

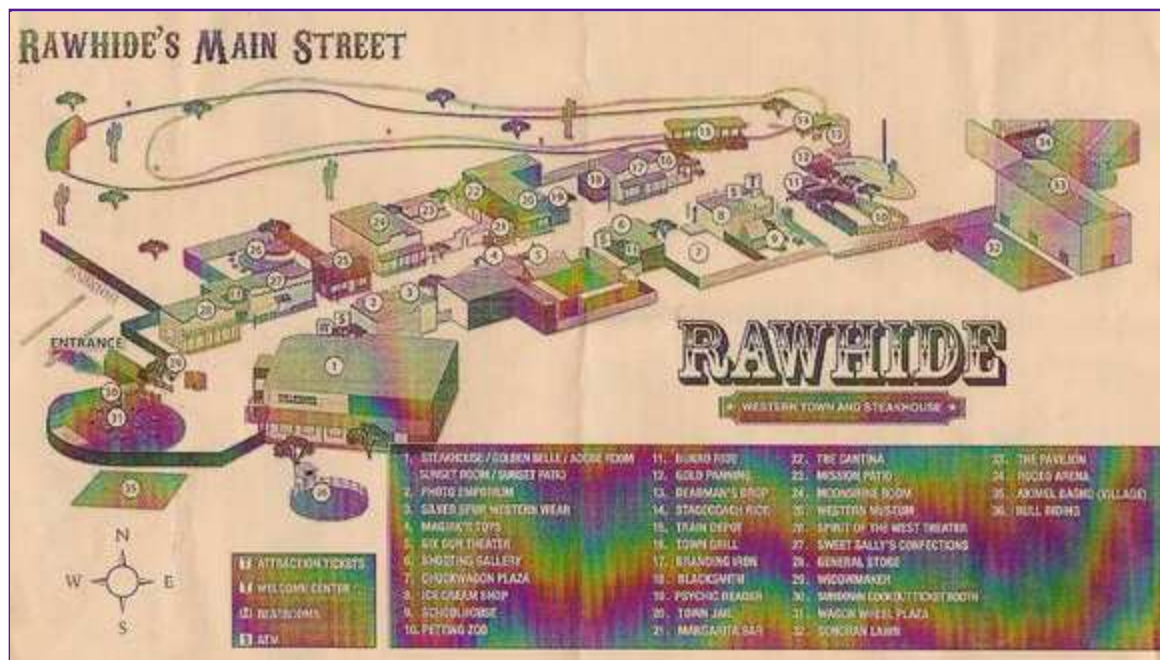
Ormand Family Activity

November 2011: Glendale Adventure

On Thursday, November 3, Charity turned 20 years old. No longer a teen-ager. Since the following Friday is an off-Friday for Raytheon "A" schedule people, and Faith has the two days off for teacher conferences, I figure we ought to celebrate the special day in style. I do a bit of research and send Charity a "smorgasbord" of activities to choose from, and then we leave on Thursday morning to fetch her down from Flagstaff.

Her first choice is to dine on steak at Rawhide (rawhide.com). I'd seen the ads in the Arizona and Phoenix tourist lit; I was thinking it was something like our own Trail Dust Town, with a steakhouse (in our case, Pinnacle Peak) surrounded by little shops and old west paraphernalia, and a wild-west stunt show, and some rides like a miniature train, and stuff like that. Trail Dust Town is really a pleasant place, and the steak is as good as anywhere else in Tucson, and better than most (my opinion, and I'm no gourmet), so I figure Rawhide might be something to check out.

It's pretty close. It's bigger than Trail Dust Town. And it's out in the Akimel reservation, in the Wild Horse Pass resort and casino area.



The similarities end there, however. On a Thursday night, Rawhide is practically dead. We arrive at early evening, there are perhaps twenty cars in the (very large) parking lot, and we walk around the deserted dusty street looking at all the empty shops. Our reservation is for 7:30, and we have time for the stunt show, which is due to start shortly and the stuntmen are out in the street trying to get an audience. So we go in.

Second surprise (after the deserted condition of the town): they were expecting tickets or wristbands for admission. Turns out the attractions at Rawhide *cost money*. You can purchase single tickets for \$5 or all-day wristbands for \$15. We think this is a bit much for a place that is just dying for customers, and apparently the stuntmen think so, too, because they let us in anyways on the condition that we "hit the tip jar" on the way out.

The show is okay, but not as good as Trail Dust Town - which isn't saying much; wild-west stuntmen everywhere are more comics than actors, and other than some black-powder blanks going off and one unimpressive fall from the top of the barn, it was pretty much just a run of off-color gags. I guess I need to revisit Old Tucson and see if the shows there are better. I think they would want to put on a quality show, like one sees at Universal Studios and the like; maybe they could draw more of a crowd. As it was, there were only three little groups in the stands, and the one in front of us kept wise-cracking with the stuntmen, who, to their credit, ran with it. But we were ready to leave when it was over, and besides, it was time for our meal.

