My Journal of my trip to
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
To Visit Grandma Val
Flat Stanley's Journal about his visit with Grandma Val

Friday, September 8, 2006
I have been at Grandma Val’s house for a few days now, but she has been working a lot, so, we have not done too much so far. I did go to her office with her one day, and everyone gave me their business card for when I grow up and want to buy a house. Grandma Val is a Real Estate agent in Myrtle Beach South Carolina. It was interesting to see how much work she has to do to list or sell a house. I see signs in the yards in my neighborhood that tell me a house is for sale, but she says that is just the tip of the iceberg. She has a lot of “stuff” on her web page, and the newspapers, and real estate magazines that she has to get ready. She even makes movies of houses that she lists, she calls them Virtual Tours, she said that I can go to her web site www.ValerieWhiteman.com (that’s Grandma Val’s real name), and I can see them any time I want. She gave me some pencils and paper to share with my friends, so that I can think about becoming a Realtor some day. I liked going to the office with her.
Well, today was really a strange day, even Buddy, Grandma Val’s dog, was confused about what was going on. We got up at about 2:30 in the morning today, and boy was I tired! I wanted to see what was going on, so I told Grandma Val that I just had to get up, even though she encouraged me to stay in bed. As soon as we got down stairs we put on a pot of coffee and went outside, opened the garage door and turned on all the lights we have outside. Grandma Val is a pretty big volunteer, and today she was going to be emptying her garage of all the items that she has been collecting from her friends and fellow realtors so that they could be sold at a city Yard Sale. The money from the sale will all go to a group called KW Cares. This is a part of her Keller Williams Real Estate company that collects money from all over the country to help other people (especially their own Keller Williams Agents) if they have trouble and don’t have money to get through the day. When the Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, KW Cares sent over 5 Million dollars to help out! Wow... that’s a lot of money!! Grandma Val says that Yard Sales are where someone’s trash becomes someone else’s treasure. She had some pretty neat stuff in there! In fact, it took about six trucks to get everything hauled off!! Her friends from
work came over with the trucks and then we all had coffee, juice and fresh doughnuts. I especially liked that part. It was about 4:30 AM when everything was gone, and the food was cleaned up and everything was back to normal. Buddy wanted to go back to bed, but Grandma Val had to get ready for another fund raising event that was coming up later that morning. Grandma Val had to make this little tiny printer work with her little lap top. She said she had to download a driver from the internet to make that little printer work just like a big printer. She worked on it for quite a while, and finally found what she was looking for by using what she called a search engine. Whatever that download means it worked... that little printer started working like crazy! Pretty cool! I wish I had one! Well, we took a brief nap after that, because we had to be at the next event, what she called the Mark Sloan Golf Tournament, by 7:30 AM. She said that this event raises money for Cancer research. It takes a lot of money for that, she said. So... we put the top down on the car,
loaded up her little printer and the laptop and went out to the golf course to meet all of the players, who were mostly real estate agents like herself. She doesn’t golf any more, so she gives her time organizing all the prizes and raffle tickets. I don’t exactly know what she did, but while she was doing that I got to ride around on the golf cart with one of her friends handing out water and sodas to everyone. They were FREE drinks! I had lots of them, ’cause it was pretty hot out there on the golf course. They gave me a cool bag with lots of cool stuff in it. I will take it home with me when I go back. Wow, Grandma Val is going to have to pack me in a box before it’s over!! We stayed most of the day. I was so tired when we got home we both fell asleep on the sofa for another nice nap. I thought that grownups didn’t take naps… but Grandma Val says if you are tired, you should just go ahead and take one.

**Sunday September 10, 2006**

Well, today we just toured around town in Grandma Val’s convertible. It is so much fun to ride with the top down. I have to be very careful, because I could easily fly out,
and then we would have a HUGE problem on our hands. Grandma Val strapped me in tight with the seat belt. She says you must ALWAYS wear your seat belt when you ride in the car. This kept me very safe, and I was glad.

We took a drive up to a place that Grandma Val likes a lot. It was a pretty long ride out into the country. The place we went is called La Belle Amie Vineyard. We took a short tour of the neat store that they had there. They sell lots of “stuff” that you might give to someone if you needed a present for them. They sell wine there too that they make from the grapes that we saw and touched in the fields of grapevines. They have so many, but I guess it takes a lot of grapes to make one bottle of wine. Anyway, that’s what the Tour Guide told us.

Grandma Val said it reminds her of Italy (she went there last year), and it is so green and pretty. I have to be a lot older to drink the wine, but Grandma Val says that day will come soon enough. They play music there some days, and Grandma Val and her friends go for the concerts. She said they sit out on the lawn and listen to
the music under the big, big oak trees. Even when it is 90 degrees in the summer, it is cool and breezy under those big trees. I would like to do that some time. I picked up a neat brochure with their information on it, so next time that I go to visit, we can remember where we went the last time, and maybe we can even go back there.

