

On the road and crossing borders

I was born in Israel before Israel was born. As a boy I joined a youth organization and traveled the country, length and width. Mind you width could have been as narrow as 12 Kilometers and as wide as maybe 50 Kilometers. But length, that was something unimaginable, a distance of somewhere around 500 Kilometers. From the origins of the Jordan River in kibbutz Dan to the North all the way to the Red Sea port city of Eilat to the South. My hometown was smack in the middle between Dan and Eilat. Whenever we ventured on a trip, or a hike or a bike ride to another town, or down a desert canyon or to an oasis for a cold and refreshing swim, it was either going northward or going southward. It never occurred to me that one could travel, definitely not in one day, from Dan to Eilat or vice versa. As I was heading out the door on any of these trips, my mom's warning rang in my ears: "Just be careful not to cross the border!" Crossing the border was a real possibility whenever straying of the beaten path. It meant walking into enemy territory and a practically guaranteed capture or just as worse - death.

Since 1971 we live in Toronto my wife of 52 years my three children their spouses and seven grandchildren. It is likely that life in a tiny and enemy surrounded country like Israel is at the root of our passion for world travel. It is the curiosity to venture across the border. We may well be regarded as world travelers. We travel for adventure, nature, culture and exploration. In fact we traveled the world over from the Arctic to Antarctica, from the Himalayan kingdoms to the Galápagos Islands and Machu Picchu. Tracking primates in Uganda and Rwanda and sailing down the Nile in Egypt to name a few.

This summer we came to the realization that there was one part of the world that we have completely neglected: The Eastern provinces of our own country. So we embarked on a 30 days road trip to explore Eastern Quebec and the Maritime, just the two of us.

Before we begin to sing the praises of the beautiful land of ours and the extraordinary nice people we met while driving the highways and byways of Eastern Canada, let's talk about road trips. For a wife and husband who were married for so many years to spend almost a month together literally 24/7 mostly in the confines of an economy car is not a trivial challenge. This gets to be especially complicated when one is a less than mediocre driver and his partner a below average navigator. The only benefit of this situation is that you get to see more of the countryside than what you actually intended. No service, no GPS, are we driving toward or away from our destination? What if we cross the border? But just as quickly this instant of historic panic was replaced by the calm feeling of freedom and safety, a feeling that especially Canadian immigrants so dearly appreciate. It is on one of those occasions that John Payne's song "I Wouldn't Take a Million Dollars for a Single Maple Leaf" came on the radio as if reading our minds: "and as I watch my children, playing freely with their friends, I thank God for this beautiful country that we're living in ... Compared to others in the countries of this world, we live in a paradise a rare and priceless pearl"

Way too often do we ask ourselves what does it mean to be Canadian? A road trip to Eastern Canada is a wonderful refresher. The music, the humour, the story telling, the sense of community, the fun loving folks we met throughout our trip reminded us that we all have a common bond.

Oh, by the way, a few years ago we did cross the border from Israel to Egypt and Jordan and it was beautiful. It gave us a glimmer of hope for what may come one day. With the situation in the Middle East being what it is, we may have to transfer whatever little hope we have to our grandchildren.

On the road to Eastern Canada – A Travel Blog

July 2 -22, 2015

Trip Highlights:

Top 10

1. Cabot Trail



2. Peggy's Cove



3. Hopewell Rocks, NB



4. PEI



5. Baddeck, Cape Breton



6. Coaticook, Quebec



7. Louisbourg, NS



8. Bromont, Quebec



9. Quebec City



10. Saint John, New Brunswick



Best BB

Firedance Ridge, Cornwall, PEI



Best attraction

Hopewell Rocks, New Brunswick



Best nature scenes

Cabot Trail, Cape Breton, NS



Best meal

Lobster Suppers, Baddeck, Cape Breton, NS



Prettiest town

Mahone Bay, NS



Best Entertainment

The Ross family concert in PEI



Best drive

Peggy Cove to Lunenburg



Most fun

Bagger's Banquet, Louisbourg, NS



Day-By-Day

29-06-2015

Not without trepidation and a spoon full of apprehension on my part, we are readying to hit the road for a month to explore and experience Eastern Canada. Of all the places in the world, and we travelled to some 60 odd countries on all seven continents, Eastern Canada (Eastern Quebec and the Maritime provinces) is one destination we skipped. It has been on our bucket list for a while, but one full month on the road with our 11 year old, 200K plus kilometres clunker of a car, you must admit, is a daring feat. But travel has always been our best time together and the latest semi-retirement funk needs some airing. So off we go on Thursday July 2, 2015. We'll fill you in as we go. Stay tuned.

30-06-2015

There is some good news and some bad news. First the good news: \$118 later after a “road fit” inspection the mechanic warned me to not take the clunker on the road. Now the better news: I get to drive a brand new Budget Rent-a-Car. Still moody (no pun intended) but ready to rumble.



02-07-2015

We're off to a flying start. The 401 from Leslie to the Quebec border and beyond was virtually traffic free, which for a Toronto resident is absolutely euphoric. At the legal speed limit of 100 km/hour give or take 40% (OK –give only) we arrived at our destination: the village of Bromont, QC a good one hour ahead of plan. This was a joyful drive and to celebrate it we headed almost immediately to one of the top wineries in the townships for a wine tasting tour. Wine tasting is actually a pre-sales activity to buying Quebec wine. So we are bringing back 2 bottles of Quebec Chardonnay and Rose.



