

Sunday, April 29th – Day 8th

07:30 a.m. – we jumped out of the bed and still sleepy we hurried to the balcony. Wow ! What a spectacular view of a white stretch of the seashore, lit up by a low morning sun we got ! Wonderful ! And already 83 F !

Susie was already up and in full work in the kitchenette : „*Good morning, friends ! Time to have breakfast ! Come here and help yourselves !*”,

So we took our seats at the table, richly set with boiled eggs, yogurts, cheeses, baked goods and coffee and started eating. But without Zuzanka. She with words : : „*Ah, Dan, Dan where are you again ?!*” left us alone and went out to search for Dan, who had still been on his morning room.

After while we tried to have a look down at the seashore and ... here we are ... we could see both of them ! They were coming from the beach to the hotel. Susie was ahead, still turning to Dan to talk something. She was visibly excited, using upward gesticulation to our balcony, then again to Dan, she flailed her hands, continued her way, then again turned to Dan and she probably repeated her reproach. And Dan without any word, lowered his head, went behind Susie ...

Because of a big distance and because of sounds of waves we were not able to understand anything of their conversation. But we did not care, we were able to get the sense from their body language. A pantomime on the beach ! We had a good time ☺. After few minutes they appeared in the door, Susie still a bit angry and Dan with apologetic words : „*I’m so sorry, friends. But you know me, I’m a passionate photographer ...*”. And we answered that nothing happened, we had still had our coffee and everything was okay. But Susie was quite more strict to Dan and she again reprehended him, that he was irresponsible like a little child and he did not think about others, who had to be waiting for him. So me and Hana, to ease the atmosphere, told them about our watching them from the balcony, what a perfect pantomimic scene it was and I played it back to them. And we were successful, Zuzanka started smiling and Dan burst into laughter : „*Ah, Mirek you got it again ! You’re a perfect pantomimist !*”.

So everything was all right again and in a good mood. And what can be better start to the new day than a casual time with friends in so neat apartment and with sounds of the ocean going in through the open balcony door ? I do not know better thing !

09:00 a.m. – jump in Toyota again ! We set out for a trip to the Falling Waters State Park. (<http://www.floridastateparks.org/fallingwaters/default.cfm>)

After about an hour long drive along ‚77 Hwy’ , what represented about 110 miles, we reached the state park. It was a pleasant wooded area. We took a short track to the biggest waterfall with the deepest chasm there. Yes, it was a nice change to walk under all those tall trees that provided such a welcome shade and fresh forest air. On our way to the waterfall Hana and me had noticed an ash under the trees. Dan answered that it was man-made. Rangers regularly make controlled fires to burn all low vegetation, that is the often cause of fires in that dry region, as a prevention of the big and wild fires.



We casually walked down the trail along smaller even bigger depressions of the ground, what was a consequence of a carst phenomenon there. And we continued walking to the biggest depression, Falling Waters Sink. But when we came to the waterfall, there was nothing to see. The long running dry weather did the trick and the water was almost over. We could see not falling water but only weeping rocks ☺. But we did not mind it. The scenery was nice and interesting and we did enjoy our longer walking after all lazy time we had spent over the last few days.

After our return to the parking place we could read some information about the park on a board :





,Falling Waters State Park continues to be a destination point for nature lovers from around the United States. If you are in search of a place to relax and enjoy the great outdoors, this is the place for you. Come stroll along one of the parks scenic trails, reminisce with friends as you camp in one of Florida's highest elevated campgrounds, or plan a quiet picnic lunch under one of our covered pavilions. The staff and volunteers at Falling Waters strive to make your visit a pleasant one.

The waterfall is fed by a series of seepage springs which are highly seasonal rain dependent. Under drought conditions, there will likely be little to no water over the falls. However, the geological features of this park are still quite spectacular.

Huge trees and fern-covered sinkholes line Sink Hole Trail, the boardwalk that leads visitors to Florida's highest waterfall. Falling Waters Sink is a 100-foot deep, 20-foot wide cylindrical pit into which flows a small stream that drops 73 feet to the bottom of the sink. The water's final destination remains unknown. Only a few miles south of I-10, the park provides travelers with a quiet, serene stop on their journey. Visitors can see beautiful native and migrating butterflies in the butterfly garden, take a dip in the lake, or have a family picnic. Hikers can experience the verdant, gently sloping landscape of North Florida.'

