

Some Memories of Blaine Mineweaser by Erik Olsen, Step-Grandson – 12/15/02

My first memories of Blaine were sometime in the early 1980's – Blaine and Florence visited us in Santa Clara, CA in about 1982 or so. I would have been about 14 and well, I was 14, so all I really remember was that these nice folks came to stay with us for a while during the holidays.

In August 1990, after graduating from college, my friend and I toured the US by car for 1 month. One of our stops was to visit Blaine and Florence in Florida. From my diary dated 8/11/90, I wrote:

“Today we arrived in Sebring at Blaine and Florence's. They took us out to dinner (I had orange ruffly) and then apple pie with ice cream afterwards at their home. They are in their 70's and seem to be doing pretty well; they're selling their home to move to a retirement, Samaritan complex. He is a Mason; I talked with him quite a bit about the Shriners too.”

I know I slept well there that night.

Jump forward to January 1994 – I flew to Orlando to run the inaugural Walt Disney World Marathon. I had contacted the Mineweasers to see if they could come watch the race. I clearly explained that they should aim to come early to see the end of the race; however in true fashion, they arrived late and missed the finish. To top it off, their camera, as we discovered later by the fuzzy photos, was not working properly, or not being used properly. I think they were happy to be there though and I especially enjoyed a meal out with them – after over 3½ hours of running, I was eating everything in sight!

Thanksgiving 1998: Mom, Craig, Lou, and I met at Blaine's home. Here are some pictures. We toured Cape Canaveral and had dinner out – I think that was my first Thanksgiving at a restaurant!



The next night we went to a Medieval Times show – where they re-enacted Jousting on horseback and make you eat out of pewter bowls with no silverware – all for way too much money. But then again, when else can a bunch of adults wear cardboard crowns, drink pale beer or overly sweet red wine, and cheer for the Black Knight.



Thanksgiving 1999: After some discussion with Mom and Craig, I invited Blaine to my Blacksburg, VA home for the 1999 Thanksgiving holiday. He arrived right on time at the airport and we got home in time for a nice evening – and the beginning of a series of many many Blaine Mineweaser stories. The next day was Thanksgiving – and we had the works – Turkey, stuffing, gravy, and pumpkin pie – even Jell-O Salad that only Blaine and I ate. I think there were 11 of us there that night – including a fellow student from Turkey named Tolga that my friend had invited against my wishes. You see he was pretty annoying to me, but I tolerated him nonetheless. The dinner went well and Blaine went on into the night once again telling the same stories I (and most of us in this room) had heard repeatedly. But alas, the evening ended, and everyone went to sleep content.

The next morning, four of us went golfing; I had not golfed in years and it showed. I think Blaine got the lowest score, beating all of us by a healthy margin – I guess regular practice – at any age - really does help!

The next day was Game Day. Some of you may have heard of Virginia Tech College Football over the last few years, especially with our star Quarterback Michael Vick, the 2001, 1st Round, 1st draft pick now with the Atlanta Falcons - and since we have been ranked consistently among the top-10 in College Football. Well, 1999 was a good year for the Hokies – so we went to the game. It was a chilly November morning – I had warned Blaine to bring his winter rain gear. It was clear as we prepared to leave the house, and as luck would have it, it started to sprinkle just as we walked out the door. But Blaine stuck it out. Here he was, an 85-year-old man, sitting in the student section, wearing a black garbage bag for protection from the rain, very content. We ended up being amongst the driest, most comfortable fans, sitting on our stadium seats on the cold, aluminum bleachers.

It was a good day – I think the team came from behind, having to pull in our 2nd string quarterback – Blaine and I were witnesses as super-star Michael Vick turned his ankle and hobbled off the field – a single event that probably cost the Hokies the national title that year; however, the rain stopped, the sun broke through, and we won the game and we walked on back, content – according to Blaine, this was his first-ever college football game since High School! It was a fine, cool day.

Our last night was spent out for dinner. We went to Michael's – a diner with long beige curtains and matching tablecloths reminiscent of the 80's – the décor that seemed to fit the occasion. I think we ordered steak.

Later, after Blaine arrived at home, he wrote this letter:

Dec, 1, 1999

Dear Erik,

I want to thank you for the wonderful time I had with you and your nice friends. I sure enjoyed your home, auto, and your good cooking. I had no trouble coming back. All was fine. My friend Joe and his wife picked me up at Orlando airport and I had him drive to downtown on 192 to Denny's Restaurant and we had a good meal. Then I drove home from there.

I went in the house about 3:30 PM and the phone rang and I was surprised or rather shocked, as she told me the lady in Apt 6 was killed by an 18 yr old girl driving the car, as she was crossing the road on Friday from eating at McDonald's to our in gate. We went to the church here in the Village for a service on Monday. About 45 people were there and I took all the ladies from this quad. I now only have 4 ladies to look after.

I hope you are well and doing OK since the ball game. Monday evening I turned on the TV and they said Virginia Tech was going to play Florida State. I will try to watch that on TV. I may golf tomorrow to exercise but it is supposed to be the coldest morning yet. Around 40 or 35 degrees. No rain since I have been home yet.

I didn't find my Visa card so I went to the bank this morning and had a lady call for me. We cancelled the old one and they will send me a new one. No money lost anyway.

Thank you for all you did.

With Love
Blaine

Ever since my Grandfather Telford died over ten years ago, I had wished I had had a chance to talk with him and get to know him better. Blaine allowed me to have such a chance, albeit on just a few occasions.

Ironically, it was that annoying Turkish associate, Tolga - that my friend had invited for Thanksgiving who perhaps most appreciated Blaine and his stories that Thanksgiving evening. The overly told, seemingly endless, sometimes pointless stories that Blaine told, were a pleasure to Tolga from Turkey. He later stopped me in the hall and personally thanked me for having him over for Thanksgiving:

"He reminds me so much of my own Grandfather," Tolga said. "With his stories, I was reminded of being home and I was glad I could be there to spend some time with him; his stories were great."

I hate to admit it, but the box of sweet Turkish Delight that Tolga brought over that night was enjoyed, mostly by me, for weeks to come. I think Blaine enjoyed a piece of it as well.

And, ironically, *I* am the one now telling you the seemingly endless stories.