I bet that few wine connoisseurs tasted Quebec wine which according to the wine server is “under rated. That is to say it is there as good as any and not better than many, but what do we know? The village of Bromont is an upgraded version of Niagara-On-The-Lake: quaint, historical homes from the mid 1800’s now turned boutiques, bistros and galleries.



We sipped on Café O’ Lait and a rhubarb tart that mom claims is by no means better than hers and in my opinion just as good. We just returned to our B&B (a nice tiny clean room on a second floor of what used to be a barn and now owned by a nice young (fully bi-lingual) couple and their 16 year old baby girl Madeleine). We’re off to a good start.



03-07-2015

Today can best be described as Freedom 72. Imagine you get up in the morning, have a fabulous home-made breakfast at the B&B and head out to follow the Townships Trail. This is a 418 (!) Kilometers scenic drive through the Eastern Townships, towns, villages and hamlets. You don't have to be anywhere at any particular time, you can stop anywhere if you wish to and drive through if you don't. There is no set arrival time, the roads are excellent with little to no traffic and the scenery is magnificent. It is quite relaxing and the feeling is one of total freedom. If Quebec were to ever separate from Canada, it will take with it one of the most beautiful pieces of land we Canadian own. The photos will speak for themselves.



The Eastern Townships are one huge cottage country, may be as beautiful as Ontario's but we would never know, being city dwellers ourselves. In Magog we discovered of all the places we ever visited the closest thing to an Israeli Ice Café' which contrary to the term is Ice Cream dunked in a tall glass of coffee – delicious.



Our team of pilot (driver) and Navigator is actually working better than ever. No screaming and yelling and “re-calculating” our route. Mom swears by the spread out paper map but will not trust Google's

maps and GPS. Somehow the iPhone goes dark every time she touches it which is proof positive that modern technology is a hoax.



Today for mom is also a learning experience: some people actually stay in dive motels where the number of stars is basically what you see at night outside your parking lot deluxe room window. This will cost us likely a gourmet dinner at an official "Creative Chefs" French cuisine establishment in Sherbrooke where we are now staying at the Hotel (Motel) de Jardine overlooking the Honda dealership in the outskirts of Sherbrooke's industrial section. But on the bright side it is clean and cost only \$100 a night. Mom is a trooper and has no problem lowering her lodging standards. We cancelled the second night though.



04-07-2015

Today can best be described as couci-couça or (for the English reader) Mezza – Mezza. It could have been a fantastic day had it been bright and sunny with a cool breeze. Instead it was a cloudy, warm and humid day a combination that attracts millions of « barchashim » (a Hebrew or rather an Arabic word for a bug which is a mutation of a miniature fly and a mousquito) to high elevations where we spent a good part of the day,

We also had a navigational error where we spent a little over an hour driving to Nowhere instead of following the map to Somewhere. In her defense the navigator attributed the error to the intensive (sorry, exclusive) use of the French language and the less than adequate road signs in Quebec. An argument which is hard to deny and will likely be accepted by a sober judge. I plan to use it thogh as political capital to when I make the next stupid mistake which is virtually guaranteed to occur at least once every 24 hours.

Today we « did » the Summit Trail a couple of hundreds of kilometers in the Eastern Townships hugging this region of the Quebec's mountain range. The views were fantastic and to be truly appreciated would require a professional camera which we did not have. The Lac Megantic National Park and the Granit House are two places we remember fondly although in both places we were subject to a vicious « barchashim » attack.

Two days later – look what happened



We actually drove through the town of Lac Megantic where the rail derailment tragedy occurred in the middle of town that killed 47 people. Driving the (excellent) roads was almost a pleasure for those who like to drive. The roads were clear of traffic, straight, and fast. The countryside is beautiful, lush and green and the villages quaint and quiet. As we understand it the holiday period in Quebec does not really start until later in July so we had the roads for ourselves. We also discovered a few things we did not know about the Townships : First it is biker's heaven and none of the bikers we saw or met were « Hell Angels » Second, a popular vehicle we have never seen before anywhere. A 3 wheel motorcycle with two front wheels and one rear wheel. Looks like a toy car on steroids. We also found out that one of the main industries in this part of Quebec is growing and selling Christmas trees which actually makes perfect sense in mostly Catholic Quebec.



Today we crossed the 1000 kilometers since we left home. At this rate I am obligated to issue a « Buy » recommendation for Budget-Rent_A-Car stock as only the first 3000 kilometers are « free ».

We arrived back in Sherbrooke around 6 PM to our B&B. What a difference compared to last night. The decor is as 19th century French as you can imagine, or as mom described it as an upscale French bordelo. Having lived in Paris for sometime it would be hard to argue with her, but what do I know ? I'll tell you more tomorrow.