Third surprise: We didn't need a reservation. The steakhouse was cavernous, and almost entirely empty. There was a large group near the stage, perhaps an office morale thing or a tour, and perhaps three or four small parties like us in a room that would seat hundreds. Pinnacle Peak back home had lots of character, not least the cut-off neckties festooning the rafters. Here, the rafters were just the naked steel roof trusses. For all that, the steak was pretty good, and the price wasn't outrageous, and there was a musician on the stage who was decent and had a large repertoire - including country songs, which made Charity happy, since she is into that recently.

After dinner, we go back out on the street to look around. Still pretty much empty. But there's plenty to see. Faith has a shocking experience.



There's a little museum here, with these wooden carousel-type horses. Charity and Faith were being silly, as usual. Most of the stuff in the museum was the usual collection of guns and lamps and kitchen tools and Army stuff, but there were a few unique things - an antique regenerative radio set, and an amazing (but

non-functioning) music box that played actual violins by depressing the strings with a matrix of stops and rubbing the strings with a motorized belt. I would have loved to see *that* working!

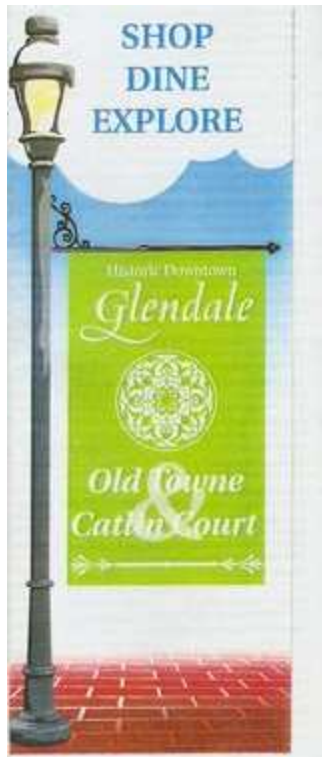
The naughty girls
end up where
naughty girls belong.



We go all the way to the end, looking in shops and empty drinking places and convention rooms and such. Only the ice cream shop has any people in it. At the end we find the rides - yes, a miniature train (which, from the map, just goes around in a circle, unlike the one at Trail Dust Town, which goes through corny little dioramas), and a stagecoach ride and burros. All standing idle. It might be more interesting to come back some Friday or Saturday night, when there's some life here. I hope they survive. But I'm thinking the place is subsidized as part of the Resort and Casino, by the Akimel tribe. Plus, at the very end of the "town" (which we don't get to) is apparently a rodeo grounds, so there is apparently a periodic Big Event which draws a crowd.

