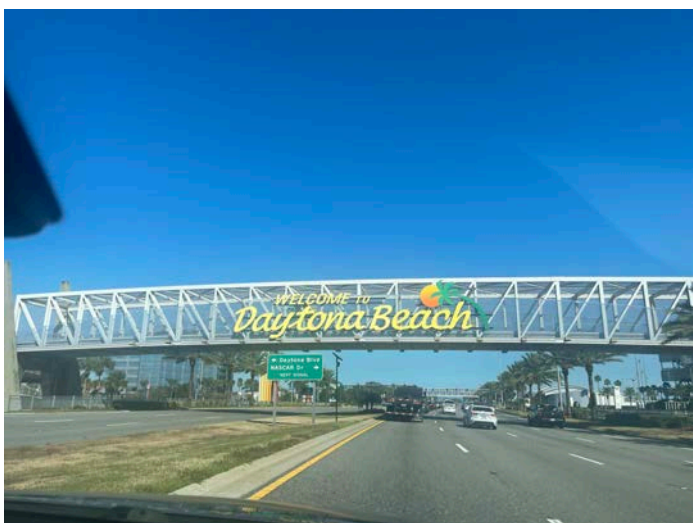


231109 BRA Daytona Beach Remembered Day 1 P



Nancy Montanari was born in Gainesville but was raised in Daytona Beach Florida. She spent all of her young adult life here. When we were married, we visited this area from Jacksonville Florida, but we never got as far as Daytona Beach. I was stationed there in the Army and did my last tour of duty as a Corps of Engineer officer in the district Headquarters. This is the first time that Nancy's been back to Daytona Beach with me since 1983 when we were married here.



Daytona 500. I was last at the Daytona Beach 500 track with Eric when he was a young child. I had access to three season tickets and turn # 3 and I took my brother Tony to the race. Eric spent his whole time

climbing under the stand, which turned out to be the world's biggest jungle gym. I watched the race with fascination, and it was the first and last time I've ever been to a NASCAR race. The entire area around the race track is completely transformed. It's all built up as opposed to when I was here last. My wife is laughing at all the changes that she sees. Daytona Beach, like other places has grown, but when you're away this long, it's really a transformation.

Daytona Beach. This is probably one of the most iconic and famous beaches in the beach because it is flat and hard packed sand and is famous as you can drive your car on it.



1952: Stock cars race on the beach

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In fact, as you can see above, the Daytona speedway has its origin in races that were held at the beach. As late as 1952 they were still running stock car races on the beach. In 1958 the Daytona 500 race track was open and the beach racing would come to an end.



1959: The Daytona International Speedway opened in 1958 to replace the beach course.

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Unfortunately racing real stock cars would also end. There was a great saying back in the day, which was; "Race on Sunday sell on Monday." The car manufacturers would fight to see whose stock retail cars were fastest. But once professional stock car design took over the name "stock car" is name only. These cars are now hybrid quarter million dollar racing frames with just a fake look-alike fiberglass shell on the outside. They're not really stock cars anymore.

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1952: Cars get ready for stock car race

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It's high tide now and some of the beach is closed off. Hotels now buy the property and traffic right in front of their locations and you cannot drive in those areas. When Nancy was a young girl you used to be able to drive on the beach from Daytona Beach all the way up to Flagler. You cannot do that anymore.



It cost \$20 a day for a car pass. Today the beach was not crowded, but this is not the heights of Tour season. Daytona Beach, Florida in November through February can get cold.



Nancy, remembered this opening at the Plaza Hotel as an arch that you used to drive-through to get to the beach. She was surprised that it was not an arch but a square opening under an arch. I told her that her memory was correct even though that small detail was not.