Afterward Zuzanka consulted her itinerary and a map and set direction to the Torreya State Park, another natural place of interest of the State of Florida. And again we took about one hour ride down the narrow roads through a Florida back country, with both poorer looking and evidently richer farms. First the road was lined with only sporadic trees but how we went far and far, they were replaced by the regular forest and we entered the state park.



From information on the table we learned, that the park is actually a huge recreation area that is intended mainly for hikers with many tracks and trails and overlooks. And to reach such an overlook represents about one hour walking. Nothing for us. So we had some looks around and hit our road again, back to PCB.

Just for your interest some information on the park :

,High bluffs overlooking the Apalachicola River make Torreya State Park a one of Florida's most scenic places. The park is named for an extremely rare species of Torreya tree that only grows on the bluffs along the Apalachicola River. Developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, Torreya is popular for camping, hiking, and picnicking. Bird-watching is also a popular activity. Over 100 species of birds have been spotted in the park. Forests of hardwood trees provide the finest display of fall color found in Florida. The main campground offers full-facility campsites and a YURT (Year-round Universal Recreational Tent).'

02:00 a.m. – back in Panama City Beach, in the *,Scampy's Seafood & Steaks'* restaurant for lunch. It was the stylish seafish tavern, pretty crowded and full of a buzz. And what would it be being in the fish restaurant without having any seafish food ? So I had *,Stuffed Crab with onions rings and green potatoes'* and Hana *,Grove Fish'*, what was grilled sea fish with broccoli and beans. Again new tastes and yumming. The ones who broke the rule were Susie with her beloved steak and Dan with a veggie meal ☺.



And without any long sitting around, back to our condominium.

There was a funny event during our return to the hotel. When we were driving through the gatehouse, that nice man in the uniform came out of the gatehouse with a beautiful yellow parrot sitting on his shoulder ! We were amazed and fascinated by that bird so the man handed him to Dan into the car and Dan gave it to Hana ! The yellow parrot was so sweet but afterwhile he seemed a bit confused by our Czech speech and became nervous so we gave him back to the porter. He gave us salute and we ended our ride *,home'*.

And then every our couple did separately according to our hobbies.

Susie and Dan went out shopping and we ... ??? Yes, of course, to the beach for



swimming in waters of the Gulf and lazy time there. Whoopee !!! Jump into waves, let the ocean swing us up and down in its strong armful and than again on the beach to lie down on the snowy white warm sand and to fall into daydreaming ... to listen to a symphony of rolling waves and sounds of wind. And all that we could relished in very private atmosphere, because of pretty small amount of people on the beach ... the peak season was over ... it was perfect ! All those natural miracles were just for the both of us ... the fantastic feeling.

On the beach we spent about two hours until **05.30 p.m.** then we slowly returned to the hotel.

06:30 p.m. – dinner in the living room. Eggs, tomatos, ananas and Susie's yummy salad with beans. Coronas and Pilsner Urquells. Dan's watching TV (*Open Range movie*).

And then our last sitting on the balcony, sipping wine and friendly talking during watching our last sunset into the Gulf. For that once there was Hana's turn talking story from her childhood : *„When I was a small girl, about ten, my grandmother came to us every day to do morning supervising me and my younger sister Zdena because our parents were already gone for their jobs. One day, before my grandmother coming, I got, what I thought at that time, a great invention. I stood just inside the door and when my grandma opened the door and entered I jumped out and shouted : ‚Boo !‘. I thought that my grandma would be shocked and that it would be a great fun. But what a surprise ! She did not take any fright of it. Instead of it she gave me a solid slap in my face. Slap ! Wow ! It was no fun at all ! I got hot and cold all over ! Well. It is my child story. And it is true that it was a hard lesson for me and I never did it again ☺“.*

08:00 p.m. – we left that spectacular overlook and went to our rooms to pack our stuff for a next day departure.

09:30 p.m – *„Good night, friends ! Enjoy your last night in the Beach !“*