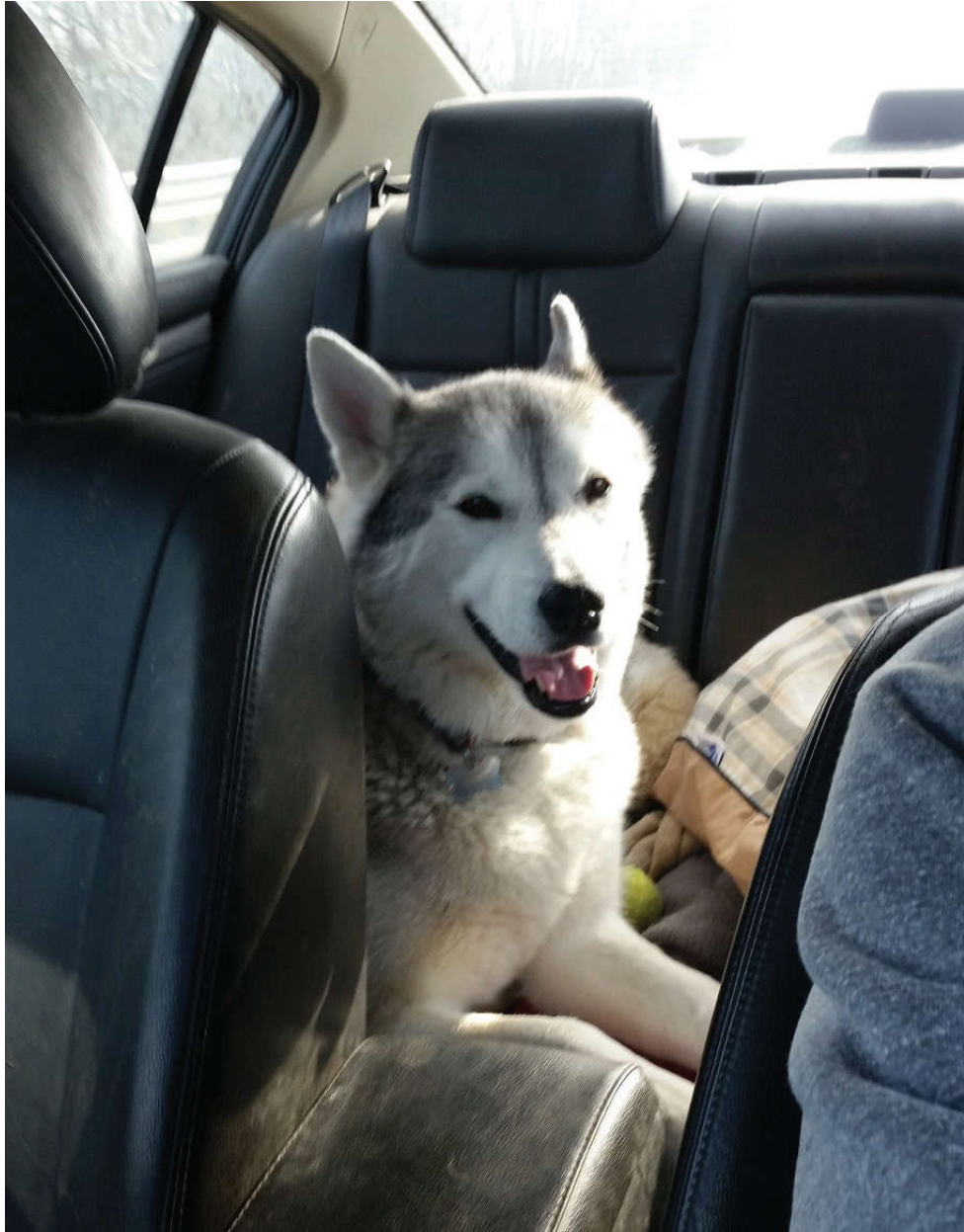


BRING NORWAY



LANCE FRIEDMAN

Copyright © 2026 Lance Friedman.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This book contains material protected under International and Federal Copyright Laws and Treaties. Any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is prohibited. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without express written permission from the author/publisher.

ISBN: 979-8-89079-472-7 (paperback)

ISBN: 979-8-89079-473-4 (ebook)

Dedicated to the dogs who cause chaos, damage,
and mischief – yet bring a smile to your face.

Contents

Introduction	1
Part I: East.....	7
Part II: Farther East	107
Part III: South	203
Part IV: Lake Michigan.....	241
Part V: The Heartland.....	279
Part VI: Route 66	365
Part VII: Minnesota 2.0	451
Epilogue	473
2024 and beyond	475
Credits.....	483

Introduction

“This is Norway,” I proudly announced in an email to friends and family. “And, he’s a handful!”

One year earlier, Oscar, my sixteen-year-old pal had passed away. After months of traveling, working, and absorbing the loss of my canine friend, I was ready and excited for the next dog. During my travels, I had spent time in Iceland and Norway, including visiting husky farms in Beitostolen and Tromso. After hiking and riding with the eager huskies, I was hooked. They were enthusiastic sledders and wonderful companions. I loved those eyes and their personalities. I knew my next dog would come from a husky rescue organization.

I monitored the Orphans of the Storm animal shelter website, waiting for a husky to come up for adoption. Also, I looked at Forever Husky, a rescue organization one hour away. Any young adult husky would be a candidate.

When I found a blue-eyed male at Forever Husky, I began their multi-week adoption process. First, I filled out the application. They wanted to be sure I was suitable to take the dog – a unique breed. Did I have high enough fences to hold the escape artist? Did I realize the energy involved? I knew huskies required a lot of activity and attention. I was ready to accept the challenge.

During the husky search, I explored the idea of adopting a senior dog. I always wanted to help an older dog who couldn’t find

a home. After months of seeing the same sorry dog on the Orphans of the Storm website, I finally decided to check him out on a Friday in January.

The scruffy ten-year-old in the picture had a likable look. Unfortunately, the meet and greet was a disaster. The poor thing was a basket case, and unapproachable; possibly due to years in shelters and prior neglect. Thankfully, it was a no-kill shelter, so he could stay as long as needed. But, for me, it was not a fit. *I cannot save the world.*

While exiting the shelter, I noticed a young female husky, with one blue eye and one brown eye, sitting in the corner. *Where did she come from?* Then, further down the row of cages, I saw a grey husky with brown eyes. *Where did he come from?!* He was not profiled on the Orphans website.

I brought over one of the volunteers.

“What’s the deal with this husky mix?” I asked. “I didn’t see him on the website.”

“He came in yesterday,” she said, “with thirty other dogs from Tennessee.”

“Really? That many?”

“They didn’t have room at the shelter down there. So, we brought them here.” A subtle way of saying they would have been euthanized.

“Can I take him out for a moment?”

She opened the cage and handed me the leash. While we walked outside, the husky just looked around. He led me, sniffed a little. Mostly, he simply looked out into the distance.

“Not paying much attention to me, huh?” I said to him.

He stared ahead.

He was not the husky I imagined. He did not have the blue or white eyes typical of his breed. And, his body shape was slim, though he sported a big head. The majestic husky I had envisioned was kind of a funny-looking fella. But he had piercing brown eyes that seemed observant and probing.

While we walked around the grounds, he seemed gentle enough; still, he didn’t acknowledge me at all.

“Hey, dude. Gimme something! I am here to find a dog. You gotta sell yourself!” I joked.

Nothing.

But something struck me. I believe in fate and timing – And, then, there was the funny big head!

We returned to the cages, where I asked more questions.

“So, you don’t know anything about him? Is he housebroken? How old is he?”

“We figure he is about two years old. And, he seems housebroken. Like I said, we just got him yesterday.”

I looked again at the new tag on the cage. “Gus. Siberian Husky mix”. *Gus? Really?*

“Let me take him around one more time.”

“Sure,” the volunteer said. “No rush.”

As we did another lap around the area, I weighed my decision. Unlike Oscar, a black shepherd schipperke mix, this guy was a grey and white husky. I was looking for another male dog. Big enough to wrestle and roughhouse with; but, not too big. And, something different from Oscar. *There is only one Oscar!*

“Hey, Gus.” He didn’t turn around. In fact, he didn’t react to anything spoken. “OK, we can throw that name out the window.” The name Gus didn’t seem right for a husky, anyway.

During our walk, he made a point to step in a massive mud puddle and get dirty. *Definite personality. And, sort of funny-looking.*

“I’m going to take him,” I said to the volunteer. *This is impulsive; but I believe in fate.*

It cost me four hundred fifty dollars for adoption, shots, and neutering. Over the weekend, the husky would go to the vet for the procedure. *From Tennessee, to one day in a shelter, to the clinic... and then a name change.* I wrote “Norway” in the adoption papers.

Over the weekend, I prepared for his arrival. And, I learned he had worms. “Of course, he does,” I mumbled to myself. More money and more stuff to fix. But I would not be deterred!

* * *

On Monday, I went to the clinic and picked up my dog! We walked outside toward the car. A thought occurred to me: *I wonder if he likes riding in a car? If not, that will be a problem. No more road trips.* I led him into the Nissan. He climbed onto the back seat and sat there. I loaded a bag of medical items, dog treats, and adoption gifts into the car. Then, we took off.

The drive went fine. Norway peered out the window. No car sickness. He seemed good for the road. Ten minutes later, we went to the house. Inside, I placed the pain pills, some treats, and items on the kitchen counter. Norway stood at the entrance looking at me.

“Last week, you were on death row in Tennessee. Then, you were at the shelter for a day. Then, you got your jewels snipped. Now, you are at your new home! Quite the week.”

I gave him a guided tour and let him wander through the house. He sniffed the baseboards in the living room, bedrooms, and office. Then, he walked around the kitchen. I led him to the porch and introduced the doggie door. With a treat in my hand, I lifted the flap. He burst through the door. I stepped inside, lifted the flap, and he popped back inside. It was a fun game to him. At the same time, he understood he could enter and exit as he pleased.

“OK, I am going to run and get you some vittles. Then, we’ll have lunch.”

I put the Elizabethan Cone over his head. The cone would prevent him from chewing his stitches. He sat on the couch and looked at me. Poor guy looked silly with a funnel over his head.

“I’ll be quick.” I darted out the door. At the store, I picked up a rotisserie chicken to spice up his dry dog food. Then, I raced back home. I hurried inside the house, wondering what I would find. *How did Norway react to being left alone for a moment?*

I stopped short. In the living room, the funnel was torn apart, lying in the middle of the rug. *Where’s Norway?*

Through the window, I saw him trotting around the fenced-in backyard. I went outside to check on him. He got excited: someone to play with!

“Norway, you are going to tear your stitches!” I warned. “Slow down.” I tried to settle him, but he just kept playing and running away from me.

Bring Norway

OK, that is not working. But, at least, he is having fun.

I went back inside to unpack the chicken. As I poured dog food in the bowl – and, topped it with the juicy chicken – I noticed something was missing from the counter.

“His pills!” They were gone. After scanning the kitchen, I went outside and searched around frantically. There on the grass was the bottle of pain pills – open and empty. *Oh, no.*

I went inside and called the vet clinic.

“Hi, I picked up the husky earlier today.”

“Yes, how’s it going?”

“OK, I guess,” I said while watching Norway through the window. “But I think my dog swallowed all of his pain pills.”

“All of them? Are you sure?”

“Yeah, he got a hold of the bottle when I stepped out for a few minutes. Right off the counter.”

“Huskies will do that,” she said.

“I found the bottle in the backyard, but I didn’t see any pills.” *How did he unscrew the safety cap off?* “I think he ate them. Should I bring him in? Or, is there something I should do?”

The woman asked, “How does he look?”

“Fine, I guess. Right now, he is just running back and forth in the backyard. He looks energized and happy.” *Five days of pain pills might do that!*

“Is there any way you could calm him down?”

