

25th College Reunion

Westminster College

New Wilmington PA

October 8 - 11, 1998

We left home on Thursday morning, flying Delta on our frequent flyer tickets and arrived in Pittsburgh in the mid-afternoon. We rented a car and checked into our hotel, not far from the airport. After getting organized we went to Tambellini's for dinner. My father used to take the family there for excellent Italian cuisine and fish. I recognized the maitre de as being familiar. I asked him if he had been there for a long time and he replied 37 years. I told him that I recognized him and he was flattered after 20 years. I left Pittsburgh in 1979 and had not been back since then. Dinner was fabulous, as usual, and being near the Mt. Washington area, Judy and I went to see one of the sights of Pittsburgh that was not there 20 years ago, the area of Station Square.

The Pittsburgh Historical Society sponsored the renovation of the Pennsylvania railway station, a passenger station that had not been used for many years. The deteriorating warehouse district of Pittsburgh was

remodeled to an office complex, indoor shopping plaza, Sheraton hotel, amphitheater, museum and is the home of the Gateway Clipper line, the tourist passenger cruise line. It was well done and seemed to be thriving.

While in the vicinity, we rode the Monongahela Incline up Mt. Washington for a view of the city. We didn't get off, we just rode back down. The weather was cool but clear and the city lights were beautiful, reminding me of the city where I lived and worked for six years, after college until I moved to Miami.

The next day we had an appointment to see my old pastor and friend, Harry Heidrich. We were to meet at the church of which I was an elder at the age of 27. He too was a graduate of Westminster College. We shared stories of our alma mater and he told me of the small changes in the church congregation. Many had died or moved on to nursing homes but they were replaced so that there continues to be about 19 in attendance each Sunday morning. He continues to manage both the McNaugher Presbyterian Church and the Troy Hill Presbyterian church, having a service at Troy Hill first and then at McNaugher. He was proud to show us the article that was printed in the Wall Street Journal about him and his two churches surviving together. We toured the church together and then walked up the street to my old home.

The garage had been torn down and the house next door that I had owned and rented out was abandoned, the side door to the house was missing. The side door that I used so often had been covered over and eliminated. The peony bush in the back was gone. Next door, Jan's house had been remodeled as well. The back yard now had a deck that went from her garage to the second storey where a door had been made. Our part of the street was in pretty bad shape. Judy remarked that the rest of the neighborhood looked a lot better.

We went to see my earlier home on the North side, in Allegheny Center. We drove around and I pointed out 10 Allegheny Center where I lived on the fourth floor for \$140 per month. When they raised the rent to \$165 I decided to buy the house referred to above on Meadville Street in Fineview.

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I decided to buy the house referred to above on Meadow Street in time view.

Continuing backwards in time, we drove to Mt. Lebanon where I attended high school and went to visit our house on Osage Road. As we pulled up to the curb, a man was standing on the sidewalk. I asked if he lived there and he replied that his son-in-law lived there. I told him that I had lived there and told him about the inside of the house. He was proud of the improvements that his family had made and asked if I would like to tour the inside. I was thrilled and Judy and I walked through the house that I had grown up in. Much was the same but much was different too. The waterfall and pond that Dad made 30 years ago was still there and was operated in the summer. The back was no longer a woods, an apartment complex was there instead. We weren't the last house on the street any more, either. The street had been continued and looped back to Valleyview Road at the top. Newer houses were constructed on the sides of the hills on both sides of the street, all were very nice.

We took one more step back in time as we traced my route to high school. I wasn't sure if I would recognize our first home, on Old Hickory Road, but I saw it and realized that it was there that we had rented a house for a year when we first came to town and I baby sat the six wretched kids next door.

We drove by the high school and I noticed that a few more additions had been made. We parked to take a brief walk but it was a bit cool. It was there that I had my first experiences with computers as Mr. Myers taught matrix algebra which included FORTRAN programming. We used a teletype terminal in a janitor's closet to communicate with a computer in Cleveland by timesharing. I learned to drive in driver's education class in the parking lot where we had parked.

We then drove back to town through Dormont and had lunch at a little restaurant. It had no non-smoking section. It seemed that more people smoked in Pittsburgh than we were accustomed to in Florida, much as we remember Italy and Greece. We had salads and souvlaki at this Greek restaurant.

Our destination for the afternoon was the new Strip District in uptown Pittsburgh. The old wholesale district had been refurbished and now catered to shoppers of all kinds who purchased fresh foods, produce, fish, meat, pastas and coffees. We stopped in a book store where we bought a book for Willie and postcards for the Sunday School students back home. We stopped for cappuccino and baklava in another store as we completed our journey.

