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DSW probably
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texas 2

but never finished?

+ where is the canal on p
+ what else is missing

EASTWARE BOUND - SPRING 1998

At our age why be sensible thus our most recent outing/adventure. To begin with Dawna decided to drive cross country leaving prior to the actual launch of TRACE; a concept fraught with surprises given the launch business. Sure enough she first planned to go around 1 March, slipped her departure to 12 March in order to see what was likely going to be a real launch date, and within 12 hours of when she left town, the launch slipped from 19 March to 30 March (in theory). She was driving a southern route and doing it alone. Initially Frenney was going to go with her but as Dawna's departure slipped and as it became clear that Frenney's main goal was to see all of the US relatively quickly while Dawna wanted to wander around the desert Southwest, she turned out to do it alone. This was not all bad because it meant peace and quiet for her and the ability to do whatever she wanted. Given how hectic things had been for her both in preparing for "moving" East and dealing with the Salt Lake Situation, this had a lot to be said for it. After learning of the launch slip I decided to join her in El Paso, goof off for a few days, and return from San Antonio; keeping track of how the launch date was holding in the process. Crazy? Sure, but so what. The rest of this "trip letter" will follow the usual day-by-day format of these things with Dawna's portion worked in after the fact.

Thursday-1: Dawna left around noon. This was a great relief for her as the last month or two had been "too busy" getting ready to go. This required going through a large amount of the house to determine which items were to go back East for our apartment living (no furniture thank goodness) and which needed to be basically packed away so that our house sitter/renter (Chris) could move in. Chris was breaking up with her boyfriend and thus leaving his house so it was win win for both of us although I admit as we transferred two different van (our) loads of her boxes to our house for storage and then she came with a small truck full of heavier items; we had some degree of hesitation. This, along with all the stuff Dawna/we packed meant the living room became a quite full storage room. But I'm a bit off the track of the daily reports. Dawna drove to the edge of Death Valley where she arrived at about *** and spent the night. *****. In the next paragraph we'll hear her side of the story. She took great notes throughout her trip so the majority of this lengthy "report" will be by her. Meanwhile, I received the call at work that said the launch was highly likely to slip and by the next (early) AM it was an official slip. The change in plans at VAFB also meant that the test which I was going to go down there for on Saturday would take place on Friday; we learned early Friday morning!

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Friday-1: I and another fellow got a rental car and drove the 200 miles to VAFB in time for our portion of the test that afternoon. We stayed over night, having "Friday night beer" in Lompoc and returned on Saturday. Dawna meanwhile, +++ write here DSW+++

Saturday-1: As noted, I returned from VAFB and then got in a walk in the green hills in nice sunshine; badly needed. Dawna on the other hand was playing in the Joshua Trees and Mojave areas - see the next paragraph. I also began scheming about replanning our activities based on the launch slip. Somewhat unfortunately, we had agreed that she'd call home on Sunday, since I expected to be at VAFB through Saturday; so I had to wait to discuss options with her.

We left the Caravans in the late afternoon, electing not to do any of the short walks that are on the roadside near there but rather took a route, shown to be scenic on the map, to Van Horne before it got dark. Well it was a fine road but not very scenic except maybe near the end and by then it was dark. Pulled into one of the view motels there and took a cheap room. Again it is interesting how "all" the less costly/older motels in the Southwest are run by East Indians. Went to basically the only place to eat, which also had some level of fame - The Smokehouse and Antique Car Museum. I had the mixed special which included brisket, sausage, and ham while Dawna had the brisket sandwich. Quite good BBQ sauce and friendly/local folks. An amazing amount of paraphernalia beginning with sports stuff in the cafe itself and then the antique cars adjacent to it. Quite a collector this Mr Van Horne put together and No the town isn't named after him. This being somewhat of a strange "vacation" I had my new Hitachi Laptop along and managed to log on back at work to see how the planned new launch date was working out. Did this after deciding to try the pulse mode for the phone line since the normal/tone mode didn't work - hadn't tried that in a long time.

