

Sunday, May 6th – Day 15th

08:30 a.m. – „We got up at our leisure“. In spite of that a bit unquiet night we woke up fresh and rested. We got used to the water bed and we finally found pleasure in it. Yes, we liked it. And we also liked the glass sliding door overlooking back yard. We could see through it Joey and Sunka looking at strangers in their lower rooms ☺.



We opened the door and could see that the morning was rainy but pleasantly warm (70 F). After a while we climbed upstairs where Susie had prepared breakfast for us. She was alone, Dan had gone and when we asked about him, we got the answer that changed our vacation feeling a bit ...

That night storm with the downpours brought a disaster to Jackson Artworks (<http://www.jacksonartworks.com>) where Dan had got his gallery and workroom.



That huge amount of water that rained down during the night made a big pool of water on the roof of the Jackson Artworks building. And old wooden beams of the roof did not manage that terrible weight and caved in. All that water fell down into galleries and created about two feet high wave of water that flooded everything with unimaginable devastating effect on all things inside the gallery. All inner partitions were moved away and almost every exhibited artworks were damaged or destroyed as well as almost all devices, facilities and furnitures. And computers, machines ... the horrible tragedy.

Dan learned that sad news from their friend Marcia, a gallery worker, on early Sunday morning and he immediately went to the gallery. The catastrophe happened probably at about 1 a.m. when Marcia was woken up by an alarm from the gallery but when she came to the gallery to checked it up she found locked and undamaged doors and she returned home again.

The terrible reality she got only when she walked in Jackson Artworks on Sunday morning when she came to work.

We were shocked by that news and we did not know what to do. We did not want to be ball and chain for our friends because it was clear that at that time they would have different thoughts in their minds than our vacation. It seemed that the vacation had ended for them ...

So we told Susie, that we would hate to be the cause of even bigger financial loss keeping them from rescue their property in the gallery. So we would understand if they spent their time saving odd, still usable things there instead to guide us around Omaha. We suggested we could help them too. And we also could take care of ourselves for the remaining days.

But Zuzanka, our beloved hard dog, answered that it was out of the question, that they anyway did not do anything more than Dan was doing right at that moment in the gallery, it meant organizing and saving their property. There could not anything more to do. And also she told us that the gallery owner had already arranged a building company that would provide a clear-out of destroyed things and all mess as well as a complete reconstruction of the collapsed roof. So it is not necessary to change our Omaha program only to add a few visits to gallery to check work there.

Well ... even then ... that sad event had still been with us from that time ...

Sipping coffee with Susie we learned from her, that it was really the stormy night, and actually we were lucky people in all that bad luck, because there were more than eighty tornados raging around Omaha that last night, even some people were killed in Kansas and the road that we went by on Saturday afternoon was flooded about four hours after we came through by the flood water that created a lake of size 20 miles by 2 miles. Nothing to shout about.

Omaha World-Herald : ,The May 2007 Tornado Outbreak was an extended tornado outbreak that started on May 4, 2007, affecting portions of the Central United States. The most destructive tornado in the outbreak occurred on the evening of May 4 in central Kansas, where about 95% of the city of Greensburg in Kiowa County was destroyed by an EF5 tornado. The supercell killed at least 13 people including 11 in Greensburg and two in Pratt County by a separate tornado. At least 60 people were injured in Greensburg alone. It was the strongest tornado of an outbreak which included several other tornadoes reported across Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota that occurred on the same night. 25 tornadoes were confirmed that night.

The outbreak did not end there; a total of 84 tornadoes were confirmed reported on May 5 in the same area. Most were in open country but one fatality was reported in Ottawa County, Kansas near a county line. Fourteen more tornadoes were confirmed on May 6 in the same general area before the activity subsided.'

Then Dan returned from the gallery. He was also brave and tried to act as usual and did not show a sign of his feeling but it was written all over his face. His thoughts were elsewhere.

11:00 a.m. - we got out of Toyota in the Old Market quarter, in a quiet street with brick houses and a row of trees in the edge of a sidewalk. Yes, there was Jackson Artworks in front of us, Dan's kingdom. From outside there was not any sign of disaster. But then we entered the gallery ... Good heavens ! There was a layer of a slimy mud all over the ground, everything one foot high was soaking wet, inner partitions were broken or dislocated, all equipment including artworks were damaged. And right above Dan's part of the gallery there was a big hole in the roof ...



