



CHIROPRACTIC (GENERAL)

Chiropractic Travelogue

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"Tee shirts, cut-offs and a pair of thongs. We've been having fun all summer long" — "All Summer Long" by the Beach Boys, 1964

I was sitting in a Pizza Hut in Peoria, Ill., with my friend Reggie, sometime in the spring of my senior year in college, when he started doodling on his paper placemat. In those days, the company had a picture of U.S. on the mats, showing all the locations of the "Huts" in the country. Reggie had located the most northern, southern, western and eastern points to which he had traveled at that time. Then he drew a line connecting the points, making a rectangle of sorts. Imagine a "box" showing the connections of places such as Houston, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Rocky Mountain National Park, for example.

Reggie called his doodling The Miller Box Theory of Social Mobility. Several of us had a lot of fun that night, plotting out our "boxes" of travel on paper placemats. The bus boy had the tiniest box, since he had only been from north Peoria to south Peoria, and from the Illinois river on the east to the granite quarry on the west side of town.

I mention this story only because few of my high-school or college friends had traveled very far from the Midwest in those days. Any kid who had vacationed with their parents in California was a celebrity. I was lucky. My folks liked to take vacations, so I saw most of America from the back seat of our Pontiac. Consequently, I am always curious about where my patients are going when they tell me they will be out of town next week and can't come in for treatment. In fact, I am probably bordering on rudeness when they tell me they are going on vacation; I start quizzing them about where they are going.



I actually keep a road atlas in my office so patients can show me where they're heading, especially when they are going somewhere unfamiliar to me, like their home town. "Can you show me where [Roby, Texas](#) is exactly?" I might inquire. When a young mother tells me her family is driving to East St. Louis, I automatically ask, "Visiting relatives?" With no offense to the city of East St. Louis, I am assuming this is not a popular vacation destination.

Perhaps I have even become a "trip advisor" for a few of my patients. I get *National Geographic* magazine, watch the Travel Channel, read about history and geography, and can even sing Johnny Cash's song, "I've Been Everywhere" in B flat major. But I have a secret I seldom bring up with patients: I have never traveled in Europe. Consequently, I feel somewhat like a "hick" when someone asks me if I have ever been to Paris. Should I say, "No, but I saw pictures of it on television"? In today's world, I know I shouldn't fret about this. I probably can download some hologram of the Eiffel Tower and have it projected on a wall, with me "photoshopped" on it, waving from the top.

Technology is a two-edged sword, though. In my opinion, it can take the spontaneity and adventure out of a vacation when one knows too much in advance. On the other hand, the timely use of a search engine can save one from ptomaine poisoning or bed-bug bedlam.

But finding a good meal while on a holiday has caused some differences of opinion between me and my wife. I can be driving along and see a funky restaurant with a lot of cars in front of it, and make an assumption that it is popular place to eat. Yet I know my wife will immediately whip out her smartphone and check some website's ranking of the place, look at the menu on their web page, and search for negative or positive comments.

Chiropractors, as well as other health professionals, understand the tax advantages of mixing a business trip with a vacation. In my early years of practice, I was hungry for information on how to run and market a practice, let alone prosper. That led me naturally to practice-management seminars, which led me naturally (?) to Las Vegas. I'm still not clear why motivational seminars are held in such an edgy and lascivious city. Fun is fun, but it's difficult to have an uplifting or positive experience when porno peddlers accost one on the street.

I remember one particular time, when leaving the hotel at 4 a.m. to catch an early flight, my attention was diverted to an elderly woman playing a slot machine in the casino. She was wearing her pajamas and a robe, smoking a cigarette and drinking a cocktail. Her oxygen tank was draped over her chair. Had she been up all night or did she get up early to start playing the machine? In either case, it was not the healthy lifestyle image I wanted to take home with me.

In my office, at least, travel and vacations are a common topic of conversation. Just this week, one of my patients told me she was going to the Midwest to visit her aunt and take a riverboat ride on the Mississippi. I reached for my road atlas just as she said, "My aunt lives in [East St. Louis](#)." Oh, well...

JULY 2015