in our adventures together has come to an end. Looking forward to our trip down the Danube this summer.

Chad, the friendly owner and chef of Picasso's. We had three opportunities for conversation. Enjoyed them all and the food.



## Day 16: Heading Home

So my lower back has been giving me some fits the last two days and I had a hard time sleeping. I woke from a restless sleep about 2:30 am CST and decided to get on my way. I thought my back might cause me a real problem on this first day, but once I was in the car supported by the comfortable front seat, I was fine for the almost twelve hours I spent on the road. The weather was good, the Indiana Tollway under constant repair, and my goal of reaching State College, PA and Penn State University by late afternoon right on target. I pulled into the Best Western just outside of the famous university town nestled in the hills of "Happy Valley" at 4 pm EST. It was easy navigating to the downtown section where the campus is located. This is a college town with lots of students enjoying the cool sunny day on the pub laden streets that surround the campus. I decided not to do a lot of walking because of my back and soon found the "Local Whiskey Pub" that catered to a mixed age crowd. I found a seat at the bar and soon was emerged in conversation with Suzanne, an alumni who lived in various places around the country including Nashville and San Diego, but had finally decided on this magical university town in the northwest hills of Pennsylvania. She was also very Irish and when I told her I was planning visiting Donegal this summer, she corrected my pronunciation and then told me that in addition, I should try and go to Belfast and along the northern shore of Northern Ireland. She recommended the beef filled egg rolls as an appetizer. They were "melt in your mouth" delicious. After a couple of Yuenglings (the bartender gave me a break and substituted one of my known favorites for the unknown local stout that thickly poured out of the beer tap), the tasty appetizer, and some lively conversation with Suzanne about all things Penn State, including Joe Paterno, who was a personal friend of hers, I wandered back to my hotel, watched a little of Frank Kaminsky, the former Badger basketball star have a good game for the Charlotte Hornets against the Miami Heat and was attempting to sleep by 9:30. Of course, here it is at 3:30 am Sunday morning and I am typing away at my trusty iPad. This was a good stop. Now that the Big 10 includes Penn State, Rutgers, and Maryland, I need to find ways to navigate the relatively short drives to see the Badger football and basketball teams.



My new friend Suzanne, settler in Happy Valley, but has traveled everywhere.

I am thinking about grabbing breakfast here at 6, shooting some photos down on campus at 6:30, attending Mass at 7:30 and hitting the road right afterwards. That would bring me home about 1 or 1:30 with plenty of time to unwind before Sunday evening. I have a busy schedule coming up this week. I will wrap this journal up tonight or tomorrow morning with a final statement about this great spring journey to Madison. According to my word count, I am now at almost 10,500 words of unfiltered and unedited wisdom poured into this document. Not bad for a bit of writing every day for the past two plus weeks.

## Day 17: Some Final Thoughts

On the last day, I began with an auto tour of the Penn State Campus. I took a number of photos on the academic portion of the campus. I decided not to take photos of the athletic buildings, why I do not know. It is a stately campus with a great college town feeling to the stores, etc on the boundary of the campus. I went to church at 7:30. The Mass was long due to numerous musical productions and the homily was way too long and very repetitious with the priest throwing in every thing but the kitchen sink, which left me without a theme or a purpose to his homily. I started driving about 8:30. The day was sunny, the roads generally lightly traveled, and the construction slow downs minimal. I arrived home at 1 pm and basically chilled out for the rest of the day watching golf, falling asleep, and capping it off with dinner at Taormina's.

I suppose my real reflection will occur when I start to build the page on the Website. It was a good trip, filled with my own decision-making for how to spend my time. Although my friend Ann was out of town the second week, I was able to see Sally and other friends enough to keep me engaged in social banter. I rode my new bike quite a bit, played golf for only nine holes, and took over 500 photos documenting various phases of the trip.

Fortunately, I kept this journal on a daily basis and it now comprises over 10,700 words, which I am sure will decrease with editing. However, I do have significant body of journaled memories for the Website and I am sure that I will add reflections as I post. I was able to capture a number of old photos at my sister's home and I was able to process them for the family album



Penn State University, early on a Sunday morning.

project I am working on. I should have plenty to keep me busy between now and the family excursion to the Outer Banks in June. My new car performed well. It is comfortable, reasonable on gas, and can hold plenty of stuff. It was a great first trip for 2016.



# Wisconsin, Spring, 2016

University of Wisconsin, Bascom Hill

The End