“I tried. He thinks I am playing with him.”

“OK,” she said. “Just monitor his stitches.”

“I guess.” I wasn’t sure what I could do. He’d already torn apart his cone. “But the pills won’t harm him?”

“We’ll see,” she answered. “If he seems OK, then they will just go through his system. Just be careful and call us if his behavior changes. And, keep an eye on his stitches.”

I got off the phone and watched Norway playfully run back and forth. *What can I do?* He ignored the lure of treats. I couldn’t catch and stop him. We would just have to wait and see if the stitches ripped open. But, right then, he was as happy as could be!

That first evening, Norway enjoyed his chicken dinner. Afterward, he wandered around to look for a sleeping spot. He

had the backyard, a doggie bed, the couch, and other comfortable choices. Eventually he came into the bedroom and jumped onto the bed. He walked around, climbing over me, and then plopped down beside me, pressing up against me.

“Bonding,” I said. “This is a good start.”

Then, for a moment, I recognized how trustworthy – or, naïve – I was with dogs. Here was this random stray dog, that looks like a wolf, lying beside me. He could rip off my face in the middle of the night. Yet, I had a sense that he would be a kind companion.

PART I

EAST

NORWAY WATCHED ME exit and enter the house.

“Going on a road trip,” I told him as I passed by carrying supplies. “You’re going to like this!” I went out the door, making sure the latch was closed.

After five months, we were going on our first big trip. Having done extensive road trips with Oscar, the planning and preparation came easy. I packed the same items, then loaded the Nissan with a few duffel bags, snacks, and dog supplies.

I spent thirty minutes getting ready, while Norway observed. *Then, he made his move.* When I failed to latch the door completely, he made a dash through the opening.

I put down my box and walked out into the driveway. Norway was standing about forty feet away.

“Come here, Norway,” I encouraged him. I crouched, and kindly said, “Come on, boy.”

Then, he smiled and darted down the street. *F\$%#K!* I had learned from prior occasions that it is terribly difficult to catch a two-year-old husky.

I ran inside and grabbed the leash, along with treats to lure him. I went back outside, and headed down the residential street to track Norway. At 6:00 a.m., the neighborhood was quiet. I found him in the next block, sniffing bushes. I cautiously approached. At one hundred feet away, he saw me and trotted farther. Then, he stopped and sniffed some more. Occasionally, he looked up at me. I tried walking away to draw him closer, but instead of following, he just watched. Then, I called out. No reaction. I waved his treats. He was not interested. Each time I got close, he went farther. It was a game of edging closer and snatching him when he was not looking.

Forty-five minutes later, I corralled Norway.

“Not part of the plan. You are wrecking our schedule,” I said to my energetic, eager companion.

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS, to PERRYSBURG, OHIO

THE LAST ITEMS went into the trunk. I set my laptop bag on the passenger floor. Then, we did a final inspection around the house. The appliances were off, the windows were closed, and the desktop computer was shut down. I locked up, and then led Norway to the passenger side of the car. He wasted no time leaping into the seat. I got in, started the engine, and we headed down the driveway. After a two-year hiatus, the road trips resumed!



Waiting for the driver!

As we started east on I-94, Norway enjoyed the ride. It was a cool morning, so I cracked the windows on the way toward downtown Chicago. Suddenly, I heard a sound in the backseat.

“Oh, my god!”

Norway had one front leg through the narrow opening in the back window. His head was outside. *He is trying to jump out!* The next highway exit was one mile away. And, this road section did not have a shoulder to pull over.

While steering the car —moving at forty miles per hour amid the modest traffic -- I stretched back to grab his collar. I couldn't reach. Norway cried out, because he was partially stuck in the gap. When I cracked the window a bit more, Norway tried to get another paw through. So, I rolled the window up to prevent him from squeezing out. He squirmed. I was steering the car, trying not to swerve into the next lane - while glancing over my shoulder to see where Norway was. Then, I pressed the button to lower the window a bit. Norway cried louder.

Bring Norway

“Oh, shit.” I had accidentally pushed the wrong lever, closing the window tighter.

Finally, I managed to stretch and grab a clump of Norway’s fur. Holding tight, I abruptly opened the window and yanked him backward. Then, I closed all the windows.

“What on earth are you doing? You cannot jump out of a moving car!”

Norway just sat back in the seat and thought about his latest caper.

The next hour of driving was smooth. Surprisingly, Norway slept the entire way. *Maybe the morning escape and car incident had worn him out?* We made our first stop in Elkhart, Indiana. I had read about a giant American Gothic statue and wanted to see it. Also, halfway to our overnight destination seemed like a timely spot for lunch.

We found a parking place on the main street. There were several statues and artwork lined along the sidewalks. While Norway stretched his legs, I browsed the scenery, which included several theme-painted elk statues and illustrated hearts. I scanned the area for lunch options, and searched for the giant American Gothic. At the end of the block, we reached a large park, where the massive piece was in the distance.

The farmer with the pitchfork, beside his wife and suitcase, towered about twenty-five feet high. It had traveled to various fairgrounds, museums, and parks around the country. Now it was in Elkhart. Norway and I got a closer look and took photos from different angles.



American Gothic, Norway, and Lance

We left Central Park and continued to browse for lunch spots downtown. Unable to find a place with outdoor seating, we drove toward the interstate and settled for a Subway sandwich shop. I preferred local spots, but this chain restaurant had a wide-open outdoor patio.

Our first road trip lunch went well. Norway seemed pleased with the Subway turkey slices and enjoyed sitting in the shade. After the break, we returned to I-80 East, and continued to northern Ohio.

Bring Norway

Later that afternoon, we passed through Maumee and arrived at the La Quinta Inn in Perrysburg. I had been there three years earlier with Oscar, and I liked the spaciousness and large front lawn.

When we entered the hotel room, Norway scouted the new surroundings. Meanwhile, I inspected the room, moving the complimentary shampoo and soap out of the husky's reach.

Earlier this year, I had learned of Norway's attraction to household items. One afternoon, I had come home from work, and Norway was relaxing on the couch. We had a snack, watched TV, and then it was time for bed. When I went to brush my teeth, I realized the entire bathroom counter had been cleared! *Oh, Norway.*

I went to the living room and looked out the window. Meanwhile, Norway trotted through the porch and out the doggie door, into the backyard. I walked outside with a flashlight, and found all my bathroom items on the back lawn!

Beside my comb, now adorned with chew marks, lay my toothbrush and toothpaste. And, my bottle of mouthwash... my *empty* bottle. *Did Norway drink it? Or, did he just rinse and spit?*



Norway practicing good hygiene

I sighed and picked up the items. I wished I'd had a video recording. It would have been amusing to watch Norway move one item at a time from the bathroom to the backyard. It was quite an accomplishment.

After I cleared the La Quinta room of potential trouble, I looked over tomorrow's route. Meanwhile, Norway found a spot to take a nap.

In the evening, we went into downtown Perrysburg. As we walked up and down a few streets, and then along the Maumee River, people stared at Norway. Many commented, "Beautiful dog."

One woman stopped us. "My gosh. He is a gorgeous husky. Where are you from?"

I explained the road trip, that this was our first day traveling together.

"Well, he is so well-behaved," she said. "Mine is very energetic."

"Really?! You have a husky?"

"Yes, she is six years old."

"With blue eyes?" I asked.

"One blue. One white."

"Cool." I love those bright eyes. "What is your dog's name?"

"Iceland."

"Iceland? You're kidding! This is Norway."

She laughed. "Great name."

"Have you been to Iceland?" I asked.

"I have, many years ago," she said. "Have you been to Norway?"

"Yes, last year. Beautiful country. The fjords are magnificent. And, I got to meet some huskies out there."

"Really?"

"Yes, one day, I went hiking with a husky. It was amazing. My canine hiking partner was such a wonderful, social companion." I told her about the Norwegian countryside and the experience. Then, I added, "And, another time, I went summer sledding with a group of huskies. They loved running down the road, dragging me along."

"Huskies are so wonderful."

We talked about their endless energy. She informed me that hers started to slow down after about five or six years. I supposed I

Bring Norway

was in for a wild ride for the next few years. Then, I explained how I found Norway.

“His name at the shelter was Gus. I considered the name Columbo, but that seemed more appropriate for a basset hound or bloodhound. I had other options, but they were the names of other dogs; and one was the name of my friend’s kid. So, I passed on those. Norway just seemed right.”

Norway and I had dinner at Zingo’s. The patio table was solid, but not large enough to hold the husky. He could easily drag it away. I set him next to a bench that was anchored to the ground. “Wait here, buddy,” I told him. “I’ll try to be quick with some vittles for us.”

He watched me go around the corner and into the restaurant. A moment later, I returned to him. Then, we picked a table. The woman came out with our chicken and falafel. It was as delicious as I remembered from a few years earlier. Norway enjoyed the seasoned chicken chunks mixed with his dog food.

Following dinner, we continued our walk along the river, passing statues and monuments. Then, we circled around and stopped at O’Deer Diner for a giant sundae. A crowd of people sat enjoying the summer evening. Norway got excited when another dog approached. I held on tight to his harness. Then, to prevent a scene, I distracted him with tastes of my ice cream sundae.

After dessert, Norway and I returned to the hotel. The end of a solid, eventful day. I was pleased that traveling on the road would be something I could do with a young husky – just as I had done with old Oscar.

PERRYSBURG, OHIO, to ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

AFTER PACKING ITEMS into the car, we headed to the lobby. The La Quinta women at the registration desk nicely offered to hold Norway while I grabbed some breakfast items. They even gave him dog treats. *Norway making more friends!*

With breakfast in hand, we returned to the hotel room. After Norway tipped over his entire water bowl, I mopped up and fed him. He picked out the eggs and the dog treats, leaving most of his dog food.

Day two of driving went OK. The Ohio toll road had a one-hour delay due to an accident, along with the expected construction. Otherwise, the Thursday traffic was fine.

We passed through Cleveland and continued east to check out the Ohio bridges I had seen on RoadsideAmerica.com. The Liberty Street Bridge in Geneva was quite appealing. Completed in 2011, at just eighteen feet, it became the shortest covered bridge in the nation! A placard with its history, dimensions, and features was

Bring Norway

mounted on the side, and a kiosk and little toll booth area added charm. It did cross over a small creek --- so, it wasn't just for show.

At the Plymouth-Ashtabula township line, we visited the Smolen-Gulf Bridge. Dedicated in 2008, it was the longest wooden-covered bridge in the US and fourth-longest in the world. It spanned 613 feet at 90' above the Ashtabula River, offering a pretty view.

It was fun to contrast the bridges, as well as hike around the surrounding park areas. In between our bridge tours, we picked up lunch from Mr. Hero. Wrap and fries for me; chicken for Norway. We ate at picnic tables overlooking the bridge.



Above and below the Smolen-Gulf bridge

An hour later, we arrived at the hotel in Erie, PA. After picking up the room key, we headed out to explore Lake Erie. We started at Presque Isle Park on the sandy peninsula, taking in the beaches, bike paths, and volleyball courts, mixed with restaurants, snack bars, and recreational activities. *What a spacious public space!* Norway had his first water encounter, playing in the little waves along the lake-front. I had chosen Erie, because it was a suitable stopover between

Ohio and New York; but this afternoon excursion was a pleasant surprise.

We returned to the Red Roof Inn, where the dog-loving woman at the front desk gave an incredibly warm greeting. In our hotel room, I surveyed the space and picked up a remote control sitting on the night table. *Too low.*

“Not going to get this one,” I said to Norway as I patted him on the head.

