



Another Newberry-Stehno adventure or As far away as possible

It's been a rough two years since we returned home and I only now come with a story about it ... about what ? About another fantastic adventure that we spent together with our very good American friends Susie and Dan Newberry in April and May 2007. And it was more exciting time for us than our last two vacations with them, because for that time our meeting point was on the other side of the ocean in the town of Miami in Florida in the USA ! Our friends had prepared for us more than two weeks of sightseeing around Florida Keys, Panama City Beach, New Orleans, Saint Louis and Omaha of course. It was supposed to be more laid back vacation with a lot of interesting experiences and fun, with many wonderful Gulf sunsets, some kayaking, many alligators, much sipping cold and yummy drinks and much talking and joking with our friends Zuzanka and Dan.

But one by one ... and please do not expect a novel. It will be my another beatnic talking. It will be a medley of dates, events and feelings.

So ... where was the start of that our vacation ? There was already a first note about a trip down to the South of the States during the first visit of Susie and Dan to the Czech Republic in 2004. From that time Zuzanka had been scheduling and planning it. And already before their second vacation in our country was negotiated that our mutual ,Good Bye !' in the summer of 2006 would not be for long time and we would continue our common vacation story at the beginning of 2007 in Florida, U.S.A. And it was in more detail agreed during our friendly talkings while we were together in our mutual ,Newberry-Stehno Czech Holiday 2006' when we spent wonderful 13 days wandering around the Czech Republic, sightseeing Czech castles and old towns.



Yes, for this reason, to know that it would be only for short time, our ,Good Bye !' was not so sad. It was almost ,See you tomorrow At Miami International Airport, Florida !'.

Then there were many fine-tuning emails where we specified dates of our flight to Miami on April 22nd of 2007 and our departure from Omaha on May 9th 2007. That way Zuzanka was able to book all apartments and condos ahead of schedule enough to get good prices. Our friends got us to try to add some days off but it was enough time for us to be out off of our jobs.

„I can't repeat what Dan said when he saw the date you were leaving, but you know Dan, he thinks money grows on trees and that everyone controls when they work and when they don't, like he does. He doesn't understand the '9 to 5' type of job or the responsibilities of people's jobs. Oh those artists. But what can be done? If Dan had his way he would spend his life traveling without a worry as to how he was going to pay for it.”, Susie wrote.

What can be done. Anyway ... we had many beautiful days together before us.

On August 8th we bought flight tickets from our flight provider Czech Airlines for our flights to our skyways Prague Ruzyne Airport – Paris Charles DeGaulle Airport, Paris CDG – Miami International Airport, Omaha Eppley Airfield Airport - Cincinnati Northern Kentucky International Airport, Cincinnati CVG – New York JFK Airport and NY JFK – Prague Ruzyne Airport.

And then we had only been looking forward to that vacation and kept lettering about it. And then months had passed, weeks had passed, our emails were flying over the ocean almost every day and all at once ... there were just a few days left to our arrival to the States ! And here you are, on Wednesday before our big Sunday jump on the other side of the ocean Susie sent us the letter :

„Hello friends, Well we've done it again. First Bekky, then Hana's mom, then Michal and Sunka - and now Dan!! He nearly cut off two of his fingers this morning! But don't worry . . . it won't affect the trip, except that Dan won't be able to swim and in ten days we'll either have to find a clinic to remove the stitches or do it ourselves.

He was doing last minute work at the shop, this morning at 5 a.m. I was working, at home, furiously removing his tools from the house so I could finally complete the cleaning. He called me and said that I must come right away. He'd cut himself and could not stop the bleeding. He thought he might need A stitch! Dan is one of those people that could cut his hand off and say it was only minor, so I was really concerned. He was drilling a hole through a round, flat metal piece that goes flat against the wall behind our dog tie-outs. The spinning drill caught the metal piece and spun it like a circular saw blade and it went through two of his fingers, all the way to the bone, and past in some areas. It's directly behind the finger nails. Because he takes aspirin every day for his heart, he bleeds more than a person who doesn't take aspirin. He could not get it to stop.

*But after I got to the shop and he got into the car, I turned the ignition and nothing happened. The car was totally dead. The door locks would not even work. The day before we leave!!!! So I took him to the emergency room in his truck and while they were stitching him up, I had to call the car dealer to find out what to do with it. I'm sure he thought he was dealing with a mad woman when I was explaining to him that my husband was in the emergency room after trying to cut off his hand, we were leaving at 4:00 tomorrow morning (3:00 if Dan has his way) on a very long car trip, that I'd bought this car specifically for that purpose so a loaner car would not do--**period**. The car had better be fixed and ready to go by this evening. I told him I was sorry but I had a very short fuse, at this time, and I could not deal with the car not being fixed TONIGHT!*

So, now Dan is resting, with 10-12 stitches in his fingers, but will still be able to drive - but not swim- The car, as it turned out, was very minor, just a loose battery cable. So we are being thankful right now. Dan could have had a worse cut and could be in surgery right now and delayed our end of the trip for a day (or two) and the car could have refused to start tomorrow, after we were on the road and at a rest stop in the middle of nowhere, instead of right in town before we left.