05-07-2015

We started the day with a sumptuous exquisite homemade genuine French breakfast as befitting an establishment of this repute. We left Sherbrooke only to return for a late lunch at the Bistro Bla Bla (real name) where we had a Bla Bla Pizza (literally). Today we headed to Coaticook (real name) where we finally found something unique in the Parc de Gorge. Not that the other townships and summits are anything but beautiful as much as we are probably a bit jaded. We find the green shades of the countryside and the many lakes are somewhat of a "been there done that". We could not get tickets to the Lumina Foresta last night. This is a light and sound show inside a forest and a major tourist attraction, but we all could watch it on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIMcZtSUiFo>

We went instead on a 4 kilometers hike inside the forest. We went down to the cave, onto the gorge up a 128 stairs tower and across the largest (in the world {?} or may be in North America) suspension bridge. The hiking trail by comparison to the climbing and hiking we did in the Himalayans just two years ago would be considered below average difficulty. Yet we both were huffing and puffing with our age,

weight and fitness level on full display. Mom still has Angle's Falls in Venezuela on her bucket list and we agreed to do that on her 75th birthday on condition that by then we will both loose between 25-30 pounds each and as fit as our old bones would allow.



The drive to Quebec City was fast and straight forward until the iPhone went dead and on restart Google Maps could not be restarted to find our way to the hotel. This is another proof positive that dependency

on technology may be at your peril. 90 minutes after arriving in the city and a few tension filled exchanges between driver and navigator we relaxed over a wonderful and not so expensive dinner a few doors from our hotel. Lights out.

06-07-2015

We are staying in Quebec City at the Saint Pierre in the lower city on the recommendation of my cousin Josh. Good choice. Lovely cobblestone narrow streets full of bistros, galleries and boutiques. Remind you of Paris of course. Food and fashion in QC are exquisite.

Our first walk today was to the Hospital within a walking distance of the Hotel. Mom has to have her stitches removed from her middle finger so it can function again for its designated purpose. However mom's right eye is virtually closed and puffy the result of the heretofore Barchasim attack of two days ago. So we're going for the double. All is good- mom is out. Notice the name on the Hospital card.



On the registration form mom by mistake answered No to the question: are you happily married? We will likely never live in QC as to get to the hospital we had to walk up a steep hill to the upper city which almost justified going to the emergency on its own merit. We couldn't understand why a nice person who directed us to the hospital suggested we either make the 5 minute walk or take the bus until we did.

We walked by the grand rail station and I mean grand:



Quebec City has true unmistakable charm and character. You feel like you have been transferred to Europe and more specifically France: Architecture, galleries, iconic historical buildings, pedestrian allies, buskers and bistros, bistros, bistros.







We are into waterfalls for one reason or another. We're yet to go to Angle Falls but we've been to Niagara Falls, Iguassu from both Argentina and Brasil points of view and Victoria Falls. It drew us to the water falls near Quebec City. Higher than Niagara Falls as advertised – Yes but only a sliver of its width. Nevertheless, it is thrilling to watch nature act in mysterious ways.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5PYR>



For many years I have asked myself this question but was never curious enough to research the answer: Why are so many innovations in 3D, CGI, animation, documentaries and film originate in Quebec. The Museum of Civilization delivered the answer. You must see it. We thought going in that we will learn

about the history of Quebec civilization. Instead we were mesmerized by the displays of the origins of animation, documentaries and films as well as interpretive dance.



Quebecers pioneered these arts, won world-wide acclaim and awards including an Oscar. I thought that French flair and its liberal arts and culture were behind it. Therefore we were surprised to see names like Larkin and McLean, clearly Anglophone names among the Quebec luminaries in these art forms.

The Museum is 20 meters across the hotel, but 10 meters next to it is a fashion boutique with amazing designs. As you can see Mom modelled at least 3 of them and guess which one we (this time) both agreed on.



As you can see, Mom still looks Aboriginal (no offence intended toward either) She is taking her medication regularly but the inflammation is not responding as fast.

As avid comfort seekers we are spending the night at the Comfort Inn in Edmundson, New Brunswick. It is one of those places where you have to have a good reason to go to. Ours was to break the 6 hour drive to Saint-John in half.

08-07-2015

By the way nobody told us that it could rain in Canada in the summer which it did for most of our 3 plus hours drive to Saint John. Ludwig van Beethoven made the drive easier at least to the ear if not the rear.

When New Brunswick came before the almighty (probably late Friday afternoon) the Lord said: Sorry, all I have left is lots and lots of trees and one medium size river. This is not fair said New Brunswick. Look at what you gave Quebec: mountains, gorges, waterfalls and other good stuff. The Lord hesitated and said: OK I'll give you the Bay of Fundy with the high and low tide but I am not sure exactly how it works. You'll have to read the manual to figure it out. I think it is low in the morning and high in the afternoon and the river reverses or something. Are you happy now? So far we only saw the trees and the river and a bit of the low tide. But we were assured that by the time we leave we'll be singing New Brunswick's praise. All kidding aside Saint John the first town in Canada (!) is beautiful. The architecture of the heritage homes is fascinating at times breath taking including the Shaarei Zedek synagogue.





Watch the before and after tide photos of the Reversing Falls.



This is the water level at low tide



This is the same from the same spot – High tide





<https://youtu.be/Y5PYR6hE504>



<https://youtu.be/OMUsvkpuy28>

The NM Museum had a unique exhibit about Moths. Did you know that in Canada there are 22000 species This artist replicated the liking of some of them in this collection.



We spend the evening on a boardwalk Cafe being entertained by Saint John's Idol singers.



We're having lots of fun but it is also hard work that few seniors our age would even try.



<https://youtu.be/s4MfWPguAuo>

09-07-2015

St. Andrews. The Mecca of Golf, home to the most prestigious Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews hosting the 2015 British Open scheduled to tee off in a few days.



