

Along the Sappa

Angry Swirl
Jumps from the
Sink

By Steve Haynes

I'd finished rinsing the dishes and loading the dishwasher, turned the water on in the sink and hit the switch for the disposer when an angry black vortex erupted from the drain.

What the ????

OK, mostly coffee grounds.

I hoped I didn't understand what was happening, but after shutting the water and the disposer off, I tried again. The angry black vortex jumped up to greet me.

There was little doubt now that the outlet pipe from the disposer was jammed. I've seen this enough times to recognize the symptoms.

Worse yet, I understand the cure all too well: clear out the cabinet under the sink, disassemble the plumbing, clean out the peelings that have jammed it, then put it all back together.

It's not difficult, but it is time-consuming, and since it's often discovered after dinner, when you just want to go sit in your favorite chair and relax, the timing is poor.

Oh, no time is convenient for playing with under-sink sewer pipes. But considering the difficulty getting a plumber here, and the cost, and the delay, self-help is the quickest and most reliable answer.

But we hadn't peeled any vegetables. Then I remembered that Cynthia, wanting a late-afternoon snack, had peeled a mandarin orange.

Usually, in our experience, it's hard vegetable peelings that cause trouble in a disposer – carrot, cucumber, zucchini, stuff like that. They are long and thin, but tough and small enough to just slide out of the grinder whole rather than hanging around long enough to be chopped. We have learned to just put them in the trash.

Manufacturers actually encourage people to grind citrus peels because they generally chop well and make the kitchen smell so good. This little orange had been around a while, and its rind was a little mushy.

Oh well, I sighed. Doesn't really make any difference what jammed the pipe; it still has to be cleaned out if we want to use that sink.

I set to work, clearing out the cabinet and setting the sprays and cleaners aside. Then I grabbed a pair of large pliers and started take down. Since the pipes are all new PVC plastic, they came apart with little difficulty. And when I got to the outlet T draining the two sinks, I found just what I expected clogging the disposer side: Mushy orange peel, nearly whole, not nearly flexible enough to make a 90-degree turn.

That cleaned up, I started putting the pipes back together. That, too, went well. I hand-tightened the joints, ran some water, tightened a couple just a little more, and glory be, it all worked.

That just left wiping out the cabinet and putting everything away, dishwasher pods, soaps and sprays, bags and every thing else that lives under there. I was done inside 30 minutes, and with a little practice, I think I could cut that time in half.

Not that I want practice, understand.

Years ago, plumbers used a straight T pipes under a two-sink setup. Jams were not a problem. But we got new pipes around 20 years ago, and learned that somewhere along the line, the plumbing code had been changed to require a vertical divider between the two sides of the T. This forced outflow water down, apparently to prevent gunk from a disposer from coming back up the other side.

Well, live and learn. I learned how to clean out a jammed disposer outlet and Cynthia learned how to separate vegetable peelings from other refuse and divert them. After a couple of false starts, that worked for years.

Somewhere along the line, we had more work done under the sink, and I asked the plumber to use a straight T, which he did. But some time later, apparently, somebody put a divided T in.

I did not remove the offending pipe – it was 9 p.m. by then – but I did tell Cynthia that my offer to teach her how to do this simple home repair was still good, should there be a next time.

Her answer does not bear repeating, but hey, she's been telling me we each need to know what the other does to keep the household running, from chores to plumbing to finances.

Just in case.