Next we went by Barefoot Landing ... what a neat place! We went in and out of stores that are built over the water. It's almost like being on a ship! There were turtles, birds and baby alligators in the water. Oh yes, and a lot of fish that Grandma Val called CARP. Some of them were so big they would not even fit into the front seat of Grandma Val's car!! She said that people feed the fish, and then they just grow and grow in there. No telling how big they will be next year. They have a very cool boat down near the Intercoastal Waterway (this is a large lake that goes from New York to Miami Florida!). The big boat is called a paddle wheel boat. It carries people up and down the Waterway to see the sites. We are planning to do this on our next trip. We kept on walking around out there; it was so much fun and interesting. When we came around the corner I saw a sign that says Alligator Adventure.
Grandma Val says we are planning a trip there while I am here. I can hardly wait. We picked up a brochure, and it showed pictures of alligators that were way, way, bigger than me. Snakes, bugs, and all sorts of other animals live there. This is going to be a super place to visit. We drove around in the car for a few minutes until we stopped at the Giant Crab Seafood Restaurant. It is just down the street from Barefoot Landing. It was time for dinner, so we went in to eat. In my life I have never seen so much food in one place!! The brochure says that they have 120 Items to eat. There is a picture of it in the brochure. You can’t believe it! I was completely stuffed and tired when we left there. I thought our day was about over, just when Grandma Val said we were going to a show called ONE, at the Alabama Theatre. Well, I came awake as quick as a wink when we walked in to this HUGE building with beautiful carpet, lights and music. We saw everything from these Irish tap dancers to the funniest guy I have ever seen! Grandma Val said he is a comedian. There was dancing, costumes, lights of all kinds. It was really, really pretty and fun too! I saved the brochure from this place too, 'cause my mom and dad would love to come back and see this place, Grandma Val said. Wow, I was so tired I could not even walk any more. Grandma Val carried me to the
car, and I was asleep before we got home. What a great day! Awsome!!

Wednesday, September 13, 2006
Grandma Val had to go to a funeral today. She was very sad about it. It was a really great friend of hers that she knew for most all her life in Myrtle Beach. She said that after the funeral, a lot of her friends got together to celebrate her life. She also said that “When a friend is in your heart, they are always with you.” I want to remember that, because it made her feel much better. My friend Dalton’s dog, Sailor, died just a little while ago. I want to tell him what Grandma Val said, because I think it will make him feel much better, too.

Thursday, September 14, 2006
Well, Grandma Val came home and picked me up to take me with her to Dr. Ross’s office. Dr. Ross is an Orthodontist. That means that Dr. Ross is a guy who puts metal on your teeth to straighten them out. Grandma had some work done a while back, by her dentist, that made some of her teeth crooked, so now she has to straighten them out again. I thought it was interesting to see how many kinds of “braces” they have to do the job. You can even get colors! How cool that was! Grandma Val said that if I needed braces one day, it would be good for me to see
Saturday, September 15, 2006
Well, this was a great day too! We finally were going to Alligator Adventure! But first, we went to a place called Dino’s Pancake House. I had the best waffles with strawberries that I ever ate. I even had whipped cream on them! They let us park in a special place, where we could come in the back door and watch our car from our table. They were so nice to us. The waitress gave me a place mat with a note on it. It is in my treasures that I am bringing back from my trip. She wants me to bring Dalton next time too! She wrote that! She gave me a golf Tee with the name of her restaurant on it, and a card and a menu so that I will be sure to come back. I promised her that I would, and that I would bring Dalton too!

Well, when we pulled up to Alligator Adventure I got a little scared. It didn’t look like they were in cages or anything!! There were about 500 turtles at the entrance to the building, saying hi to us as we came in. Once we got inside, you could see that the alligators could not get to you.
There was a lot of protection for us... but they were just laying around in the mud and water like they were not worried about getting out. What can I say? I have never seen such interesting animals up so close! They had an albino snake that was over six feet long, and I got to touch it! It was more “yellow” than white, which is what Grandma Val said albino means (white). There were baby tigers, bears, birds and of course alligators and also crocodiles! I did not know there was a difference, but the guide told us that crocodiles have narrow noses, and that is how you can tell the difference. Also, there are no crocodiles in South Carolina. I didn’t know that! The man said that “the crocodile’s raised nostrils, eyes, and ears allow the animals to float almost completely submerged while still monitoring their environment”. There were alligators there that were over twenty feet long!!! That is longer than our Van! Wow! This was one of the most interesting places I have ever been. I will want to come back here again some day. Grandma Val thought that I might like some books to share with the class about some of the things I saw and learned that day, so she bought me some on our way out. I also have a cute tattoo of a tree frog and some tiny rubber snakes, a frog
and a rubber alligator! I know it’s an alligator, because it has a wide nose! This was a most exciting day.

