

**October, 2005**

### **Toronto Revisited**

I'm back!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

My last trip to Toronto was mellow. This one started off a bit differently. I got in about 1100 Saturday and worked almost straight through until 1100 Sunday. I prepared for and cleaned up from what was supposed to have been a massive data move from old, outdated servers to new ones. 5.5 hours into the time we had allocated for the move, we decided we could not complete it and rolled back out of it. Needless to say, by the time I finally hit the fartsac on Sunday night, I was down for the count. We are going to try it again this weekend but with another hand or two on site besides me.

Bad weekends of work notwithstanding, I hope to get out a bit more on this trip to explore the area. Check back for updates.

### **Updates On My Move to Centreville**

Hey now,

I guess it is time to write. I forwarded 24 emails to my work laptop so that I can hopefully reply to them all while I am back up in Toronto again from 1 to 22 October. I knew it was coming but still was barely ready. I just got everything put away in my new place the day before I left and got maintenance to come in for a walk through.

I had lots of issues....with the place that is. The apartment complex was built about 17 years ago and is showing it's age. That is offset in a big way by the setting which has lots of big, mature trees in contrast to some of the new, maybe nicer apartment complexes in the area. Forgive me if I repeat myself but the location is great. I can walk to my sister Julie's house and the house of other friends in the area in about 15 minutes. Right next to my complex, though not even visible due the trees, is a shopping area with grocery store, hardware store, vets (for the cat), a State Farm office where I will transfer my policies (since I use State Farm), four or more eateries, and a bank.

Back to the issues. Who ever lived there before me was a slob and heavy smoker. Even though maintenance had nine days to clean up, paint, repair, replace, etc., the place still needed work. Mirrors and windows were smeared terribly. Dust and crud was accumulated in horizontal surfaces of window and door sills and cabinet doors. I think I might finally have aired out the smoke but I guess I'll be able to tell when I walk in after having been gone for three weeks.

The replaced my dishwasher without me having to ask and will replace the washer which stops half way through the spin cycle. Now I'll have a new washer and dishwasher that don't match the stove and dryer. I am sure the old stuff is about as energy efficient as an SUV. NTL, the place is good sized with plenty of closet space. I never seem to be able to find the ideal set up for the living room getting sofa and chairs arranged so that everyone has a good view of the TV and a good listen of the stereo. Since most of the time everyone is me, that's not really a big deal.

My master bedroom is my office with desk, bookshelves, and two easy chairs. Since I ditched my bed at my last place, I'll be ordering one when I return from Toronto. I normally sleep on an inflatable mattress which is plenty comfortable for me but it would be nice to have a bed for a change. I'll put the bed in the smaller bedroom which is still decent sized and has the walk-in closet (my cat loves to hang in there). If I have guests...I expect Mom and Dad to stay with me at Christmas...they can have the bed and I'll crash on the inflatable in my office.

I have two full bathrooms, one off the office which is the cat box location, and one off the hall that also has a door to what I'll use for the bedroom. That works well since the one off the hall is most likely to be used if I have guests. I can share the other one with Hamlet.

The kitchen is very small compared to what I had in Fredneck. It is only eat-in if you are standing over the sink. I did not lose too much counter space but already miss the double sink. As I said, since everyone is usually only me, I am not losing any sleep over it. It is kind of weird to have a dishwasher. Other than washing up a bunch of things that had been in cabinets for years after I moved in, I haven't even used it. Cabinet space is actually pretty good including a floor to ceiling pantry closet thing.

I have a loft ceiling in the living room which I wish (and can't figure out why they didn't) carry over to the dining area. I also have a fireplace but figure the likelihood of using that is minimal so I covered it over with a Chinese screen and put my stereo and TV racks in front of it. I have sliding glass doors in the living room that open out on to a good sized deck (for an apartment) that look out over the end of the parking lot, a nice grassy area, and more trees.

Finally, I wish the natural lighting were bit better. It is best in the morning since most of my windows face east or north east. The smaller bedrooms windows face south or southeast. Due to the overhang on the deck and the deepness of the apartment, a fair amount of artificial lighting is required. There is not much of that built in except in the kitchen, halls, closets, and bathrooms so I bought three brushed bronze floor lamps that each have upward, ambient lighting as well as two directional reading lamps. I am still not sure exactly where they will go but I've got time.

Moving was more stressful than I anticipated it to be. I know that the experts say it is one of the most stressful life changes...up there with losing/changing your job...but I am a single guy. It should not be that difficult. Maybe if I had more than six days between returning from three weeks in Toronto before the move and more than 20 days after the move before returning to Toronto for three weeks, it would not have been as stressful.

The move was also much more expensive than I expected. I looked around for respectable movers and think I got robbed. That was twice as much as I was led to believe it would cost. They get you by giving you an estimate, adding a travel to and from their office clause that they don't mention on the phone, and then rape you with packing material costs. Of course they won't unload you until you pay them.