That is not where we were today. We were in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. A quaint, once a fishing village and now a summer cottage resort town.





St. Martins. A place where we were married some 52 years ago and where we had one of our first pre-Alexandra all family vacation. We were not in any of these places today but we were in St. Martins, New Brunswick north of St. Johns on the scenic Fundy drive. Some lobster cakes and chowder later we are back for an afternoon rest.



In between we drove through the Irving National Park where we walked a mile and drove 10 on our way to St. Martins.



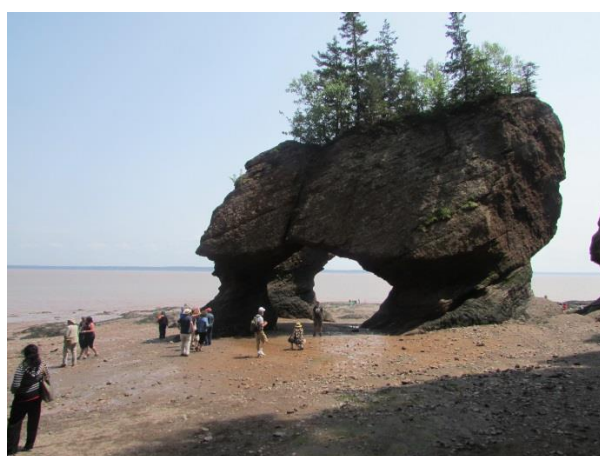
Driving long distances on traffic free, mostly flat and fast highways leaves a lot of time for thinking, contemplating and introspecting. It occurred to me that I should seek a second career as a driving instructor (Stop!). Just this week I drove more than 2000 kilometers. I have driven in many countries on multitudes of roads from crazy bad (Costa Rica) to incredibly smooth (like on this trip). I have driven on the Left and on the Right side of the road regardless of the country's official side. I drove through so many side roads that people with a good sense of direction will never have an opportunity to drive on, and (seriously) I did not have a single traffic violation in the past 12 or more years. I think that this automatically qualifies me as an instructor. But that's not all. Being a marketing consultant I plan to differentiate myself by focusing exclusively on a niche market and brand myself as "Go To" instructor. The market I am targeting is that of female teenagers, first time drivers like Erin (Stop!). Think about it. As a pre-senile senior the parents are assured of the safety of their child, females generally exercise more respect toward seniors and are generally better and safer drivers. I plan to call my school GrandPadre (for Grandpa Driver Education). What do you think?

10-07-2015

We heard a lot about and actually experienced the warm and friendly nature of the people in Eastern Canada. When we stop people to ask for directions which we do way too often they go out of their way. They are also quick to strike a conversation. Last night we were waiting on the boardwalk for a table to free up at an outdoor Bistro. 3 ladies at the nearest table on their 5th or 6th beer immediately invited us to join their table as they were just about to leave. Before too long we discovered that one of them has 2 sons of Bulgarian decent and the others best friend was Israeli and it was not the beer, I swear.

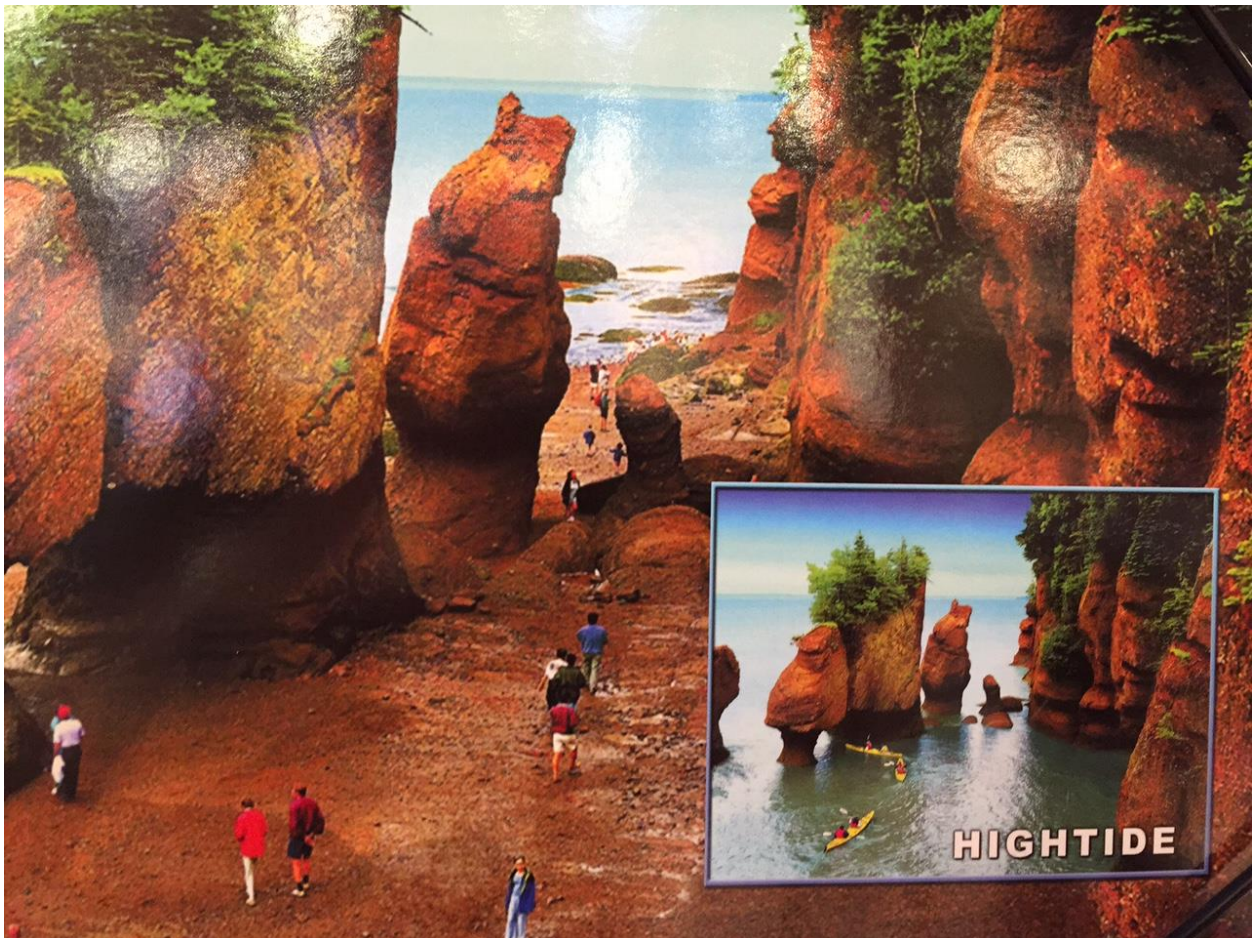
But there is something wrong going on in New Brunswick. We drove by an unusually high amount of "For Sale" signs in front of homes. There seems to be an exodus from the province or as one of the ladies at our table said: "we're dying here, there is no work"

