Two for the Road

By Bruce Menzies

Two for the Road is a continuation of a travel journal I began back in the day when Twyla, me, and our four-year-old Michael, lived in Brussels, Belgium. We were there volunteering for our church and as many weekends as possible we would travel the countryside, stay in a little inn or Auberge, and as many weekends as possible we would travel the length of Belgium. We were there volunteering for our church and the postmaster in the area had extremely blue eyes! Blue Eye originally received its unique name because de Belgique.

Continuing that theme, this past month Twyla and I became daytrippers with a quick trip to Morningside in Blue Eye, Mo. Most of you know Blue Eye is located about eleven miles west of Highway 65 south of Branson. In the 2010 census the population was officially 167. It is reported to be part of the Branson Micropolitan area. FYI: that means, as defined by the United States Census Bureau, Blue Eye is part of an area consisting of two counties in southwestern Missouri, anchored by the city of Branson. The last piece of trivia is this—and this from reliable Internet sources—Blue Eye originally received its unique name because the postmaster in the area had extremely blue eyes!

Nowadays, Blue Eye may be best known as “mission control” to the Jim Bakker Show filmed before a live television audience at a facility known simply as Morningside. Morningside encompasses several hundred acres and is home to Grace Street, which houses the television studio, café, general store, ministry offices, and condominiums for sale and nightly rental. Deeper into Morningside is Peaceful Valley, home to Lori’s House, for unwed mothers, wilderness camping, a tabernacle, and a community of very small houses for sale that Jim Bakker refers to as Cozy Cottages. Morningside Church hosts regular worship services, community outreaches, food and clothes pantry, and prison ministry of which Twyla and I are volunteers.

Something else notable about Morningside is their general store which is a prepper’s dream come true. The store has every conceivable item for survival food and gear. Although personally not a prepper, I can recommend to those that are, Morningside is your place to visit.

After attending the Sunday morning worship services we had a splendid lunch with dear friends at their lakeside home on Long Creek. I can simply report “as long as love still wears a smile, I know that we’ll be two for the road, and that’s a good time was had by all.”

I can’t cross Long Creek Bridge without remembering the day I jumped off. About 1966, my best friend, David Knott, and I were young scuba divers. We found the Long Creek arm of the lake to be the clearest with underwater visibility reaching thirty feet some days. That day as David and I passed under the bridge I said I wasn’t afraid to jump off. My challenge was answered in less than a heart-beat. He motored his boat to the shore where I disembarked and climbed the steep shore line to the highway and walked across the bridge until I found a good place to jump. You know, it’s a funny thing about optics. Suddenly, the distance looking down to the water seemed much further than from the boat looking up at the bridge. I hesitated. After a few minutes of reflecting on my short life—and acute case of hoof and mouth disease—David hollered he was going to the marina for hamburgers. Upon returning he said if I didn’t jump, he’d eat my hamburger too. Well, thirty or forty feet wasn’t too great a distance for a free hamburger so off I leapt. I can remember hitting the water and going down, down down. “Am I ever going to stop going down?” I wondered. Soon enough I was going up and enjoying my free lunch. Great memories!

I look forward to continuing our petit journal des pensees et voyages. And as the song says, “as long as love still wears a smile, I know that we’ll be two for the road, and that’s a long, long time.”

Grandson of oil magnate John D. Rockefeller, Nelson coveted the White House from childhood. “When you think of what I had,” he once remarked, “what else was there to aspire to?” Before he was thirty he had helped his father develop Rockefeller Center and his mother establish the Museum of Modern Art. At thirty-two he was Franklin Roosevelt’s wartime coordinator for Latin America. As New York’s four-term governor he set national standards in education, the environment, and urban policy. The charismatic face of liberal Republicanism, Rockefeller championed civil rights and health insurance for all. Three times he sought the presidency—arguably in the wrong party. At the Republican National Convention in San Francisco in 1964, locked in an epic battle with Barry Goldwater, Rockefeller denounced extremist elements in the GOP, a moment that changed the party forever. But he could not wrest the nomination from the Arizona conservative, or from Richard Nixon four years later. In the end, he had to settle for two dispiriting years as vice president under Gerald Ford.

In On His Own Terms, Richard Norton Smith recreates Rockefeller’s improbable rise to the governor’s mansion, his politically disastrous divorce and remarriage, and his often surprising relationships with presidents and political leaders from FDR to Henry Kissinger. A frustrated architect turned master builder, an avid collector of art and an unabashed ladies’ man, “Rocky” promoted fallout shelters and affordable housing with equal enthusiasm. From the deadly 1971 prison uprising at Attica and unceasing battles with New York City mayor John Lindsay to his son’s unsolved disappearance (and the grisly theories it spawned), the punitive drug laws that bear his name, and the much-gossiped-about circumstances of his death, Nelson Rockefeller’s was a life of astonishing color, range, and relevance. On His Own Terms, a masterpiece of the biographer’s art, vividly captures the soaring optimism, polarizing politics, and inner turmoil of this American Original.