

James L. Holly, M.D.

Tales of our Travels Carolyn and Larry Holly August 27 – September 5, 2016

More than a travelogue of places we saw; this is a story of people we met. It is really a contemporaneous recording of “miracles” we experienced during our trip. Some of those miracles are still bearing fruit nine months later when this story is being written.

Carolyn and I have taken long driving trips before. Dalhart, Texas has been a part of two of them. When our children were young, we drove from Grand Junction in the Yellowstone National Park to Dalhart, Texas, in one day. We left at 5 AM and arrived in Dalhart at 1 AM. It was 1050 miles.

Driving vacations require much less planning and packing than flying. You get to see more of the coming and going and you are more likely to explore new and exciting places. This trip proved all of that.

August 27, 2016 – the Beginning

One Saturday, August 27, 2016, Carolyn and I left Beaumont at 9 AM on vacation. That night, at 8 PM, we arrived in Dalhart, Texas, 750 miles away. Texas is as beautiful, as it is varied. We had a great day. From here forward, the tense will be in that of the contemporaneous documentation of this trip which was posted on Face Book and copied for this document.

Tomorrow is half as long to arrive at Estes Park, Colorado, which we often visited with our children. We already miss the other 12 members of our family. It will be interesting to see how long we last before heading home.

August 27, 2016 – the End of Day One

When we arrived in Dalhart, we selected lodging. Shortly afterward, our son texted to tell us the name of the highest rated place in Dalhart. It was the one we had just checked into.

At check in, we were helped by a young lady with red hair. We have five grand children that are redheads. When she smiled, it was obvious that her teeth were very, very badly decayed.

Later last night, I went down to the lobby and found the young woman alone. I told her about David S., whom I met when I was an 18-year-old sophomore at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana, whose teeth were rotten. I made an agreement with a dentist to fix David's teeth. I proposed that if I paid for it the next summer, he would do the work immediately. He agreed and I did.

When I went down later, I ask this young lady if it would offend her if I asked her to smile. She smiled and I asked her if she had ever wanted to have her teeth fixed. She said she had, and I added, "but, you couldn't afford it," and she again said, "Yes."

I gave her my card and told her that if she chooses to contact me, I will help her get a full mouth restoration. She was quiet, but thanked me.

We will see if she follows through. If she does, this vacation will be marked by more than beautiful scenery. I hope she does. Seeing people's lives transformed is the only thing which gives real meaning to life.

The following is a partial follow-up to this young woman's story

"Wednesday, April 12, 2017 4:29 PM – From SETMA's Care Coordinator: Dr. Holly, I called Sandra and checked with her about the extractions. She saw Dr. Dunham yesterday and approved the wax mold for her dentures – that has been sent to the lab so the dentures can be made. She is scheduled to have the extractions done on the morning of April 25th with Dr. Bailey in Amarillo. She is so excited. I told her that we would all be praying for her on the 25th."

My Response to a Face Book Post About Hotel Clerk

God put the gift of giving in my heart long ago and then He taught me the discipline of giving. You never wait until you have to give; you give when you don't have and when you have you already are experienced and practiced at giving. Practice the widow's mite every day. (I learned this gift from my mother and father. I watched them often give what they did not have and help where they should not have been able to do. I saw lives changed.)

August 28, 2016 – Day Two

The miracle of one is proved by the absence of others. After the joy of meeting a young lady whose life may be changed forever by our seemingly chance meeting on the first day of our vacation, the second day seemed inconsequential. We did meet a waitress from Macedonia, who was a joy, and whom we blessed with a generous gratuity for her service.

But, the significance of Dalhart, and the confirmation of the "rightness" of the plan for that young lady, is that thus far, among all the contacts on this trip, there has not been another person for whom such an obvious and apparent need was presented.

We need to be attentive to opportunities to be blessed by giving to others; they don't come every day. And, when we miss one, we may not receive another.

August 28, 2016 -- Evening

Tonight, we are in Estes Park and checked into The Stanley. Expensive fraught with difficulties but we have had a great day. Look forward to five days here and then we are off to visit Carolyn's place of birth in Roswell, New Mexico. And jokes about Area 51 are not appropriate!!!