Finally a Ahah moment. We finally hit the jackpot at Hopewell Rocks. This is a world-wonder. We first arrived at the low tide and will be back tomorrow for the high tide. We are told but would need to see it with our own eyes that by high tide the rocks will be covered by waters. One guy said all the way to the tree roots. New Brunswick - you did it, totally worth the "price of admission".





Did you get it?

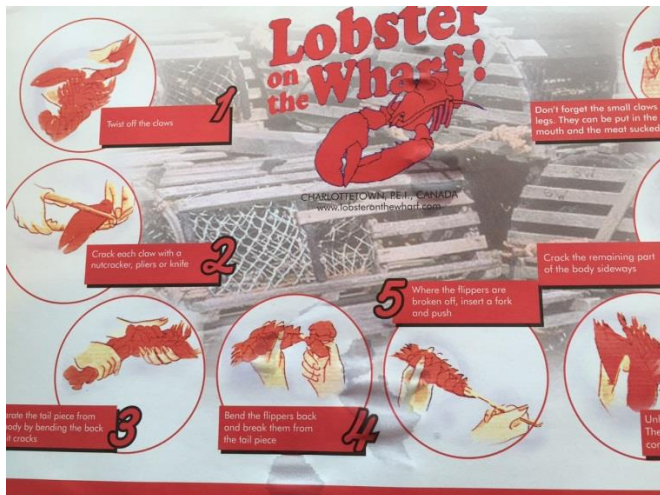


New Brunswicker (s) have a fascination with Pizza and Ice Cream parlours. They are everywhere. Urban and Rural. The cultural or heritage reasons for it will remain unknown.

The first Lobster dinner in Shediac, NB a town whose logo is a lobster and Gabriele the "best lobster in town" mom's verdict: a perfect 10.



You need to know how to eat a lobster. Eating Lobster 101:



No Canadian report can be complete without a comment about the weather. So far except for half day during a long drive – perfect: sunny and warm.

11-07-2015

The High tide advertisement was a little hyped up but still very impressive. We returned to Hopewell Rocks for the high tide and indeed it rose 40 feet (!) above the sea bed level we travelled on yesterday. More impressive than that was to see a vast area of the ocean floor fully exposed yesterday was all water.



Today we crossed the 3000 kilometer mark. We would like to officially apologize to the environment for burning so much fossil fuel. But this is the only way to see the country and its abundance and beauty. I bet Canada was in to see the almighty first thing on Sunday morning, probably before the opening.

We are headed towards PEI on the Confederation Bridge – the longest bridge I remember driving over. We're headed and now entered the Firedance Inn a wonderful and not too expensive B&B 20 minutes away from Charlottetown where we will stay for the next 3 nights. Now this is a room with a view:



This afternoon we're headed to the Cavendish Beach Festival, one of the top country music festivals tonight featuring Keith Urban and other country music A- list artists. We made it there and turned back on account of an age restriction. There were thousands of people there none of them over 21 years old it seemed. Mom felt out of place and we went back to our quaint B&B.



I am driving for thousands of kilometres with two women in my car. They are my wonderful wife of 52 years and Ms. GPSy. They do not get along. There are issues of trust and engagement. Mom keeps second guessing GPSy and vice versa. Any little touch and GPSy goes blank and it's up to me to get them to cooperate. It is flattering that I get both their attention but it is also confusing like hell. Today we crossed the 3000 kilometre mark. This means that we have to pay 15 cents for every additional kilometre. We agreed that if we end up veering of course due to a driver error, extra kilometres will be deducted from their pay, the same for a navigator error. If however it is a Ms. GPSy error it will be invoiced directly to Apple which at the current rate may drag down their market value.