Thursday-2: Usual breakfast in the room and then down the highway, to Martha in case you have your map out. Bought gas and did a grocery store run, obtaining a block of ice, some beer, and some pork chops. Then straight South to the border town of Presidio. This was a fine scenic drive even if not marked as such on the map; in contrast to yesterday afternoon's. From there the road followed the Rio Grande and wound through quite interesting countryside. First stop was at Ft. Leaton state park and the restored fort/Visitor Center was a pleasant surprise especially when combined with a very talkative and informative lady who worked there. She did warn us that it was going to be hard to get sleeping accommodations, however, because it was Spring Break and fine weather. So, a bit down the road we found a pay phone, called a place listed in AAA as well as in the nice lady's literature, and got their last room. This assisting us in relaxing on the rest of our drive, including a nice picnic lunch stop along the river. Dawna couldn't get over how small this Grand River actually is. Got to Study Butte which is on the edge of Big Bend National Park and where I thought our motel was but found out it was about 12 miles north. Went there and checked in. Bit out of the way but also therefore remote and in a great high desert setting. Dropped off a few bags and raced into the Park. Boy have we been making good use of our Golden Eagle yearly pass lately. And we note that in a couple of years we can get a Golden Age pass (for ever?) for \$10! Did one of the three major park routes, this one back down to the Rio Grande where Santa Elena Canyon has been formed by the river. Stopped at each roadside site/display along the way thoroughly enjoying the scenery, geology, and great weather. Plus some reasonable cactus. At the end of the road we took the couple mile hike along the river and saw the spectacular canyon up close, with walls on each side of the river like 1500 feet high. Nice lighting at the end of the day as well. Backtracked a couple of miles along the road to where there was a great canyon overlook, whipped out the famous black box and cooked those pork chops while looking at the view and eventually the setting sun. Mighty nice. Oh, yes, earlier when we stopped at this view point we saw a group of wild pigs (Havalina) down below. The sun set, we put away our wine, and drove back the way we came getting to our motel not too late.

Friday-2: Usual breakfast and then back into the park, gassing up before entering. Stopped at the visitor center and picked up a bit of literature as well as a warning that the parking lot near the

We were tempted to do a different Rock Art trip but that would be at 1 PM and we didn't want to hang around that long. Turns out there are hundreds of rock art/petroglyph sites in this general area.

Got to Del Rio and talked to, really listened to and listen to and listen to, a lady at a visitor center. Based on a couple of her many recommendations we went to lunch at a Mexican place and after that went to a chip/salsa factory. The lunch was good but not great and wouldn't have been as good had the lady not told us to ask for the green salsa, which was excellent but which they don't automatically give you. The "factory" was small and fun and Dawna got some chips and salsa for her travels. Then we headed East with San Antonio in our eventual sights but the next adventure being to go out of our way 40-50 miles to see some dinosaur tracks. First however we bought gas for 95 cents a gallon; even though we only needed about half a tank we had to do it! Got to about the dinosaur spot on curvy roads in what they call Hill Country and it is rolling hills and prosperous farms. Stopped at a cafe and asked where to find the tracks and learned they had been put off limits a couple of years ago due to vandalism but that some new ones were discovered in a town sorta toward San Antonio which was also an antique store loaded town. So, cruised over there along pretty back roads. People hardly knew what we were talking of and clearly one couldn't just go see the tracks. So, walked the town a bit, then bought some T-bone steaks and BBQ'd them in a little park along the river; watching various kids feeding ducks, losing a ball in the water, digging in mud, and just being kids. Nice dinner and fine red wine. After all this, went motel searching and found things a bit crowded due to Spring Break but ended up in a standard one at higher prices than Dawna likes but reasonable for most folks. And to sleep again.

Sunday-2: Took advantage of the coffee in the lobby along with donuts, neither of which were as good as our standard breakfast, and then drove into San Antonio. Missed a few turnoffs but eventually back tracked and parked near the Alamo and Visitor Center. Picked up a bit of literature and headed off on foot. First walked the old German section; yes, an amazing number of Germans in the early days of San Antonio and vicinity; like the cutesy town we were in the day before was really German. Then did the, now famous, Riverwalk and did lots of it. T was relatively

early Sunday morning so only beginning to crowd up and. We took advantage of this to have lunch at like 11 AM; eating BBQ'd beef that was pretty reasonable along with a Texan/German beer. We then went up to the main streets and wondered around looking at things, including seeing a parade of souped up cars cruise around under police escort as some sort of Mexican celebration. Fine weather and some interesting architecture. Went back to the car, out to the airport and Dawna dropped me off as she headed East on a route not yet planned and I headed West by plane. Was quite early so did some of this trip report writing and then watched the first half of the Stanford-Rhode Island basketball game. Stanford ended up winning by 2 points and thus making it to the NCAA Final Four. My plane was full and I had a large person next to me and it was hot but at least it left on time. Unfortunately, when it stopped at Phoenix they decided to deal with a mechanical problem so even we through passengers had to get off. Walked over to where a plane was going to SFO but they were overbooked so that didn't help. Thus, had to wait. At least I found a plus and cleaned up the trip report text that I banged out on the plane. Seems like the batteries do better if I use a DOS editor on the plane and then take that text file and make