

Madison, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2005

We decided not to take a long vacation this year, instead we will take several day trips or stay over night.

It has been very hot, over 90°F for several days. We book a night at the Edgewater a week in advance and hope it will cool down somewhat.

Our wish was answered, and then some. It rained last night. We are packed and ready to go, but it is still misting. Not what we wanted. Jan drives to New Glarus, which boasts of being America's "Little Switzerland", where we stop for breakfast at the Chalet Landhaus Inn.



The Capitol.



A group of seals swim in constant motion.

We are both wearing shorts. It is cold. I go back to the car for jackets. My turn to drive. I have printed detailed turn by turn instructions from the internet. Even Jan can read the large print. We find Madison's Henry Vilas Zoo surrounded by a city park in a quiet neighborhood. Small, but free. There is very little parking so we circle the lot several times and wait for a van to leave.

We are most impressed by the animal enclosures. Lots of trees, shrubs and shaded. The animals have much more space than what we saw at the San Diego Zoo.



Thoughtful Ma.



Dopey Pa.

Five lion cubs, only a few months old, are sitting on a huge rock. One, obviously a trouble maker almost pushes his brother off the rock. Around the corner, but separate, are the parents. We are surprised how close we get to the animals.



White Rhino and toy.

Two Tapirs circle their pool and retire to a corner for a conversation.

A White Rhino is attacking a thick branch. Probably just scratching. We read that they do not see well, and tend to charge on sight, just in case the object is an enemy.

The Giraffes have eaten all the greenery they can reach, but one determined fellow shows us how long his neck really is, and then slurps with his tongue.

In the same enclosure, a large bird marches in goose step and seems to be following us around the perimeter. Must be a guard.



My neck is longer than yours.



Off to the Tapir Conference.



Left foot, left foot.



Slurp.



Why are Flamingos pink?

“Look at the Flamingos. Are they ever pink. Do they really eat shrimp to get that color?”



And the white pelican showed us his back.

It is starting to rain again, so we pull our coats over our heads and duck into the aviary. Several blue and gold parrots try to get our attention by performing acrobatics. We watch. They are pleased. “Time to go.” As we turn we are deafened by a protest squawk.



I see you!

We have seen enough, so using our internet directions head to the Edgewater. The lobby entrance from the road is at level four. The numbering is in reverse. One at the top, seven at the bottom. Our room on level seven looks directly out over the lake. Gray, windy and choppy.

Back in the lobby we make reservations to have dinner in the Edgewater, but first a matter of lunch.

“I need food.”

“What, after that breakfast?”

“Yup.”



The Edgewater.

The Edgewater is only a few blocks from the Capitol, modeled after its namesake in Washington. We drive downtown looking for a place to park. We are headed for the Stillwater, a bar we know on State Street. What we did not know is that State Street was torn up. Looks like they are laying new sewer lines, the trench is ten feet deep. We end up circling the Capitol twice before heading down a side street. All the parking is RESERVED. Must be for the politicians?

The Stillwater is a bar serving great food. We both have burgers and me a brew.

“Let’s change our plans and go to the shopping mall at Middleton.” The weather looks threatening. Again our printed directions do well except that we end up in a residential area. We turn into a parking lot and drive through.

“Jan, ask that guy....” But he has already gone into a Subway shop. So I follow. The usual young folks tending counter, probably won’t give good directions. Sitting at a table is an attractive thirty something lady doing paper work. If you do paperwork, you can probably give directions.

“Excuse me, I am looking for a shopping mall....”

The lady lights up and is delighted to provide animated directions which we follow successfully.

Greenway Crossing is a new mall with lots of artsy, boutique stores. Open, arranged in blocks or lines. Beautiful flowers. We wander around. Neither Jan or I are shoppers, so after an hour we had enough. Darn the rush hour.

Back at the Edgewater I find the ice machine and a martini.

Why is it that every town in the USA uses different channel numbers for the TV stations. OK there is CNN.

We dress for dinner. This is a posh place. Plenty of waiting staff, we order and sip our drinks. The sun is low so shades are lowered. We watch a magnificent sunset. Should have brought the camera. We pig out.



