

MILWAUKEE



17-19 June 2005

Our Trip to Milwaukee, June 2005.

Friday, June 17, 2005

We got up around 6:30a.m. Naw, ain't no such time. Blink (several times). OK, so it is. "Jan, go get your hair fixed." Breakfast and departure at 9:00am. It's bright sunshine. Warm. I'm driving to Beloit, then Jan will take over.

We followed I43 and branched off at Layton towards the Airport to find the Four Points Sheraton, which is hosting the stamp show. This is the annual American Topical Association show which we have attended for several years. Good displays but after a couple of hours I have seen enough and am not buying any stamps today.

It is cool, only 62°F. I do my Superman trick and change from shorts to long pants in the men's room.

We head north from the show to our Hotel of choice, the Downtown Hilton, about 7 miles. I had print-outs and turn-by-turn directions for all our routes in Milwaukee. "Darn it! That ramp is closed, now what do we do Jan?" We take the next exit and find the road we need without a problem. Good memory and sense of direction.

"Welcome back sir." Oh, that's right we *have* stayed here before. Sixteenth floor this time, but at least the elevator is fast.

"Well Jan, it's your birthday weekend, what do you want to do?"

"Book our restaurants and how about an IMAX."

Telephone calls are \$0.95, robbery, but to my surprise we get reservations at Pieces of Eight for 7:00 pm tonight and Bacchus at 7:30 pm tomorrow (Saturday.) The IMAX is changing its shows and times, so we opt for 5:30 pm. "Hey, that's only one hour from now." One finger, one thumb keep moving.....

The IMAX show, *Mystery of the Nile*, showed the first raft expedition to travel the length of the Blue Nile from Lake Tana in Ethiopia to Cairo on the Mediterranean, over 3,000 miles. This was one of the best IMAX we have seen.

Back to the Hilton, just three blocks. We are surprised how empty the streets are. A quick change, time for an aperitif, and a cab ride to Pieces of Eight. The last time we were there, twenty years ago, it was a rustic restaurant on stilts over the lake. Now, completely remodeled, it is enclosed with concrete bastions. Gone is most of the wooden interior, replaced by elegant walls and large windows. The dining was elegant. We both had fish. Immediately to the north is the new Art Museum with its floating wings. Although there was an art show under canvas adjacent to it, we ran out of time and never visited.

Saturday.

We have not seen any coffee shops or breakfast places outside the hotel, at least none close by, so we order in their restaurant. It is packed. A bead and button show is being hosted.

Our directions to Mitchell Park, the Domes, were simple to follow. Three geodesic domes, each 85ft high house a tropical forest, an arid desert and a seasonal show which was spring flowers.



After an hour or so we motored south west on Forest Home Road which runs parallel to I43 to the Boerner Botanical Gardens in Whitnall Park.

The gardens, typical of a formal English country garden, were developed in the 1930's but continue to be expanded and enhanced. Today is warm and sunny. We wandered the various gardens, Annual, Perennial, Rock, Bog and Rose. Here we watched a couple exchanging wedding vows. The Rose Garden was one of the best we have ever seen.



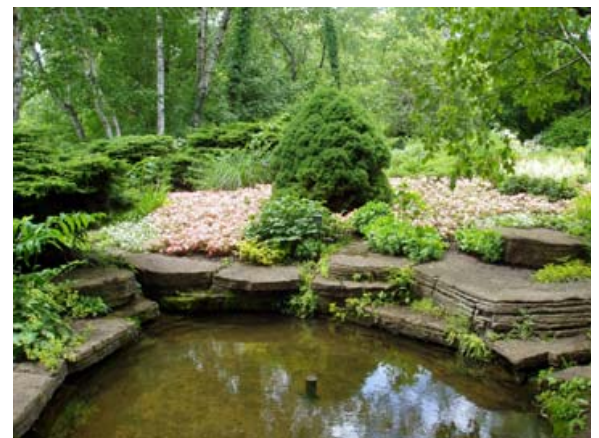
Rose Garden.



Peonies.



The Lodge was built in 2002.





Traffic has been light, but I am glad to return the car to the garage adjacent to the Hilton. From here on we walk or take cabs.

Just a block from the Hilton is the Grand Avenue Mall. Anchored by the Boston Store, which carries the same logo as Bergner's it is three stories high with a food court on the top floor. We head there and try Panda Express Chinese for lunch. Not bad, though mine was a little too spicy.

We wander the stores and head for the Boston. I still have to buy Jan a birthday gift, we had promised her a new outfit. Neither of us was impressed with the clothes and left disappointed.

The Bacchus lived up to its name. Expensive, but superb.

Sunday.

Time for home. Lured by the desire for breakfast, we made the same mistake as the last time we motored I43 and exited at Mukwonago. After a hundred yards I realized that we had been here, done that, and not found food, so a rapid U-turn put us back on the interstate. At the next exit we settled for a Mac Muffin and coffee. We were home by noon.