

Our Trip Takes Us

By Becky Hirn

Ever since I got back from Ohio last week, the trip has taken on an urgency that wasn't there before. Maybe it's like Saturday night and I know the work week is coming all too soon. The lazy days of window-shopping in charming downtowns and strolling along beaches are dwindling. Even our nights of finding a great campsite or a suitable parking lot are numbered. My reaction to this is to grab up as many experiences as possible before Monday morning.

After school testing, Abby and I flew from Ohio to Seattle last week. On Tuesday we didn't waste a second. We were back on the trip. A fellow traveler and Delphos resident emailed us the perfect Seattle itinerary. We wandered through Pioneer Square and until we landed in the center of Seattle's celebrated market. At Pike Place I saw a young girl catch a gigantic fish. We sniffed tulips, bought corn dogs and blood oranges. We were awed by the first Starbucks store. It's amazing how such a small storefront started a widespread coffee craze. Later in the day we rode the monorail to the Space Needle and the surrounding amusements.

The next day was a race to Spokane. We met up with family friends there. They gave us a tour of the city. Parks, bookstores, an enormous Radio Flyer wagon sculpture and dinner at One World, a community kitchen, where all the ingredients are locally grown, everyone's a volunteer and customers pay what they think the meal is worth. Following Spokane was a camping trip with our friends to Priest Lake, in northern Idaho, just 20 miles from the Canadian border. A motocross biker warned us of wolves and grizzlies. We didn't get to see any, but this remote lake area revealed spectacular views, particularly at sunset. Snow-capped mountains, bone-chilling waters and alpine trees cloaked in mist surrounded us in a surreal landscape.

As peaceful as it was, I had this nagging urge to keep moving. There are only seven more weeks, and eight more states, I heard the inner voice saying. Will we make it in time? We were scheduled to be in Montana days ago.

We did make it to Montana, but not without delay. There was another force at work. Driving along Highway 90, just a few miles from the Idaho/Montana state line, Dan and I heard a loud clatter in the back of the RV. I looked in the backseat to see Abby and Carter covering their ears. "What is it?" I yelled. As they were about to cry, Dan pulled over. We got out and bent down to get a good look. A flat tire we can handle. But a shredded tire that flaps so violently that it destroys the plumbing of our entire holding tank system. "Oh, crap," I said. And then, "Oh...crap!"

The gods of travel seemed to be telling us to slow down, take it easy. So we listened. We stopped, got the tire fixed. We made an appointment to have the plumbing fixed when we get to Utah. We revised our trip schedule to accommodate the repairs.

And then, we got moving again. Today we're camping out just a few miles from the National Bison Range. Then we're headed to Yellowstone, then Idaho City and Salt Lake City by next week. Maybe I'm

not listening to the travel gods, but after a transmission repair early in our trip, a flat tire last month, and a million difficulties in between, I think the worst thing to do is dwell. Keep moving forward, foot by foot, mile by mile, because time will eventually run out.

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