

Day 10 – Return to Denmark – Interesting Denmark

My Dear Fellow Travelers:

Well, we are all coming to the short side of our adventure.

For AmazingHugh, GeddiMaster, and of course, myself, it has been more fun than humans should be allowed to have.

I cannot express how blessed I feel, to have had the chance to spend this last two weeks with the best Dad ever.

When I was a kid, everyone would take me aside and tell me what a wonderful Senator he was. My response was always the same. I'd say "I agree, but what you don't know is that he's an ever better Dad".

For 25 years, I was indeed fortunate, to be able to work with him, on a daily basis, when I was an Assembly Counsel, then Deputy Attorney General, and then as Senior Counsel to the Senate Majority.

I stayed on with the Senate another five years after he retired, but quite frankly, it was just not as much fun.

AmazingHugh, as we have referred to him on this trip, has more than lived up to his new moniker. Up early every day, energized and ready to go, Dad always exhibits a simply delightful demeanor, with an upbeat, positive, playful, friendly attitude.

He has tireless energy, and a level of kindness and generosity, that I, for one, could only aspire to. Moreover, at 92, his mental acuity, instant analysis, and high quality and always spot on judgement, dwarf us mere mortals.

Dad is the best storyteller and teacher one could ever encounter.

Wherever we go, he instantly makes new friends, who genuinely love him, while he is always offering an upbeat insight, or interesting story, to anything we observe. He is the definition of the wise, loving, knowledgeable, educated and cultured, person, one just loves to be around.

Interestingly, there were occasions on this trip, when we would have to upgrade our sport shirts and sneakers, to suits and ties. These times were called Chic nights.

When that was the case, without losing one ounce of his trademark humility, my Dad would especially come to life, offering a public glimpse of the Senatorial stature, for which he was famous for over 40 years.

He may have retired in 2016, but put him back in a suit and tie, and he returned to his political mastery, asking everyone their name, how their family is, where they come from, and taking a genuine interest in them and their lives as an individual. Meet him once, with his warm and bright blue eyes, and you feel like you have a real and trusted friend for life. I have no doubt, had they held an election of the ship, by the time we reached Skagen, and he would have been instantly elected, and beloved, as its President and favorite person.

I have always admired my Dad's innate ability to instantly connect with people.

Some of you may remember, that I had my own, albeit far less influential, career in public office, where I was elected five times. Although I am very proud of the work I did, my greatest hope, both then and now, was to simply become at least a pale imitation of my Dad.

And now, years later, for the past two weeks, I've been able to spend the ultimate in quality time, with the greatest man I've ever known. My best friend, my mentor, my hero, my Dad.

And if that wasn't awesome enough, both my Dad and I, were equally fortunate, to also have the company of Robert W.

Geddis.

In 1976, when my Dad first ran for Senate, my mom and Dad were at a political event in Saratoga County.

There my mother, saw a gentleman working tirelessly for another candidate in the race. He could only be described as a human dynamo. She was so impressed, she said to my Dad, right there and then, "you need to get that man on your team".

My Dad took my Mom's advice (which is always good), and the two men befriended each other for life.

And since that time, this wonderful man, hasn't just been our friend, he has been a member of our family.

There is nothing Bob Geddis cannot do.

He has long ago earned his nickname as GeddiMaster.

The lead staff person in my Dads Senate office, he handled everything from politics to policy.

He could run and manage any mission.

A brilliant mind, with sound, practical judgment, he is the definition of versatility and capability.

He can rewire a circuit panel, navigate a crowd of people, pick the best spot for a political sign, solve any problem. convince anyone of anything, and perform any mission he sets out to do.

He is the dictionary definition of a determined multi tasker, and his fearless ingenuity, assure that everything he does, he does well. He is a winner, and was quite simply the Vince Lombardi of the Senate.

Fiercely loyal, determined, funny, tireless, and always hard working and achieving, no one on earth ever had a better friend than Bob Geddis.

Perhaps most fun of all, is watching the interaction between Bob and my Dad.

My Dad had six natural brothers, all of whom were close and beloved. But Bob is in actuality his seventh.

They simply couldn't be closer, and the respect, affection and enjoyment of each other's company shows.

They give as good as they get with each other, but only in the spirit of 6 year boys, and never with any other indication other than hilarity and brotherhood.

This two week adventure, simply would not have been as wonderful, without the delightful company of the GeddiMaster.

Please also note that he also is a very forgiving person. Never complaining, with a smile always on his face, even when he got stuck in the middle seat of the air flight, or when I accidentally tripped on the cord and unplugging his CPAP breathing machine, causing him to briefly suffocate. (As if that wasn't bad enough, my Dad did the same exact thing, to him back in 2002, when the three of us went to Antarctica). And no, we weren't trying to kill Bob.

Life is about people, my fellow travelers, and so, that was my lengthy way, to explain to all of you, how I have had the two best traveling companions, ever on this trip.

On Day 10, we arrived early at the port city of Skagen, which is a small fishing based village at the northern most tip of a finger like peninsula in Denmark.

Surrounded by the North Sea to the West, and the Baltic Sea to the East, this small strip of land, surrounded by a hostile ocean, is simply a beautiful place for a visit.

As I was sadly still down for the count with my Metformin mishap, only Bob and Dad could make the shore excursion, to partake first hand in the sights of this great little hidden gem of a town.

As there is nothing the GeddiMaster cannot do, he graciously agreed to be our photographer for the day.

The pictures he skillfully took, of the sights and people of Skagen, can be found here:

<http://www.bobfarley.us/0800travels/833scandinavia/Day10/>

Now there needs to be a bit of a disclaimer here at this point in time.

The GeddiMaster has a proud heritage of being of Scotch-Irish decent.