When we were at the Station Square the night before, we did not have the chance to see the Railway Car shops as they were closed. We returned to check out the antiques found there. We picked up a Christmas tree decoration of the Duquesne Incline to remind us of this journey. I was getting tired so we went back to the hotel for a short nap before our evening mission.

I had made arrangements to visit one of my parent's old friends, Dr. & Mrs. Garson, who were also clients of mine for many years. We had communicated by phone and mail taking care of their taxes for many years. They were very pleased to see us and what expected would be a one hour visit turned into three. As is not unusual, the men and women had separate discussions after a while. Judy and Mrs. Garson talked about porcelain dolls and Dr. Garson and I talked about the president's affairs.

Afterward we went to the new Galleria shopping center in Mt. Lebanon for a hamburger. Though the shops were closed, we looked in some of the windows.

Saturday morning we drove to New Wilmington where I had scheduled a meeting with Mr. Burgey, my accounting teacher who was still teaching at the college after 37 years. I asked him how old he was 25 years ago, he was 35, younger than I am now. Everyone seemed much older when I was 20. He told us of changes

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in the teaching and asked about my business, he seemed intrigued that I would be both accountant and attorney. He showed us some of the Amish farms and we had breakfast together. It was the high point of my day.

Judy and I toured some of the campus buildings and walked around the lake as romantics did many years ago, watching the "Submarine Races." When I was here 25 years ago, the computer center had an IBM computer and card reader with keypunches. When I returned 20 years ago, the computer was replaced and there were numerous video screens around the central computer. Today the computer center is a room with 30 PC computers on desks and a young man at the front of the room. Times have certainly changed.

That afternoon we watched the beginning of the Homecoming football game. Westminster was definitely out classed and didn't play very well to boot. I was told that the score was 48 to 6 before the game was completed. We stayed for half time to see the band and auxiliary and then looked for our motel in New Castle.

The motel situation was unfortunate. When I checked in the clerk could not find our reservation. She checked with the Grove City Super 8 motel to see if I was supposed to be there but to no avail. Finally she checked the central reservations and gave my reservation number. They told her that my reservation was for November 10 instead of October 10. She canceled the November reservation but was unable to fill the one for tonight as they were fully booked. She kindly checked each of the surrounding motels and suggested the El Dorado that had a room for \$35, less than theirs. We checked in and found the place simple yet satisfactory.

We took a brief nap and prepared for the evening festivities, the 25th reunion dinner at Trogios. There was a buffet with your basic overcooked vegetables, chicken breasts, fish and roast beef. There were 28 people attending the reunion, a smaller group than I expected. Judy and I were one of those farthest away but there were some from New York, Georgia and Texas. I think that Judy and I looked younger than many of them there but we had the oldest kids. It was fun for me to talk with my classmates though I didn't recognize any of them as friends. My group was the computer center and the radio station. No one came from those areas. There were a few business students but the one who I talked with did not have any classes with me. He tried to avoid accounting as his concentration was management. Judy was quite bored as she might be knowing no one and having nothing in common.

The next day we returned to New Wilmington to go to church. They identified the returning Alumni. The choir and bell choir performed together. The children's ministry presented a puppet show about giving "warm fuzzies." The minister had a special sermon about the "Sermon on the Mount." He did a good job explaining the passage, "Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He said that "poor in spirit" meant those who had nothing to hope in but God. He played the guitar and sang a song he had written about the message, it was very well done.

Thereafter we went to the Tavern for lunch. We started out with the sticky buns that I remembered were the same 25 years ago. The waiters recited the menu as was their custom. The menu was more extensive than before but the food was good. A home style bowl of corn and cooked apples was also served, just as before. Our server made a small mistake in delivering my lamb chops. He gave me an order that was medium well, instead of mine that was medium rare. I later learned that it had been prepared for the man at the next table. He quickly recovered and gave me the other man's whose had not yet been completed. As I had cut into each chop to determine its doneness, he could not serve them so I had four to choose from. Another order was prepared for the other man. The food was excellent, the rolls were just as I had remembered, it was a wonderful treat to end the reunion. I told them I would be back 25 years hence.

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Judy and I then drove back to Pittsburgh and took the scenic route. She did not want to shop for two hours, it takes her longer so we stopped at the apple/pumpkin festival in Zellianople. Judy enjoyed looking at the crafts, I watched a wood carver with a chain saw. She remarked that she had particularly enjoyed the festival we attended at my cousin, Rob's, wedding in Michigan. I am glad that she had this opportunity today.

We arrived at the airport quite early and Judy took the time to visit the Air Mall, here at the airport. I found an outlet in a quiet area of the floor and sat down to complete this journal. We should arrive at Orlando Airport shortly before 11 p.m. this evening.

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