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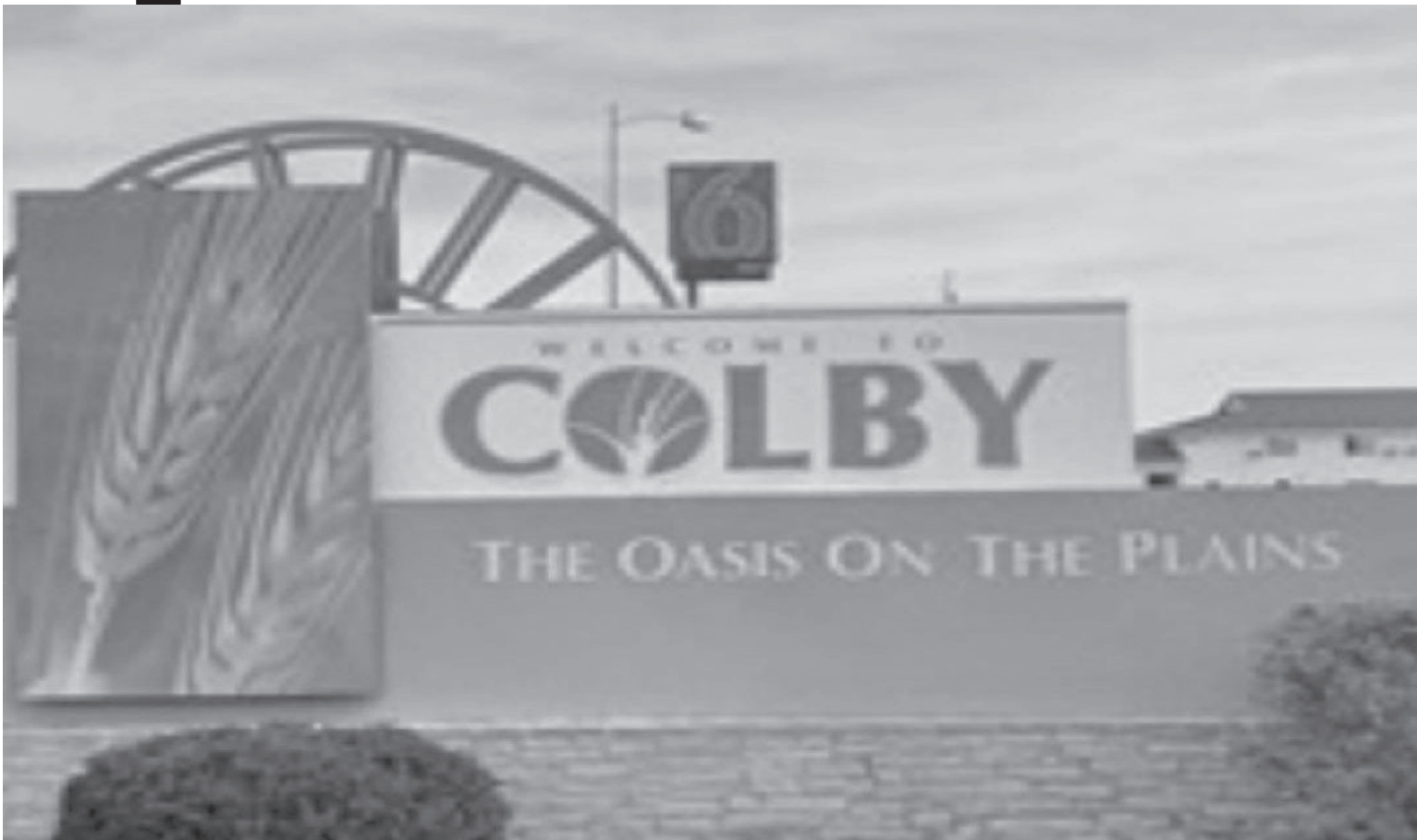
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The Last Day is Still the Longest

I get asked all the time about going to Alaska on a cruise ship.

It is my favorite trip of the year and yes, I am coming to the end of a long one.

As I have said before, for me...there is no place like it and going to that state on a cruise ship is why I work at the newspaper. It's not cheap.

There are a few choices of going on an Alaskan cruise. Of course there are several cruise lines that sail up there in the summer. The season is from May until September.

Generally May and September are "cold" cruises. There was still a lot of snow up there in mid-May and it can be raining on any given day. The wind blows...it can be cold but the whales were out.

Depending on what port and cruise line you choose, generally there are just a few options open to someone traveling from the United States.

If you want to just sail, then by and large you will leave from either Vancouver, Canada, Seattle or San Francisco.

The ones that leave from Vancouver or Seattle, the length of the cruise to the inside passage is generally seven days. It takes a sea day to get there and it will take a sea day to get back with four or five days in between to visit three ports. The most popular ports are Ketchikan, Juneau and Skagway. Some go also to Sitka and Icy Straight Point. I've been to all of the above mentioned places on this cruise, plus a few new ones like Seward and Wrangle. It's been quite the trip.

From San Francisco, it takes two sea days up and down so the trip is a 10 or 11 day one. Others are shorter...seven days.

There are some that are longer and go all the way to Anchorage and back. Those take 14 to 22 days, depending on the amount of ports that the ship will visit. This one was a super cruise and lasted 24



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- thoughts from
the editor

days and went up to Seward, just outside of Anchorage.

There are also cruise/tour variations that combine a cruise with an overland trip. Those are not round-trip. I've never been on those.

So, what is the trip like?

The first day is tricky and you have to make a calculation based on risk if you have to fly to the port.

The ships generally leave port at 4 p.m. local time and you have to be aboard by 3:30 p.m. at the latest.

If you are flying east to west, there are direct flights that will leave in the morning and get you there before noon. That's no problem...plenty of time...if. The "if" is if there are no delays, cancellations or problems.

When going to the West coast, like this cruise out of Seattle, we chose to fly late at night the night before, stay at a motel in Seattle and then get up and go to the port. I wasn't taking any chances this time around, flying the day of the cruise. Flight delays occur way too often.

