



Living in this great area as we do, called the North Georgia Mountains, do we continue to appreciate all the beauty around us as we awaken each day? I know that I do! I never lose sight of the sounds, landscape, and wildlife this area offers to us.

During a recent visit to the cabin, my nephew Josh and his fiancée Tammy made me realize all the more what we have, and what we should continue to appreciate each and every day.

Day One: Taking a drive to Helen, visiting the craft stores, candy shops, and watching the horse carriages take tourists for rides around this beautiful German town, where evidence of last years tornado is still evident, thankfully it spared most of the village of the devastation.

Day Two: Off on another adventure to show them what our beautiful area has to offer. We take a hike down the pathway to Dukes Creek; experiencing the beauty of not only the falls, but the plants, and trees. Dukes Creek Falls is a very powerful, high volume waterfall. We mustn't forget the small wildlife that was there to greet us along the way.

Day Three: One of the many pleasures of living in this area is to be able to view another of one of the many beautiful waterfalls. Walking along the path heading toward Desoto Falls, you will see native plants, trees and wildlife. Then when you reach the falls viewing area, it is always amazing. The quadruple layers of large rocks that have the water running over, the beautiful natural landscape, the peaceful sound of the falls, and of course some of the freshest breathable air you will find.

Day Four: After a night of sitting on my screened porch, telling them of the black bear that visit here in the springtime, Tammy told me she had never seen a bear. I had shown them numerous photos I had taken, and paintings I had done of just that topic, so it just made it easier to plan the journey for the next day.

I had seen signs for, but never stopped at, The Chestatee Wildlife Preserve nestled in the foothills of the mountains between Cleveland and Dahlonega. I did a search on the internet to find the hours, and pricing of the Zoo. Lo and behold while viewing the site; there were photos of "Lions, Tigers and Bear, OH MY!"

So off we go! We arrive at the Zoo, greeted by a young man (about 12 or 13 years old), who was taking the entrance fee in the parking lot. It was nice *not* to stand in a long line, as one usually does at a public attraction. He handed us the map of the Zoo, started telling us stories about some of the animals living there, and led us to the beginning of the route. First stop was a raggedy old looking camel, as they say, "a face that only a mother could love". After petting "Sebastian", and getting to know more about him, it was easy to see why he is there to greet all the visitors. (His story continues...).

Josh and Tammy soon were able to view what they had come to the Zoo to see. Several black bear are located in fenced areas for easy viewing. Now she can *not* say again she has not seen a black bear, she has now seen six. Josh was excited to see his favorite, "The King of Beasts: The Lion". After an en-

joyable walk around the park viewing all the animals they had to offer it was time to leave. One of the more enjoyable experiences was while driving out of the park. "Sebastian" the camel, decided to run alongside of the car the entire way out the drive, galloping around bushes trees and rocks, looking as if he were smiling, we soon discovered why his mother would love him; he had a playful, truly loving personality. I definitely will be returning to this great place in the future.

Sitting in the comfort of the cabin throughout the week during their visit, on their last night, the two visitors from the north are allowed to experience another beauty of the area. A herd of white-tailed deer make their appearance near the kitchen window. This was a wonderful sight not only for me, but for the two that live in a city and are not as apt to be able to view these magnificent creatures.

It has been a wonderful experience having these fresh eyes visit our beautiful area, and speak in awe of our beautiful natural treasures. Their enthusiasm encourages me to appreciate each and every day the beauty of this area, that I am proud to call my home.



Josh and Tammy at Desoto Falls.



Ostrich kissing my camera lens.