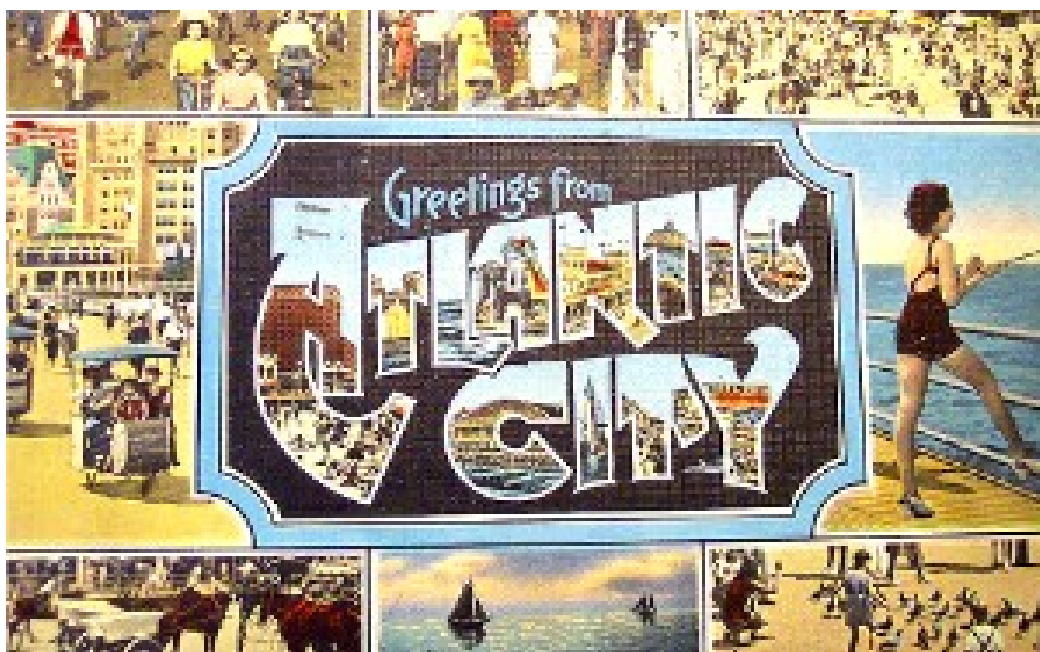


I remember Atlantic City faintly, at age three, when our family took the train from Philly's 30th Street Station on early Sunday mornings in July and August. We changed to swim suits in a bath house, then spent several hours on the beach. Then, after a sandwich and soda at a Boardwalk stand, we'd take a bag of salt water taffy back to the train. I believe the day's total cost for our family of five was \$20, a bit expensive for those days.

I have a much clearer memory of a visit in the summer of 1946. By then, my mother's sister and her husband were owners of a small hotel just a block from the Boardwalk. My brother and I, just returned after service in WWII, were rewarded with a free room for a week at their hotel. Of course, it was the cloakroom just behind the front desk, with a bathroom down the hall. But since it usually rented out for \$7 a day, we appreciated the gift.



As our own kids were growing up, we visited Atlantic City many times, and when gambling came to town in 1978, more than a century after the city became one of the East's most popular resorts, we were among the first to indulge in the new changes.

Today, more than 30 million people visit Atlantic City, now a year-round Las Vegas-by-the-sea destination. There are now a dozen resort casinos, and although the Boardwalk and beach still give the city its unique charm, it is much different than the city I visited as a child and sailor returning from WWII.

There are still shops lining the Boardwalk that sell the famous salt water taffy and the usual

tourist doo-dads, but in and around the casino hotels, you can now find such upscale stores as Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren.

The old Steel Pier is gone, along with the dance halls and music of Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and Gene Krupa. Now there's, the Entrance to the Stars at Resorts International, a cement section by the Boardwalk. It features celebrity handprints, footprints and signatures of Elvis, Frank Sinatra, Johnny Carson, Milton Berle, Cher, Liberace, Nat Cole, Ella Fitzgerald and others who've entertained in Atlantic City.

If you're thinking of visiting Atlantic City and want information about upcoming events, hotel deals, casinos, restaurants and other happenings, go to www.atlanticcitynj.com