Susie looked around, faces in palms and she shook her head in disbelief. Dan in pensive mood stand aside and visibly tried to visualize all that work that would be

awaiting him there.

After about one half an hour checking and searching caused damages all of us the four went out of the gallery into cloudy but warm enough day (72 F). Our friends wanted us to show around that town quarter.

The Old Market (<http://www.oldmarket.com>) is actually an old industrial area with dozens of old multistory brick buildings, former factories and storages, that were, over the years, gradually changed into an interesting historical center of that modern city of Omaha with a lot of art galleries and exclusive shops of jewellery, branded clothes, perfumes etc. Also many old buildings were rebuilt into very exclusive and expensive apartments and that almost forgotten area had began to live its new age.

The sightseeing tour of the luxury factory quarter included also a walk along watercourses and parklands that were situated between the old and the new Omaha. It was the nice area to walk and relax.



Then we took once again a short stop to the gallery where we met Marcia, that gallery worker and Newberry's friend.

Afterward our friends took us for a car tour around neighborhood of the Old Market. We walked down the Riverfront in a bank of the Missouri river, what is the huge area where varied culture events were given as well as the good place for casual strolls and sitting by the river. There also was a big bronze sculpture sits in the bank of the river to talk about the steel-industry history of Omaha.

We also could notice how much water was flowing down the

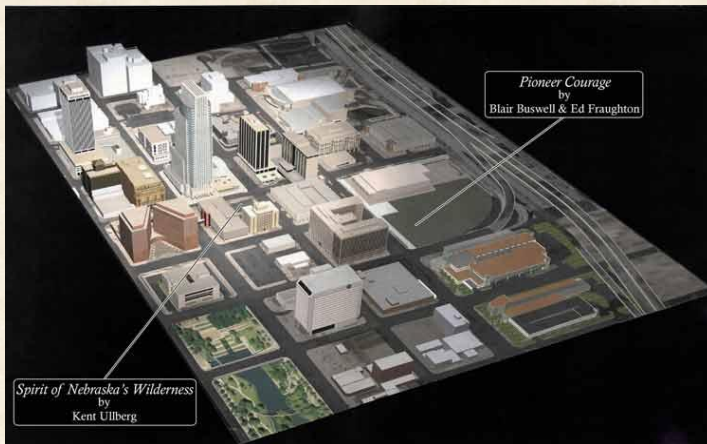
Missouri, with a lot of mess in it that was a consequence of those heavy rains during last night. The mighty stream was full of tree trunks, branches even remainders of wooden buildings ...

Then we went through a modern part of Omaha, we headed for the Qwest Omaha Center, the giant cultural complex (<http://www.qwestcenter.com>). Seeing that only boosted our knowledge, that Omaha representatives and businessmen really did a good job and they made of Omaha really the biggest center of culture of the Midwest.

We posed for Dan in front of high sculptures of a ballerina and an acrobat before the Center and then we moved a bit farther by car to the First National Bank.



(<http://www.boodyfinearts.com/firstnational.html>)



First we slowly rode down the streets around and could admire many bronze above life-size sculptures of bison and geese which all were so tastefully and sensitively situated among or into modern buildings and parklands. That ,*Spirit of Nebraska's Wilderness*' was reminder of typical wildlife of the Midwest and

connected last times and nowadays together. The ,*Pioneer Courage*' sculptural group that we visited a bit later paid tribute to the first pioneers, settlers who came to the Nebraska area. There we could see again accurate bronze sculptures of men, women, children, horses and wagons of above life-size again. Very interesting, very big, very impressive. And again ... all those exhibits created the one unit with modern buildings all around.



01:00 p.m. – we stopped at the Susie's Pet Grooming to feed and pet the cats.

During a drive home Susie showed us a town quarter where they lived with Dan after their wedding. At that time they were quite poor, Dan was sick (*meningitis* ?) and he had to be hospitalized and Susie stayed alone with small Stacie almost without any money. She recalled that she had only a few dimes when she went to buy muffins ... „*We were poor people, Mirek, really poor people. So from that time we think about every expense and we are very careful about money*”, Dan added.

