

VACATION ACTIVITIES

Lisa and Ray Nichols, Doris and Gary Gordon

Broadkill Beach, DE

August 3-17, 2013

HISTORY

For years the four of us have enjoyed a 2-week summer vacation on Wells Beach in Maine. Ray is Doris' brother, and Lisa is Ray's daughter. Recently Ray has had health problems, and Lisa decided the 11-hr drive to Maine was too much. Doris and I were happy to give it up, although we all missed seeing relatives and friends in New England. Hence the shift to Broadkill Beach, which is only a 2-3 hr drive from home (Wilmington or Washington Grove), at the mouth of the Delaware River and located at the end of DE-16.

COTTAGE

Lisa explored a number of websites, and found our cottage. It's on one floor. One end has three bedrooms and a bath. The other end has a screened porch with a view of the Delaware Bay, and often a few oil tankers and the Lewis-Cape May ferry. It's only a short walk to the beach, and then we can turn and walk as far as we want in either direction.

CAR BATTERY

After all the decisions of what to take and what to leave, packing the car, and getting in, we were ready to go – except for a dead battery! All our close neighbors that might have a jumper cable didn't answer their phone. Finally, Doris phoned a neighbor that suggested another neighbor, and we got the car started. We got to the beach, but a couple of days later I left one door ajar, and had a dead battery again. We again found a stranger that had a jumper cable and helped us. For the rest of our vacation I was very careful not to leave anything on, and we got home successfully. We now own a jumper cable – and a new battery.

ACTIVITIES

We enjoyed walking on the beach, looking at the water, the sand, some gravel, birds, dead horseshoe crabs, etc. The beach was not crowded like many public beaches, but there were a few individuals walking, fishing, sunning, or enjoying a kayak or sailboat. Many evenings we played Upwards, similar to Scrabble but a letter may be placed on top of another letter (piles limited to five letters). Ray and Lisa went antiquing several days; Lisa found and bought 8 red glasses for a friend.

ART

Gary has a friend, Denis, from the time we both worked at Comsat Laboratories. When Denis heard we were vacationing near Rehoboth, he urged us to visit a special art exhibition featuring paintings by Bill Snow. The latter was a good friend of Denis, and also had worked at Comsat. The special exhibit closed before we got there, but Bill Snow's website (www.billsnowartist.com) had the sentence: "My paintings can also be seen in my studio by appointment." So we phoned him, and he invited us to visit his studio in his home. He had paintings hung over most of the second floor, and also some on the first floor. We spent an hour there. He showed us many paintings, and answered many questions. We had a lovely time -- better than seeing his paintings at the Gallery.

LISA'S FRIENDS

Kathy Spencer, a close friend of Lisa's, drove down from Wilmington to spend the day with us, along with Kathy's husband (Leon) and her mother (Barbara). Lisa and Kathy happen to have the same birthday, which we all celebrated. I was astonished when Kathy inquired about a short article I had been writing 12 years ago (2001), for an anthology. By an amazing coincidence, I had brought the book to the beach, "*The God Factor, 50 scientists and academics explain why they believe in God.*" While the conversation continued, Kathy read the entire 9-page article!

Another friend, Lisa's voice teacher, was scheduled for an organ recital in an Episcopal church in Rehoboth. We all attended the recital. Later in the day he visited us at our cottage and we walked on the beach.

CHURCH

The Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church, Ray and Lisa's home church, broadcasts its Sunday service at 9:30am. This broadcast can be seen via the Internet. So on the first Sunday we attended church right in our cottage, joining in singing the hymns. On the second Sunday we also watched the broadcast, which ended at 10:30am. But this Sunday, Doris and I drove to Milton, and attended the 11:00 service at the Milton Baptist Church. The sermon was good, and I especially enjoyed the singing of "Baptist hymns."

MEALS

As in previous vacations, Lisa prepared the evening meal. She says she enjoys cooking, and nobody protested. For lunch, Gary and Doris ate what Doris fixed, and Lisa took care of her dad and herself. A few evenings we had a meal at a restaurant. We have fond memories of the Steakhouse in Maine, where waiting for a table took an hour, but we four could enjoy a game of Upwards. We found a place in Rehoboth that had as much atmosphere, and delicious chocolate cake, but the rest of the meal wasn't quite up the Steakhouse standards. After that meal we drove to the Ferry Landing, where the ferry from Cape May docks. There is also a sailing ship there; at scheduled times there are free tours of the ship at port, and at other times a 2-3 hr ride on the ship, for a hefty fee.

NEXT YEAR (2014)

We all agree that driving to Broadkill Beach is easier than driving to Maine. The particular attraction of this beach is that there is only a narrow strip of land between the beach and the marsh. There is room for cottages, but not for commercial development. It is relatively quiet (few people on the beach), and yet not too far to drive to the more commercial towns of Lewis and Rehoboth.

Lisa spent some time looking on the Internet for rental cottages for next year. She found one similar to the one we had this year, but with larger bedrooms, easier parking, and a little closer to the beach. The owners live across the street from the rental cottage. Saturday we had to be out of our cottage by 10 AM, and so did the renters of this other cottage. So we drove over there, met the owners, and had a complete tour of the cottage.