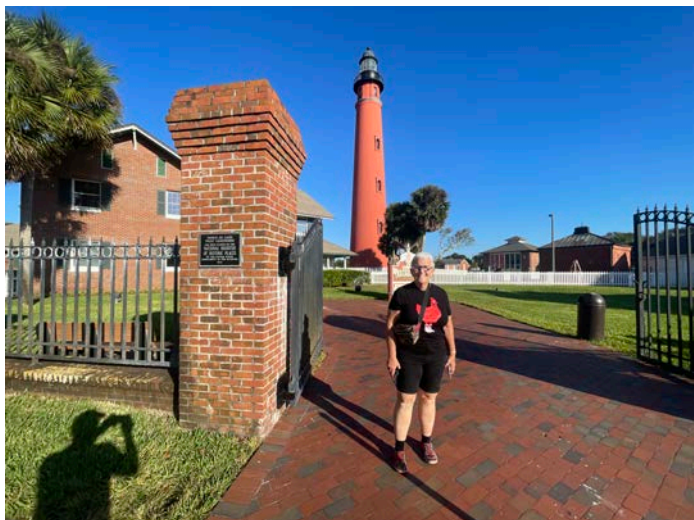


In many ways, the sign below is correct. The beach is iconic and world known. Sadly, as stated, you can't drive up and

down the beach anymore continuously. Hopefully they won't ban driving all together.

