

Snapshots From the Orange Bowl

LuAnn and I (plus nephew Max and niece Kelli) returned on Wednesday from our Orange Bowl trip. It was somehow the first bowl game for any of us, despite our having been born and raised in Iowa City. I can't bore you with our photos in person, but I'll bet I can do it with just the descriptions:

>It is easy to tell the Iowan (Kelli) from the locals in this photo. We were walking along Biscayne Bay, where it was a sunny 56 degrees. She's dressed in gym shorts, sandals and a bikini top, while these two Florida women in the background are wearing - yes - down parkas with hoods.

>We made the traditional sightseeing visit to the Miami Seaquarium on Sunday. This empty enclosure is supposed to contain pink flamingos, but we didn't see any because it was too cold for them to be let outside. Similarly, clueless tourists in the first six rows of the killer whale show were significantly chilled when Lolita the four-ton orca doused them (duh) with frigid salt water.

>This is our cab driver, Sijeune, who drove us from our hotel in Miami to a reception sponsored by Bravo Sports Marketing on Sunday night in Fort Lauderdale. Until that day, I had never paid more than \$100 for a cab ride. Judging by the fare, we must have passed through at least one time zone and possibly an uncharted foreign country. Sijeune is smiling because LuAnn has difficulty calculating 20% and consistently over-tips.

>I took along my slide trumpet on the off-chance I'd run across some other rogue UI Alumni Band members. I never located any, but since I have no shame, I played the trumpet cheer (ta da da DA da DA da DA DA – GO HAWKS!) onstage at a couple of events. Here's a KGAN video clip of me playing Monday afternoon during the official Hawkeye Huddle at the Miami Convention Center for about 15,000 of my newest friends.

>There was an official After-Huddle Hawk Party at the Clevelander Hotel in South Beach. When we got there the waiting line stretched halfway around the block, so LuAnn flagged down Dave Gallagher - co-founder of Bravo - who had developed an interest in my slide trumpet at his reception the

previous evening. He escorted us in – we felt like the cute girls that get to cut in line at the Los Angeles night clubs.

>Even later that evening we hung out at the Cameo, an upscale club with an Iowa City connection in a remodeled 30's movie house (think Englert) in South Miami Beach. There was deafening music that had no apparent melody, plus something called "bottle service," whereby you order full bottles of name-label spirits in a lounge-like setting. This low-res cell phone photo of the menu shows that Johnny Walker Gold is somewhat mid-priced at \$540 per bottle, and the list tops out with a Jeroboam (literal translation: "honking big bottle") of Dom Perignon at \$6,000. I had club soda.

>This is Max, talking to random friends that he manages to find wherever he goes. He's a 2009 UI graduate, and it seems like two-thirds of the Hawkeye fans we saw in Florida were of similar vintage. In the four days I was there I somehow only recognized a half-dozen people, which demonstrates either the impressive breadth of the Hawkeye fan base or the shockingly small size of my circle of acquaintances.

>We were scheduled to attend a tailgate at the motor home of Kelli's boyfriend Jake, pictured here. The plan was for him to call his parents so they could tell him where it was parked so he could in turn notify my niece so she could in turn text the location to us. I said, "Wouldn't it be easier to just have Kevin Bacon call us and tell us where it is?"

>After a great game (we won!), we rode a charter bus back to our hotel from Land Shark Stadium (see postcard). Our driver had to make an emergency lane change because of heavy traffic, knocking some of us out of our seats and causing the man across the aisle to exclaim, "I don't want to die on the best day of my life!"

>We got back to our hotel after 1 a.m. (Eastern Time). Following two hours of sleep we boarded the same bus we had just emptied (I think our seats were still warm) so we could catch a 7 a.m. flight home. If I hadn't been so sleepy, I'd have taken one more picture...

Dave Parsons has returned to a comparatively dull life at his business on the Coralville strip. He is a member of the Press Citizen Writer's Group.