August 29, 2016 – Day Three

Today, Monday, August 29, 2016, Carolyn and I found the place where we stayed on our first trip to Estes Park, 39 years ago. The memories were thick and rich. We then drove down the Big Thompson River Canyon from Estes Park to Loveland, Colorado. We did this for two reasons. One it is beautiful but the other is more important. We did it in remembrance of a hero.

In 1976, torrential rains created a flash flood in the river and canyon. With hundreds of campers in harms way, Deputy Sheriff Purdy raced his patrol car down the canyon, siren blaring and bull horn shouting: "Climb; climb for your lives; leave everything; climb; climb!!"

Many lives were saved and many were lost, along with this hero, Officer Purdy died that day while saving others. "Greater love has no man than laying down his life for strangers."

It doesn't change history but our celebration of this noble man's sacrifice enriched our lives today. The following is a song about Officer Pyle's heroism. Beautiful story of sacrifice. One of the finest singer/songwriters of our time, Chuck Pyle (R.I.P.) memorialized Deputy Sheriff Purdy's bravery in song. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwI8q3zPYVQ>



[Chuck Pyle "Here Comes the Water"](#)

August 30, 2016 – Day Four

This is Tuesday, August 30, 2016. I wondered what our miracle for today would be. As you read this, remember that as a child, I ate Holsum Enriched Bread. The whole wheat kernel was bleached to produce "white" bread. The bleaching removed 21 nutrients. Holsum added 12

vitamins and called it enriched. Is that truth in advertisement? Maybe that's why it is said, "The whiter the bread, the sooner dead?"

Carolyn found our miracle in the grocery store yesterday and we read it this morning. This is a description of today's miracle from the wrapper on a loaf of 21-grains-and-seeds, whole grain, organic bread, which reads: Dave's "Killer Bread -- 15 Years in Prison

"That's a tough way to find yourself. Dave Ahl realized he was in the wrong game and knew that he had more to offer. His brother, Glenn, saw a change in him and gave Dave a second chance by welcoming him back to the family bakery. Dave set out to make a loaf like no other - the most nutritious, organic whole grain bread -- and the result is what he called "killer" bread.

"Dave's Killer Bread is built on the belief that everyone is capable of greatness. What began as one man's journey has turned into so much more. Today, one third of our employees at our Oregon bakery has a criminal background, and we have witnessed first-hand how stable employment sparks personal transformation."

August 30, 2016 – Day Four

We started a drive down an interesting road when we saw a marked trail. We walked down it, and up it and around it and then we walked back. It was wonderful.







That evening we took a drive down and interesting road in the Estes Park area and saw this magnificent anima.



August 30, 2016

As we read more about “Dave’s Killer Bread,” we saw that it invites others to take “The Second Chance Pledge,” if you believe every one deserves a "second chance." I joined. They asked for everyone who joins to finish the phrase, "I believe everyone deserves a second chance because..." This is how I finished the phrase...

“I spent many years ministering in prisons. I told every one I met two things:

1. I am not here because I think you have all of the problems and I have all of the answers;
2. When you give others your strengths you have given them the best they will get, but when you transparently give them your weaknesses, you give them the best that God has.

Even I deserved a second and a third and a fourth and a fifth chance ... ”

August 31, 2016 – Day Five

Today's Miracle -- This is day five of our vacation, August 31, 2016. When I awoke this morning, my first thought was, "Will we experience a miracle today?" My next thought was, "I will not manipulate events to make one happen," and then the following e-mail came.

The e-mail was entitled "teeth." -- "Hello, this is _____ from the _____ in Dalhart, Tx. I know you are probably still on vacation since you said it would be about 10 days. I was just wanting to touch base with you. There are quite a few dentists in Amarillo and I'm also comparing prices with one I found in Dumas as well. I haven't set on one just yet as I wanted to touch base with you first. Sometimes when someone says it's too good to be true it usually is I'm hoping that's not the case here. Hoping to hear from you. Thank you and God bless you."

My heart was filled with joy and I was not surprised that she would worry. People often don't follow through on their good intentions. I wrote the following to this young lady:

"I am on vacation still, but glad to hear from you. It is not too good to be true. It is real. I want the best result for you. A good cost would be nice but that is secondary to a life-long good result. You should get a reconstruction dentist experienced in total mouth health.