**Monday, September 18, 2006**
I got to go to a place called the Marriott, which was located right on the Atlantic Ocean, because Grandma Val had to attend a Real Estate convention. She thought that I would like to go along, because they give away a lot of neat stuff to everybody. She was right, we walked around in this big room, and everyone had candy, and pens and notebooks to give away. We got lots of stuff, and I ate most of it already. I brought back this neat light weight black back pack bag that I can use. I brought a few other things, including a neat red ball that is really easy to throw, because it is so light! Cool!

**Sunday, September 24, 2006**
We went to hear the Long Bay Symphony Orchestra today. I did not think I was going to like this, but, Grandma Val really likes music, so I went along for her. I was really wrong because we were so close to the people playing the music you could see everything! I don’t know how they can move their fingers so fast. The people who played the music were all dressed in black, and the guys had on what Grandma Val called Tuxedo shirts. They looked really nice. What made this so neat was that they
showed movies, that the music was from, while they played the music! They had Star Wars, and even something from Harry Potter. There were a lot of tunes that I did not know, but Grandma Val did, she hummed along with the music all afternoon. It really taught me that going to hear a concert could be real fun!

Saturday, September 30, 2006
We had to get up pretty early today, because we were going to an Irish/Italian festival in North Myrtle Beach. It is another fund raiser that Grandma Val helps out with every year. She raises money, this time, for the Humane Society. We all love animals, so, we thought that it would be an excellent thing if I went along. We got shirts to wear when we were working. Grandma Val gave me hers to bring back. She said it was pretty big, but that I could use it to cover up my clothes when I was doing painting. It is a pretty green color with all of the sponsors on the back. She gave me some stickers too. There was mostly food and entertainment there, but, you could buy some craft items. I did not get any crafts, but I did eat some unusual foods. I ate spicy sausage, olives that were what Grandma Val called “marinated” in oils and spices, Italian ice, and different kinds of homemade candy. Everything was really tasty, even though I never ate this stuff before. We were there all day from 8:30 till 4:00! The puppies that they were hoping to be adopted that day
were, and a lot of kids were very happy with them. I asked Grandma Val if we could take one home, but she said Buddy would be jealous, and we would not want that to happen. I was so happy that they all got new homes. Grandma Val washed the Tee Shirt she gave me, because when we were eating, some oil dropped on it (plus, she sweat a lot that day too)!

On the way home I told Grandma Val that I wanted to see the Dixie Stampede some day. Dalton said he went there, and they had real Buffalos stampeding into a large ring with dirt on the floor. We passed it on the way back to Grandma Val’s house, and I saw lots of horses outside. She said I would have to pick one more place to see, and there were lots and lots more things in Myrtle Beach. You could be there for two months and still not see everything! I also told her Dalton told me about Magi Quest and Medieval Times, and water parks and the Ripley Aquarium. I wanted to see them all, but, I would be going back to Mrs. Hinkelmann’s class room pretty soon, and we would only have time to visit one more neat place. Well, we did get brochures of all the cool stuff I wanted to see: so that I could see it all next time I visit. We even got a cool guide book that will help me to remember all the things I did see and didn’t see. We decided that Grandma Val would take a day off this week, and we would go to Ripley’s Aquarium, because this is
Dalton’s most favorite place to visit in Myrtle Beach. So, the plan was made. I can hardly wait!

**Thursday, October 2, 2006**

Well, this was one of the prettiest places you could ever imagine! Beautiful fish and real sharks swimming right over your head! I loved playing in Ray Bay where little sting rays came up for you to pet them. They felt smooth and soft. They would come right up to the side of the tank for you to touch. They have their stingers removed, the lady said. They can not hurt you. There was a neat place where you could look at and touch a horseshoe crab! It looks like the shape of a horseshoe, but it has a tail! When you turn it over it has lots of little legs with pinchers on them. I would not touch it, because I thought it might pinch my finger. The lady that held it up for me said it would not hurt, but I was not taking any chances. This was the last adventure of my trip to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to visit Grandma Val. It was the BEST of all the places we saw, for sure. Dalton was right!
Saturday, October 07, 2006
Well, I am leaving today, and I will miss all the fun I had with Grandma Val. I hope that some day I can come back again to visit, and bring Dalton too! I will write Grandma Val a thank you when I get home. She was a nice lady. She was always very busy, but she made time for me. Thanks Grandma Val!

This is Grandma Val, Buddy and Me!