

The Good Samaritan of 2019



Dale Kovar

HJ GENERAL MANAGER

Our week at a cabin up north was over. We had hauled our stuff back, unpacked most of it, and weren't in a mood for vacation to be over yet.

After some quick searching, on a whim we headed off to the Uptown Art Fair in Minneapolis to try to stay in vacation mode.

On the way, Linda used my phone since she wasn't carrying hers. When done, she set it between our seats. Later, it slipped onto the floor. Being a responsible driver (at least then), I didn't try to retrieve it while moving at 55 mph.

We reached the art fair area and had to go a few blocks to find parking, which we did on a street that had cars parked along both sides of it.

Off we went.

Most of the art fair didn't suit my taste (not much art does), but, hey, it was vacation. Somewhere along the way when I put my hand in my pocket, I realized I hadn't picked up my phone from the car floor.

We were over halfway through the displays, coming back on the other side of the street, when suddenly a rain shower popped up.

There were enough awnings and shelters available, but we decided to just keep moving.

With several blocks to go, we started getting pretty wet in the rain, but, hey, it was vacation. We even commented about it being sort of fun to be out in the rain.

We turned the last corner, and there was a tow truck loading up a vehicle. It was somebody else's – ours was already gone.

It was a pretty quick realization that we had no car, no phone (it was in the car), we were soaking wet in Minneapolis, and there were only a few hours of daylight left.

The gentleman doing the towing confirmed that we would need to find a way to the Minneapolis impound lot. I didn't bother to bore him with the details that we had no phone, no car, were soaking wet, and there was little daylight left, as he seemed to be focused on towing more cars than worrying about the ones that were already gone.

We settled on a plan to head back toward the art fair with the hope that we could come up with a way to hail a taxi.

Along the way (still raining), I noticed a car with a Lyft placard. We don't have Lyft or Uber accounts since we NEVER have use for them, plus we didn't have a phone anyway because it was in the car we didn't have.

I asked the Lyft driver about a ride, but was informed she was waiting to pick someone else up and we would have to call for a ride.

Across the sidewalk, a young man realized our pre-

dicament and came to our rescue.

Huddling under an overhang (it was still raining), he called a ride for us, explained how far away the driver was, how long it would take, and the color and license plate of the vehicle to identify it.

A bit later, the driver called back and asked to change the pick-up location as some streets were blocked off because there was an art fair going on.

Our hero negotiated a new spot a couple blocks away, then led us through the rain and a department store, and right up to our ride.

I gave him a overly appreciative handshake and slipped him a \$10 bill for his trouble. As we got settled in the vehicle, we made one more eye contact. I mouthed "thank you;" he nodded with the assurance we were on our way.

Having never used a ride service before, I realized en route that not only had our friend obtained the ride for us – he paid for it too!

Had I figured that out soon enough, I would have compensated him way more.

Eventually we reached the impound lot, where everybody else in the line was there for the same reason. A \$138 fee later, plus the automatic \$45 parking ticket that accompanies a tow, and we were back on the road. My phone was right on the floor where I last saw it.

The impound lot is actually very close to Target Field. Linda declined my suggestion of also taking in the Twins game that night. (Hey, we're on vacation, aren't we?)

Instead, we figured we had dried off enough by then to venture into a restaurant for a hot meal.

From there, we made it home, grateful for no other surprises.

Later, I tried through Lyft's customer service to track the transaction and let us pay for it instead, but the only option allowed would be to get our Good Samaritan a gift card if we knew his email address.

We only knew him as Leonard, with no other contact info available. He only knew us as some old people from way out in Carver County.

So, Leonard, on the remote chance you're reading this or we meet up again, I owe you one! ■

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