Boltz Conservatory.

## Wednesday.

After our experience yesterday, parking and finding food outside the hotel, we decide on a light breakfast and stay in. Only one other table is occupied. We check out and leave. The parking garage is empty.

Again our directions to Olbrich Botanical Gardens have been printed.

Jan reads, “We need 51<sup>st</sup> street.” Since we are only at 2<sup>nd</sup> street, that is a long way.



Coleus.



Cone Flowers.

“Jan, are you sure about 51<sup>st</sup>? We are at 5<sup>th</sup> and have traveled a mile and three quarters, it is only five miles to Olbrich.”

“Well it could be S 1<sup>st</sup> ..... south first?”

“Grr!”

After our course correction we drive east along Atwood Avenue gazing out over Olbrich Park which skirts Lake Monona. “We should have found the gardens by now.”

I stop and enquire at the Library. We were so busy looking to our right that we drove right past the entrance to the gardens on our left.

“Grr!”

The gardens are free, but today there is a special exhibit of butterflies, so admission to the glass conservatory is \$5 each. We pass. That is lunch money.



Hibiscus-like.

We see several varieties we do not recognize. This flower resembles a hibiscus, but has different foliage and flowers the size of a dinner plate.



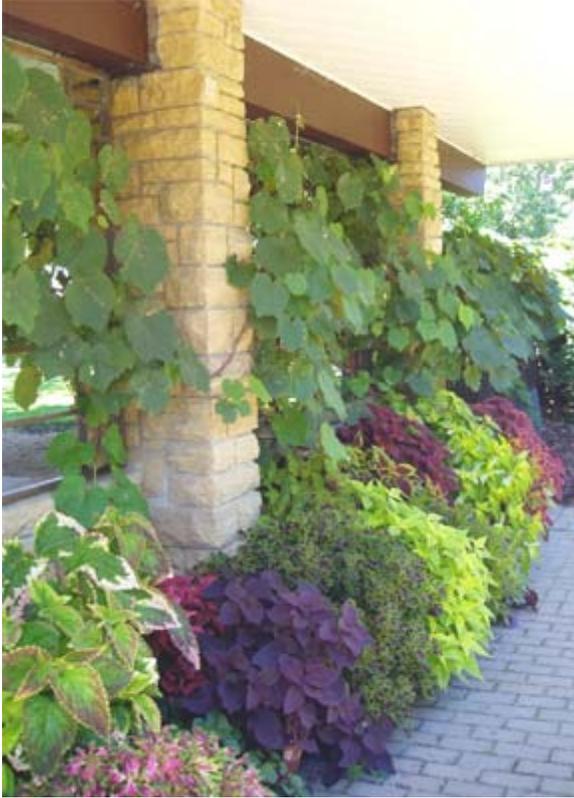
This Canna has two different colored flowers on the same stalk, one red, the other yellow.



We comment on the Zinnias which we can't find in Freeport, and are told they are a common variety available as seed from Parks.

Another flower we do not know.





More Coleus.



Reflecting Pool.



Rock Garden & Pool.



Water Garden.

We stroll through the sixteen acres of gardens. It is not crowded. We navigate the Sunken Garden, Hosta Garden, Wildflower and Perennial, eventually crossing a bridge to the Tai Garden.



Mighty Jan but mightier elephant ear.

Sun Tolerant Coleus.



Thai Pavilion.



The Pavilion, a gift from the government of Thailand, is the only one in the continental United States, and the only one outside of Thailand surrounded by a garden.

We are surprised to see brightly colored coleus in full sun and ask a gardener about them. I suspect he was a horticultural lecturer. We had a most interesting conversation about many of the plants in the bed he was tending. We learnt that they are a new variety, sun tolerant, and that he had planted them as an experiment.

After a couple of hours it is time to head home. No directions this time, but the route is easy. We lunch on the balcony at the New Glaurus Hotel. My taste is for Saurbrauten, red cabbage and spetle.

Home by 3:00pm.