

## Trip Across America

I took across this great, and not so great, country to blow off steam and see my brother and his new wife outside Denver, Colorado. I traveled from Aspen Hill, MD to Littleton, CO and had a hell-of-a-time, in a positive way.

I took a taxi to the Glenmont metro station and left my car at home. I traveled into Union Station, ate lunch, and had a few drinks. The trip seemed like a big risk to me, both in terms of time and money. I ate and enjoyed it. I made conversation with people at the bar.

I found the train, boarded it. The cabin attendant was very helpful and made me feel quite at home. I had a sleeper compartment all to myself: just a two-person sleeper, mind you.

I found myself next to a black man who had an impressive experience which I cannot remember. We talked about all sorts of things.

Later, I discovered Gayle, who inhabited the sleeper directly behind me. We were in two-person sleepers, as opposed to the big ones which were entire rooms. Ours each became two opposing chairs during the day. At night, they pulled the sleeper bed out for you. She was returning from a conference on female heart diseases, a subject near and dear to her heart because her sister had died from early heart disease. She became a close and wonderful friend. We talked for many an hour and shared meals together. (Today, I still call her and we talk about life.) Along the way, I had dinner with many interesting people, some couples, some singles. My dinners were a part of my ticket and were really good food on linen tablecloths and having linen napkins.

The night was long and wonderful as the train gently rocked back and forth and the lights of the various towns rolled by. Pulling into Chicago, I saw the baseball stadium! When we arrived in Chicago, after traveling through Pittsburg and several other locales, Gayle and I got off to eat and see Chicago. We ate at a local place right off the train, then Gayle directed me to go up the Sears Tower. I went all the way up to the observation deck and could see the whole city! I took pictures. When I came down I took pictures of me and her together!

We proceeded on to Kansas City where she got off. I proceeded on to Denver.

Arriving in Denver, my brother picked me up. We had a nice stay. We saw a Comedy Club presentation, I got to talk a great deal with his new wife, and I walked and got exercise. We also saw the dinosaur museum.

The trip back, on the train, wasn't impressive, but was what I needed. I just relaxed and drank beer and watched the miles roll by. It was great. I had so much steam to let off from the job I had left behind and from family that I just sat in the snack car (or on the observation deck) and drank and relaxed and talked to strangers.

A special person I met was Janet who, like me, had a vision of building a solar house. Unlike me, she was close to making it happen. We had a long interesting talk and I invited her to look me up if she ever wanted to explore the DC monuments. She said she might.