During the past several months, I had gone through five TV remotes. The first time, I had come home and couldn't find the remote. Not under the couch. Not on the table. I looked out the window. The device was in the backyard. The plastic cover, batteries, button, and handle were in pieces. Norway had plenty of snacks and chew toys; but he couldn't resist the remote.

The conversation with the cable company went like this:

“Hello, thank you for calling RCN. How can I help you?”

“I need to replace my remote control,” I began.

“Is it broken?”

“I'm not going to make up a story,” I admitted. “My dog destroyed it. He got to it and chewed it apart.”

The woman took it in stride. “Oh, that can happen. Do you want to exchange it at the office? Or, we can send one to you.”

A few days later, the new remote arrived at my door. Two weeks later, another replacement was needed. I had tried to train Norway. But he snatched the next remote. I realized I needed to train myself, not my husky. I began placing the remote on a shelf.

One day, I forgot and left it on the couch. When I returned a few hours later, it was missing. Another call to RCN. Eventually, I habitually placed it on the shelf when leaving the living room. *I was trained.*

In the hotel room, I turned on the TV and placed the remote control behind the screen. Norway found a spot on the cool bathroom floor. Meanwhile, I checked Yelp and found encouraging reviews for Tasty Bowl. *Worth a try.*

Dinner was good. At twelve bucks for spring rolls, chicken, veggies, and white rice, there was plenty for Norway and myself. *Ready to dig in!* But I could not find the plastic utensils. The take-out

Bring Norway

place had forgotten to pack them. I ran down the hall and asked the nice woman at the front desk. She handed me a fork and spoon.

Following dinner, I fell asleep watching *Alone* on the History Channel. Norway was by my side the entire night. *By my side*. Norway the husky did not sleep at the foot of the bed. He did not sleep next to me. He slept *against* me. Sort of *on me*!

Years later, I mentioned to a Russian couple that I had a husky. The man asked, "Is it a Siberian husky?"

"Yes, he is."

"Does he sleep near you?" he continued.

"He does," I said. "Actually, he kind of lays on me. How did you know?"

My Russian friend smiled. "Yes, they were bred that way. In the northern parts, huskies were taught to protect the children while the adults were working and hunting. The huskies would keep the children warm."

"Impressive." It amazed me how domesticated animals can maintain traits in their bloodline. Norway was far from Russia. Yet, he exhibited the characteristics of the breed; and he was great with kids.

Although he hogged the sleeping space, I could at least keep track of him and I knew he wasn't chewing on something. And, I could take him outside if he got up.

Later in the evening, Norway began barking mixed with husky talk. He wanted to play. *Not good in the hotel room*. I tried giving Norway a chew bone, which did occupy him --- for ten minutes. Then, after offering him the rest of the Chinese food, he was content and quiet.

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA, to SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

I STARTED THE morning with a shower. A moment later, Norway jumped in, splattering water around the bathroom. *At least, there are no paw prints in the room.*

“Are you proud of yourself?” Norway just smiled while having fun.

Outside, it was overcast with bits of rain. But no complaints— it was not hot. After loading the car and packing up, I left a five-dollar tip for housekeeping and wrote a quick “Thank you” on LaQuinta Inn paper. I doubted the Red Roof housekeeper would mind.

The on-and-off rain continued, so we would bypass Niagara Falls. I had seen it on other occasions. Norway could see it another time. It was not worth the multi-hour detour with crappy weather.

After an hour, we paused at a rest area. As I walked with Norway and had a snack, a dozen people complimented the dog. A couple in an SUV drove by; and, a mini-husky poked its head out the passenger window. It looked like a cross between a chihuahua and husky with blue eyes. It yipped, and Norway barked back.

Bring Norway

We returned to the I-90 tollway and continued east. Half-way to our destination, we exited to take a lunchtime break. As we pulled up to the window, I searched for my ticket.

“Hello,” the toll booth woman said cheerfully.

“Hi,” I answered while shuffling through papers and my pile of spare change. *Where is the ticket?*

“Oh, boy. He is handsome.” She eyed Norway, perched in the passenger seat. “Quite a road companion.”

“Yes, he’s great company,” I said, “although he hasn’t got his driver’s license yet!”

The nice woman smiled and waved at Norway. We chatted as I kept looking for my toll ticket.

“I can’t find the ticket,” I finally told her. “We’re coming from Erie. We entered from there.”

“That’s OK,” she said. “You can use that price.”

“Thanks.”

After exiting the tollway, we stopped for a break at Tim Hortons. We sat at nearby benches in the shade and had lunch. Across from us sat a woman and her husband, a little terrier beside them. They were eating sandwiches, while their dog sat and watched – intrigued by Norway. Then, it turned toward two other pups in the distance.

Norway tried to pull away from the table to play with the little terrier – until I pulled out our snack. Immediately, he refocused and leaped onto the picnic table. *Time for lunch!*



Not the best table manners

“OK, OK,” I said to him. “So embarrassing. I can’t take you anywhere,” I joked while standing face to face with him. The others in the park area watched and laughed. A sixty-five-pound husky can be a formidable lunch effort.

In the afternoon, we checked into the Syracuse hotel and went for a quick excursion. I took the wrong exit and landed in a ghetto with stragglers loitering everywhere. I turned the car around, and with my map, traced a path to downtown.

Syracuse reminded me of an old Eastern US city. A bit run-down, but trying to rebuild. There were many commercial vacancies; yet, sections with new cafes and restaurants. We walked through a few blocks of bars and restaurants, until spotting the twenty-four-second clock. Set up on a street corner, it honored the first basketball shot clock used in 1954. A plaque explained the origin, purpose, and background of the clock. A nifty bit of basketball history.

Ninety minutes later, Norway and I returned to the car. On the ride back, I missed a turn, detoured, and took the long way. *Travel is a learning curve.* At last, we pulled into the hotel parking lot. I collected the bags and bowls, and we headed for the stairs. Our room was at the top; but Norway did not want to go up the stairs. *Ugh.* Instead, I carried the pile of items to the elevator, seventy-five feet down the corridor. We took the elevator up. Then, walked down the long corridor to the room.

Once inside, I dropped off the items. As I started to check my email, I noticed Norway was pacing. Fast! I picked up his leash, and we ran to the stairs. *Nope.* He would not go down. And, he would not let me lift him. So, we trotted down the corridor to the elevator. *Waiting, waiting.* Got in. Pushed the down button. *Waiting, Waiting.* After an eternity, we got to the bottom and trotted to the grass. Nothing. Then, a moment later, Norway found his spot and relieved himself. The lunch, snacks, and all kinds of stuff had worked through him. I bent down to pick up the waste, when I noticed, fully intact, *the white tollway ticket that was missing! When did he eat that?*

We regrouped in the hotel room until dinnertime. The kid at the front desk had suggested, “Joey’s is the best restaurant in Syracuse”. Also, he said, “Mafia’s Italian Pizzeria is a good spot.” Both were next to the hotel. I checked online for menus and reviews to pick one. Since Joey’s was busy, taking at least an hour for take-out, we walked to Mafia’s.

As we approached, a young guy left with a pizza. “Cool dog”, he said to me. I set Norway next to the entrance and went inside to order. As I looked at a menu, the owner appeared.

“You can bring the dog inside,” he said. “Beautiful dog.”

I escorted Norway inside and ordered the eggplant sandwich. It was enormous and filled with fresh ingredients. The owner showed me the huge eggplant he cut. While I watched him make our meal, we had a nice conversation.

I learned the owner had been a chef at many Atlantic City hotels and casinos. Eventually, he moved and opened this spot with his wife about fifteen years earlier.

Lance Friedman

As they put together the side salad, I requested meatballs for Norway.

“How ‘bout a leftover burger patty?” he offered.

“Perfect.”

They did not even charge for it. I think they liked the dog!



Mafia's pizza. Another satisfied customer!

Bring Norway

A few minutes later, he offered to cut up chicken as well. *A feast for Norway!* We had picked a great place.

Carrying the bags of dinner, we walked back to the hotel room. In the bathroom, I prepared Norway's dinner - dry dog food, topped with the burger and meatballs. Norway sniffed and watched with anticipation. It looked good.

Following his delicious meal, Norway climbed onto the middle of the bed and fell asleep.

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK, to LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK

AT 5:30 A.M., Norway began his “I want to play” barking and yelping, mixed with Husky talk. Luckily, our room 201 was at the end of the corridor, and room 203 was vacant. It was unlikely he disturbed anyone. I took him for two walks, bringing items to the car, hoping to settle him down a bit.

Back in the room, I managed a workout, mixing exercises for thirty minutes. Half the time, Norway watched with interest. The other half, he got involved –wagging his tail and pivoting back and forth while I did jumping jacks, crawling under me during the planks, and climbing on top of me doing sit-ups. *At least, he's not barking.*

After checking out, we sat in the air-conditioned Red Roof lobby so Norway could enjoy attention from two of the hotel workers. Fifteen minutes later, we hit the road.

Yesterday's rain had passed. It was bright and sunny with a cool breeze. We briefly used the I-90 tollway, where I observed another tollway worker doing double duty -- alternating between handing

Bring Norway

tickets to those going, and flipping to the other side to take tickets and money from those coming. *God bless him for doing the tough active job.* The young man happily greeted us and took time to offer Norway dog treats! This time, Norway ate the treats, not the toll ticket.

We exited onto I-81 north and headed sixty miles toward Watertown, NY. At Route 3, we turned east and continued into downtown Watertown. While passing the courthouse, I noted signs to Route 12. A pizzeria sat next to the currency exchange, tattoo parlor, and monument ponds. Suddenly, I recognized we were criss-crossing the route Oscar and I had taken three years ago!

We traveled east on Route 3 for two more hours. Ten miles short of Lake Placid, we stopped at Saranac Lake. There was a farmers market beside the village. We walked around the area, noting the bars, restaurants, and local monuments. Afterward, we went to the lakefront, grabbed a slice of pizza across the street, and ate a quick snack in the park.

We finished our drive into Lake Placid and found the Crowne Plaza. The location was great -- near the Olympic attractions. The room was disappointing, with no clear view of the lake. However, it provided quick access to the front lawn. Crowne Plaza was much more expensive than the Lake House visit three years earlier. *Perhaps, we had gotten a deal because the Lake House had just opened.*

Norway and I spent a few hours strolling around the village. We enjoyed the open air, view of Mirror Lake, and quaint local shops. Mostly, we visited the outdoor skating rink where Eric Heiden won five gold medals, and the arena location of the "1980 Miracle on Ice".



Wandering past sports history

A woman passerby was extremely sweet, offering to keep Norway company while I went inside to explore the Olympic ice rink for fifteen minutes.

The husky attracted quite a bit of attention. Some were a bit wary of him. But most people enjoyed meeting Norway, especially five young coeds we encountered. We chatted for a moment as Norway soaked up the attention. The females loved him, his name, and the fact that he was a rescue.



The luckiest dog in the world!

Bring Norway

We followed the main road up the hill to a synagogue. It was an ornate building with a big blue menorah embedded in the brick face. Interestingly, the 125-year-old synagogue was open all year round, supported by a couple dozen families in the area.

Norway and I turned and went back to the main area. We enjoyed beautiful weather, plus water bowls were conveniently placed at different restaurants. We stopped for a sandwich at the Big Mountain Deli. I ordered a #42 out of forty-six sandwiches -- a tribute to the forty-six Adirondack peaks. The avocado, tomato, onion, and cheddar cheese on fresh bread looked appetizing. And, the young guy serving was super nice and helpful! Meanwhile, a young woman was watching out the window, keeping an eye on Norway.

We walked back to the Crowne Plaza to retrieve Norway's dog bowls, as well as pretzels and soda in the room. Instead of the long way around on the paved route, we tried the shortcut. Thankfully, Norway was OK trotting up the hill and stairs.



