

It's October and my sister, Karen, has had knee replacement surgery. In rehab for another 2 weeks at least, it appears I have time and the means to take a long over due vacation.

There is a friend I have known for some years online who I decided to visit finally. Dannie lives in Nemo, South Dakota. Following her suggestion, I checked Allegiant Airlines for available flights and fares. Would you believe I can fly from Vegas to Rapid City for \$39 each way? Don't. That is a good fare BUT after you add in the extras, such as seat selection and priority boarding and \$40 to check a bag, the flight actually cost me \$205 round trip.

Karen did try to talk me out of flying en femme citing all kinds of problems and holdups but I was determined to take my vacation entirely as Rosaliy and that was that.

It's Thursday, 10-22. I'm excited about my trip tomorrow as I head to bed about 10pm. Just my luck, it is 10:30 and I can't sleep. Got up, online, chat, play games. Finally got to bed about 12:30.

Friday, today. 3:30 and the alarm wakes me. I heat up some coffee, get dressed and 'put on my face.' My sister calls to wish me a safe trip. After that I take out the trash. The cat has already been set up with bulk feeders and clean litter. Have to change my shoes. My favorite, and most comfortable pair, have worn down to the unsafe state and will have to be replaced. Ah well.

4:15 comes and I call Kathy who has agreed to take me to the airport. She arrives at 4:50 and we are on our way.

At the airport find my terminal and meet the first hurdle. Rosaliy presents her boarding pass and id's. The skycap doesn't bat an eye as he takes my one checked bag and tells me how to get to the gate.

The airport is very busy this morning and I have to snake my way to the next hurdle ... the TSA checkpoint. As I hand the officer my boarding pass and id's, I advise him he will need both. He checks all and passes me through. I trip the buzzer passing through the metal detector and have to remove my jewelry. I should have done that in the first place. I clear this third hurdle and am on my way to the tram to the gates.

It is now 6:00 am and since I, wisely I think, arrived two hours before my flight, I have breakfast at Ruby's Dinette. I sit down at 6:20 to eat and pen my notes for the January newsletter.

Rosaliy is on her way.

About 7:00 am I make my way to a rest room before boarding. By 7:15 I am on the plane and waiting to take off. YEE HAW !!!

7:45 and the pre-flight briefing has been completed as the aircraft prepares to taxi out.

It is 8:02. Having taken off on time at 7:50, we are now cruising at 10,000 feet toward Rapid City, S.D. All hurdles passed and vacation ahead.

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9:30 am LV Time and we have begun our descent to Rapid City. Of course we have crossed a time zone so the local time is 10:30.

10:50 local time, we have touchdown and proceeded to the gate. After a nature stop, I proceed to baggage claim and I meet up with my friend, Dannie. After collecting my checked bag, we had lunch at a local Mexican restaurant. From there we stopped at the store for some groceries followed by a scenic drive to her place. After dinner we talked with some friends online and finally went to bed..

Lovely home, parts of which are still in process, in a nice, quiet rural location. Very peaceful.

I took pictures around the place and even caught the dog, although I had to trick him into posing to catch him. We sat around relaxing much of the remainder of that first day until Dannie made supper. One thing she does well is cook. Other than a few meals while out, Dannie did all the cooking and we ate rather well.

Friday was quiet and peaceful so we stayed at home mostly. Talked, played with the dog, chatted some online, watch news and other tv programs and ended the day as usual.

Sat we both slept late which was just as well since it rained most of the morning. Late afternoon and Danie's friend Becca arrived.

We have a good visit, a sumptuous dinner and chat for hours. Becca left before midnight and we both crashed shortly thereafter.

Sunday and again we slept a little late but then it snowed most of the morning so we just enjoyed sharing the day, breakfast, catching the news and I checked in online for a while. It is still fairly warm so the snow can't accumulate. By afternoon the snow has stopped. Late in the day we decide to take in a movie so we headed out and had dinner at Olive Garden. After that we went to the theater and watched Couples Retreat. This is a comic movie about 4 couples going on a 'fix your relationship' retreat. A little strained in the beginning, it has it's moments and does a creditable job on the plot. Overall it was worth seeing once.

