



Item: Fast Lane #48th in 2022 Petergram (#143 since 2020)
Date: **Saturday, November 26th 2022**
From: Peter writing from home in Clearwater, Florida
To: **Our Fast Lane Travel Customer Family and Friends at home in Australia, Canada, Europe, Iceland, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa and in the USA!**
Subjects: Farewell to Bob and Happy Thanksgiving Memories

I. Bob Armes – Last Saturday was Bob Armes' memorial service at the Mt. Dora Yacht Club. We said goodbye to a wonderful, caring, and very best friend. Linda's family, thankfully, was there, the Williams from Torquay, Bob's hometown were present plus dozens of other guests. Linda had organized an impressive display of memorabilia. The Commodore of the Yacht Club commenced with the memorial. Michael Clarke, another member of our Columbia University gang, recited fond memories. Steve Williams and several others fondly remembered Bob. I recited fond memories and concluded, of course, with a true story about two Pearly Gates. We'll miss you very much Bob. Be well Bob, and please put in a good word for us and save a space for Clarkie, Hall and me. (*I've shared photos on the last page*).

II. Thanksgiving: Rather than talking about trips and the travel business, I'll share with you my story of my first Thanksgiving in this wonderful place, Steubenville, Ohio, United States of America. Remember I was born during a B-17 bombing raid on Vienna, Austria on April 25th, 1943 – two years before this devastating tragic WW II was over. Hunger, sickness, depravation, and fear was my early childhood. Jumping forward to 1960, when I was 17, I had this wonderful opportunity to come to the US. This is the story of an event I had never heard of in Austria – my first Thanksgiving.

#35 Thanksgiving 1960

Towards the end of football season, the leaves had turned into spectacular fall colors. We raked the leaves from the two huge oak trees in the front yard into big piles. Mark of course made a sport of diving into the leaf piles. We then burned the leaf mounds on the street in front of the house. An American Holiday was celebrated called Thanksgiving. Toodie had been cooking since early morning – the house was filled with the most inviting mouth-watering aroma. I was told that I should have a big breakfast, as in twice the normal cereal with a cut up banana on top, because we'll get no lunch but will have an early dinner. A Thanksgiving dinner!

Toodie's (Edwina Vaughan, nicknamed Toodie, was my American mom) sister, Beverly, and her husband Frank Taylor, a U.S. mailman by profession came over first. Beverly brought some covered dishes which were hurried into the kitchen. Then Toodie's parents, Mr. & Mrs. Peterson, arrived and Mr. Peterson had a high ball in the living room and his usual unlit Churchill-size cigar in his mouth. The dining room table was set with

the best China, silver, and cloth napkins. Toodie was persnickety about every detail of this event. Then at about 3:45 pm everyone helped carry bowls and trays of food into the dining room. At this point I had been in the U.S. almost five months and had become familiar with the American way of food consumption. But I had never in my life seen so much food for so few people. There were eight of us – just the right amount for the small dining room.

There was a big empty space in the center of the oval table surrounded by mashed potatoes, noodles in gravy, orange sweet potatoes bathed in their glaze, lima beans, mushy little rolls called “dinner rolls,” butter, red jam, cranberries in a sauce and then round slices of jellied cranberry sauce, green transparent Jell-O with bits of pineapple in it, Waldorf salad, and green translucent Jell-O with white little balls in it called marshmallows and finally two gravy dispenser filled with the hot brown liquid. Then came the piece de resistance. Dick, to a deserved round of applause, brought in this huge platter with the biggest damn chicken I had ever seen. It was explained to me that this was not a chicken, but a bigger relative called a Turkey. WOW. Then Toodie ladled the “stuffing,” which looked like chopped up Semmelknödel, into another bowl, completing the array of carbohydrates. Dick then proceeded to carve this monster and separated the meat into light and dark meat, whatever that was.

When that was done, everyone bowed their heads and folded their hands, Mrs. Peterson said grace along the lines of thanking the Lord for our blessings – she also included me in her prayer in that Peter is here with us etc. – very moving and unifying. After the prayer, plates were passed around and filled with food. Surely it must have been 10,000 calories per plate. There was a very tall goblet of ice water at every plate. Ice water? I posed the question “What kind of wine are we going to have with this beautiful dinner?” Suddenly silence except for the clanging sound of utensils dropped onto the plates. Mrs. Peterson’s eyes doubled in size; Mr. Peterson’s cigar, still in his mouth, angled downwards; Mark grinned from ear to ear as in “you’re in trouble now, buster;” Toodie smiled apologetically; Dick stood up and took me into the kitchen where I was admonished. “Our kind of people don’t drink wine. Only winos drink wine out of paper bags on the Bowery!” I apologized and made a mental note that someday I must go to this place Bowery – I had never seen wine in paper bags.

After dinner we had pumpkin pie with “Cool Whip” which tasted nothing like Schlagobers in Austria, or we also had apple pie a la mode with a glob of vanilla ice cream on the side and a slice of cheddar cheese on top – very strange. The coffee was the worst – watery and no taste. There were no after dinner drinks. I really wanted a Cognac.

After dinner the men moved to the sunken living room, where Mr. Peterson smoked a Churchill size cigar, Dick a cigarette and Mark and I sat there just hitting each other – with the goal to get the last hit. This usually stopped when an adult exclaimed: “will you two stop horsing around . . . Peter you should know better.” This usually resulted in a one-minute break and then some secret hits from behind or taps with one’s elbow.

We watched the Steelers on the big black and white TV console in the living room – I still didn't understand at all what was going on in this game, but I liked the shots of the cheer leaders. During advertisements Mark or I were dispatched to the console to change the channel with the big round knob to "see what else was on" the other three channels, resulting in calls to "go back, go back" because presumably the game had resumed. All in all, it was a festive day and the beginning of a half a pound a month weight gain for me for the balance of my stay in America.

III. Final Thoughts this Week: it's time to slow down and enjoy the rest of the trip.

Source: Hector De Lara



An Airbus 380 is on its way across the Atlantic. It flies consistently at 800 km/h at 30,000 feet, when suddenly a Eurofighter with a Tempo Mach 2 appears. The pilot of the fighter jet slows down, flies alongside the Airbus and greets the pilot of the

passenger plane by radio: "Airbus, boring flight isn't it? Now have a look here!" He rolls his jet on its back, accelerates, breaks through the sound barrier, rises rapidly to a dizzying height, and then swoops down almost to sea level in a breathtaking dive. He loops back next to the Airbus and asks: "Well, how was that?"

The Airbus pilot answers: "Very impressive but watch this!"

The jet pilot watches the Airbus, but nothing happens. It continues to fly straight at the same speed. After 15 minutes, the Airbus pilot radios, "Well, how was that?"

Confused, the jet pilot asks, "What did you do?"

The Airbus pilot laughs and says: "I got up, stretched my legs, walked to the back of the aircraft to use the washroom, then got a cup of coffee and a chocolate fudge pastry."

The moral of the story is: When you're young, speed and adrenaline seems to be great. But as you get older and wiser, you learn that comfort and peace are more important.

This is called S.O.S.: Slower, Older and Smarter.

Dedicated to all my senior friends: it's time to slow down and enjoy the rest of the trip.

Enjoy the Weekend!

Please stay safe, healthy, and look forward to the great times we will have together in 2023. All the best to you, Peter