Full of energy at the top of Lake Placid hill

He was adapting, starting to go up and down some stairs, and interacting with certain dogs. At the hotel room, we had dinner. After five minutes, he was conked out on the floor.

Following a power nap, Norway was running around the room with a surge of “I want to play” energy. I was exhausted.

“Save it for tomorrow!” I promised.

LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK (day 2)

AT 1:00 A.M., I followed Norway outside, where he promptly did some business. Afterward, we slept well as the air conditioner cranked. Norway was by my side. Although two beds occupied an enormous room, Norway crowded onto the soft bed with me. He woke up at 5:30, but luckily, he simply repositioned himself and went back to sleep.

At 7:15, Norway was up, stepping on my head, and walking over me.

“Wonderful,” I said to him. “Yes, I’m excited for today, too!”

Lake Placid was a town I recognized. With no plans to drive, we could relax, with plenty of time to revisit favorite places. After dressing, I grabbed Norway’s water bottle, my headphones, and an extra shirt from the car. This morning, it was sunny, cool, and peaceful.

After confirming directions at the front desk, we began the 2.7-mile loop around Mirror Lake -- the perfect length for a leisurely one-hour walk. The path mostly encircled Mirror Lake

Drive, making it tough to get lost. We walked down the sidewalk, past the small, sandy public beach, around the bend, and up the road past a section of beautiful homes. We went by numerous walkers, dogs, runners, and triathletes swimming in the Lake. The July Lake Placid Ironman competition was a few weeks away.

We stopped and talked to a variety of people, including a New York woman who had traveled in Iceland to see the northern lights and loved huskies. We passed some again on the other side of the lake, as they were walking clockwise while we walked counterclockwise. Encounters were 85-15 positive. Occasionally, Norway excitedly “attacked” another dog. Or, lunged at a runner. Norway loved to play, but he did not recognize boundaries. *And, he is unaware that he scares the crap out of little fifteen-pound dogs.*

In one instance, Norway lunged at a runner. The woman darted aside, as his paw swiped high at her shirt sleeve. I yanked Norway aback, and hoped that he hadn’t scratched the woman or torn her shirt.

Twenty minutes later, we saw the same woman! We were unable to avoid her on the narrow sidewalk. In this second encounter, she stopped running and turned to us.

“Hi,” she said with a smile.

“Hey, how’s it going?” I answered cautiously. I was certain she recognized us.

“Great dog.”

“Thanks. He gets a little excited. Sorry about earlier. Did he tear your shirt or scratch your arm?”

“No, it’s all good. I love dogs.”

After a brief pat on the head, she jogged away.

Overall, Norway followed the path, and people enjoyed meeting him. On the north side of Mirror Lake, we ran into a couple dragging their Labrador retriever our way. Apparently, the lab wanted to go down a road to the water. *He knew the way!* Unfortunately for the pup, the couple had an appointment in the other direction.

Norway and I walked down the road to a boat landing beside Lake Placid. We greeted two young girls working there. As three kayakers with fishing gear were pulling in to the dock, I introduced Norway to swimming. He half doggy-paddled after plunging into the

Bring Norway

water. Then, panicking a bit, he tried to climb onto the pier instead of just swimming the five feet to the shore! But he was improving.



Morning adventure in Lake Placid

We returned to the path along Mirror Lake, connecting onto Main Street through town. Eventually, our walk ended at the sandy beach where the route had begun. I took Norway over to the lake shore. He still was not enthusiastic about the water and swimming. But he loved darting around in the sand!

During a quick stop at the room, I checked messages and made the Montreal reservations. I spoke to a gentleman named Turgay and booked directly --- which resulted in a slightly better price and free parking.

Norway was impatient, so we headed off to find lunch. I picked up a salad at Good Bites. Then, walked to Big Mountain Deli to see about a chicken sandwich snack for Norway. There was a huge line; so, we returned to the Crowne Plaza to eat on their patio with a view. This plan worked out well until it started raining.

After a brief rest in the room, we went back to the beach. I noticed there were posted “No Dogs” signs. *Hmmm, I hadn't seen them this morning.* No swim lesson for Norway. Instead, we walked around the town.

The sun had come out. While a trail hike was an option, we preferred interacting with the dog-friendly people. Also, it was amusing to see crowds keep Norway company while I was inside a shop getting a frozen hot chocolate.



Norway waiting with his new friends

At dinner time, I spoke with a woman and her family while waiting for a #46 sandwich outside the Big Mountain Deli. She had a female husky. Her pure husky was super mellow, although she had similar habits of laying on the woman when sleeping at night. Her boy loved playing with Norway. And, Norway enjoyed it, howling and rolling around! Others gathered to take pictures with the prominent husky.

Bring Norway

Following the public relations, we strolled back to the room and relaxed. I watched TV, and ate half of the sandwich, leaving the rest for a nighttime snack. It was a tasty mix of turkey, provolone, avocado, tomato, and other fresh ingredients. I gave Norway the turkey out of the sandwich. He was pleased with his share.

The laundry room had two washers and three dryers. *How many people at this resort did their laundry on vacation?* After utilizing the available machines, I returned to the room and dumped the clean clothes on the bed. As I folded and placed items in the suitcase, Norway came over. For some reason, he enjoyed watching me fold laundry at home. *Maybe he felt like he was participating in an activity. Or, was he eyeing one of the pieces to add to his collection of chew toys?* Each time, he would hop on the bed next to the clean clothes and sit with a sense of comfort as I folded them.

LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK, to MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

WE GOT UP at 5:30 a.m. -- thanks to Norway. He began to bark, talk, and run around on the bed. After I showered and stashed a few items in the car, we retraced our path around Mirror Lake.

The thick-coated husky appreciated – and, thrived in -- the chilly morning temperatures. At one spot, Norway got a burst of energy and raced ahead. I tried to keep up; but, the slack in the leash disappeared and Norway's harness jerked him backward for a moment. He got more excited and pressed ahead, digging into the ground and dragging me behind. The more I pulled back on the leash, the more excitedly Norway countered with a burst forward. He was in sled dog mode. If I had another husky and a sled, I could have gotten quite a ride!

After fifty yards, Norway suddenly stopped by a tree. He sniffed the scents around the base, while I caught up. Then, satisfied he darted off again. *This is fun!*

After the morning trot, I handed Norway treats. Then, he passed out on the bed. I checked email and wrote quick directions on paper --- *86E to 9N to 87N to 15--* to Montreal. *How hard could that be?*

I finished packing and clearing stuff out of the hotel room fridge. The slushy Gatorade was pretty good, just like the slushy raspberry iced tea I'd had in the Erie, PA hotel room. *I have not quite figured out these hotel mini fridges.* Breakfast was not included in our hotel reservation; and, we skipped the rather expensive extra option. We were ready to go. Norway perked up as I picked up his leash.

Lake Placid to Montreal was about a hundred and twenty miles of driving. Halfway, we stopped in Champlain, NY for a snack at Nathan's fast-food. I picked up a sandwich for me and beef slices for Norway. After our pit stop, we crossed the border. *Bon Jour.* Welcome to Quebec!

I followed my directions, printed maps, and the giant Montreal skyline into the heart of the city. With little trouble, we reached our hotel. After parking, Norway and I climbed the steps to meet Turgay. The friendly gentleman checked us in and pointed us to room 4.

The accommodations were terrific. We had two rooms, a kitchen, and bathroom. Plenty of space for just me and a dog. The cable TV was minimal - but they offered DVD movies to use with the room's player.

A block away, I found a store to get necessities. *Where would Norway wait if I went inside?* It was harder than I thought to find an outdoor cash machine. A hotel staff member made a great suggestion: find an ATM at a pub. It was an option, assuming Norway was in my sight.

With a list of attractions and a map, we set out to explore. Once I got oriented, it was quite easy to navigate the section we walked. Tour highlights included a very cool matador mural on Blvd. St. Laurent - among other eye-catching street art; and Schwartz's deli with its famous original smoked meat. There was a line, and besides, I do not eat meat. As we walked by, Norway eyed the crowd. At Parc LaFontaine, we spotted the forty-nine-foot, giant slingshot,

carved from a dead tree. Surrounding this piece was a nice-looking park with plenty of squirrels for Norway to chase.

People were sunning, biking, and walking their dogs, enjoying a cool, beautiful day. After more than three hours, Norway had grown tired—he even lay at one of the last traffic lights. But he made it!

We took a break in the room until dinner time. Looking at online maps, along with TripAdvisor and Yelp reviews, I chose Cafe Lola Rosa. The Mexican/vegetarian restaurant was five blocks down Rue Milton. On the way out, I got directions to an ATM from Turgay. It was inside the convenience store we had passed two doors down! The ATM was right by the window, so I could see Norway. I withdrew cash and bought a soda on the way out.

We walked down Milton, passing restaurant options for tomorrow. Norway was scouting, tugging, and stopping every three feet to smell scraps and shrubs. Then, he would race ahead. We had walked more than three miles that morning in Lake Placid, and we added almost four hours exploring Montreal. Yet, he had more energy to expend.

We reached McGill University at the end of the road. *Did we miss the restaurant?* I asked a few people, and on the fifth try, I found two students who pointed us in the right direction. I couldn't believe we had passed the restaurant the first time. *Why didn't Norway tell me?!*

As Norway waited beside a tree, I went inside to order take-out. While waiting for service, I could see Norway through the open wall. A young woman was keeping him company, and other passersby greeted him. *Very good.*

A few moments later, while paying the bill, I heard growling --- A little dog had run up to Norway. *Oh no.* I went outside to see the dog and its owner scampering across the street. *Oops.*

"Norway, try to avoid any international incidents, please." I said to him.

He just happily wagged his tail.

With the bag of food, we headed back. The Café Lola Rosa dinner was healthy and tasty. Plus, plenty left over in the fridge. There was a bit of spice, so hopefully it would not upset any stomachs

Bring Norway

-- mine or Norway's. I didn't want to have to walk him in the middle of the night.

Where do I walk him? I suppose in the back alley, where homeless people had set up shop. The alley did smell a bit like a urinal.

In the evening, we went for a quick walk to see if Norway would relieve himself and whether the frozen yogurt place was open. The froyo place was closed, and Norway did not go. We did greet three Eskimo/Northern Canadian/indigenous/homeless/drinkers who were out in the back. They were quite polite and had an affinity for the husky and me. Hopefully, they would keep an eye on our car.

I collected dog treats and a sweatshirt from the car. On the way back to the apartment, I picked up an ice cream bar at the convenience store. Then, we headed up the stairs, ending a day of a lot of walking in Lake Placid and Montreal. There was not much on Canadian TV, aside from an *America Ninja Warrior* rerun.

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA (day 2)

“BOY, YOU RECHARGE quickly, don’t you?”

At five a.m., Norway began to yelp and bark, leaving me no choice but to go outside. To his credit, he did his business during our walk around the city block. I led him back inside, up the stairs, and into our room. I tried to go back to sleep, but Norway began jumping on me, yelping, and wagging his tail.

“Oscar would never do this!” I joked, complained, and pleaded.

I relented and got up, showered, and dressed. I drew up our game plan, using the Wi-Fi to scan various spots in the area. Meanwhile, Norway sat on the bed, napped, got up, napped, and chewed through part of a bedsheet. *F\$%#k.*

I neatened up the room and dumped Norway’s food, just as a few ants appeared. After removing the food, they vanished.

On the way out, I grabbed my headphones, camera, waste bags, the dog water bottle, and map. Outside was sunny and cool—a perfect morning for exploring and outdoor activities. We started down Rue Milton, passed Lola Rosa Café, and on to McGill/University

Bring Norway

Road to the museum area. On the way, tons of cool photography, artwork, and sculptures were displayed along the streets!



