

Thursday, May 3rd – Day 12th



06:00 a.m. – and again : „Rise and shine ! Today is our longest driving day !”.

Packing, coffee ...

07:15 a.m. – we checked out of the hotel, paid for that, then loaded Toyota and : „Good Bye, New Orleans ! It was nice to meet you ! Maybe next in the future !”.

07:30 a.m. – „Let’s go for Saint Louis !”.

We headed north, first across Lake Pontchartrain, along the longest bridge in the world : „The Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, or the Causeway, consists of

two parallel bridges crossing Lake Pontchartrain in southern Louisiana. The longer of the two bridges is the longest in the world over water, measuring at 23.87 miles (38.42 km) long. The bridges are supported by over 9,000 concrete pilings. The two bridges feature bascule spans over the navigation channel 8 miles (13 km) south of the north shore. The southern terminus of the Causeway is in Metairie, Louisiana, a suburb of New Orleans. The northern terminus is at Mandeville, Louisiana”.

It was great ! We drove and drove down the bridge and it reminded us a bit of the Overseas Highway ... only concrete ribbons and us ...

In the middle of the bridge we stopped at a resting place, got out of the car and enjoyed views around. There was water and water, as far as our eyes could see and the both south even north ends of causeway were dipped on the both horizons into the lake’s dark blue ...

09:00 a.m. – a stop for breakfast in Hammond, in a cafeteria of the ‚Iron Skillet’ chain. Yes, it was a self-service restaurant, so we had a pile of scrambled eggs, roasted bacon, cheese, toasted breads, muffins, juice, coffee ... we love American breakfasts ! And to all of that there was an typical American waitress, like from a movie, with blond hairs and a sharp voice : „Sweet honeys, are you satisfied ? Would you like more coffee ?”.



And on the road again ... Interstate 55.

11:30 a.m. – we passed by Jackson in Mississippi.

02:00 p.m. – Hana got a chance to drive Toyota and go down American freeway. And she immediately fell in love with an automatic shift. „Heigh-ho, good bye sport style of driving, our next car will have certainly automatic shift !”, I thought ... ☺

02:45 p.m. – we went by Memphis in Tennessee and Dan returned again behind the wheel.

03:00 p.m. – we had a stop in West Memphis for lunch and coffee in the favorite ‚Perkins’ restaurant. Chicken salad with roasted bacon, coffee, Coronas.



04:00 p.m. – and again on the flat American road, on that concrete ribbon passing towns and cities in the distance and safely transporting a stream of cars and trucks to their destinations ...

05:15 p.m. – from dark clouds fell the first raindrops that changed into a downfall in a moment. Temperature had dropped from 85 F to 69 F.

06:00 p.m. – 125 miles to Saint Louis, it’s raining, 68 F.

08:15 p.m. – we reached the ‚Residence Inn Marriott’ hotel, a complex of row of two story houses with a lodge nearby the entrance



that contained a reception desk and a self service canteen. Breakfast buffet came with rooms.

(<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/stlrh-residence-inn-st-louis-galleria>)

08:30 p.m. – after we checked in and familiarized ourselves with our ‚Executive Penthouse Suite‘ we set out again to replenish our food supplies in a shopping center and some wine in a special wine store. There was fun in the store because Hana had to sign a statement that we will not give any party and drink wine that evening. Wow! Those Americans ! ☺ Hana had promised ...

09:00 p.m. – we came back to our hotel rooms and finally now we were able to properly look around our dwelling. And we were satisfied again. There was a large room just behind a doorway that was split among kitchenette with a dining table, a living room with the TV and a comfortable sofa and our bedroom with bathroom and other facilities. Susie and Dan had their bedroom upstairs, on the second floor, just above ours, but unlike ours, theirs was opened into other space and it was separated only by wooden handrail. Even there was also bathroom and so on. And of course, under stairs there was a central air conditioning as usual in America.

09:30 p.m. – in spite of Hana’s proclamation ☺ we gave a party with wine and cheese. Zuzanka was nicely merry and was narrating about her Dad. He had been looking forward to us and also he was a bit disappointed when we skipped Omaha in our 2004 U.S. vacation, that Frank stole us from them Omahan’s. Hana and me explained that it was difficult to include a visit to them in 2004 because our itinerary was full enough and Frank did his best to show us as much as was possible of North-South U.S. beauties. And we could not disappoint Frank, he was our guide and he was the first who answered to my FIRST e-mail in 2002, he was the first link of the American Stehno chain.

So we drank wine, ate chees and munchies and were talking about cheerful even serious topics. Yes, there was lots of food, lots wine and we all had a nice time.

Meantime Susie also downloaded lyrics of Jambalaya from the Internet so we could sing together a bit ... And Susie continued her pretty talkative mood ☺ (*we love her*) :
„I left my parents, my natal home when I was seventeen. You know ... I went steady with one boy who was a waiter in a hotel. My parents didn’t agree with that my relationship and they forbade me to go around with him. But I ignored their prohibition and I kept company with him. So once, when we were with my boyfriend together in the hotel, my parents went by car by the hotel and got to see my car in a hotel parking. When I returned home there was a strict speach to me from my parents, mainly from my father. I had to choose. Either to stay home and gave up my fellow or to leave home. I chose to leave. I was a hard dog. Still I am ☺.“

Yes, a relationship between parents and their teenagers is difficult very often. Children are not children any more but their parents still do not notice it ... a generation gap. And Susie added : *„Frank also left home early. Our father didn’t agree with Frank’s choice of studying. But also Frank was a hard dog and didn’t let the father interfere in his study. So he had to go away too. Yes, our father is the hard dog too ☺.“*

And also there were some words about Ginny during sipping : *„She’s been married for the first time. Her husband is ex-policeman (her the second policeman in a raw). Nowadays he is retired. They are fine. They have got very nice and expensive house. Yes, they live on the high standard.*

And Stacie ? Ah, Stacie and Kendel ... yes, they are fine too. They are happy and they are at peace with the world. They have the two sweet and pretty girls, a neat house with a small garden. And they live their lives. Sometimes we don’t agree with something what they do ... for example how they raise Cassidy because they spoil her too much and they let her be awake until 2 a.m. very often. But what are we gonna do ? It’s their deal ... “.

And Susie talked and talked ... no, she was not drunk, no way. She was just merry and in a good mood as we other were too. Happy times ... *„My silly Susie.“*, Dan was

smiling ☺. And us two remembered a story with Michal as a protagonist. He was about four, we grilled sausages and made a fire and he stayed up with us as long as we did, to 11 p.m. and he looked like drunk. He laughed and his eyes were glittering like stars and he talked and talked for our fun. As Zuzanka at that time ☺. Our sweet cousin.
11:00 p.m. – we drank up the big bottle of Chardonnay and went to bed. Next day would be at our leisure.