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“Amazing GPS”

by

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Still meandering around the boot shaped country in Southern Europe... eating a moderate amount of pasta and drinking a less than moderate amount of the country's national drink. Will be home in a few days and am looking forward to it. Hope to have many details to fill in your blanks in a couple of weeks so keep your interest high. Don't forget folks... next week is Election Day so don't make any other day-plans until after you've gone to vote.... Crucial vote this year.

I think I have figured out why most gas stations on the main drag always lock their bathrooms... they're afraid someone might get inside of them and clean them... what a shame that would be. Can you actually imagine some of the filth that is allowed to remain in some of the 'Clean Restrooms' advertised up and down the highway. Not a whole lot one can do about the matter other than writing to the Oil Company whose name adorns the main sign and telling them they'll never get another dime of yours until they clean up their act.

Traveling can be a real fun time these days especially with the new GPS systems. Whether they are built-in your car or you have a portable, it is absolutely amazing to watch these gadgets work. It's like having a human on-board navigator by your side. A typical conversation with Sara (that's our GPS Lady's name) in my car... "In one mile take a slight right." "in ¼ mile take a slight right." "Take next slight right." "Turn here..." Oops, missed it. Sorry Sara! "In ¼ mile, make a legal 'U' turn.

In the not too distant past we were coming home from up north and decided to stop in Jacksonville, FL on the way to eat at a really neat seafood restaurant. After the meal, rather than backtracking to the main route I asked Sara to take us the quickest route to I-95 South. She did her calculating quickly and advised us to get on the highlighted route and she would take over at that time. Unfortunately, she didn't know just how bad the driver's sense of direction was and we got lost trying to get to the 'highlighted route'. Well, we weren't actually lost. We knew exactly where we were but we didn't know how to get to where we wanted to go. Okay... so we were lost.

We kept going around in circles and finally I pushed the On-Star button (Another cool gadget) and asked the nice lady if she could help us get to I-95. She took a couple of minutes and said, "Alright sir, I see you and I will lead you to your destination." She said are you on "such and such" road? I said no. She then told me to go a few more miles in the same direction, which I did. "Alright sir, you should be coming to a major intersection soon where you will turn right on "such and such" road. Well, it didn't happen. She then asked another question to which we answered in the negative again and she said, "Sir, I don't really know what to say. Our computer's image shows you right in the

middle of a large stand of woods and I-95 is not too far from where you are.” I replied, “Well, unfortunately for me someone has snuck in during the night and cut down all those trees and used them to build about a thousand new homes because I’m surrounded by them.”

She truly had nothing to say except to tell me to hold on and she would call her supervisor. I advised that would be fine but in the meantime I was going to take a turn toward the east on the next road and drive until I ran into I-95 and I would let her know when I got there. That is exactly what I did and sure enough, about 3 miles further to the east there was good old reliable I-95. The On-Star lady was happy to hear that we had arrived. Being on familiar territory once again we made our way home in proper time. All in all, however, the GPS systems are fantastic and I highly recommend them to anyone... especially someone with a lot of patience.

You folks have a great week... and from Italy.... arrivederci ya’ll!

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