

Pasadena – A Virtual Photographic Collage

I returned last weekend from a great trip to the Rose Bowl (except for a few hours during the Hawkeye loss). I can't bore you with my photos in person, but I'll bet I can do it with just the descriptions:

>This is Amanda, LuAnn's 35-year-old niece who was also my very petite and youthful-looking travel companion. LuAnn couldn't make the trip due to work, so I spent much of my time in Pasadena explaining to people I know that no, Amanda isn't my new trophy wife. Or my daughter.

>Amanda's heavy suitcase had broken wheels (per this photo in case the airline lost it), so I insisted on carrying it for her. I told her if I didn't, people would say, "Look at that lazy guy making that poor girl schlep her own luggage." On the other hand, we're not many years away from people saying, "Look at that perfectly healthy young woman making that poor senior citizen schlep his own luggage."

>This tour bus is full of people who arrived for the Rose Bowl parade two hours early because traffic was unexpectedly light, even for five-thirty a.m. We had time to watch an entire movie (Draft Day with Kevin Costner, actually a great film) before it was time to head for the viewing bleachers.

>According to this thermometer it was 40 degrees at the beginning of the parade, which began just after dawn. As we climbed the steps in the bleachers, I explained to the shivering people I was passing on the aisles that I wanted to be "closer to the sun."

>Here's a short video clip of the viewing stands surrounding the parade starting point. We somehow got an I-O-W-A chant going that spanned four different bleachers across the street from each other.

>Our seats were right at the starting point, and all of the parade entrants were in place at least an hour before the 8 a.m. start. We had the misfortune of being directly in front of this South Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association float,

which played the Andy Griffith whistling theme tune at 120 decibels on an endless loop. We all agreed it was the musical equivalent of the Chinese Water Torture.

>This is the Aguilas Doradas Marching Band from Puebla, Mexico. Amanda commented, "If Donald Trump was president, they probably couldn't have gotten in."

>I have no idea who this Hawk fan is, but we talked for ten minutes. 1800 miles from home you acknowledge every Hawkeye you pass on the street, and begin conversations mid-thought with people next to you in line (lots of lines). It was common to be chatting with complete strangers like they were my best friends.

>This shot of the iconic front entrance of the Rose Bowl stadium also shows a mob of maybe 2,000 people trying to get in. Even the Stanford fans who had been there three of the last four years proclaimed it to be the worst FUBAR they had ever seen (look it up).

>Here I am in the South end zone watching the game with my chin almost on my knees; the seats are unusually low to the ground. We speculated that they had been designed by moonlighting munchkins on hiatus from MGM in Hollywood.

>Pictured here is the Stanford band's unofficial tree mascot; as you can see, it's kind of a diseased Rastafarian caricature that also happened to be a very bad dancer. I wasn't offended by their halftime show purportedly mocking farmers; I likened it to watching a regular marching band while overdosing on heroin. I watched the show again online and read the announcement transcript, and finally decided it was more offbeat and amusing than offensive. But I have always been a sucker for mindless whimsical entertainment.

>Although this scoreboard indicates a lopsided score early in the second half, chants of "Let's Go Hawks" were frequent. The crowd rightfully resisted my efforts to alter the verbiage to "Let's Throw Rocks" or "Let's Do Shots."

>This last photo of the Hawkeye football team exiting the field to loud applause underscored the fact that a disappointing finish did not negate a remarkable season. It was a great ride!

Writers Group member Dave Parsons is already looking forward to the next football season, and was delighted to learn that there are actually other men's and women's sporting events worthy of our support currently underway at the University of Iowa.