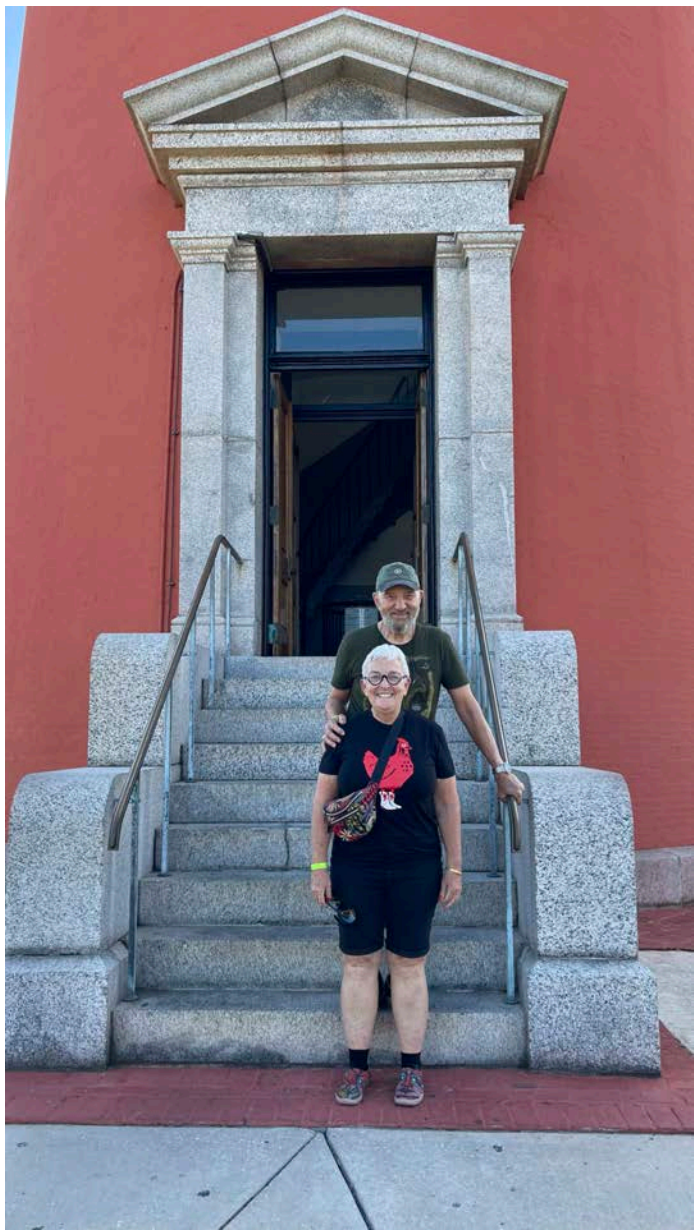


Ponce Inlet lighthouse. Nancy recalls; "You can walk up to it now, well last time I was here it was all broken glass. None of this was here; how they fixed it up with grass and everything. What I recall it was just a dump. Nobody took care of it and there was no gift shop either. Well the house was here but it was just that there is no gift shop. The boats come in from the Atlantic ocean, the fishing boats and it was so much fun to go over there and watch them take all the fish off and you could buy fish from the fisherman or they'd give you one or two you know for a couple bucks." But now the whole area has been completely modernized. There's a nice park here that's well-maintained. The lighthouse is now open and I think we're going to climb to the top.

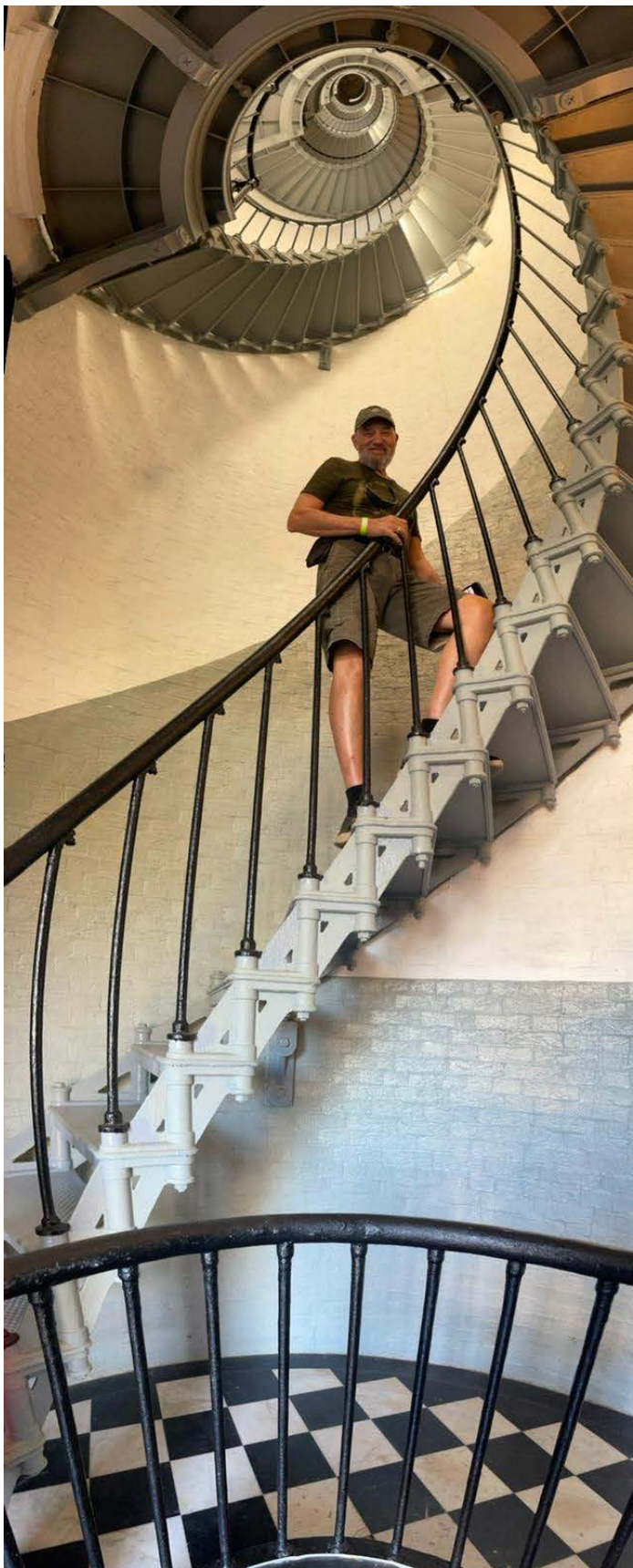


This is really an impressive structure. These lighthouses were made to endure. They were made to survive a major hurricane, and to function in them, because they were lifesavers to boats that were stranded on rough seas, and needed to find harbor.