Norway and the Wolf statue

We turned toward the financial area, walking among people going to work. Strolling down the wide Blvd. Bourassa, past the Bourse, Montreal Exchange, and big banks, was pleasant.

As we turned toward the old city, Norway became a bit sick, hesitated, and almost threw up. At the next corner, just two blocks from the open grass of Victoria Square, he relieved himself on the sidewalk. Thankfully, I had bags and a full container of water to clean up.

We reached the western part of the old city, passed the Centre d'histoire de Montreal museum with its impressive architecture, and strolled by several quaint shops. I stopped at a cafe to get a banana smoothie and try a vegan *pastrie*. The peanut butter/chocolate snack was quite good. Meanwhile, water and a treat pleased Norway.

After the breakfast break, we spent time on cobblestone roads, by the port with views of the river, and back around to the huge palaces, plazas, Hotel de Ville, and Notre-Dame Basilica. *Awesome*. Being a weekday, it wasn't too crowded. I noticed a watering spot,

near an outdoor fruit stand. Norway got a sip, and I bought items for tomorrow.

We continued up and down the Old Montreal streets, eyeing potential rest places. When I looked over a wall menu at Creperie Chez Suzette, Norway decided to lie down beside me. He was exhausted. A woman was setting up the patio.

“Excuse me,” I said. “Is it OK if we eat here?”

“Yes, it is fine,” she said, and offered any of the outdoor lunch spots.

I chose a table off to the side, in the shade for Norway, with a view of the passing people. I decided to try the crepes and Quebec maple syrup. Moments later, a big family took up two full tables beside us. Norway rose to meet our neighbors seated in the adjacent plastic chairs.

“Sorry about that,” I said to the boys seated closest to us. “I hope he’s not bothering you.”

“He’s OK,” they said. “We like dogs.”

“Where are you from?” They didn’t have Canadian accents. One sounded Southern.

“We live in Seattle and North Carolina. We’re visiting family here in Montreal.”

Norway started to nose into their table area. They gave him a pat on the head. “What’s his name?”

“Norway.”

“Really? Her parents are from Norway.” They pointed at their mother.

We continued chatting until the food came out. Norway turned his eyes to my plate of crepes. They were terrific, and the Canadian maple syrup was tasty.

Twenty minutes later, the manager and the cook came outside with complimentary cheese for the customers and snacks for Norway. Also, they agreed to prepare a doggie portion of roast beef for five bucks. Great! Norway made some friends, was fed, and we all got to relax and enjoy Montreal.

After cooling and fueling, Norway and I continued sightseeing, then headed back. We never found the dog park. It wasn’t at the listed address. However, we viewed more cool murals and street art.

Then we reached St. Laurent. *Familiar*. That led to Sherbrooke. *Familiar*. And, eventually, Parc Ave. I was getting the hang of the streets. I realized that the street names changed when you moved to different districts, much like Paris. Also, I noted areas with Jewish influence—restaurants with *Kosher* written in Hebrew. Also, the style had hints of New York and classic Europe. I noticed the attractive, chic women. And observed Inuit-indigenous influence and appearances.

When we arrived at the hotel entrance, Norway got excited. I opened the door, and he dashed up the lower part of the stairs. He paused, looked back to make sure I was right behind him, and darted up the upper half. *I guess he's learning how to use stairs!*

When we entered the room, Norway headed right to the toilet and his water bowl. He gulped the water, plopped down on the cool floor next to the fridge, and passed out before I took off his leash and harness. We were exhausted from five hours of walking.

After uploading photos and checking messages, I sat in bed with the pup and watched a DVD. I had picked *Legalese*, a TV movie with James Garner, Gina Gershon, and Mary Louise Parker. *How bad can it be?* Through the window, I watched the clouds pouring in. *Is rain on the way?*

Following the movie, and after lying around, I went to fix dinner. We had the leftovers from Lola Rosa Café. Plus, Norway had dry dog food to mix with leftovers and the wet canned food in the fridge. And treats, in case he didn't like his dinner.

Before turning in for the evening, I stopped at the convenient market next door to grab a soda and a candy bar for later. We greeted two more Inuit people living in the back alley. They loved Norway, probably because he looked like a wolf.

We encountered an elderly lady. When I mentioned I was from Chicago, she commented, "It's dangerous, no?" *Is that the impression of Chicago this Canadian has?* For some reason, a Chicago tourism commercial frequently appeared on the local Montreal station, encouraging people to visit Chicago. Apparently, the television ad had not affected this lady's impression.

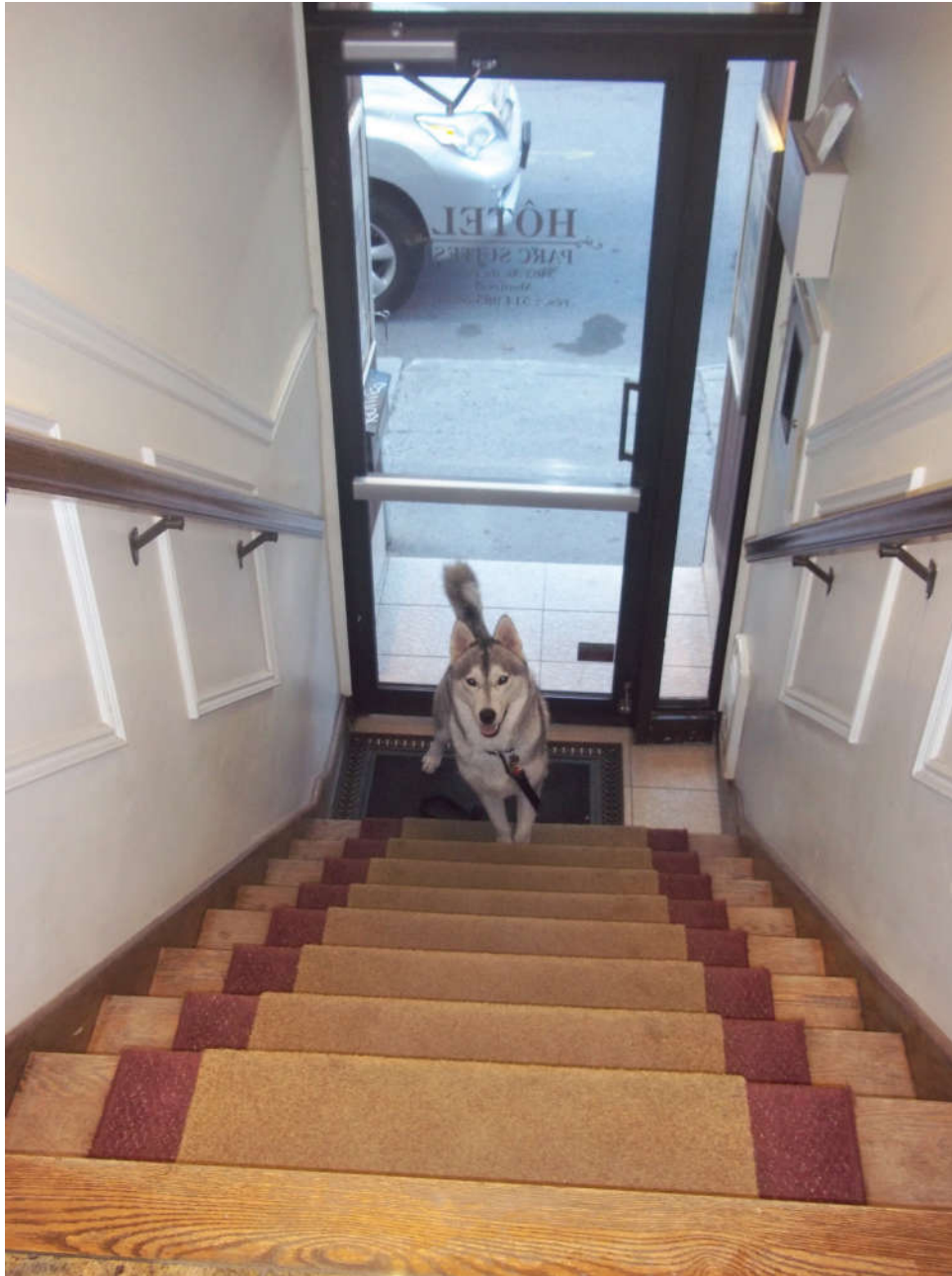
Back at the room, I turned on the TV. A television commentator was talking about finding out info about your blind date. "You want

to see if they are criminal, transgender, or a Trump supporter.” The panel nodded, and the audience laughed in agreement. *Guess the wholesome matchmaking days of Dear Abby and The Dating Game have ended.* I flipped channels. Then, after an unhealthy dose of toxic television, I tried another 1990’s DVD movie from the front desk until I fell asleep.

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, to QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC

AFTER GETTING CHANGE to leave for housekeeping, we said good-bye to Turgay. The gentleman was very understanding when I mentioned the hole in the bed sheet. Thankfully, he liked the husky. Norway went ahead and started down the stairs.

“Great job, Norway!” He made it to the bottom. Admittedly, once he started, he couldn’t turn around midway down the steep stairway. Nevertheless, we were pleased with the accomplishment.



Look out below!

We got in the car and followed Rue Sherbrooke southwest until turning onto Autoroute 15.

“See, I’m learning my way through Montreal!” I proudly said to Norway. He was staring out the window watching the rush hour traffic.

At times, the French signs and roads were a bit confusing. Luckily, I could see a big orange sphere in the distance. I was on the correct path to the Gibeau Orange Julep. Its claim to fame as

Bring Norway

the largest orange sphere in the world became obvious. The roadside attraction—a fast-food spot with an eye-catching architectural design—was erected in 1964 by the Gibeau family.



Hanging around the Orange Julep

At nine a.m., we parked in the mostly empty, huge, round parking lot. *This place must fill up on weekends.* The orange julep drink was delicious. It tasted like a sweet version of Orange Julius. We sat at picnic tables and listened to satellite radio pop and rock music blasting out of their speakers. I treated Norway to a burger patty for breakfast. I passed on any food, although I was tempted to try the vegetarian hot dogs and their poutine.

After the morning pit stop, we headed back onto the 15 Nord, then connected to the 40 East. Then, in fluid traffic, we entered the QC-25, which was a tunnel toward downtown. Next, we turned onto 20 East. And off we went to our next city.

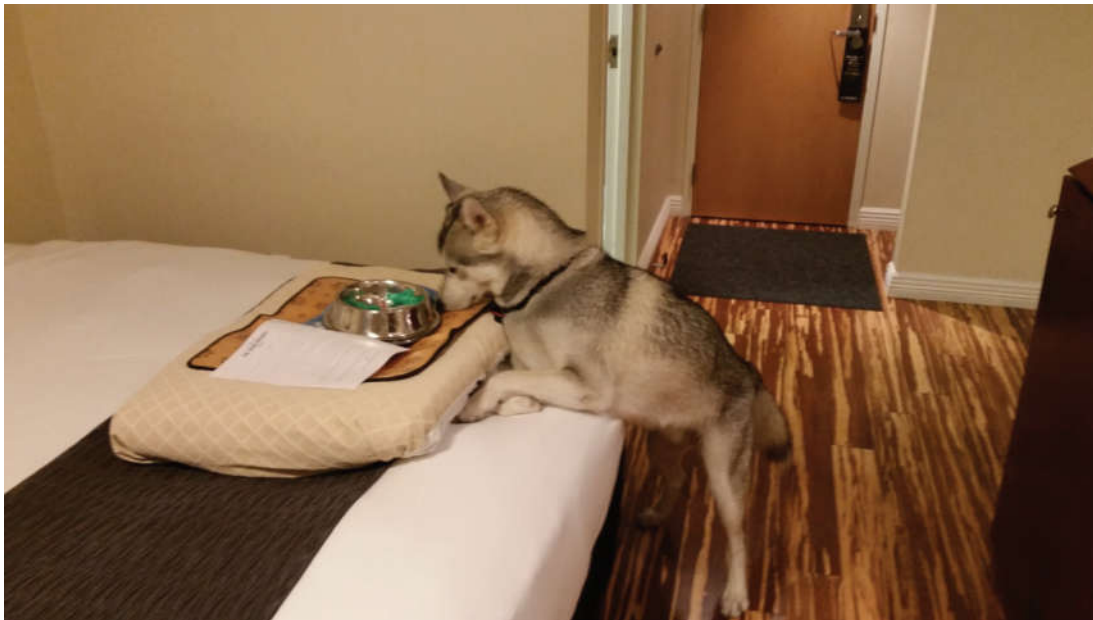
Norway slept through most of the easy drive. I followed my written directions: *20 East to 73 Nord and connecting to 40 East.* It

was going fine, but some of the signs were a bit misleading. *Am I still on the correct route?* I began looking for a gas station to check my directions, when suddenly I saw the turnoff for Route 40.

