

DAY 15 — MAY 16, 2011 (Monday)
DURANGO & SILVERTON, COLORADO

by Darry D Eggleston, <http://DarryD.com>¹

Photos on Picasa: <http://bit.ly/lpquwE>

Photos on Facebook: <http://on.fb.me/krojBR>

04:00 — ANOTHER GLORIOUS DAY IS COMING OUR WAY.

We're planning on riding the Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad Train < <http://DurangoTrain.com/> > on a 52 Mile Round Trip. We have to be there at 07:30 for the all-day ride, but we're excited about seeing the country and riding a bit of history.

With "It Might Be You," played by Glenn Paul < <http://bit.ly/q54GVB> > in the background, I'm looking for another introspective day full of investigation and revelations as to who I am and who is this woman in the car with me.

Every day should challenge us to find out who lurks inside the frames we carry around and inside the minds that drive them.

I don't want a day to pass where I cannot honestly say that I have discovered some new truth about me.

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."

07:00 — TEMPERATURE: 42 DEGREES

The locals are starting to irritate me. It's 42 degrees, and I'm searching for my parka in the truck. Walking by, hand-in-hand, is a young couple in shorts and t-shirts. THAT hurts.

08:15 — TRAIN RIDE CANCELLED.

We're disappointed. All the reasonably priced seats on the train have been sold. According to the nice lady behind the counter (without a name tag), some kind of reunion or convention is in town because the majority of folk who got onto the train were wearing name tags. We were willing to pay \$90/each; but, not \$120/each. She offered us tickets on tomorrow's train, but we've got places to go and people to see. Instead, we'll just drive up to Silverton, taking photos along the way.

So we just did a self-guided tour of Durango.

13:05 — DRIVE TO SILVERTON, CO.

It took 1.5 hours to drive the winding, twisting and challenging road up to Silverton.

We could easily tell the locals. They were the ones in pick-em-up trucks passing us on the hairpin curves where the speed limit was 20 mph. They took great joy — apparently — in trying to touch our rear bumper during the brief periods when the road was straight for 100 feet and the speed limit was 50 mph.

They revved the engine to 75 mph and rushed ahead, once again over extending their belief in their brake's ability to keep them from plunging into sure death.

I don't know — nor do I believe anyone else knows — how many cars, motorcycles, and bicycles lay demolished at the bottom of the gorges that make up this mountain.

I wonder how drunk the people were who designed that road through the mountains.

The Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad goes right up the valley and through a narrow pass. The cars and trucks have to traverse a white-knuckle road with no guard rails — and 1,000+ foot drops — up and around bends that are often 170 degrees.

The state saved a lot of money on the lanes because while its marked as a two lane road (one each way), the lanes were created when only Model T's were on the road. Today, motorcycles have no problem passing each other (in opposite directions), but cars and trucks pass so close that the rearview mirrors miss by only centimeters.



**Over the Edge Road
into Silverton, CO**



No Guard Rails

We were told, by a waitress who has lived in Silverton her whole life, that there are no guard rails so that the snow plows can dump the snow over the side more easily.

If I had to drive the road between Durango & Silverton, I'd stock up on Depends and Valium.

There is a broad line between 'breath taking' and 'horrific'. During the drive, I didn't see any of the scenery because my eyes were fixed upon the pavement. It's two-hand, squeeze harder, driving all the way.

Listening to an audio book, *Murder She Wrote* "Coffee, Tea or Murder," calmed me somewhat, but my constant prayers kept me from hearing a lot of the story line.

I have never missed the flat land in Florida so much. When we get back to The Promised Land, I am going to hug the dirt and kiss the ground for the first hour.

PegEgg will be posting photos of the trip to both Facebook < <http://on.fb.me/krojBR> > and Picasa within a few days.