12-07-2015

If you want to chill on a Sunday morning in a city rather than the country - Charlottetown, PEI is your place, especially Victoria Row. Oh by the way, if you do not like potatoes don't bother to come. PEI is all about potatoes and Ann of Green Gables



Mom could be anything she wants to be. She could be a paratrooper, a chef even an astronaut but for god's sake not a navigator. She sucks at it. Myself I could no longer be anything I want to be. I could no longer be a soccer referee, or a soccer colour commentator, or a child psychologist (maybe) but I sure as hell should not be a professional driver. I suck at it just as bad as mom sucks at navigation. Yet we have arrived at every destination on our itinerary sooner or later and with a negligible amount of violence and so far no involvement of law enforcement. Only a road trip of this duration makes you think about things like that, in our case, just short of half way through our road trip.

Tonight is Sunday Night Shenanigans at the York Community Centre, the best Country and Irish song and dance entertainment \$12 can buy you. We had a blast. To me country music still is a bit of "they all sound alike" what do I know?. On the other hand the lyrics and the rhythm and melody really spoke to us.



You must watch this and think of how fortunate we are living in Canada.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tpox5T7n0u0>

... and this to my children from your Bulgarian mother:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R7E4mNX5E>

13-07-2015

We head to Basin Head Beach the best in PEI and voted the best beach in all of Canada in 2013. Since we arrived Wassaga Beach took over as no. 1. Go figure. White sand, knee deep for hundred metres, cool clear water surrounded by great scenery, but no Copa Cabana or Tel Aviv.



There is a lot of room for more people in PEI. If only we all ate more potatoes.



By the way, how did people travel by car to so many destinations before the Internet. There is still a lot of mistrust between GPSy and mom. Lots of second guessing and double checking on paper maps is going on.

We just came back from a fantastic Celtic music and dance concert by 3 siblings of the Ross family and their mother. I have never clapped" so much and yelled so many "Wow's during a concert. As you well

know, when I clap – I clap. You would have thought it was a soccer match. Clapping was partly because of the awesome performers and largely because the music and dancing called for it. Check it out on <https://rossfamily.ca>



In PEI it seems that we arrived at our destination:



Lobster Bay



Oysters Falls



Muscles Beach

14-07-2015

We are leaving PEI behind heading towards Halifax.

It took exactly 4000 kilometres for me to get a speeding ticket the first in the past 20 years or so. Welcome to Nova Scotia. The officer was nice to "reduce" my speed from 134 to 115 which adds to the financial statement of the trip \$233 under the category "other". We were like minutes from our destination, shucks. The good news is that I was not caught doing 160 just a few K's earlier. This is not a good day financially speaking. Earlier this morning I was charged 83 KM at a rate of 15 cents per KM for having to return to Shediac to retrieve the USB cable for the cameras which I left in the room when we checked out 2 nights ago.. Budget-Rent-A-Car must be happy.

We checked out Halifax waterfront this evening. Somebody must have known that we were coming as the Bluenose II sailed into the Halifax harbour which it has not done for the past 4 years. Impressive vessel. Don't say it's not worth a dime.



We even caught a free performance by the shanty Yarmouth fisherman.



15-07-2015

Whenever I check in on my good old friend Norm he tells me: “Old age sucks” – Welcome to the club. With mom running out of gas walking up and me straining a back and groin muscle walking down, we sure qualify. I guess that the maximum age for a road trip like this should be that of Thelma and Louise (when they made the movie).

Sitting on the bench at the Citadel waiting for the change of guards (sorry, guard) This is not Buckingham palace. I was interviewed for (local, I guess) TV while on the Bluenose II. I was asked if I thought that the exorbitant cost of the Bluenose II was worth it? What do you think?



Halifax, early afternoon. Turkish Delight. It’s not what you think but delightful nevertheless, 1453 Spring Garden St. The CIAC (Tarator in Bulgarian) is heavenly, Even mom would admit. I call her mom even in public and people turn their head in disbelief only to say: Na! What is it about Halifax. Sitting (again) on a park bench overlooking the harbour I was approached by a stranger asking if I would mind being interviewed for his video project. The project title is “The future of the World”. His simple question was “ What do you think will be the future of the world?” What would you have said? I hope he is not affiliated with ISIS in any way.



As immigrants to Canada and, just to remind my children that they too are immigrants we finished our tour of Halifax at the Canadian Immigration Museum on Pier21. A must see for us. This was the port of entry for millions of immigrants from the 1920 through 1970. Canada was not always kind to immigrants or allowing immigration to Canada .Remember Jewish Holocaust survivors turned back - None Is Too Many, Chinese taxation and Japanese internment. But since the 1970 Multicultural Policy Canada opened its doors and its heart a whole lot more.