We took 40 East and started looking for the hotel. I noted signs for downtown Quebec and Montmorency—two places we intended to visit. Then, among the city sights, I saw the hotel on the side of the road.

Le Dauphin was a score! First, the price and location were quite good. It was next to a twenty-four-hour Tim Hortons, in case I wanted a snack later. The front desk people were very pleasant. One enthusiastically wanted to pet Norway. Our room was tremendous, with nice features, lots of outlets, and comfortable decor with non-carpeted tiles, so no messes. The curtains opened to reveal an indoor pool. Sadly, Norway hadn't packed a swimsuit.

The hotel staff left a dog kit with a few treats, a blanket, and little dog bed, in addition to a dog bowl and waste bags. It was welcoming and thoughtful. Norway jumped onto the bed to look at the contents. *I doubt that's what the hotel had intended.*



Norway eyeing his goodies

There was another Le Dauphin about one hundred kilometers before Quebec. Was this a Canadian hotel chain? *Will I find*

others further along on this trip? I tried the cable TV. There were many French stations. The talk shows looked familiar, but they were speaking French. I changed channels and found *Magnum PI*. Much better!

In the afternoon, we drove twenty minutes to Montmorency Falls. I had learned it was a beautiful place with views and an opportunity for Norway to get some exercise. On the way, rain poured, then it stopped briefly, only to be followed by hail. Undeterred, we continued to the park.

At Montmorency, I learned you could get to the top via the stairways. This worked for me but not for Norway. While Norway showed promise in Montreal, he was still wary of steps. To this point, I had never gotten him to walk down the stairs to our basement. And at some hotels we had to take the elevator when he resisted the stairs with all his might. I wondered about the fear. Had someone pushed him down? Had he been locked in a basement? I hoped it was natural and not trauma from an experience.

We took a back trail, winding up the side of the mountain. Eventually, the shaded, wooded path emerged at the top where the stairs ended. The skies overhead had cleared. And we got a gorgeous view of Quebec City, the St. Lawrence River, and the horizon.

Descending paths are not easy, especially after rain. We retraced the damp trail back down. The pace was brisk as Norway excitedly led the way.

“Wait a sec,” I called out as I hurried behind him, holding his long leash.

“Wait.” We picked up speed. “Norway! Wait!” I tried keeping up, sidestepping the rocks, trying to maintain my footing on the muddy parts of the trail. But it was not enough.

“F\$%#%\$K!”

I slid thirty feet down the muddy hill—until Norway stopped and turned to look at me. He was expressionless, wondering why we had stopped.

“Wait,” I said emphatically to him.

I gathered myself, wiping clumps of mud off my legs and clothes. “Slowly, please.”

He happily resumed his descent down the slope.

Despite the muddy clothes, it was a fun excursion. Montmorency offered cool waterfalls, a nice trail, and glimpses of Quebec in the distance.

An abundance of commercial choices were in the area along Route 40: strip malls, restaurants, stores, and services. Costco, Walmart, and McDonald's were mixed with local places. As we scouted restaurant options, I saw a guy getting into a car with his dog. I asked him if there was a nearby PetSmart. He suggested a similar place just down the road and offered to lead me there.

The pet store was one mile from the hotel. It turned out to be rather good, selling similar items. I did find a slightly different harness that was suitable.

Down the street, we ordered takeout from Scores, a family restaurant with many options. I split the chicken and rice with veggies, giving Norway the chicken kabobs, while I ate the rice and veggies. Also, we had a side of poutine—fries, cheese curds, and gravy—with some ketchup. It satisfied a craving after a full day of driving and hiking. Norway gobbled his food, and after he learned he could not have any of my poutine, he went to sleep.

QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC, CANADA (day 2)

AT FOUR THIRTY a.m., a paw struck my face. I pushed it aside. Norway moved it back. *Is he doing that on purpose?* Then, he stood up and leapt off the bed. *Ugh, I should have left the paw where it was.*

“OK.” I got up and put on shoes and a shirt. Then, Norway led me outside. He routinely marked his favorite tree for the third time in two days. After a few minutes, we went back to check the laundry room availability. The hotel offered free use of a washer and dryer, with detergent and softener. These were usually full of clothes—but not at 4:45 a.m. Good job, Norway!

I put our wet and muddy items into the washer. Back in the room, I set the alarm clock and went to sleep. Forty minutes later, I got up to switch the clothes to the dryer. Back to the room. When I climbed into bed, Norway jumped in. I reset the alarm clock for forty-five minutes and went back to sleep. Got up. Walked a few doors down to the laundry room. I pulled out the lighter fabrics and let the dryer take care of the rest. Back to the room. When I entered, Norway was waiting by the door. Then he hopped back

into the bed. I followed, turned on the TV, and waited. Thirty minutes later, I collected the remaining cleaned clothes, sweatshirt, and towels I had used at Montmorency.

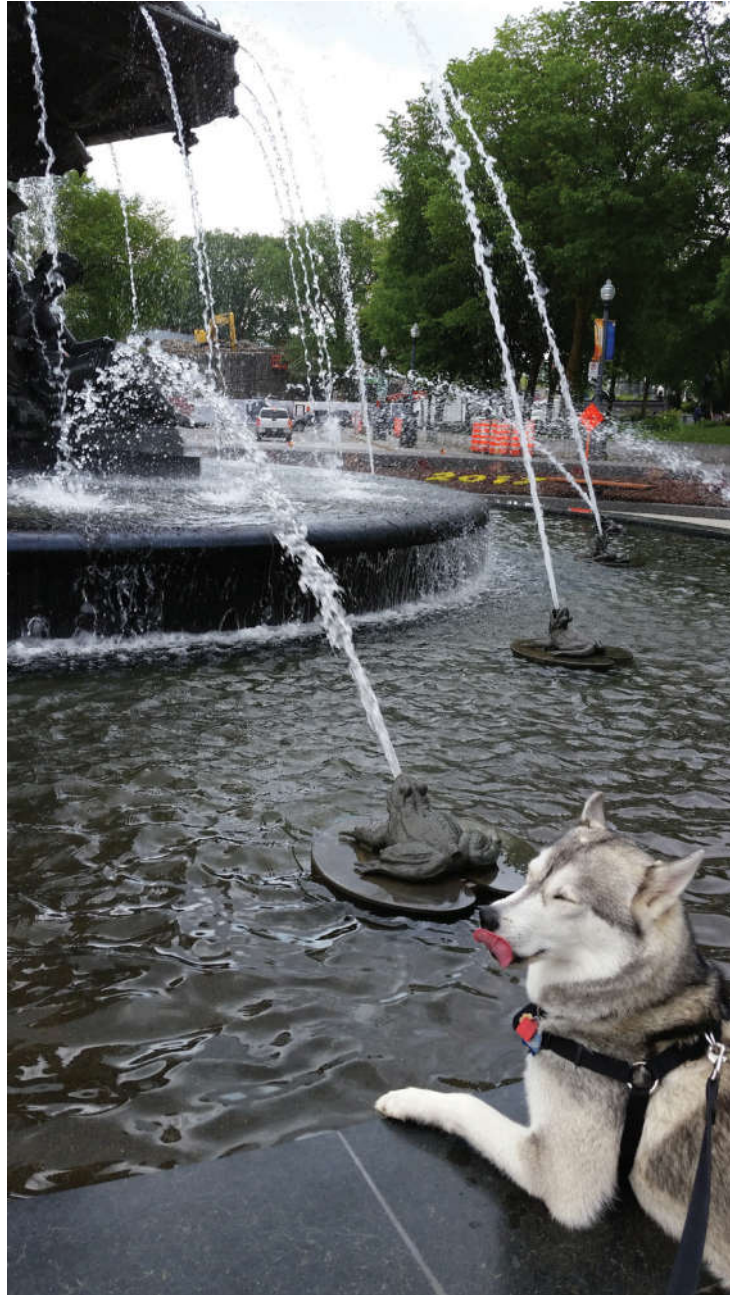
After soaking in a tremendous water pressure shower, I went with Norway to the lobby.

The hotel's breakfast room was a bit crowded. I searched for a spot to secure Norway. The chairs and tables did not look like they could hold him if he decided to make a getaway. I settled on an ice machine near the lobby. I darted into the dining hall and grabbed fruit, a banana, and eggs for us. A minute later, I ran back to the ice machine and saw a crowd of people. *Are they adoring him? Or did Norway do something wrong or get tangled up?* I approached to find a guy petting happy Norway. The crowd was watching as they waited for an elevator. I thanked the man for keeping my dog company, collected Norway, and went back to the room.

After breakfast, I picked up my camera and phone from the room's row of charging outlets. Then, at the front desk, I received a map and directions to the old city. We could take our time today. Old Quebec was quite manageable to walk around in a few hours, assuming we did not get hosed by any rain.

I found the parking lot easily. The \$18-CAD-per-day rate was a bargain. It proved more economical to stay at the less expensive hotel and drive for the day rather than at a pricier place in Old Quebec.

We walked toward the Parliament Building, a tremendous structure across from the Fontaine de Tourny. On this hot day, Norway was particularly interested in this majestic fountain with water jetting out and surrounded by decorative flowers. To him, it was a drinking fountain. Part of me wanted to let the dog loose. The other part of me wanted to be respectful of the public space. I compromised and let Norway get close and sneak a few sips.



A delicious sip from the fountain

While Norway was taste-testing the Parliament fountain, a couple sitting on a bench watched with amusement. *Oh, what the hell...* There was construction going on, so how bad could it be?

While the area was undergoing renovation until 2019, cranes and crews were scattered across the sites. Nevertheless, the statues and tributes to historical figures were interesting, and, the area was well maintained and clean. Mostly, the fortress walls surrounding the old city were noteworthy.

Among the moderate crowd, touring with Norway was fine, although he kept tugging and lunging at the horses that went by. Although he startled some pedestrians, most people seemed OK with Norway. Countless folks commented, “*Bon Chien.*” Several asked to take photos of him. *Norway making souvenirs!*

We proceeded down the main thoroughfares, spotting the ornate Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac, the St. Lawrence River, and the wonderful Terrasse Dufferin. Not only was it a pretty walkway, it was super-wide for a dog stroll.



Terrasse Dufferin

Bring Norway

During the busy lunchtime, it was difficult to find an open cafe to sit with Norway. We wound up at Le Chic Shack. I guessed that *chic* was short for *chicken*, although it could have meant style. The restaurant provided a menu posted outside, and I interrupted one of the workers to order takeout. He kindly went to get a Jardin burger, fries, and a cola-type drink.

While waiting, I noticed maple and pepper fries were on the menu. *I wish I had tried those.* The guy brought my order outside, and I was very grateful for his help during a busy lunch hour.

