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Remembrances of George R. Seaman, by James Freeman

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George was a wonderful friend, and I miss him a great deal. The times we spent together during 20 summers playing in the Pops Esplanade Orchestra (George played longer than I did) were surely for me the highpoints of the Pops experience. George and I decided early on that the tours were going to provide wonderful opportunities for adventures, and we did everything we could to make those adventures happen. That included attending every major league baseball game we could find, even when (after a concert in Columbus) it involved a 2-hour drive to Cincinnati. Other games we managed to get to were in Los Angeles (several times), Houston, Atlanta (a great double header with Pittsburg at which we even collected a foul ball), and San Francisco. But I think the real gem was in Charleston, South Carolina. Determined to find a ball game somewhere, George and I hired a cab to take us to the minor league park of the Charleston Rainbows. There we watched a great game and introduced ourselves to the owner of the team who eventually drove us back himself to our hotel.

More exciting even than the ball games was the mountain climbing. We climbed half way up Mount Rainer, Mount Hood, Mount Fuji (had we been just a little more crazy than we were, we would have gotten to the top), Pikes Peak, half way down the Grand Canyon, and all the way up Mount St. Helens and Mount Mitchell (after a 3-hour drive from Charlotte). Someone in the Pops had told us the Mitchell climb would be disappointing, and when half way up the mountain a beautiful and curious buck deer stopped right in our path to look us over, George couldn't help but say, "Hey, guys, that's some disappointing deer, isn't it?" There was also the famous time when we brought our children to climb Mt. Monadnock together, deciding - naturally - to take the Pumpelly Trail because it was the longest. It was a hot day and we brought nowhere near enough water with us to sustain the 14-mile hike - but we did survive, barely!

Then there were the museums. I really had a hard time keeping up with George on those trips. One free day in L.A., we went in the morning to the L.A. County Museum, then to the Getty Museum, and finally to Palo Alto to still another museum. I was bushed and said in Palo Alto I'd had enough museums but would go in just to find a rest room. George later loved to tell the story of how there was a gorgeous Monet at the end of the entry hall, and that convinced me to keep up with him even then. In truth, it was just George's undying enthusiasm - not the Monet - that kept me going.

George called me this past January to tell me of his illness. "Jim, I didn't want you to find out that I had died, without talking to you myself," he said. The incredible thing was that he didn't want ME to feel bad, and that was why he was calling. That was so typical of the extraordinarily generous spirit of this man whom I loved - and will always love - as a brother.