



27 October 2011 (Thursday)
TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA



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Today, I learned from:

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03:55 — **UP, UP, & GOING**

Knowing that I’ve got a Veterans Administration Hospital appointment at 06:30 this morning, I’ve decided to get up five minutes earlier than usual.

For my pre-mortem at 13:30, I’ve got to have blood drawn at 06:30; but, to get a parking space anywhere near the cavernous facility that is the hospital, I’ve got to get there before 06:00.

The 5th Dimension sing “Up, Up & Away” [<http://bit.ly/SdRL0>] as I print out my “Doctor’s Visit” form and the separate list of my medications.

PATIENT	DARRY D EGGLESTON		DATE	
DOCTOR		WEIGHT		PULSE
		BLOOD PRESSURE		TEMPERATURE
		CHOLESTEROL		
LAST VISIT:				
REASON FOR VISIT:				

¹ These are reflections designed to be re-read when I am too old to journey from the comfort of my stead and, so that in my bed, I can relive the days gone by. Permission for reproduction in whole or in part is granted to groups and organizations for internal, non-profit use provided credit is given to the author along with the copyright notice: Article reprinted with permission. Copyright © 2011 Darry D Eggleston, <http://DarryD.com>.

It's a read-only document so that I can open it, enter data, and save it with another name therefore protecting the "virgin copy". The one for today is saved as "2011-10-27 VA Exam".

05:20 — **ON THE ROAD AGAIN**

I'm heading out onto Interstate 75 where about 50 cars are already racing by in both directions.

Between where I entered the highway and where I exited onto Fowler Blvd, maybe 1,000 cars jockey for positions in front, behind, and next to each other. Each racing to some unstated and — perhaps to them — unknown destination, each has not time for courtesy.

Speed — it's all about the speed. When on the road to nowhere, one must go as fast as one's chariot will carry him.

The music roaring to escape from my CD player trickles down the waterfall of my subconscious into the lake of my awakening as I focus upon arriving alive. Cars, trucks, and motorcycles pass at warp speed as I maintain the authorized speed of 75 mph.

A "crotch rocket", as the kids call the newer, sleeker, motorcycles with the apparently 1-inch-wide wheels and handle bars that require the rider to position his chest on the gas tank roars past me on only it's back wheel.

I'm doing 70 mph (110 km/h) in the 70 mph zone, & this zombie-brained, testosterone-powered teenage passes me with only the back wheel touching the concrete.

The rocket appears to be black or dark blue and the black outfit of the rider makes the machine almost invisible as is roars on the highway ahead.

Since the rear light is pointed at the ground beneath the back tire and the front light is focused on what he must pray is his destination — i.e., heaven — I'm wondering how this fool can even see to safely drive.

At 05:30, it's darker than a witch's heart in patches of the highway and brighter than Dallas Cowboy Football Stadium during a game in others. We're in the heart of the of the highway, not the middle of a game.

Since he's not wearing a helmet, I hope he's got his wallet in a fire-proof and waterproof bag. Thus, after he crashes and the gasoline soaks the wallet & the resulting fires consume the body, his ID will be safely protected.

It's hard to get DNA out of barbequed ribs.

The saddest thing is that I'm not related to him. That way, I would have gotten insurance money after his blood mixes with the concrete, asphalt, steel, & fire that will make up his part of this speedway when he has that crash he's searching for.

05:55 — **JAMES A. HALEY VA HOSPITAL**

There are 18 parking places left in front of the hospital.

As I back into one of them, 9 more become full. At this facility, the parking gods smile upon the early risers. Two more are filled as I walk across the lot to the building.

06:04 — **CHECKED IN TO LAB**

There are already 29 people ahead of me waiting to have their blood drawn and urine sampled.

One of the first called & admitted is a 50+ year old lady in a wheel chair. As she comes out of the blood-letting room, she calls to her husband/care taker, "Hey, I've got to have my blood checked to ensure I'm not pregnant! Check outside and see if there's a star in the east!"

The reference to the birth of the man called Christ is lost on my Jewish friend to my left. His brow is burrowed, his head cocked, and his eyes search for an explanation.

"She's referring to the immaculate birth of Christ," I whisper to him.

"Oh!" he replies and a look of satisfaction fills his face, his eyes twinkle, and he sits back in his chair. Now he understood.

06:15 — **BLOOD DRAWN**

Nurse No Name — because her name badge is hidden — takes my blood without any pain inflicted.

Three vials as thick and as long as my middle finger are taken.

Then she instructs me to enter the men's room and create a urine sample.