You are a gift to us and although we may never meet again, I will always know that you are living out a dream of joy and happiness, of righteousness and of service to others, and that someday you will have the privilege and opportunity to help another. That is your obligation and that is your only cost. I will want to talk to the dentist you choose and I will have him/her bill me, not you. God bless you."

This is a gift that just keeps on giving and as I judge things, this is our miracle for today.

This is a response to one of the posts below: That is kind but I really only do what I am compelled to and which I am blessed to do. The lesson is that we all have opportunities to bless others. In the eyes of man some are big and some are small; in the eyes of God, they are all the same.

September 1, 2016 – Day Six

We are driving today from Estes Park, Colorado through the Rocky Mountain National Park to Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Park was as magnificent as we remembered, but this time it was special. At the highest point of the Park, traffic was stopped and people were parking along the narrow road. There was a herd of Elk walking across the road and tundra. They were beautiful. We did not stop but slowed to 2-3 miles an hour. As Carolyn was taking an iPhone video of the Elk, I suddenly said, "Wow!" At my window which was down and up a almost vertical cliff, there appeared a bull elk which was larger than the one picture above. He was 18 inches away from me and was incredible. We watched him walk away and felt blessed to have witnessed this sight.

We drove on and went through small town after small town and the amazing thing was that each one of them had a library. There were long distance between towns and very little traffic. It was a great day. We arrived in Santa Fe late that afternoon and began another remarkable part of our trip.

September 2, 2016 – Day Seven

This morning we walked to the Santa Fe National Cemetery to visit Carolyn's aunt's grave. We debated whether to walk or to take a taxi but finally decided to walk. It was a long, long way, but if we had taken a cab, we would have missed a great blessing.

Carolyn's Aunt Margaret, her father's sister, along with five of her seven siblings, served in World War II and in Korea. The director of the cemetery told her that they conduct a burial every 30 minutes. It was wonderful visiting her grave. Her husband served as well and retired Major. He is buried with her. Both of their children served as well.

Here is Carolyn looking for Aunt Margaret's grave marker.



And here she has found it.



September 2, 2016 – Day Seven

On our way walking to the Cemetery, we asked a question of a security guard. For the next forty-five minutes, we talked. He graduated from Lamar University (Beaumont, Texas) as did his three brothers. He then graduated from Yale and Texas A&M. He just retired from Los Alamos.

Here is his e-mail, sent after our visit. Carolyn and I both agree with the sentiment, I quote:

"Dr. Holly: "It was so wonderful, a miracle indeed, to meet you and your lovely wife today in Santa Fe. Talking about Beaumont brings back so many happy and fond memories. If you get this email while you're still in the Santa Fe area, I offer myself as a tour guide over this Labor Day weekend. Great places to see! It would be an honor to show you around. "I'll follow up with more information about my family and me later, as we discussed. Enjoy your visit, my dear, new friend."

Lamar University's Alumni Association needs to run an article about this family. They are Hispanic and they are incredible. We almost drove to the cemetery. We did take a cab back. If we had not walked, we would not have met this remarkable man. You don't make many really good friends. Rubén will be one of ours.

September 2, 2016

Miracles on Vacation for Day Seven, Friday, September 2, 2016. We have experienced five miracles today:

1. When we awoke and prepare to leave the room, I could not find my wallet. Yesterday, for the first time I had put all my cash in my wallet. I typically carry it in my right front pocket. I looked every where then I recruited the help of the eagle beagle, we call her, Carolyn. We both combed both rooms. Then Carolyn declared it gone. We called home to start the process of cancelling my one credit card. Because my card sends an immediate note to my cell phone, we knew no charges had been made. After the search was called off, Carolyn went to one last place, a dark closet, and in the corner, in the dark, she found the black wallet it is this relentless with which we I have lived for 51 years which always delivers. Miracle One.
2. The Security Guard we met, whose story is told elsewhere.
3. The visit to the cemetery to pay our respect to two family members who served in WWII and Korea
4. Our taxi driver who brought us from the cemetery. With an ear ring in his nose and tattoos all over his body, he told us his story of redemption and of the recent birth of his daughter. We were able to share his story and to provide a gift for his newborn child.
5. In a fine store, we were talking to a clerk. He said he was from Haskell, Texas. In a moment, he and Carolyn made the connection with Carolyn's lifelong best friend who died several years ago. If you had seen the expression of joy on Carolyn's face at the remembrance of her friend, you would know how much they loved each other.