Indeed, in 2016 we were all very proud to accompany Bob as he visited his family's hometown in Northern Ireland.

But make no mistake, because of his Scotch heritage, Bob is very, very proud, of his frugality over his personal spending.

Extremely generous, almost to a fault for others, he does not apply that rule to himself.

This has meant, he carries with him, the absolute worst cell phone in history.

Nicknamed by Dad and I, the Yugo Phone, after the infamous economy car from the 1980s, Bob's phone is guaranteed to underperform and underproduce.

God help us if any of us ever needed that thing for an emergency.

Hours after Dad and my phone get a text, email or signal, Bobs phone will suddenly light up and get one.

It's almost funny, as almost like clock work, hours after we pull into a port city, Bob's phone will suddenly start blowing up with emails, texts and delayed phone calls, all of which are preceded by a very unusual beep like notification.

When at one point my Dad asked, "what the heck is that odd noise", Bob just responded, somewhat sheepishly, "oh tha's just my cell phone".

And to justify his sad telecommunications device, Bob always looks to the positive, commenting that "but it's cheap".

So, if after viewing any of Bob's kind picture taking, my fellow travelers, you ask yourself, why do these pictures look different from the previous postings, please don't blame Bob.

He's an excellent photographer, with a great eye, who indeed, took our family's wonderful and cherished, Christmas Card picture for years.

But on this occasion, he was forced to work with the substantial limitations, using his infamous Yugophone.

Moreover, please also remember, that we are very lucky, that Bob agreed to pinch hit for me in the first place, when I couldn't even get out of my stateroom bed.

And so, it was a beautiful, sunny day, when Dad and Bob mounted up and went in to visit Skagen. The now two jolly boys, off for yest another exploration.

Skagen, Denmark, is this small nation's northernmost town. Located, as previously mentioned, on the east coast of the Skagen Odde peninsula in the far north of Jutland.

The Port of Skagen is Denmark's main fishing port, as well as a significant tourist destination, attracting over two million people every year.

Its name, originally applied to the peninsula upon which it sits, now just refers to the town.

Dating back to the Middle Ages, as a fishing village, and renowned for its herring industry, starting in the 19th century, thanks to its seascapes, fishermen and evening light, it became popular with a group of impressionist artists now known as the Skagen Painters.

The modern port of Skagen opened in 1907, and with the railway connections to other parts of Denmark, tourism soon began to develop. Indeed, the town gained even more prominence, as a favorite place for Danish royalty to vacation. They even built a summer vacation palace, Klitgaarden, along its shores.

A somewhat sleepy little community of fisherman and artists, its population is half what it was in 1980, with today sporting 7,547 residents. Seafood, of course, forms a staple in Skagen's restaurants.

One of the town's most famous attractions is St Lawrence's Church.

Built just outside the village at the end of the 14th century, it has been mostly buried in the drifting sand of the shore's dunes. A remarkable landmark, when it was publicly operating, it could accommodate more than 1000 parishioners.

GeddiMaster took several pictures of this interesting structure.

The Skagen shoreline also is home to several World War Two Bunkers and Pill Boxes, designed by the forces of Nazi Germany to deter invasion from the sea. An invasion which would instead take place hundreds of miles away along the beaches of Normandy, France.

Several landmarks in the town, are closely associated with the Skagen Painters who used to frequent them. These include the Brøndums Hotel, the Skagens Museum, Michael and Anna Ancher's House, and the Drachmann's House.

Skagen's first school was the *Latinskole*, a grammar school, which was in operation from 1549 until 1739. By the end of the 19th century, three schools had been established in Skagen, and in 1921, Skagen's Skipper School was opened to train navigators for both fishing boats and merchant ships. In 1955, a new public school was also built on the peninsula.

In 1974, the Skagen sports center was constructed, primarily to accommodate badminton and tennis. The local football club, Skagen Idræts Klub, was founded in 1946, and has regularly proven competitive in Danish football (soccer).

Skagen station is the most northerly railway station in Denmark, and is the terminus of the national railroad. There are also ferries to Gothenburg, Oslo and Laeso leaving and returning to the town's port.

As can be seen from Bob's Yugophone photos, the typical Skagen house has a red tiled roof, with white trimmings, yellow-plastered walls, and a white fence.

In 1747, the famous Skagen white Lighthouse was built, to help the maritime community of this region. Bob took several picture of this impressive structure.

It is interesting to note, that in 1859, famous author, Hans Christian Andersen visited the town. During his stay at Brondum's Hotel, the future painter Anna Ancher, daughter of the inn-keeper, was born.

This amazing little town, was a special little trip for Bob and Dad.

Upon their return to the ship, I tried to rally for the evening, where the three of us dressed up for dinner and went to one of the Silhouette's fancier restaurants (I smartly chose not to eat due to my tummy issues). With a smile on his face, AmazingHugh made yet another friend, Salzcin, the restaurant manager. A Romanian national, with three kids at home under five, Dad found out everything that this interesting man wanted to tell us.

Salzcin thought Dad was the greatest thing since sliced bread. But then again, who doesn't.

After dinner we all went to the ship's theater for a show, then up to the 14th deck sky lounge to all play trivia. We were stellar on the general knowledge section, but quite frankly were much less so on the music and arts information section. Two lawyers and a government policy expert should stay in our lanes I guess.

Tomorrow we start to sail back to England and then to home.

This has been one amazing time, and we simply couldn't have made it as fun without you.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for reading, and for sharing our time together.

Please be well.

My Warmest Personal Regards,

Bob

Robert T. Farley, Esq., JD/LLM

The Excited Traveler

7 Glenwood Drive, Scotia, NY 12302

Tel: (518) 986-2037 Email: bobfarley@bobfarley.us