To top it off, I decided to have the cleaning service that I used to have clean my apartment come in and do a move clean. I did this because I did not want to do it, I thought my landlord was going to try and by new window blinds (12 of them required) instead of having them cleaned, and they quoted me a price of about \$160. When I got the bill, it was for \$400. Bend over Rover....let Jimmy take over.

I hate to get taken advantage of because that's not the way I work. Here's an example: When I am traveling on business for my company, I can submit on my expense report up to \$35 a day for meals without any receipts. My last trip up here, my daily food expenses average less than \$10 a day because I don't eat out much, hit the grocery store, and cooked for myself in the condo. That's what I submitted. In two trips up here totalling 42 days if I kept my meal expenses to about \$10 a day, I could net \$1000. Could I use that money? Oh definitely! Do I feel right getting it? No. It sucks to be nice with decent morals and ethics. Oh and I forgot that my landlord charged me for a full months rent my last month there even though I gave her 60 days notice that I was vacating on the 18th. And she still has not sent me my deposit back.

### **Black and Blue Ego**

If I drink Carling Black Label and I want to get bruised, what's better to drink with it....Labatt's Blue or Pabst Blue Ribbon?

### **Aging and a Fine Wine**

I am starting to feel my age I think, finally. Odd shoulder problems are nagging at me. Nonetheless, I hope to age reasonably gracefully. Please let me know if I start turning into a grossly overweight beast with a bad combover who stinks up the men's room in the office.

### **More Bad Names for Business**

Up here in Scarborough, an eastern suburb of Toronto, Canada, there is a very large East Asian presence. I am not sure if the name on this place is East Asian but I am going to assume it is and suggest that it is inappropriate: "Shadi Jewlers." Is there a translator in the house? My kingdom for a translator. A little help here please.... Anyone...anyone?

### **Quick Afternoon at Bathurst and Bloor in Toronto**

I had hoped to have a quick beer and some lunch at a place I had been to with a friend from Toronto on my first trip up here, December 2004. I was at the corner of Bathurst and Bloor. Unfortunately, I could not remember the

name of the place. Fortunately I found a cozy, college, neighborhood pub called the Pauper's Pub instead. Thankfully the Pauper's Pub did not break my bank. Had it done so, I am not sure I would have enjoyed this place.

I had planned to walk down to Lake Ontario but I never made it. One, I started out walking the wrong way. It just did not feel right and when I turned around and realized the sun was behind me, I knew it was over...Johnny. So I walked back to the corner of B&B.

I decided to enjoy the few beers and had a bad Korean lunch of Daenchang Chigae. At the restaurant, they loved my Korean and said my accent was great but if they put any Daenchang in the Chigae, I couldn't taste it. By then I was just ready to get on the metro and head back to the condo.

### **Quick Tour of the DDI Toronto Apartment**

Testing the movie making functionality of my digital cameral. Unfortunately, it saves in Quicktime format which I hate. I'll have to check into that. As much as I hate Microsoft, at least the Windows Media Player is prevalent on most PC's and is not so obnoxiously installed on your PC.

DDI Toronto Apartment - Not for dialup users.

TO High - View From Above

Another movie test...shot from the DDI Toronto condo balcony.

View From Corporate Condo - Not for dialup users.

### **Burned in 'Fields**

I am battling with my apartment management company to do some basic things like get my apartment cleaned to the condition it should have been when my lease started. Basic things like windows, mirrors, and window and door sills.

I had other issues that have been resolved like a tub that drained very slowly. I hate that...might as well take a bath! I got a new dishwasher without explanation and I was not one to complain. I also got a new washer. I did complain about that. It stopped about halfway through the spin cycle and just made a humming noise. The oven door took some adjusting to get it to seat right and both the oven and stove crank though I am sure they are not energy efficient.

I found that one of the burners seemed to have no thermostat control. I had some frozen veggies in a sauce pan, brought the minimal water to a boil, and turned it down to simmer. Well simmer was still high boil. I am glad I was paying attention.

So today I dragged the maintenance manager in for round two to try to get things squared away. I was showing him the deal with the stove burner....I put a saucepan on with about two inches of water in it and set it on low. We reviewed some action items. He wrote them down. We left.

I went to Julie's house to take her to the grocery store...her car is in the shop. I waited for a bit as she put some dishes in the dishwasher. I wrote Ryan a check for cat sitting. As Julie and I headed out, I was telling her of my travails of getting my apartment to my liking when I realized I had walked out with saucepan on a burner on low that was really on high!

We jumped in the car and I drove over a bit faster than necessary to my apartment. I jumped out of the car and in the background heard this kind of beeping noise. It did not take me long to realize that it was probably my smoke detector. I dashed up the stairs and into the apartment to the smell of something seriously overheated and the alarm of the smoke detector. I took the pan off the burner and turned it off. A couple of exhalations through the smoke alarm and it was cleared.

This scared the living crap out of me. It was a miracle that I even remembered it. I've never done anything like that before though I've know plenty of people who have. I always check to see that the things that are off are really off before I sit back, go to bed, or leave my place. If I had not been having issues with my apartment's condition, I am sure this would not have happened.