So, all is basically well. A few things will not get done now because Dan has limited use of his hand for a couple of days, but I'm sure our friends will understand.

So now, in a few hours WE ARE ON VACATION! and in four days we will be ecstatically waiting for you at Miami airport. All our downs will make our ups for the vacation even better and we will laugh at all of this (at some point) in the future.

So, bye for now friends, I will try to write one more before I turn everything off in the office tonight. I don't know if we'll get into our rooms on the first two nights in time for an internet connection or not. It will be a 28 hour drive to Long Key from Omaha, and Dan is Hell-bent to make it as early as possible. So bye bye until later."

We got almost heart attack , when we read it. We wished them ‚Good Luck‘ to their Thursday start of the vacation and we kept our fingers for all the best for our common Sunday meeting in Miami.

On Friday and Saturday we packed our baggages, several times we checked on all our things and on Saturday evening we went to Prague to overnight at my Prague cousin George's house.

Sunday, April 22nd – Day 1st

Our Prague friends gave us a lift to the airport and we reached there shortly after 5 a.m. We thanked them very much for their care and arranged with them for May 10th. Then they went home and we entered an arrival lounge in the terminal of North 2 at Prague Ruzyne Airport. Our another big adventure began.

It was too early, check-in counters had been closed yet but we didn't mind it. We love this special atmosphere of airports, when you can clearly feel all future experiences in the air, this special mixture of expectations and worries. We also once again checked our passports, flight tickets, a map of Paris CDG Airport ...

In the meantime they opened the check-in counter for our flight. We checked in, said 'Good Bye !' to our baggages and then spent another free time sipping coffee and looking around ... in the same place where we set with Susie and Dan in the 2007 summer.

Afterward we passed through strict customs, came in a gate and in a moment we were looking out of a window of our Airbus A320. And in another moment, at 7:15 a.m., we could see like our Czech ground is running backward and fading down somewhere. We finally realized that it was not a dream, we waved at our country and we gave ourselves to agreeable sensation of the flight toward a wonderful, exciting adventure. We left our everyday lives behind. „Let's go !”.

But soon stewardesses interrupt our dreaming because there was a time for breakfast. A pleasureable interruption ! Coffee, baked goods, butter, muffins ... yum ! The pleasant beginning of our vacation ...

To be approaching close to Paris, we became a bit nervous because of a change of planes and a transfer to a different terminal. After all we had never been there and Charles de Gaulle Airport is large enough for us occasional travelers. But we believed in ourselves, we were the two.

09:00 a.m. – our plane landed on the ground, we deplaned in the 2B terminal and inquired an airport hostess about our way to the 2E terminal, used a bus, found the terminal, visited restrooms, bought some bottled water, calmed ourselves down and went to the customs. There was a very strict inspection, I had to take my suspenders off and took my cell and billfold out of pockets. However we finally managed it (*Hana was O.K.*) and we head for a gate of our flight. Our next plane was 'Jumbo' Boeing 747. It is true that there was a delay of about one hour but eventually we boarded our metal bird.

12:00 a.m. – we took off and left Paris for Miami.

Ah, to travel by 'Jumbo' is a dream. There was a full servis and comfort, including a screen with both videos and actual flight information in every seat as well as a music. Shortly after takeoff they served scrumptious lunch, pasta with chicken, wine, coffee and muffins. And one hour before landing they served the second meal. For a different time zone again lunch ☺. Yum again.

In the meantime we filled out imigration forms I 94 and 6059 B, listened to music or watched TV about the last James Bond and those eight hours of flight were over almost in no time. We enjoy flying. It is still something magic, it is something like a magic ring from fairy tales. You give the magic ring a turn and you are on the other side of the world.

And our delay ? French boys did a great job and it was only about thirty minutes behind schedule.

02:40 p.m. – (*our 08:40 p.m.*) we landed safely on Miami International Airport, entered airport coridor and head for an immigrational inspection, the last barrier among us and our friends. We were nervous, it is unpleasant thing everytime. Fortunately we were pleasantly surprised. A clerk was a very kind, smiling, young man



who welcomed us to the States. Yes, there were some formalities like taking our pictures by camera and scanning our forefingers, but we were already used to it and it was nothing. The clerk wished us a nice stay in the States „*Good bye and the happy stay in the States!*” and we were allowed to enter American ground ! We went to a baggage claim for our baggages (*they arrived !*), took an airport cart and continue our way to our friends, who were waiting for us in an airport hall (*we hoped for it because we were without any news from them from Thursday when they left Omaha for Miami*). We found an exit from our gate and „*Here you are !*” we could see Zuzanka and Dan just behind a glass wall ! Zuzanka was waving an Czech flag at us and Dan was taking pictures. A few more steps and : „*Zuzanka, Dan ... Hana, Mirek ! Hello friends ! Nice to meet you again ! It's like we saw you yesterday !*”. We all were happy and smiling. There was kissing and hugging. „*We are already together again ! What a dream ! And what a warm air all around, really tropical sensation ! Ah, friends we are with you again, that's amazing !*”. And so on, and so on ...