One time, a few years ago, we were flying west to east out of New Mexico. Our plane got diverted from going to Ft. Lauderdale to New Orleans. We missed our sailing and had to scramble to get on a different cruise. That was a major headache.

The answer to that costs money and time. Fly into your cruise port destination a day or two early and stay in a hotel. Then you have to take more time off and you have to pay for lodging and food.

Biden's Cancer, Don't Settle
for a White House Doctor

The recent announcement about former President Joe Biden having terminal prostate cancer is mind-blowing. It was announced that the cancer is in his bones, so yes, it's terminal. He might live a couple of years depending on how far it has progressed. This week, I have been wondering if the cancer is already in his brain and if it has been there for a while. How long will it be before we know the truth? Will we ever know the complete truth?

Biden having stage four prostate cancer is just crazy. We recently heard on national news that it has been 14 years since Biden had his last PSA test, which is typically done every year on any man who has a physical. If the doctor doesn't order a PSA test on any man over 50 then he should have his medical license revoked. We are talking about the President of the United States who supposedly has access to the finest medical care in the world. In reality he must have had an idiot looking out for him. Or, did Joe know he had cancer early in his term as President and everyone agreed to keep it quiet?

Biden's condition grew worse throughout his Presidency. He wasn't great when he was doing all his campaigning from the basement. In his last two years, he became increasingly difficult to understand and he couldn't answer questions on the spot. He



from
other pens

- Glenn Mollette

had to be given questions in advance. We saw it all play out on national television. Let's please pray for Biden. He is a very sick man.

Shame on the White House medical team for not taking care of the President. Shame on Jill Biden. Why would a wife allow her husband to try to keep doing what he was not able to do. Shame on Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, Bernie Sanders and every Democrat who tried to fool the American public. They did not fool anyone.

Prostate cancer can be treated and cured if caught early. A PSA test each year will identify a rising PSA number. Typically, any number over four will warrant a prostate biopsy. Biopsies are not fun but they are much better than terminal cancer. A biopsy will determine if there is any malignancy in the prostate. If a malignancy is found early on then there will be choices to make. There are various treatments such as radiation seed implants, cyber knife, pro-

Once you get on the ship...all is right in the world.

But all good things come to an end and like any vacation...there comes a time when it is time to go home. Even if you are "ready" to be home, going home in one day will make you need another vacation.

The last day is the longest and I dread it. It takes days to recover from. You're tired and your sleep patterns are destroyed.

Coming from Seattle on a Saturday, our day will begin around 6:30 a.m. PDT.

Get up, have your last breakfast on the ship and then it's time to get off the ship. There are more than 2600 people on our cruise and they all have to be off by 9 a.m. It takes about an hour to check off the ship, go through customs and get your luggage...then it's back to the airport which in Seattle, takes another hour or so.

Then check in, check your luggage and go through security. Soon enough you are waiting for your flight that will leave sometime after noon.

Why after noon? Fog! If the ship can't dock that morning, it will have to lay off the port...sometimes for hours. That happened on our first cruise out of Galveston, TX years ago. The chaos was something to behold as people's flights were all messed up.

So, we have a 2 p.m. PDT flight with one stop along the way...no non-stop flight available at the right time.. That will put us back into Denver at 9:30 p.m. MDT. By the time we get our luggage and pick up our vehicle...it was 11 p.m. MDT.

Three hours later...3:00 a.m. CDT is when we will get home and I'll be seeing double for the last few miles. Then got to get up and go preach Sunday!

I love living in the rural Mid-West. I love to cruise...especially to Alaska. But that last day? I'm getting to old for this!

ton therapy, radiation therapy, freezing the cancer or surgery to remove the prostate. However, if you wait and delay treatment then the cancer will eventually escape the prostate and end up in your bones and other parts of your body. Then, it is just a matter of time before you die.

An oncologist may do hormone injections and radiation to buy you some time. That's what "managing" the cancer is, buying you a little time, very little time.

Again, pray for Joe Biden. Also, men, get your PSA test every year. Even if you are over 75, insist on it. A dear friend of mine, died from prostate cancer at age 80. He was diagnosed at age 77. His doctor was passive and kept saying, "We'll watch it." They watched it for sure. They watched it kill my friend. If they had done PSA tests earlier, they could have caught it and treated the cancer.

If your doctor says, "We don't do tests like that after 70 or 75, then find a different doctor. What's the point of going to the doctor at age 70 or 80 if their attitude is "You're too old to treat. We will just let you die." Be proactive. Don't settle for a doctor like the White House doctor who allowed the President to become terminal.

Dr. Glenn Mollette is the author of Uncommon Sense. Available wherever books are sold.