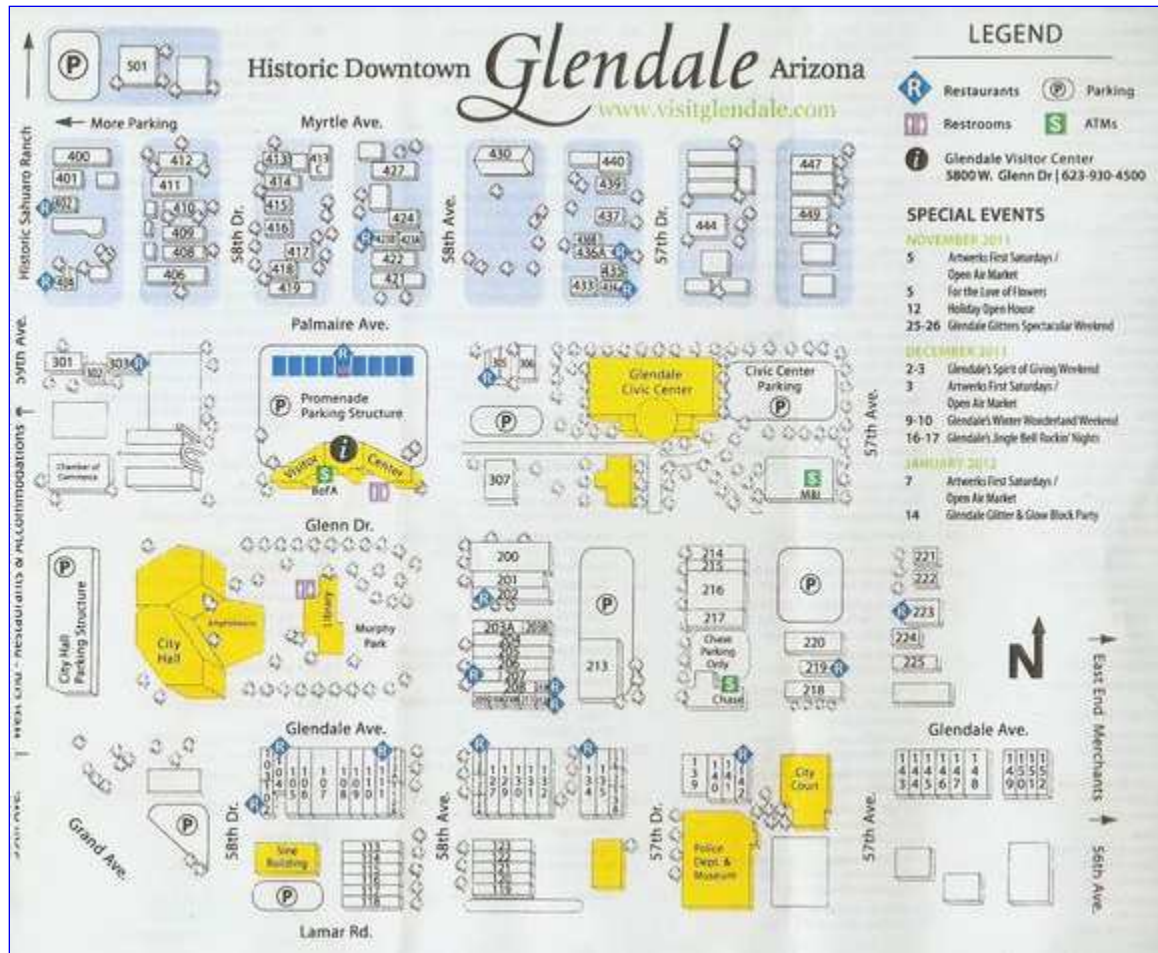
But we have now seen it, and so we leave back to I-10. Charity wanted to see *The Three Musketeers* after dinner. I figured we would catch this at Metro Centre Mall, where our hotel is, but I'm not sure we can get all the way back in half an hour and get decent seats (which, for all the traffic on the freeways, it only took us about half an hour from our hotel in Glendale down here to Wild Horse Pass). So we switch and go to the theatre at Arizona Mills mall. Yep, we beat the crowd - for about twenty minutes we sit entirely alone in a dark theatre. I have to step outside to verify that we are in the right theatre at the right time. Seems *nobody* goes to movies at 10:00 on Thursday nights! I was expecting at least the advertisements to be running on the screen! But just before the previews started, a few more people came in, and mommy had to quit playing with shining her pocket flashlight on the screen! After the movie (and it is a very silly movie), we return to our

hotel well after midnight.



Friday, we are going to see Glendale. The Phoenix metropolitan area is a concatenation of other cities, similar to Los Angeles, except there's not as many towns, and they're not so little. The big ones are Phoenix proper, Glendale, Peoria, Scottsdale, Tempe, Gilbert, and Chandler, and around the edges others are joining in, like Goodyear, Tolleson, Cave Creek, Paradise Valley, Anthem, and... Surprise! Some of them are attractions in their own right. We've visited downtown Phoenix, of course, and Scottsdale has a lot to do (except that most of that is upscale, and the girls don't care to go shopping in "Snobsdale" if everything is too expensive to buy). Tempe has Mill Avenue, which we've visited. Mesa has lots of antique places, as well as the Confederate Air Force museum, but for *this* trip, we will visit Historic Downtown Glendale (www.visitglendale.com).

Which appears to have two parts: Catlin Court, north of Palmarie, which is a bunch of historic residences converted into boutique shops, and the downtown shopping district, along Glendale Avenue, apparently called "Old Towne". All of this is gathered around the central Murphy Park, where the library is, and the civic center with its open-air amphitheatre. We park in the garage near the Visitor Center, where we got the nifty map above. None of the visitor websites had this particular map.



Walking through the park to Glendale Avenue, we find a marker sign explaining that the man who founded Glendale was one of the creators of the Arizona Canal, which brought water (and still does) to the city, originally for agricultural purposes (remember, Phoenix was originally "Pumpkinville"). He used some of his canal-borne wealth to build a better road from Phoenix to Wickenburg, and that road became the characteristic diagonal Grand Avenue through the northwest part of the metroplex. The BNSF Railroad purchased right-of-way along Grand from the man, the railroad brought commerce in, and Glendale prospered.

Part of this prosperity was marked by the nice storefronts along Glendale Avenue. I suppose that, like Tucson, which also had a prosperous downtown with these vintage storefronts, Glendale's historic area had its downturn as the businesses followed the affluent residents into the suburbs. But Glendale has successfully reimaged their downtown, and pretty much all the old storefronts have new occupants. Mostly antique shops. Which we spend a good bit of time

exploring.