After leaving a generous tip, we took the boxed meal and found a bench in the nearby plaza. *Bon appétit.*

The delicious veggie burger came with lettuce, tomato, beets, and special sauce on an artisan bun. It was a terrific colorful presentation of a burger. Maybe it was chic after all. As Norway and I ate with a view of Fontaine de la Place d'Armes, many passersby greeted us.

After lunch, we walked to an ice cream shop. We relaxed and had a maple-flavored sundae while watching people walk along the Terrasse Dufferin.



Eyeing the sundae

Lance Friedman

Eventually, Norway and I began to tire. We headed back to the car and returned to the hotel. We had time to explore the outer parts, but seeing the heart of Old Quebec was satisfying. *Bon chien* and I were very impressed!

QUEBEC CITY, QUEBEC, to EDMUNDSTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

AFTER WATCHING THREE *Big Bang Theory* episodes last night, I turned off the TV and went to sleep. I was back up at one a.m. because Norway was sitting in the bed panting. A cool evening stroll outside seemed to satisfy him.

At five thirty a.m., Norway began pawing at me and stepping on my head. We did a lap around the hotel. Full of energy, he ran around the parking lot. Although I can be a morning person, Norway's schedule was killing me.

Today's drive was a few hundred kilometers on the TransCanada highway. We waited until after nine a.m. to avoid rush-hour traffic. Along the auto route QC-20 Northeast, a view of the St. Lawrence River was on the left side with farmland on the right.

We stopped at an easy pull-off beside a Subway, Tim Hortons, and a gas station. These seemed quite common along the Canadian highways. Following a long walking break with Norway, I used the

bathroom in Tim Hortons, then bought a drink and a muffin to repay the favor.

During the next leg of the drive, Norway mostly slept in back. Meanwhile, I missed the Route 85 turnoff, which added thirty-five minutes to our trip. *Bummer*. Eventually, we got on QC-85 east and headed inland. The landscape turned to pine trees, reminding me of Maine or upper New York.

We stopped for gas about forty kilometers out. At the station, we met a cute woman who was selling auto wax for interior and exterior use. It was unnecessary for an eight-year-old Nissan. Still, we had a nice conversation, as she loved the husky.

Upon arrival in Edmundston, we made a quick detour across the border to Madawaska, Maine. Off the US-1 highway, Main Street, we discovered 4 Corners Park. I had been to the Four Corners Monument, which marked the spot where Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico meet. This geographic landmark recognized the four extreme points in the continental US.

Established in 2007, the cool attraction provided a good photo op of the most northeastern spot in the United States. Plus, it included a tribute to motorcyclists who had ridden to all four corners of the US: San Ysidro, CA; Key West, FL; Blaine, WA; and Madawaska, ME. There were groups that organized a nine-thousand-mile challenge of covering all four corners in twenty-one days.

I approached two ladies walking around the fountain and granite dedications. One kindly took a few photos as Norway fluttered in my arms. Eventually, she snapped a well-centered souvenir shot with Norway facing the camera.

Bring Norway



Four Corners Park in Maine

Across the way, a McDonald's board was promoting their McLobster Roll.

“You gotta be kidding.”

I'd had the McRib long ago, during my meat-eating years. And, surprisingly, it was pretty good with the sauce. Out of curiosity, Norway and I tried the McLobster Roll. As fast-food lobster goes, it was *McDecent*.

Madawaska, population under five thousand, was a small town. Norway and I walked up and down the main street for about thirty minutes in search of a card for a friend's birthday. After visiting Rite Aid, the post office, and local shops, I found a suitable postcard.

We returned to the car and drove up Bridge Avenue, crossed over the St. John River, and headed back into New Brunswick. On the Canadian side, we resumed on Prom de Veterans and followed the map to Four Points by Sheraton. There was plenty of parking, and it seemed easy to get around town.

Our room was the size of a comfortable apartment, with a bed and couch, a fridge, and a TV, plus plenty of outlets for recharging. It had wood/tile flooring, so if needed, easy cleaning.

This area in Edmundston provided an ideal start for an afternoon walk. Up the road from the hotel, we passed statues, Cathedrale de Immaculée Conception, Fortin du Petit-Sault, the marina, and finished through the walking bridge and promenade around Parc du Petit-Sault. It was a pleasant tour for Norway and me.

From a street full of restaurants, I chose Frank's Bar and Grill beside the hotel. It had good online reviews and a diverse menu. Since we were exhausted, the convenience was worth the somewhat high price.

After booking tomorrow's hotel, located in the southeastern side of New Brunswick, we headed for dinner at Frank's. The bilingual hostess helped considerably with the French part of the menu and accommodated Norway with chicken penne. Also, the young woman working was very nice. Charged to the room, the meal was one less credit card receipt.

As we waited for takeout, restaurant patrons stopped to say hi to Norway on their way out. *Norway, the canine greeter*. I noted the red Canadian maple leaf flags decorating the lobby and restaurant area. It was a pleasant atmosphere.

It would have been nice to eat on the patio. However, by dinnertime Friday, the empty restaurant became packed. We took the dinner bags and headed up to the room. The meal was quite tasty: penne, cheese, broccoli, and peppers. Norway devoured the chicken with a few pieces of pasta.

While eating, I turned on the TV. The channel guide displayed an hour later than I thought it was. I realized that we had crossed into another time zone: the Atlantic.

I fell asleep in my clothes. At 2:15 a.m., I woke and walked the dog (just in case). Back into the hotel, up the elevator, and back to the room. Norway hopped onto the bed and went to sleep. Meanwhile, I changed clothes and checked the Wi-Fi. Unfortunately, the connection had not improved. I watched the French-Canadian version of *Lip Sync Battle* on TV. *Lip Sync Battle: Face à Face* had the same set design and format. The co-hosts were a French-speaking man and woman. Same introduction, with two competitors going after the lip-sync belt. Each had chosen American rock-and-roll songs.

EDMUNDSTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, to MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

CANADA DAY! JULY 1. We passed through the flag-filled lobby and started outside with a loop around the hotel area. We walked by the cathedral, statue, and shops under overcast skies. I hoped for the best, as the forecast predicted rain.

The ninety-minute morning leg of driving was in the rain. Fortunately, when we got out of the car to visit *RoadsideAmerica*-listed spots, the downpour dwindled to a drizzle. We explored the Florenceville area, stopping to see “Noah’s Ark.” Built in 1993, the three-hundred-foot replica was an ambitious project. At the time of our visit, the structure had tenants and a café.

On the way back to the highway, we paused at Potato World, the New Brunswick potato museum, where I learned about the potato’s impact in the region. Apparently, the climate and soil in this area were ideal for growing potatoes. Home of McCain Foods,

the largest producer of frozen potato products, Florenceville-Bristol is the “French Fry Capital of the World.”

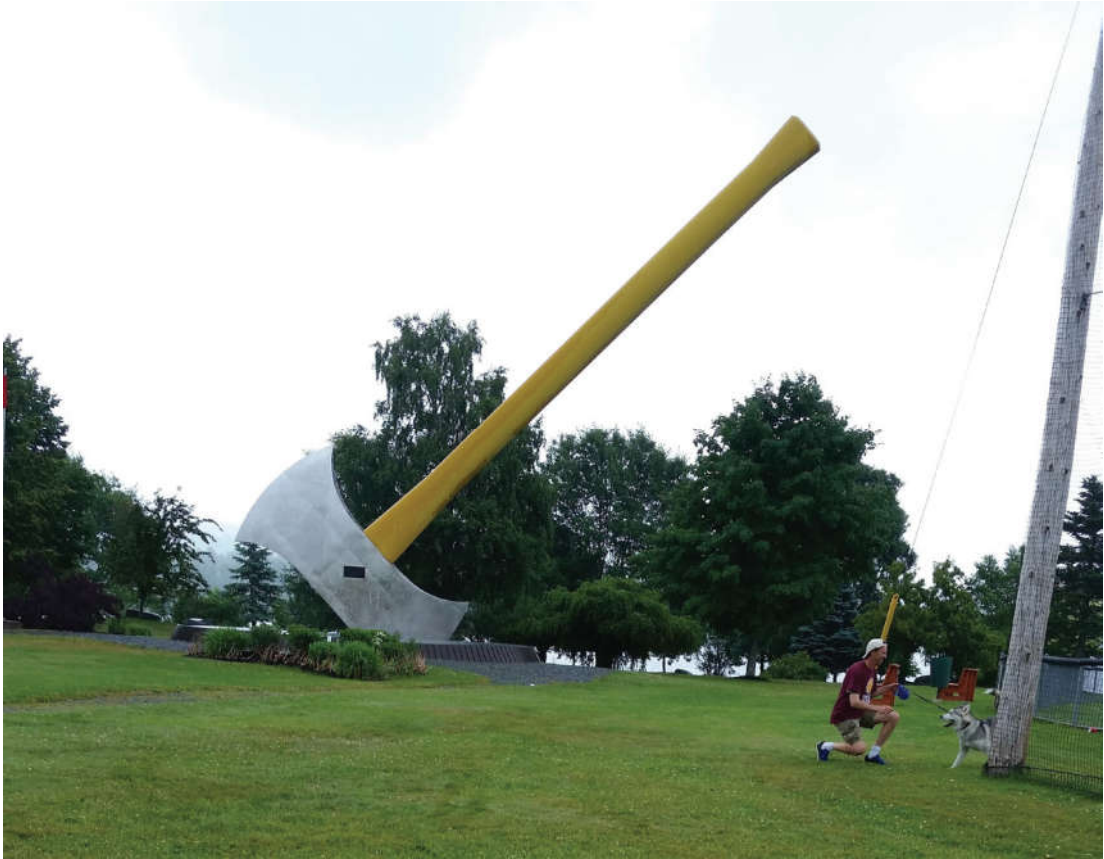
Twelve miles down the road, we made a stop in Hartland to view the “world’s longest covered bridge.” The 1,282’ wooden bridge was a cool structure, spanning over the St. John River. Originally built uncovered in 1901, the harsh weather compelled the town to enclose it in 1922. The structure was amusing, as the width allowed only one car to go through. Since side-by-side cars could not fit, traffic in one direction must wait until the other side cleared. Nevertheless, the bridge has provided a helpful connection to other locales in the area.

We resumed on TransCanada-2 East, until our last stop at the “Largest Axe in the World” in Nackawic. The intriguing site showcased its giant axe, constructed in 1991 to represent the forestry industry. The handle was nearly fifty feet high, and the blade was about twenty feet long. Apparently, musical and theater performances took place on the stage surrounding the axe. *Horror show, anybody?*

I took pictures from different angles, plus, shots of posted history and statistics about the axe. Then, I tried to get a full photo with Norway. I set the camera timer for ten seconds, and we ran down the field and turned to pose. As I led Norway back to the camera, he playfully came along. I looked at the digital image: it was off-center, Norway was looking in the wrong direction, and I looked like a lunatic tackling my dog.

We made a few more attempts, setting the camera timer and running down toward the giant axe. Everything was going well until Norway got free from his collar. He started racing around the park, chasing birds, and stepping into the water. I think he might have waded further into the St. John River if he hadn’t been afraid. I watched, followed, and hoped I could round him up. While passing a nearby party boat, several folks on the deck seemed amused by the dog running around and my having to chase him.

Eventually, Norway settled down and came back to me. *Oy vey. An international incident.*



Time for a picture—chop-chop!

We left with a fine souvenir photo to capture the moment. And I was reminded to use the harness, because Husky Houdini knows how to slip out of his collar.

Overall, the three-hundred-mile drive was fine. I snacked on an energy bar, dates, and nuts. Meanwhile, Norway enjoyed his cozy pillow and a treat. At four o'clock, we arrived at the Four Points by Sheraton in Moncton.