While talking we got to their new red Toyota RAV4, loaded our baggages and sat at rear seats. Our driver Dan skillfully waved his way out of an airport parking area and turn on a CD player with Jimmy Buffet songs and our vacation journey get started by a ride along the town of Miami. A traffic was really heavy but we don't mind it, this slow way of ride was fine for us two. It was a great sightseeing tour and we could



better relish and enjoy all that summer tropical atmosphere here down in the South. Only a few hours ago we left the very beginning of Spring in our country and all of sudden we could breathe that salty ocean hot air with deep blue sky above and palm trees all around ! What a dream ! And on top of that we were together and could talking to our friends. You know it, that first time together after a long time. Euphoria, smiles, jokes ... yes, we enjoyed a company of one another so much and took everything easy. We were vacationists ! There was a good mood and joy inside the red car that was led by experinced

driver through afternoon Miami rush hour for our next destination. And for us to know where, Susie gave us her perfect made itinerary of our common dream days off.

Yes, that heavy traffic caused a little problem to Susie and Dan, they wished to take us

to South Beach for a drink and then to the edge of the surf for dipping our feet in the Atlantic Ocean and also do sightseeing the Miami Beach Holocaust Museum. But for that delay we had to give up that program and continued our journey. But we don't care it, we were satisfied. It was enough for us to look out of car windows at a scenery. The blue ocean, a green foliage, blue sky. Really a fairy



tale for us who were coming from a colder area ...

We went along beaches and coastal canals down to the South. Afterward Dan took a way out of the town toward the Overseas Highway. After a while the road passed from wide six-lane freeway to the two-lane road. It was the Overseas Highway, that had only one lane for traffic in each direction. Basically it is a long concrete belt built on concrete pillars that connects all islands named Florida Keys. Some of them are big some ones are small. On the map it seems like a wonderful necklace with the most beautiful pearl of Key West on its end. The island of Key West is the southernmost point of the U.S.A.

Thus we zoomed down that dreamland with the Atlantic Ocean on our left hand and with the Gulf of Mexico on our right hand. It was almost like we were shipping. In the middle of deep blue nowhere. An incredible experience.

And then there was the first of islands, Key Largo and then the concrete bridge strip again ... and other island, Islamorada, with a tropical foliage and laid-back feeling. „There is laid-back time in the Keys.” said Zuzanka.

Yes, we enjoyed that about 100 miles long ride our best. It was a marvelous sightseeing tour and our friends could only hear from us : „Aaaah, ooooh. It is something out of a movie !”. So exotic sightseeing ! The vast ocean field rotated with the tropical islands with wooden houses and high palm trees. It was amazing and headily leisure beginning of our vacation. Only us two and our great guides Susie and Dan. Only at that time we realized that our excellent driver was injured and we asked him about it : „No problem, I’m fine.” answered Dan and showed us fingertips of his left hand plastered with Band-Aids and he continued driving Toyota down Overseas Highway toward our first destination, the island of Long Key where we would stay in Lime Tree Bay Resort in Treehouse Suite.

(<http://www.limetreebayresort.com/ontest/treehouse%20suite.html>).

07:00 p.m – we reached Lime Tree Bay Resort and pulled in Treehouse Suite. It was a nice wooden house on pillars, surrounded by palm trees and situated about 200 feet



far from a seashore. It was so beautiful and so, so romantic !

Our friends made the great choice. An airy lodging with bedrooms, a living room with kitchen, a clean restroom. But what was the best, it was a cool porch around two walls, with a tree growing through the floor, chairs and table and a fantastic hammock. And wonderful prospect of the Gulf of Mexico. A fairy tale ! The fairy tale about the Tropics, about the Caribbean ...

Well. Us two got settled in (*our friends had lived there from Saturday already*) and changed clothes from Czech cold wearings into light Florida summer clothes. Meanwhile Susie made something to eat on the porch and me and Dan had our first common Coronas with limes. Then we tried the sky chair and relish views of a scenery. We all were on cloud nine ...



There was a lot of casual talking about everything, but mainly how we all could hardly wait for that our vacation and how high we would enjoy out our time together.

Among others, after my „journalistic” questions, we gathered from Dan that he had got three siblings : „Vera is the oldest, followed quickly by Arthur. I’m twenty two years younger than Vera. You know, my Mom basically had two families of children. Vera and Arthur then me and then three years later David. Me and Vera are by far the most stable of the four.”

And we talked and talked and joyed in our reunion. It was the real laid back ! The ocean, the sun ... and that air ! The air full of salt and humidity, full of distant areas and full of promises of next experiences. And the first of those breathtaking

experiences came at that next moment ... our first sunset into waves of Gulf of Mexico. We were laying on beach chairs, sipping Coronas and relishing that special moment. The golden orange sun falling down into dark waters, a net of palm-tree leaves above our heads. Ah ! „Come and look !”.

Then there was some walking along the seashore and then we returned in our bungalow on pillars and went to the beds. Yes, we were tired. Anyway ... it was the long day with a lot of excitement. And next day we wanted to be fresh and full of energy for new experiences. What would it be ? Nice times in the Key West !