But we can't spend too much time here in "Old Towne", since I've discovered that the Cerreta Candy Factory (www.cerreta.com) has daily tours at 10:00 and 1:00, and it's nearly that, now. About a half-mile east of downtown is the Factory, and we step into a world that smells of sugar and cocoa.

And some larger-than-life candy show-off works, like this Oompa-Loompa. Faith and Charity are psyching up for the tour, which will include some hands-on experiences.



Like wrapping truffles! Before automatic machinery, the candies had to be hand-wrapped in cellophane, very fast, very hard on the wrists. In the days before work-related injury claims. While we sat waiting for the tour to start, we watched some automatic wrapping machines at work.

Our little tour included a (homeschool?) mom and five children, who *really* got into the hands-on stuff.

Trish, our tour guide, was very animated. She is standing next to a 5-foot solid chocolate Santa, with the mold just beyond. Against the far wall is the caramel department, run by Jim Cerreta. All the Cerreta children are part of the business. We didn't meet any this time, but the founder (well along in years) still comes around to check on things.



Jerry Cerreta is in charge of the Chocolate department. This is part of the machinery that makes the chocolate-covered cremes and mints.

Trish explains how the melted chocolate is poured into molds, then refrigerated long enough for the chocolate to harden on the outside of the mold. Then the trays are pulled out, the still-soft chocolate on the interior is poured out, leaving a chocolate shell. Then the filling is injected, and more chocolate is poured on top to form the back.



Up by the front of the factory is a high-speed automatic wrapping machine that can process thousands of candies per minute. I would have liked to have seen all this processing at work. It seems that the 1:00 tour on Fridays is the wrong time to see much.

The front of the large room is the factory shop, where you can buy "bulk" candy - and we did! Cerreta's moves hundreds of pounds of candies a day. Trish says a lot of this goes to area supermarkets, like Fry's. Must just be in Phoenix, though, as I've never seen Cerreta's Candy anywhere but in this building. Tastes pretty good (unlike Mary of Puddin' Hill, near Commerce, Texas. Sorry, Texas! Arizona beats you again!).

After the Cerreta tour, we come back and look through a few more Old Towne shops, then go north to the Catlin Court area. It's after five now,

and most are closed. From the few we visit, we wish we could have spent more time here. Calls for a return trip to Historic Downtown Glendale someday. Dinner is in a Mexican place in Old Towne (nobody bit on my suggestion of the German restaurant on Glendale Avenue), which featured another live musician playing country, especially Johnny Cash songs. After dinner, with Charity driving, we leave Glendale, going down Grand Avenue, with another one of those Phoenix dust storms blowing up. But we make the two-hour drive back to Tucson without incident, and Saturday morning we are ready for more adventures.

The first being a visit to the Mini-Time Machine (theminitimemachine.org). The three of us have seen it and been impressed; it's Charity's turn, now. Who is obviously baffled by the front door; "I thought it was supposed to be *mini*?"





Faith finds the *mini* door. I don't remember seeing this when we were here before. It doesn't work. Or perhaps Caitlin the fairy has this door locked!

When we were here before, they had a huge miniature house in the lobby area. This had been moved out for some special event. Also, we took a guided tour last time, but we skip that this time. Plus, there is a little orientation "movie" (or miniature show, more accurately) in the Magic Theater, but it was not working this time. In fact, many of the video display panels in the museum were not working correctly during this visit.



All the same, it was a good visit, and Charity got to experience the world of historic and fantastic miniatures with her sister.





And her mother. It really is an excellent little museum, and there was a fair bit of traffic through it. Including some children with pencils and paper hunting for Caitlin; apparently they have resumed (at least to some extent) the child-oriented activity. I think they must have moved some of the Caitlin figures around, as the one that was definitely in the bathroom of the BIG house (number 7 on the map) was not there this time!

After leaving the museum, we have a few hours before the last experience of the weekend - attending the production of *King Lear* at Beowulf Alley (www.beowulfalley.org) downtown. Not only can Charity cast a professional eye on the production, but Faith can get her Thespian Club points for school.

It was a pretty good show; the actors were not in period costume, and they rattled off their Elizabethan English a bit too fast to follow, but it was well done. I'm impressed with Beowulf Alley so far; this visit was just to sample the theatre, to see if it was inappropriate or objectionable Tucson avant-garde, like so much of what happens downtown, but it was quite good. Family friendly, even. No guarantees for other shows, but I will want to try out some of their other offerings, like the Old Time Radio Theatre or the Lunchtime Players thing.



That concludes our whirlwind Charity's 20th Birthday adventures. Well, except for the long drive back up to Flagstaff and back on Sunday!