

## Our Trip Takes Us

By Becky Hirn

It's not too early to think about what I'm going to be doing five months from now, when I return home from our trip. After all, it took about 18 months to plan this year. So what do I want to do? That's a pretty big question. I've struggled for years to find the ideal job. Some people I've known have a plan, a direct path to follow, teacher, accountant, nurse. I haven't found my career groove. What I have found is that I like learning about new things every day, experiencing new things, meeting people and hearing their stories. That works out pretty well for a reporter or a writer. This week in Texas I bumped into some inspiration.

In Vidor, Texas, just across the Louisiana state line, we stopped at a small town library so Abby could work on her research paper. I wondered if she was the only fifth grader in Texas researching snow and snowflakes. I taught Abby the day before that there were four resources in the library, books, magazines, reference materials and the internet. Both Abby's book and I missed the most important resource. When the librarian on duty, Collette, discovered that we were working on a writing assignment, she blossomed into one of the most useful resources in the entire building. She printed handouts, directed us to the right sections and shared her notes from the library's "Meet the Author" programs. She even took our picture. Most importantly, she encouraged Abby to write. Write anything! Collette was from the school of thought that believes everyone ought to be able to publish a book. She explained to Abby how her favorite children's book is about a grandmother and child. Then she used it as a guide to write about her own mother. Collette showed us her books, four of them, about her family members. It was just so refreshing to meet someone on a Friday afternoon who loved her job.

Later in the week, while visiting in San Antonio, my uncle introduced us to his neighbor, Bob. This animated 80-year-old is a photographer, a pilot, an inventor, a world traveler and many other things. He opened his home and shared his photos of famous people. He also showed us his inventions, including the four models of Mr. Spenser, an ingenious aluminum foil and plastic wrap dispenser.

Before leaving I told Bob he really is an idea guy and that I loved hearing his stories. What I didn't tell him, and I should have, was that I could see the enthusiasm in everything he talked about.

I used to think it was a real problem that I never settled into the perfect career. As I continue to meet people like Collette and Bob, who simply follow their passions and engage others to do the same, I see a path. For now I'll travel, write, take the kids to places like the Alamo and try to be passionate about it before my five months is up. And I'm trying to convince myself to follow Collette's advice about publishing my own book.

Becky Hirn is a Delphos resident traveling America with her family for a year. She documents the journey at [www.ourtriptakesus.com](http://www.ourtriptakesus.com). Follow the Hirn family in photos, blogs, on Facebook and Twitter. Or learn how to partner with the trip as an advertiser. You may e-mail Becky at [beckyhirn@ourtriptakesus.com](mailto:beckyhirn@ourtriptakesus.com)