Monday and again we slept in rather late but we did get out of the house. We drove out to the Crazy Horse monument which is a work in process. Took some distance shots from the road then off to Mt. Rushmore. Very impressive and I took quite a few pictures. Also watched a couple of the short movie clips about the building of the monument and the ecology at the site.

We stopped for lunch on the way to Mt. Rushmore. Quaint and rustic little Inn with good food and service to match.

Considering the tools available and the mapping from a scale model to the actual mountain, Mt. Rushmore is an impressive achievement even though parts of it as originally planned may never see completion. Today is Tuesday. Overcast and chily. Dannie has to go into Deadwood over some licensing matter so I am free to wander around main street for a while on my own. Spent some money at a local jewelry store and just floated around as it were. Dannie wasn't all that long so we stopped in to a casino buffet. Place was deserted but we had a nice breakfast. By now the stores were opening. Unlike Vegas, Deadwood, except for some casinos, rolls up the streets at night. We wandered through a few gift shops then into this place where they make old time photographs. I did a sitting for one. They took 9 shots. It came down to number 7 and number 9. I had 9 done and asked them to hold 7. Usually they erase the unused digital images.

We also drove through a couple more small towns, Hill City and Lead, and returned to Dannie's place. Checked in online, chatted with my sister, Karen and played some games while Dannie started dinner. This gave me time to write this material to this point. More later.

This morning, Wednesday, I woke up around 7 am to find it snowing outside. So, I rolled over and went back to sleep till sometime after 9am. So far there is only a light dusting on the ground but the snow is still falling. We had planned on going into Custer today but the weather is not good enough so we will likely make other plans.

Thursday morning and the snow is still falling. Looks good from inside a nice warm house. Stayed in all day where it was warm and cozy.

Having time to spend also allowed me to go through Dannie's stored clothes and jewelry. Dannie was generous in giving me a lot of new clothing items, which I will have to ship home, a less expensive option, and quite a bit of jewelry. In fact, as I prepare the January Newsletter, that new jewelry has already been posted to my new website. Yes I got a new site. I actually ran out of space on the old one. Like the jewelry, my 'old time photo, is also posted on my new web site.

Friday dawned overcast but with no more snow. We went off to Custer and drove through the Custer State Park.

Got lots of scenic photos including mountain goats, deer, buffalo and other creatures as well as forest and mountain views.

Before heading out to the Crazy Horse Monument, we stopped at a local drug store in Custer to ship a package home. Had a few too many acquisitions on this trip to take back with me on the plane and the \$26 tag beat the extra \$40 to check it on the plane.

Having done that, and picked up some additional groceries, we headed off to Crazy Horse. This monument is being built entirely off private funds, donations and visitor fees. The people doing this have actually spurned government funding. Lots of pictures in and around the monument including scale models of the finished monument.

With a little over 2 days left, this has been a fun and relaxing vacation. My remaining hurdles come Monday when Rosaliy boards the return flight back to Vegas. I am hoping that the return check in will be as easy as it was when I left Vegas back on the 23rd.

It's Sunday morning. Daylight time has gone back to normal. Halloween was a quiet uneventful and totally lazy day.

We watched tv, played games, talked and generally lazed about. In a few hours I will print out my boarding pass for tomorrows flight home. This vacation has been a great and relaxing time.

On the news front, my sister Karen will be coming home from rehab on Tuesday. All in all things are going well.

It's November 2 and time to make the return flight. The only small glitch occurred at the TSA check in station. The TSA Agent had never seen a TG id before and had to confer with someone else before allowing me through. I did get the clearance to board and the return flight was as uneventful as the outgoing flight.

Concerned about flying en femme? Don't be. Just be prepared with all the proper id's and behave normally. You'll fly well.