That's looking up in a panoramic photo. You have to believe you are the little engine that could in the movie Dumbo. You just gotta keep going and put 1 foot above and in front of the other. Coming down of course is a lot easier.



A great view, which you can not get any

longer. There used to be an observation tower along Daytona Beach, which was torn down the year we were married some 40 years ago. So the only place to get this view along this entire barrier island is at the top of this lighthouse.

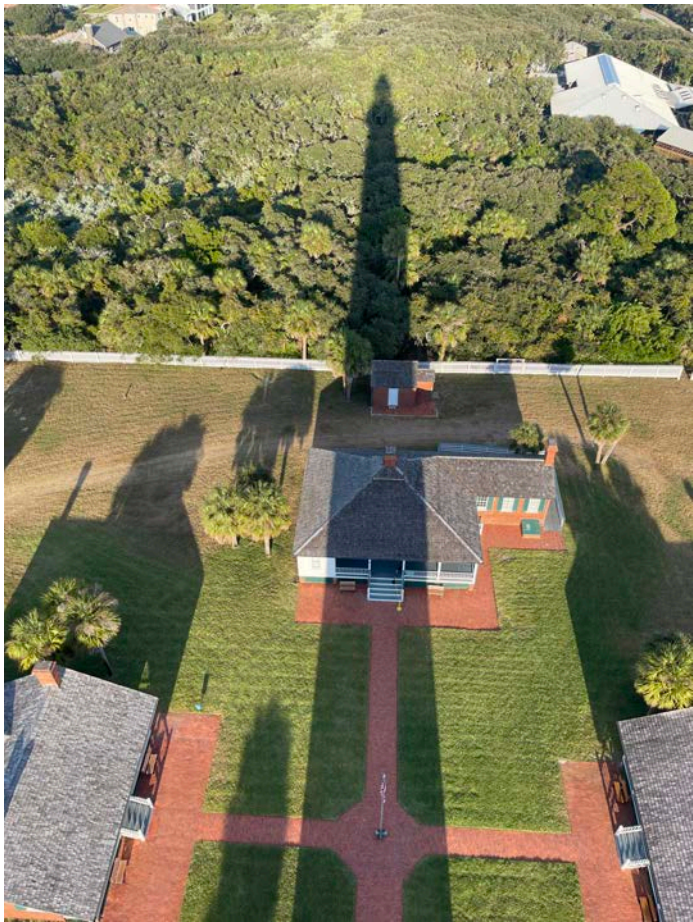


You have to hand it to the local community. This lighthouse and the grounds were meticulously restored. This is absolute a museum grade quality restoration. And the entrance is only seven dollars per person. It's really a bargain.



Sunset at the Ponce Inlet lighthouse in Daytona, Florida has seen from the base of

the lighthouse looking east, with the sun at our back along with the lighthouse.



Dinner. We had dinner at the Hidden Treasure Restaurant, which is located in the shadow of the White House. It's a beautiful day, the wind is less than 5 mph and the sun is at our back. Can't get better than this.





If you're looking for great seafood at a great price then this restaurant is for you. Great atmosphere and a wonderful view. The food is very good and the price is more than reasonable. The fried fish entrée easily fed three people. The HT Chopped half salad was as large as a normal salad. And the Cheese Crab Fritters appetizer equally was also large enough for three people. The entire meal of these three things shared, +3 drinks and dessert was \$78. It easily filled our appetite. You're not gonna get a price like this in most other metropolitan areas. Consider this restaurant for lunch or dinner.



By the way, for anyone, that does not know, real Keylime pie is yellow. If you get Keylime pie and it's green, then it's got food coloring.



END