In 1939, this order-in-council was used to justify the government denying sanctuary to Jewish refugees from Germany on board the MS St. Louis. The ship was eventually forced to return to Europe resulting in many passengers dying at the hands of the Nazis. Pictured are the passengers aboard the MS St. Louis.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Dr. Liane Reif-Lehrer

En 1939, ce décret en conseil a donné au gouvernement une justification de ne pas offrir l'asile aux réfugiés juifs venant d'Allemagne à bord du MS St. Louis. Ce navire a été forcé de repartir vers l'Europe provoquant ainsi la mort d'un grand nombre de ces passagers tombés entre les mains des Nazis. Cette photo montre des passagers à bord du MS St. Louis.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtoisie de Dre Liane Reif-Lehrer

The Immigrant:



16-07-2015

Peggy's Cove and the scenic coastal drive to Lunenburg with a stop at Mahone Bay are worth all the publicity. The coastal drive is the prettiest we have seen in North America and that includes Northern California. These places can only be told by being there or watching the photos. We are there so you can have the photos.







How do you adjust to being 24/7 with a person who trusts nothing but her instinct and intuition, mistrusts other sources of information especially digital content and requires information to be delivered to her on her terms and in her medium? Be careful before you answer. She also posts a life time batting average of 927. The answer: it takes at least 52 years of hard work, patience and humility on which I am running low but hoping to survive the next two weeks.



By the way any illusions that we will return from this trip slim and trim owing to all the walking and hiking we were to do, will have to remain in this category: Illusions. We are doing well on the intake of calories but not as good on the out take. This is partly because both of us are on the injury list (mom's breathing and my back) but you do not get match fit playing cards in the dressing room.

17-07-2015

Nova Scotia drivers are obedient and considerate to a fault. At times it extends from the ridiculous to the sublime. Let's start with the basics: a 2-3 lane highway with little to no traffic. The left lane is a passing lane - full stop. The speed limit at times as high as 110 KMs is the speed limit- full stop. Nova Scotia drivers will yield their right of way to a driver waiting to make a left turn by stopping (at times abruptly) in the middle of the road giving the car behind little time to react. On a two lane road in Bedford traffic is jammed on the right lane and the left lane is wide open. Local drivers know that at the intersection ahead the left lane turns into a left turn only so to get back in you'll have to cut back. I am not from Nova Scotia. If Toronto drivers were to behave this way we will be still on the 401. Nova Scotia drivers are also mind readers. As soon as a pedestrian glances across the street thinking whether or not to cross the road, traffic stops: Cross Walk or not.

Cape Breton is a gem and Baddack, the home town of Alexander Graham Bell and now his descendants, is its crown jewel.





Coming into Cape Breton we saw this sign: Farmer's Daughter - Come Visit. We found out that it's not what we thought but rather a local market.



Cape Breton is a world class destination with its breath taking scenery, ocean coastal trails, rolling hills and quaint town. Cape Breton is also all about music, mainly Scottish Ceilidh. This is our first of three days in Cape Breton and we're blown away even before we start the famous Cabot Trail tomorrow. Can it get better than this?

We had Shabbat Dinner at the Lobster Suppers. It is by consensus the BEST sea food restaurant we have ever been to.



The maestro at work:



18-07-2015

We see a surprising (to us) number of Ontario license plates wherever we go. I guess we are not the only crazy ones. Is it possible that with the crumbling Canadian dollar More Canadians are spending their summer vacations touring Canada? Or is it that many GTAers decided to leave town during the PanAm games? Just asking.

Cabot Trail is a driver's heaven and a photographer's paradise. It is a long and winding road with many exciting hair pin turns and spectacular views on both sides of the road.



The play of the day was the hike to the top of Meat Cove. See for yourself. Mom is a trooper. Huffing and puffing but she made it to the top.



On Saturday afternoon we are in Chedicamp at the Doryman Tavern listening to authentic Cape Breton live music with some 300 others. The thing (only) to do in Chedicamp.



19-07-2015

Today, is "moving day" in the British Open and Cabot Trail just moved to the top of the leader board for best experience. What a way to witness nature's beauty at its most pristine. It seems that we have

planned our itinerary well as every destination seems to be as or more exciting than the previous. Or is it last impressions? Newfoundland you are being challenged.



We thought that we saw everything on the Cabot Trail and then we came to this lookout on our way to Louisbourg.



https://youtu.be/l66hvfVX_b8

Sometime today we crossed the 5000 KM mark and we have one hundred or so left before we fly to Newfoundland. How did we ever think we would drive back from NL to Toronto just to get back home. Thank goodness we rented a car which we will drop off in Sydney tomorrow.

We are spending the day (and night) in Louisbourg the most Northern town in Cape Breton known for its French Fortress where the British kicked the French derriere in two different wars in the 18th century.

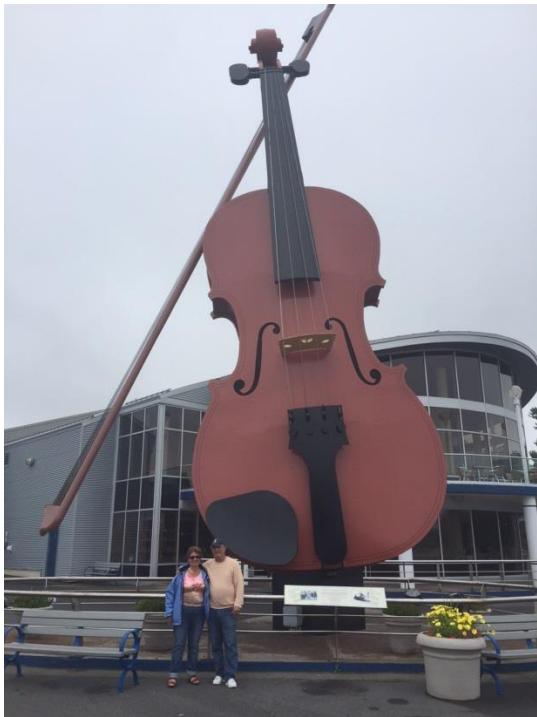


We were "invited" to the, just as famous, Baggers Banquet. A fantastic lobster dinner, music with all dressed in period clothing. Once the Visa bills come due we may have to become permanent members.