In the lobby, balloons, cookies, and snacks were set out in celebration of the 150th Canada Day. Like the Four Points in Edmundston, this hotel offered plenty of space and amenities. Since Halifax and Prince Edward Island were a few hours away, this Moncton location would be a solid springboard. I added two days to the hotel reservation.

Before dinner, we ventured out to see if we could catch the local tidal bore. Twice a day, the high tide from the Bay of Fundy flows into the Petitcodiac River, which runs along downtown Moncton.

The thick wave of water will roll back and raise the river levels as well as create waves. I didn't see much. *Was this site an exaggeration?*

After too much drizzle and waiting for the tide, we bypassed visiting downtown and the Canada Day celebrations. Instead, we wound our way back to the hotel. Mapleton Street ran past a stretch of restaurants and stores. Considering menus and reviews, I settled on the closest places: Thai Zone or Panizzi. I scanned each and picked the Thai place.

Dinner was not bad. The teriyaki Tao salad had a good flavor and consistency. Norway seemed to like the chicken. When I looked over at him, he had flipped his bowl upside down. His dog food was spread on the floor, and Norway was eating it up.

"You gotta explain that one to me."

After finishing dinner, I led Norway out to the car to get another overnight bag. While the dog received three compliments, I got three wicked mosquito bites. We returned through the lobby, where the receptionist greeted us. I got a candy bar at the front desk, collected some treats for Norway, and we settled in the room.

I went online to watch surfers on the Moncton tidal bore. The videos were shot from the same spot where we had been standing. So, right place, but wrong time. *Maybe the rain affected the tide?*

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, CANADA

NORWAY PAWED AT me around four a.m.

“Alright. Alright,” I complained. “I hear ya.”

I put on a sweatshirt, pulled the towels out of my shoes, and put them on. They were almost dried out from yesterday. We went down the elevator and greeted the young man working the night shift. He recognized us with a nod.

Outside, it was drizzling, but, luckily, no mosquitoes. Norway took a leak and did his Michael Jackson moonwalk. He stepped forward and tried to kick up dirt to cover the scent. He smiled and followed me back to our room.

At seven a.m., Norway was not going to let us sleep in. Big day ahead. I showered, ate a snack, and packed up stuff for the day. In the lobby, I used an ATM to withdraw necessary Canadian dollars. And, I spotted a gas station across the street. An ideal launching spot for the day.

I got brief directions from the woman at the lobby’s front desk. I went with her suggestion, taking NB-15 instead of TC-2. It proved

faster than the online estimate. *It often pays to ask a local rather than an online search engine.*

Less than thirty minutes from the hotel, we turned into Shediac. I followed Main Street toward downtown. We reached the visitor center, which featured a huge lobster and a fisherman. The fifty-five-ton, eleven-meter-long creature certainly defended the town's claim as the lobster capital of the world. I took photos, exercised Norway around the park, and looked at the shops and monuments. Across the street we enjoyed an open view of the water from Northumberland Strait.



Surveying the view beside the world's largest lobster

Highway 15 was an easy feeder into TransCanada 1, taking us to the Confederation Bridge connecting Prince Edward Island. The massive bridge, finished in 1997, took four years, and cost one billion dollars—and eliminated the need for ferries to get to the island. This seemed a better alternative to travel in the icy winter waters.

The eight-mile bridge over Northumberland Strait in the Gulf of St. Lawrence took about ten minutes to cross. The highest point was about two hundred feet over the sea. When driving, it got a little uncomfortable at those heights above the large expanse of water. *Just stay in the middle lane and follow the cars.*

When descending onto the island, we entered Charlottetown. Known as the birthplace of the Canadian Confederation, Charlottetown is where the founders first met in 1864. The road signs led to the heart of the Island, where the original settlers landed on shore. There were 150-year Canada celebrations and maple leaf flags flying everywhere.

It was easy to park in an area packed with artisans and a farmers market on the main strip. We walked around the main streets by the harbor. Snack shops, souvenirs, and sights provided an enjoyable atmosphere. Among the monuments were construction workers and equipment to make the place even nicer.

We stopped at the Chip Shack for lunch. The lobster roll was pretty good, a notch below the ones in Maine. But the fries were excellent, representing this potato area very well. While eating at an outdoor table, we encountered several people who wanted to greet Norway. I had a long conversation with a man who asked to pet Norway. He had just lost his thirteen-year-old lab three days earlier, so he appreciated the comfort from Norway. I could empathize, remembering Oscar's final days.

"My wife and I are from Ontario, about an hour from Toronto," he said. "We visit PEI frequently—flying, not driving."

"Is it always this quiet?" It was a delightful summer day. *Where was everyone?*

"This is very crowded for PEI!" he said happily. "Usually, it's quite empty." He, like I, preferred the tranquility and space. *Hmmm, a scenic harbor and beach area, with lots of restaurants, shops, and activities with no crowd?*

After a post-lunch walk, Norway and I headed north to Brackley Beach. Near the shore, I could view kite surfers in the distance enjoying the pleasant scene. Since dogs were not allowed during the summer, we continued west to Cavendish.

I drove up and down the main Cavendish road, then stopped and asked a knowledgeable local kid where to find “the potato place.” Eventually, I pulled over at a random area because I had seen the “Cows Creamery” sign. While exploring the shops, I spotted a restaurant called Red Island Baked Potato.

We walked, took photos of the church, and stopped at a donut shop. The owner, Kip, had just opened the place eleven days ago. He loved dogs and offered donut pieces to Norway! The husky enjoyed that. I learned Kip was from Saskatchewan, and he too had had a dog, which had lived to be twenty-one years old! He missed him. Kip gladly came out to take a photo of Norway and me in front of his shop.



A doughnut with sweet filling

For a late afternoon snack, we circled back to Red Island Baked Potato. I ordered a Tex-Mex potato, consisting of BBQ sauce, chicken, sour cream, cheese, and fixings in a potato. It was outstanding. The flavor and texture were perfect. At the tables outside, I

handed Norway the chicken, while I enjoyed the PEI baked potato covered in toppings.

Afterward, we went back to Donuts by Design to say good-bye and order a dozen to go. I chatted with Kip as people passed by and eyed the donuts and Norway. Four girls recognized the husky from Charlottetown three hours earlier. I said good-bye to Kip, and he handed me an extra bag of donuts.

“A snack for Norway,” he said. Although off-shaped, the donuts were much appreciated by the pup.

On the way out, we stopped at the creamery. Cows was named “best in Canada” and rated one of the top ten in the world. The ice cream was delicious, using locally sourced ingredients. The blueberry flavor was the best I had ever tasted. And the chocolate, toffee, and caramel concoction was very good.

By late afternoon, the sun finally came out. It was beautiful outside but time to drive back. We started heading toward the south side of the island and the bridge, occasionally checking the map on my laptop, and guessing for the most part. Norway slept most of the way. He seemed pleased with the Prince Edward Island sampler of treats: lobster, chips, donuts, and ice cream.

We crossed the bridge back to New Brunswick. The toll was \$46.50 CAD (approximately \$35 USD). It seemed reasonable. The New York tunnel was about \$15, and this PEI bridge was impressive. We gotta pay for the bridge!

We backtracked past the familiar sights from this morning until we reached the correct exit off the TC-2. Back to the hotel in Moncton.

In the lobby, Norway and I stopped at the front desk.

“Any chance you found two bowls?” I asked. “They’re not in the room. And I’m not sure if I left them somewhere.”

“We have your bowls.” The guy presented Norway’s items. We lucked out, finding them just before a trip to PetSmart down the street to replace them.

“I must’ve left them here after getting directions from the lady at the desk this morning.”

We returned to the room, where Norway ate dinner and napped. I uploaded photos and watched TV: more *Big Bang Theory*

and *Modern Family* episodes, and bits of '90's movies *Twister* and *Tombstone*.

Overall, it was a great excursion today. Prince Edward Island was impressive with lots to explore! PEI offered a variety of spacious landscapes: ocean, ponds, farmland, beaches, and towns. It provided good food, history, and activities, especially in Cavendish: water park, amusement park, paintball, movies, kids' stuff, jet skiing, and more. I would love to return someday.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

THE NIGHT OWL was up at one a.m. Norway was panting in the warm room. The strange air conditioner randomly stopped. After I reset it, the unit cranked again ... until it stopped. We went outside for a cool stroll. Norway got some relief, and we managed to avoid the mosquitoes. We greeted the two guys working the night shift. I think they liked us breaking up the monotony. After resetting the air conditioner, we went back to sleep.

At 6:40, we prepared for another day. We greeted the dog-friendly hotel crew. The morning receptionist gave him a treat and petted him. This hotel was a Norway favorite.

The sun was shining. Hopefully, that was a good sign! We hopped on the highway, no problem. Excited with anticipation as we neared our easternmost destination, I followed the road signs toward Halifax, Nova Scotia. At the NS border, I stopped for photos (and mosquito bites). Norway got to run around the welcome center front lawn.



Next year's Nova Scotia visitors' brochure?

Inside the Visitors Information building, I received a very helpful map and a suggestion to go to Peggy's Cove. We climbed back into the car. Norway's underside and paws were soaked. And the wet grass had soaked my running shoes. It could be wet socks all day unless I pulled out my extra dry trail shoes and white socks in the car. But they would look awful. *Fashion vs. comfort?*

We continued south on TransCanada-104. At Truro, in the middle of Nova Scotia, the roads branched out in different directions—sort of like the spoke system at airports. We went south on NS-102 toward Halifax and Peggy's Cove. On the way was a "Halfway between the Equator and the North Pole!" roadside billboard. We stopped at the Stewiacke exit to investigate.

A big Tim Hortons cup sat on top of the coffee store, alongside a little shopping mall and mini golf place. I filled the car with gas and got a photo of the touristy sign. I wondered if we were truly halfway. There is some dispute, since the Earth is not a perfect sphere. Still, it was close enough.

We passed Halifax and traveled south on NS-333. The Peggy's Cove road was a leisurely drive along St. Margaret's Bay. It took a bit of time but proved worthwhile. Beside the quaint fishing village was a beautiful walking area and picturesque scene of the lighthouse

Bring Norway

and the Atlantic Ocean. Understandably, and unfortunately, it was very crowded. But, all in all, a nice visit.



In front of the lighthouse at Peggy's Cove

We circled back to downtown Halifax with the map, guesswork, and some luck. We walked around and climbed up the steep hill next to the citadel, which offered a gorgeous view of Scotiabank Centre Arena and the water behind it. We walked back down to the riverfront. Browsing the nice shops was OK but stressful with a distracted, troublesome husky. He chased birds and dogs, and picked up scraps from the ground, but he did seem to be having a pleasant day. Nevertheless, I was glad we saw this part of Halifax.

During the ride back, we stopped at Oxford, the “wild blueberry capital of Canada.” Just off TC-104 stood a friendly, robust blueberry character next to Tim Hortons and Irving Gas. Nearby was a park with kids playing in the water and a family restaurant and motel. Plus, a little ice cream and fresh-strawberry stand. I asked two girls if blueberries were in season.

“No,” they told me. “Not until August.”

“That’s too bad.” I would have liked to try them or treats filled with them. “Are there any restaurants in town?”

“This is the town!” They pointed at the diner next door.

I got a chicken garden salad, poutine, and garlic bread. Then, I bought a soda at Tim Hortons and sat in their seating area. The food was good. And, I had plenty to share with Norway. Although we missed the fresh wild blueberries, we were greeted by the smiling blueberry man.

We went back on TC-104 and passed the familiar Nova Scotia exits. At the New Brunswick border, we connected to TC-2 and went by wind farms. At Moncton, we took the 454 exit and Mapleton Road to the hotel.

We reached our turnaround point!



The inaugural road trip with Norway was going well. After a laundry run and a car interior cleanup, we reset for the second half of our trip.