

Our Trip Takes Us

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By Becky Hirn

Stranded just outside of the city

I have a handful of ideas for my book title, if I ever get down to the business of writing my book. Each day brings a new experience that's worthy of a story. Some days bring out an entire book title. Well, maybe a chapter title.

Two chapter titles came from our experience just last week. The first is "Two tow trucks and a police escort." The second is "Stranded just outside of the city."

We definitely were stranded. We were stuck for four days with only the items that we carry in our travel trailer, no water and little electricity. The ironic part was that anything you can imagine was just about an hour away in New York City. What got us stranded was one of those RV adventures they make movies about. It was what people warned us about before we left. It was why one of our friends gave us a copy of the movie *RV*, starring Robin Williams, the day after he learned about our year-long trip.

Basically what happened was while we were navigating our way from New Haven, CT to a campground about an hour north of the Big Apple, 1.) we kept trying to get on parkways, or roads that are restricted to passenger vehicles, not RVs, towing other RVs; 2.) we got lost; and 3.) we broke down. This last one was the biggie because what we first thought was water dripping on the ground was not water. It was transmission fluid. It's the problem that makes everyone's gut sink and blood pressure rise. It was the transmission.

This is where the first quote comes in. Dan had to call in a tow truck. They realized they'd have to send two trucks, one for the RV, one for the travel trailer. They also realized, the tow trucks were not allowed on the parkway, the one we were illegally travelling on when we broke down. So, the tow trucks had to have the state park police escort our vehicles off the parkway. According to the police, driving on the parkway is a common mistake made by people with RVs. This information made us feel only a little bit better at this point. What did make us feel better was the way people were treating us. They guys towing the RV said they would take it to their shop for the night and then tow it again when we decided where to get it fixed. The guys towing our travel trailer offered to tow it to the campground that we couldn't seem to find earlier. The officer offered the whole family a ride.

It seems like it worked out as well as could be expected. We got to the campground, we had somewhere to sleep. Life is good, right? Well, the problem was, the campground did not offer water or electric at the site. This is okay when you have a generator and a full water tank. Our RV with a transmission problem has both of these. But it was in a shop 15 miles away. So our

first problem was we were without water and had only a 2-3 day supply of electric on the battery of the travel trailer. Our second problem was that we don't carry much of anything in the travel trailer. It's mainly our office and clothing storage. We didn't even have a fork in there. And I thought I was prepared for life on the road.

Overall, the entire event became comical. When it started to rain, we didn't get depressed; we collected it to put in our water tank so we could flush the toilet. When we realized that even our playing cards were in the other RV, we made up games. When we started to worry about the transmission, or our skimpy food supply, we realized that compared to many other people in this world we are still very fortunate. The same day our transmission broke was the day Dan told me he knew what Lou Gehrig felt like when he said he was the luckiest man alive.

This is where our trip is taking us. Even in the face of something difficult, there's still a whole lot to be happy about.

Becky Hirn is a Delphos resident traveling America with her family for a year. She documents the journey at 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