

# Life after making the move to North Texas.



**M**y move to Texas in 2006 was a great idea. I had the opportunity to get mom and dad to move to the Dallas area as I did and we bought houses across the street from each other. Being able to spend the late years of their lives across the street brought many pleasures. Mom was always baking breads and dad always had a project in garage. He built hope chests for some of the granddaughters and his Chiropractor. It was funny dad had mentioned his work to his Chiropractor, who then asked if he could stop by and see the one he was working on. After seeing the hope chest he contracted with dad to have one built and free services from the chiropractor for the rest his life. Dad and I had met a guy, Richard that was into restoring cars and he helped dad and I get the sprite running again. I had not really been drive able for years. Once it was drive able I wrote up the story of the little car and put it on a display board and we went to car shows with it. It was always a popular display.

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One thing we did almost every afternoon when I got home from work was take a walk around the block. Our street had the high school on the other end and was a divided street with 2 lanes

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each way. One of the things I had been doing since moving there to Garland was adopting the park across the street and once or twice a week I was over there cleaning. But in the afternoon, mom and dad and I would walk up Colonel Dr and I would pick up trash as we went and we all chatted. Mom was so funny though, if I happened to miss some trash, she would stop and stand there by it pointing it out to me till I got it picked up. It was amazing that I could pick up a bucket of trash every day off the same 3-4 blocks. It was nice to walk and talk with both mom and dad.

Mom was never one to go and do much, but dad and I went to car shows, boat shows and cruises all the time. I got to spend some fun times with them and enjoy their senior years.

I also found a couple country western clubs where I started going dancing 3-4 nights a week. Dallas was different than the rest of the world of course. Instead of the normal two-step, or three-step depending on who you talked to, they had the Progressive Two-Step. I took lessons and quickly became very good at it. Lots of fun turns and routines. I got to know a lot of gals to dance with. I was never much of a drinker, so instead of going to the bar for a drink when I got to the club, I headed for the dance floor and found a dance partner on the way.

I had also become friends with a few guys, Marc my wing-man, and Brandon the kid, and Harold the cowboy. We all would chat

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and let each other know which gals could dance or not. Unfortunately Marc passed from cancer a few years later. I have a little stuffed monkey he had given me so it could ride with Army, The Armadillo, that I kept on the faring of the Gold Wing and then later on the dash of my car. Army, I got in 1983 at Ft Riley in a western store.



It was funny, my buddy Andy and I were in a western store in Manhattan Kansas looking for Andy a new hat. I saw the little stuffed critter and picked it up and started talking to it. Some previous alcohol may have been involved. Anyway after carrying it around the store and shopping as we were checking out, I put the stuffed critter down and was headed out with the cashier

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says “heh, your not going to leave that little fellow here. He has already bonded with you.” So I was made to buy the little critter. Well when Andy and I headed into a dance club that evening he says, “What, you going to make Army stay in the truck?” So I took him in and placed on the table. By the end of the night, he had an empty beer bottle laying next to him. He got to be part of our friends and bartenders life’s as well. Everyone one wanted to see Army every night we were out dancing. Yes there was a little drinking going on as well. I even would take him into Dennys and sit him on the counter and order two apple pies. He always ended up with an empty plate before we left. Sometimes at the dance club, the waitress would put Army on her tray so he could help serve drinks. That’s how we kept him from getting to drunk.

Anyway back to Dallas, Army and the little monkey go everywhere I go and I remember Marc all the time. Marc the last few years of his life was volunteering at Meals On Wheels, so when I passed I volunteered for a couple years in memory of him. Also pinned to the monkeys arm is an angel pin we had on mom for a long time.

The reason we had a pin on mom was it had a card with it with her name and address. One time as mom’s Alzheimer’s was progressing she walked away from the house with out us knowing. A couple hours a nice policeman brought mom to the door and asked if we knew her.

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Also the monkey had a fun pin from one of my cruises where I watched the bartender pour 8 martinis at once.

Ah, Cruises... Yes I always had another cruise lined up. Sometimes dad and I went and other times I went with friends from the meetups that I knew. We would get 10-12 people together to go cruising. We kept trying to get more guys to go, but it was mostly ladies and my buddy and I. We always had a good time. My buddy and I went and did a Mediterranean cruise as well. That is where I met Chantelle, she was in the show cast and they all were at the martini bar one night and she said I was going to be her "Ship Boy Friend" that week. That was the first time I did the Studio VIP show with the cast. I was on stage as one of the group for WMCA. Another time doing the show on another cruise I danced the hustle with one of the female dancers. For that first cruise when Chantelle was giving some VIP's tour of dressing rooms and back stage I got to go as well. All of the cast was so much fun. Since then I have met many of the casts from different ships and keep in touch with many on FB. When Covid hit, Chantelle went back to Australia and got married and has such a cute little baby boy. I have spent a lot of my cruising meeting and getting to know cast and cruise directors and musicians as well.

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Dad and I have cruised Alaska and Caribbean. I have also done Mexican Riviera, Western, Eastern, and Southern Caribbean, Mediterranean and Baltic cruises. Mostly on Carnival, but when Carnival did not have a ship going that way then others. Total of 40 cruises so far.

Also why enjoying cruises, I made several trips to Europe. I would build points on American Air and then fly Dallas to Madrid, non stop for \$15 and points. Then while in Europe book their airlines to move around. I loved going to London, eat fish and chips 3 times a day and go to a show every night. I saw Chitty Chitty, Bang Bang there one night and the Mousetrap and more. I went three times to Venice, I love the city and the buses are actually boats. So instead of my usual Hop on and Off Bus, it was Hop on and Off Boat. When in Madrid I did the Vaughan Town experience 4 times. That is a week for free at a resort outside of Madrid to just chat with Spaniards to help with their conversational English. Got my own room for Sun-Fri, three meals a day and people to chat with and do things with. It was always so much fun. I have two friends in Madrid I met doing that and I still have dinner every time I go there with them.

When I moved to Texas I was driving my Grand Prix GTP and I had about 230,000 miles on it when I decided it was time for something else. I bought my first Jaguar S-Type 2005, Seabreeze, they called the color. I have really enjoyed owning one ever

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since then. The first one had 87,000 on it when I bought it and was why it only cost \$7000. Then a few years later with about 150,000 miles on it, a lady pulled out in front of me and I totaled it. The insurance gave me \$10,000 to get another. I found one online in Denver,CO with only 33,000 miles. It was the same make and model and color?? I had them ship it and the only thignwhen it showed up was it had mismatched tires. So new tires and a great car with low mileage. Most people did not even know I had a different car.

Working at JHA was easy and they paid me so well and gave me too much vacation, so I was able to do all I wanted pretty much. Cruise and Travel around the world and Sail in town, in Kemah and in BVI. Life was good.....