01:45 p.m. – Dan had a nap for a while and us of the tree had a nice time sipping coffee and talking. We also gifted Zuzanka with our last present, we gave her two ceramic cups for coffee. We hoped we brought a bit pleasure in that her exhausting day ...

Of course we went through all events of the day, Susie showed us the afternoon Omaha World-Herald that had already contained an article about the catastrophe in Jackson Artworks.

Omaha World-Herald May 6, 2007 **Art gallery roof collapses just hours after reception**

About 150 people attended Saturday night's showing of about 100 pieces of art at Jackson Artworks. Fortunately, they had left the opening- night reception hours before the collapse of the roof at 1108 Jackson St. in the Old Market of downtown Omaha.

"It was like a mini-tsunami in here," gallery director Marcia Manzo said as she provided a quick tour while workers removed debris Sunday evening.

Manzo and owners Jim and Kat Moser, who live next door in one of the two side-by-side buildings they own, were the hosts of the reception from 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday.

The roof may have been struck by lightning and, weakened by the weight of the water from Omaha's record rainfall Saturday, collapsed between midnight and 2 a.m.



"It could have been devastating if it had happened last night," said Manzo, who received a phone call informing her of the collapse.

Nobody was in the building after 10:30 p.m. Saturday. None of the pieces in the show were damaged. However, damage totaling thousands of dollars was done to other pieces, including many that were being held for buyers.

"We were blessed," Manzo said, referring to the fact that there were no

Possible lightning strike and the weight of water is being blamed for the roof collapse at Jackson Artworks on early Sunday. Paul Davis Restoration employees work atop the building at 1108 Jackson St.

injuries and the 100 pieces that were shown were intact. "But we also sold a lot of art last night."

Unfortunately, the studio and artwork of Omaha artist/sculptor Dan Newberry were destroyed. Some books in his studio ended up more than 35 feet away in the building's kitchen.

Paintings in a front storage room were destroyed; others were damaged by the humidity in the aftermath.

Other artwork hadn't been accounted for, and some works in storage weren't reachable because of their proximity to the collapsed roof. The building's office, including its computer, was destroyed, as were the contents in another room rented by an Omaha musician.

"He was pouring water out of guitars," Manzo said. Workers estimated the hole in the roof to be 22 feet by 20 feet. Despite the mess, there's a possibility of reopening soon. "We're hoping for a reopening of this show, with any luck, this weekend," Manzo said. Meanwhile, there is no way of estimating the damage. "We're not anywhere near that yet," Manzo said.

In the newspaper we could see that the hole in the roof was already repairing by workers. However Zuzanka was a bit more skeptical according to early reopening ...

Then I started taking memory shots of inner arranging and decorating of the house, as well as of the back yard with all its beautifying. On that occasion I probably saved a water pump in the small pond. I could hear it was ticking over so I called Dan, Dan filled up the water level in the pond and everything was all right again. Meantime our girls spent an pleasant half an hour going through American accounting and bookkeeping. ☺

04:00 p.m. – we moved to the Old Country Buffet restaurant for family lunch and meeting. Originally Susie wanted to give it at home in the back yard, but then because of the uncertain weather and also because of the Jackson Artworks event she changed the plan and invited others to the restaurant.



Hana and me were quite nervous. After all, it was our first meeting the Omaha Stehno family ... but everything was okay. Before the restaurant we shook hands with Joe Stehno, who was waiting for us outside. Then we all entered the restaurant, passed by a cash desk where Susie paid something (\$10 per person for us the four ?) and we went on to a private meeting-dining room where other family members already sat at the table. There were Dad Frank Stehno, Ginny with her daughter Carrie, Stacie McDonald with her husband Kendell and daughters Cassidy and Danica. There was a lot of welcoming and shaking hands and much and much English words for our Czech ears. We gave them small presents that we brought along ... Omaha Frank got playing cards of the Czech castles, a ceramic bell and a CD of Czech Brass Music, Ginny was given with a neckless of gemstones and playing cards of the Czech castles, Joe got a

pencil of Pilsner Urquell as well as Kendell, there was the playing cards of the castles for Stacie and the small girls were given with little cushions with a picture of the Mole (*a very popular character from one Czech fairytale*). They all were surprised and liked their gifts (*we hoped for it*).

Then we all went for our meals. The restaurant was, according to the name, of the buffet style, it means self-service style and we could load on our plates what we wanted.