When one has only had water to drink and has been up as long as I have, filling the urine sample bottle is not a challenge.

I wonder if I'm pregnant?

06:30 — CAFÉ OPENS

After waiting barely two minutes — during which I have to endure 35 minutes worth of whining from the overweight, foul smelling veteran to my left — the doors to the Café (called “Canteen” by the old heads) open.

I get a small coffee and head to the checkout.

There, the lady in line before me shows an eggs, bacon, and bagel plate and a large Coca Cola. I guess that's her version of a power breakfast.

She pays with a debit card. NOT a great day to do that.

It turns out that today is the day that the café is trying — for apparently the first time any of them has even turned on the machine — a new cash register that is going to save the customers time while checking out.

Of course, the novice cashier in my aisle.

Even though assisted by a man with “Assistant Manager” in 24-point Arial Black font (and his name in 8-point Arial regular font), she cannot get the printer to provide a copy of the receipt for the debit card.

After 180 seconds, the buyer announces that she doesn't need a receipt, grabs her purchases, and rushes for the door like a firefighter on the way to the annual picnic.

The cashier announces that the small coffee costs 99¢ and I hand her one dollar.

As she hands me the penny in change, she asks, “Would you like a receipt, Mr. Darry?”

(My name tag has worked it magic again. WHY can't people see the “D” in “Darry D” as easily as they see the “Darry”?)

Her lips are moving behind the plastic smile cashiers practice, but her eyes are screaming, “PLEASE, say, ‘No’.” Her eyes are suddenly fixated on the non-working printer.

“No, thank you, ma'am,” I smiled.

Her eyes light up. Her smile goes from plastic to genuine relief & happiness.

“Thank you, Mr. Darry!” she gushes in a release of stress that is obvious — even with my limited skills.

17:50 — EMAIL AVALANCHE

Dropping the Worldwide Web for 2+ weeks for our cruise was easy. However, digging my way through **849 emails** that awaited my return has not been easy.

Of course, my established priorities aid the work:

- ① HELP messages.
- ② Messages from family.
- ③ Contributions to the Daily Journal.
- ④ Emails from friends.
- ⑤ Forwarded emails.
- ⑥ e-newsletters.



Some of my friends are upset that I haven't answered mundane questions like, "How are you doing?" Patience, Kemosabe. "All things in their time."

18:28 — GERMAN ENGINEERING

No words need be spoken. [<http://bit.ly/9yIKwD>]

19:27 — 3 MEAT PIZZA

One of the best deals in town is the "3 Meat Pizza" at Sam's Club.

Ready in 10 minutes, it's less than \$10, and it will beat any pizza by any other pizza joint in town.

PegEgg got a hankering for a pizza, so I drove to the nearest Sam's Club to buy one.

There was no one in line at the Café as I walked up to the counter.

"One 3 Meat Pizza, please," I said to the petite, lady of about 20 years of age.

The lady behind the counter announced what I owed her and then — looking at my name tag, asked, "What's the 'D' for?"

I replied, "Darlin'," as I always do.

She said, "My boyfriend's middle name is Honey, but he doesn't tell anyone."



When I delivered the pizza to PegEgg, she pointed out that the lady had placed “Darry Darling” on the box.

If you're not wearing a name tag, consider starting to do so.

20:40 — **MILITARY REVIEWS**



Lady Lynette: This is “River Dance” with boots & rifles! I can't remember ever seeing a display of precision to beat this!

Watch this in full screen by clicking not the small box at the bottom-right of the screen (arrow in graphic).

This is the definition of precision!

Those are US made Garand M-1 rifles & they are heavy weapons (9 pounds). At 3 minutes, when one soldier goes on his own — you've never seen a rifle spun that fast! [<http://bit.ly/cF3IB0>]

In addition, view the BBC recording of the opening parade of massed pipe & drums at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo [<http://bit.ly/vhUdy0>].



21:43 — **WHAT IF?**



'Linda Sunshine'

“What if you woke up today with only the things you thanked God for yesterday?” Anon

23:51 — **DADDY'S HOME**

Shep & The Limelites sing “Daddy's Home” [<http://bit.ly/gfyfyF>]

“[Their name] will forever be etched in rock & roll history for recording the endearing ‘Daddy's Home,’ a tender ballad about returning from [the Vietnam] war. The song soared to #2 on the pop charts in May 1961.”

[<http://bit.ly/uMyQQa>].”

Very few of the people I knew associated that song with the Vietnam War, but everyone could hum along with this tender ballad.