An incredible day and it isn't over. Shortly, the daughter of Aunt Margaret, Carolyn's first cousin, Effie, will join us for dinner.

September 2 – Dinner in the Evening

Carolyn and her First Cousin, Effie Handfield, daughter of Margaret Handfield, whose grave we visited today, having dinner at Geronimo's in Santa Fe. Three and a half hours and we barely scratched the surface of important issues of concern to all of us. Wonderful evening with family.



September 2

Carolyn Bellue Holly's Aunt's Service record.

Margaret Ellen Bellue Handfield, US Army, Nurse -- World War II – Korean War. Lieutenant, 1940 – 1955. Four-year graduate of Charity Nursing School in New Orleans, LA. In World War II and in Korean War, Army nurses served in the combat theater very close to the extremely fluid front lines of the war.

As Margaret Ellen weighed under 100 pounds, she was often tapped to fly as the medical person on amphibian aircraft to pick up wounded on the islands so that more weight in the form of medicines and soldiers could be loaded on the aircraft. She flew in, landed in a lagoon, picked up wounded, possibly stayed a few days if Japanese ships were in the area, then flew back to the

Field Hospital. Margaret Ellen served in the South Pacific Islands, Hawaii, New Caledonia, Papua, New Guinea and possibly other locations.

In March 1942, the territory of New Caledonia, located in the southwest Pacific Ocean, became an important Allied base, and Nouméa the headquarters of the US Navy and Army in the South Pacific. The fleet which turned back the Japanese navy in the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942 was based at Nouméa. Margaret Ellen was stationed in Pusan while serving during the Korean War and afterwards was stationed in Japan to help rotate the soldiers back to the States. The Battle of Pusan Perimeter was a large-scale battle between United Nations and North Korean forces lasting from Aug. 4 to Sept. 18, 1950. It was one of the first major engagements of the Korean War.

September 2 – Walking to the Cemetery

Public Libraries: Why I Love them.

Today, walking to the National Cemetery, we passed the Santa Fe Public Library. Yesterday, driving through many small Colorado and New Mexico communities, we saw many Public Libraries. As we saw each one, I remembered how Carolyn took our children to the Beaumont Public Library. Public Libraries are places where magic happens.

In the movie, *Good Will Hunting*, the star tells incredulous Harvard students that they spend \$150,000 on an education they could have gotten with a \$1.50 library card and late charges. True but improbable. But, great libraries are the heart and core of civilization.

All of this is true, but none of it explains why I love Public Libraries. My love was birthed and nurtured in Natchitoches, Louisiana. I lived in the country and was isolated somewhat from social interaction, particularly in the summer. But starting in the fifth grade, every Tuesday my mother would take me to the Natchitoches Parish Library. They had a limit on how many books you could check out. I think it was fifteen but every Tuesday I checked out the maximum. By Friday I had read them all. I loved to swim and ride horses but I loved words and I loved books. I did not read classics or complex books, but I read. The library became my window to the world, to ideas and to dreams.

I learned to love the library and I learned to love books. Now almost seventy years later, I love words and books and my heart is warmed and my mind is stirred simply by seeing a Public Library. If we must, let's give up athletics or recreation but never the public library. I love them.

September 3 – Day Eight

Vacation Day 8, September 3, 2016 -- We have had a wonderful day. Important experiences but nothing which qualified as a miracle. In another post, I addressed Peter Singer's idea that impaired children could be euthanized. The opportunity to stand against evil is a blessing but not a miracle.

Tonight, we walked around the Plaza in Santa Fe. We heard Indians beating drums and chanting. We found them and I began video taping them. They went on for a long time and at

present, I cannot load the video. We expressed our appreciation generously, shook hands with each and told them how drawn we were to their music.

I asked them What their sounds meant and they said it was to draw people to them. I told them that my wife had asked and I told her that that is what they do before they eat the spectators. Everyone laugh and their leader took his drum stick and said, "oh, no, this is what we play before that!" His sense of humor and generous warmth was precious. We greeted them again and expressed our personal prejudice in favor of all American Indians.

As we bade then adios, they bade us "God bless you," we had new friends and people of incredible differences had spanned the rift with love and acceptance. Their lives will not be changed by our exchange but for a moment they and we were received. That is a miracle.