20-07-2015

If in Louisbourg, NS, remember the name Cranberry Cove Inn, it's a wonderful B&B and I mean, the Bed, and the Breakfast plus the wonderful scent of the lilac tree in full bloom. Short drive to Sydney the city known for the largest fiddle: (notice our height v the fiddle)



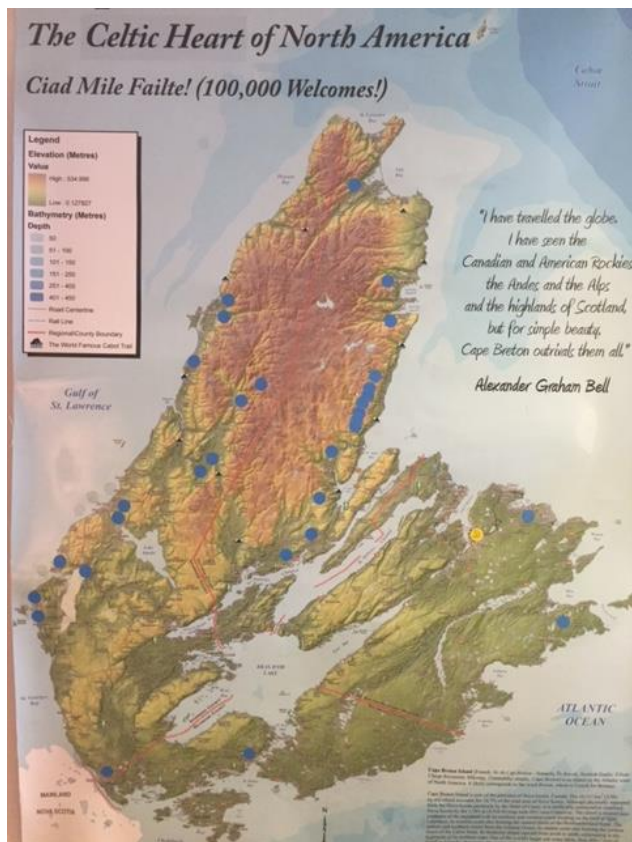
Other things to -do in Sydney:

(Intentionally Left Blank...)

By the way, we did not see any of them:



We are ready to leave Cape Breton and are endorsing warmly Alexander Graham Bell's view of Cape Breton:



21-07-2015

Today we travel to Newfoundland. We were promised by the Inn keeper in Louisbourg that Newfoundland is going to be a whole new experience and a good one at that. He said: expect a different culture, attitudes, music, people etc. Today is also a day when I relinquish my driving duties to the WestJet pilot and will resume driving duties in St. John's tomorrow morning.

Shucks, can't take sealed wine bottles in carryon luggage. Sydney, have a blast with our Quebec wines we purchased on the first day of the trip.

Guess what? Our trip has come to an abrupt end and we are headed home. The flight from Sydney to St. John's NL could not land due to a combination of bad weather and construction work on the runway. We are now in Gander of all places and will be flown back to Halifax soon where we will spend the night. We are told that conditions in SJ are not going to improve for the next 3 days so we'll likely head home tomorrow.

So far the weather cooperated fabulously. Except for one half day driving in the rain in New Brunswick it was sunny and warm every day - until this. The night is young and there could be some more surprises.

This is a good time to ask the question: Why is it that you have to have a degree in electrical engineering in order to operate the TV in hotels, motels and B&B's? And why is it completely different from place to place? And how stupid do you feel asking the reception how to turn on the TV? And who in God's name is using all the "features" on the 102 button converter? And finally, why did I not think of a start-up to bring to market the ON/OFF, CH +/- VOL +/- with a ten digit key pad?

Officially we made it to NL albeit a short stay on the runway in Gander. Today there is an Environment Canada Rain Warning for St. John's and we cannot get a flight till Thursday. We just made an executive decision: we're flying home from Halifax and promised ourselves to fly to St. John's in the next few weeks to complete our mission. Cost will be practically the same and we're truly intrigued by Newfoundland.

Lasting impressions:

(Eastern) Canada is a vast and beautiful land and driving through it is a wonderful experience.



The dominant Colour during our trip was Green, all shades of green. In fact whoever designed the Canadian flag may well have chosen green rather than the red. Green, for the spring /summer seasons and white for fall/winter seasons. I am sure the Muslim community would have liked that.



People in Eastern Canada match or exceed the stereotype: Nice and polite but also warm and friendly. They are also quick to strike a conversation and share stories.



Aren't we blessed to live in a country where you feel safe and free driving in every nook and cranny of urban or rural country roads. Where if your GPS fails you and you can't see a car ahead or behind you, you know that you're going to be OK.



You do not know sea food until you go to the Maritimes.



It takes a strong bond, a good partnership and fondness and love for each other to survive a long road trip even when your partner is your wife of 52 years. We have it all.



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