14:30 — SILVERTON, CO

There was snow everywhere — and remember that this is May. The local Silverton folk don't expect the snow to clear until about July. Obviously, their summer is July 4th through 1 August. It was 49 degrees and dropping. They expect a big storm tomorrow.

As we entered the town, we passed two penguins waddling south with suitcases with "Florida or Bust" on them. (Obviously, they're senior citizen penguins.)

There were more cars parked than there were on the streets. All but 3 of the cars parked there appeared to be locals, but I could be wrong.

Internet access is by microwave. The local newspaper had an article about the town suing the state's Public Utilities Commission (PUG) to get high-speed internet service because the PUG turned down its request



Silverton, CO

claiming that microwave was good enough. No one who has been on microwave and on high speed would chose the former.

The town has a single facility for elementary through high school. There were no graduating seniors this year or last according to the waitress. Her son works in Utah because he can't find a job closer to Silverton.

According to City-Data.com < <http://bit.ly/mi2rTi> >, the town's population in July 2009 was 527. Its population change since 2000 was+ -0.8%. About 8.5% of residents lived in poverty in 2009.

That same source shows Silverton compared to Colorado state average:

- ✓ Unemployed percentage significantly below state average.
- ✓ Black race population percentage significantly below state average.
- ✓ Hispanic race population percentage above state average.
- ✓ Median age significantly above state average.
- ✓ Foreign-born population percentage significantly below state average.
- ✓ Renting percentage below state average.

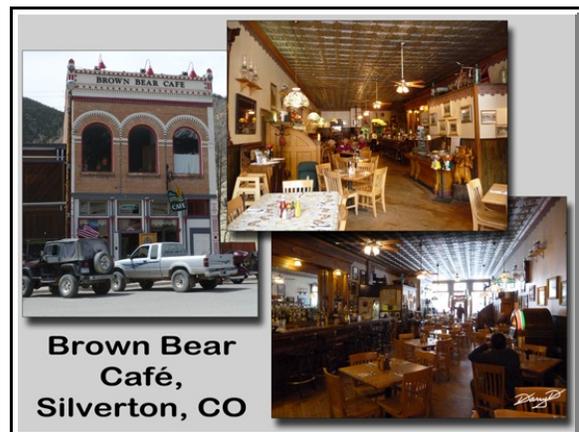
14:45 — **BROWN BEAR CAFÉ**, 1129 Green St, Silverton, CO 81433 — 970.387.5630

We ate at a great café, having the daily special — Turkey, Bacon, Swiss Wrap — with a coffee for me and a Diet Coke for PegEgg. Cost: **\$23.06**.

At one point, a young man disappeared through a trapdoor into the floor. The waitress pointed out that, at one point, there were 200 houses of ill repute in the town — all on one side of the street. (The town's name come from 'a ton of silver', thus Silverton.)



Silverton, CO



**Brown Bear
Café,
Silverton, CO**

However, the city council which was controlled by the town's Christians so it passed a law that made it illegal for prostitutes to cross the street to the bars and restaurants. Not a problem. The town's silver miners a tunnel the length of the town connecting every 'house' with every bar.

The café, although changing ownership over the years, has kept the original design — adding antiques along the walls and on every shelf. Naturally, it has a jukebox from the 1950s. (My young friends, ask your grandparents what a jukebox was, please.)



Out of the floor

23:15 — IT WAS LIKE A SONG

With “It Was Almost Like a Song,” sung by Ronnie Milsap is playing in the headsets that block out the rest of the outer world < <http://bit.ly/riyoBH> >.

Within my mind, I recall the ones I've known and the ones who had shown me so much. Both male and female, soldier and civilian, straight and gay, each contributed to whom I became.

Even when we're not aware of the affects others have upon us, we are changing every day that we stay 'above ground'.

Even those who have given up the living and retreated into their televisions change in response to the stimulus they have chosen.

We cannot avoid change, but we can manage it by being aware and making our own choices.

Will you create the future or live — forever — in the shadows of someone else's?

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