I will post the video as soon as I can.

September 4 – Day Nine

Sunday Day 8 of our vacation, September 4, 2016 -- The continuing story of our miraculous vacation -- On day 6 of our vacation, September 1, 2016, I told you about that day's miracle which resulted from an encounter with a man on the streets of Santa Fe as we walked to the National Cemetery to visit the graves of Carolyn's Aunt and Uncle. On Friday, I posted his first communication, below is Ruben Rangel's second:

On Sep 3, 2016, at 10:21 PM, _____ wrote: Dr. Holly: Thank you for the Face Book post on our meeting. You are most kind. Yes, I agree my family's story would be wonder to tell in the Cardinal journal. It is a testament that dreams in America are possible and reachable. My brothers did not graduate from Lamar University on our own merits, but with the help, support, and guidance from wonderful Lamar faculty and philanthropists, such as yourself. God gave us intelligence and the will to succeed with his grace expressed through the help of others. With your LU contacts, I will work with them to draft the article.

As requested, attached are the résumés of my son (_____) and I for your review and dissemination, as you deem appropriate. I shared my exciting and emotional meeting with you and Carolyn with my family. They were very happy that I had met a person from Beaumont and knowledgeable of Lamar University. They saw that I was happy to recall my formative years at the university with you, and how excited and emotional I got talking about our miraculous meeting.

Dante is quite excited to meet and talk with you about his drive and passion to become a medical doctor. His personal history on his ongoing journey to accomplish his dream is both sad and happy. I know he will fulfill his dream. We welcome with open arms any and all guidance and counseling you can give him for his journey. He is a wonderful son and accomplished individual. My wife (Beatriz) and I are very proud of him.

Dante will help me set up my Face Book account so we can all communicate effectively. We are at your disposal on the method you want to communicate: telephone (individual or conference),

Face Book, Face time (iPhone) or Skype. We know you and Carolyn are on vacation, so please enjoy it and get back to us when you are rested and have the time. Below is our contact information:

As you can see from Dante's résumé, he has shadowed many physicians. He mentioned he would very much like to shadow you in some capacity so both of you can become better acquainted. My wife and I would help him with his travel and housing costs. Dante would be available after he graduates and returns from his course work at the University of Granada, Spain at year's end. Certainly both of you need to discuss this.

Thank you ever so much for offering to help my son. My prayers have been answered. I have been praying for years for Divine Intervention to help my children complete their education dreams and become productive members of our society. God chose you to be Dante's angel. To quote the lady you helped with her teeth, "Is this for real." My family is still in shock trying to comprehend your generous offer. God bless you and Carolyn. Rubén

P.S. Our other child is Daniella and she is also at the University of New Mexico studying Speech and Hearing. Both kids want to work in the healthcare industry to help the community.

Dr. Holly's observation

What a remarkable man and family. Our meeting of him, which many would call chance, was a blessing and will forever make this trip significant. On October 10, 2016, Ruben and his wife visited us in Beaumont. This shows us at Carabba's having lunch.



Carolyn and I hosted the Rangel's with the President and Vice-President of Lamar and with several other friends at Pappedeaux's.



September 4 – Day Nine

We left Santa Fe and drove to Carlsbad Cavern. Both Carolyn and I had visited there with our families as children, but it was fun to relive the day. The drive was beautiful. We had hoped to get there before noon but we stopped in Roswell, New Mexico to explore where Carolyn was born. The place she was born no longer exists but we had a great time driving around the town.

We then departed for Carlsbad arriving mid afternoon. We went through the Cavern and started out. To our shock, the line for the elevator was very, very long. It took over three hours for us to reach the elevators. We were happy to have gone and we were happier to be leaving. We began to drive and drive and drive.

When we re-entered Texas at Fort Stockton, we kept driving. It was late and while I am usually cautious about fuel levels, we past the last town without getting gas. As our gauge approached empty, there was nothing in site and the next town was over 100 miles away. It was tense. We finally saw a small, closed station and we existed. Fortunately, the pumps were still own and we

filled up and breathed a sight of relief. At Sonora, Texas, we were happy to spend what was left of the night.

On September 5 – Day Ten

We drove through San Antonio and arrived in Beaumont late in the afternoon. It was good to be home with a treasury filled with rich memories.