Yes, you pay some money when you come and you can eat what you manage ... but without hesitation, the owners of that chain of buffets are experienced and they have it counted, they know what they do ...

So we had some meat, sauce, vegetable, potatoes ... and coffee and something sweet. Delicious !

And then there was much casual talking and chatting, the pleasant atmosphere. They all our new relatives were so nice, polite and friendly and we did feel like home during our own family party. It was like we had already known each other for long time ... Only that much English was a bit exhausting for us. We were able to talk to the one, or to the two of our friends but when they started to talk all together and across the table, it was very difficult for our ears to catch it and we were almost lost in all that ocean of foreign words. Yes, of course we were able to understand here and there quite enough but we got to know that our English still needed to improve ☺.



Anyway ... the meeting was so warm, spontaneous and so, so friendly ! Me and Ginny took some pictures to keep that memorable meeting in memory. Then me and Hana thanked to our new family companions for their warm words and for having us like family members, we invited them to the Czech Republic. Afterward we all left that pleasant restaurant. Outside we took another pictures, said them all our good bye, our special one belonged to Dad who was visibly touched by our company ... and got in Toyota.

„Good Bye for next, dears !“.

Just for Ginny it was not so long farewell, because she knew we would meet the next day in the Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo.

06:00 p.m. – we stopped to check a situation in Jackson Artworks. The roof was under reconstruction and almost all debris were over. Yes, the restoration company was doing really the good job.

Dan and Susie again looked over damaged things, they picked another usable ones up and they discussed that sad event with the gallery owners, Mr. and Mrs. Moser. And they all were immensely happy that the horrible disaster did not happen last evening when there were about 150 people so that catastrophe was without any one injured or killed human being.



They all seemed to be in a balanced way, almost without any mark of sadness or depression of that havoc all around. The strong people.

But for us two, Hana and me, it was the really sad spectacle. To see Zuzanka how she picked up a computer full of dirt from debris and Dan how he stand in front of his damaged sculpture ...

And they both concordantly were sorry about not having us to the yesterday's opening, we could see the gallery in full feather before that catastrophe. *„But what are we gonna do now ...“.*

We also could see some dirty Jackson Gallery T-shirts and we showed our wish to have some for memory ... we got the last ones new and clear. The orange one for Hana and the black one for me. Thanks a lot.

08:00 p.m. – back at the Newberry's. Dan made a fire in a special, bottle like ceramic fireplace in the front sitting. He told us that it was made somewhere about Santa Fe from a special potter's clay.

So ... flames and wine ... and friendly casual talking. Susie questioned us what we liked the best on our joint vacation, what would remained in our minds as the memories number one. Hana remembered unbelievable white pure beaches in Panama City Beach, me recalled the first sunset in Long Key. You know, the sunset among fans of palm tree branches ... and also jacuzzi and canoeing in the bay in Key West ... and the trip to Dry Tortugas ... but everything what we had seen was wonderful ...

„And what about you, Zuzanka ?” ... „Your pantomime, Mirek, when you performed us two discussing on the beach in Panama City Beach ☺”. And we continued our common joking. We remembered their first visit to the Czech Republic in 2004, our family meeting in our kitchen together with Hana's sister Zdena and her husband Karel and their sons Tomas and Jakub. We told our friends that only when we later watched the video of that party, we got that Susie and Dan misunderstood our explanation of the Czech saying : „Chodit po houbách = To pick mushrooms.”

So ... explanation again ... in our country we use this saying when we talk about somebody young when we want to say that some events had happened before he was born ... he still picked mushrooms at that time.

So ... in that meeting we translated Zdena and Karel's talking about their joint life, that something was happened even before Tomas and Jakub were born ... we used that saying ... the boys still picked mushrooms at that time ☺. But from the video when we could see how Susie and Dan after our explanation bursted out laughing we got it that Zuzanka and Dan understood it in their different, more ribald way ... that Zdena and Karel went mushrooming ... and then Tomas was born ... then they two went mushrooming again ... and Jakub was born again ☺ ☺ ☺ ! No, no, it was not right catching, our friends. Anyway ... more funny ! Try to see that video ...

Yes, we spent pleasant evening again with our friends. But there is an end to everything ...

09:30 p.m. – *„Good night, friends. See you tomorrow morning.”*